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A Case Study on the Facilitation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in a Public Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

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Disruptive behaviors in elementary schools are a serious concern for teachers. With mounting pressure from school district administrations, state and federal government agencies, and the communities in which these schools reside, teachers often struggle to determine the best path to achieve consistent student engagement. When inappropriate behaviors are not managed effectively, academics suffer. Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) have been shown to be effective in reducing such behaviors. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) have also become very common in schools as teachers are organized into teams to collaborate and plan learning opportunities and methods for the instruction and assessment of students. The present study examined the effects of PBIS implementation through the PLC on the teaching staff in seven elementary school classrooms. This is a case study in which selected teachers were observed and interviewed to determine their level of and concerns regarding implementation and subsequent adoption level. Results indicate that the teachers all have unique experiences with PBIS and related interventions that either reduce their use or support their belief that it is an effective system. Their PLC collaboration is also discussed as it was proposed to be the medium and data catalyst for implementation. Limitations and implications of this study for researchers and practitioners are discussed.

Keywords: elementary school, positive behavior interventions and supports, professional learning community, implementation

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Current federal legislation outlines specific achievement expectations intended to decrease the learning gap among various student populations (No Child Left Behind, 2001; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). The mandates in this legislation frame an obligation for public schools to ensure students are provided with quality opportunities to achieve academic proficiency. In addition, state legislative efforts target the creation of safe schools free of violence, bullying, peer pressure, and other student safety concerns. This includes discipline procedures and practices essential for maintaining a positive school environment. These two issues, learning and school environment, are not mutually exclusive concepts. Learning is often dependent on the school environment. Thus, educators today struggle to ensure that schools are safe environments for learning to occur (Sherman, 2000). These two challenges, academic achievement and student behavior, have been at the forefront of many discussions involving a diverse population of stakeholders including parents, policy makers, and educators (Race to the Top, 2009).

More than ever before, disruptive students undermine instruction and learning (Gest & Gest, 2005). Disruptive students require teachers to take valuable learning time away from other students to deal with inappropriate behavior. According to a study conducted by Anderson and Kincaid (2005), “Four in 10 teachers reported that they spend more time managing disruptive behavior than they do teaching” (p. 49). In a poll conducted by the American Federation of Teachers in 2004, 17% of the teachers said they lost more than 4 hours a week due to disruptive behavior by students, and another 19% said they lost at least two or three hours a week respectively (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). The more time spent addressing disruptive

behaviors, the less time there is for quality instruction. Per Akin-Little and Little (2004), "Without effective behavior management, a positive and productive classroom environment is impossible to achieve" (p. 323).

Over the years a typical approach in many schools for stopping disruptive student behavior has involved disciplinary action (American Education Coalition, 1983). This often involves office referrals, suspensions, and other punishment-oriented interventions. Unfortunately, punitive disciplinary approaches have resulted in very little improvement in the academic growth of students who struggle with problematic behaviors compared to schools that utilize proactive behavior strategies (Morrison et al., 2001). As a result, there has been a growing expectation that administrators and teachers utilize alternative and more effective ways to manage behavior, which will keep students in class and engaged in learning as much as possible.

Various initiatives have been enacted in many school districts to reduce problem behaviors and improve academic success. Two that are important to this study are positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) and professional learning communities (PLC). PBIS is not a program but rather a philosophy of education in which punishment is minimized while positive behaviors are recognized and rewarded. PBIS models attempt to improve behavior and limit the need for disciplinary action. The effective school-wide PBIS model, if implemented correctly, involves the whole school population of students, faculty, school administration, and support personnel. Implementing a successful PBIS initiative takes time and effort. One implementation challenge for PBIS is that there are not institutional mechanisms to integrate it into existing programs. It may be that educators will see this as an additional program rather than a part of what they are and should be doing.

The other initiative pertinent to this study is the organizational strategy of the PLC. PLCs intentionally put teachers into collaborative groups where they are expected to use data to improve learning. The PLC process is based on the philosophy that by allowing teachers to collaborate, better instruction and student learning will occur as teachers evaluate data, discuss student needs, and share professional methods. This existing arrangement seems to be a logical place to include PBIS efforts. These two initiatives are growing in popularity as solutions to educational problems in which both goals of academic success and learned positive behaviors may be met (Horner, Sugai, & Lewis; 2015, Ruebel, 2011).

This study looks at an effort to integrate PBIS principles into the PLC process. In many ways, efforts to integrate PBIS into schools within a PLC collaboration structure attempts to change the attitudes of educators and students. Efforts are made to create a culture of connections between behavior and learning within the school. This type of culture shift within an organization can be difficult to achieve. The success of this integration depends on several things. This study explores the efforts of the BYU–Public School Partnership, the Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling (CITES), and an elementary school as they attempt to integrate PBIS principles utilizing the PLC structure already in place in the district. The PLC+ initiative (i.e., PLC plus PBIS principles) is housed within the PLC structure, which was established in all the regional school districts within the past few years. While the effectiveness and implementation of the PLC process in these districts likely varies, it is intended to be a teacher-led collaborative group in which educators are assigned to meet weekly for 60–90 minutes to plan instruction and discuss student needs as identified through data and observation.

The PLC+ initiative attempts to add the PBIS philosophy and intervention planning into the PLC process.

Both PLC and PBIS have a significant amount of research to support their individual success (Horner, Sugai & Lewis, 2015; Ruebel, 2011; Young, Caldarella, Richardson, & Young, 2011). This study is an exploration of the process of integrating the two with the express purpose of identifying the challenges and best practices for those trying to facilitate this type of integration. The goal of this study was not to evaluate the academic effects of a program but rather to identify and understand the important attitudes, individual and group beliefs, and misunderstandings that support or inhibit the integration of these two initiatives. This study seeks out the indications of acceptance or barriers for individuals who are expected to learn and implement these programs and philosophies. The results of this effort are intended to provide significant understanding for future planning and implementation efforts within similar districts and schools. The study also has the potential to be very insightful regarding the relationship between the PLC process and PBIS philosophy with regards to successful student intervention and educators' acceptance of integrating the two systems.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to delve into teacher perceptions of the implementation process of PBIS and the level of acceptance by each individual as measured by various program adoption frameworks (see Appendices A and B). The mechanisms for teacher collaboration were the existing PLC team meetings and professional development training sessions that occurred in the school monthly. This case study explored PLC teaming relationships within the elementary school setting and focused on the implementation of PBIS. In this school, the effectiveness of the

training and dispersion to the PLC teams was observed and evaluated within the context of the individual teachers' perceptions of the process, value, and progress of PBIS utilization. The specific research questions this study attempts to answer included the following:

1. What are the perceptions and experiences of the professional school staff involved in the PLC+ implementation process?
2. In what ways do the perceptions and experiences of professional school staff affect the success of a PLC+ implementation?

Background Information

The idea for PLC+ began when superintendents from the five area school districts expressed an interest in having the BYU Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling (CITES) program develop a discipline training program that would help them solve a variety of behavioral, social, and academic problems that school employees felt existed in their schools. CITES began organizing team members and planning in the spring of 2015. As these districts collaborated with CITES to determine available professional development time and ideas regarding long term training, a determination was made to use the currently utilized and district wide PLC model as a venue for implementing the PBIS strategies. The PLC+ process was planned and developed out of these early meetings as a way of utilizing the training and collaboration model to include the facilitation of PBIS.

District leaders were invited to commit to the training plan suggested by the CITES instructional team. Of the five school districts in the partnership with CITES, three agreed to participate and support a pilot school within each district. The selection of the participant schools was a collaborative decision between school administration and district administration that

facilitated discussion and evaluation of potential participants in terms of their readiness for training. School administrators and lead teachers were then invited by the district leadership and CITES to attend trainings sponsored by CITES in a train-the-trainer type of program.

The expectation or understanding between CITES and the districts was that these individuals would work within the designated pilot schools to train teachers in the PBIS philosophy with support from both CITES and the individual districts consisting of monthly release for training time, on-site coaching, School-Wide Information System (SWIS) training, and other opportunities for extended or needs-based training. Training was scheduled to occur once a month on the campus of BYU. BYU professors and others from the CITES program provided the instruction and practice for the school and district personnel. These trainings typically lasted 6–7 hours each day and involved time for instruction, practice, discussion, and school collaboration/planning sessions with their CITES coach. CITES also provided on-site coaching for faculty professional development meetings within each pilot school.

The schedule for monthly training ran from September of 2015 through April of 2016. In the summer of 2016 the school teams met to plan for start-of-the-school-year meetings and training sessions. It was anticipated that all three pilot schools would fully implement training and practice within their respective schools at the start of the 2016 school year. This case study is focused on one of the participating schools.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Literature Review Method

Initially the keywords *Positive Behavior Intervention Supports* were used to search the electronic databases in the ERIC (EBSCO) and PsycINFO search databases. This first search in EBSCO generated over 300 articles, dissertations, book chapters, and book-length treatments appearing from 1996 to the present. The bulk of the literature on PBIS was published within the past two decades. Google Scholar also proved valuable in identifying citation references. Placing a time frame restriction in Google Scholar for the past 20 years to match the EBSCO search produced 17,000 articles. Placing the terms in quotes reduced it further to specific topics and a more manageable 117 results. Another step utilized the *intitle* search operator in which the terms searched were; *PBIS*, *Positive Behavior Intervention Supports*, and *Implementation*, resulting in 40 article references.

The list of articles was narrowed down through a second search to eliminate studies that referred to PBIS only in passing, or those that were not specifically related to the practice or implementation of PBIS in schools. Any article that did not follow the implementation process as cited in Sugai and Horner (2009) were eliminated, as they didn't discuss the implementation elements of interest in this research. This procedure left approximately 35 texts for further review. The articles were categorized based on their discussion of implementation practices, specifically those that discuss models using individual participant data during implementation.

As the PLC model was not mentioned in any of the PBIS literature, a separate search was done to select articles. Initially the keywords *Professional Learning Communities* were used to search the electronic databases in the ERIC (EBSCO) and PsycINFO search databases. This first

search in EBSCO generated over 600 peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, book chapters, and book-length treatments appearing from 1996 to the present. While models similar to PLCs have been researched since 1968, it was determined that a similar time frame for research with PBIS would be sufficient for collecting the most recent research. Placing the terms in quotes reduced it further to specific topics and 311 results. Google Scholar also proved valuable in identifying articles. Placing a time frame restriction in Google Scholar for the past 20 years to match the EBSCO search produced 22,500 articles.

The time frame was reduced to the last ten years to gain access to the most recent research, resulting in 307 articles. Another step utilized the *intitle* search operator in which the terms searched were *PLC* or *Professional Learning Communities*, resulting in 258 article references. Adjusting the time frame in EBSCO yielded similar numbers, with 287 available writings. Articles were screened again by reviewing abstracts and selecting literature reviews and research that appeared to have relevance to the functioning and practice of PLCs in public schools. This method yielded 25 articles that were reviewed in detail for use in this review.

Educational professionals often search for effective methods in teaching and managing students. PBIS is a compelling potential solution, as student behavior impacts learning and presents a significant challenge in schools. PLCs present a way for schools to implement and evaluate practices while providing support for teachers. It is important to understand the philosophies of the two to delve into the value of teacher perspectives during the implementation process. In the following sections I will discuss the PBIS philosophy and the PLC methodology.

The PLC and PBIS review

A wide variety of new educational practices and policies are being implemented in today's public schools. They are driven by political agendas, community expectations, administrative goals, or industry needs. Whatever the motivation, source, or goals of a new policy may be, change often equals resistance. Recognizing the powerful link between participant perspectives and successful implementation may begin to close the gap between educator ideology and the implementation of new practices. Elevating teacher understanding of the effectiveness of a program, philosophy, or practice is critical to closing that gap.

Researchers and educators have worked to develop ways of helping teachers understand the importance of new practices and how these practices benefit both students and teachers. It is important that the theories selected for utilization have extensive research to support their successes. Positive behavior interventions and supports and professional learning communities are two such popular educational practices that often require change on the part of teachers and in turn, encounter varying degrees of resistance. Both have had several studies conducted in which the benefits of each are documented when implemented with fidelity (*PBIS*; Ackerman et al., 2010; Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Dunlap, Sailor, Horner, & Sugai, 2009; Feuerborn, & Chinn, 2012; Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010; *PLC*: Bullough, 2007; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010; Fulton & Britton, 2011; Hord, 1997).

Understanding that PBIS and PLCs are research based and have a history of success can lead to the pursuit of answering new implementation questions such as, how do teachers perceive these practices in the first stages of implementation through full adoption? Does this perception affect the implementation process? Does it affect the pace of implementation? Does it depend on

internal beliefs or external motivators to drive the acceptance and practice? Finally, as PLCs have been used to implement a variety of education interventions, and as the model has not yet been studied when used in the implementation of PBIS, the combination of the two brings up an interesting question about the effectiveness of the implementation. The compelling perspective within the PBIS implementation through the PLC model is the teacher: the participant who is learning, adapting, and changing.

In this review, I attempted to fill in this gap by discussing the PBIS philosophy and PLC model, how they have been implemented and utilized, and why this study into personal beliefs is important to the research. The consideration of the individual and their perception could help overcome the challenges presented by resistant participants while obtaining the benefits of using PBIS and PLCs. Thus, being informed, the reader can be introduced to the need for implementation of PBIS utilizing the PLC model and incorporating teacher perceptions throughout the process.

The first purpose of this review was to discuss the research on PBIS and to share how it can be beneficial for dealing with disruptive behaviors, improving participation, and fostering better academic success for students. The second objective is to review the PLC program and its utilization in schools for teaming and data analysis. The final objective is to investigate the research related to educators' perspectives of the implementation process of both PLC and PBIS.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

In my analysis, I identified four different themes in the current literature on PBIS:

1. Development of the PBIS philosophy,
2. Evolution of systems of support,

3. Tiered systems of support implementation, and
4. Results of PBIS in practice.

These themes are discussed in the following sections as they relate to PBIS.

Development of the PBIS philosophy. PBIS began as a focused approach for resolving serious problem behaviors of individuals with severe developmental disabilities. It grew into an approach that included the implementation of strategies aimed at groups of children in classrooms and schools, as well as children and adults in a variety of early education and service programs (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005). The underlying theme of PBIS is teaching behavioral expectations in the same manner as any core curriculum subject. The school focuses on three to five behavioral expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. In other words, rather than telling students what not to do, the school will focus on teaching and expecting the preferred behaviors. Typical PBIS will focus on some, or all, of the following: first, to teach children to respect themselves, respect others, and respect property; second, to be responsible and respect relationships with teachers, peers, and others; third, to recognize and respect your responsibilities as a person (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Schools implementing PBIS will have a team of educators who will train and lead the implementation process. They plan trainings and seek support from the other educators. The staff then determine how to target specific behavioral goals: rewarding compliance or reporting discipline issues. Some adherents have viewed PBIS as a framework for resolving problem behaviors through individualized functional assessments and multi-component, assessment-based behavior support plans. Others have viewed PBIS as the application of school-wide universal systems designed largely to improve school climate and reduce office discipline referrals (Dunlap et al., 2009; Mathews, McIntosh, Frank, & May, 2014).

PBIS is an approach for enhancing the quality of the school experience for students and reducing problem behaviors that detract from learning and student success. Current research on PBIS suggests that within classroom systems, the strongest predictors of sustained implementation were the following: regularly acknowledging expected behaviors, matching instruction to student ability, and accessing additional support (Havercroft, 2012).

Evolution of systems of support. In the past few decades, PBIS has experienced considerable growth as the approach has been applied in an expanding number of schools and, more importantly, at multiple educational levels (Dunlap et al., 2009; Lucyshyn, Dunlap, & Freeman, 2015). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) reauthorization and other legislative efforts, (i.e., No Child Left Behind, 2001; and Race to the Top, 2009), emphasized the use of scientifically based research to improve outcomes for students. While these programs did not necessarily fund systems of support, they did introduce many educators to the concept of interventions beyond special education programs and the possibility of individualized education for all students. Based on the support of research, the concept of support systems has been introduced in many schools, incorporated into professional development, and funded through grants. Consequently, systems of support have now been widely introduced into many schools and found acceptance as educational plans with strategies that involve student screenings, tiers of support, and individualized interventions. Like the evolution of PBIS, response to intervention (RTI) was developed as a system for screening and identifying students in need of academic intervention. One perspective noted by Dulaney, Hallam, & Wall (2013) concerns the defining features of RTI and the application of those features to school-wide PBIS suggests that the initial purpose of RTI has expanded from a focus

on screening and improved outcomes for students with learning disabilities to a general approach for improving instructional and intervention decision-making for all students. Sugai and Horner (2009) described the parallel evolution of PBIS with the focus primarily being on the social culture within the whole school and behavior supports for those students with problem behaviors. They concluded by suggesting that the RTI approach offers an excellent umbrella of guiding principles for improved assessment and intervention decision-making and that PBIS is an example of the application of these principles to the challenge of establishing formal systems of behavior support for all students.

Tiered systems of support implementation. Sugai and Horner (2009) offered a guide for PBIS implementation, including a self-assessment protocol for school and leadership implementation teams. They suggested that improved development of an integrated continuum, including behavioral interventions and support practices, creates effective, relevant, and durable change in schools. As is the case with PBIS, core instruction is an important part of an effective multi-tiered model. To implement RTI effectively, school teams regularly examine the effectiveness of their core instruction to determine if students meet the proficiency standards with core support alone. However, educator skills necessary for effective core instruction are a confounding variable in this process, as is the lack of fidelity if teams are only utilized as a format for teacher gatherings. To provide educators with a template for effective collaboration, Harlacher, Potter, and Weber (2015) described the grade-level team meeting in which the purpose is to use data to analyze the effectiveness of core instruction in reading. The team is typically grade level (secondary schools are content-area specific) and may include the principal, reading specialists, or the school psychologist, along with other specialists who can help support

the conversation. To ensure a productive meeting, the time set aside for the meeting is protected from cancelations and interruptions, and the team meets at a regularly scheduled time. Discussions are focused on the results of the data and alterable variables instead of conjecture and things outside of the school's purview, such as the student's family dynamics or maturity level. Typically, a checklist is used to ensure that the process is followed and to document decisions made. These meetings occur immediately following the collection of a school's universal screening data and continue as students are evaluated regarding tier assignment and intervention progress. This model links the concepts of tier data analysis to the PLC model.

PBIS in action. Research on PBIS in schools identifies some specific results and conditions that influence implementation and successful practices. Havercroft (2012) examined several studies conducted on the effectiveness of PBIS within the classroom and whole school systems. Findings of this study indicate that schools that train and implement school-wide PBIS do experience an improved school climate, a possible decrease in discipline referrals, and an increased consistency in behavioral expectations and disciplinary actions. However, as a cohort, fidelity of implementation was not met even though several individual schools did achieve the status of implementing school-wide PBIS with fidelity. A similar meta-analysis also noted that when implemented correctly, PBIS provided behavioral and emotional support for students, meaning that teachers were utilizing this philosophy in their management of student behaviors (Bradshaw, et al., 2010). Horner (2000) found that teachers who embrace PBIS principles may provide an organized environment that is highly effective in influencing the educational experiences of young learners.

Teachers trained in PBIS tend to provide higher-quality instructional support to young students as well (Ackerman et al., 2010). Sosinsky and Gilliam (2011) showed a correlation between teachers who utilized PBIS and the provision of instructional support, emotional support, and classroom organization. This suggests that teachers who support one another as they teach are more successful. They also found that teachers perceive other teachers to be most helpful, or complementary, when their educational credentials are similar. This is important information, considering the dynamics of the PLC in the PBIS implementation process. As PLCs are becoming more popular in schools, the implementation of PBIS through PLCs is a compelling notion for educators, as it provides benefits not obtained through a school-wide training method. It then becomes important to consider how PLCs may be utilized in the implementation of PBIS.

CW-FIT: Class-Wide, Function-Related Intervention Teams

In addition to PBIS implementation, the introduction of class-wide, function-related intervention teams (CW-FIT) as an intervention option is evaluated to determine the benefit to schools for managing student behaviors. CW-FIT is a behavioral intervention designed to specifically teach and reinforce appropriate social behaviors using a game-like activity that can be implemented within the general education classroom setting. CW-FIT typically is used to target the following behaviors: gaining the teachers attention, following directions, and ignoring inappropriate behaviors. Beyond the game element of CW-FIT, teachers create posters to use as prompts for students, model the desired behaviors, and practice with the students using role-play to demonstrate desired behaviors. This intervention can be strategically implemented during challenging times of the day to decrease problem behavior (Caldarella, Williams, Hansen, &

Willis, 2015). By providing opportunities for continued positive behavioral reinforcements and intervention data, PLC teams could have the opportunity to generate and evaluate specific behavior data regularly. In this way, CW-FIT provides another evidentiary instrument for understanding teachers' perspectives and values related to PBIS. CW-FIT utilizes four research-based activities that are reported to improve class-wide engagement during academic instruction including (a) teaching socially appropriate communication skills, (b) using differential reinforcement with an interdependent group contingency, (c) extinguishing or eliminating potential reinforcement for problem behavior, and (d) implementing individual interventions using self-management, help cards, and/or functional assessment (Kamps et al., 2011).

Results in recent studies suggest that CW-FIT is beneficial for elementary teachers to utilize in their classrooms. If teachers consistently implement evidence-based interventions with fidelity, results of studies indicate that these interventions may be more likely to positively impact student behavior (Kamps et al., 2011; Wills, Shumate, Iwaszuk, & Kamps, 2014). Studies also suggest that CW-FIT implementation was associated with significant improvements in teachers' praise to reprimand ratios. While praise is regarded as an evidence-based intervention, many teachers do not use it frequently and consistently enough to have maximum positive impacts on student behavior (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013).

Results showed that the implementation of CW-FIT resulted in increased levels of class-wide group on-task behavior and had significant positive effects on academic engagement and reduction of disruptive behaviors for students identified as at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Finally, Walker and colleagues (1996) found evidence suggesting that teachers and students believed CW-FIT to be socially valid. This belief is of importance, as many

teachers do not use interventions that research has shown to be effective, resulting in what has been called a research-to-practice gap.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

In my analysis, I identified five different themes in the current literature on PLCs: the philosophy of the PLC model, PLCs in practice, keys to PLC success, results of PLC practice, and PLC practitioners' beliefs.

Philosophy of the PLC model. The traditional and most common teaching structure in public education today involves a single teacher working with a group of students in a closed classroom. The reasons for the commonality of this pattern are (a) that single-teacher classrooms are affordable to district budgets and (b) that single-teacher classrooms are simpler to evaluate and compare. Even though studies have shown the greater effectiveness of multiple-teacher classrooms, they are rarely available in public schools (Bullough, 2007; Hord, 1997).

While single-teacher classrooms are the mainstay in most schools, a growing practice in schools is for teachers to be placed in small PLC groups. In reaction to mandates for increased student achievement, and because many schools have multiple classes at each grade level, the PLC model is being investigated by many school districts. As with most successful implementations of new programs or philosophies, it is important that teachers are invested in the PLC process for useful collaboration and planning to occur. If not, the expected behaviors and related data will not be discussed, interventions will not occur, and students will continue to be deficient because of behavior that limits the capacity of all concerned (Bullough, 2007). Since most districts struggle to fund the ideal classroom structure, the PLC model offers teachers

collaboration opportunities and professional development that leads to effective teaching and student successes (Dulaney, Hallam, & Wall, 2013).

PLC in practice. With an awareness of the research and advantages of cooperative teaching models, school leaders increasingly attempt to use various forms of PLCs. They hope that PLCs will provide an approximation to the professional development experienced in the co-teaching model, which utilizes two teachers per classroom (Dulaney et al., 2013). Typically, a professional learning community consists of a team of teachers that meets regularly to learn or share new topics and ideas, review data, and problem solve. Often, teams determine the topics they want to learn and the methods they prefer. A normal practice is for a facilitator, coach, or team leader to guide the team in learning a new topic, generally using professional development materials designed to teach the content. This makes the PLC model an ideal structure for implementation of new programs or practices (DuFour et al., 2010). The practice of PLCs did not originate in education; it originated from the business domain where the intention was to empower employees in the decision and innovation process. (DuFour et al., 2010) The PLC model is based around the idea that isolation creates stagnation while collaboration provides a rich flow of interaction, adding the ability to maximize individual performance (DuFour et al., 2010). The expectation is that while working together, teachers will engage in deeper learning as professionals to better meet the needs of their students and be committed to continuous improvement through collaboration and reflection. In PLCs, teams are expected to be open to critical thinking, reflective dialogue, self-examination, and resolving issues that impede student success. Each member must be committed to the time, energy, and collaboration required to bring about lasting change in their classrooms and school (Ruebel, 2011).

Keys to PLC success. While many schools across the country are currently using the term professional learning community to loosely describe groups of teachers that work together at specified times in their buildings, the model is not consistently being practiced as intended, or with the support from educators, that is necessary for success. A great majority of these schools therefore falter in their efforts to create true PLCs (Carroll, Fulton, & Doerr, 2010). Sims and Penny (2015) conducted a study of PLCs in one public school and found that the implementation had too narrow of a focus and therefore failed to affect student achievement. This qualitative case study method was used to investigate the perceptions of teachers participating in a PLC known as the "data teams" (Sims & Penny, 2015). The case study examined teachers' perceptions of the program and how lesson planning, teaching, and time management were affected. They noted that a PLC might be unsuccessful for a variety of reasons, both internal to the collaboration or external, involving environment and circumstances. Consequently, problems may lie with definition: not every gathering of teachers, even when called a PLC and held for collaboration that is intended to lead to improved student achievement, meets the criteria necessary to be an effective PLC. A critical shortcoming of the PLC groups examined by Sims and Penny was their narrow mission and definition as data teams. Consequently, the participants perceived the PLC, in that condition, as focused solely on the single set of data. They lacked the time, collaboration, and support needed to be effective.

The level at which each school or team functions in the PLC model is also a concern. Teams that function at higher levels as PLCs find it easier to implement new practices or concepts. If teams don't practice PLCs with a high degree of fidelity, the implementation of additional programs will be hindered and trying to implement additional programs when the PLC

model is already not being practiced correctly will further harm the PLCs (Louis & Marks, 1998). To counteract these failed attempts, Hord (1997) reviewed the literature on educational leadership and school reform, and generated a list of five critical attributes for successful PLCs, which include:

1. Supportive and shared leadership, with administrators and teachers being viewed as equal partners in decision-making;
2. Collective creativity that encourages and promotes collaborative brainstorming to solve common problems;
3. Shared values and vision with a strong focus on what's most important—student success;
4. Supportive conditions, including available time and resources to implement the work of PLCs; and
5. Shared personal practice, which requires colleagues to offer their classrooms for observation, discussion, and critique.

Further, to establish the needed mind-set for effective practices, Hord (1997) wrote, "An effective PLC strongly adheres to a vision of student learning, a vision that acts as a consistently articulated and referenced guide-post in making decisions about teaching and learning" (p. 1).

Results of PLC Practice. During the past two decades, schools worldwide have increasingly adopted structures and practices associated with PLCs to enhance teacher collaboration and improve student achievement (DuFour et al., 2010; Lee, Zhang, & Yin, 2011; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Extensive research has shown the power and potential of PLCs on teacher practices and, ultimately, student performance. For instance,

Louis and Marks (1998) found that professional learning communities boost student achievement because they tend toward authentic pedagogy. They investigated whether the development of a school-wide professional community among teachers positively affects classroom organization and, subsequently, the performance of students on authentic assessments. Their analyses drew on (a) survey data from 609 teachers and 5,943 students in 24 nationally selected, restructured elementary, middle, and high schools; (b) classroom observational data collected on students and teachers in 144 mathematics and social studies classrooms at 4 time points; (c) 235 assessment tasks collected at two time points from these same teachers; (d) 5,100 samples of student work in response to these assessment tasks; and (e) in-depth case studies of each of the 24 schools. Louis and Marks focused primarily on professionally supportive relationships among teachers within their schools rather than on external networks.

The analysis built on previous research in which the development of strong professional communities within schools was associated with an increased sense of collective responsibility for student learning, a school attribute shown to be related to gains in student achievement on standardized tests in comprehensive high schools (DuFour et al., 2010). When teachers work in correctly functioning PLC groups, school cultures begin to evolve as teachers explore new instructional practices and learning becomes more authentic. Tasks transform from those requiring simple memory recall to more sophisticated, intellectually challenging activities, resulting in higher standardized test scores (Newmann, 1996).

When implemented properly, PLCs are driven by the interest and needs of participants and are based on professional inquiry into research, reflection, examination, discussion, and experimentation (Bullough, 2007). Often the cycle repeats itself as new practices kindle

questions. PLCs provide participants with a network of professionals facing similar challenges. One key feature is the understanding that setting high standards for all students is the responsibility of individuals as well as the collective team. Membership requires not only a commitment of time and energy, but also an examination of current practices and why those practices have been put in place, as well as whether they serve the current needs of the organization.

In 2011, Lee, Zhang, and Yin conducted a multilevel analysis in China in which they used the Professional Learning Communities Assessment (PLCA) instrument developed by Huffman and Hipp (2003). The analyses were conducted to investigate how school-level variables, including the five factors of PLC, faculty trust in colleagues, and collective teacher efficacy, affect teachers' commitment to students. Forty-five items in the original PLCA were designed to measure these dimensions and over 500 professional educators responded. Generally, the results supported the important effects of PLCs and faculty trust in colleagues on teachers' collective efficacy and their commitment to students. These findings support the suggestion of Louis (2006) that within the learning community, organizational learning and trust should be emphasized in improving a school. Building a collaborative PLC environment, creating a trusting atmosphere, and enhancing the teachers' collective efficacy, could all be helpful in increasing teachers' commitments to students.

PLC Practitioner Beliefs. The institutional factors leading to successfully functioning PLCs have been widely discussed in research of American schools. The effective model is noted to have consistently similar factors regarding leadership, management, and purpose. Teachers' beliefs contribute to PLCs' success during implementation and longevity of practice (Ruebel,

2011). The causal connection between teacher support and high-functioning PLCs indicates the need to understand teachers' perspectives during the implementation process.

With international research available on PLCs, the opportunity to study implementation in other countries provides some additional perspective. In Hong Kong, Tam (2015) investigated teachers' beliefs about teacher learning in PLCs and their influence on collegial learning activities in two departments (English and Chinese) at a secondary school. The study used qualitative techniques of multiple interviews and observations to collect data. The findings indicated that teachers in the Chinese department believed that learning could be achieved in PLCs and that their practices of collegial activities were conducive to teacher learning. Conversely, teachers in the English department did not believe that interacting with colleagues would foster learning and that their collegial activities yielded limited accomplishment in teacher growth. The teachers in both departments had different backgrounds in pedagogical training, which may have influenced their philosophy regarding collaboration. The study suggests that teachers' beliefs play an important role in facilitating or impeding reform initiatives on teacher development.

Research has demonstrated that to meet the needs of today's learners, the tradition of teaching in isolated solo classrooms must give way to a school culture in which teachers continuously develop their content knowledge and pedagogical skills through collaborative practice (Stoll et al., 2006). Teachers will need to see that collaboration is expected and desired within their work day. Fulton and Britton (2011) stated that "teacher collaboration supports student learning, and the good news is that teachers who work in strong learning communities are more satisfied with their careers and are more likely to remain in teaching long enough to

become accomplished educators" (p. 46). Teachers construct visions of teaching and learning based on a picture that is structured by their very positions as teachers. This can create paradigms based on preconceived notions of right, wrong, good, or bad in schooling. In the end, this broad observation can serve to limit the solutions teachers develop to improve their own practices or improve student learning. These perspectives need to be considered as they will influence implementation.

PBIS and PLCs

There is very little research connecting PBIS practices and the PLC model. However, studying the effectiveness of teacher PLCs is important as research has shown that teaming can impact teacher well-being, teacher behavior, and education quality (DuFour et al., 2010). This can influence the introduction and implementation success of new concepts or ideas (Anderson & Bourke, 2000). Sosinsky and Gilliam (2011) particularly noted that cooperating teachers had a tremendous impact on the well-being of their fellow teachers. Supportive teachers provided emotional support, positive feedback, counseling, and a protective barrier against criticism and negativity from others. An unsupportive PLC resulted in stressed and unhappy teachers. Speaking about her PLC, one teacher stated: "my success was much better because of their support" (p. 347), whereas another teacher described a very different experience: "I felt entirely disconnected. My PLC was about checking the boxes . . . when you are working with these kinds of people that makes you feel frustrated and like you are wasting time, . . . at a certain point, it is too discouraging" (p. 346). Clearly, the experiences of these two teachers were very different based on the relationships they had with their PLC teams.

A qualitative study by Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) highlighted the impact a teacher team can have on the behavior of its teachers and their beliefs regarding educational practices. They noted that if teacher educators, administrators, behavior support coaches, and leadership team members can reach a deeper understanding of the current perceptions and practices of teachers, they may be better suited to help teachers achieve readiness for the shift to PBIS. This could include a better understanding of their concerns, the data they use to assist their planning, and the types of social, emotional, and behavioral support strategies they employ. It makes sense that positive teacher well-being and teacher behavior can have an impact on the quality of the educational environment, thus impacting the environment for students. For example, in a study on the effect of team teaching in early childhood education, McNairy (1988) described her research subject, a teacher, as having much greater interaction with her students when utilizing PBIS concepts. The teacher also noted on several occasions how teaming and reflection on the utilization of the PBIS philosophy provided her with an opportunity for collaboration on these concepts.

A positive correlation has also been found between PLC relationships and the quality of the educational environment. McCormick, Noonan, Ogata, and Heck (2001) found a positive relationship between the cooperating teacher relationship and the provision of an effective learning environment. They discussed the findings—that teachers who had a shared work ethic sought out real partnerships in which teachers had trust, support, respect, and a desire to cooperate with each other. As both PLCs and PBIS can contribute to a positive educational environment for educators, it is important to understand the conditions that effect both.

The research that examines teacher perceptions may identify promising approaches and strategies. McIntosh and colleagues (2014) suggested a few important conditions in working toward implementation and sustained utilization of the PBIS philosophy by school staff. Participants need first to understand the PBIS philosophy and the elements necessary for its successful functioning in schools. Successful implementation will then improve. Across quantitative and qualitative analyses, results indicated that administrator support and school team functioning were rated as the most important features for both initial implementation and sustainability. Staff support, integration into typical practice, and parent involvement were rated as significantly more important to sustainability than initial implementation (McIntosh et al., 2014).

The critical element of PBIS is the focus on systems change within a school. To effectively shift practices that will support the goals and objectives of a PBIS system requires commitment by administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff, including office staff and even custodians (Dunlap et al., 2009). For the benefit of teacher support, which should encourage the success of PBIS, the teachers need to view the principal as one who involves the teaching staff in decision-making for the desired outcomes (Horner et al., 2010). The administrator must guide the school in developing operationally defined and measurable goals based on results from the data collected (Horner et al., 2010). The development of school culture evolving around the PBIS framework should be representative of teachers' opinions and recommendations.

The PLC model needs to be reflective of this pattern as teachers feel empowered and motivated to implement a new process or philosophy (Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009). In both PLCs and PBIS, the efforts put forth by school administrators to build capacity is a

precursor to the success or failure of the programs. These include the development of guiding principles, daily operating routines, offering physical, technical, and emotional supports, as well as taking the leading role of making data-based decisions (Flannery et al., 2009).

Implementation Evaluation Frameworks: Concerns-Based Adoption Model and the Affective Domains

Many evaluations of PBIS and PLC programs haven't focused on the perspectives of those involved in implementation. Rather, they have been objective-oriented evaluations focusing on whether, or to what degree, the program goals were met (Ruebel, 2011; Stoll et al., 2006). Two useful frameworks in the literature can teach us more effective paths to evaluating implementation. These are not the only possible frameworks available, but there is a compelling gap regarding participant beliefs during implementation, and these frameworks mesh well together by providing a lens for perspective analysis. To support this research, the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) and affective domains frameworks will be discussed in the following section as lenses through which participant perspectives can be analyzed.

Concerns-Based Adoption Model. Criteria for judging the success of school programs often examines changes in student test scores, decreased behavioral referrals, or increased participation. CBAM is used as a diagnostic evaluation tool (or framework) to examine how participants' attitudes and participation levels affect the implementation of the PBIS process (Hall & Hord, 1987). CBAM was designed in the early 1970s and 1980s by researchers at the University of Texas Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. These researchers, who were focused on the implementation of educational innovations, asserted that "there was more to change than simply delivering the innovation *box* to the classroom door;

rather a process was involved" (Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 7). Using their field-based research, the authors documented the stages and levels that participants in the change process underwent and, through this documentation and analysis, designed three scales for understanding the change process: (a) stages of concern, (b) levels of use, and (c) innovation configurations. The first, stages of concern, is a framework that describes seven concerns and feelings that a participant might have during the process of change. These range from stage 0 (awareness), where a common response might be "I am not concerned about it," to stage 6 (refocusing), where a participant might say, "I have some ideas about something that would work even better" (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987, p. 31). Appendix B provides a depiction of the CBAM framework stages. The stages in CBAM reflect a developmental continuum and are organized into three dimensions that reflect an individual's primary concerns during the change process, namely, self (stages 0–2), task (stage 3), and impact (stages 4–6). Although these stages and dimensions are distinct, at any given time in the change process, an individual is likely to express behaviors that reflect multiple stages of concern and dimensions (Hord et al., 1987).

The second framework, levels of use, is a framework that describes eight levels of use for an innovation, from level 0 (nonuse) to level 6 (user starts seeking more effective alternatives to the established use; Hall & Hord, 1987). In 1987, Hall and Hord explained that although the idea of documenting levels of use for an innovation during the change process might seem obvious, "school leaders assumed [in the 1970s], at least implicitly, that the use of a new program or promising practice was taking place if the materials had been delivered to the classroom" (p. 82). Levels of use, designed to challenge this assumption, focused on definitions of what is observed with regard to people's behaviors during the change process. These scales are grounded in

several key assumptions: “Understanding the point of view of the participants in the change process is critical” and “change is a process, not an event” (p. 8), as well as “change is a highly personal experience” and “change involves developmental growth” (p. 6).

The Professional Development Schools Handbook identifies the CBAM as a “useful tool for understanding what change looks like to the individuals who are being asked to adopt a new approach in their practice” (Teitel, 2003, p. 36). It becomes clear that understanding processes of change is essential to growth and sustained PLC partnerships. The guiding perspective of this article grows from the joining of the CBAM and the PLC literature with the key principles of this PBIS process. In summary, change is a personal and developmental process. Implementation of new policies, programs, or processes must consider the unique characteristics and points of view of all participants.

Affective Domains. The second framework for evaluating participant attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives is within the affective domain (Bloom, 1965). Utilizing a second framework provides an essential measure of comparison that can inform research regarding beliefs that occur that are either supportive or contrary to the actions being viewed through CBAM. Anderson (2006) noted that in the educational literature, it seemed that though many authors introduce their paper by stating that the affective domain is essential for learning, it is the least studied, most often overlooked, the most nebulous and the hardest to evaluate of Bloom’s (1965) three domains (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective). They continued that it can be argued that many times researchers neglect any kind of focus on learning within the affective domain. One possible reason for this neglect is that learning in the affective domain is often perceived as difficult to observe and measure. However, despite this perceived difficulty, affect is considered

a very important component of teaching and learning. Understanding an individual's motivations, perspectives, and beliefs is difficult to quantify and lends itself better to viewing through qualitative affect. Affective education is defined by Lang (1998) in a European school study as a significant dimension of the educational process that is concerned with the feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions of learners, within their interpersonal relationships and social skills. He states that this dimension is likely to involve a concern for the development of values. To consider any individual's perspective, an understanding of their values must be recognized. Therefore, the need for an affective lens in research becomes critical to understanding the learners' movement within the affective domains.

Affective education, with its links to the subjective *soft* sphere of emotions, feelings, and values, has often been considered inferior to the *hard*-objective domain of intellectual/academic activity (Anderson & Bourke, 2000). It is vital to recognize that the emotional state of the participating teacher is integral to his/her ability to learn, and progressively implement new practices. The most useful method of categorizing the emotional state is through an assessment of individual attitudes, interests, values, and appreciations (Donlon, 1974). A commonly used assessment technique is the self-report survey in which teachers respond to questions related to the levels of the affective domain. A more effective methodology, when time and funding allows, is observation and interviews (Donlon, 1974).

Lang's (1998) comprehensive survey of affective education in 16 European countries provided a wealth of valuable material for practitioners in the field. He noted that it is important to see the affective dimension operating at all levels; the individual, the group or cohort, and the institution, in order to ensure consistency and coherence of application. Concern for the

emotional stability of learners at the level of individual PLCs would be of little use in a school characterized by an authoritarian management structure, which does not value teacher autonomy and self-worth. Also, a concern with affective learning "involves both the provision of support and guidance for learners" in addition to a recognition "that the affective and cognitive dimensions of learning are interrelated" (Lang, 1998, p. 5).

If we are striving to apply the affective continuum to the implementation method, then we are encouraging educators to receive more than just the information at the bottom of the affective hierarchy. We want them to respond to what they learn: to value it, to organize it, and eventually to become instinctive users of the philosophy and practices. In formal professional development, most of the trainers' efforts are typically applied to the cognitive aspects of teaching and learning and are usually designed for cognitive outcomes (Teitel, 2003). The reasons for this are simple: evaluating cognitive learning is straightforward, while assessing affective outcomes is difficult. Thus, there is significant value in realizing the potential to increase learning by analyzing with the affective domains.

As student behavior impacts learning and presents a significant challenge in schools, PBIS is a compelling solution. Research has shown that PBIS can improve student behaviors that inhibit learning for the individual and peers. This is a significant redirection from previously accepted behavior modification for most school systems. Accepted models generally involved punitive actions in response to inappropriate student behaviors. Although this philosophy has been firmly entrenched, it is changing as more people recognize that punitive methods of discipline do not encourage or enhance learning. Teacher PLC collaboration models are allowing for better professional development and decision-making based on data analysis. What we do not

yet understand is how they are perceived during implementation. Understanding what educators believe and how they feel about PLCs and PBIS will likely have an impact on the implementation process. As PLCs have not been used as the main structure for implementing PBIS, and as PLCs have been determined to be a successful model for allowing a high level of control by teacher teams, the understanding of how teacher beliefs impact implementation is important.

CHAPTER 3: Methods

A case study approach was used to address these two research questions:

1. What are the perceptions and experiences of the professional school staff involved in the PLC+ implementation process?
2. What ways do the perceptions and experiences of professional school staff affect the success of a PLC+ implementation?

According to Merriam (2009), the unit of analysis to be studied is what distinguishes a case study from other types of research. She describes a case study as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). For this case study, it was determined that the method developed by Merriam would be preferred to other case study methodologies. She described conducting research with more latitude and evolving understanding, allowing for the researcher to consider broader relationships between multiple subjects. While this study had a specific selection of subjects, the relationships between those subjects and the likely similarities of beliefs and perspectives makes a combining of multiple subjects into similar categories for analysis more informative. To help organize the structure of this research, Stake (2006) provided worksheet one (graphic design of a case study, Appendix E), which was used to focus collection efforts in a systematic manner.

The unit of analysis in this study was elementary school grade-level PLC teaching teams including grades 2–4. Our PLC teams had been studied in-depth, with a goal of understanding and illuminating some of the issues that were present for elementary education teachers working together. This was another important part of this study as few, if any researchers have studied the

implementation of PBIS within the PLC context. The functioning of the PLC in regard to collaboration and the sharing of academic and behavioral data is highlighted.

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the school district for the 2015–16 school year. Additionally, approval for the study was obtained from the university's institutional review board.

Explanation and Clarification of Time Frame and Elements of Study

As there are many "moving" and interrelated parts in this study, I include this explanation to clarify for the reader how each relates and interacts. To understand the entirety of the study, it is important to realize the longevity of the time frame, as the initial planning for the professional learning communities plus (PLC+) training began three years prior to this publication. The planning for the university and partner school districts on implementation of PBIS into pilot schools began in the fall of 2014. Over the following twelve months the plan for training and the creation of the PLC+ model was discussed on many levels within partner school districts and leaders within the university's Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education & Schooling (CITES) team. Pilot schools were selected from three of the school districts and a schedule for training at the university with district and school leadership teams was finalized. In August of 2015, prior to the start of the PLC+ training the Effective Behavior Supports (EBS) survey was given to pilot schools to determine their beliefs about behavior supports in their school. This data was provided to the PLC+ training team for planning purposes.

The main structural requirement for PLC+ was the use of the established PLC grade-level teams in each school for the implementation of PBIS. The school districts believed that the implementation of PBIS in these pilot schools would be best facilitated through the PLC as these

had been implemented over the past few years and were the main collaborative, data analysis catalysts in these schools. The belief was that behavioral data would be collected through the School-Wide Information Services (SWIS) online program and made available to teachers in their PLCs to determine advancement on tiered interventions and the effect of those interventions over time. This was a departure from the typical PBIS implementation that involved a school-wide tiered intervention plan and the creation of a behavior team led by administration. To add to the behavior data tracking to be utilized by PLCs, class-wide, function-based intervention teams (CW-FIT) were introduced into each teacher's classroom, which would provide weekly data on behavioral goals, success rates, rewards, and areas of concern. With weekly tracking of CW-FIT and the reporting of major and minor behavior incidences through SWIS, PLC teams would be able to recommend students for tier two or three supports and collaborate on the content of and progress within those tiers.

With these goals established, the training commenced in September of 2015 with monthly all-day meetings on the university campus. At the completion of each training, a survey was given to all participants to provide feedback rating understandability and usefulness. Suggestions and critiques were also requested as the training team desired feedback to inform future training sessions. Surveys were given through Qualtrics, and results were compiled and provided to the team typically two weeks prior to the next training session. This was the standard practice through the final training date in April of 2016. After that final session, the EBS survey was given again to pilot schools to provide a pre-post analysis to determine if implementation readiness had changed, whether improved or otherwise. Also during this time frame pilot schools

participated in SWIS training and were funded by a university grant to implement this data collection system into their schools.

Pilot schools began with school-level training on PBIS concepts in January 2016 by introducing teachers to the school-wide plan to establish guidelines of respect and responsibility. Teachers participated in trainings supported by a university coach each month and were familiarized with the SWIS reporting process. In August of 2016, as teachers reported back to school, the CW-FIT intervention was introduced in a brief professional development meeting, and the tools of the intervention were distributed and explained. Teachers were informed that they would be reporting to the office each Friday the results of the week's CW-FIT activities and success rates. This was to be done on a form created by the school facilitator. The goal for this new intervention was to support teachers in the implementation of PBIS concepts with students, provide behavioral data each week on a specific intervention, and develop a consistent reporting system in conjunction with SWIS.

Setting

Data were collected from an elementary school located in the western United States. The elementary school is one of several elementary schools in this district, and teachers from this school were chosen to participate in the PBIS training because of the school's diverse student population. The training agenda was decided on and enacted by district and school administrations with support from the university PLC+ coaches. This school is a K–6 public elementary and has student population demographics as depicted in Tables 1 and 2 and a professional staff of 33 teachers, administrators, and support personnel.

Table 1

School Population Demographics

School Name	Total	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Male	Female
Terra Elem.	472	61	68	55	85	70	62	71	239	233

Note. Data obtained from the State Office of Education 2015

Table 2

School Race Demographics for Participating Schools

School Name	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	Multiple Race	White	Low Income	Special Ed
Terra Elem.	8	5	6	261	8	12	172	393	59

Note. Data obtained from the State Office of Education 2015

In total, the school in this research serves approximately 447 children and their families each year. This school has been in operation for several years and has a staff mixed with veteran teachers (5+ years) and intern or beginning teachers. The school has an established administration and staff with a teacher turnover rate similar to the state averages. The organizational structure of this elementary school is hierarchical in that there are different levels of power, authority, and responsibility within the operation of the school and the PLC process.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants for the study. This was particularly suitable for this case study research because of the need to explore cases that maximized opportunities to collect data that will most likely answer the research questions (Merriam, 2009). This research study was part of a larger project, a combined university and school district implementation evaluation effort in which data collection was concerned with the successful training and implementation of PBIS through professional development activities, including faculty trainings and PLC meetings. At the beginning of this study there was an assumption that

all PLCs at this school were functioning at similar levels, meaning, that teachers were meeting at similar times, for similar lengths, and had similar opportunities to discuss data and share information about their students. The focus for the current study, however, looked at implementation issues at the individual level that may arise from perceptions or experiences related to the PBIS training experiences. The main criteria in selecting research participants was as follows: (a) identification and classification of individuals with a range of past teaching/training experiences, from numerous to very limited, (b) individuals who held various roles as trainers or were in leadership positions (to evaluate their beliefs in providing the training), (c) individuals who had various levels of university degrees or alternative training experiences.

Another area of interest for this study was to explore the dynamics of the PLC group for issues related to teachers who had been working in the school for only a short time. The dynamics that may be present when a less experienced teacher was combined with a more experienced, possibly older teacher(s) is of interest in this study as it related to attitudes in relation to perception and acceptance (Bullough, Hall-Kenyon, & McKay, 2012). It was inevitable that the focus was on female teachers, as the majority of elementary school teachers are female. Having a case that would be most like a typical elementary school teaching situation was most valuable to this research as this increased the likelihood of transferability (Merriam, 2009) and illuminated issues that may be pertinent to a larger number of elementary school teachers (i.e., generalizability).

To identify possible participants from the participating school and to select a target school, a survey (see Appendix D) was completed by all 17 teachers in attendance at a PLC+

professional development training session to identify teachers that fit the needed demographics. Surveys were checked to identify teachers meeting the selection criteria and follow-up personal conversations were completed at a PLC+ training session to assess the availability and interest of teachers for participation in this study. Later interviews were arranged with eligible teachers to gain background information and to assess their continued willingness and suitability for the study.

As the exploration of implementation issues not only involved the teachers, their school-level trainers also needed to be willing to participate in the study. The perspective of those providing the information and guidance on PLC+ implementation provided another dynamic regarding perspective and belief about implementation progress and success. An evaluation of their level of commitment, as well as that of participating teachers, along the affective domains of receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing was incorporated into the interview and observation process to determine acceptance and internalization of PLC+ concepts.

Process of Collection and Analysis

As Merriam (2009) suggests is appropriate, the intention of the researcher was to do the collection and analysis of data somewhat simultaneously as each informed the other. However, for convenience, data collection and data analysis is discussed separately in this report.

Data collection. Data collection consisted of weekly observations and monthly interviews over a seven-month period. In order for data collection to be effective, I first attempted to developed rapport with my research participants. To establish rapport, Merriam (2009) suggests, "fitting into the participants' routines, finding some common ground with them, helping out on occasion, being friendly, and showing interest in the activity" (p. 123). I used

each of these strategies as I conducted data collection, which began with observations of teachers in their classrooms. For example, prior to my first observation I discussed with each teacher my experiences of being an educator and empathized with their working life and struggles. I believe they felt I was a safe person to talk to about job challenges as I made it clear that I was interested in their experiences and had no influence on job evaluation or reporting to their administration. Most conversations were in the teacher's classroom initially, with later conversations occurring in the library, teachers' lounge, and hallways of the school. Many of these conversations allowed me to get to know the teachers on a personal level and to be recognized as a confidant. I was able to participate in conversations with topics of interest to them regarding their careers, interests, and their families, which I believe helped them become more comfortable sharing their beliefs and perspectives with me in interviews. Observations began in April with first interviews starting late in April and second in May of 2016.

Observations occurred approximately once every week while the teachers and students were in session with a break during the summer vacation months. It is desirable in qualitative data collection to reach a saturation point, in which very little new information is obtained through further data collection (Merriam, 2009). Although data collection in this study was constrained by the school year, I believe I reached saturation point after observing at the end of the 2015–16 school year for two months and during the first 3 months of the start of the 2016–17 school year. Trainings by this point were completed at both the district and individual school level, and an expectation of implementation was understood or conveyed by the administration through staff meeting announcements and emailed feedback messages with some PBIS references to observed classroom comments.

Each individual observation was flexible, but most lasted for approximately 30 minutes. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of the teacher and were allowed to take as long as was needed or as time allowed. My audit trail consists of handwritten notes containing information about the setting, activities, and behaviors of the people present. Ongoing observations, interview data, and the research literature were used to inform observations and focus for upcoming interview questions. The focus of the observations and interview questions were adjusted throughout the data collection period in response to information that was shared by individual teachers and external conditions that effected teacher perspectives (e.g., trainings, data analysis) Issues relating to the general understanding of the PBIS process were the focus of the initial observations, as the administration was conducting training with teachers and the early efforts of implementation were readily observable in each classroom. Through these early observations, the issues of effective training, understanding what was expected, and PLC discussion with shared data analysis became informative for developing interview questions. Each teacher had different and similar incidents revealing both a personal and interpersonal dynamic that illuminated implementation issues and beliefs about PLC+. As suggested by Merriam (2009), my observation notes were reviewed and expanded after each observation and then transcribed.

One concern with using observation as a data collection method is the presence of the observer (Merriam, 2009). As an outside participant, I am aware that I likely affected the behavior of those being observed, particularly in the beginning. However, the prolonged data collection period likely helped teachers and students to accept my presence without issue and appeared to act as they would normally. Having prolonged engagement time with respondents in

their native culture and everyday world to gain a better understanding of behavior, values, and social relationships in a social context (Given, 2008) was an ongoing consideration. As pointed out by Merriam (2009), my presence "may elicit more polite, formal, or guarded behavior" (p. 127); however, this was likely mitigated by the length of time involved.

I believe that my efforts to accommodate a relaxed interview environment and to have a variety of other interactions with participants facilitated this comfort quickly and increased my acceptance as a confidant. Creswell (1998) agrees that an environment outside of the work location can provide a more conducive interview and reflection condition, but in this research, none of the teachers felt that an off-campus location was necessary; possibly further demonstrating their comfort and acceptance of my presence in their workplace.

Initial interviews for this study began in late April 2016, a few weeks after observations began, with a second interview in May. As teachers were finishing up their PLC+ training and the school year, the perceptions of the training were very fresh and expectations were mixed. After the summer break, interviews and observations began again at the start of the school year with trainings and as students returned to classrooms. My presence at start-up trainings at the beginning of the new school year in August was intentional, as it allowed me the opportunity to contact new teachers and reconnect with returning staff. Interviews were conducted monthly along with weekly observations, with the final interviews conducted in November 2016.

From the beginning, semi-structured interviews were conducted, in which questions and possible probes were determined before the interviews took place. Interview questions were informed by previous observations and interviews and by the literature. Open questions were asked to enable participants to share their perspectives and feelings on the topics discussed.

Probing questions were asked to obtain a deeper understanding of the relevant issues and to clarify meaning. Interviews were conducted in a variety of on campus locations, with the selection based on a place that was convenient for the interviewee, most often in the classroom, and took between 30 to 45 minutes on average. Interviews were recorded utilizing a personal recorder and a backup with my personal iPad. No video was recorded.

Upon completion of each interview, any further thoughts or insights I gained were recorded and noted as a part of my audit trail. While interviews were mostly between the researcher and the individual teachers involved in the study, others, including the principal and district coach, were interviewed to clarify school information and data collection/usage topics. Planned questions used for each interview are listed in Appendix C. Additional probe questions were specific to information being discussed and discovered during interviews and are not listed in the appendices, but are noted in the interview transcripts.

Data analysis. Data was analyzed using the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) and the affective domain frameworks to understand and organize the data (Hord et al., 1987). This process commenced as soon as data collection began in order to evaluate and develop timely and relevant interview questions. As stated by Merriam (2009),

> A qualitative design is emergent. The researcher usually does not know ahead of time every person who might be interviewed, all the questions that might be asked, or where to look next unless data are analyzed as they are being collected. Hunches, working hypotheses, and educated guesses direct the investigator's attention to certain data and then to refining or verifying hunches. (p. 169)

Informal analysis was ongoing as I analyzed the case through observation and interview. During this period, I discussed my data and a preliminary analysis with my dissertation committee chair to gain feedback for questioning strategies and other evaluation techniques that would help me to be more effective.

Formal analysis began as I read my field notes and interview transcripts and "jotted down notes, comments, observations, and queries in the margins" (Merriam, 2009, p. 178). Codes that related to teaming and implementation were applied to the data, and additional codes emerged as I read and re-read my field notes and interview transcripts. These codes were grouped together according to meaning. As patterns emerged with the repetition of codes throughout the data, categories or themes were created, a process Stake names "categorical aggregation" (1995). According to Merriam (2009), "categories are conceptual elements that cover or span many individual examples of the category—categories are abstractions from the data, not the data themselves" (p. 181).

As data analysis continued, I created subcategories and renamed categories to more accurately reveal understanding of the teaming experiences of the teachers being studied. The categories created were "exhaustive," "mutually exclusive," and "conceptually congruent" (Merriam, 2009, p. 185–186). Categories and subcategories were further examined to find ways in which they were interrelated. Themes were created for each case based on the interrelationship between these categories and subcategories. Stake (1995) also recommends "direct interpretation of the individual instance" (p. 76). This is also called member checking. By verifying that your interpretation of the data provided by respondents is accurate and what the provider intended, further trust is established as well as better accuracy of data analysis (Creswell, 1998). In my

analysis, I looked for instances in which meaning could be identified and contribute to the illumination of teaming and implementation issues for these elementary school teachers.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

The limitations of this study are most notably that it took place in a single elementary school with a specific student population and a unique community. The generalizability of this study to other schools, teachers, and communities would be difficult. This study is a snapshot of these teacher populations interacting in the PLC+ trainings, Friday PLC time, classrooms, and across the school. While the information may not be specifically useful in guiding the evaluation of PBIS through PLCs in other schools, it does provide some understanding of the dynamics of teacher beliefs as core to the stages of concern and levels of use that an administrator, teacher coach, or trainer may encounter.

The need to understand what kind of impact educator beliefs and perceptions have on the process of implementing PBIS through PLCs is important to policy makers, administrators, and educators at all levels. Further research into the interaction between the PLC model and PBIS philosophy is needed, as this collaboration model has the potential to improve school behavior issues more rapidly than the school-wide training model currently utilized in PBIS trainings. Case study research that examines a variety of teachers during the PBIS implementation through PLCs would be valuable. Specifically, it could inform issues of personal beliefs that may support or impede successful implementation.

Additionally, research regarding PLC levels of functioning and implementation is important to understand team dynamics and the effect on practice fidelity. The design of training methods for implementation may have an impact on teacher perceptions and beliefs. While much

of the research in this study is qualitative in nature, quantitative studies that document changes in teachers' perceptions of the professional culture of the school would be of value. Longitudinal studies, both quantitative and qualitative, that document changes in teaching practices as teachers work in PLCs to plan interventions, could be informative. Also, qualitative documentation of the nature of the work teachers do as they analyze student work, and how this changes over time, could prove important to administrators and planners of professional development. Finally, the analysis of case studies and quantitative documentation of changes in student learning and achievement would be informative to the teachers working in PLCs.

Trustworthiness

One of the primary concerns in mixed methods research is the trustworthiness of the findings of the study. Many steps have been taken to increase the credibility and dependability of this research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that trustworthiness of a research study is important to evaluating its worth. Trustworthiness involves establishing (a) credibility or confidence in the truth of the findings, (b) transferability by showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts, (c) dependability by showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated, and (d) confirmability, or the degree of neutrality, to the extent that the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

First, triangulation was used to increase trustworthiness. Three types of triangulation have been utilized: methodological triangulation, data source triangulation, and investigator triangulation. Methodological triangulation was achieved using both observations and interviews. School data was also utilized to inform interview questions and observations including EBS, SWIS, and state reports. Interviews were used to clarify and elaborate on

information gained from observations, and observations were used to confirm information gained through interviews. Data source triangulation was achieved as multiple examples of the same idea were found throughout the data. Finally, investigator triangulation was used as I shared my data and my interpretations with others I worked with and asked for feedback (Creswell, 1998).

Another important method to increase the reliability of the study was to conduct persistent observations and have prolonged engagement in the classrooms. This involved spending adequate time observing various aspects of these classrooms and developing relationships and rapport with these teachers who shared in the school culture. Development of rapport and trust facilitated an understanding between myself and these teachers. I became oriented to the various situations each teacher experienced so that I better appreciated and understood the context of their perspectives. Over time this allowed me to be able to detect and account for distortions that might be in the data. Respondents began to feel comfortable disclosing information that might have been counter to the expected opinions of a teacher in this school. Spending enough time in data collection was important as it enabled the research participants to get to know me better and become more used to my presence in their classroom. As a result, they were less likely to put on a performance and more likely to be themselves. What was observed was therefore more likely to be authentic (Merriam, 2009).

I also created an audit trail. This involved recording my reflections, questions, and decisions regarding the study in a research journal (Creswell, 1998). To create an audit trail, I created an electronic journal of the study as well as field notes written with journal entries. Creating an audit trail throughout the duration of the study enabled me to trace my thoughts and decisions.

I used other strategies to increase the trustworthiness of the study including spending a sufficient amount of time reviewing data, analyzing a case study of a failed implementation, and using member checks at various times. A case analysis in which the PLC was used to examine and utilize data was reviewed (Sims & Penny, 2015) prior to the start of the 2016–17 school year and after the interview transcription and initial analysis was completed. The purpose for this review was to consider the focus and breadth of vision the study PLCs may be managing and how this may affect their decisions and perspectives. This gave me focus for a complete review of the data as I looked for examples that might have been contrary to my findings. I also considered other perspectives and alternative explanations of my data (Merriam, 2009).

Member checking took place after interviews were transcribed and copies of questions and responses, including probing questions, were e-mailed or physically given to participants. My preliminary report was shared with research participants after the final interview as a part of my exit strategy. It was also done to find out if my interpretations of the data and assertions are in line with what the research participants feel was their experience (Merriam, 2009).

A concern with qualitative research is the ability to generalize findings to others, making them transferrable. The purpose of this study is not to generalize findings, but to illuminate issues faced by teachers in the implementation process, specifically PBIS integration. Illuminating these issues may provide valuable insight to teachers, administrators, and pre-service and professional development organizations. The findings presented in this dissertation may enable teacher trainers and teachers to identify with and make connections to their own circumstances. Making their own personal connections may help them to consider their own methodologies and ways to improve them.

Administrators and teacher supervisors may also be able to make connections and transfer some of the study findings to their personal roles and responsibilities of helping teachers deal with training, integration of new concepts, and professional relationships. Finally, illuminating training issues faced by elementary school teachers may be beneficial to pre-service education and professional development organizations to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to better negotiate future professional development. To increase the likelihood of transferability I used detailed descriptions in this dissertation to enable readers to understand the context of the study that may help them make connections with their own situations (Merriam, 2009).

CHAPTER 4: Results

To organize this study in a meaningful way, and for a variety of readers, I structured the following sections to demonstrate how the implementation process was conducted. As each of these sections will be used to present implementation information, it is important to note how each also presents a situation or perspective that may have influence on outcomes. The goal was to present the information in a rational manner to allow for the explanation of the many and varied perspectives of participants in this process.

The Plan for Implementation

Terra Elementary was a part of a multi–school district implementation effort including university-led training with coaches and district-level supports. After district leadership personnel agreed to the consortium plan and committed resources to this training and long-term implementation process, the university agreed to provide monthly trainings hosted by the university and a specific university professor at each school to serve as an implementation coach for the faculty and staff of pilot schools. Each pilot school was to have a team, headed by the lead administrator, attend all training sessions and carry out the PBIS school implementation plan.

The consortium proposal included the desire for these teams to be voluntary and selected by the individual districts based on their need and high interest in utilizing PBIS to improve their school. After schools were selected, the university and consortium training teams began collecting data to determine the best process for training and meeting the needs of individual schools. The first stage of this process included the delivery of the Effective Behavior Support (EBS) survey to determine faculty and staff beliefs about the current state of behavior supports in

their school. As was noted previously, the EBS was designed to provide data regarding the readiness of a school to implement PBIS.

Readiness

EBS data. Pre-training surveys were given to all participants of the university training sessions, which included the five independent school district teams. The results of these surveys are not specifically relevant to this study, but they do relate to the nature of the initial trainings sponsored by the university, the request by partner school districts, the belief that PBIS was needed and would help with classroom management (thus improving student overall success in schools), and the ability of trainers and participants to meet these goals. This item is included as it speaks to the mindset of the district and their belief that this training model would have the desired effect on administration, teachers, and support staff to implement PBIS and improve student success.

Plan for school training—Professional development with faculty and coach. Three of the participating districts selected schools to serve as pilot schools for each district with the understanding that implementation and training would be continuous as it expanded to include other schools within the district over the period of several years. The university faculty agreed to participate in the initial pilot school training and provide expert knowledge and guidance in the implementation process. Pilot school training began during the same time as the district and school leadership training was occurring at the university to lend the training effort more efficiency at both levels and to address relevant questions or issues as they could arise.

After collaborating with the pilot school leadership team, university coaches went to their assigned school at designated times to conduct PBIS training with staff and the leadership team

for that school. This training time was intended to introduce staff to PBIS concepts, practices, and expected outcomes while also maintaining fidelity of training across schools. The belief was that by collaborating among coaches and focusing on specific goals, fidelity of implementation would be high, creating the best outcomes for each pilot school and providing a good model for other schools within each district.

The experiences of coaches at these trainings was also utilized by the university training team to plan leadership team trainings as needs were identified and deficiencies or advances were noted. This is an important element of this case study, as there was a belief that effective training had occurred with leadership teams and within the pilot schools. Efforts were made by trainers and coaches to identify the needs of the leadership teams and pilot school staff to meet needs, resolve questions, provide guidance, and encourage implementation. Training ended in April 2016 with the expectation that collaboration would occur over the summer in preparation for full implementation in the fall. The university offered to continue support for schools and districts with the intention to help scale up implementation to other schools.

EBS (pre-training). In the pre-training EBS survey given at Terra Elementary, all teachers identified that school-wide positive and clearly stated student expectations or rules were defined and *in place*. Teachers unanimously expressed that expected student behaviors were being taught directly. Out of 17 teachers responding, 13 stated that expected behaviors were regularly rewarded. The remaining teachers noted that this practice was *partially in place*. Ten of the teachers believed that problem behaviors were defined clearly, while the remaining seven believed this was only *partially in place*. The majority of the teachers (12 of 17) also believed there was a low priority to improve how to clearly state expected student behaviors. A division

developed in the other three categories: opinions were equally divided concerning the priority for improving the instruction of expected behaviors, the rewards for these behaviors, and specifically defining problem behaviors.

The teachers nearly all agreed that procedures were in place to address emergency or dangerous situations, that a team existed for behavior support planning and problem solving, that school administrators are active participants on the behavior support team, and that data about problem behavior patterns are collected and summarized within an ongoing system. The area of concern for teachers was noted in the question asking whether booster training activities for students are developed, modified, and conducted based on school data. Eleven of the seventeen teachers identified this as *not in place,* while only one teacher identified it as being *in place*. Teachers did identify this area as a medium priority along with most of the other questions in this category.

Another area of concern to the teachers was the non-classroom setting. This also defined how they felt about support staff and their ability to enforce school-wide expected student behaviors. They believed that school-wide expected student behaviors apply in non-classroom settings and that supervisors actively supervise students in these locations. These areas of concern relate to all staff receiving regular opportunities for development and improving active supervision skills, as well as understanding the status of student behavior and management practices being evaluated quarterly from data. These two areas were held as either *partially* or *not in place* by teachers, indicating a belief that improvements are needed in professional development, consistency, and frequency of data collection. Both areas were also identified as medium priorities for improvement.

When asked specifically about classroom setting systems, teachers identified these as being *in place*. They believed that expected student behaviors and routines in classrooms were stated positively and defined clearly, that expected student behavior and routines in classrooms were taught directly, that procedures for expected and problem behaviors were consistent with school-wide procedures, that instruction and curriculum materials were matched to student ability, and that teachers had accessibility to assistance and recommendations including observation, instruction, and coaching.

It was identified that while most teachers saw this area of the EBS as highlighting the strengths they already had, they also had two areas of low priority for improvement. First, that expected student behavior and routines in classrooms are stated positively and defined clearly. Second, teachers have regular opportunities for access to assistance and recommendations (i.e., observation, instruction, and coaching). Likely, teachers identified these areas as low priorities because they felt they had them in place and did not need the to address them further. This is somewhat in conflict with the previous sections where teachers seem to be frustrated with a lack of collaboration, professional development, and data analysis time.

Teachers also believed that in the individual student systems a simple process existed for teachers to request assistance. This section of questions identified specific issues related to the students themselves. There was a division in beliefs among teachers and other staff on whether assessments were conducted regularly to identify students with chronic problem behaviors. Teachers believed they were usually being done, but other staff identified this as a significant area of deficiency. Teachers did agree that local resources weren't being used to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning at a rate of 10 hours per week per student

and that their school didn't include formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavioral support/positive parenting strategies. When analyzing the ratings for priority for improvement, scores were evenly spread throughout, giving no indication that teachers identified any area as more important than the others.

EBS (post-training). The post-training EBS survey was given to teachers and administrators after all the PLC+ trainings had been completed in May 2016. As this training was given only to faculty and not all staff, the results were analyzed to compare the teacher-only responses from the pre-implementation survey with the post-training survey results. Of the original 17 teachers that responded, only 15 participated in this post-training survey, possibly due to the resignations of two teachers.

Of specific interest in the post-training EBS was the slight upward trend toward being *in place*—teachers believed that problem behaviors (the failure to meet expected student behaviors) were defined clearly. Teachers also rated the priority for improvement as medium where it had been a low priority previously. As noted previously, teachers had little concern about how data on problem behavior patterns was collected and summarized within an ongoing system; however, in the post-training EBS, this is now noted as only *partially in place,* and not *in place* as previously identified. However, in a reversal, the issue with patterns of student problem behavior being reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g., monthly) had a strong shift (5 to 11) toward those who reported this as being *in place*. In addition, the previously reported *not in place* (11) for "booster training activities for students are developed, modified, and conducted based on school data" dropped to 3 with 12 marking it as *in place* or *partially in place*. Clearly the emphasis in training for data usage and conducting

ongoing trainings had the effect of improving the perceptions of the teachers in these areas of concern.

Faculty also shifted in their belief regarding the school administrator as an active participant on the behavior support team. Previously they identified this as a low priority (12/17), while the post survey dropped to 6/15, with most seeing it as a medium priority. Another important shift came with more faculty identifying the *in-place* status of the physical/architectural features being modified to limit (a) unsupervised settings, (b) unclear traffic patterns, and (c) inappropriate access to exits from school grounds. The upward trend for this understanding of how physical school systems function and the staff role in supervision is noted in this response.

Two other areas of concern by faculty in the pre-training EBS were first, that non-teaching staff received regular opportunities for developing and improving active supervision skills and second, that the status of student behavior and management practices were evaluated quarterly from data. These areas did see some positive improvement as only one teacher identified these areas as *not in place,* whereas it had been identified by nine previously. However, even after months of training, teachers still did not identify significant improvement in these areas as they related to classroom setting systems.

Where the faculty did show a significant shift was in the belief that problem behaviors are defined clearly. Previously their responses were mixed among the three levels of implementation, but they unanimously identified this area as *in place* in the post-training survey. This same upward trend is shown the category on problem behaviors receiving consistent consequences. Most marked it as *in place* instead of the previous evaluation of *partially in place*.

Another interesting priority shift occurred with the area of *expected student behaviors and routines in classrooms* being taught directly. The vote had been previously spread evenly among teachers over all three levels and now had dropped to where only one teacher identified it as a high priority. An important trend upward was also identified in category "the local resources are used to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning at ten hours per week per student." Where eight teachers identified this as *not in place* previously, now only two still did.

Clearly the training had an effect of involving teachers in improving their school functions, identifying areas of need, and improving them. The awareness of inconsistencies or deficiencies likely attributed to these shifts in beliefs as well. An important part of these responses, for this research, is that the data helped inform questions for interviews and a structure of goals for observations. While teachers responded positively at the end of the training, an important question regarding their belief about the value of PBIS and its full implementation then needed to be addressed post-training as the staff of this elementary would be reliant on their experiences to continue forward. The district and school administration expected the pilot school staff to adopt this philosophy and utilize it to improve student behaviors and academic success. These questions then became the focus of this research: what are the experiences and perceptions of the school staff regarding PBIS and how will this affect their personal implementation?

School Academic Data

An important and ongoing question is whether PBIS influenced academics. Possibly it is too early to tell, but the administration stated in interviews that they believed it had. In determining the beliefs or perceptions of faculty this supposition of successful implementation needs to be accounted for. How did teachers feel when presented with the idea that academics

could be improved with the implementation of PBIS? Do teachers believe the issues facing the school regarding academics are linked to behaviors or other issues? The school does utilize several sources of academic assessments to determine student progress, and teachers discuss these in their PLC time.

By utilizing academic tracking and making it a priority discussion for PLC time, administrators sent a message that they expect teachers to work to improve in this area. School data was collected from the state office of education and reported on their website. This data was used to establish trend information and compare with state data for three years. The idea that PBIS would help solve behavior problems and support increases in student achievement was core to the decision to adopt PBIS by the district and school leadership. The state and school common core data is organized into Table 3.

Table 3

School and State Results for Common Core Assessments

School Year	Subject Area	School proficient	State proficient	Difference
2014	English Language Arts	34.7%	42%	-7.3%
2014	Mathematics	34.1%	39%	-4.9%
2014	Science	33.3%	44%	-10.7%
2015	English Language Arts	43.6%	44%	-0.4%
2015	Mathematics	45.9%	45%	+0.9%
2015	Science	40.7%	47%	-6.3%
2016	English Language Arts	31.1%	44%	-12.9%
2016	Mathematics	33.0%	46%	-13%
2016	Science	35.9%	49%	-13.1%

Note. Data provided by State Office of Education 2016.

When compared to the rest of the state, it would appear that the school made improvements from the 2014 to 2015 scores and then had a major decline in 2016. The administration identified this as a major reason for adopting PBIS. This data, in combination

with the behavioral data from 2014 to 2016, would suggest that there was an issue that administrators felt could be resolved with PBIS. Although the pilot school behavioral data has issues from the 2014 to 2015 reports, it was utilized in determining where school changes could be made.

The announced success of classroom and behavior management training should have a noted effect in the 2016 scores. Seeing a decline in scores may have led to the school professional development planning shift and de-emphasis in the proposed full implementation of PBIS at the start of the 2016–17 school year, while they searched for solutions that might give a more immediate effect on academics. An exploration of teachers' perceptions of this implementation and beliefs about administrative expectations is of interest in answering this question. Included in this query is the concern that time, funds, and district attention had been utilized in this effort and a level of effectiveness was expected. Determining if teachers and school administrators declared the success of implementation to appease this oversight is also a point of interest. As the training and longevity of implementation would largely be determined by the principal, the decision was made to conduct preliminary interviews with her to gain the vision for PBIS outcomes she expected.

Observations: Preparations for Faculty Observations

Observations at the school began in April 2016. The school principal and faculty coach were interviewed prior to my conducting observations and interviews with teachers. While interviews with school administrators are not a specific focus of this study, it is important to note how they perceived the implementation process and needs of teachers at the start of and during the implementation process. By including this information, I hoped to develop an understanding

of where the administrators believed the training had influenced faculty and staff behaviors so that I could compare and contrast these beliefs later with the data from the faculty.

Administration interviews. In the first interview with the school principal (April 2016) we discussed the leadership team training that had been occurring for the past several months at the university and how it was being received by the faculty and staff of her school. She expressed the belief that the trainings were going well and that the teachers had talked positively about the experiences they were having together and the usefulness of PBIS. She reported that there was a range of responses to the training noted mostly by teachers believing they had done or are doing many of the elements of PBIS—specifically using praise and requiring students to be appropriate in getting teachers' attention and interacting within the classroom. She stated that she believed this would help to reform the school climate by changing expectations for teacher and staff consistency in all places.

In response to whether full implementation would be in place for the new school year she stated that she believed they would be ready in August but that there would need to be a variety of elements completed prior to school start. She felt that summer training would need to be completed with a refresher for current teachers and an accelerated training for new staff prior to students returning. At this point she didn't have a plan in place for this training and was looking for funding to pay teachers for the extra time before contracted time began in August. The question of supporting her teachers during implementation was described as her "being in classrooms often and giving specific feedback on PBIS concepts." She also felt that they needed to extend training to include class-wide, function-related intervention teams (CW-FIT) into the implementation and reinforce the concepts through the use of that student engagement technique.

The principal related how CW-FIT had been presented during the PLC+ training and believed it would benefit teachers during challenging times of the day and would address the issue of maintaining student attention. On the use of data and what would be reported she planned to continue the use of PowerSchool for district requirements and SWIS for the school. The principal believed that they had seen a good decline in inappropriate behaviors already and wanted to provide that data to teachers as evidence of the success of PBIS. She had a list of students who were causing the most disruptions and felt that some of the needs were met with intensive interventions through the "flight center" but that many others would be solved with PBIS. When asked about what data she would collect and share, and in what training situation, she stated that she "expected the PLCs to talk about grade-level information" and for "individual teachers to report major incidences so that the behavior team could discuss them." She noted the decline in minor student incidences and believed that this was due to teachers becoming "more effective in their management of classroom behaviors" and "needing to report less." She identified an area of concern being that a few teachers would leave this year and the new teachers wouldn't have the needed training.

In the first interview with the district coach assigned to this school (April 2016), the coach noted that her role was to support new teachers, years 1–5, and to help with trainings. She had been involved with the PBIS+ training sessions as a member of the lead team for this school and believed that PBIS would be of benefit to all teachers. While she hadn't had experience with PBIS as a teacher, she felt that the concepts were going to be useful in dealing with a variety of student issues in this school and would also provide a good foundation to learning classroom management for new teachers. When asked about the progress of training and implementation at

this point, she discussed how some of the teachers seemed to really like PBIS, while a few talked about it as "old hat." She said that the faculty trainings had seemed "very positive" and expected that this would "help with many of the discipline issues the staff was dealing with." On her role in supporting the implementation of PBIS she replied that she was to help with training and provide suggestions to new teachers. She stated that she believed that "consistency was going to be a challenge as some teachers had resistance to some of the training they had conducted." However, she felt that the training had helped teachers think about what they're doing and how it affects students.

I conducted two other interviews with the principal to follow up on her plans for training and supporting the implementation process. The first interview (September 2016) was done in the teachers' lounge area where school data was displayed regarding each classroom's cumulative data. During the first interview of the new school year she informed me that the district coach would be out for several weeks and that her responsibilities would be "on hold" until she returned. These included supervising and training on CW-FIT and providing classroom support for new teachers.

We discussed her plans for training and what she had been able to accomplish during the summer months and at the start of the school year. She stated that nothing had been done over the summer as funding hadn't been available, but they were able to do some other supplemental trainings for teachers who had interests in various conferences. She also noted that nothing was in the works at this time to continue trainings for CW-FIT or PBIS as they didn't have any consistent data to use yet. She explained that she had no major incidences reported in the first three weeks to talk about with faculty and believed that PBIS was working well. She had felt

resistance by some staff when they had done CW-FIT training and "didn't want to address that again so soon" to let the PLCs "work it out" before the coach returned to work and could analyze the data collected on the weekly reports.

We talked about the change in one of the grade's teaching staff, reducing from three teachers to two with one quitting two weeks after the school year started, and how that was affecting the remaining teacher. She was concerned as this pushed the two class sizes up to what she believed was a maximum level for these classrooms. Funding was the deciding factor in the change as the original three classrooms were only averaging 17 students and the district was limiting the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) on her school. To date she noted that one class had a full-time substitute who had quit recently and that a new substitute would fill in while they hired a new teacher. She recognized that this class was going to be very challenging and discussed how the teacher of the second-grade level class was someone she considered to be one of the best in the school and hoped she would be able to support the new teacher once hired.

I followed up with an interview the next month (October 2016) in her office where we talked about the progress of PBIS implementation and data she had been collecting. She stated again that "PBIS is making a great difference in the school" and that reports of incidences were way down. She referred to her list of students that she had concerns about and noted that several had no issues this year and were doing very well. She described her observations in classrooms as being positive and her efforts to provide feedback included a tally of positive versus negative comments that was being received well by teachers. She felt that most of the teachers had "implemented fully and were doing it (PBIS) well." She expressed a concern that the two new teachers and two interns were being rushed into PBIS training, but felt that their PLCs and

mentors would help support them sufficiently. She did discuss how all of the teachers were using CW-FIT at this time and talked about it positively for helping during difficult instructional times of the day. She believed this was helping with the other PBIS concepts and keeping things consistent.

When asked about professional development time and revisiting PBIS or CW-FIT, she stated that this was done in PLCs and in behavior team meetings. She wasn't noting any concerning behaviors that indicated that there was a need to do otherwise at that time. She discussed how her grade-level PLCs were "very effective in planning and supporting each other, having behavior data discussions each week." She noted that the coach would be back soon and would lead the planning and training of CW-FIT and any further PBIS discussions. She explained that no plans were made for continued training and the agenda for future trainings would be decided by the development of issues or behaviors of concern, most likely to be resolved with the behavior team.

I conducted a brief interview with the faculty coach when she returned to work in November where we discussed her role in CW-FIT and PBIS trainings. She felt that she had not had enough time to figure out what needed to be done and was working to sort and record all the CW-FIT data that had been turned in over the past few months. When I asked her how she felt about her role in taking over the PBIS training she stated that she "wasn't aware that she was also responsible for PBIS training" and felt that her role was "more of a problem solver for the teachers she was working with, giving them suggestions for interventions and strategies or activities that may engage students." When asked if she believed that PBIS was making a difference in the school she commented, "maybe, but the teachers are already very good at

classroom management" and only needed occasional supports from her. She agreed to provide me with the data she had from CW-FIT once she had time to organize it.

School observations. The April 2016 observations and interviews with teachers were prefaced with an introduction of myself in a personalized email which provided them with a brief description of my professional experience and interest in having them take part in this case study. I conducted a school tour to familiarize myself with its physical structure and to note the items posted around the school to promote various events, rules, recognitions, and philosophies. Noted items in the school were posters with Falcon Notes (school rules): "Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe" in all hallways and common areas. Teachers also had these posted in their classrooms.

There was a large Accelerated Reader poster in the main hallway with AR goals, rewards, a tally of words read, the number of books read, and a bar chart with results per class on goal progress. An I-Ready poster titled "Leveling Up" displayed class progress comparisons for each grade level as a growing flower chart. Students at this school were recognized as winning a Bronze Award for being a healthy choices school. Near the lunchroom doors was the Principal's Challenge poster in which students could read a specific book during the month and as a reward would get to sign the poster when they finished. Another poster with student signatures was a pledge poster that recognized the goal for students to choose to be kind. Noted was a "buddy bench" on the north playground where students were encouraged to sit if they would like a friend to be with. In another hallway, the school district sponsored a poster for students to sign when they pledged to stop bullying. Around the school was found many examples of student projects, artwork, writings, and themed events. Decorating most of the teachers' doorways were themes

that included welcoming statements with students' names and certificates of award for progress in assessment goals. The school also had a display case in which historical information was organized to help patrons understand where the school name originated and its mission. The school is actively promoting several positive concepts to students and celebrations of progress and successes were done monthly school-wide.

Classroom observations. The classroom observations began with grade-level groupings in which I spent 20 minutes in each class noting teacher interactions, items posted around the classroom (specifically those related to PBIS), and the methods for classroom management exhibited by each teacher. After a few observations, I determined to conduct the case study utilizing grades 2, 3, and 4 to provide a mid-level demographic of students. I met with teachers during prep time to discuss my proposed research and to solicit their help. As teachers agreed to participate I secured their consent to be a research subject and scheduled initial interview dates. An important part of the observation process was being in the classrooms often and blending into the background. I advised teachers to ignore my entries and departures to allow for students to also be able to minimize my presence. For simplification, I have combined the seven teachers I observed into three categories based on similarities of teaching and classroom management methodology and level of implementation of PBIS.

Data Analysis: Information Reported from Teachers using School-Wide Information Systems from 2014–2016

As teachers and administrators were tasked with data analysis to inform decisions, it became necessary to gather and analyze longitudinal data from Terra Elementary to develop interview questions and delve into the perceptions of teachers when analyzing this information.

The SWIS data provides several categories for analysis and had updated data from the 2014 school year to the current school year, 2016.

Category: Number of students and percentage of office discipline referrals. While the 2014 SWIS data was referring only to the 540 minor incidences reported, it is still comparable to the 2015–2016 data based solely on the number of students being reported for behavior incidences, with 19 (2014), 13 (2015), and 12 (2016) students committing 55–60% of incidences. The decline in general was minimal between years 2015 and 2016 (when PBIS implementation was occurring) when considering the number of students committing offenses, but the number of reported incidences between 2014 and the 2015/2016 years was significant with 541 (2014), 386 (2015), and 302 (2016). There was a major shift in what types of incidences were reported between 2014 and 2015, with only one major incidence in 2014 reported and 540 minor incidents. In the 2015 and 2016 data, the rise in major incidences and the decline in minor incidences indicates a shift in reporting that may be related to specific trainings or policy changes. Likely, something has occurred that shifted how teachers reported, or how incidences were managed.

Interviews with the administration give no reference as to why this change happened when asked about policy changes or specific trainings on reporting incidences. They simply identified it as an improvement due to training with staff. With PBIS implementation the administration believes that they have seen a major change in student behavior. This is likely attributable to the count of the total number of reported incidences. The number of students who are being reported, especially during the initial implementation phase, didn't change much (-1 if trend holds), but the overall number of incidences has declined.

Category: Average student referrals. There was a general downward trend in referrals overall, with peak months lower in the 2016–17 school year than in previous years. It is unclear whether this is due to improved student behavior or a change in reporting or teachers' beliefs about what should be reported. Interviewed teachers report that they feel behaviors have improved with the implementation of the common language of PBIS and the use of CW-FIT during difficult times of the day. They also report that the awareness of classroom management being a priority for recent trainings demonstrates the administrations interest in teachers being more effective managers of their classrooms. This may have an effect on teachers' belief about reporting incidences to the administration as they may feel it represents weakness in their skills as a teacher.

Category: Data tables—referrals by major and minor behaviors. There seemed to be a shift in reporting from 2014 to 2015 in the data. The year 2014 had large numbers in minor incidences and only one reported major incident. In 2015, the major incidences category jumped while minor fell in dramatic ways. In 2016 only half of the year was completed at the time of reporting, but the category distribution appears to be similar to 2015 in major and minor incidences. As the shared data represented one semester (Fall 2016) I doubled the report to gain comparable data, assuming the behavior trend would be similar between semesters, and found that a general decline of reported incidences had occurred between the two years' data. In interviews with the administration, this data was used to demonstrate the effectiveness of PBIS. The assumption that PBIS training aided in the spring 2016 change may not be accurate, as the training with faculty occurred in that semester with only a few teachers attempting implementation that semester. The results may be more reflective of the raised awareness or

emphasis by administration on classroom management as is noted in the feedback from classroom observations and trainings.

Category: Location of referrals. It appears that classroom referrals had been declining with some increases on categorized locations, such as the playground and in the hallways. This may be evidence of the training effect of PBIS with teachers, as the playground monitors and other staff were not included in the training. Teachers believed that all staff were trained similarly, but no verification of this event was noted in interviews with the administration. Teachers do monitor students in the cafeteria, providing more evidence that PBIS is being used in that location and may be having an effect. However, teachers also monitor on the playground and there was an incident number increase in this location. Observations of these locations provided evidence that supervision methods are different than lunchroom monitoring methods. In the lunchroom, teachers sit with students and have more interaction, while on the playground they tend to stand together and talk or use their phones more often. It is possible that expectations for behavior are not present or are different between these locations as they are not viewed as instructional or constrained to the same standard of behavior.

Category: Time of day with highest rate of referrals. CW-FIT is believed by teachers to have an actual positive focused impact on noon peaks and afternoon rises of inappropriate behavior. Teachers believe that behaviors are much improved with CW-FIT use during this time. Afternoon averages seem to have held steady over all three years, while number of reported incidences dropped. This would seem to correlate with the decline in total behavioral incidences data, though the specific number of repeat offender students continued to be reported equally over the three years' data. It is difficult to use the 2014 report here as the differences between

major/minor incidences data seems at issue. The comparison between 2015–16 seems to be very similar and may not have any significant difference. What does this say about the use of CW-FIT and PBIS during this time? Teachers believe it has had a positive impact with managing the minor incidences that are likely related to the more frustrating part of the afternoon behaviors, and it allowed for them to note specific students who don't seem to care about the positive reinforcements or competitions/rewards.

Category: Peak grade levels. Discipline issues in grade-level data demonstrates no significant data trend that is confined to a specific grade level: overall, there was a decrease in problem behaviors. Teachers do report concerns that as students move up grade levels they must be re-oriented each year to the behavior expectations. Implementation and fidelity may be accountable for these differences per grade level, but the decrease is trackable per advancing grade level over three years. Teacher beliefs about reporting may have significant influence on these numbers as new teachers enter the school. The emphasis on what is reported in feedback from the administration may also influence reporting and expectations per class moving through.

Data analysis: CW-FIT reports. The data supplied by the facilitator at Terra is divided by teacher per sheet in an Excel file. Teachers were required to turn in data sheets each week to her. Each sheet is charted according to the day of the week, the number of timer beeps, the reward, the goal, and each team's results. The following figure is a sample of the method for collecting and reporting data per day for the weekly submission.

Table 4

Example of Form Used in CW-FIT Data Collection Process

Date: Week of 9/12/2016–9/16/2016

	Beeps	Reward	Goal	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5
Monday	15	2 min recess	10	5	2	3	6	3
Tuesday	15	1st to recess	6	3	8	2	6	4
Wednesday	15	Just dance	10	7	9	3	7	2
Thursday	15	2 min recess	5	5	5	2	5	4
Friday	15	Limbo	7	7	9	5	8	3

What I could determine from visual inspection of the data is that no time frame was described in the data for use of CW-FIT, meaning that there isn't an area where the teacher could report the total amount of time utilized in the game. It is also unclear how much time is used between timer beeps. Analyzing the data for effectiveness of time intervals is impossible without this data. I analyzed trends in the student teams' success in meeting goal numbers as the semester scores were reported, and I evaluated the options used for student rewards checking for the following:

1. Number of timer beeps/goal number = percentage
2. Range of goal variations
3. Number of weeks CW-FIT was used
4. Number of times teams don't achieve goals
5. Rewards offered
6. Anomalies and/or modifications

Teacher use of CW-FIT. Teachers have been organized into three groups, and these groups were each given a fictitious name to facilitate a representation of the following data. The groups were organized to represent teachers with similar beliefs and practices; this consolidation created better readability of the study and understanding of how teacher perspectives and experiences influenced implementation. The three teachers are named Beth, Ann, and Tina. Timer beeps intervals are determined by the teacher, typically 3-5 minutes to allow the teacher to check student behaviors and award points. A teacher determines the goal number based on the amount of time the game will be played divided by the intervals for timer beeps. For instance, a 45-minute game time with three-minute beeper intervals would make for a maximum of 15 beeps, or 15 total points possible. Teachers were advised in the CW-FIT training to set goals of around 80% to assess student participation.

Beth. Beth recorded the following results for a 12-week (8/22–11/11) time period. She used CW-FIT almost all days except for days with interruptions and a few Fridays. The number of timer beeps and the goal number seemed to have some wide variation. Range for beeps was 5–18 per session in the initial efforts to use. Goal numbers ranged in percentage from 100% (5/5) to 50% (6/12). However, the wide range was only seen a few times and early on, suggesting that she adjusted from the wide range of goal objectives to a more consistent number. The goal range average was 87%, [total goal average number / total timer beeps number] which is higher than the suggested 80% average teachers were instructed to use when they were in the start of the school year training. The goal average was introduced to teachers to help them gauge the effectiveness of the game and the scoring criteria utilized by teachers to determine progress and challenges.

I utilized a scoring combination analysis method to gain insight as to the overall use and effectiveness of a teacher's utilization of CW-FIT. I determined to call this analysis a "success score." The score is calculated by utilizing the following simple formula:

(total average of all timer beeps – total average of overall daily scores) +

(total average goal number – total average score)

As numbers approach zero the students are noted to have been generally successful in meeting their daily goals.

Beth had a success score of -0.62, which suggests that the students were successful in achieving their goals most days. The data does have some issues with the use of bonus points and is therefore skewed positively. There were only two occasions where no teams achieved the goal. Team one seemed to have the most misses with 4/10 missed. No training was given on the use of bonus points and Beth records data several times of teams achieving beyond the number of beeps. This could be seen as a modification or an intention to improve the system if later data suggested the change in beeps and goal numbers, but it does not appear that changes were made later in this round of reporting to support this assumption. Rewards were diverse with Beth, including *Go Noodle, talk time, Heads Up 7 up, 4 corners, extra recess, Hangman, missing student game, Minion Go Noodle, YouTube videos, free computer time, free time, computer games, Musical Chairs, movie clips, Hide and Seek, Don't Eat Pete, Tic Tac Toe, chat time, game, bubbles, crazy bread coupons, erasers, "how it's made" videos, puzzle page, stickers, colored markers, OK Go,* and *Accelerated Reader* while laying down.

Ann. Ann recorded the following results of intermittent CW-FIT use over 11 weeks. She had random days missing from her reports and started with a five-point gap adjusting to three by

the end. Ann averaged a 71% goal range overall and her success score was 1.77 which still suggests that her students were consistently achieving the goal numbers or were within two points of the goal. This data is skewed due to her very liberal use of bonus points in the first three weeks. Twice none of the teams reached the goal, and there were a variety of times when individual teams did not reach the goal. This is not consistent with interviews with Ann as she claimed students were always achieving their goals and enjoyed playing. Several scores were also reported at three to four points above the number of beeps. Other evidence of use comes from the fact that no teams failed to reach the goal in the first three weeks (total of 12 days played). In the last three weeks (five days played) there were four teams that failed to meet the goal and no bonus points are evident. However, on week five the goal was set higher than the number of beeps, and in week six the beeps and the goal numbers were identical. This could suggest modification consideration or an unmotivated use of the game. It may be assumed from the reported data that Ann was losing interest in CW-FIT or did not like the results: there was a decline in use, generic reporting, and change in utilization. Ann's rewards had some variation: *ticket, un-identified game (7), free time (3), quiet time, video, Go Noodle, (one day has no reward listed), chat time, Heads Up 7 up (7), early recess, Simon says, Who is Missing, video clip, change desk top, riddles, change background, Hide and Seek.*

Tina. Tina recorded the following results of her use of CW-FIT. She didn't start using CW-FIT for several weeks after the initial training and showed a very low commitment to using the program. Tina reported results after her first week of use with two teams never reaching the reward goal (out of five days), one team getting the reward twice, and two teams earning the reward three times. Rewards were additional recess for that week. Timer beeps were set at 15 for

all days with goals ranging from 5-10 (40% average). Her initial success score was 12.76 suggesting that students were rarely successful in meeting the goal numbers. Tina didn't report results again for two weeks. In her next attempt to use CW-FIT she reported sporadic daily results for the next seven weeks, with two weeks having no data reported. In this second round of reporting CW-FIT results, all student teams reached or surpassed the set goal every day. Beeper ranges were 6–12 and the ratio of beeps to goal was at 77%, meaning that goals were set one or two points lower than number of beeps. She did utilize individuals as teams on several occasions. This would be done to allow a single student to participate without consequences to a team. Tina does see some success with the separation of difficult students from the team, allowing them to be a solo team for six of the reported weeks. Solo students appear to be very successful working independently during that time. In her second round of use she has a success score of -0.51 which suggests her students are successfully reaching the goal on most days. Tina's rewards are very limited: *Limbo (2), Just Dance (2), color time, craft time, extra recess (3), free time (24), shoes off, color blocks,* and *drawing.*

Observations of Teachers: Beth, Ann, and Tina

The purpose of this section was to develop understanding of what management practices, teaching methods, and student/teacher relationships were developed by each teacher. I wanted to understand how various students influenced the teacher, as well as the time of day, the day of the week, disruptions to the schedule, and visitors to the classroom. What I observed was utilized to clarify and inform interview questions and aid in understanding the level of belief that teachers actually have regarding the implementation of PBIS and its value to them.

Beth

During PBIS spring semester 2016 training. Beth was a veteran teacher (5+ years) who was serving as a mentor within the school and on district committees. Her classroom had progress charts posted, *Character Counts* posters, and other motivational type displays with the *I Can* theme being most prominent. Her room was open with very little decoration aside from student projects and learning goals. The learning goals for the current sessions were listed on the board and changed as she moved between content areas. Beth liked using cues to prompt student attention and bring focus. In early observations, she used countdown and "snap, crackle, pop" type statements that students were to reply to with a choral response (everybody stop), or by tuning into the instructions she was giving—to return to the carpet, or desk area, or to a new center. There was a mix of "thank you" and "good job" types of positive statements during her classes when students were on task or complied quickly with her directions and questions. When students talked out of turn she would respond with "excuse me?" to remind the student of how they were expected to behave. This was emphasized in her use of the "be a problem solver" or "what went wrong" statements that were often heard when students had work issues.

In the early April and May 2016 observations, I noted how she managed her classroom with a mix of positive comments and punitive ones. She would stop the whole class and have them repeat the rules or procedures. While the majority of comments from her are purposefully positive, she would go to punishment statements when students continued to misbehave. While these situations do not occur often, she has sometimes had to isolate students, take away recess time, have students sit at their desk with heads down, or miss other valued activities when they did not behave appropriately. Her classroom appears to be very well organized around

procedures, as students know what is expected when she tells them to transition to a new activity or lesson, or when lining up to leave the classroom. When students failed to transition as she expected, she would have them return and practice until they did it to her expectation.

Beth exhibited an understanding of how positive supports works when recognizing constructive student behaviors and reinforcing those actions in others. She appeared to do this very naturally as she interacted with students. Her choral response cues were responded to with enthusiasm from many students, and they seemed to want to please her. Beth used patience and time in some of the behavior management techniques, preferring to say, "I'll wait" or "I'm looking for people who are (describes good behavior)" to motivate compliance. Consistency and the purposeful nature of her management techniques are evident during these observations. She had 2–3 students who were management issues and didn't seem to care about others being recognized or rewarded for appropriate behavior. These she managed with a punishment system often but was quick to recognize when they complied or exhibited appropriate behavior.

During the fall 2016 school year (training completed). During the first week of the new school year Beth had implemented some new behavior tracking systems. She was using a rock jar to give rewards to students when they did something positive or complied with her directions. Her procedures for class routines were being practiced with these new students as she had them line up for transitions from the classroom and movements within the classroom. This was taking some time to do, as this new group of students appeared to have some very disruptive pupils. Beth was trying to implement the ignoring inappropriate behavior skill by modeling it herself and reviewing it with students. This was a challenge early on, as some students appeared to be using this as an excuse to misbehave. She continued to be very purposeful in her positive

comments, targeting students to influence others and using other "problem solver" comments to motivate students.

Beth seemed to be developing some students as class leaders at that time as well. As was observed with last year's group of students, she had a few students who did not comply or seem to care about the efforts she was making to recognize positive behaviors. Her efforts to ignore the inappropriate behavior had a sporadic effect as well, as the misbehaving students seemed more confused about what they should do. One student appeared to have no regard for anything she did and continued to exhibit the inappropriate behaviors constantly until isolated or removed from the room. Beth didn't show frustration at this, but students in the classroom responded with similar behaviors when she tried to ignore his. As the semester continued, Beth maintained consistency with her efforts to practice and recognize appropriate behaviors and having students review/recite the rules and procedures of the class. She was recognizing when students were ignoring inappropriate behaviors and rewarding them with rocks in the jar.

While the behaviors of the 2–3 students continued to be a challenge, it appeared that the majority of the students had recognized what was appropriate and expected for the class and were willing to comply. They sought her approval and positive comments and were taking an active role in dealing with some of the inappropriate behaviors from the few non-compliant. Beth had specific cues that she used consistently to focus students and was quick to note specific behaviors with positive comments. She had started talking with the students about having a plan for themselves and making decisions in advance for how they will behave and how they will show that to others. Beth had incorporated this into her cues, as the students seemed to have

become more compliant with classroom rules and procedures and were expecting the same from each other.

Ann

During PBIS spring semester 2016 training. Ann was a newer teacher in the school and participated in the spring 2016 PLC+ trainings on PBIS and was a member of a three-person PLC. In her classroom, the walls were decorated with motivational posters and handmade *looks like, sounds like* charts. These were designed as references for students to remind them of what various activities should look like and sound like, for example, reading time should be still and quiet. Ann had target goals on her white board that start with "I can" statements. She also had the daily schedule on the board and a "mystery prize" game in which students could earn marks if they raised their hand, followed directions, and stayed in their seat when appropriate. Ann carried tickets with her as she circulated the room, giving them to students who were on task and behaving appropriately. She wrote their name on the ticket, and students collected them for a later prize sale. For most students, this seemed to be a good motivator to comply with rules, but a few became very distracted, showing their tickets to others and even stealing them when students weren't watching.

Ann was very efficient in dealing with issues as they arose, but her common method was punitive. She had a warnings list posted at the front of the room with stages of punishments. These were related to color slips of paper that students are required to fill out when directed. Green was a first warning in which the student must retrieve the slip, write what they were doing wrong, and what they will do to correct it. Yellow was a continuation of writing what they did

wrong and how they will correct it, plus lost recess time. Red was a loss of recess, a call home, and referral to the principal. Another red was a referral to the flight center and the behavior team.

Ann did thank students for following directions and told them appreciation comments at various times, but she talked more about expectations and responsibility in contrast to punishments when students were not in compliance. Ann utilized a marking system in which she organized teams by table area and rewarded them for various behaviors: answering questions, being on task, transitioning efficiently, and so on. She also took points away for inappropriate behavior and had a column for the teacher in which she gave herself a point when students were all off task.

Most students seemed to understand how the class operated and what was expected, but a few students continued to have issues. One student appeared to enjoy the negative attention and had been removed from a group/team and isolated. He was causing the team to lose points and the conflict within the team was significant enough that Ann decided to isolate him. Ann used some verbal cues like "snap, crackle, pop," with a choral response expected— "everybody stop!" and "class, class"— "yes, yes." Ann often did not note when all students didn't respond. She also didn't require them to practice the expected behavior when students were behaving inappropriately. While she did use "thank you" and "I like" statements, the use of overt threats occurred more often, for example, "don't blow it," "You'd better clean up or else," and "it looks like we won't be going to recess today."

During the fall 2016 school year (training completed). At the start of the new school year, first observations revealed that a new rule list with stages of warnings and consequences was posted: (1) verbal warning, (2) miss 5 min recess to practice, (3) buddy room, think sheet,

call home, and (4) flight center. The new PBIS and CW-FIT posters were also up around the room, and Ann referred to the *appropriate ways to get teachers attention* poster often. Ann was continuing to use the color card discipline system (green, yellow, red) and a new game for measuring classroom quiet with the spelling of "teacher" on the white board. If students were noisy, Ann put a letter on the board and then would erase when students were quiet. If the full "teacher" got written on the board, students lost recess time.

During activities Ann also handed out *Caught you being Good* cards from which students could earn rewards (e.g., pencils, erasers) at various times of the day. This was like her use of tickets last semester. Ann utilized proximity to students who were not behaving by circulating the classroom or moving students closer to her during carpet time or activities. Ann continued to use verbal cues to get students' attention and reminded them of expected behaviors. However, the mix of threats was also prominent in her management style as she often said, "we won't do this activity," "I'll take away points," or "that's it! Shush!" It appeared early in this school year that the students who were causing most of the disruptions were ignoring her threats and continued with the behaviors, gaining support from fellow classmates, while Ann moved on with her lesson and didn't follow through with punishments or attempts to change behavior with positive comments.

The most effective effort Ann made to manage disruptions was when she circulated the room and gave personal attention to students. Ann was incorporating yoga into the class this year, calling it "brain dance," by having activity times where students followed her through stretches and movements prior to assessments. She played music and talked quietly to students while they moved. As the school year progressed, Ann seemed to be more inclined to use

positive comments with students, and they seemed to understand better what she expected. Ann utilized the ticket reward system again and related the option for students to choose from the CW-FIT selection of rewards for good behavior at other times of the day. When observed playing CW-FIT, Ann began with reviewing rules with students and then allowing them to select rewards. When the students voted on the top two options several students often complained. Ann responded most often by telling them "maybe we won't have rewards at all."

On a side board Ann had a success chart with tally marks. These appeared to be given when the teacher wanted to remind students of their behaviors and if they were meeting their learning targets. However, she did take points off when students got loud collectively and individually by table/team. This mix of positive and negative comments seemed to be ongoing for Ann as she tried to do a variety of management strategies, perhaps not have understanding how or why they worked.

By November the students were making transitions without being off task as often, and Ann was providing a variety of verbal positive comments. These seemed to be specific to students as a reward and less as a way of reminding students about expected behaviors. However, students were behaving as directed. Observed were common incidences in which students would raise their hands and when Ann approached she would kneel by their desk would whisper, "thank you for raising your hand." She used broad recognitions of students being on task, quiet, and behaving, but appeared to become frustrated when students didn't comply with directions or her expectations.

Ann also utilized a marble drop system with several cans for each table/team to give a reward to students. She appeared to give a marble whenever students were on task and used

phrases like “oh, table one is doing so well” to draw attention to the behavior she wanted. This did have the effect of quieting down students and getting them on task for a time. Compliance appeared to be based on gaining physical rewards, as students didn’t seem to have a personal connection with Ann. Observations of students seeking approval from the teacher were uncommon unless rewards were offered or expected.

Tina

During PBIS spring semester 2016 training. During initial observations of Tina’s classroom, it was noted that she displayed the *Six Pillars of Character* poster, had her daily learning targets on the board, and had several achievement charts around the room. Her room was decorated to have a home effect with plants, seasonal decorations, and centers where students could go to be separated from the class to read or do other work. Desks were organized into fours to create table teams. Tina would be considered a veteran teacher, having served for more than five years.

Tina used positive comments in her interactions with students (e.g., “thank you,” “good job,” and “well done”). However, the comments seemed to be specific to the receiving student or the whole class and not strategic to behavior supports for those around the receiving student. The awareness that specific students were off task seemed to be her greatest concern, as she tended to lecture individual students for periods of time about what they should be doing while other students continued with the work assigned or a recreational activity after their work was completed. It is unclear what behavior was allowed, as students were observed to leave class with a hall/bathroom pass without permission, to wander the room talking with others, or to

ignore the teacher while she read to them or directed them in an activity. It appeared that Tina was more concerned with finishing a lesson than managing the students.

Tina wore a lanyard around her neck as a part of the PLC+ training she was participating in. It had several cards on it with suggestions for ways to praise and recognize student behaviors. She had set a bell to remind her to do this every ten minutes. When the bell went off and she looked at her cards for a prompt. During spring observations, it was noted that she wore the lanyard only for a few weeks before it was left hanging on her chair or left on her desk.

Tina had routines established for various activities, and students did seem aware of her expectations for them to go through specific procedures, but their level of compliance seemed to be bordering on pushing limits much of the time. She had various times when students were collected in small groups at her 1:1 table for specific help while the other students were assigned work, locations, and partners. At these times, her students became most unmanageable and engaged in a wide variety of inappropriate behaviors (e.g., running around the room, taking things from others, talking/yelling). Tina did try to correct the behaviors from the small group table, but she rarely left her seat to do so and most corrections were temporary. While she did appear frustrated with these behaviors, her efforts stayed limited to speaking directly to the offenders. She did say kind words to students as she negotiated the classroom environment, and students do seem to like her, but it felt like an ongoing negotiation between teacher and students much of the time. There was evidence in her room of various behavior trackers, but these seemed largely unused.

During the fall 2016 school year (training completed). At the beginning of the new school year, Tina's classroom felt much like the ending of the last year. The first observation in

August started with her at the small group table working with three students while a boy ran around the room and crawled under desks and another two students engaged in a sword fight with pencils. Tina moved from behind her desk and circulated the room in an effort to get students on task, which seemed to get the rowdier participants calmed down. She stopped near a girl who was flipping through books and thanked her for reading quietly. Tina provided similar comments to other students around the room who were in various stages of working on papers or reading. This seemed to have a calming effect on the classroom. After a few minutes, a student was called out to go to the office. Tina said to him "show me you know how to act in the hallway—be the best student you can be." The student folded his arms and left quietly.

There is evidence of practice of procedures during this time. As Tina had students move from location to location and activity to activity, she talked to them about how to do this and what was expected. Over the next several observations, Tina utilized a variety of cues to get students attention: "class, class"— "yes, yes," "1, 2, 3, eyes on me," and so on. By requiring a choral response, she did get students attention better, and she made an effort to thank them for compliance. She used a variety of reward measures to gain behavior compliance: button jars, marks on the board, and bell winners. What continued to be missing is evidence of positive behavior supports procedures: how to get the teachers attention, ignoring inappropriate behavior, and so on. She also participated in the CW-FIT training, but she didn't appear to be utilizing it with any classes. She was using a checkmark system on the board, with teams organized in sitting areas on the carpet. Checks were awarded for correct answers and on task behaviors. Prior to starting the use of this reward-based game, she had students talk about the rules and how to

get points. Tina used this game at various other times to manage behaviors, noting when students were working quietly and appeared on task.

After several weeks had passed she started using CW-FIT for a few sessions each week. She also posted the PBIS posters and began referring to them. It was unclear why these items came into use this far into the school year (October), but students seemed to respond to her use of them. The CW-FIT scorecard poster was used for other score keeping efforts and another teacher vs. students game was utilized. In this game, the students were awarded points for participating and the teacher was awarded points when students were off task. Tina would ask students to hold up their work or whiteboard to show they had an answer or were done with their work, and she would award a point. When using the button drop, she would say to students "red row gets two buttons for getting done first, green row gets one for finishing second" and so forth. Much of what she did for classroom management appeared to be work-completion oriented instead of behavior improvement.

Interviews: Groupings and Category Summaries of Interviews

In this section, the interviews with teachers are categorized into areas of interest to clarify their perspectives on the PLC+ training and the implementation of PBIS into their classrooms. The intent of these sections is to delve into the areas of belief and concern about the innovation and determine what they believe and level of adoption. I will also be exploring the levels of adoption by presenting the typical behaviors that are associated with acceptance, modification, and ownership.

Teacher Philosophy. The purpose of this section is to describe these teachers' philosophies and perspectives of what it means to be a teacher; their responses show what teachers believe about students and educating them. They reveal individual beliefs and broad ideas and also show whether the PBIS philosophy has found a home, or not, in their teaching practices. Levels of use, concerns about innovation, beliefs about usefulness, beliefs about professional development, and innovation and implementation are all reflected in a teachers' philosophy.

Student and Teacher Challenges. Teacher beliefs about what their professional challenges are and what students are being challenged with will have an influence on the acceptability of new ideas, specifically ideas related to student support and management. Identifying consistent teacher beliefs about what they are expected to do and what they feel is more important, or useful, is defined by the challenges they identify as priorities.

Student Growth Beliefs. To better define the teachers' professional perceptions of innovation, I chose to look at the comments and actions of the teachers to understand their beliefs about what student growth is. As educators, this belief is often at the heart of discussions regarding the fairness or equality of assessments, or the recognition of progress. Most importantly, for this study, it may define what they are willing to implement or use to achieve these goals. Often these beliefs are found in statements regarding why teachers love to teach, or their motivation to teach, or what they find rewarding. I will use this section to build understanding by pursuing the following questions: Do these beliefs corroborate their actions as observed in their classrooms? Are the successes isolated to a few or all? Lastly, do they observe these successes in all students or just a select few that become anecdotal?

Management Programs. A focus of most school professional evaluation plans is the ability of a teacher to manage a classroom. When teachers are asked about their most difficult tasks, they often refer to managing students, or specific students. Having recently participated in the PLC+ training, the PBIS philosophy and implementation should be noticeable in teachers' ideas about classroom and student management. Ideas about positive supports, punishment, cues, reinforcers, redirecting, and so on, should be noticed and prevalent if teachers have adopted this philosophy.

School Programs. Schools often are magnets for a variety of programs that purport to be of benefit to students. An observer may see posters hung all around the school supporting healthy choices, behaviors, motivators, and progress charts. Terra Elementary has many of these same programs supported around the school halls and demonstrates an effort to meet the myriad needs of the students. In its support of students Terra also provides some less conspicuous programs to help needy students in physical ways (e.g., working to solve hunger issues, providing a safe after-school environment). This section is to provide teacher perspectives of evidence, or show a lack of evidence, of a unified and focused effort in behavior support.

Professional Development. Professional development was proposed and planned as a consistent part of the PLC+ training for the effective implementation of PBIS. Fidelity of implementation was discussed with the school implementation team and included regular booster trainings to be informed by administrative observations. The concept of PLC collaboration over time was to ensure that teachers had the opportunity to discuss concerns and share successes. How teachers view that specific training, along with other trainings, would show what value

teachers place on the training and how the administration and other teachers view its usefulness and success.

Data Use. As a part of the PLC+ training, teams utilized school data to understand the readiness of their staff and areas of concern. How data is collected and used will influence the perceptions of what teachers and administrators believe about the implementation process. The PLC+ training team all claimed to use data to make decisions and shared the belief that PBIS was needed at their school. The collection and use of data for collaboration and planning was a practice supported throughout the PLC+ training. At the school level, the value of data collection and use, and how they apply it in decision-making, is an indicator for PBIS acceptance and use.

PLC Responses. A key component in the PLC+ training was that PBIS was intended to be implemented through the PLC, the main mechanism for collaboration, team observation, and planning. How the PLCs function in these ways, and how they use the data they collect and share, will show their beliefs about the value of PBIS, their expressions of concerns with implementation, and the levels of innovation use, including possible modifications.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. PBIS was the focus of the PLC+ training for tiered and planned interventions to be implemented at pilot elementary schools. The EBS was used in pre- and post-trainings to determine staff readiness. The districts and school administrations committed to put this philosophy into practice. At the administration level, the belief was shared that there was a need for this philosophy in their classrooms and that this is what would help solve behavior problems and improve academics at these schools. Clearly, the faculty of the university and the leadership of the schools and districts shared this belief that PBIS would be beneficial to this goal. If this belief is shared effectively with faculty and staff at

the target school, then implementation levels should be observable, and interviews should reveal beliefs about usefulness.

CW-FIT: Class-Wide, Function-Based Intervention Teams. CW-FIT was introduced to teachers at Terra Elementary during the first week of the 2016–17 school year after students had returned to school. As was noted previously, the goal of this training was to connect PBIS concepts to a classroom management practice that could be tracked and discussed. The fidelity of implementation and use of data from this program demonstrates teachers' beliefs about positive reinforcement of behaviors and their perspectives on data collection and analysis for collaboration. As this activity was linked to PBIS, its value to understanding teachers' perspectives about PBIS and their enthusiasm for implementation can be viewed through ongoing training and classroom utilization. In this section, the use of CW-FIT, modifications, and implementation fidelity will be addressed, as it reflects on the culture and beliefs of teachers in this school.

Beth's Perspective

Teacher Philosophy. Beth demonstrated a mix of caring and compassion for students and had a perception that students needed her to fill the "holes in their lives." These holes are referred to as being poor, being academically or behaviorally in deficit to their peers, or lacking perspective to their potential. She states, "I think that it's important what we do to support them socially and emotionally, and even sometimes physically, when they are in homes without food, or heat, or they are poor." She sees that students have potential to be self-aware and self-determining in their lives and relates how that links with personal confidence, "I care about if they're connecting they feel confident in themselves." Beth shows characteristics of

understanding the use of autonomy as a learning goal in her classroom. When asked about her concept of student progress she replies, “Empowering kids. I want students to feel like they have control of their learning experience and can make positive decisions about which way it is going.”

Student and Teacher Challenges. Beth talked about her beliefs regarding the origins of misbehavior issues. She told bullying stories to demonstrate her belief about this behavior as a significant problem with her attempts to integrate a student autonomy method of classroom management. She states, “They needed to learn how to be nice to people even when they’re different and how to be kind even when maybe it’s not popular.” She believed that the immaturity of students is a developing theme that will influence her future decisions about how she manages students. “I think (Terra) students are a little more immature. I feel like that, behavior wise, because they are even lower academically, their behavior is lower, and they are more immature.”

Beth believed a major challenge in education is the expectation of students to be entertained. “They just want to be entertained and have their attention focused in on this technology, and I think that that’s a problem. I think also that our kids don’t have a lot of the life experiences that other kids have.” She tried to use data to explain her beliefs about student issues and develop her ideas about where these behaviors are coming from. Beth is thoughtful about her analysis and data use and used tracking methods to try to sort the behaviors into ways she can understand and manage. She noted a troubling trend, “when the kids give up on themselves behavior problems really show up, and that’s hard because that can be infectious and they can explode and lots of kids can get involved.”

Beth recognized that her energy levels and effective student management relate and questions herself about what must be done first.

> When they're coming back from PE, and their hearts have been pumping, and they're full of adrenaline. I must bring them back out of the rafters, their response to getting them back and calmed down is a lot longer than say, coming back from music when it's a lot calmer activity. That's the challenge and most the time it's not that they're trying to be defiant it's just that their mind is somewhere else.

She expressed frustration with changes and decisions outside of her control or influence claiming that its overwhelming to do the "planning and meeting the directives of the district, state, school administration, and even the parents sometimes. It's all very complicated and I think it isn't in the best interest of kids sometimes." When asked about her feelings on the educational requirements kids must meet she stated,

> To take one standard and get everyone to meet that is a huge issue, not to mention there isn't just one standard – there are many, in different areas, and they don't seem to understand the diversity of kids or families or even schools. Testing is so big politically, and everyone seems to have an opinion on it, but I just see how it stresses the kids, takes away teaching time, makes people believe that the school is either good or bad, and then the kids think that about themselves.

Beth believed the behavior problems in the school are getting worse and that her personal data supported this belief.

> I did the self-reflection journal a lot when I started collecting data. With this group of kids, the behavior problems are bad, and the amount of behavior problems that they have,

> the number of kids that are misbehaving, they've almost got into this bravado attitude like it's cool to goof off. All of the kids are expressing a new kind of defiance with a change in attitudes of the students, just that they think they're more like a tough guy attitude. It's a lot more of that attitude that they don't care if they're in trouble, and they want to say, hey, let's see if we can poke this other kid.

Beth believed that most of the school issues are affecting her directly with an increased class size. She states, "Last year there were three grade level teachers, but they decided that since the numbers were smaller this year, they were going to reduce the grade down to two and have large class sizes." She also discussed the lack of support that was promised in the PLC+ trainings last year and at the start of this school year stating, "First it was the big news, and plans for doing all of this support. Now, we have some things in place, but it seems to have just been passed over." This reflects in her beliefs about whole school issues and the lack of connectedness for PBIS trainings and collaboration across classrooms and grade levels. In a frustrated moment during an interview she stated, "We do all these trainings, read all these books, and get told we're going to do follow-ups, but then it doesn't happen, just more new trainings."

Beth often shared her belief about children's development and felt that when it comes to behavior management she's not fully supported by administration, but she shares in the team support with her PLC. "I just feel like as long as I'm not reporting to the office things are good. I get good evaluations. My grade level team is where I really feel supported and can share." Her expressions of concern with perceived mixed administrator messages, and with the requirements to report issues while not getting any meaningful feedback or school behavior data, is difficult

for her to reconcile. Beth commented that "unless a major offense is reported, and the behavior team is utilized, I don't think the office is aware of what's happening around the school."

Beth challenged what she believes are the perceived standards and difficulties that come with the diversity of the community. "I think that our kids don't have a lot of the life experiences that other kids have," she stated when asked about her beliefs of this community and their issues. "They are poor and have many challenges and I think that limits what they get to experience." She continued, "they seem to be removed from the larger community of this area. Maybe that's why they aren't doing as well as other students."

She believed there was a challenging problem with the school PLC system stating, "they [PLCs] don't understand each other due to grade level separation. They don't understand their influence on community beliefs and student perceptions either." Beth also had strong opinions on what she calls the "over testing" of students, but sees the value in some assessments, advocating mostly for her personalized ones. Because she felt somewhat powerless to influence school trainings, she had resorted to reading educational theorists to try and make sense of what she is experiencing.

> I am trying to align what I have read to what we're getting in trainings. I get that people say that students like this can't succeed because of their background, but if you look at the effect sizes the background is at the bottom of the chart and the other things are way higher and more important.

Beth talked often about interventions, effect sizes, and the importance of doing and reading research. Having been in two other districts, she recognized the differences in

philosophy for teaching in those districts and how this has benefited her professional understanding, including the differences in her beliefs about learning.

Student Growth Beliefs. Beth stated, "Student growth is when the students don't have to be reminded of how to behave." She talked about how the first step to being ready to learn is when "I didn't have to give any cuing, or give any reminders, that to me is great progress. Now they are ready to learn the academic stuff." She was looking for student maturity, as evidenced through better decision-making, as examples of how this affects their lives. "I want them to feel powerful, when they're excited about what they're learning, when they connect, they light up. It's so much fun when they connect and they get excited and they say, 'I get it.'"

Further defining her belief about student success and learning, she stated,

> Hopefully it has a lasting effect on these kids that will help them not just get through this year, but to get through the next several years and to mature and see how their actions affect their educational opportunities and probably even their life opportunities.

Beth believed that success comes when students make personal choices around concepts of respect, cooperation, and kindness. She wanted them to have "expressed strategies of how to get along together as a life skill." Beth shared several stories during her interviews, many of which are related to developing positive behaviors that resulted in students experiencing successful academics and developing life skills. "I think about the opportunity to teach kids about getting along with each other and being kind. I think that it was important that I taught them how to respect each other." Often, "I think they're going to need to use these skills in life" is a quote heard in interviews with Beth.

Management Programs. For Beth, the establishment of clear expectations, how to follow the set rules, and how to behave in all situations, was central to her management plan. Like many of the teachers at Terra, she utilized the *looks like, sounds like* strategy and believed it helps students to understand the specific behaviors in the various classroom situations they will participate in. When students struggled to follow or accept the expectations of behaviors, Beth would have them practice until all students got it right. She called this "fidelity of practice" and "essential to the foundation of classroom learning." Beth was noted to do the extra practicing, making it a priority that the students understood what was expected, and she followed through consistently. Beth did not see the fidelity as monotonous or boring, or in need of change-up, other than changing the activities she did with her students. Beth was closer to full adoption of the PBIS philosophy than other teachers and demonstrated an observable understanding of how constant positive cuing and tiered behavior supports established and maintained results.

Beth remarked that she is still trying to figure out management issues with her large classes and to determine how to configure student seating strategies to fit needs. She discussed "troubleshooting how to spread them out or situate them to have best possible results, or to isolate at times, for rethinking or cool downs," and how the flexible seating concept she was utilizing fits into this plan. Beth was consistent in establishing routines and refers to how important this was for this particular student group. She identified this as a major part of her management philosophy in conjunction with establishing behavioral expectations for the class.

Beth expressed an understanding of student behavior, how they are affected by different situations and how these events need to be understood by the teacher to help students in the most appropriate manner. As was noted, she recognized the times when they return from PE or recess

and how their energy levels were different than returning from art. She did not discuss this as a behavior problem, only a "level of energy situation." Beth recognized how these "energy" needs should be planned for to allow "patience and appropriate guidance in bringing their behavior back to where they need to be." This is a strong representation that Beth understood the students' behavioral needs at the management level and was working to meet them.

Beth talked about expressing the expectations to students that they are "old enough to be responsible" and consistently utilizing that expectant language with them. As a behavior management adaptation Beth utilized a flexible seating plan with her students. Allowing students to choose work spaces, partners, and responsibilities demonstrated how she was trying to emphasize maturity as an extension of her behavior philosophy. She explained that this "has led to a myriad of opportunities to recognize positive behaviors and encourages interactions where students also provide positive supports to peers." Beth discussed her belief about prioritizing empowering kids to make decisions and leveraging that to guide students into the "best social behaviors, and the adoption of school appropriate behaviors," through that belief in themselves.

Furthering the concept of empowerment, Beth was using success criteria on assignments and projects that helped students understand what they need to do to be effective. This also allowed them to be accountable individually and in teams. Beth stated that this "helps them to understand how to do things and what's acceptable and what's appropriate." Underlying this acceptance of positive support is when Beth engaged in her own research to understand how to make what she is learning from her experiences and studies work better with consistency. This was done beyond the professional development offered by the school and district and was reinforced through personal practice and a degree of personal action research.

School Programs. Beth recounted how she saw the school working to support student needs, beyond the intellectual. "We're not just meeting their intellectual needs. I see that on Friday when [the school facilitator/coach] pulls kids aside and fills their backpacks full of food." She talked about other cooperative school programs to support academics through shared data files. "Probably the best thing is we use Google spreadsheet (and Google docs) to share information. Because then we can sort information by teacher, by score, by student, and that we all have access to it." Beth believed that other teachers were using these files to analyze data in the same way that she does. She also identified a STEM theme of focus for the school as being emergent. "[We] share a lot of information and that probably helped us to understand the school a little bit better, at least what's going on at each grade level." Clearly missing in Beth's comments is any reference to behavior data being shared school-wide. She did identify a behavioral team that meets and creates plans for specific students when their behavior becomes too disruptive for classroom management.

Professional Development. Beth often referred to her opportunities to have collaboration time and involvement in curriculum development with other schools and outside groups. She talked about how this has been very important to her, helping to see professional successes and share ideas.

> I was able to be a facilitator for the 4th grade and we talked about Go Math, and it was interesting to be on the other side of planning for professional development. We have a lot of people to collaborate with throughout the district. I feel like I'm really organized in my professional life since I'm on three different district committees. That's one of things that I really like, to build, to be a voice in the district, and have some influence there."

The desire for collaborative time with others within the school is a strong theme she came back to often in her comments.

> This year I'm the grade level leader and so I have some influence there and I like sharing resources that I have and learning new things. I like sharing the new things that I have with the kids too, and seeing them be excited about the new stuff as well.

Beth recognized her purposeful role in developing teachers when responding about her other leadership roles.

> I also get to mentor the two new teachers that are at our grade level. I like working with new teachers because they don't act like they know everything and so we get to share a lot more and learn a lot together and I feel like I get to help them.

To be able to talk about concerns, what was working, and to see how others are adjusting in similar circumstances are common subjects in Beth's comments. Beth felt passionately about how teachers were an untapped resource at her school. She talked about how collaboration had occurred in other areas, mostly academics, but not with CW-FIT or PBIS. The frustration with this lack of connection, beyond what she was able to do with her PLC time, is noted when she says, "I would really like to be able to go in and see the other teachers in my PLC teach because we talk about a lot of things that we're not able to actually go and share that time." She felt like they were finding answers on their own and should be sharing. The value of what they gained from school trainings had worth, but she expressed that it still lacked the collaboration element.

> I think we really need to talk about it and kind of debrief to share stuff that we're doing and saying. In learning, I feel like we're really an untapped resource for each other. I think we really need to sit down and talk about what we're doing with this training. I

> think it would be really beneficial to, like 20 minutes out of a PLC where everybody could say it was working, or these are the things that I'm doing.

Her frustration with her perceived isolation and lack of interaction she craved is a frequent note in her comments. "I really feel like for you to share ideas and have this be useful then we've got to be able to talk about how it's working. Those kinds of things. It would just be nice to talk with other people."

Leadership roles held by Beth in the district are a benefit to her increased motivation for understanding and implementation of positive supports. She also referenced how sometimes her leadership role left her feeling isolated at her grade level, but that it was also a motivator to work to make connections and seek out resources she could share.

> I felt really bad because I give suggestions sometimes and they don't try them, so I worry that it's because they don't think I know what I'm doing, but when they do try and they see that I do actually know what I'm talking about, that helps out the next time I give them a suggestion.

A part of the collaboration Beth seeks was related to gaining validation of her ideas and was reflected in her statements about how she feels conflicted when "others in her PLC don't accept her leadership."

Data Use. The school utilizes a variety of assessments as previously noted. When asked about this diversity of assessments, Beth discussed specific tests and assessments regarding what data she found useful, what was more universal, and what she found less useful or less applicable to her classroom.

> We do the I-Ready assessments every month, they have quick progress monitoring test that they [students] do, an annual diagnostic test, and on Monday I'll be doing the DIBELS beginning of the year testing, and I'll do progress monitoring throughout the year.

As a PLC leader, she explained that all teachers at this grade level do talk about the grade level Google spreadsheet data they share and the weekly progress monitoring assessments during their PLC time on Fridays.

> We do regular timed tests to see how they're doing with their math facts and [look] at their weekly quizzes to see how they're doing with what we taught during the week. With that it helps to guide the reteaching for the following week.

Beth specifically articulated the variety and purpose for the assessments she gave and those given by the school, district, and state. The usefulness of these assessments for her and her PLC are noted in comments where she lists what has value for collection and discussion;

> We collect data on our PLC spreadsheet. We collect data on STAR tests and Accelerated Reader, DIBELS, math facts, and Go Math assessments. These mean something to us. We've also been tracking Success Chips for the school monthly stuff. Most important, we track kids to see about their learning targets and reteaching data.

Beth rarely discussed the results of state tests, but does comment that while they are evaluated on these results, the state annual assessment "has very little value to planning for us. We have to deal with the day-to-day progress and hope that it's enough to do well on the [state test]."

Beth had been asked by her district to serve on assessment committees and felt she had a good concept of school and student needs based on the data they were utilizing. As has been discussed, the data for this PLC is utilized to guide lesson planning and future assessments. She stated,

> Our PLC time is about planning for the next week, in deciding what our lessons will look like, and what assessments we have coming up. We talk about what information the assessments are going to give us and then just checking with each other to see if there's any struggles or challenges.

Behavioral data was not shared on a community data file, but it is tracked by individual teachers in her PLC and discussed at other meetings they plan during the week. She notes that they meet at other times during the week to share concerns and that they "do talk sometimes about behavioral issues we might be having, especially with some of the newer teachers in my grade level that have some challenging students and might like some input for me."

PLC Responses. Beth felt the scheduled Friday PLC time was best utilized analyzing assessment data, individual student progress monitoring, and discussing how successful their lessons had been. Time for planning was sometimes relegated to a different day, outside of school hours or at a shared lunchtime, so that her PLC could discuss their plans and preserve the PLC Friday time for data analysis.

> We most often meet on Tuesday mornings to do that so that we have more time during our PLC on Friday afternoon to go over the data we have. In that way, we can figure out after looking at our data what we need to do for reteaching and what things we might need to emphasize in the future even if we choose not to reteach.

She believed her PLC functions well in that way, but as was noted previously, she worried that a weakness was in support for each other due to a lack of trust in each other's experiences. She believed that they don't see themselves as veterans or knowledgeable enough to trust in each other's experiences.

Having worked in other school districts, Beth has had similar early experiences of having little or no support from other teachers. She felt like a grade-level PLC person "walked" her through her first year to learn how to do the job. While Beth talked highly of her current school PLC, she felt her most important experiences had been in collaboration at trainings outside of the school.

> Maybe it's because we are at these [district] meetings specifically for collaboration and we expect to support each other. I don't know. Maybe my PLC is competing with each other so we aren't supportive enough. I feel like we're colleagues and all get along well.

Her perception was that she got better support for her ideas and plans from partners in other schools and at the district level. Within the school, Beth saw the encouragement of her PLC as being very important. She valued the member help with brainstorming and problem solving. She saw her early PLC experiences as a new teacher as being useless and discouraging. She recounted the worksheet pacing and scheduling they had and the pre-established lesson plan structure she was given as having a negative effect on her first experiences as a teacher and contributing to her decision to leave that school district.

> I never had the opportunity to ask questions about why we were doing different things, or why we had to do what they gave us. It was very frustrating and I felt like my skills were not being recognized or that my perspective meant nothing.

Beth shared her belief that her current "PLC is a great personal and professional support," even with the differences they have in perceptions of veteran status and knowledge. "We work well together and like to meet outside of our PLC time to talk about concerns and teacher stuff. I think that having lunch together and sharing ideas is important for all of us."

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. Beth was able to talk about the elements of PBIS in a way that demonstrates her desire to understand and utilize it effectively. Beth saw it as a way of managing her class in the long term and not as a tool to take out and use in rotation with other tools. "I know that it's a paradigm shift for me. It is going to be a paradigm shift for the kids, and hopefully it'll help. It's a better plan because we have a way to explain it to the kids." Setting clear expectations with what the procedures are up front and demonstrating with students how they can be successful and supportive of each other are evident in Beth's classroom practices. She states,

> When you start out and you tell the kids, this is what I expect, and this is what you're going to need to be able to do to be successful in this activity, then they know what's going on and how you expect them to behave. Then you're not doing that during the activity. So, setting those clear expectations right up front I find that they understand it and I don't have to do even so much cuing.

She referred to PBIS being a paradigm shift for her and recognizes that it is a move from a punitive discipline perspective and belief system to a new positive and rewards-based one.

> I'm trying to do PBIS, and I know I'm not perfect at it because it's a paradigm shift for me. I've been using other methods a long time. You know, that ignoring inappropriate behavior is not something I'm used to doing and that one is a challenge.

A frustrating part of this implementation for Beth is found in her recognition that teachers in her school were not receiving the follow-up training or support that they wanted and needed. "I think we really need to talk about it and kind of debrief to share stuff that we're doing and saying." She stated again her belief that "in learning I feel like we're really an untapped resource for each other." She also recognized the issues that revolve around trainings that lack follow-up,

> You know it's like they introduce CW-FIT at the beginning of the year and then we've never done anything with it since. We really need some follow-up where everybody could say it was working and these are the things that I'm doing.

Her perspective on what needs to be done to successfully implement PBIS was tied to collaboration, "I really feel like for you to share ideas and have this be useful then we've got to talk about how it's working and share everything from our resources, to our rewards, to our system for keeping it fresh."

She recognized the challenges the students are having with these new concepts, especially that of ignoring inappropriate behaviors, and seemed to be conflicted on how well she thinks this implementation was going. Beth recalled, "Some of the kids will correct each other to say stuff like 'you're supposed to wait until the teacher calls on you when you raise your hand' and they'll do different kinds of reminders because that's what the expectations are." Beth saw some behaviors as getting worse in some ways, violence and defiance being most prominent in her comments. "I've been here at this school long enough that I have seen an increase in the number of kids who are misbehaving. It really does feel like it's escalating, that overall attitude of kids." She believed this concern might be fueling her desire to have collaboration on what everyone else was experiencing. Beth felt like having some time allocated to this discussion

would help all of them to understand better what is happening school-wide. “There’s just too many things we don’t know about what’s happening. It’s frustrating.” She did not believe her PLC was being informed as to the data on PBIS successes or failure, “we’re told its going well, or doing well, but that’s it most of the time.” Some of her frustration was also tied to the belief that CW-FIT wasn’t being supported with collaboration or feedback.

Beth stated that she believed PBIS was a good philosophy, but that the needed training and evaluation for development school-wide wasn’t occurring. She felt that “maybe the administration doesn’t realize this need because they see kids behaving well when they visit classes and teachers ‘performing’ to get the praise ratio that is expected.” Her concern was detailed in her reflection of a recent administrative observation, “It is funny though when she comes in [the principal] and they behave super well with folded arms, and they are so obedient, and then when she leaves they’re like ‘whew’ that’s over. They’re on their best behavior when they [administration] come in.” For Beth, the PBIS implementation made sense in solving the problems she saw. The result was that it was being implemented with better fidelity for her than with the other teachers. “I think that’s probably the most useful and it’s got me continuously thinking about what it is that I’m doing and how is it that that I’m using positive cuing instead of using negative responses or corrective responses.” Her belief that this is a change in teaching philosophy, and not a useful tool, defines her level of acceptance.

CW-FIT: Class-Wide, Function-Based Intervention Teams. When commenting about the successful use of CW-FIT and how it had benefited learning during the difficult times of the day (after lunch with math lessons), she called it “golden.” She had recognized early in implementation the need to have students pick rewards, but she wasn’t sure if this was an

acceptable practice, as the subject had not been discussed in training. As had been noted, Beth expressed frustration at the lack of any follow-up training or collaboration on this program. “I’m curious to see what it is that people are doing with our information. What are they figuring out from the data to share with us? This is like the truth right, because I’m wishing that there was more collaboration.” She had been very active in using CW-FIT and turning in the scoring reports each week, but was unaware of the purpose for doing the reports. A reoccurring theme of frustration with Beth was expressed several times by her comments on the desire to meet with other teachers to share ideas, compare notes, talk about what is working, and get feedback on use.

> I know we’ve been really busy, and I don’t blame anybody, but I feel like we really need some follow-up. Instead it seems like you were filling out this piece of paper, which we don’t know if it’s just getting thrown away or if it means something, I hope somebody’s keeping track or doing something with it.

Beth explained that during the sole training opportunity they were given, an idea was put forth to create a Google doc with rewards ideas, but it never happened. She was not sure who was in charge of the reports or when to expect any feedback, if at all. She started using data from her own use of CW-FIT to plan groupings and reteaching and saw it as a good motivational tool as long as the kids were excited about the rewards. Her modifications of the game had been in two areas: time intervals and bonus points.

> I was just thinking about this, on trying to keep things fresh, I was starting to do bonus points. When a team is doing what they’re supposed to be doing, I’ll say “here’s a bonus point” and I don’t know if that’s what I’m supposed to be doing or not. I thought we’re

> supposed to change it up, but there's no way to track it on the chart that we turn in. So, I don't know since we haven't talked about it what anyone else is doing and if it's effective or were we even supposed to be doing that.

When asked about the structure for using CW-FIT, she didn't recall if they were supposed to always use the same amount of time per interval or overall length of the game, but she had been trying various interval lengths "depending on my perceptions of the kids' attention span." During one interview, she noted that the timer was a distraction sometimes and changed the length of time between bells to be less disruptive to what she is teaching.

> I'll drop it down to every three minutes, and if were doing well I'll put it up for five minutes for every beep, because I want fewer distractions and fewer interruptions during the lesson itself. That's what it's got to be in my class because they have a shorter attention span. I've done two minutes, I've done four minutes, I've done five, but nothing longer than five because then they just lose it.

While Beth had been very consistent in her use of CW-FIT, she did recognize that "the thing that's hard is when kids don't make the goal and then they feel bad because other kids did and get rewarded." This was another strong contrast between her and other teachers. Beth allowed her students to not make the goal and not get the reward as a way of motivating them for the next time they play.

Ann's Perspective

Teacher Philosophy. Ann was divided on how she saw her philosophy as a teacher. She saw her students as having hard lives and needing someone to tell them that they have potential, that they are smart and that they have dignity as a person and need to recognize it. She stated,

> I believe that every child is smart in their own way and my philosophy is to help them to see that. I know a lot of kids are all right, even with their hard home lives. They think they're dumb, or they don't know stuff, or they're bad at things. I try to show them the little things that they're good at. I want them to know that they are smart, just a different kind of smart. They all come from different pasts and they'll have different hard lives and so a lot of the reasons for misbehaving, or acting out, or doing something wrong is because they have a hard situation. I am helping them to feel loved because maybe they don't get that at all.

Ann had a very personalized perspective on concepts of power and being a teacher. She believed that teachers need to keep and guard the power of decision-making. "The most dangerous thing for a teacher is when you give up your power" she stated during an interview. She believed that determining the direction of the class (e.g., work, lessons, and class management) cannot be given up without consequences to the teacher.

> We don't get much feedback from them [administration] because they only intervene if it's something that really needs to happen. Which is good because if you turn over your problems then the students won't take you serious. They know it's like, you're just going to give me over to the principal, so I don't need to behave for you, I only must behave for them.

In several interviews, Ann made references about her belief that a teacher's discipline demonstrates weakness if problems are not managed in the classroom.

Ann often stated that she wanted to try new things and that innovation or new ideas are interesting to her. "You're going to make mistakes. Maybe a classroom can run perfectly, but the

second you say, 'I'm done trying new things' then it's all over. You should continue to try new things." Ann also noted that in caring and disciplining students the method must always consider the child. "The goal was to always make them feel safe and loved and to never destroy their dignity. I need to remember they're little kids and that they mess up, and so I take care of them."

Student and Teacher Challenges. Ann often talked of her belief about the environment the kids were growing up in as challenging.

> I think my biggest concerns for students is that they come from very difficult backgrounds and have a lot of struggles and trials. We want to try and figure out what things are going to help them, which things are going to work for them, and we don't really know a lot of times what their home situation is, or what living in their neighborhood is like.

She presented evidence to support her beliefs and shared stories she had heard of community issues. "You see them come in and they don't have a coat, or they are wearing the same clothes day after day, or you get this idea that they haven't been fed." Ann also saw that part of the problem was related to the diversity of educational levels among her students. "There's really a big difference where you will have students who seem like they're reading on a low level, or not reading at all, or they're ELL and they don't understand any English, and you know that they still must take tests."

Ann felt that there was a lack of support from a mentor or her PLC. She was concerned about what to do, believing that some of the problems she faced were due to a lack of experience.

> I think the big challenges are that we're expected to do so much. I feel new and that I make mistakes, but sometimes I don't recognize that I made a mistake until after it's gone on for a little while and then I'm not sure how to fix it.

Ann shared her concern about having too many things to get done each day and the expectation that she keeps track of academic data while trying to plan lessons and manage students.

> It's really challenging that you can't control where students come from and how they come to you and you also can't control what kind of mandates are given to you from above. They're not ready for it. They're all in different places and so it's hard to be able to differentiate for that specific student, but still meet all the criteria expected to meet on the outside.

She spoke about her personal beliefs regarding the available classroom and teacher supports at Terra and how that affects student learning.

> It's frustrating because of the time and limited support. You know that is one of the most motivating things for students, that one-on-one feedback and reteaching time, but you'll not necessarily have the instructional time to do that very often. You must cover so many other things specific to the curriculum.

As a fairly new teacher, her most significant concerns were found in the comments about preparation and time to do the job. Ann talked about how students should make decisions but feels there is a challenge with balancing student autonomy and maintaining teacher control. "I don't trust my kids to stay on task and do group work. I don't feel like I trust them. It's hard

when there's way different levels of kids." A recurring theme in her interviews was based around her motivation to try new things and the fear of failure or loss of control.

> Having the control with the kids is a priority. For them to really learn to own it and [they] must know where they're at and must be motivated themselves. That's hard. Sometimes to let them do it and fail, because you want them not to fail, but they learn more when you let them be in charge. Just like, behaviorally, knowing what to do in every situation is hard.

Ann often expressed frustration with school planning time and her perception that she lacks personal control. She explained her concern on "when to draw the line of being prepared or just spending your whole life preparing. There's always more you can do with teaching. So, knowing when to just be done and go home and have your life is hard letting go." She continued, "I'm just trying to learn as I go and recognize when something went bad." References to being overwhelmed are noted when Ann discussed the multiple programs she saw in the school.

> I feel like there's so many different little reward things that keeping track of them, you know, it's like CW-FIT we do for math, and then the little tickets we do all day, and there's so many things. That's good because it's keeping them on task, and they have different things every day, and different rewards, but it's just remembering to do all of them.

She further noted that "even with our tracking we don't know really where they're at with comprehension. Those kinds of things are really challenging because there are just so many unknowns."

Student Growth Beliefs. For Ann, student success and progress was "figuring out how you fit in. Being yourself, finding your strengths, and then doing more than you thought you could." She elaborated, "my lowest kid, and he is very low, but he loves to color and draw. So, I told him. He's good at it. It gave him confidence and he said, 'My mom wants to have me help decorate for Halloween.'" To be able to bring his drawings from home and help decorate was an indicator of student success for Ann. "I told him how proud I was of him. We're able to put those up in the classroom for a little Halloween thing and he felt safe and he feels like he can connect with me." Ann expressed pride in student efforts and believed she was making connections between what the student likes to do and their finding success. She detailed her personal belief of her role as teacher in helping students to grow as, "I like finding the little things they do and trying to bring those out. I need them to do more than what they could do so that eventually they will do more than they can do right now."

Management Programs. Ann was consistent in her start-of-school practices and getting students into routines through repetition. "We have to do it repeatedly to establish a routine and even still we should keep establishing a routine. So, it's just repeatedly with constant reminders and it's an ongoing process. Very explicit instructions are very important." She articulated her understanding that this was important in establishing and maintaining an environment that students can participate in. Some of her responses include references to students having responsibility in the classroom and learning the social skills of cooperation and leadership, but she also referred often to keeping control as being important for the teacher. "I've given my class a lot of responsibility. They have their jobs and one of their jobs is to excuse those who are being

quietest. So, they have some responsibility to help run the classroom and so they want to listen to their peers more."

Being recognized as the authority and directing students was important to Ann, as she has issues of trust going beyond that level of shared control with her students. "So, doing these little games, that are peer led, I try to act like everything is normal, and everything is good, and I'm in control." Ann did not believe that her students could make consistent decisions beyond compliance with rules and directives.

> I like to keep it simple by only having class rules that are the school rules: be respectful, be responsible, be safe. I like to keep the rules simple and can be very clear, because those are the rules and are kind of abstract and they look different in different ways, but the students can understand them if they are simple.

As has been discussed, she saw her students as coming from hard home lives with difficult backgrounds and being in need of consistent structure enforced by an authority. She stated her belief in authority as "teachers tend to be very controlling or we want to be controlling. We want to have control; we love defining environments. It's hard to push yourself that way and give up some of that control." Ann did not see student autonomy as a part of her management philosophy, but rather she saw students as participants in the planned structure. She does not talk about a specific management plan beyond the procedures she employed.

Ann did not seem to have an understanding of student behaviors beyond her beliefs or the expectations for her students. She talked of changing things up to keep the students interested, but she does not discuss any foundational understanding of the theories behind the routines she employs, apparently believing only that students need to have rules to follow.

> I think it's helpful in my switching up management. It is one of the things that I need to do next week or soon. I need to do something new other than our marble drop, because we've been doing it for like a month now. At the beginning, they were really excited. They like marbles and now it's like it doesn't really matter.

Ann also used the *looks like, sounds like* cues to develop classroom structure, but as with PBIS it was only seen as a part of her overall management program. "I think teaching procedures exactly is very important. That's why I have the *looks like, sounds like* areas and then also expectations for homework. My kids know exactly what I expect and what I'll accept." Ann feels that repetition is important but does admit she gets tired of it. Ann used positive commentary to reward students but has not fully utilized these concepts as a philosophy of behavior management to focus students solely on preferred behaviors.

> I really like trying to do positive reinforcement. I'll try to show that I will reward this kid and the other kids will want to be rewarded, and I've tried to do not that much negative reinforcement, because they get a lot of that from home.

She talked about other training she had attended and book readings she had been involved in as sources of information to help her find new things to "change it up" to keep kids interested and to keep herself motivated. Examples of her changing things up were the use of the marble drop, classroom dojo, behavior charts, and various other tracking and rewards systems generally based around points for behavior goals. She also spoke about her rewards systems having consequences for non-compliance with rules including loss of points or recess time and warnings. "Usually, some kids are talking too much and they lose a recess. I found that warnings don't usually help and they love recess, so it works out." In interviews completed after the start

of the new school year, with the completed PLC+ training she continued to use punitive methods. “It seems like I still must give out warnings often. I do see it decreasing with time as students lose recess. I had to give out a lot more at the start of the year than I do now.”

The most defining comments from this teacher were that “I am very controlling” and “I think we want to be controlling.” Her belief that “it’s hard to push yourself that way [PBIS] and give up some of that control” demonstrated her level of adoption of PBIS. However, she has sought after solutions as she was trying to understand what works. A challenge for Ann was that she saw some success with the modified version of PBIS, with positive commentary and cues for most students, and punishments for the more defiant or disinterested students. She had witnessed changes, which may be seen as desirable, without a full understanding of how the management philosophy could be utilized in positive ways for those who are more difficult.

School Programs. When questioned about school programs that support students in positive ways she discussed the Success Chip school-wide academic reward program.

> When a student successfully masters some skill, then they get to put their name on the Success Chip and they [administration] collect them every five or six weeks at the office. They’ll draw out some names and they [students] get specific rewards. Getting a success chip just means that you’ve mastered something and they want to give you an opportunity to be recognized and rewarded throughout the whole school.

When discussing other school support programs Ann talked about the new-teacher–mentoring program and identified a district coach who still visited her occasionally.

> I have a district coach that [works with] first to third year teachers and she comes in sometimes and helps. To be honest, I don’t know who she even reports to if she reports to

anyone, but she does give me feedback, which is usually an email to me afterwards. A lot of times it will tell me stuff like my praise to correction ratio, which is helpful I guess.

Ann explained that PowerSchool was the main means of communicating major offense discipline reports to the principal. She noted that "for more serious discipline issues I would submit a log entry to the principal through PowerSchool. Then usually they'll check back." She discussed the process as "usually you make a phone call home and put that in the comments and note that there was a parent contact." When asked the value of this process she identified that "the reason you have the PowerSchool things is because you realize that there's a pattern and then you can start getting help for tier 2 and referral to the flight center." When questioned about minor offences Ann explained that "I talk with the behavioral team about these if the issue goes to them, but otherwise it's just something I track. I suppose I could report them on PowerSchool, but that seems like excessive work."

Ann stated that they have an expected process to follow that involves doing all they can in the classroom to resolve issues and then taking it to the principal or flight center when the situation becomes unmanageable. She described this as a tier 2 behavior status, where they can be referred to the flight center for behavior training. "They recently implemented a course on nonviolent behavior and other kinds of behaviors, that are kind of extreme, but they'll have to miss PE for two weeks and go to the flight center." When asked about the purpose of the flight center Ann responded, "they take this course and they learn social skills and must write up a report after and present it to all the admin, to the principal and vice principal."

Ann discussed the behavior team meeting process, in which behavior data is brought to an administrative committee "to show what has been done [intervention data] and decisions are

made to involve other services or plans." She noted that she had "a student right now that I'm going to refer for that. I'll meet with the admin for half hour in the morning and bring data with me. We'll put our heads together and we try to figure out what we need to do with the students." When asked if this team was solely for behavior issues she responds,

> That's for both academics and behavior, but before you can do that [make a recommendation] you must fill out this form to show what you've done, show them what interventions have been done, and then there's a narrative part where you can show what their behavior has been.

Ann believed a student was moved to a tier 2 intervention level for intensive support. When asked if she was aware of tier 3 interventions she commented that "the only students I know of that go that high are often expelled." She also noted that her role was "over once they get into tier 2 interventions. The flight center gets them for a few weeks, at least, and makes corrections."

Professional Development. Ann saw validity in comments or professional guidance from veteran teachers. She commented that these teachers are more "useful for her current situation as a newer teacher." Ann was willing to take advice and try things if she believed the other teacher's experience or longevity in the profession validated the idea. "I like to talk to other veteran teachers and they will tell me, you know, try these different things. They work." She discussed that sometimes she would try something and it would not work how she envisioned it. She noted that she might say, "This just isn't working, and so I'll try something else. Maybe I don't want to talk about my failures with anyone I work with, I don't know. So, I get ideas from everywhere, especially Pinterest." Her insecurity with sharing and potentially being vulnerable to

a veteran educator was reflected in her comment that "I'm just trying to learn as I go. It's better to get someone who knows things and is more skilled and been out a long time, than like me, and has already tried it." She also noted that "the Title I facilitator talks about some ideas of things I can try too" when she visits her classroom. Ann talked about how her PLC was useful for her as well as she tried to develop her ideas, but she seemed to rely more on other sources and past experiences. "I sometimes ask my team, but usually I just look online for ideas, or I think of things that I did last year."

For Ann, the PLC+ professional development reaffirmed for her that management is a balance of keeping herself revitalized, along with the students, while still holding the power of control.

> I feel like I'm continuing my learning outside the classroom is to help me to energize myself. I feel like I'm going to try this in my room and I feel like I'm gaining tools, like the things that I can point out that are positive. By doing other things and trying to implement them in your classroom, it helps you to stay revitalized, because you're trying and you feel like you have power. That goes with switching up management.

She believed that her students often get bored with the classroom management tool being used and needed something new, even though it was a similar method. "It's different, and so then the kids also feel revitalized about how we're keeping track and managing our classroom behaviors." Ann saw implementation as the same effort to start something else new, or at minimum, something different.

Data Use. Ann referred to their "little assessments" as being done every few weeks, but she didn't often talk specifically about them or what they were intended to measure. When asked

what data she used, her response was based on individual students who are "low" or for a class that didn't make a specific score to move forward in the curriculum. She explained,

> We need to see if they're growing and what interventions we need with them. We take a test every few weeks and we talk about what kids should be in which class, or we talk about individual cases, about our low kids and what interventions should we give them.

She discussed using assignment scores to guide decisions for the next lesson and to plan for group structure, centers, leaders (advanced students), and small group or 1:1 interventions. Her preferred method of assessing student understanding was represented by her check-plus method.

> I'll put up three questions on the board and I have them write down the answers. I collect them and sort them with a check minus, which means they turned it in but it was wrong, or a check, which means it was partially right, or check plus which they turned it in and it was all right. On the last assignment only four of my kids even understood it at all and got it right. So, I came back the next day and had those four students help lead us in centers on rounding. Then they helped them practice. After they helped out I checked to regroup the kids again.

For behavior data, Ann did not utilize a specific student tracking plan other than the color card (green, yellow, red) reporting system. When a student had a behavior issue they were directed to retrieve a color card, based on their infraction level, to write what they did and how they would fix the problem. Ann explained,

> I don't have something specific for the long-term (behavior data). I put different things in these color-coded baskets and then if we have any problems I'll tell them to get their

> green card and then they have to write on the green card what they got it for and that's what I check at the end of the day.

When asked how she used the data and if she shared it she responded, "this is just classroom data for me to see whether or not there are patterns developing in their behaviors that are concerning." For major offense reporting Ann replied, "If there's a school rules violation then I submit a log entry so that the principal is aware of those violations."

Ann maintained a binder with the color card reports, but admitted that she only shared issues with her PLC if the student recorded several red cards.

> I don't really know what anyone else does to keep track of their warnings or if they keep track of them at all. I have no idea. We do have different meetings during the week other than our PLC time. A few days ago, at lunch we talked about the whole class kind of idea.

When asked if she felt she should discuss behavior data with her PLC she responded, "not really, we do sometimes, usually when we're frustrated, but it's not real common." When asked to recall her PLC+ training on data use she recollected that "we needed to share more with each other. We decided to have more meetings during the week to plan and talk about issues."

She appeared to believe that only major infractions were to be reported to the administration through PowerSchool as an incident report. Ann explained that consecutive major issues are intervened through the flight center and tier 2 supports as recommended by the behavior team. She clarified that "they don't get feedback from the flight center on behavior plans, because they only intervene if the behavior is severe and student removal from class with intensive intervention is utilized." Her comment regarding feedback and collaboration with the

flight center was, “they only intervene if it’s something that really needs to happen. Which is good because if you turn over your problems then the students won’t take you serious.”

A belief that is prevalent with Ann is that behavior data should be managed within the classroom, for the teacher to use privately, and without the specific awareness of the administration. Ann explained that “behavior management is a critical part of a teacher being able to do her job” and not needing support from outside. This continued to be reiterated in her comments that being unable to manage a discipline issue demonstrates weakness.

PLC Responses. Ann stated that she liked the PLC collaboration and planning time each week. She explained that “sharing everything on a Google doc and discussing interventions and assessment scores feels good to have evidence for planning.” She shared that their discussions were related to planning and interventions, often reteaching, but nothing is official on their group Google document. Ann notes, “We use it for us and our planning time. I suppose we could share it, but nobody seems interested.” Her PLC’s purpose seemed to be for collaboration on pacing of students through the curriculum and sharing the workload for lesson development. She specified, “We decide which one of us will be in charge of doing all the math lessons and the other persons for reading and writing.” When they meet it’s

> So we can talk about what things worked this week and our math lessons, which ones we do next week. We have good collaboration that way so we’re all on the same page. We don’t want one class way ahead and the other classes way behind.

When asked about her PLC discussions on behavior data she recognized that the PLC was not talking about whole-class responsiveness to PBIS and was still problem solving at the individual level.

> We'll share ideas among us about what to do with specific students, but we don't have a tab on our spreadsheet that deals with behavior concerns. We have different ideas, and we're able to help each other and come up with an intervention across the grade that will help. I feel like more of it is academic than behavioral.

Ann sees the PLC support structure as "on track" with academic goals.

Where Ann believed the PLC was most successful was in how they share teaching ideas. She identified this "because we don't know all the answers. I think we feel a more veteran teacher would know what to do." She explained that they "feel we can't do it alone" and that "our PLC provides us with the support we mostly need to not make mistakes, or at least minimize them." Ann discussed an area she feels they are most successful in when she says,

> We share students among the [grade level] teachers. The spreadsheet helps to keep track of them for the next time and then who they'll be with as the next teacher. Then we'll see whether or not it's something going on with interaction with the teacher or the testing time or testing group.

Having that access and consistent reporting "helps us to figure out what's happening here and why they're not getting it." From that feedback "we can plan intervention groups for the week."

When Ann spoke about the value of her PLC time and data sharing, she summarized it by stating,

> We all share. We can all look at the data and plan interventions and then track the success of those interventions, and we keep a column open on the spreadsheet that says what the

intervention is that we tried so we can see what we did to remediate. This is a huge help to figuring out how to help our kids.

Ann was the only teacher to comment consistently about how sharing students was a motivation for teachers to share data and compare strategies, especially with students who were having behavior problems.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. Ann saw the value in positive supports, stating, "It motivates me to want to stop using negative reinforcement, because I feel like positive usually works. I feel like that's just a good thing." She had utilized positive comments to encourage appropriate behaviors, but appeared to be looking for other management plans to change things up. She held that the kids would become unmotivated and stagnant when staying with one management plan for too long. "I'm going to start a new plan. I mean it still works [PBIS], it's just not as exciting and not as motivating, but this is not for every child. I feel like I should switch things up." When asked what she would use to replace what she had been doing, she responded, "I'm thinking about doing class dojo because I think they would really like that, and I wanted to do it. I just didn't want to overload them with rewards and behavior things." Clearly, Ann saw this as a tool and not a philosophy; however, she did see the value in positive supports.

Aside from the positive comments to support appropriate behaviors, she identified the benefit of uniformity in the school. "When we started using positive behavior supports, we all starting to use the same vocabulary. The anchor charts and the common language in the hallway make it easy to remediate, so I think that's one of the biggest benefits." Her concern was in how it was being implemented, asserting, "The problem still is that I think that everything is slightly

different between teachers. Our students need that consistency from everyone." This statement was an interesting contrast for Ann, to claim that consistency of implementation was important while simultaneously considering moving to a new management plan. She expounded on her management concept with an underlying concept of personal focus on discipline and how she viewed its nature. "You should be strict here if you want to survive at the school." This concept of being successful as a teacher and survival being tied to strictness adds another element to Ann's perspective of the value of behavior management. Her message of routines and consistency continued to be found throughout her interviews when referencing PBIS. "It helps the kids to know what to expect anywhere at our school, which could be very helpful." Ann also recognized that she has an influence on the application of positive supports:

> Some days, when they [the students] start out bad, or if I'm in a bad mood, and let's be honest that's really what it will probably be, I'm going to beat them [at the game] and I'll give myself a lot of teacher points and that doesn't really do anything.

While Ann recognized this ineffective situation, and her responsibility in it, she also understood how it affected her students stating, "If they have no chance to win it doesn't matter at all. So, you can sit up there all day, and you're talking, and so I get a teacher point, and then they don't care because they know they lost."

Ann also seemed to be conflicted about the use of rewards. Her comments range from the need of students to "get something every time they do something good" to wishing her students wanted to be more intrinsically motivated. "I feel like kids should be able to do things without always having to have a reward" is a common comment she shared in interviews. As identified previously, Ann believed the best part of PBIS was the posters and procedures being used by the

staff. She felt it gave them a common language for dealing with issues and eliminated the power struggle between students and teachers. While she had concerns about the consistency of all teachers utilizing this set of procedures and rules she did recognize that "it's hard to be totally consistent, [but] it helps to make it so there's not a power struggle." This understanding of PBIS returns to Ann's concepts of power and control. She wanted her students to understand that

> this is our procedure. This is how we do this. It becomes a very teaching thing instead of saying, I am in charge and so you're going to do it. That doesn't help kids like that. I've used the same vocabulary to reinforce it, the same as we all are, or should be.

Ann believed that her experience with PBIS training had been good personally for her, noting, "I was pointing out, with praise, the things that were going right. That just makes sense, people want to be liked and praised." She referred to how "it kind of helps you to stay calm too, because you're looking for positive things instead of just pointing out the negative things that are going on. Also, it helps with the kids to get recognition and they feel good about themselves." When asked about her consistency she said she feels like "I still get mad sometimes and use punishments, but I think I am getting better."

She also identified that they aren't getting any data back from the administration on the effectiveness of PBIS, but still believed the structure of it has helped the school. "I would assume it is working to improve some student behaviors, but I don't know if we have any data on that." Ann did share concerns about the "consistency across the school, but I feel like that will be the case with any system that is used by a diversity of people." When asked about this concern with consistency and a lack of professional development or collaboration, Ann indicated that it might have led to a "diminished vision in the long run. Some of the new teachers probably don't

understand the rules and procedures already." Ann noted that she had attended trainings and has been reading books over the summer to help her understand what she can do to improve her classroom management. She commented that PBIS training and other training experiences have been good to help her "develop my own system of what works."

CW-FIT: Class-Wide, Function-Based Intervention Teams. Ann highlighted the value in CW-FIT for difficult times of the day to get students going, typically after lunch break. "We use it during their hardest times of the day and it seems to make it go better. If we didn't have it, it would just make the environment harder." She elaborated on how she felt about the effectiveness of CW-FIT when she talked about her discussions with other teachers. "I tell them how I really love it. Last year teaching math was a struggle. It was so frustrating. It was right after lunch and they were very unresponsive to anything we did." She believed the reward system helped them to focus quickly, "Students get rewarded for everything good that they do and the kids really find that helpful." When asked about her previous comments regarding too many rewards Ann recants some and states, "They like that and they know that they will be rewarded, so they have a reason to try." She also recognized how this motivates the students to perform and conform.

> I'll start calling them back together [and] if one person isn't coming back to me very quickly the students will say "hey, come on," it's time to get back, because they want their team point. So, in that way, team-wise, it influences their positive behavior support as far as between students too.

Ann did not share any ideas about how she would modify CW-FIT and keeps consistently to the 3-minute timer inside of the 45-minute window of use. She does identify that "it's nice to

modify the team structure of it for certain students who need to monitor themselves." Her other adjustment in practice were "for rewards, I'll come up with two options and let the kids pick between them. I picked most of the rewards at the beginning, but now I'm letting the kids pick more what they want." Her lone observed modification was in her use of the teacher team. She said, "I love that because some of the times during the lessons, and they're not following expectations, it's like teacher point, teacher point, teacher point, and sometimes that works. They don't want to lose to me so they get together." Ann did not recognize this as a modification of the CW-FIT program as it was not clarified in the initial training. When asked specifically about the procedures for CW-FIT she replied, "I didn't think we had anything other than the game rules, timer, scorecard, and rewards idea. I thought it was pretty simple and straightforward."

Ann was considering the longevity of the game and what she perceived as a waning interest by the kids. In a final interview, she talked about her continued consideration of starting up a new plan, "I think I probably will do something different after Thanksgiving break or Christmas break. I'm going to start a new plan. I've been thinking about doing class dojo." Ann also reported that they still had not received any feedback from the weekly reports they were turning in and had no follow-up trainings on CW-FIT. "I haven't had anybody give me any feedback on it or any other kind of training. As far as I know we haven't gotten anything back yet, we've turned in several weeks, but I haven't heard anything yet." Her concern did not seem to be very high for this deficiency, with only limited comments or expressions of interest about the data. "My guess is that we will look through patterns to see if there's some teams that never make it and what maybe some of the problems are there."

Tina's Perspective

Teacher Philosophy. As a veteran teacher, Tina talked often in her interviews about the variety of experiences she has had over the years. Most of them are related to emotions she had as she recalls specific stories of her students. She often shared her belief that students learn better when they feel loved and safe. She related this caregiver philosophy when stating, "I think the most important part of teaching is just caring about the kids and seeing if the kids are feeling loved and involved and safe." When questioned about the role of academics in her teaching philosophy she declared;

> For me, I think we all want them to learn and make progress academically, but I don't think that you really get that until you let the kids know that they're loved and that they are in a good place with someone who does care about them, because they don't always get that at home.

Further, she stated, "I listen to them and I care for them, so it's more like this positive relationship and I find they listen a lot better when they have that relationship."

Tina talked about how her students need to relate to the teacher to feel like they can connect with learning. "The most important part of teaching is just being interested in each child and serious about figuring out what they need, whether it's academic or emotional or behavioral." She discussed how she felt like teachers need to find ways for the students to personally connect with learning and that their job is to help them find it and to make progress. "Every child can succeed, you just must find what helps them along to their success."

In several interview responses Tina related how she felt like they must be changing and doing new things to help the kids. “I think that it’s important that I keep doing new things all the time and coming up with different ways that I can really help the kids.” When asked about her ideas for these changes Tina explained “every child is going to be different and have special needs. I am going to figure it out and help them.” In some of her comments she seemed to feel that her students are somehow helpless to move forward or make progress without her. She seemed to believe that her students are fragile and, in some cases, in need of protection. “They live difficult lives, some of them, and they need someone who cares about them and will meet their needs, to watch out for them.” She often talked about how “you let the kids know that they’re loved and that they are in a good place, that somebody cares, and if I can’t do it this way I’ll find another way.”

Student and Teacher Challenges. Tina expressed that one of her biggest challenges came from the number of English Language Learners (ELL) students in her class each year. When asked about the percentage she typically expects, she guessed 60%. She reported later that “I actually have 75% ELL most years.” When questioned about the number of ELL students and what she does to meet their needs she responded, “I look for data. Normally after a few months into the new school year I try to see how they are testing and if they need a buddy or something.” Tina believed the best method for helping these students is the buddy or grouping system for support. When asked about the data behind her choice of the buddy system intervention she reported, “I try to put a stronger child and group them by [their] ability, or buddy them up, where they can help each other along. I’m trying to match a curriculum pace so getting them going is important.” Further, Tina noted, “I just like it and I think it helps them to feel connections. They

get the socialization while they learn the language." She also replied, "There might be some other ideas out there, but my experience is that this is best."

She identified that the challenges related to this population are found in the curriculum pace and language acquisition. She said, "I've noticed in the degree or the level of their language, I seem to have more that have a lower vocabulary rate, where they don't know all the vocabulary and they don't have all the comprehension skills yet." When asked how the buddy system helps mitigate this deficiency she stated, "It just seems to work well and helps the kids to connect." When questioned about what other interventions she has considered, or any research she has done, she replied, "I don't know of anything else, but I feel like my experiences are good research."

Tina explained that her caring about students often conflicts with the demands of the curriculum. "It's hard to see the kids struggle to pass these tests and get the curriculum done each year, but we buckle down and do it." She believed she was good at identifying behavioral issues that some of the kids are having, but she doesn't talk about her solutions, just the ones enacted by the school. She often responded with, "Some of them have hard lives and I know some of them are coming in tired. I realize that of course they don't really want to learn, of course they have other needs, and they're not going to be able to pay attention." Tina believed that much of the behavioral issues students have were related to physical and emotional deficiencies in their lives.

> I know some of them that they need a coat, especially now that it's cold, and some of them, they don't get this or that at home. How is a kid going to learn when that's what's on their mind first? I'm so glad the school does breakfast and lunch because I know some of the kids don't get it otherwise.

When questioned about implementing new ideas, Tina expressed issues with implementing and felt overloaded already. “I don’t have time already. How am I supposed to try out something when I don’t know that it’s any better than what I already do?” She was resistant to new ideas that she termed as “been there, done that.” She commented often that her time was better spent helping students. Tina believed she was “always trying to meet everyone needs, you know, you do it, but it’s hard sometimes because you need to help them when they need help, regardless of their skills, if they’re advanced or if they’re really struggling.” Time was a factor that Tina saw as restrictive and admits,

> I’ll fall back on things that I just am more comfortable with and then that maybe blocks off some of the new things that I could try, but I don’t just because I don’t feel like I have enough time to really think about it and figure out how to do it. I already have so many things that are demanding my time, so something brand-new or something that, even when it sounds good, I suck at it and think am not sure if I have time to be able to try that. Especially if something comes in during the school year. That makes it very difficult to say, oh yeah, I’m going to commit to try that.

As a veteran teacher, Tina believed that she related to the issues of various classroom dynamics and perceived their impact on the environment, which guided her methods of management. She identified gender issues as being a real challenge for her and did not see this as a teacher bias. She often noted that her “most difficult students are boys. They’re so rough and eager to fight. Girls are much easier and eager to please.” As with several of the other teachers, Tina shared in the belief about Terra’s students having difficult home situations and her role as the teacher in mitigating that. She reiterated often that she believed that all kids need to feel

loved and safe and that this was her first priority as a teacher. Tina believed that negative behaviors were an escalating problem at her school and that the school data would support it. "[It] feels like they're more violent and not as kind to one another. They don't know what being a friend is. So, I think I've seen that over the years and it seems like it's getting worse and worse."

She claimed to use performance data from classroom assessments to "support what my practices are and I'll make adjustments in classroom management if it seems appropriate." Tina identified the issue of meeting individual student needs as being very difficult, claiming, "The challenge of completing curricular requirements and preparing students for testing is conflicting with desires to help my individual students." She expanded her concern, noting, "When you have one who is reading at the beginning of the first grade and another at a fourth grade, how do you do that when you have 24 different kids? I mean, if I help one the other gets bored." This concern is reiterated as she considers her job for the whole class, "It's difficult to address each of those challenges for all 24 students at the same time when you only have an hour to teach this math lesson and they have 24 different perspectives and needs and levels."

When discussing her recent experiences with professional development, she commented about her beliefs regarding PBIS and its effectiveness for students, stating, "It reminds me to be positive, but reaffirms that some don't care about being thanked or in pleasing the teacher." Even as a veteran teacher she worried and reflected,

> I am always trying to figure out discipline. [It's] a battle I keep fighting to figure out and establish clear rules and guidelines. There are two or three students that could care less if I'm giving out positive supports. They don't seem to care one way or the other if I'm

saying I like how the student is doing something, or I like how that student as being respectful, or [I] like how or love how or any of those kinds of things, but I think that for the rest of the class that really do like that."

Her recognition of this reality for many students was noted and shared by several of the other teachers at Terra. "It is very supportive of what they're trying to do and they enjoy the recognition and it does have an influence. I think that it's very beneficial for them." Still, she believed the root cause of many behavioral issues was that "we know that those come a lot of times from their home environments, and so we're trying to help them to learn how to treat others and to take responsibility for their actions in their lives."

Tina holds the belief about how her students see themselves in a Title I school and what that means for them. She believed that a Title I school might promote an image of "students with bad home situations and students who have academic disadvantages." When she discussed her students out-of-school experiences, she felt that while home might be good, the likelihood of home problems (e.g., lack of food and clothes, lack of parenting, lack of academic support) was prominent.

Student Growth Beliefs. Tina was very anecdotal in her stories when asked to discuss her beliefs about what success is. She preferred to tell individual student stories to describe successes. "I have a very hard student this year, who the other day he left, and he gave me a hug, and the other teachers have never seen that, and so that was just kind of nice." She explains this belief further, stating, "oh yeah, I'm making a difference in your life, and so that's what I'm hoping for, to make some kind a difference in their lives." She shared stories about students who had hard lives and were going to fail until she stepped in.

> There is one student who was early on in third grade and basically his parents had given up. He had had a horrible home life and, I don't know the whole story, but I know enough of it. He'd given up on himself and he just didn't think he could learn. He told me that he thought he was stupid. He said, "I can't learn," and I sat down to work with him and he's now in high school and is doing great.

She explained that he comes to visit her to talk about life and goals. More broadly she reflected on "some of my hardest classes still come back to me, and I see them and I think, okay, they were the ones that at least they know that I care, and if nothing else I'll care about them."

Growth was broadly described as when a student "gets it" and connects with the concept she was teaching.

> Watching the light go on when they get it, like, I understand when the concept reaches them and they know what they're doing. For them it's a real big thing when that light comes on and suddenly they go from here to here.

When asked to explain she continued, "That growth when they get it, and they're doing it, and they're proud of themselves, and they feel like shouting 'I'm doing it,' that's neat to see." As she reflected on what her perception of growth is Tina explained that "giving them those tools and saying, it might be hard, but you can do it." She commented often about how she wanted to teach students to understand: "I love those aha moments where those kids suddenly have confidence in themselves and say, 'I can do this,' and they realize that they can do hard things."

Management Programs. In interviews Tina discussed ideas about helping kids recognize ownership of their responsibility for their actions. "Instead of saying she [the teacher] is giving me this punishment, they need to recognize that they did this and that this is what can

happen." Tina talked about teaching responsibility and discusses the consequences of student actions, good and bad, as essential parts of her management plan.

> We talk a lot about choices, where we have consequences for the choices we make, some consequences we enjoy and are great, and some consequences are not as fun. So, if I chose not to do my work when I was supposed to do it, then I'm choosing to do my work during another time where there might be something I wanted to do instead. So, they're just responsible for their choices in their learning.

Observation of her classroom revealed the most defining and separating factor between this teacher and the others. While she talked about holding kids accountable and used similar ideas in her classroom, she recognized that she was inconsistent with behavior management practices. She shared,

> I think I'm stronger with classroom management now. That's probably my strongest, although some days I wonder. I think some of my weaknesses is that sometimes I don't follow through. I should make sure that I'm consistent all the time. I can be consistent and sometimes [I'm] just tired.

As a veteran teacher, Tina seemed aware of educational concepts and terms well enough to discuss knowledgably the various plans and programs that had been promoted over the years of her service. A variety of these terms were evident in her discussion of classroom practices. However, having participated in recent PBIS training, these specific practices should have been in evidence in her classroom. "I think being courteous and saying stuff like 'thank you' is good. Showing kindness helps the kids to understand how they should act. So, I try and say that. It's a good reminder from the positive training that we've done." When asked what she learned from

the PLC+ training beyond the "thank you" messages she replied, "You have to set the boundaries first and then you can start the teaching after that, but if you don't have those boundaries then the kids are lost out in the field and not ready to come back and listen."

The management system discussed often by Tina used a "button drop" where students got rewarded in their group for doing "good," which could be anything the teacher wants to reward. She described it as "a management system by putting the buttons in the jars." She explained, "The buttons are different sizes, and they can see in the cups, that's why I did those, because all week long nobody can tell who's winning and then at the end we count the buttons." She also referred to other programs she's tried, noting, "We used to do row points on the board where the kids would be sitting on the carpet. I found that if one row gets way ahead then the others just give up." She also has a variety of other rewards and levels in her management systems.

> I always do, like we've talked about the Olympics, we have the silver and the gold and the bronze. I may give a gold prize and the silver prize and a bronze prize to the teams, and I hope that they would all want to tie, then I can give everybody the same prize.

Observations note that awards are most often given for students being on task and quiet, however she did use her rewards to gain compliance for other desired behaviors.

> What I try to do is if somebody is messing around I'll do the row in front of them and say, oh, I like how this row in front is sitting, and so I may give them a button. Usually if you do the one around them, or the one near them, the other kids are like, oh, they got a button, I wish I'd gotten a button, and so they'll emulate the behavior.

Tina also stated that she preferred to give out levels of rewards so that students don't give up and stop trying. "You try everything in your bag of tricks to see if they will follow along there

with something that works." She consistently stated the belief that the students will only stay engaged if offered a reward. When asked if this is counter to her idea of that students can be accountable and responsible without them she responded, "maybe, but they're so young and they don't understand such big ideas."

Tina utilized various behavior and academic tracking charts, some visible and others in private binders. She has used classroom dojo as well and talked about how "positive behaviors tracking is similar." Tina preferred group scoring games tracked on the board, which often include a column for the teacher for times when students were off task and she awarded herself a point. She shared some of these ideas with her PLC referring to them as "tools in the toolbox." She also referred to going to her toolbox when individual students weren't responding to what she was doing.

> I have a different system going [for them]. For one I have a sticker chart, for another, if he doesn't hit back or engage back with this other student, then he gets a sticker. Once they get five stickers they get to choose a reward, like iPad time for five minutes or personal reward time.

When students do not respond to rewards, Tina believed a punitive method was appropriate to gain compliance. "If they're not following directions after I've warned them then they start losing 30 seconds of recess." She noted her belief that "there are two or three students that could care less if I'm giving out positive supports. They don't seem to care one way or the other."

The PLC that Tina was a member of had an intern teacher with whom she shared lesson planning and materials. Tina said she was not an official school mentor and stated that she had

not been asked to be one for this beginning teacher. When asked what data they discuss and how that effects their PLC time, she referred to "past developed grade-level and district-level lesson plans and an established curriculum as a guide." She stated that she "would rather have this structure for pacing and assessments for her teaching methods." While Tina felt that she recognized deficiencies in student learning, her solution was to do "reteaching for the whole group if enough don't seem to have understood the material and then using the smart kids to lead teams." Tina expressed concern often that the students may not get through the material in time to be prepared for testing or the end of a term. "I feel like so far, this year spent a lot of time on behavior and management and I feel like the academic side has suffered a bit."

Tina expressed her goal to use a system that would get students to emulate the behaviors she wants. Beliefs about this management system are defined in her statement, "You try everything in your bag of tricks to see if they will follow along there with something that works." In establishing this system, Tina talked about her start-of-the-year practice and training of students. She expressed a belief that they were consistent and established routines. In one interview, she explained, "We start the year out with clear rules and expectations, practice procedures, and get them down pat." While she stated that this was her initial practice she does continue to expound, "I get tired of it sometimes, maybe just tired, but you just want the kids to get it and behave so you can move forward and maybe I am not as consistent later." A qualifier of tiredness was added to her philosophy statement as she changed her mind about consistency.

Tina was asked about the more effective plans she has utilized and how they worked. She commented, "I was using dojo; it helped me keep track of everything online and then they [students] can see it, or I could post it and then they can see if they are following directions and

doing what they're supposed to." Continuing to explain its usefulness, she stated, "They get a point and sometimes I gave out the warnings, and it pops up on the screen with a sound so they know if they are not doing what they need or not following directions." The punitive tracking was also highlighted, "If they are being disrespectful to another student, if they hit them or take something away, then they automatically lose a point." When asked why she abandoned this system, she stated that it "got boring for the kids and took too much effort to maintain."

Beliefs about the three or four students who she claims do not care about positive comments or supports, runs throughout Tina's interviews. She referred to "needing alternative plans for these students and to utilize punishments to gain compliance." She stated,

> What I see as positive for these kids, is that it keeps everything at a higher level, but when there is the negative consequence, if they can understand that it was something that they chose to have happen, not that somebody was being mean to them, or are saying that they had to do this. It's because you did this, and so this is the result and I'm sorry you feel sad, but you made that choice.

There was also discussion about how the constant emphasis on behavior management has cost her progress on the academic side, making it difficult to cover the material and stay on track with the district pacing guide. After the semester of training on PBIS in the PLC+ faculty trainings, she noted that opportunities to look at other ideas were presented by the school. This lead her to concerns about what works, as she shared, "I went to a school conference suggested by [the principal] and am considering how those might be used in my classroom." Whether this additional training resulted in mixed messages from the administration on expectations for the coming school year, or not, Tina remained steadfast in her original ideas about management. "In

my classroom, I want to focus a lot more on them taking responsibility, but also for them to realize how their actions are affecting others." These statements of ideas related to student responsibility and awareness are typical of Tina's perspective.

School Programs. When asked about school programs, Tina expressed the belief that the school is "very focused on tracking data on students, much more than other schools." Her ideas on school programs fall into several categories. In reference to school attempts to support teachers in behavior management, she discussed the training done over the summer. "I think that most teachers went to the visible learning conference this summer. I think we're trying to implement some of those strategies [PBIS], and we have been, but I think we need to get more strategies from the visible learning conference, you know, the whole mindset things."

When discussing administrative observations and feedback she explained "When [the principal] comes in she'll leave me a little note on how often I will say positive reinforcers versus negative or corrective things with the kids." When asked about other programs in the school that she utilized, Tina discussed briefly how she liked to use Character Ed or Character Counts lessons and Prevention Dimension. Regarding PBIS specifically, Tina often referred to it as "the positive supports stuff" and appears to view it as another tool, not an overarching philosophy. Flight center is referenced as a quick solution for an incident or a place to go for "students who can't figure out how to behave." She also referred to having a "time out area in the SPED room for that student population." She recalled the school weekend food program that "helps the poor kids," but doesn't know the details of how that is administered. "They give them food. They really care about them. Our administration really cares about these kids and wants the best for them. They do all these programs so that they can get food on the weekends." When

discussing the programs she sees as helping support the students in positive ways, Tina referenced the use of technology, stating, "We try to use that to keep them engaged with Imagine Learning and i-Ready."

Professional Development. In interviews about professional development, Tina discussed how it was interesting that PBIS was the focus last year for behavior and classroom management and how it was like many ideas she had encountered.

> I like to know the new things that are out there so I can pick and choose among the advancements that have been made of different ideas. Sometimes it's just a reminder of things I have done too. Or, you know, I'll say, oh that's something I didn't think of. I really like that. This adds more to that toolbox of things that I can use in my teaching.

She commented that flexibility was important as well as understanding the students, "You don't want to be a stagnant teacher. I have different kids now, and every year they have different needs. So, there's different areas that you have to try to reach them and they're not all the same."

She made an important observation that the principal and school facilitator (coach) both "talk about utilizing consequences and punishment interventions" that were not in line with PBIS. She believed they do this alternative training with all the new teachers. Tina expressed her confusion, as the facilitator was one of the selected trainers for the PLC+ training, but the facilitator talked with her often about how "different kids have different needs. Sometimes they need hard consequences." Tina often commented, "By doing different things you are a problem solver." Tina often referred to these ideas as "things," the positive thing, the mindset thing, and so on. Another prevalent comment was, "I think sometimes the professional development is stuff

that I've already done, and it would be a good option to be able to say, "I've done this, can I do something different. There are other things that I could use the time for" and "this endorses what I already believed." Tina felt that much of what they were learning was of limited value, as it was more of a refresher or reminder.

Data Use. Tina is vague on what data she valued and used and what she learned from their many assessments.

> We assess them every week on what the main skills were [from lessons] and what we were trying to teach that week. We can do interventions if they're not understanding and enrichments if they've got it and need to go on. We do our PLCs and then we do our assessments for the week and decide what they need to know. We're sharing data.

She referred to Google docs to share data with her PLC, but none of the other teachers in her PLC talked about this document or sharing data. She seemed to disagree within the grade level on what they looked at in their PLCs as well. When discussing her PLC, she commented,

> We just go through and we talk about these kids that need help, and what are some of the options and ideas, and how we can address it and help them. We track both behavioral and academic data in the Google doc, but it depends on the child, but it seems like the majority of it is tracked on the academic side.

In a later interview, Tina observed,

> Most of the time we have to look at the academic, but I'll be honest, most of the time we like to look at our behavior data and talk about how we can help each other, because if we have one student making us crazy you can't get it done. So, it's almost more behavior

than academic. I mean we look at and try to figure how can bring these scores up but mostly it's behavioral.

She referred to specific assessments that helped her with measuring reading levels, but she referred only to general student progress when discussing the other assessments being given.

Tina shared that PLC time was mostly used to discuss the weekly assignments and exchange lesson plans, which included individual content area assignments, giving out materials, and sticking to a set pacing schedule. Tina conveyed that "we have discussions on data and include lesson planning around what that data is telling us." She talked about how they "share strategies that have worked in the past to engage students who may not be performing well." When asked about the value of her PLC, she referred to having "a team at grade level to share assessments and lesson plans so that they can divide the work up and not have to do it all themselves." When asked if her data use had changed with recent PBIS trainings, or any other recent professional development, Tina confessed that she used "the data that makes sense" and tried to understand if the rest had any value, but she had "enough to do without sorting through useless information."

PLC Responses. As discussed, Tina saw the PLC as a "share the workload" support plan. "We look at the whole outline of the curriculum to where we need to go next and we look at our district pacing guides and district curriculum just to see where they're at." She continued, "We have to decide what they need and if they have holes that need to be filled in, if they've got it, and if they're ready to go on. We share all of our flip charts and our different plans." In her PLC, they assign out who will be in charge of making the lesson plans, flipcharts, and assessments for specific content areas for the upcoming week.

> When we're sharing data, and our students maybe did really well on this, and so we want to share why we think they did. Well, we're using the same flipchart, so maybe there was different things we said, or we brought in different things. Maybe we had a different way of presenting things that maybe they didn't think of.

This is what she saw as the best purpose of the PLC, to share in the utilization of the curriculum guide already set by the district and to discuss concepts of practices for lessons.

Tina did identify the requirement for reporting on the Google doc for sharing, but she gave no other comments that relate to its use and value other than as a storage plan for scores as required by the administration. She described her shared use in the following way:

> We put it in Google docs so the whole grade level sees it. Then we just go through and we talk about these kids that need help, and what are some of the options and ideas, and how we can address it and help them. We track both behavioral and academic data in the Google doc, but it depends on the child.

When asked what the division of labor for this PLC was like, Tina responded,

> We trade out, like right now I'm doing math for the whole team, another one does language arts, another one [the intern] is doing the newsletters and doing whatever else we need. The thing I do like though is that when I'm able to meet with my PLC and we're able to share the workload and give each other, you know, these are the worksheets that I'm using, here's my lesson plans for the next week, or even for the next month, this is what we're going to do. I know that they've looked at the curriculum and so they've got all of the ideas. That makes it so I have to spend less time with that kind of planning and more time thinking about my individual kids and what I can do to help them.

She believed that the PLC had its district curriculum scope and sequence, and collaboration was "just more of coming up with the activities and the assessments that we want to use for those topics."

Tina believed that they looked at data and then did planning in their PLC time, but she didn't share any specifics of that data analysis other than discussing needs to reteach or in looking for better teaching strategies. Tina saw collaboration as "sharing games, worksheets, and other resources to support their teaching strategies." The PLC was for convenience:

> All of us are teaching the same thing and using the same assessments, which is really nice because I have support. I feel like my team does more for me, like instruction, because we all get together and have so many resources, and have all those flip charts, and all those worksheets and they say, "do this" or "try that" in there, and have the games ready, and they tell you what they're planning on doing, or if they did something the day before and they'll say "try this game because it really worked out well" so that's been nice for helping with teaching.

Tina related that some structure for collaboration between grade levels was already in place and was a good indicator of good school practices.

> Last year we went with [previous grade level teachers] and said, okay this child, what do you know, what can we do, what can you help me with, what can you tell me from last year. Then I was able to move on with planning.

While the support they had was to share lesson plans and workloads, she said they felt that this was beneficial to their goal of teaching and keeping progress. When asked about how

this PLC was mentoring the intern in their group, she said she believed that the intern appreciated the organizational part and can focus on classroom management skills.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. After participating in the school-level PLC+ training, Tina still seemed to have a diminished view of PBIS, making several comments about it being a tool with its "little timer" and "little signs" and "little activities." These minimizing comments intuit how Tina viewed PBIS as another option to get students to behave. When discussing what PBIS was and how she utilized it, she reduced it to two aspects: CW-FIT and saying positive things (ratio of positive to negative comments). When asked how PBIS was working in her classroom she responded,

> The kids love the CW-FIT; they love the little timer and the rewards. We didn't do CW-FIT until this year. We just did the teaching strategy and instructional strategy and then a few of the positive rewards things. I know all the positive behavior stuff, and I know that positiveness makes a huge difference. I've seen it over the years, but even more so when you're aware, you know, of how much praise you've given on a ratio to the other thing.

She talked about her level of implementation commitment, stating,

> I kind of knew it anyways, but it was just another reinforcement of it for me and learning here are some of the ways you can do it in your class and some of the things that you can do. Mostly it just reinforced stuff that I do. We have our little signs, and we do our little timers, and we change our little activities.

When questioned about the value of the training she participated in and how that affected her classroom use, she noted, "I've pretty much just done it the way that they've told me to. I mean I'm thinking about how we did things in the different trainings and other things that I've

been doing and tried to do for a long time." In addressing the value of the PLC+ training she noted, "I think it's a good idea, the positive behaviors." Most of what she saw as positive comments was the "thank you" and "good job" statements that are evidenced in observations.

When discussing the evidence of success, she related her belief that the "hallways are quieter" and that "teachers are speaking the same language." Further evidence of this minimization is noted when Tina speaks of PBIS in this way:

> The positive thing has really helped; it's made me think about it differently. So, it kind of endorses what I already believed, but maybe it helped focus me more and more and it gave me ideas on how to train them on how to do things on how to sit and follow directions and to be able to do that in a positive way.

There was little or no adoption of the PBIS philosophy with Tina as she continued to do what she claims to have always done, including punishments.

> I'll praise them, and I tried that before I correct them, just to remind them that they need to check themselves and remember how they're supposed to be in the hallway, and how do they show respect, and try and put the behaviors on them and what they need to do to be a respectful person versus me expecting something from them. If not, they get recess taken away. So, they are responsible for their actions and they put themselves on the wall because they are the ones talking.

The one exception to this is when Tina is observed by administration, as the report from the principal includes the counting of positive vs. corrective comments.

> When [the principal] comes in she'll leave me a little note on how often I will say positive reinforcers versus negative or corrective things with the kids. That helps me to

> think more about how often I'm saying, "thank you" and telling the kids that I appreciate the things that they're doing. I think for me it was mostly just a wake up.

Tina commented how she has used a variety of behavior plans but also punished students when she believed "the positive isn't working with them."

During early training observations Tina wore the timer and cue cards. In her first interview, she commented,

> I hated that monitor thing on me, but I think it really helped train me to look, you know to say, "oh, look you know, so-and-so is doing something really good" and so it reminded me to give them positive praise. I find that sometimes, I'm thinking [I] haven't done that for a while, and with that timer it helps you.

She believed that if the administration wanted them to do more praise "they'll give it back to help monitor, if they wanted me to do that. At times, it's just nice to be reminded that I hadn't said anything positive for a while." Tina's beliefs about the consistency and feedback from training were probably contributing to her beliefs about the value of PBIS, maybe even concluding with her viewing it as punitive to her or beneath her experience.

CW-FIT: Class-Wide, Function-Based Intervention Teams. Tina was the slowest to start using CW-FIT according to the school reports she turned in to the office. Startup for use in her classroom was three weeks after everyone else, with her initial use only occurring a few times over one week and then not again for a several weeks. Tina talked about using CW-FIT with tier 1 math and literacy class time but gave no time frame or reasons for using it in these areas other than that it is when they are at carpet. She noted, "that's the biggest time that they're on the rug and so it makes sense to use it then." The modifications that occur are noted when she

began using CW-FIT again weeks after her first attempt. In response to shifts in practice time she discussed,

> Tier 1 is an hour and so we'll do multiple rewards during that time. They just can't sit that long and so I don't do it for the whole time. I don't make them do it for a whole hour: we'll do 20 or 25, maybe 30 minutes max. The kids seem to like free time or extra recess. It's kind of their go-to.

She believed CW-FIT was similar to other things she had done, with the most common goal for students being to get extra recess time for compliant behavior. On some days, all students got the reward if they beat the teacher. "I've always done activities where you can get five extra minutes' recess if you beat me." There was some realization of the value and effectiveness of CW-FIT as Tina talked about what they did in class and the kids' responses. "I'm starting to hear different things people are doing and I'm like 'oh, I need to let the kids choose the reward.'"

When asked about her beliefs regarding students performing well to receive the goal achievement reward, Tina expressed the idea that

> they really try to be on their best behavior. The first few times I did it, some teams didn't make the goal and they were so upset. That's been enough that they're good now because they know that if they don't earn their points then they don't get the reward time.

Tina did eventually see the effectiveness of the CW-FIT intervention and utilized it similarly to other teachers. She stated,

> I'll try to praise the teams that are doing that correct stuff and give them points. If they're still talking or off focus I'll say "oh, I would've loved to give all the team points, but

they're not on task" or "they're not doing what they're supposed to," but I was trying say that next time I'm sure they will be.

As is recorded in her interviews, she believed all students should get a reward to stay motivated to participate. This is noted in her giving levels of rewards that typically are divided into varying periods of extra recess. She recalled that reward ideas were talked about in the initial training but did not recall the list given or the directive to let students suggest ideas. She explained, "It works well. I only got started after two-and-a-half or three weeks so I don't remember if I'm missing anything."

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

School leaders and university partners identified the PLC+ initiative as a way to help low-achieving students succeed in school by improving classroom behavior. The PLC+ implementation plan followed by the districts in this study was similar to that of other public education professional development processes. Partner districts selected pilot schools that the district felt would benefit from classroom management and behavioral supports training and that had administrators willing to implement PBIS in their schools. The PLC+ training was organized, locations and dates for training were scheduled with teachers selected from each school, and participant surveys were prepared. Results from the research suggest the training was executed well. Satisfaction and feedback surveys were utilized to guide future trainings. Coaches met with designated pilot school faculties to support administrators and teachers in local schools as they implemented the program. Overall, the training and support process appeared to be sufficient to meet implementation goals. Still, it was clear that over time not all the teachers and staff implemented PBIS with fidelity. The perceptions and experiences of the teachers affected the degree to which they understood and implemented the PBIS program in their classroom.

If a teacher failed to fully implement the PBIS philosophy as it was presented and practiced in the PLC+ trainings, it could be due to a lack of understanding of PBIS principles or a low functioning PLC, or both. The teachers in this study all received the PLC+ training. Data from interviews indicated that they had a good understanding of PBIS and the various aspects of the program. The participants all believed that they understood the philosophy of PBIS and contended that they were fully implementing the required components of the initiative. In this regard, the perspective of each teacher was unique in their beliefs about fidelity of

implementation and their understanding of the scope and philosophy of PBIS. Some had reduced it to "useful tool" status, to be utilized for helping students feel good about positive behaviors and for creating a common language to talk about behavior with others in the school. Others were actively evaluating the effects of PBIS strategies and adapting their classroom management structures to assimilate PBIS strategies, for example, flexible workspaces. Teachers' approaches to implementation seemed to fall into three general categories: the believers, the undecided, and the minimizers.

Implementation Approach: Groups

The believers. Of the teachers in this study, Beth's story represented those who have most fully bought into the program and were implementing it, not just in the prescribed way, but also in novel and innovative ways that improved the outcomes. In terms of the CBAM framework (Giancola, 2000), the degree to which the believers implemented the program was at the *impact* level. That is to say, they were concerned not just that they implemented the program (which they were also doing), but also with how well they implemented it in order to maximize the effect. Their level of use was high, as they were making or considering changing PBIS practices to increase learning outcomes. They asked questions about how PBIS was affecting their students (consequences), how they could relate what they were doing to what others were doing (collaboration), and how they could make it work better (refocusing). They were making deliberate efforts to coordinate and collaborate with others in their PLC and elsewhere and were considering more effective alternatives to the basic prescribed use of PBIS.

The undecided. The undecided group was embodied by Ann's story and represents the middle-of-the-road fence sitters. In the CBAM framework, these individuals were at the *self-*

level. They ask questions about how the PBIS program might affect them personally, noting that they often believe they are spending all of their time getting materials ready (management). Their levels of use fell into the routine and mechanical. They were implementing the program but were concerned more than they did it, not necessarily how well they did it or what impact it was having. Teachers in this group made few or no changes to the patterns established in the PLC+ training. Any changes they made were to help them be better organized in their personal use of PBIS.

The minimizers. Tina represented those who were non-believers, or minimizers. Even though they attended the training, they still had a relatively low level of understanding regarding PBIS (awareness) and still felt they needed to know more about PBIS (informational). In general, they did not value the PBIS philosophy likely because they were comfortable with what they were already doing. Their levels of use could be categorized as *orientation* and *preparation*. They took some initiative to learn more about PBIS and utilized elements of it in their practices but typically continued to manage their classroom as they had in the past. Each of these teachers implemented PBIS strategies but only at a minimum.

Implementation Issues

Feedback. A critical aspect of the after-training implementation for this program was administrative support intended to provide ongoing training through observation feedback. As was noted by all teachers in this study, the administrative follow-through with support, guidance, and booster trainings was somewhat superficial in nature after the training. Administrators were very busy, and the initiative included a university advisor who did provide support. However, most often follow-up support was limited to structured observations that counted the number of

positive vs. negative comments made or looked-for evidence that the PBIS approach was being utilized. The message that this gave teachers was that they needed to comply: they needed to be seen doing the program. Feedback regarding impact was less forthcoming.

For the undecided and minimizers this minimal feedback reinforced their perception of the value of the initiative. The undecided were struggling to see value in the process but were focused on implementation. The minimizers did not see value in the program, and this type of feedback reinforced their perception. The believers were beyond this type of feedback; they already saw value in the process. They would have benefited more from collaborative discussions about what was working and what could be done to maximize the program's impact.

Impact and implementation perceptions. The data seems to indicate that the program was working, but this might have led to somewhat deceiving conclusions of how well the initiative was being implemented. The behavior data, i.e., office referrals and incident reports, were down. However, there was evidence that not all teachers were committed to the implementation of PBIS and the PLC+ aspects of the initiative. There are several plausible explanations for this. Often in cases like this, the faculty feel pressure from the district to participate in the training after receiving low assessment scores and then feel a need to demonstrate a commitment to "turning things around" within the school even though they may not fully "buy in" to the program (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, & Foleno, 2001). While the change in data appears to show a decline in inappropriate student behaviors, suggesting a positive effect in the classroom, the actual impact on student behaviors was viewed differently by teachers and administration. The administration believed that the training was successful; reported inappropriate behaviors were down and teachers were utilizing more positive comments in their

classrooms. Responses from teachers to the administration reflected the benefit of a common language within the school as well as the usefulness of CW-FIT. On the other hand, all the teachers reported in interviews that they felt behaviors were getting worse, specifically more incidences of violence and bullying. Some of the teachers went further with this explanation to describe their belief that by reporting incidences to the office they were demonstrating their lack of ability to manage students. So, while reported incidences declined, inappropriate student behaviors may not have.

On the surface, teachers in all three groups appeared to be implementing the initiative. However, the commitment and quality of implementation varied by group. The believers were implementing with a quality that focused on impact. The undecided implemented aspects of the program to the best of their ability to comply but often wondered if there might be something better they could try. The minimizers implemented the initiative only to the degree they felt they needed to. To the casual observer, all were implementing the program as they were trained to do.

Ongoing training and additional programs. Teachers are often inundated with a variety of programs designed to help them improve student learning (Farkas et al., 2001). Terra Elementary is no exception. A plethora of ideas from professional development and research grants were presented to these teachers with the expectation that they would implement these ideas and strategies. During the time frame of this study, Terra Elementary teachers participated in faculty book readings; monthly district trainings on math, science, and ELL instructional strategies; SPED intervention strategies training; summer seminars; recertification coursework; and PLC+ training. At times, the teachers at Terra Elementary expressed feelings of being overwhelmed and often felt that most of these ideas and strategies were optional. They simply

could not implement them all, and they valued each of them with varying degrees of enthusiasm or a lack thereof.

The decision to introduce CW-FIT to teachers as an element of PBIS at the start of the new school year could be considered follow-up training, but only in that it was to be implemented as a part of the previous training and understood as a part of the PBIS philosophy. CW-FIT was to be a refresher for teachers on the PLC+ training. It was intended to be implemented with PBIS and was to include feedback and collaboration. There was no feedback given on CW-FIT in the first semester (fall 2016) and teachers were confused as to how the two were to be integrated.

Having agreed to participate in the PLC+ training and having conducted faculty training over several months, the administration and faculty shared mixed messages on continued PBIS implementation. This was epitomized when teachers at Terra Elementary were encouraged to attend summer trainings that focused on the works of John Hattie (Visible Learning) and Carol Dweck (Mindset) rather than develop a specific training for PBIS, or a startup PLC+ for new teachers and interns. As a result, no PBIS training in August was conducted with the support of the university coach, as was the original plan. This again seemed to de-emphasize the importance and priority of PLC+ trainings from the previous spring. Even with the introduction of CW-FIT, the priority for PBIS was tenuous for the undecideds and minimizers who may have seen this as the continuation of the PBIS "management plan," reinforcing their belief that PBIS was a useful tool among the many they possessed but not necessarily a priority.

Data and perceptions. An issue in prior years at Terra Elementary was the misinterpretation or misrepresentation of behavioral data. As has been described, data changes

from year to year (starting in 2014) appeared to be inconsistent. In order to solve this problem, and in anticipation of the PLC+ training, school administrators participated in School-Wide Information Systems (SWIS) training. The SWIS data was to be collected by the administration and was intended to provide teachers with behavioral data they could use in their PLCs. Additionally, when considering the three-year trends from SWIS data, a significant change occurred that appeared to have been a motivating piece for the district decision to include Terra Elementary as a pilot school in the PLC+ training. If the reported three-year behavior data was to be trusted as accurate, the school had already seen a decrease in reported incidences prior to the PLC+ trainings. The minimizers may have seen this as evidence that what they were doing was working.

As noted previously, a critical part of the PLC+ training was to have teachers track, report, and discuss behavior data within their PLCs. For successful implementation of PBIS, steady collection and use of behavioral data with decision-making is essential (McIntosh et al., 2014). According to teachers at Terra Elementary, no analysis or feedback on SWIS behavioral data was shared with teachers in any consistent or meaningful way. Teachers expressed concern that the reporting process was not working. The accruing data report they submitted was not being entered, and therefore no meaningful summary data was available. Additionally, teachers did not believe it was necessary to collect behavioral data to collaborate with others regarding tiers of interventions. Teachers consistently referred to the personal collection of behavior data for their use and planning. There was some sharing reported within the PLCs when teachers felt they needed ideas to manage a specific student's behaviors. Data was also used and shared with the school behavior team when a student exhibited inappropriate behavior beyond the capacity of

the teacher to manage. In these instances, the behavior team would advance a student to interventions that most often involved the administration and the flight center.

In interviews, the concept of tiered behavior interventions was rarely discussed by any of the groups of teachers. This was partly due to lack of access to summary data. Teachers' perceptions on reporting data that would involve the administration in the intervention process conveyed a concerning message of classroom management expectations and the ability of teachers to do their job. Likely the only reason teachers collected and reported behavior data was that an administrative team required teachers to present their history of interventions with a specific student when they needed to get involved. All of the teachers in this study noted that there had not been any PLC+ follow-up trainings or school-wide behavior data collaboration after the initial PLC+ training. This was an important piece of the PLC+ training that was to be a consistent part of regular PLC or professional development time.

PLC. An important aspect of the PLC+ training was that some PLC time was to be allocated to the discussion of behavior data. This did not happen in any meaningful way. Teachers continued to utilize PLC time for academic data analysis and lesson planning. This was specifically noted at the start of the new school year when implementation was planned to be at its fullest. The belief that academic data was still the PLC priority is reflected in the commitment to past practices rather than adoption of the new behavioral management philosophy as found in in the PLC+ training. As a support for implementation in PLCs, evaluations needed to occur regularly to determine the effective use of behavioral data in developing tiered support for struggling students (Lee et al., 2011).

This missing part of implementation was observed in the mixed messages about positive supports and tiered planning for interventions. Having members of the school-level PLC+ training team give advice contrary to the philosophy of PBIS, namely encouraging punitive measures for non-compliant students, minimized the effectiveness of the training and demonstrated a misunderstanding of the PBIS philosophy. In addition, during training they recommended that PLC teams collect behavioral data and collaborate to determine tiered strategies for difficult students without any notable follow-up to emphasize this action within the PLC time frame. Making contrary recommendations created a confusing and resistant culture for changing classroom management and school expectations.

The PLC+ implementation plan emphasized that collaboration and data sharing was critical for success. Believers made connections with others within and outside of their PLCs for collaboration. They recognized the value of PBIS in their professional experience and worked to encourage others within their school to use the behavior data to improve the effectiveness of the PBIS program. For the minimizers, the time would be better spent on other more productive endeavors. They felt they were successfully managing behavior in their classrooms and wanted to focus on student achievement. The undecided teachers found themselves in the middle, generally due to their relatively new experiences as teachers and their developing perspective of what works in classroom management. Minimizers are difficult to sway into adoption of a new philosophy, not because they do not see some value in implementing some aspects of PBIS but because they are believers in what they are already doing. Undecideds may be persuaded to implement a new philosophy like PBIS but only if they begin to see some benefit. Most of the PLCs at Terra Elementary had a mixture of teachers from each adoption group. And while the

believers may have been able to demonstrate the effectiveness of data collection and analysis, the minimizers were equally convinced that their practices produced good results as well.

Conclusions

Implementing change is difficult. Typically, implementation efforts to install a new teaching strategy like PBIS fail or succeed for a variety of reasons. Blame or credit cannot be assigned to one specific aspect of the training or to an individual for the success or failure of an initiative. Implementing change is a dynamic, complicated endeavor; we cannot expect that all the participants will value the initiative to the same degree. If it is essential that the change be made, special efforts need to be made to understand the individuals involved and adapt follow-up efforts to personalize the formative feedback we give.

The perceptions of the teachers at Terra Elementary school and the specific use of PLCs to improve PBIS strategies implementation was the focus of this study. The concept of the community of practice as envisioned by Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) states that "communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (p. 4). The community of practice at Terra Elementary embodies the multiple perspectives and varying levels of teaching passion for the PBIS program they were expected to implement. While the teachers involved may have had a shared concern, there was not a shared passion for the PBIS initiative. Each of the teachers involved in the PLC process valued PBIS in different ways but were inundated with additional ideas and strategies that they or someone else felt would be important for them to consider. The interaction between participants was shaped by their beliefs about new initiatives, and their

willingness to accept it as a viable solution to their classroom problems, which in this case was improving student behavior.

In many ways, this is a problem of becoming. Bloom's taxonomy for the affective domain refers to becoming as the development of a value complex (Krathwohl, Bloom, Masia, 1964). In reality, training can only hope to guide individuals through the first two levels of the affective domains (receiving and responding). We can present information and evaluate the level of understanding of the participants. We can help individuals to better understand what it is, how to do it, and why it might be important. The individuals themselves must do the rest, as we cannot force them to value anything. As is the case with minimizers, given the political impetus of teachers to at least attempt to implement a new strategy like PBIS, teachers may express some interest and even attempt to implement a new initiative to some degree. This attempt, however, will be only a temporary change if they do not truly see value in implementing the program. For the believers, the process of internalizing, resolving conflicts, overcoming issues, and adapting the program as needed to improve outcomes is a part of becoming. These are the individuals who will continue with a strategy long after the program has lost its funding or administrative priority emphasis.

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APPENDIX A: Affective Evaluation Domains

Receiving: Awareness, willingness to hear, selected attention.

Responding: Active participation on the part of the learners. Attends and reacts to a phenomenon. Learning outcomes may emphasize compliance in responding, willingness to respond, or satisfaction in responding (motivation).

Valuing: The worth or value a person attaches to a particular object, phenomenon, or behavior. This ranges from simple acceptance to the more complex state of commitment. Valuing is based on the internalization of a set of specified values, while clues to these values are expressed in the learner's overt behavior and are often identifiable.

Organizing and Conceptualizing: Organizes values into priorities by contrasting different values, resolving conflicts between them, and creating a unique value system. The emphasis is on comparing, relating, and synthesizing values.

Characterizing/Becoming (internalizing values): Person has a value system that controls their behavior. The behavior is pervasive, consistent, predictable, and most importantly, characteristic of the learner. Instructional objectives are concerned with the student's general patterns of adjustment (personal, social, emotional).

APPENDIX B: Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)

Table 1

Stages of Concern

Dimension	Stage	Expression of Concern
Impact	6 Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5 Collaboration	How can I relate what I am doing to what others are doing?
	4 Consequence	How is my use affecting learners? How can I refine it to have more impact?
Task	3 Management	I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready.
Self	2 Personal	How will using it affect me?
	1 Informational	I would like to know more about it.
	0 Awareness	I am not concerned about it.

Table 2

Levels of Use of the Innovation: Typical Behaviors

Level	Description of Level	Behavior Indicators
0	Non-use	Has no interest, is taking no action.
I	Orientation	User is taking the initiative to learn more about the innovation
II	Preparation	The user has definite plans to begin using the innovation.
III	Mechanical	The user is making changes to better organize use of the innovation.
IV A	Routine	The user is making few or no changes and has an established pattern of use
IV B	Refinement	The user is making changes to increase outcomes
V	Integration	The user is making deliberate efforts to coordinate with others in using the innovation
VI	Renewal	The user is seeking more effective alternatives to the established use of the innovation

APPENDIX C: Planned Interview Questions

1. What is your favorite thing about teaching?
2. What do you think is the most difficult part of teaching?
3. What do you think is the most important part of teaching?
4. How would you describe your philosophy of education?
5. What do you think is the greatest challenge facing teachers or education today?
6. What is your discipline philosophy/program?
7. What has been the best PD you have participated in? Why?
8. What kinds of data do you use in your planning? In your PLC?
9. What do you do with your PLC and what has the most value to you?
10. I noticed that by the first week of school your students had a good idea what the policies and procedures were for your class. What did you do to make that happen?
11. What do you think is your best strength as a teacher?
12. What would you say is a weakness that you have as a teacher?
13. What do you wish you could have that would help you the most as a teacher?
14. I have noted that you often say, "thank you" to your students. Why do you do that? How has it helped in your class?
15. How has the PLC+ training helped you with classroom management?
16. What is the most useful part of the PBIS training that you have had?
17. How has CW-FIT worked in your classroom? Why?
18. Each teacher has their own level of tolerance for student noise or being off task. What governs your levels?
19. Think of a time when you successfully made a positive change in your professional practice.
    a. What was the change?
    b. Why did you make it?
    c. What types of support were especially helpful in the transition?
20. What is your most cherished professional accomplishment?
    a. When did it happen?
    b. Who was involved?
21. What are you especially proud of about your classroom work?
    a. How about this school?
22. Having been involved in PBIS and PLC+ training what are your ideas/opinions on its value to you?
    a. How about its value to this school?
23. As you were going through the PLC+ training last year, what was the most valuable experience you had?
    a. What have you felt was most useful to use with your students?
24. What has been the most valuable training you have used as a new teacher?
25. What are you biggest concerns for your students?
    a. How about for this school?
26. What was your PD on last Thursday? In what way was it valuable to you?

27. Do you feel like full implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports has occurred in your classroom? Why or why not?
28. Have you noticed any changes have occurred in your school climate since the implementation of PBIS?
29. What feedback do you get from your Admin on PBIS or other classroom management efforts?
30. What ideas would you offer to improve PBIS at your campus?
31. What do you feel is still needed for student behavior to be where you want it in your classroom?
32. How does your PLC use the behavior data you have collected?

APPENDIX D: Introductory Survey

I will be observing at [redacted] over the next few months in classrooms, faculty trainings, and in PLC meetings. I would like to invite you to be a part of a case study in your school. Please take a minute to fill out this survey. I will come and discuss this opportunity with you personally at a later date.

Thank you!

Todd

Name: _____

Years teaching: ____

Years at this Elementary: _____

What grade levels have you taught: _____

What is your favorite subject to teach: _____

Grade level currently teaching: _____

What has been the most recent professional development you have attended?

_____

If you were to rate it on a scale of 1 -10 (ten being the best ever) where would that PD rank? ___

Have you ever participated in a case study? Y N

Would you be willing to be a participant in a case study? Y N

Where would you rate yourself on this continuum: (circle one)

Student Teacher – Intern Teacher - New Teacher – Semi-Veteran Teacher – Veteran Teacher

APPENDIX E: Worksheet 1, Graphic Design of a Case Study