Positive Behavioural Supports (PBS): Effective strategies to support instructional practice

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Abstract

This qualitative research study looks at the question: how does a select group of teachers enact positive behavioural support systems in their classrooms? Three educators who identify as enacting PBS in their classrooms were approached via convenience sampling to participate in semi-structured interviews. The participants agreed to provide insights of their experiences, effective strategies, obstacles and benefits of implementing PBS in their classroom. The interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed for common emergent themes to assist in answering the research question. A total of four themes emerged in this study: Educators who understand and facilitate positive behavioural supports in their instructional practice promote a co-created safe space in their classrooms; Educators who understand and implement effective positive behavioural supports in their instructional practice rely on a comprehensive repertoire of resources to support their facilitation; they are impeded by resistance from multiple stakeholders in the school community; Educators implement PBS because of their longstanding positive experiences with it; Educators urge for consistency in implementation. After examining the findings, personal implications and implications for the educational community are discussed; moreover, recommendations for teachers, administrators and faculties of education are suggested. Finally, further areas of research are suggested that provide a platform for continued exploration into positive behaviour management strategies.

Keywords: Behaviour management, Proactive Strategies, Professional Development, Holistic Learning, Pro-Social Classroom, Progressive Discipline
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I have gained immense insights as an educator about positive behaviour supports, and how they can be most effective in managing students’ behaviours in and outside of the classroom. I look forward to seeing where and how this strategy continues to become implemented in schools to shape the holistic development of students and teachers pedagogies.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Research Context and Problem

Across research, dealing with problem behaviours that span across a spectrum of aggression to discount of personal and academic criterion in school, proves to be an area of concern for educators, administrators and community members (Wheldall & Merrett, 1988). As a result of problem behaviours, many teachers have expressed exhaustion and burn out symptoms within the profession (Clunies-Ross, R, Little E., & Keinhus, M., 2008). What seems to remain consistent is that children are not responding to reactive approaches as a method of behaviour management in schools. Thus, troublesome behaviours continue to increase and teachers and administrators struggle to navigate students success in a positive and progressive way (Solomon, Klein, Hintze, Cressey, & Peller, 2012).

Further to students’ continued disobedience that disrupts the daily operations and community within schools, the personal development and academic success of students is suffering (Sugai & Horner, 2008). In reactive approaches like punitive consequences of suspensions or withdrawal from programming, the knowledge that surrounds positive behavioural supports are not unveiled (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2008). Uncovering the learning potential in all aspects of student’s development, cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally, and their relations and interactions in and outside of school, should remain critical for all educators. Therefore, the programming and community in classrooms should comprise a co-created and responsive space, one that is established within a positive behavioural support system (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Meeting the needs of the whole child requires working collaboratively between teachers, students, and community members to ensure all are respected and reflected in the school and classroom environments (Somersalo, Solantaus & Almqvist,
2002). Ultimately, students need to feel they have a place in their classrooms, one of which is valued in the progressive nature of their personal and academic learning journeys each year (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Holistically supporting students has shown to hold the greatest results in scaffolding students learning’s; moreover, providing context to their successes and needs (Somersalo, Solantaus & Almqvist, 2002). Implementing a positive behavioural support system meets the needs of the whole child by proactively preparing students for situations, how to respond to them before they escalate; furthermore, it teaches them how to work through difficult problems (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

To further stipulate the learning lost from a non-PBS system, consider the process of reactive approaches, where punishments commonly involve simply telling children that they are doing something wrong with a subsequent punishment awarded to them. The distinct difference of a positive behaviour support system begins in the identification process of the unwanted behaviour, follows through to the language used surrounding its unacceptance and rests in the subsequent stages of identifying how their actions have negatively affected another; moreover, it emphasizes how they can be corrected (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Positive behavioural supports focus on the process of behaviour modification and consider the development of a place and responsibilities as members of a classroom, school and worldly community (Horner et al., 2004). As such, children need to feel that they have a stake in the choices they make, and in receiving natural consequences to their actions, such as punishments or tasks that directly relate to the misbehaviour, a modification can be achieved and provide an opportunity for self reflection (Hayes, Hindle & Withington, 2007).

Positive behavioural supports promote the ideology of guiding children in their discovery of self, as they navigate through life and the experiences that come with it (Hayes, Hindle, & Withington, 2007). The learning involved throughout the process of behaviour management
relies on children making a multitude of choices that will dictate their journey (Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, & Collins, 2009). In each decision they make, they will come to understand their stake in the communities they reside, as they experience the positive and/or negative repercussions to their actions. Enacting positive behavioural support systems allow students to gain necessary experience in becoming successful members of society. They are guided through authentic experiences of being empathetic, showing pride for one’s community, taking responsibility for ones actions or another’s, and contributing to the co-construction of a safe space for all (Chitiyo et. al, 2014). In contrast, the punitive measures or consequences consistently evidenced in research as reactive approaches to behaviour management do the opposite (Houghton, Wheldall, Jules, & Sharpe, 1990). They prepare children for disappointment and encourage them to stray from socially acceptable behaviour, consistently isolated, receiving inconsistent punishments and inadequate tools to correct problem behaviours (Chitiyo et al., 2014). Reactive approaches teach children to be ok with defying rules and using judgments as a way of guiding behaviours because of the nature of the management from teachers and administrators themselves; most significantly reacting to problems instead of avoiding or solving problems (Beaman, 2006). For students to excel when permeating society, a society that exhibits respect, equitability and cohesion, they must have practice at these very skills. Through proactive approaches in behavioural supports the school community can build relationships, emit consistency and allow for the holistic development of student (Silver, Measelle, Armstrong & Essex, 2005).

Having discussed some barriers and negative repercussions of reactive approaches to behaviour, it is also important to focus one’s attention on the proactive approaches. It is within these approaches that much advancement can be made in strengthening the communities in schools, in particular within classrooms (Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, & Collins, 2009). Research has shown that through positive behavioural supports, authenticity in the planning and facilitation of
activities, room set up and evaluations are displayed (Silver, Measelle, Armstrong & Essex, 2005). Teachers have shared that the safe space in the classrooms is reflective of the unity of each individual group of students each year; moreover, successful collaborations amongst them and a universal motivation within the class allows them to remain focused on their academic attainment; with no behaviour disruptions, authentic learning can occur (Tyler & Jones, 1998; Silver, Measelle, Armstrong & Essex, 2005).

A factor that remains consistent within the research of proactive and effective behavioural supports is the value of forming a trusting relationship with students. Stattin & Magnusson (1996) describe holding a holistic position offers an alternate view to the often narrow opinions and rationales presented regarding negative behaviours and their antecedents. To encompass the various needs and differences of children, building a trusting and authentic relationship with students is imperative. It is within this trusting relationship that students feel ownership of who they are and their role within the environments that surround them (Hayes, Hindle, & Withington, 2007). The working relationship with students allows them to feel valued for the person they are and the opinions they hold (Stattin & Magnusson, 1996). Once students feel valued they will be more willing to encapsulate the expectations of their surroundings (Stattin, & Magnusson, 1996). Research shows that many times its not the student’s blatant disregard of authority that motivates their ill behaviours, but rather a confusion within themselves of who they are, their value and tools sets available; moreover, this is necessary to alter their behaviour ultimately fixing situations (McCready & Soloway, 2010). Providing students with clear expectations provides them with a framework for how to behave within school, while the authentic and trusting relationship allows students to own up to their indifferences and create a space for reflection and correction (Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, & Collins, 2009). Educators must not forget the naivetés of their students, a raw passion for experiencing and learning new things.
While their ill behaviours may demonstrate a maturity that resonates with disrespect, they are young, impressionable and eager to find their way in the world (Stattin & Magnusson, 1996). When dealing with behaviour, educators and administrators must embrace the role of a supervisor and guide their students in learning societal norms. As McCready & Soloway (2010) state, correcting behaviour proves trivial because of the complexity involved; behaviour is presented as attributing two opposing pathways: technical and adaptive. Technical pathway can be addressed through content remediation, while adaptive is structured through experience and value systems.

The behaviours students exhibit are not fixable like content-based topics such as grammar (technical), rather they are cries out for help as students navigate themselves in and outside the classroom. Students are demonstrating behaviours that they have come to understand as acceptable (adaptive) (McCready & Soloway, 2010). The students continued demonstrations of problem behaviours is as a result of their limited learnings within the scope of the goal they are being asked to overcome (the problem behaviours that are disruptive) and in being aware or accountable of their actions and reactions to the situations (McCready & Soloway, 2010). A distinction between the student and the behaviour they are exhibiting is critical to each student’s journey of success; moreover, future biases within the school environment that may stick to them (Sugai & Horner, 2008). To support students on this journey of behaviour modification, teachers need support from administration through daily practices and professional development.

Providing teachers and administrators with professional development that involves pedagogies in awareness, relationship building, leadership and cultural responsiveness is said to support the implementation of PBS (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Keinhus, 2008). Teachers and policy makers have reached unanimity when speaking to effective teaching. They deem that teaching should involve combining social and cultural identities to foster student engagement and academic achievement thus, warranting acknowledgement of salience of their own cultural socialization as
the norm and involve collaboration from students and teachers (Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat & Ontario, 2013). It is expressed that only when teachers and students are aware of each other’s values and responsibilities within the classroom, can they take accountability of their actions to support a cohesive classroom climate (Clunies-Ross, Little & Keinhus, 2008). This is where a problem lies in many classrooms today and it can also be a reason why positive behavioural supports are not implemented. Teachers do not successfully implement to entirety the PBS system, consequently claiming its failure not on the diligence of implementation, rather on the lack of change within their classrooms.

The gap between the knowledge of positive behavioural supports and its degree of implementation for teachers and administrators is essential to tackle. Within a conducive learning environment, research tells us that the social, emotional and academic needs of students must be met; however, what is understood about the needs of students today has taken a shift from what was previously known (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006; Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat & Ontario, 2013). The Ontario government has implemented multiple studies in the subject and have since mandated multiply policies that encapsulate positive behaviour supports alike, their progressive discipline plan (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006).

Conclusively, the effectiveness of classroom practices and obtainability of students’ holistic development lies within the dynamic nature of each individual classroom teacher’s pedagogical understandings and implementations of new approaches (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006). If teachers do not implement set approaches, then the development of their students is hindered and their professional growth in halted. Positive behavioural supports is at the forefront of these credited approaches to manage behaviours and, while accepted by teachers, their confidence and access to practical implementations strategies is lacking. Teachers need to gain confidence in implementing positive behavioural supports by investing in their professional and
personal growth. Strong leaders are consciously aware of their actions; they have goals and a plan of action of how to achieve them (McCready & Soloway, 2010). Teachers need to adopt the same ideology with behaviour management in their classrooms. They need to know how they want their classrooms to operate - a routine for their students and their work throughout the day; furthermore, have clear action plans for supporting students in learning the routines, how to respond when the routine is not followed and how they will address various disruptive behaviours before they are even confronted with them. Preparation is critical to the success of a safe space for all students in classrooms; it must be led by a thoughtful and responsive teacher and pedagogical framework.

1.1 Purpose Of The Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers enact positive behavioural support systems in their classrooms. In highlighting effective positive behavioural supports and instructional practices, educators can mirror these strategies in their own classrooms to create a welcoming, inclusive and productive space for learning. The benefits of behavioural supports has become a topic of interest; moreover, it is a valued solution in the management and prevention of problem behaviours in schools across the globe yet, not everyone is doing it (Hayes, Hindle & Withington, 2007). A disconnection lies between knowing the importance of PBS implementation and actually seeing it being used in schools. With the multitude of evidence that surrounds the topic from researchers in fields of education, special education, psychology, policy and on, there is still a prevalent gap: the lack of implementation.

This study considered the research out there on the topic, having special consideration to why many teachers are still not embracing these provincial mandates. I will investigate what enforcing teachers have done to become confident in PBS implementation. Further, I will explore what recommendations they have for other professionals who want to implement PBS but lack
confidence. I will consider the professional development available to professionals on this topic and probe its validity in supporting teachers in implementation.

In discovering how positive behavioural supports are being implemented by a select group of teachers, other professionals may gain insights to support their confidence in implementation and, moreover, gain knowledge in sound resources available to teachers to support implementation. It is suggested that once PBS becomes a school-wide initiative, implemented by all teachers and administrators as a whole, will immense improvements in the school community and students autonomy arise, and problem behaviours decrease (Safran & Oswald, 2003).

1.2 Research Questions

The primary question guiding this study is: How do a small sample of k-12 educators understand the meaning of positive behavioural support and what does this mean for their instructional practice?

- How do these educators effectively use positive behavioural supports in their classroom?
- What factors and resources support these educators in implementing effective positive behavioural supports?
- What challenges do these educators face when implementing these strategies and how do these educators response to the challenges they face?
- What factors have contributed to their confidence in implementing positive behavioural supports in their classroom?
- What elements of the positive behavioural support system prove most useful upon implementation?
1.3 Background Of The Researcher

The topic of positive behavioural supports is of particular interest to me, stemming from my own experiences as an Early Childhood Educator and as a teacher in training at OISE. In both experiences did similar evidence prevail: teachers and administrators seemed to struggle with effectively managing students’ behaviours; evidences in reactive approaches like punitive punishments seemed to provoke problem behaviours further and tarnish the school climate and that, while teachers and administrators were aware of positive behavioural supports and their benefits, they demonstrated limited capacities in implementation strategies.

I have participated in multiple facets of education throughout my life. As a student in secondary and post secondary school, I volunteered my time to community outlets that allowed me to engage with children in their development of self and specialized skills. I was involved in programs that fostered children’s skills in community integration, recreational activities and religious obligations. A proficiency in working with children lead me to a diploma in Early Childhood Studies and an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Studies, focusing on what encompasses the biological, psychological and emotional development of children from birth to adulthood and the role of environments in supporting or harming their developments. My concerns about positive behavioural supports developed within each encounter I made with children from recreational activities and previous educational employments. Up to my current studies I have witnessed two distinct approaches to behaviour management and support. The interactions brought me to question what proves most effective in altering problem behaviours to create a responsive and safe space for all students? Further, why do certain reactive approaches to behaviour management seem most prevalent, even though their success at altering behaviours lags? Finally, how do the approaches to behaviour management holistically affect the teacher and students involved?
I am motivated in supporting the holistic needs of children throughout their development, but as I participate in the field of education I have a growing concern of how other professionals in the field, maintain or ignite the same views when confronted with challenging situations. I want to know how teachers are effectively using positive behavioural supports in the classrooms and what strategies or professional developments have they exercised to instill confidence in behavioural support system implementation.

1.4 Overview Of MTRP

This qualitative study involved a review of the literature and three interviews with teachers. This research project was organized into five chapters. In Chapter 2, I review the literature in the area of positive behavioural supports to inform instructional practice. Following, I describe the research methodology and included information about the participants, the data collection, and limitations in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 I report and discuss the research findings. Finally, in Chapter 5 I review the implications of the findings and made recommendations for future directions. References and a list of appendixes are found at the end.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I review the literature on positive behavioural supports in the classroom, as it pertained to a support for instructional practice. More specifically, I review the definition of positive behavioural supports and consider the known outcomes of this approach as it related to the school climate, administration and students. Next I consider various models and procedures that appeared most promising in the area of positive behavioural supports for instructional practice. Once cogitating various positive behavioural support ideologies, I consider some challenges that become evidenced in its implementation. Conclusively, this guided my evaluation of what has been noted as appropriate requirements for effective positive behavioural support implementation for instructional practice and what is still left unanswered.

2.1 Positive Behaviour Support

Positive behaviour support is a broad-spectrum, proactive and preventative application of positive behaviour interventions, used to achieve socially important behaviour changes in children (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, & Turnbull, 2000). It serves as a remediation of students’ behaviours and beliefs systems, who violate school codes of conduct and who demonstrate personal or interpersonal norms outside of what is acceptable social behaviours (ibid). In its onset, its purpose was to provide an alternative intervention for students with disabilities who exhibited extreme forms of self-injury and aggression (Durand & Carr, 1985; Meyer & Evans, 1989). It has been suggested in research on this topic that a majority of teachers surveyed believe that problem behaviours are generally disciplinary issues rather than disability related (Chityo, et al., 2014). As such, it has been applied to a wide range of contexts as a means of intervention for individual students and as a school wide approach across school boards. Its
positive behaviour modeling and reinforcement systems approach enhances the capacity of schools, families and communities to co-create effective teaching and learning environments (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, & Turnbull, 2000). The features of PBS integration involve behavioural science, practical interventions (teaching to and rewarding the appropriate behaviours), social skill instruction and values and, a systems approach (Chityo, et al., 2014). Overall this means that it assesses the function of the problem before one intervenes. PBS is believed to be rooted in relationship building between staff and students and positive role modeling amongst professionals in the school community. The positive behavioural support approach believes in providing clear and consistent expectations for all students as a means of providing environmental or instructional antecedents to problem behaviours (Chityo et al., 2014).

Despite evidence of the effectiveness of proactive strategies like PBS, research suggests that numerous teachers use other methods to deal with trying behaviours. Evidenced in Merrett & Wheldall (1993), teachers use punishments like removal from the classroom, dismissal to the office or another classroom, letters, detentions, phone calls home, written lines, chores in the school or the inability to participate in activities as means to stop a disruptive behaviour; however, while these punishments threaten the child and try to emphasis the hierarchy within the school, they rarely display a response or learning opportunity of real problem (Merrett & Weldall, 1993). From a behavioural perspective, the procedures involved in reducing student misbehaviour are divided in two broad categories: proactive and reactive strategies (Wilks, 1996; as cited in Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008). Proactive strategies are seen as preventative in nature as they hub a positive approach to guiding behaviour (Silver, Measelle, Armstrong, & Essex, 2005). In this model, teachers use positive responses to address positive behaviours in the classroom. Teachers would praise students for the positive behaviours they have demonstrated
and/or support them in. While research shows a decrease in the problem behaviours students exhibit in a PBS system, counter evidence in academic press demonstrates the potential harms to children’s learning and motivation from praising (Bayat, 2011). In a study by Mueller and Dweck (1998), a distinction in praise for intelligence after success, hard work and, effort of their intelligence creates a grave distinction in how the child perceives himself or herself in relation to a task, behaviour or surrounding environment. Simply rewarding a child for the mere completion of a task communicates a message of adhering to instructions effectively. Whereas praising a child with constructive feedback that relates to their specific efforts, success and needs throughout the process of an activity, communicates a holistic picture of the students process to attainment and showcases how and where along that process they have excelled and/or where they may need more attention (ibid). This form of praise considers the success of completion of the student but also provides students with context to their work ethic, consistency, aptitude and motivations that they can reflect on and implement in future learning experiences (ibid).

In contrast to proactive strategies is the reactive strategy of managing behaviour. This remedial strategy focuses on the teacher’s response to a student’s bad behaviour. Here, the teachers would link consequential measures to the inappropriate behaviours of students in their classrooms to manage behaviour: reprimands, time-out, limitations and exclusions from activities (Clunies, Little & Kienhuis, 2008). Beamen study reveals that through the observation of 79 teachers who used these punitive measures to deal with troublesome behaviours, it caused students to become less engaged in the class (2006). This lack of engagement led children to become off task and continue to disrupt the class as no learning from the punishment was evident. A study in a British secondary school, found that on-task behaviour increased through the use of proactive strategies rather than the use of disapproval, thus demonstrating how
proactive strategies show improvement in students behaviour (Houghton, Wheldall, Jukes & Sharpe, 1990).

2.2 Known Outcomes Of Positive Behavioural Support

The following category considers what the research credits as effective outcomes of the positive behavioural support system. It will begin by highlighting the benefits of positive behavioural supports to encourage and create a positive school climate. Further, it will unpack the required collaboration between teachers and administrators as a proponent to its success in schools. Finally, it will present the benefits associated with PBs for students. Each of these units cooperatively create an environment for students that is supportive, engaging and focused on development of students in a holistic way.

2.2.1 Outcomes of effective positive behaviour supports for school climate

This proactive behavioural support system focuses on the learning the opportunity that behaviour management can possess. As a school wide approach, it provides an effective framework for staff, students and its community, to co-create the attainment of cohesion in the school environment. It focuses on ensuring the healthy and safety of the school community, as research has shown that this positive and preventative approach has reduced numbers of new cases of problem behaviours, current cases of problem behaviour and the intensity and complexity of current cases (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, & Turnbull, 2000). It supports a continuum of behaviour supports, that involves a change of systems, environments, student and adult behaviour and an appreciation of behaviour for all involved (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, & Turnbull, 2000). Positive behavioural support systems use of assessment information to identify multi-component plans of support, include environmental redesign, curricular adaptation, schedule revision, instruction of new skills
and positive or negative consequences (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, & Turnbull, 2000). Clear expectations of each part of the school community are identified with PBS, thus each member of the school is accountable and motivated to meet and fulfill their expectations.

2.2.2 Outcomes of effective positive behaviour support for administrators and teachers

Behavioural science reveals to us that considerable human behaviour is learned and is controlled by environmental factors (Sugai et al., 2000). Further, it shows us that behaviours can be changed and become more understandable. As our understandings grow, so to does our ability to teach more socially appropriate and functional behaviours. Adapting positive behavioural supports provides administrators and teachers with efficient skills in problem behaviour intervention that support their personal and professional goals (Hayes, Hindle, & Withington, 2007).

Administrators and teachers have a responsibility to promote and participate in creating collaborative, safe and supportive learning communities as mandated by the Ontario College of Teachers (Ontario College of Teachers, 2012). Their professional and ethical obligations require them to obtain a leadership role in facilitating student’s success. Seemingly that they have the best interest of their students and school community at large, implementing positive behavioural supports provides a beneficial system. Administrators who adapt a positive behavioural support system in school and classrooms allow for their policies to ensure accountability, uppermost positive results, participation in and progress through the general curriculum and effective and efficient communications (Sugai, et al., 2000). Wheldall Houghton, and Merrett observed that teachers who used more praise and fewer instances of disapproval of social behaviour experienced higher levels of on-task behaviour in their classrooms (1989). Students on task in
classrooms supports their attainment of knowledge as they meet curriculum expectations; moreover, it minimizes disruptive behaviours as they are engaged in their learning (Sugai, & Horner, 2008). Mediated through proactive supports, the limited problems behaviours allow teachers and administrator to develop authentic relationships with their students. Students have been susceptible to the positive effects of close teacher-student relationships and teachers have expressed minimized stress levels (Silver, Measell, Armstrong, & Essex, 2005).

2.2.3 Positive outcomes of effective positive behaviour support for students

PBS allows students to become self aware, as they reflect on their actions and gain a skillset that will aid in their future success in social interactions in and outside of school (Heifetz, 1996). According to Hayes, Hindle, & Withington (2009), the procedure of PBS has been shown to reduce the destructive behaviours of students that include, physical aggression, self-injury, property destruction, verbal aggression, truancy, vandalism and harassment. The use of PBS has shown to support and motivate individuals with physical, emotional, social or education needs to achieve educational outcomes and have a better quality of life (Ruef, Poston & Humphrey, 2004 as cited in Bayat, 2011). PBS fosters the development of skills that allow students to be independent and productive in and outside of the school environment.

2.3 The Models And Procedures That Appear Most Promising In The Area Of Positive Behavioural Supports For Instructional Practices

The following section will consider aspects of positive behavioural supports that heighten its implementation and learning potential for students and the school community. It begins by dipping into the perspective of PBS as a school wide approach, as its comprehensive implementation can create a consistent and progressive environment for students to prosper in. PBS focuses on progressively supporting students on their journey of behaviour modification; in
this section incorporating the preventative element to PBS further ignites a beneficial system. Additionally, it considers the importance of creating a safe space for students through the pedagogical practices like culturally responsiveness and pro-social classrooms.

2.3.1 School wide positive behavioural intervention and support (SWPBIS)

Historically, behaviour supports in schools have only targeted students who engage in high-frequency or high-intensity problem behaviours (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai & Boland, 2004). Past behavioural support resources solely provided strategies for identifying students, providing opportunities for assessment and diagnosis of students and supporting the development of individualized behaviour support plans- remedial practices (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai & Boland, 2004). While still useful for severe cases, the past 20+ years has shifted the approach to an emphasis on prevention, which includes an investment in school-wide practices. Research has shown that the most efficient approach to decreasing problem behaviours in schools is through pro-active, school wide prevention and its multiple sets of procedures, as a means of responding to the needs of all students especially those at risk for developing chronic patterns (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai & Boland, 2004; Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010).

A school wide approach in positive behavioural supports is proving to promote positive school climate and reduce discipline problems (Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2009). Schools have been reporting 20% to 60% reductions in office discipline referrals, an enriched social climate, and enhanced academic performances, when they engage in school-wide positive behavioural intervention supports practices (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai & Boland, 2004). However, only when administrators and teachers were trained in SWPBIS, did they state that they were better able to implement the program effectively (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Administrators asserted that they established improved systems (discipline, reinforcement) and
procedures (office referral, training, leadership) to promote positive change in staff, which correlated to altering students’ behaviours (Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010). A successful SWPBIS is said to operate within three systems of support: primary (school wide/ universal), secondary (targeted and selective) and, tertiary (individual and indicated) (Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010). When administrators defined the behavioural expectations of students at school, they revealed that students gained clarity in the acceptable behaviours at school and were provided rewards for following the expectations; meanwhile, a continuum of consequences for the problem behaviours was also implemented (Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010). Similar to an ecological approach to behavioural supports, where teachers are called to document behaviours, reflect on the students’ and teacher perceptions on the problems and reframe the perceptions to understand the child’s point of view (Tyler & Jones, 1998), SWPBIS monitors behaviours and uses the data to inform future decisions. In both approaches administrators are actively involved in the discovery, communication and implementation of positive supports for the child, but SWPBIS goes one step further in targeting the need of both staff and students within school polices (Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010; Tyler & Jones, 1998). Instead of teachers juggling multiple roles themselves, SWPBIS provides functional policies for the school community; staff agree upon what is characterized as classroom managed or office managed behaviour, they discuss features of the multi-element program design - curriculum alterations and, structural redesign- inclusion policies (Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010). To support the cohesion within the school environment targeted staff training opportunities seem to be available to ensure teachers are aware of implementation procedures; moreover, increased data collections options are provided for staff to strengthen their documentations of the holistic picture of students (Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010). With prevention in mind while implementing a school-wide
approach, specific prevention programs assist in the development of positive behaviour supports for instructional practice.

### 2.3.2 Prevention programs

To promote and support appropriate and positive behaviours in students, the implementation of targeted prevention programs can aid in the students' formation of pro-social behaviours. The current Ontario Safe Schools Act policy and Section 5 of the Education Act describe various initiatives schools are mandated to implement to ensure schools safety and govern student behaviour (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006). The onset of programs such as bullying prevention, citizenship development, peer mediation and other activities, have shown to provide students with the ability to construct healthy relationship with staff and peers; moreover, they promote appropriate behaviours for school and community interactions ((Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006). Research suggests that an effective school climate is rooted in interactions from pro-social behaviours of all its members (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Valued interactions between staff and student have been said to be founded in mutual acceptance, where inclusion is modeled throughout school policies, which in turn enact a culture of respect as the norm (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006). These targeted programs provide that foundational mutual acceptance, and as they fall within an effective continuum of prevention strategies that have proven to prevent violence. Furthermore, they have supported students in making sound personal decisions and deterring from inappropriate behaviours (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006).

### 2.3.3 Progressive discipline

Further to the provincial governments educational policies that promote the health and safety of Ontario schools, they have charged administrators and teachers with their own behavioural remediation action plan known as progressive discipline (PD). Similar to the
SWPBIS, progressive disciple dictates its specific expectations for students for appropriate school behaviour. Its stipulations involve sensitivity to the needs of each student and charging school staff with the responsibility of modeling positive behaviours (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006). The Ontario action plan is specifically defined as being progressively applied steps or consequences functional to the disciplinary interventions that improve students’ behaviour (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006). PD is punitive in its supportive and corrective measures, as demonstrated in their use of developmentally appropriate consequences (allowing students to learn from their mistakes and focus on improving their behaviour). The positive behavioural support that PD mimics from the abovementioned techniques rests in judgment of the behaviour exhibited from students and not the judgment of the students themselves; further, including mitigating factors when investigating situations (age of student, family situation, special needs, provoked/harassed/bullied (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006). Considering the elements of this mandated approach, the idea of positive behavioural supports in schools to support instructional practices may seem to have been answered. However, of the research available, schools are still presenting signs of limited positive behavioural supports within classrooms and as a school community, especially in progressive discipline. A sample of teachers feel as though they are still not effectively trained in these behaviour interventions strategies and receive limited support from administration when in acting PBS policies; as a result they have reported resorting back to reactive approaches as a means of copying with the stress from students and administration, which proves to inhibit their relationship with students and professional growth (Cooper & Yan, 2015; Jones, Ling & Charlton, 1999; Clunies-Ross, Little & Kienhuis, 2008).
2.3.4 Culturally appropriate intervention

Fostering relationships with students has been said to improve not only classroom climate but also allow students to feel ownership and accountability for their actions. The positive behavioural support approach suggests cultivating a culturally appropriate classroom as a method in supporting interrelation in the classroom. A culturally appropriate intervention is depicted as focusing attention on the unique and individualized learning histories of all individuals who participate in the PBS process and approach (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, & Turnbull, 2000). Within classroom practices particularly, making time to discuss issues relevant to the everyday lives of students helps foster relationships in a culturally appropriate way. If a teacher demonstrates care for the students well-being beyond the classroom, students have shown to demonstrate care the happenings within the classroom (Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat & Ontario, 2013). Through data-based problem solving and individualized planning process for prevention, the learning histories (social, community, historical, familial, racial, gender, etc.) of agents that participate in the process of PBS dictates how classroom expectations are developed and what supports within the school community are generated (interventions that consider the context within which the behaviour occurs, address the functionality of the problem and provide justified outcomes that are acceptable to the individual, family and supportive community) (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, & Turnbull, 2000; Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat & Ontario, 2013). Encompassing culturally appropriate intervention through PBS in classrooms and school communities alike allows teachers and administrators to gain a better holistic picture of their students in the community and how to best meet their needs.

2.3.5 Pro-social classroom management

Strong evidences in research on positive behavioural supports encourages teachers to move to an adaptive direction of exploring the social and cultural contexts of their students lives
as it pertains to behaviour management, relationship building and instructional practice (McCready & Soloway, 2010). It is within a pro-social classroom framework that teachers are said to support students in their social and emotional competence as it contributes to creating a classroom most conducive to varying styles and promotes positive development outcomes for students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). A pro-social classroom takes on a positive and constructive approach to mediating behaviours and implementing behavioural guidelines that promote intrinsic motions, encourages cooperation and guide students through their conflict situations (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). In Marzame, Marzame & Picker (2003) study of teachers who demonstrated confines in their management of social and emotional challenges within their classroom, their students showed lower levels of on task behaviours and performance (as cited in Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Cultivating the competences of adaptive teaching includes being culturally responsive and mindfully aware of self within the role of student and staff; further, it requires for each member of the school community to be accountable for their words and actions (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Evidence shows that to develop a pro-social classroom teachers need professional development that encourages their own self growth and ones that “meet and greet” the changing demands of schools and classrooms based on time periods and geographical areas (McCready & Soloway, 2010). This grants positive behavioural supports as a worthy process to inform instructional practice that aids in the self-discovery and understandings of students and teachers within the context of ones environment and worldly knowledge. Pro-social management supports students ability to apply extensive process-based triggers to everyday situations in the classroom, mimicking the process based evolution of PBS individualized action plan for students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).
2.4 Challenges To Positive Behavioural Supports

Most often disciplinary acts found in schools have proven to be ineffective in managing behaviours of students. Teachers have reported feeling that they have insufficient support from administrators when dealing with problem behaviour in schools; further, they speak of limited professional development to properly mediate the behaviours of their students. Some research calls to action consistent targeted trainings in relation to positive behavioural supports for students that are consistent between principals and teachers.

2.4.1 Lack of professional development

Student misbehaving is one of the main reasons teachers have shown to leave the profession (Beaman & Wheldall, 200). Research has found that students’ misbehaviour not only affects teacher stress, well-being, and confidence, it further impacts negatively on student learning time and academic achievements (Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2003; Little & Hudson, 1998; Miller, Ferguson, & Byrne, 2000; Poulou & Norwich, 2000). According to Lazarus (1993), stress is defined as a state of anxiety, shaped by ones inability to cope, in excess, with events or responsibilities. Habitually, once an individual deems a situation threatening and beyond their scope of resources they are unable to deal with demands effectively (Lazarus, 1993). Research demonstrates a correlation with teacher burn out and recourse to reactive approaches from exhaustion and feelings of hopelessness in the remediation of students behaviour because they do not know what else to do to deal with problem behaviours (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Keinhus, 2008).

According the Safe Schools Act in Ontario, principals, administrators, teachers, parents and students should receive standardized training to ensure consistency and fairness in the application for students with problem behaviours (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006). While mandated by Ontario school boards, teachers still feel their needs aren’t being met with the
provided professional development, as they do not address the concerns and needs currently in their classrooms and are hindering their professional growth (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). Professionals have amplified the necessity for professional development of effective behaviour management strategies, specific to implementations for their classroom structure and policies—PBS fool-proof action plan (Jones, Ling, & Charlton, 1999). As such, it seems evident that professionals are yearning for leadership workshops that reference implementing and maintaining positive behavioural supports (Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat & Ontario, 2013). Research has also indicated that on a worldly scale, lack of professional development in the area of positive behavioural supports is limited as well, leading to the same repercussions for teachers and students. One study discovered that although a sample of Greek and Australian teachers reported favoring positive reinforcements, the observations of their practice revealed the use of punishments or threats was more prevalent (Martin, Linfoot, & Stephenson, 1999 as cited in Poulou and Norwich, 2000). Martin and colleagues (1999) proposed the reason for this disconnection from teacher philosophy to practice surrounding positive behavioural supports was due to a lack in sufficient information and understating of how they should be used. Subsequently, a divide between what researchers know about effective behaviour management and what is actually occurring in classrooms seems to also be a dominant problem (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008). A study by Cooper & Yan (2015) of a select sample of teachers from Hong Kong contested to the same evidences in their classrooms but further explored a strong relationship between satisfaction with training received and perceptions of confidence when implementing positive behavioural supports. This study narrated that a lack of confidence in relation to positive behavioural supports is in itself a negative obstacle to providing effective positive behavioural supports (Cooper & Yan, 2015). Further, it directs whether a teacher is
willing to continue with the positive behaviour supports in future or resort to reactive approaches or, burn out (Cooper & Yan, 2015).

On the contrary, one expert has said that it is not that there isn’t enough of the right professional development for educators, rather that teachers are accessing the wrong ones. According to McCready and Soloway, professional development workshops are less likely to have an impact on educational problems like discipline gaps since, the nature of these problems go beyond the knowledge of experts and senior authorities (2010). Further to their research, they claim the two prevalent problems in behaviour management revolve around technical and adaptive situations. They describe technical situations to be alike grammar and thus able to be solved by experts and senior authorities (McCready & Soloway, 2010). However, experts cannot solve adaptive measures like behavioural supports; solutions rest in the people enacting the behaviours. Since discipline gaps are considered adaptive situations, these social problems cannot simply be fixed by a code, form or set structure. They are progressive and rely on the transformation of people’s values, beliefs, habits and ways of working and living (McCready & Soloway, 2010). This research further recommends to teachers that the simplicity in deciphering which type problem they are experiencing in their classroom and from their students can lead to teachers choosing and attending appropriate types of professional development (McCready & Soloway, 2010). To conclude, when enacting positive behavioural supports, teachers must understand that they are not merely fixing a behaviour, that of which can be answered in professional developments that surround the topics of subject matter or curricular content based. Rather, due to the nature of identifying the belief systems of their students and supporting their reconstruction of pro-social behaviours, they must make more efforts to address their leadership role as it pertains to the social, emotional and physical development of students—a holistic approach to educational practices (McCready & Soloway, 2010). A holistic approach not only
encompasses the many facets of a student but also the geographical area surrounding the school. In Jones, Ling & Charlton (1999), a sample of teachers from Singapore identified that by building relationships with their students, and understating the contexts of their behaviours as it relates to their belief systems and geographical area, supported the implementations of positive behavioural approaches. Discussions amongst colleagues and a pooling of information, to compare troublesome behaviours within their widespread school community, allowed the to co-create an action plan to implement positive behavioural supports that supported the needs of students and teachers as a means of igniting an accountable school climate (Jones, Ling & Charlton, 1999).

2.4.2 Lack of school wide approach

As demonstrated across research on the areas of positive behavioural supports and effective implementation of its strategies for teachers, the need for a school wide implementation plan is consistently suggested. Research considers that with a universal climate in schools based on the principles of positive behaviour supports, increased provisions from administration is dire (Team, 2006). Chitiyo & Wheeler (2008) further speculate that the collaborated efforts of administrators and teachers and the strength of leadership demonstrated within each role will their efforts increase the effectiveness of practice. What seems most compelling about the lack of implementation of school-wide positive behavioural support initiatives, that research has narrated is lacking in schools across the country by teachers, is the immense amount of provincial legislator, statues, policies and regulations in place in Ontario that have not provoked the modification (Team, 2006). Provincial schools have access to frameworks that provide one-stop access to various documents that seek to profited and support a safe learning environment through positive behavioural supports yet, facilitation of these efforts is nominal (Team, 2006). In providing an explanation for this negligence, research has dictated from many levels, including
administers, teachers, psychologist, community members and other professionals, that consistent professional development for all members of the school community is pressing (Team, 2006; Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008; Merrett & Wheldall, 1993).

A consistent and strong administrative leadership has been said to secure the success of an effective positive behavioural support framework (Heifetz, 1996). Without strong leadership from school administrators, program efforts have been shown to become inefficient, incomplete and ineffective (Colvin & Sprick, 1999). To support schools in their implementation of positive behavioural supports, schools are encouraged to collect and publish data in regards to the infractions of the school, to assist the reflection for all members and as a tool to help target areas of need in the school. Throughout this data collection and reflection process the needs of all school community members can be addressed as they monitor the school climate, evaluate current programs and strategies and, focus on resources needed (identify and develop appropriate strategies to address issues of safety and student behaviour) (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2008). While the need and basic implementation of school wide behaviour supports seems distinct, research has shown that the balancing efforts and attention between school-wide and individual systems (individual students or individual teachers classroom rules) have posed burdens on the effectiveness and rate of implementation in schools (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson & Turnbull, 2000). Since the difficulty of implementation has been expressed, time, tangible information to use towards implementation, confidence in implementation, consistency of procedural methods, and user-friendly enactment procedures are of critical need (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2008). Further, this calls for an investigation to why a school-wide positive behavioural support and intervention system is not evident across all schools.
2.5 Conclusion

In this literature review I examine research related to positive behaviour supports in the classroom as it pertains to the support for instructional practice. This review emphasizes that while research demonstrates the immense benefits of positive behavioural supports for school climate, staff and, students across the country, nominal implementation is understood. Research has suggested that the reasons for this negligence is due to the limited availability of professional development in the topic for administrators and teachers; specifically, professional development that focuses on practical implementation strategies for the classrooms and holistic education. Teachers have correlated their resorted negative reactive approaches to behaviour to limited professional growth, increased stress levels and limited confidence and satisfaction with current classroom environments. Further, a proactive, school-wide behaviour support for all students, which has been recognized as the single most efficient strategy for improving the behavioural culture within a school. Research has identified that strong willed teachers that take time to ensure their own emotions are in check and who have strong beliefs in holistic education encompass the most favourable implementations of positive behavioural supports in their classrooms (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2008). It is further suggested that these teachers follow and model a mindfulness based training- a notion of expanding ones perceptions of self and others- to strengthen students attention regulation skills and to support a cultivation of openness and non-judgemental curiosity in the classroom (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2008). Teachers who successfully implement positive behavioural supports had clear pictures of how they wanted their class to behave, and took the time to teach these behaviours to their students (Mcready & Soloway, 2010).

By focusing on how teachers understand and successfully implement positive behavioural supports in their classrooms, I hope to contribute further to the holistic growth of teachers as
leaders and role models of pro social and proactive behaviours as it relates to their instructional practice. This research study approaches the issue of effective positive behavioural supports using a semi-structured interview with teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in Canada. The study addresses the knowledge teachers have about positive behavioural supports. Further, it will focus on how teachers are implementing effective positive behavioural supports in their classrooms and how they have to come achieve their success in implementation. By considering how teachers have effectively implemented positive behavioural supports in their classrooms, it is my hope to provide a better understanding to the process of implementation, and from there inform teachers’ future practice as a means of professional growth, holistic education and future effective professional development to aid in wide-spread implementation of positive behavioural supports.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The following chapter will describe the research methodology used to conduct this study. I identify the various methodological decisions that were made, given the research purpose and questions, and provide rationale for those choices. The first discussion will surround the topic of the research approach and procedure. This will provide a prelude to a discussion of the main instrument of data collection used. Following this, I identify the participants of the study and provide the sampling criteria used to decipher their suitability for this study. The sampling procedures involved in this study and some further information on the participants will also be provided. Next, I describe how the data was analyzed in this study, before recognizing relevant ethical issues that have been considered and addressed. Lastly, I speak to certain methodological limitations of the study, while also highlighting and acknowledging the strengths.

3.1 Research Approach & Procedure

The following study was conducted using a qualitative research study approach. This approach allowed the researcher to provide a sense of vision and context to positive behavioural supports and their effectiveness, when implemented by a teacher to support a positive classroom climate. This methodology was effective in analyzing the social world. It encouraged the researcher to understand peoples lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings; as well as organizational functioning, social movements and, cultural phenomena (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The process involved in qualitative research serves to conceptualize the reduction of uncertainty about important questions. As understanding generated in the study, confidence grew and as Abraham Kaplan puts it (1984), we move from the context of discovery to the context of justification (as cited in Sofaer, 1999). Moreover, we generate a coherent body of knowledge that grounds itself and holds greater staying power (Sofaer, 1999)
While some of the information may be quantified in a qualitative study, such as the background information of the participants, the bulk of the analysis was interpretative. The process called for me to immerse myself in the field to discover authentic demonstrations of knowledge in PBS. Additionally, I needed to respect and question the natural evolution of events, the interrelationship among conditions, actions and consequences (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The research approach evidenced in this study allowed me to reveal various elements of PBS in relation to a teacher’s own autonomy within their classrooms. It uncovered considerations beyond the ordinary, new and theoretically expressed understandings of social life in a classroom accounted by the participants (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

As evidenced above, this approach was well received by the purpose and questionings of the study. It provided details about phenomena—feelings, thought and emotions relating to PBS implementations and its effectiveness. Phenomena that are difficult to extract or learn through more conventional research methods and require open-endedness, conceptualization and the reduction of data accumulated from an interviewee (Sofaer, 1999). The research study included a review of the existing literature relevant to the research questions and purpose of study. It involved semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with three practicing teachers, denoting their journeys with positive behavioural support systems throughout their careers.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The primary instrument of data collection used for this study was a semi-structured, face-to-face interview protocol. While documentation and observation are also seen as sources for data collection in qualitative research studies, interviews are more widely used (Seale, 1999). The use of multiple methods is strongly encouraged to improve the validity of one’s findings; however, for the purpose of this study, the inductive nature, open-endedness and organization of interviews was seen to provide the best data to answer the research questions at hand (Seale, 1999).
Additionally, the use of the face-to-face interview as opposed to the group interview, incurred a meaningful reflection of the participants direct experiences that related to the research questions.

The focus of this study was to uncover teachers’ direct experiences with PBS and its relation to a positive classroom climate. Interviewing leaders in its implementation served to provide the most relevant information. As such, a semi-structured interview containing guiding and open-ended questions served to employ variability in the teachers responses and practical insights for future implementations. The interview structure used allowed the researcher to delve deeply into the social and personal matters that relate to PBS, create a comprehensive picture of its theory and implementation strategies (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Further to the purpose of this research study, a compilation of educators experiences, and governing rules within their classrooms dictated the nature of the interview questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; p.342). As participants autonomy was uncovered within their classroom pedagogies, they highlighted specific elements of PBS implementation. This protocol allowed the researcher to design an interview that met the research focus, providing opportunities for participant elaboration. Within the participants elaborations and possible re-directions, areas previously unforeseen by the interviewer came to light.

In meeting the contextual needs of the study and a semi-structured interview, the self-reported data was collected from teachers currently teaching in a Toronto publicly funded school. Since positive behavioural supports are at the forefront of the progressive discipline plan in Toronto schools, the data collected was most relevant to current or future teachers. Further it focused on their lived experiences with positive behavioural supports only, rather than in conjunction with observational or documentation data as in unstructured interviews. The interview location and time was pre-determined by the researcher and the participants outside regular everyday events (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).
I organized my protocol (located in Appendix B) into 4 sections. It commences with a description of the participant’s background information, followed by question pertaining to their knowledge of positive behavioural supports. Then uncovering their experiences of why and how they have implemented PBS in their classrooms and finally with questions regarding supports, challenges and next steps for teachers. Some examples include:

- What are your views on proactive behaviour management strategies?
- Are you familiar with the positive behaviours supports methodology for behaviour and classroom management?
- What are some critical positive behavioural supports most effective to your positive classroom climate?
- What resources have support your implementation of positive behavioural supports?
- What have you noticed is most effective in reinforcing PBS in your classroom?

3.3 Participants

A qualitative study is described above as the most appropriate methodology for the research questions at hand. This methodology serves to intentionally understand the complexity in psychological issues; moreover, it allows humanistic why and how questions (Marshall, 1996). Deciphering an effective study sample for this study was critical to the research, since studying whole populations would not be practical, efficient or ethical (Marshall, 1996). The act of random sampling does not mere effective sampling techniques for the following study as a result of its generalizability. Since this study focuses on developing an understanding of complex issues that relate to human behaviours, specifically positive behavioural supports to support a positive classroom climate, a small sample is size was most effective (Marshall, 1996).
The following sample of participants mirror critical commonalities and differences that adhere to my specific sampling criteria and are in relation to the research question. Below I addressed all the methodical decisions related to the research participants. Further, I included a section where I introduce the selected participants following our interviews.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

The criteria listed below was applied to the teacher participants of the study:

1. Teachers were currently teaching in the Greater Toronto Area.
2. Teachers had at least 4 years of teaching experience.
3. Teachers demonstrated leadership in the area of positive behavioural supports.
4. Teachers worked in the public school system and are aware of the mandated progressive discipline plan for Toronto schools.
5. Teachers upheld classroom management as a critical aspect in their teaching.

In order to address the main research question, the participants that I interviewed demonstrate some degree of experience with positive behavioural supports in their classroom. These participants have positive behavioural supports at the forefront of their classroom management strategy and are able to speak to its effectiveness in support of a positive school and classroom climate. This began my interest in learning about proactive approaches to behaviour management, as a means of strengthening the communities in schools and within classrooms and its limitations. I perceive classroom management, as a pivotal element in effective teaching so gaining insights from strong leaders in how they effectively manage their classroom is necessary.

In the greater Toronto areas, a mandated progressive discipline plan was established. A focus on teachers within the greater Toronto public school system occurred to specifically explore how teachers have implemented this strategy and why others have not. Lastly, I worked with teachers of varying confidence in positive behavioural supports to identify how educators use PBS in their
classrooms, what factors and resources may support these educators and their confidence, and what challenges they face upon implementation.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures

Given the small-scale nature of the study and the methodological parameters I am working within, my sampling procedure focuses more on convenience sampling as opposed to probability sampling. However, the sampling for this study also falls into a third category of purposeful sampling (Bickman & Rog, 2009). This approach reflects a strategy wherein the particular setting, persons or events were deliberately selected based on the critical information they can provide (Bickman & Rog, 2009). Additionally, “snowball” sampling was used and in combination with purposive, allowed for additional informants or events that deserve investigation to be identified as the study transpired (Sofaer, 1999). This achieved representation of individuals and activities I focused on within the study. It provided greater confidence in the conclusions of the study, denoting an adequate representation of average members of the populace and reducing potential bias that supports the need for “disconfirmation” of emergent hypotheses (Sofaer, 1999).

Due to the nature of this research method, the ability to deal with unforeseen events remained suitable and complimentary to how the participants were selected (Bickman & Rog, 2009). As a teacher candidate, I am immersed in a community of teacher colleagues and mentor teachers. Due to this exposure I relied on my existing contacts and networks to recruit participants. I provided those teachers with the study’s participant criteria and my contact information. By providing both of these elements, interested and suitable teachers voluntarily contacted me, rather than feeling pressured or obligated to participate. The unrestricted nature of their intentional decision to participate in the study fostered an effective semi-structured interview.
3.3.3 Participants bios

Judy

Judy is a kindergarten teacher in the Toronto Catholic District School Board. She has been teaching for 20 years and 15 of those years has been in her current school. Throughout the years she has taught Grades Two, Three, Five, Six, Seven and Eight. This year she gained the title of teacher in charge, where she takes on the role of principal and teacher in her own classroom, in the event the principal is away. She serves on the LSAC teach, a group that monitors what’s happening within the school in terms of grades and numbers. She classifies her school as a transient school as it remains in an old part of the city, with a lot of grand children of residents in the community attending the school. Her school follows a progressive discipline model of behaviour management. She clarifies that this model provides chances before a students’ behaviour leads to suspension or alternate forms of discipline. She describes misbehaviours at her school to be low and characteristics misbehaviours by division: kindergarten centers on physical altercations and not following rules because they are learning them, primaries centers on being bigger in a school yard and learning management skills and, intermediate involves media. She identifies herself as an educator who enacts a positive behavioural support model to approach discipline in her classroom and relates this motivation to implement due to her large family growing up and early childhood education background; thus she had insight into child development and why children do what they do and/or how she can affect them in a positive way.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a Kindergarten teacher in the Toronto Catholic District School Board. She has been teaching for 25 years and had been at her current school for 9 of those years. She spend most of her teaching career in Grades 2 and 3 but, has experience in the junior fourth and fifth
grades as well. Elizabeth is very involved in her school community where she enacts teacher in charge duties, runs the track and field, and cross country teams. Further she participates in the Me to We group at her school and works exclusively with the intermediate students in multiple extra curricular activities. She is a teacher mentor for the York University education program, as well as for Seneca College and Humber College.

Her school has about 630 students from Kindergarten up to Grade 8. They have various programs implemented within the school for students and their families, such as primary behaviour class, ESL and Italian extended day language program. She describes herself as taking a hands on role with discipline in her school. School-wide they encourage positive behaviour from their students through modeling, not dwelling on the negative aspects of the misbehaviours. They enact discussions with students about their behaviours’, devise plans of actions or strategies to support them in improving their behaviours holistically, complete discipline reports to monitor patterns of behaviours. When necessary they reach out to parents for support or refer the students to a social worker or psychologist. A focus on behaviour modification for her school is supporting students to use words rather than actions to communicate. She identifies herself as an educator committed to enacting positive support models to approach discipline and ensures she focuses on her students positive strengths to build their confidence and become life long learners. He goal is to make sure all her students are happy and feel welcomed at school.

Cristina

Cristina is a Grade 2 teacher in the Toronto Catholic District School Board. She has been teaching for 8 years. She teachers all core subjects and has experience in Grades 1-3 individually and as combined grades. The extra curricular activities that she participates in within her school community includes, coaching for the girls volleyball team and a participant on the teacher advisory committee for the greening initiate. She has been at her current school for 3 years. The
schools enrollment is in the range of 400 students and is made up of students from different backgrounds predominantly: Italian, Portuguese and, South American. The students encompass a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and whose parents range from working class to professional. The overall approach to discipline models progressive discipline. As a whole school community they strive to create an environment where all students feel safe by preventing inappropriate behaviour before it happens or becomes a real problem. She identifies herself as an educator who is committed to enacting positive behavioural support models, as her approach to discipline observes students antecedents, behaviours and applies appropriate consequences. Over the years she has had a range of behavioural issues; each time she ensures that her students know when behaviour occurs that it will be process overseen by her and the student, and not dismissed to the office.

3.4 Data Analysis

Due to the nature of this study, its research purpose and questionings, the data was gathered by means of interviews and assisted in understanding the phenomena surrounding PBS. The individual responses of the participants were observed and analyzed for their unique findings and evaluated as a collective whole. The connections and associations that arose mimicked a simultaneous data collection and analysis (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). This supported my evolving understanding of the research questions and better informed the interview sample and protocol (Dicicco- Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The data in this qualitative study was coded in a manner that used interpretation to derive themes within participant’s interviews. In the transcription of interviews and coding of phrases or concepts, perceptions and relationships in the raw data were uncovered. This process complimented the conclusive elements of the studies findings by allowing the researcher to re-organize the data into theoretical explanatory schemes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Within the data
analysis, the fracturing and rearrangement of data into categories was essential in facilitating comparisons between things in the same category and between categories themselves. This served in the development of general understandings of topics that surround positive behavioural supports and generate melodies between theory and implementation (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001).

During my analysis I drew on a template approach. I used words or phrases as units of data and identified overall common patterns and discrepancies that surround PBS theory and implementation. Additionally I acknowledged the null data presented and discussed its significance to PBS theory and implementation.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedure

Given the topic of the effectiveness of positive behavioural supports in current teacher classrooms, as directed by the Canadian government and school boards, participants were asked to critically analyze their autonomy within their classrooms (actions and practices). As such, there are no known risks involved with participation in this study.

In the onset and duration of the interview, participants were informed of their right to pass in answering any questions that they felt uncomfortable with. Further, they were told they may remove themselves from participation at any point. This resulted in the establishment of a safe and comfortable environment for participants, to discuss their attitudes and, experiences genuinely and truthfully.

Within the dictation of the participants’ experiences, their self-reported data held biases. Since, the context of the study dealt with socially desirable behaviour, thoughts and/or attitudes of the participants; moreover, their inclination to depict themselves in a positive way may have skewed the data (Bickman & Rog, 2009). In light of this, participants were assured of their
anonymity in the data collection, to improve the accuracy of responses. The participants were
given pseudonyms; further, their identities and any other identifying indicators are not shared.

Upon completion of the interview, the participants had the opportunity to review the
transcripts and clarify or retract any statements before data analysis was conducted. The data
collected remains on a private, password protected external hard-drive and will be erased after
five years.

Participants of the study were appropriately informed of the study both in written
documentation and in person. Within a consent form, the interviewees were provided with a
comprehensive summary of multiple elements that pertained to their role as participants and the
function of this study. The consent forms included a summary of the purpose of the study, the
associated ethical implications, their expectations as participants and upon signing their form,
that they granted the researcher permission to interview and audio record them (located in
Appendix A).

3.6 Methodological Limitation And Strengths

One of the gravest limitations to this study was due to its limited number of participants.
Due to this limitation, the results were not comprehensive of a larger population of educators and
merely reflective of only a select few teachers within the Greater Toronto Area. The findings are
not generalizable. However, the strength of this methodology allowed for a much deeper
understanding of the subject of positive behavioural supports to this sample of teachers than a
more rigid approach would have (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). This allowed for more
depth than a survey and created space for each teacher to speak to what mattered most to them in
relation to the topic and their practice.

The ethical parameters of the study allowed me to interview and gain first-hand accounts
of teachers in the field. The interviews of these teachers validated their voice and experiences and
provided a platform for addressing what they found was critical of PBS and its implementation as referenced in their lived experiences. The open-ended approach to the research process produced surprises, possible changes of direction and new insights, all of which stimulated a rich discussion and the opportunity for achieving a comprehensive picture of the research topic (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). This methodology also allowed the participants to reflect on their practice and articulate how they conceptualize PBS in theory and in practice, which served further insight into the research topic. As the researcher my subjectivity supported the identification and monitoring of the participants responses, all of which incurred further validity in the study’s findings (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001).

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained the studies research methodology. I discussed the research approach and procedure, specifically delving into the meaning and significance of qualitative research. In highlighting some major differences from its counterpart, quantitative research I was able to showcase the effectiveness of a semi-structured interview and gain superlative data pertaining to PBS effectiveness and implementation based on the participants recounts. Upon establishing how the study was conducted I moved forward to identify the basis for the participants of this study, dipping into my professional network thus far in my career as a teacher candidate. Through purposive sampling, I was able to maximize the richness and depth of the data obtained from teachers who are currently at the forefront of PBS implementation. When analyzing the data I explored the complexities within each participant’s experiences and then inspected for common patterns and themes across the data. The authenticity of my participant’s responses I believe related to the ethical considerations implemented in the study, such as their right to withdraw and their right for anonymity. Further, considering the limited number of participants while only showcasing a small sample of teachers’ experiences provided an
opportunity for the accounts to be rich and delve deeper into their ideologies and understandings.

In the next chapter, I report on the findings of the research.
Chapter 4: Research Finding

4.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights and discusses the findings that emerged after analyzing the data from the research interviews. Throughout the analysis, the focus of the main research question—which reads: How do a small sample of K-12 educators understand the meaning of positive behavioural support (PBS) and what does this mean for their instructional practice?—rooted the connections between the educators' perspectives and previous research in the field, that of which can be found in the Chapter 2 literature review. The findings for this chapter are organized into four main themes that include:

1. Educators who facilitate positive behavioural supports in their instructional practice promote a co-created safe space in their classrooms.

2. Educators who implement effective positive behavioural supports rely on a comprehensive repertoire of resources to support their facilitation.

3. Resistance from multiple stakeholders in the school community impedes implementation of positive behavioural supports.

4. Educators continue to implement positive behavioural supports as a result of their longstanding positive experiences with it.

Each of these themes was deconstructed further into sub-themes, those of which illustrate specific details of how these educators facilitated behavioural supports in their instructional practice. Each theme will be described, include fragments of the data collected and finally, report on each themes significance in the context of existing literature. To conclude, a summary of the findings and recommendations for next steps will be presented.
4.1 Educators Who Understand And Facilitate Positive Behavioural Supports In Their Instructional Practice Promote A Co-created Safe Space In Their Classrooms.

PBS approaches to behaviour management involve a system of positive behaviour modeling and reinforcements to enhance what Sugai et al. (2000) explain as the capacity of schools, families, and communities to co-create effective teaching and learning environments. This section will demonstrate how these participants promoted a co-created safe space by providing their students the necessary tools to manage their own behaviour to be successful at school.

4.1.1 Participants facilitated a co-created safe space in their classrooms by acknowledging students’ behaviours as a holistic learning journey.

Each of the participants discussed a key part of the holistic learning journey is creating a “family” classroom environment which values each student's unique participation. In holding this position, it offers an alternative view to the often-narrow opinions and rationales represented regarding negative behaviours and their antecedents. Judy exclaimed that her class truly believes that all 30 kids are a family and ensure that others in the school know it. Judy’s students were quoted saying, “This is my family and I have to take care of them. We need to be loving and respectful to each other no matter what.” She further explained that she does a lot of work in showing her students their similarities and differences to encourage acceptance in her room. She specifically mentioned that it takes daily practice with students throughout the year for them to understand these messages: “For me its not ‘Omg I only have until September’, I have them for two years in my class and, until they reach Grade 8 in the school, so it’s a journey.”

To further facilitate this holistic journey in creating a “family” classroom environment, relationship building between educator and student, and between peers, is critical. In supporting the acquisition of relationships, the participants indicated that it is necessary to provide their
student with the language to become collaborative, inclusive problem solvers. As Cristina mentioned, “we need to show them how to use their words to clearly articulate themselves, so they don’t use physical force instead.” All three participants strongly recommended applying emphasis on students being welcomed and having a sense of belonging in your class, as Cristina stated, “We are a team and we are working together.” It was from the onset of this “we are in it together” mentality that their students demonstrated their individual strengths and weaknesses as contributing community members in the classroom. Further, this relationship allowed the participants to identify specific elements that surrounded the exhibited disruptive behaviours of their students due to their contextual knowledge of the child pre and post behaviour.

This learning journey of building contextual portraits of students, allows teachers to apply specific tools to limit disruptive behaviours among their students. Elizabeth provided an example of “fidget toys” as a proactive measure to diligently monitor how her class is feeling throughout the day and to prevent outbursts. While the other participants didn’t necessarily use the same resource as Elizabeth, Cristina and Judy would agree with her when she acknowledged the need for students to understand the teacher is in control of the classroom and there to support them. The holistic journey of students’ behaviour management will involve an array of behaviours and antecedents, thus leaving educators to employ a variety of resources and consequences. In their approach to PBS, one size does not fit all. Elizabeth expanded on this notion when she stated,

You don’t want to send the message to the student that when they act out they will be sent to the office. Once you get to know your students, for myself personally I use something called the ABC chart if I notice that behaviour is becoming an issue. I track the antecedent, the behaviour and the consequences that I give them. It really helps me determine what triggers particular students. Once I see a pattern of triggers, like being seated for too long, I
can deal with a case of inappropriate behaviour before it even happens. For example get them to hand something out or, go for a drink and what consequence worked or didn’t.

Elizabeth’s evidences correlate with Tyler and Jones’ (1998) research describing an ecological approach to behavioural supports. This approach allows teachers to gain a well-rounded perspective of students and their behaviour, which support preventative behaviour management strategies. While teachers assess how their students respond to strategies, they also engage in a journey of helping student manage their own behaviours. Significantly, the participants realized that in their experiences of helping students who continuously exhibit disruptive behaviours the process could be extensive. As Cristina says, it may take time for students to adapt but

we have to remember that they are young children, even though what they say or do may seem like an adult—even a 14 year old I still consider a child. They need our help. The ones who need it the most are the ones who “push back” the most, the ones who test us the most. The resistance is not because they are bad children—problems at home or not—they continue because they just haven’t learned the skills yet. I have seen the worst turn around but it took a couple years.

Students who continue to demonstrate the disruptive behaviours are those who are still evidently on their journeys; they just need more time. When the Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, & Turnbull (2000) tells teachers to build authentic relationships and meet every child’s needs, they don’t mention the immense challenge associated with breaking down years of preceding negative build up. The participants provide some wisdom to educators claiming that the student may only be in your class for a year, so be consistent and remediation will be in sight.
4.1.2 Participants facilitated a co-created safe space in their classrooms by creating and displaying visuals that reflect the explicit expectations of students while at school.

Educators in this study relied on the co-creation and display of class rules, learning goals and behaviour action plans from the very first day of school to guide their daily interactions with students. As Cristina prefaced, “We are a new team working together, so we need goals and to establish what we want from each other?” Judy also reflected on her first day speech to students where she explicitly tells students that they are a family that respects each other and works at getting along, and highlights that their co-created rules as necessary for safety, fun and learning at school. All three participants’ first day, week and month of school focuses on collaboration and is consistently referenced and reflected to support the safe space culture in their classrooms so their students gain a sense of belonging and ownership in the space.

Further to the display of class rules and a general behaviour plan, providing each student with a personal, interactive behaviour plan, is suggested as crucial. Judy has a firm 3rd strike policy, which introduces a change in consequence after three acknowledgments to the student that their behaviour is not acceptable. She ensures students are aware of the consequences to their behaviour and participate in the intensification of consequences. Similarly, the people that become involved as behaviours intensify (parents and principal) are provided with an interactive tracking sheet to acknowledge the behaviour plan and ensure each stage is addressed within it. Some recommendations from the participants about an effective sequence includes: a warning, time out/in, note/phone call home and, finally meeting with parents. Judy and Cristina mirrored Elizabeth’s insights about posting the positive guidelines at the front of the classroom to strengthen those skills consistently in their students, and positioning the consequences in a less conspicuous place so only those who need a reminder every once and awhile may refer to it.
All three educators referenced their display of expectations as a strong proponent to co-creating a safe space. In Cristina’s words, “they need to see and know what you want from them, it’s that simple! They won’t know unless you tell them, so use language they will understand and lets set them up for success.” Literature affirms the claims that it is through the strategy of PBS that these educators foster the development of independent and productive thinkers and community members in and outside of the school environments (Rued, Poston & Humphrey, 2004 as cited in Bayat, 2011).

4.1.3 Participants facilitated a co-created safe space in their classrooms by modeling the behaviours expected of their students.

In each interview, the participants referenced their modeling of expected behaviours supported the co-creation of safe space in their classrooms. Cristina explicitly described that, “sometimes you think they are disengaged and building their abstracts, but they always know what’s happening around them.” Judy described that her teams daily use of positive language supports her students attainment,

Even while they are playing and are in a conflict, the ECE and I always say: do you remember our “I care rules” – we use our words to solve problems, we respect our classmate’s feelings, we talk about taking turns. So it is part of what we say to them daily and by them time we hit June that’s the language they are using, and that’s how they are solving their problems.

Judy further explained the importance of modeling through role-play activities with her students to provide them with context to the behaviours they are exhibiting. She explained, “They need to see it in action, they are not going to believe it or they don’t realize what they are doing is inappropriate unless they see someone else doing it. Then it becomes a reality for them.”
By seeing and hearing how to enact positive behaviours, the participants felt their students were better prepared to take responsibility for their own actions. Elizabeth provided an example of how she modeled taking responsibility for her actions when she stated,

   Basically this year I took an oath in front of my class. I promised that I would make sure everybody had a safe experience at school that allowed him or her to learn. I repeated it over and over again. I really made them believe that it’s my promise. I showed and told them how I was going to do it. I guess they saw how serious I was because they have been doing a great job in cooperating and keeping the class climate peaceful and calm.

Cristina and Judy agreed that showing students that a teacher is serious about keeping them safe at school and invested in their wellbeing supports a co-created safe space. Cristina described modeling empathy for her student’s situations supported her co-created safe space. Her students are accustomed to individualized morning greetings to welcome them into the space and follow-up discussions of their absence when returning to school. She credits telling her students that their absence was noticed, that they were missed, and that she is glad of their return to support her safe and welcoming classroom environment. As Judy said, “make them hear and see what you want them to do, it sticks.”

   The educators inferred that even with small gestures they are able to communicate to their students the behaviours they expect to see in the room, such as a high five, smile, or thumbs up. Research confirms that PBS is rooted in relationship building between staff and students and positive role modeling amongst students and professionals in the school community (Chityo et al., 2014). The participants in this study explicitly defined their modeling to be an avenue for making a powerful impact on their students lives and days at school, and, further, fostering a place that students will actually want to come back to everyday because they feel happy in it.
The participants also credit engaging students in a critical analysis of themselves and their actions as necessary to their acquisition of behaviour management skills and co-created spaces. Judy tells her students, “we can make mistakes but as long as we accept responsibility for it and try to do it better next time, those mistakes become learning opportunities.” In these critical analyses, McCready & Soloway (2010) set a distinction between the student and the behaviour they are exhibiting as critical for teachers to identify and for students to understand: the child is not bad, their behaviour is.

4.1.4 Participants facilitated a co-created safe space in their classrooms through a room setup that enhanced self-regulation.

The participants would each agree with Elizabeth in that, “the physical landscape of the classroom has a lot to do with how children feel in the classroom.” The participants described their purposeful room set-up supported students self-regulation by encouraging students to share ideas and engage in learning together. When participants described their self-regulatory room setups, Judy and Cristina mentioned “centers” to support students self-regulation, whereas Elizabeth mentioned a “gathering place” and grouped desks as areas to foster collaboration. Elizabeth described that her, “desks are never put into rows because no man is an island onto himself. Not to sound cliché but without collaboration positive talk cannot happen, nor can engagement in self-regulation.” Cristina highlighted her inclusion of a “cozy corner” every year to support students in their individual engagement with emotional regulation. Judy made no mention of such a place but described that she encourages her students to always “find a comfortable place for them to work throughout the day.” All three participants discussed that their groupings of students rarely exceeded three, as it encourages dialogue and accountability in their students.
All three educators specifically mentioned using manipulatives in their classrooms to support PBS implementation. The manipulatives provide tangible experiences for students to collaborate and become active agents in their learning and leave less time for disruptive behaviours. Further, the participants would agree with Elizabeth when she described investing in manipulatives provides students options in working through their learning and that “having a variety of manipulatives shows that—‘hey there’s a lot invested here, you know, somebody cares about me here, I’m gonna try and do my best’.” The participants described that because the students are able to engage independently with their peers, sharing ideas or resources, everybody gets a fair shake at learning. When all the students are behaving positively, lessons are taught effectively and assessments are carried out effectively. This leaves room for struggling learners to get the extra help they need as research has found that students’ misbehaviour not only affects teacher stress, well-being, and confidence, but it further impacts negatively on students learning time and academic achievements (Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2003; Little & Hudson, 1998; Miller, Ferguson, & Byrne, 2000; Poulou & Norwich, 2000).

4.2 Educators Who Understand And Implement Effective Behavioural Supports In Their Instructional Practice Rely on Consistency And Authentic Relationships To Generate A Comprehensive Repertoire Of Resources To Support Implementation.

This comprehensive repertoire of resources requires targeted professional development and consistency in implementation of action plans, school-wide and at home to meet the individual needs of students and classrooms. The participants demonstrated a growth mindset-trial and error intervals-when generating resources, keeping their students’ achievement at the root of their practice.

4.2.1 Participants’ comprehensive repertoire of resources to support implementation included stable and collaborative relationships with parents.
Harmoniously, each participant highlighted the importance of establishing authentic and collaborative relationships with parents when implementing PBS to solidify PBS methods in and out of school. Elizabeth inferred from her years of experience that every parent wanted what was best for their child, irrelevant to their parenting styles, cultural practices or whether they corresponded with the progressive discipline approach or not. Judy and Cristina mirrored this inference as Cristina stated, “they need to know that what I’m doing is the best for their child. So, welcoming parent dialogue, listening to them and having targeted one-on-one conversations with them at my door or in the schoolyard has benefitted me. It shows them I care.” All participants explained that being empathetic to the challenges of raising a family in today’s society and remaining open-minded to unique family structures and cultural traditions permitted them relatability with the parents. Using her relatability, Judy described how she facilitates discussions with parents about consequences to disruptive behaviours in her classroom,

So I take being a mom as a resource. Because they are my kids from September to June and I take that seriously. And that is what I say to my parents. So when I discipline your child I am disciplining them as a mother. They seem very open to that every year. I haven’t received a complaint yet.

A further avenue in collaborating with parents that Elizabeth and Cristina mentioned involved informing parents along the journey of their child’s successes and areas of need for the as consistency in their relationship is necessary for effective implementation. Elizabeth described that the result of this approach afforded her parents comfort in asking for advice of how they could better support their child when they did not have the ideas or resources to do so on their own. All three participants mentioned that parents enjoyed hearing about their child in a positive light, but were equally concerned with how they could support them at school—an institution they value but do not spend time in with their children.
Curriculum night is when these educators introduced the communication avenues they intended to use with parents throughout the year. Providing parents with information about how they could effectively use these measures was also noted as crucial to the relationship formation. Elizabeth described telling parents about her phone calls home as means to collaborate on an issues and not “tattle tale” on the child’s wrongdoing. Further the participants described adjusting and supplementing the methods of communication to identify the most effective tool for each stakeholder to become invested in the process. Methods included notes home, phone calls, weekly meetings, blogs and/or explicit communication logs.

The participants noted that managing behaviour was not a stagnate achievement for students, but rather a delicate journey they will be on for the rest of their lives, as lives change, situations change and students are faced with inconsistencies in and outside of school. While teachers scaffold students’ development of self as members of a class, school community and society, they are also saw themselves as entering their students’ families when developing authentic relationships with parents. Elizabeth referenced her ongoing communications with generations of families as an extended benefit of progressive discipline. Her claim pronounces the need for consistency in collaboration: a team effort that steadily changes and needs editing. Judy referenced feedback from families of using classroom rules at home long after their child was in her class, reinforces the value of consistency. Ontario’s Safe Schools Act (2006) claims that principals, administrators, teachers and parents should receive standardized training to ensure consistency and fairness in the application of PBS for students problem behaviours; however, participants have suggested that PBS implementation supported by authentic collaborative relationships with parents requires individualized actions plans for students. The participants deem the journey with students’ families and administration as a resource, as in each step together stakeholders gain insights of themselves to inform their future actions.
4.2.2 Participants’ comprehensive repertoire of resources to support facilitation relies on consistency and authentic relationships within a school wide approach.

The participants in this study acknowledged that their implementation of PBS was heightened when the whole school—administration and colleagues—shared a consistent process and goal of behaviour management. Elizabeth exclaimed that “everybody has to be on the same page”; they must be committed to the behaviour goals of the school and, take responsibility for their own classes when dealing with disruptive behaviours, As quoted in the research, the success of PD relies on a school wide approach that implements positive behaviour supports (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai & Boland, 2004; Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010), Cristina and Judy reiterated the need for a universal school code of conduct and ethics, where the schools expectations for each child are consistent across the board from Kindergarten to Grade 8. The participants described that if teachers are uniform in their goals, alike in the sequence of consequences when disruptive behaviours are exhibited, students can consistently practice managing their behaviours each year. Elizabeth highlighted that her method of posting her class’ learning goals and day’s routine every morning supports her school-wide PBS plan of action in taking responsibility for her class.

Elizabeth described that implications from the school-wide behaviour goals and action plans additionally relies on the development of authentic relationships between student and teacher to support effective implementation. Since the whole school community takes responsibility for each other throughout the year (or consecutive years), students and teachers must develop a constructive rapport with one another to generate a cohesive school community. Elizabeth used a book by Shakker called Calm, Alert and Learning to understand how her students’ “baggage” from home relates to their limited learning and engagement at school. She described how the book has taught her how to destress her students from the “baggage” they walk
Elizabeth ascribed her school’s acknowledgment of students involvement in a single class for only year, and the school community for several years, as a reason for authentic relationship building school-wide – as each interaction students engage in informs their next interaction. Further, Cristina described that educators must acknowledge that when they are in the hallway of a school or in the schoolyard, they become everyone’s teacher. As everyone’s teacher, it is their responsibility to keep everyone safe and provide constructive feedback to scaffold each students success in managing their behaviours In supporting this school wide approach, initiatives in some of the participants’ schools, such as “anti bullying week” or “digital citizenship,” provide sustenance to a school wide culture of safety, relationship building and learning, for all of its students.

Cristina described her admin’s open door policy when working with the school wide plan is a proponent to its success. Cristina described her principal’s on the spot, one-on-one coaching, in-services or forwarded articles on the topic provided depth to the teachers understanding of PBS. The strong administrative leadership as evidenced in Elizabeth and Cristina’s interview correlates with the research in securing the success of an effective PBS framework. Research stipulates the need for a school wide implementation protocol; moreover, one that is encouraged by the administration of the school to ensure students consistently strengthens their skills with cohesion throughout each grade (Heifetz, 1996).

While the methods in Judy’s resource proved successful and age-appropriate for her students, her interview revealed an interference in her students’ progression since no other teacher enforced these codes of conduct. Colvin & Sprick (1999) explain that the scattered behaviour management strategies of her colleagues are inefficient, incomplete and ineffective for
effective behaviour management; moreover, that broken PBS systems can harm students’ success going forward. Even though Elizabeth’s school follows a PD approach, she is certain that not all the teachers in the school enact this policy. While she appreciated a school wide approach, she challenges findings in research when saying that, “even though it may not be the school’s philosophy or your co-worker’s philosophy, if you believe this philosophy to work then you should implement it as much as you can throughout the day.” Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis & Turnbull (2000) further support the balancing efforts and attention between school-wide and individual systems (individual students or individual teachers classroom rules), and place the burden of responsibility on the effectiveness and rate of implementation in schools; this suggest participants are enacting best practice by promoting school-wide implementation of PBS.

4.2.3 Participants’ comprehensive repertoire of resources generated by consistency and authentic relationships informs targeted professional development.

Of the three participants in this study, none made reference to the same specific program used in their implementation of PBS. Interestingly, they each described homogenous instructional approaches in facilitating the consequences within their individual programs. Reporting on the programs they facilitate, they stressed the variety in programs available for teachers, the individualized journey of this process for stakeholders (teachers, students and school communities) and the need for relevant professional development since what works for one might not work for all. The strategies that the participants referenced as supporting their instructional practice came from individual inquires in professional development and experiences introduced to them by their administrations.

Clunies-Ross, Little & Keinhus (2008) indicate that providing teachers and administrators with professional development that involves pedagogies in awareness, relationship building, leadership and cultural responsiveness is said to support the implementation of PBS. This study
did not provide evidences of administrative or culturally responsive professional development, yet unpacked the need for targeted professional development experiences. Participants described targeted professional development initiatives require educators to develop undoubted holistic knowledge of their students - including age or grade- as McCready & Soloway (2010) agree it supports these participants in deciphering professional development that specifically addresses the needs of their students and classrooms to support PBS implementation. As Judy described, “progressive discipline means that a child can make a mistake but with one-on-one counseling and dialogue, you give them the opportunity to fix it and see the other side.”

4.3 Educators Who Understand And Implement Effective PBS In Their Instructional Practice Are Impeded By The Resistance From Multiple Stakeholders In The School Community.

This theme reveals barriers the participants acknowledging as impeding implementation of PBS in their instructional practice. Each subtheme focuses resistance from the various stakeholders involved in the school community. The resistance described is rooted in people’s reluctance to meet the authentic needs of students in today’s generation. Meeting the needs of students requires a holistic picture of who they are, as a student, child, brother or sister, grandson or granddaughter, athlete and/or dancer etc. Statiin & Magnusson (1996) support these findings in suggesting that who students are outside of the classroom many times dictates who they are inside of it.

4.3.1 When implementing effective PBS in their instructional practice, participants were impeded by resistance from students in the school community.

When participants were asked about barriers to their implementation, each one acknowledged that unless a student felt safe at school their success in managing behaviour was hindered. Quoting Elizabeth, “If you don’t feel safe how can you learn? I haven’t done my job; I
failed them.” All three participants pointed to a student’s success being contingent on their feelings in the classroom. Cristina said, “if they love it, they will do it” and Judy said, “If you want to be at school, then you are probably going to behave.”

The participants cited that students are always tracking the teachers’ behaviours; thus, when a teacher demonstrates a commitment and urgency to enact PBS, it gives incentive for students to get on board. This also works the other way, however, as Judy explained, “If the students feel that you don’t follow through with your words; you can’t keep them safe or can’t control the class; then behaviour starts.” Similarly, Elizabeth explained that acts such as sending students to the principal dictates to students that you don’t want to or have the necessary tools deal with them. These messages are in opposition of PBS framework of consistency and relationship building and hinder student’s engagement with PBS structure.

Judy mentioned how some severe cases of students’ behaviour may still persist in light of assurance in positive and clear messages; thus, a greater network of support for the child is necessary. Numeracy Secretariat & Ontario (2013) affirms the need for tailored culturally responsive discussions and modifications as additional networks of support. This study uncovered that most of the behavioural problems dealt one-on-one with students, rather than outsourced to different rooms or administrators, allowed educators to address students’ holistic needs and identities. The authenticity of these relationships required educators to be habitually involved in every incident the child executed and, insistently unpack each of their altercations. Participants ensured their students steadily heard them, saw them and could rely to them for guidance because students know when teachers give up on them. Cristina mentioned that many times a teacher is the only consistent person in a child’s life; thus, they have a duty in not falling short.
4.3.2 When implementing effective PBS in their instructional practice, participants were impeded by resistance from parents in the school community.

The participants in the study each credited that without parental support students become confused with mixed messages from school and home. Teachers and parents need equivalent visions and to follow through with expectations. Elizabeth acknowledged this feat in saying that, “if parents aren’t supporting you, then the work you have done at school is almost in vain and won’t work, you have to try and get them onboard.” To ignite cohesion, participants suggest educating parents about the classroom’s collaborative climate; as Cristina stated, “parents come to school and are only focused on their child. They don’t realize that a day at school is not just about their child, it’s about all of them; how they interact and learn.” If valuing each family’s needs is at the forefront of a teacher’s practice, ensuring that parents also value the cohesive pedagogy being fostered in the classroom is crucial. Cristina mentioned that almost always children will value their parent’s views over their teacher’s; so developing a cooperative relationships with parents funds their support in the classroom policies and helps drive a teacher’s messages home. Without open communication with parents, participants cited parents’ inadvertent idea that reaching out to them about their child’s struggles, is a teacher picking on them.

Research highlighted a gap between the knowledge of PBS and its degree of implementation conducive to a learning environment (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006). This research regards meeting the social, emotional and academic need of students- behaviourally and generationally- necessary for parents and teachers, as both may share uncertainty in what is really happening in students’ lives. Elizabeth stated that, “you can’t analyze something or someone’s values, unless you are fully immersed into the situation.” The participants suggested mending the disconnection of realities jointly with parents is most
productive in understanding these children. Further discussions in how or if the school should address students’ lives outside the classroom remains (Safe Schools Action Team & Ontario, 2006; Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat & Ontario, 2013). However, the participants in this study acknowledged that educators must change with the times in order to manage student behaviour; each new generation will need totally different supports.

4.3.3 Participants are impeded when implementing effective PBS in their instructional practice by resistance from administration in the school community.

All participants highlighted resistance from administration in the school community: the school board. Judy and Elizabeth stated the cutbacks of human resource—educational assistants or services, child and youth care workers, social workers and psychologist—were a grave loss to their classrooms and student success in behaviour management. Cristina went on to state, “putting money back into human resources should be of extreme importance.” She apprises the “cutting of the flock” to prompt struggling students to lash out. The working relationships with these resources affords students’ targeted support in establishing aptitudes in managing their behaviour; without that service, students are left to lash out because teachers can’t effectively meet their needs in the classroom. This study acknowledges human resources as the individuals who build superior relationships with the most at-risk students. They are given the means to spend extended periods of time with students to uncover their specific strengths and needs, monitor and note patterns and triggers of behaviour in and outside of the classroom. McCready & Soloway (2010) explain that PBS relies on the transformation of students’ values, beliefs, habits and ways of working and living; thus, supports like human resources can take the leadership role in addressing the social, emotional and physical development of students holistically in and outside of the classroom.
4.4 Educators Who Understand And Implement PBS In Their Instructional Practice
 Validate Their Continued Implementation On Their Longstanding Experiences With It

The main reason participants use PBS in their classrooms is as a result of their circumstantial and abiding effective experiences with it. When asked why they implement this approach to manage behaviour, all three participants responded similarly: “Because I know it works.” As students and educators, each participant acknowledged their past experiences with reactive approaches to behaviour, such as reprimands, time-out, limitations and exclusions from activities, leaving students exhibiting the behaviours or not on task with feelings of anxiety or fear rather than understanding and reformation (Clunies, Little & Kienhuis, 2008). Their memoires of withdrawal tactics as never addressing the real issues of the disruptive behaviour informs their PBS implementation as a preventative or constructive remediation.

While the participants referenced related topics in their teacher education courses, Judy referenced her knowledge in child development as a proponent to implementation. She stated,

I chose to go to Ryerson for my early childhood education degree because my hope was to be the best teacher I could be. I wanted to learn about child development, why children do what they do and how I can affect that in a positive way. This approach lets me do that.

The three participants defined behaviour modification as a process of attainment similar to academic success. Further, participants confirm what Cooper & Yan (2015) and Jones, Ling & Charlton (1999) explain as the teacher’s failure in implementation of PBS and not the failure of the PBS strategy. The participants explained that while success in modifying every student’s behaviour every time is unlikely, it is likely that they can improve in each occurrence, week, month, year and on. They claimed that setting up a framework for students and affording them time to familiarize themselves with how it works or where they fit within it supports
implementation. Further, teachers who demonstrate a willingness to struggle with the child and consistently deconstruct their misbehaviours supports the modifications involved in PBS. Elizabeth explained that demonstrating to her students that she is always there for them and cares what happens to them, no matter what, supports her effective implementation. The participants fund that best practice of effective behaviour modification relies cohesive guiding principles for procedures and consequences school wide; however, Elizabeth and Judy cite that taking initiative to model PBS in all their interactions with students at school, proved effective in building constructive relationships with students in all grades.

Prevention of behaviour disruptions remains the responsibility of the teacher according to participants, who advise monitoring antecedents throughout the day. Further, participants claim that acknowledgement of the innate emotional satisfaction in pleasing others promotes good behaviour and success. Participants confirm Jennings & Greenberg’s (2009) position that students’ motivations to behave properly extend beyond the mere pleasing of an adult; thus, students’ alternate motivators must be decoded to support PBS implementation.

Participants urge educators to value the fragile nature of modifying students’ behaviour as holding lasting repercussions for how they interact and understand relationships, authority, collaboration and identity in the future. In knowing this, the participants consciously use PBS to inform students’ holistic development and for students to gain constructive feedback. Elizabeth mentioned that if she ever felt she was too harsh on a student, she dialogues with them so they understand the intensity of her voice or consequences, as caring for them; moreover, she ensures they understand their actions as undesirable in the classroom and not them.

4.5 Conclusion

Through the analysis process, four main themes emerged. The most critical factor influencing this study relied on the holistic journey of students when managing their behaviour.
For students to holistically develop, teachers must feature a co-created safe space in their classrooms. An environment where students feel welcomed and encouraged to prosper and share their voice. It is with a teacher’s comprehensive repertoire of resources, generated by consistent and authentic relationships, that educators can infiltrate the process of students’ development. An educator’s tenacity and collaboration with the students, parents, colleagues and school administrators from the very first day of school supports PBS implementation; as one of the participants explained, “no one is an island onto himself or herself.”

Even though resistance from multiple stakeholders in the school community impedes educators who understand and implement effective PBS in their instructional practice, they continue to enact PBS strategies because of their longstanding positive experiences with it. An individual teacher’s time with students is only one snapshot in their journey; yet, according to this research, a little bit of intervention with a child can help them.

Next in Chapter 5, I will discuss broad and narrow implications for these findings, give recommendations and note potential areas for further research.
Chapter 5: Implications

5.0 Introduction To The Chapter

This study has provided insight on three Ontario teachers’ perspectives and methods for implementing positive behavioural supports in their classrooms to support their instructional practice. In general, the findings supported most of the existing literature in the area of effective classroom management strategies involving co-created spaces, relationship building, the process of holistic development and, professional development. Yet, this study uncovered some distinctions in the resources and specific protocols teachers used to implement PBS in their classrooms. This study provides new insights and techniques when supporting students and teachers in modifying behaviour in the classroom-suggestively proactive strategies that rely a progression throughout the year. In this final chapter I discuss the implications of my research study. I begin by providing an overview of some key findings of this research and discuss their significance in relation to the literature; moreover, as a tool for educators in their classrooms. Then, I will discuss the broad implications of these findings for the educational community as well as the implications for me as a teacher and as a researcher. I make recommendations for policy and practice, including various stakeholders in the educational community. Next, I identify important areas of further research in sighted from the study. Finally, I conclude by summarizing my findings and speaking to their significance.

5.1 Overview Of Key Findings And Their Significance

As noted in the previous chapter, there were several significant findings that arose from the participants’ interviews. These keys findings were organized into four main themes. The first theme demonstrated that educators who facilitate PBS promote a co-created safe space within the classroom. In creating a responsive and reflective classroom environment, developing authentic relationships with students illustrates a teacher’s commitment and allows students to take
ownership and responsibility for their actions. In facilitating a co-created safe space, teachers must acknowledge their students' behaviours as a holistic learning journey—one that cannot be universally scripted, rather exploratory in methods. This pro-social classroom framework, also mentioned in Jennings & Greenberg (2009), positions accountability on teachers to support student's social and emotional competence to stimulate their intrinsic motivations. In modeling expected behaviours, students can become sound listeners, dutiful in routines and equipped with appropriate language to communicate with peers when mediating behaviour situations.

The second theme originated from this study highlights the reliance on consistency and authentic relationships to generate a comprehensive repertoire of resources when implementing PBS—from human resources to economic resources. This study accredits a school-wide implementation strategy—a consistent course of action and goal for behaviour management paralleled each year—as helpful for students. While prior research shares this view, this study also situates administrative support (as a strategy consultant, advocate or liaison) in a non-comprehensive system as also effective for PBS implementation. The findings advise teachers in forming stable and collaborative relationships with stakeholders to meet the individual needs of students and families (through communication logs, phone calls home, or community workshops).

Comparable to McCready & Soloway (2010), this study describes limited professional development within PBS leads to depilating repercussions for teachers and students; moreover, in concurrence with Martin and colleagues (1999), failure in the application of PBS is a result of insufficient information or comprehension from teachers. This study challenged the research where availability of resources is projected as scarce, citing that a plethora of resources are available to teachers across boards, but that teachers are simply not accessing the appropriate professional development to meet the specific needs of their classroom. As such, educators are encouraged to place students at the forefront of the amalgamated human and economic resources.
and, offer students guidance, such as language, context and/or strategies, to support their development of self.

The third theme related to the barriers participants described as impediments to implementing effective PBS: those induced by resistance from multiple stakeholders in the school community. Due to the nature of the participants’ teaching styles, personalities and school communities, each participant faced varied contentions when implementing PBS, such as longstanding relationships, inconclusive communications or, deliberate opposition of classroom pedagogies. This study highlights success in collaboration with students, teachers, parents, and administrators when each demonstrated empathy and a willingness to “change with the times” as quoted by one of the participants. The makeup of students, communities and families are ever changing, so the strategies used to support students must match their needs. This study promotes explicit intervals of communication with stakeholders to discuss relevant issues surrounding students and to show invest in student success. Finally, acknowledgement of a lack in “human resources” within the school, impedes tactful support for “at risk” students in PBS environments.

The final theme that emerged from this research was the participants’ recognition of their longstanding experience and success with PBS. The participants described their primary rationale for using this method is in their assurance that it works. This study encourages teachers to take responsibility for their students, stay committed to their procedures and endure the process to attainment for successful implementation. It is important to note that although each participant used PBS to effectively manage their students’ behaviour, they also approached it in different ways and consistently reflected on both the positive and varied weakness within it. Aligned with Clunies, Little & Kienhuis (2008), this notion of self-efficacy and reflection suggests that teachers should remain reflexive in their practice and to provide opportunities for growth and flexibility when adopting a relationship with the process of behaviour and classroom
management. The process of PBS is fluid and relies on a teacher’s willingness to become learners themselves while navigating a balance of facilitator and information provider. This study acknowledges the autonomy in a teacher’s classrooms to support PBS implementation, crediting basic universal principles of valuing respect, empathy and acceptance, as foundational for success. However, the individual goals and routines of classrooms must be reflective of the students each year. The subsequent section will detail the implications of these findings to the educational research community, as well as for myself as a teacher and researcher.

5.2 Implications

This research study has provided detailed portraits of how teachers have applied PBS in their classrooms effectively. The participants’ experiences provide variation in the types of resources to implement and how to effectively use collaboration with students, their peers and stakeholders in the school community to support behaviour modification. Broadly speaking, this study demonstrates autonomy in pedagogies of teachers’ room set up, routines, communication, and collaborations as supporting or hindering student success since varied protocols in and out of school environments create inconsistency. Managing students’ behaviours is a progressive process and should be monitored and modified periodically among stakeholders to be effective. Once students develop a comprehensive understanding of who they are and their role in school or worldly communities, subsequently they come to exist as empathetic and contributing members to society.

5.2.1 Implications for the educational research community

For school administrators

While this study has focused on the strategies that teachers can and/or could use to foster a positive classroom environment, it is also important for the school administrations to consider these ideologies when enacting universal strategies in their schools. Within the mere universality
of school administrator mandates—that of which could unite their school communities for sound functionality—creating authentic and collaboratively relationships with teachers, students and, parents are vital. If these stakeholders within school communities take ownership of their actions and hold pride for their school community, they may whole-heartedly remain committed to ensuring its triumph and authority. However, like the autonomy of teachers’ beliefs dictating the goals and beliefs within their classrooms, the beliefs of administrators contribute to school-wide practices. In light of the implications of their beliefs on the whole school community, remaining consistent among stakeholders is central to a successful PBS structure. This study crystalizes the honing of classroom management techniques relied immeasurably on the constant and constructive feedback from administrators; moreover, collaborated action plans when teachers were at a loss. Additionally, participants described having one individual, like the principal, outside of the classroom that supported the goals in the classroom, contributed to the collaborative nature of PBS by providing students with another mentor in their journey of self-discovery.

**For Teachers**

As previously specified, past conceptualizations of classroom management primarily focused on reactive strategies of controlling and disciplining students in an effort to manage classroom behaviours. Notably, it is common for teachers today to still hold this view of controlling and disciplining student behaviour even though recent literature and mandated policies in Ontario related to behaviour management have moved away from these notions. This study has demonstrated how current progressive discipline pathways prove effective for stakeholders in the school community such as teachers, students, parents and school administrators in creating cohesion in school. Research describes discipline gaps as adaptive situations; thus, these social problems cannot be fixed by a code, form or set structure (McCready
& Soloway, 2010). Instead, they are progressive and rely on the transformation of people’s values, beliefs, habits, and ways of working or living. Consequently teachers should be aware of how to incorporate elements like co-creation, relationship building, differentiation, consistency and student investment into their academic and social practices with students, families and colleagues, in an effort to invite these transformations. This research further recommends that teachers decipher the explicit needs of their classrooms and seek targeted professional development for support.

At a rudimentary level, incorporating authentic relationship building and collaboration with students in everyday routines of the classroom helps reduce stress experiences from classroom disruptions or poor management practices. With a balanced framework in the classroom, students can take ownership of their actions and, actively engage in the direction of class goals and interests.

This research demonstrated that each teacher involved this study actively worked to integrate this pedagogy into their practices, reflecting on the successes and failures’ of strategies along the way. While each teacher used individualized action plans for their class and students alike, each benefited from the amalgamation of human and economic resources to keep their students success at the root of their inquisitions. Including a reflective component in their practice promoted a comprehensive action plan for their classrooms and, allowed teachers to uncover what and how their philosophies affected their practice. Irrefutably, teachers should be aware of the cultural responsiveness present in their classrooms to aid PBS implementation. Further, use of one-to-one dialogue as a valuable tactic for teachers, such as daily talks, weekly updates, tickets out the door, or expressing to students they were missed in their absence, to acquire better understandings of their personalities, strengths, needs, and extra curriculum in and outside of the classroom.
For parents

For parents the most notable implication from this study surrounds developing an authentic and collaborative relationship with their children and, their children’s teachers. Consistent communication with the teacher allows parents to attain a holistic picture of the classroom, its goals, the behaviours of their children within the classroom and how to explicitly support their child out of school, such as by learning their child’s strengths and weaknesses as they progress throughout the year. Further, this study encourages parents to support the PBS classroom or school climate by replicating the responsibility for their actions at home, in an effort to further scaffold their experiences and strategies of confronting and solving problems.

5.2.2 Implications on my professional identity and practice as a teacher and researcher

As a teacher candidate, this research study has helped stress the importance of empathy when exploring the unique progression of student behaviour. It has shown me the critical role teachers’ play in the lives of their students, as mentor and as facilitator, when dealing with new and trivial situations. It is necessary as an educator that I use consistency and positivity for the production of skill sets academically and behaviourally. The experiences of the participants from this study have compelled me to take an active role in intrinsically motivating my students to become life long learners and contributing members of society. Most prominently this study has revealed the need for self-efficacy as a professional and imbed specific strategies, such as engaging with conversation, focussing on the process of modification, understanding student interests and needs, and encouraging student voice, as ways of developing an engaging and responsive classroom environment. As a beginning teacher, I must acknowledge that my actions, beliefs and dispositions play a role in how my students will experience the classroom, curriculum and surrounding communities. Further, that as I progress in my career, I should remain open to
acquiring new and enhanced methods for relating to my parents and, preparing my students for the world ahead of them.

5.3 Recommendations

In responding to the needs of students, this section will outline several introductions for teachers and administrators to incorporate into their practice for effective PBS implementation.

5.3.1 Recommendations for teachers

(1) Teachers should familiarize themselves with research in holistic development. The effectiveness of classroom practices relies on the dynamic relationship of student development and teacher’s pedagogies- both hindered if not complimented.

(2) Behavioural science reveals human behaviour as learned and influenced by environmental factors; thus, it can be changed and become more understandable. As our understandings grow, so to does our ability to teach more socially appropriate and functional behaviours. Teachers should strive to form authentic and collaborative relationships with students, parents and administrators to develop unique action plans. Parents can provide insights of home life-behaviours and commitments that may support or hinder the action plan in the classroom- while school administrators, can provide details of students from previous years or be privy to new research or professional development to support teachers.

(3) Teachers should work towards creating co-created classroom environments. Giving students a voice in the inquiries, goals and classroom design, provides ownership of the space. Exploring further research in the pro-social classroom and culturally responsive frameworks can support teachers in implementing co-created spaces.

(4) Teachers should reflect on their instructional practices to remain accountable to the modification of programming involved in PBS implementation-it requires assessment to inform multi-component plans of support, environmental redesign, curricular adaptations, schedule
revisions, instruction of new skills and, positive or negative consequences (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, & Turnbull, 2000).

(5) Teachers should remain consistent in their classroom goals, action plans and, consequences when fostering PBS; students need to know what is expected of them and how to effectively meet your expectations.

5.3.2 Recommendation for school administrators

Teachers have reported feeling they have insufficient support from administrators when dealing with problem behaviours in schools; additionally, they have expressed limited professional development opportunities to appropriately modify the behaviours of their students. According the Safe Schools Act in Ontario (2006), principals, administrators, teachers, parents and students should already be receiving standardized training to ensure consistency and fairness in the application of PBS for students with problem behaviours. We know that PBS works and according to the Safe Schools Act principals are already mandated to implement PBS yet, teachers still complain about the lack of support. Developments from this study acknowledge the need for consistency when enacting PBS to ensure stakeholders hold cohesive expectations and knowledge in how to meet those expectations. Administrations should renew their efforts towards implementing school wide initiatives that encourage stable and consistent relationships and the co-creation of spaces so each member takes ownership of their actions and of the environment. Over and above supporting teachers with targeted professional development, administrators should be ever present throughout the school and within classrooms; students, teachers and parents need to consistently see them motivated and committed to school goals so they may reciprocate.
5.4 Areas For Further Research

I am motivated in supporting the holistic needs of children throughout their development, but as I participate in the field of education I have a growing concern of how other professionals, maintain or ignite the same views when confronted with challenging situations. I want to know how teachers are effectively using positive behavioural supports in the classrooms and what strategies or professional developments they have accessed to instill confidence in PBS implementation. Further research from a larger sample of teachers in the area of effective professional development could expand teacher’s repertoire of resources and, aid in meeting the individual needs of their classrooms. Investigations of student’s perspectives and experiences with PBS- how students perceive their teachers, their classroom frameworks and, collaborative initiatives- could holistically present the process of behaviour modification and further support teacher’s instructional practice. Most significantly, attaining student’s rationality for their disruptive behaviours, modification processes and, incentives in remediation would delve into a unique investigation of teacher’s cultural responsiveness to students in classroom today.

Additionally, evidence of school-wide implementation and coaching for staff in PBS strategies proved positive; thus, explorations of the extent to which school administrations promote progressive discipline across all school boards can support research in this field. Finally, an investigation of whether quality programs, human resources and economic resources are universally available or valued throughout schools and school boards would contribute to research in the field.

5.5 Concluding Comments

As evidenced in multiple bodies of research, the most common issues teachers have within their classrooms surrounds behaviour. This research study discussed implications and strategies for the educational community and in meeting the specific needs of students, ensuring
they feel safe, respected and reflected in their learning environments. Given the findings from this research, it would be beneficial for the educational research community to take into consideration the significance of consistency, authentic student teacher relationship, and the process of holistic development, to provide a basis in understanding behaviour modification. Students rely on teachers to guide their developments; thus, emphasizes on the quality and consistency of relationships and scaffolded learning opportunities lies within the teacher’s authenticity, strength and effort in supporting student success in the classroom going forward.
References


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Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: 

Dear ________________________________ ,

My Name is Pierina and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on how teachers implement positive behavioural supports in their teaching. I am interested in interviewing teachers as leaders in the area of positive behavioural support strategies. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-60 minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor Angela MacDonald-Vemic. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

Pierina Lio
Course Instructor’s Name: Angela MacDonald-Vermic
Contact Info: angela.macdonald@utoronto.ca

Consent Form
I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Pierina and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ______________________________________

Name: (printed) __________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, and for making time to be interviewed today. This research study aims to learn how teachers implement positive behavioural support strategies in their teaching. This interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and I will ask you a series of questions focused on your experience implementing positive behavioural supports. I want to remind you that you may refrain from answering any questions, and you have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. As I explained in the consent letter, this interview will be audio-recorded. Do you have any questions before we begin?

**Background Information:**
1. What is your current position?
   a. What grades and subject areas do you currently teach?
   b. What grades and subject areas have you previously taught?
   c. Do you fulfill any other roles in your school? (e.g. advisor, coach, leader)
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. How long have you been at your current school?
4. Can you tell me more about the school? (e.g. size, demographics, program priorities)
   a. Can you describe your school’s overall approach to discipline?
   b. Would you describe the number of discipline cases that arise in your school to be high, average, or low?
   c. What range of behavioural challenges are common in your school?
5. You have identified as an educator who is committed to enacting a positive behavioural support model in your approach to discipline. Can you tell me more about what experiences contributed to you developing this commitment, and which have contributed to preparing you for this work?
   a. Personal experiences? (e.g. own experience in K-12 education, experiences of family members, friends)
   b. Educational experiences? (e.g. university course work, teachers college, additional qualifications, professional development)
   c. Professional experiences? (e.g. employment positions, teaching experience)
6. How long have you been implementing a positive behavioural support model in your classroom?

**Teacher Perspectives/Beliefs:**
7. What does progressive discipline mean to you? How do you understand this term?
a. In your view, what are the goals of progressive discipline?
8. Why do you believe that it is important to implement progressive discipline in schools? What are the benefits of this approach?
9. In your view, what are the potential consequences of implementing more traditional models of behavioural response and discipline in schools?
10. In your experience, how well are schools doing in implementing progressive discipline? What evidence have you seen to support your view?
11. What do you think are some of the barriers that get in the way of implementing progressive discipline in schools?
12. How, in your view, do positive behavioural support models align with the goals of progressive discipline?
13. In your experience, what outcomes of PBS have you observed in schools? *listen first, and then probe:
   a. Have you observed any outcomes related to students capacity to self-regulate?
   b. Have you observed any outcomes in terms of social skill development?
   c. Engagement in learning?
   d. Academic achievement?

**Teacher Practices:**
14. How do you implement positive behavioural supports in your classroom?
15. What range of instructional practices do you enact when implementing PBS?
16. If I were to spend a day in your classroom, what evidence of your commitment to PBS would I see and hear?
17. Can you speak to routines that you implement to support positive behavioural supports in your classroom?
18. Can you provide me with some specific examples of how you have implemented positive behavioural supports with students?
19. When do you implement PBS? Under what circumstances?
20. What considerations do you make when implementing PBS?
21. In what ways, if at all, do you teach students explicitly about PBS?
22. How do your students respond to your implementation of PBS in your classroom?
23. What resources support you in implementing PBS in your classroom?
24. What is the relationship between:
   a. PBS and your classroom set-up?
   b. PBS and your classroom climate?
   c. PBS and your classroom management?
25. Can you speak to how, if at all, you use positive behavioural supports in assessments or evaluations of your students?

**Support and Challenges:**
26. What factors and resources support your implementation of positive behavioural supports? (e.g. leadership from admin, access to material resources, communication with parents, access to physical spaces, behavioural support workers etc.)

27. What challenges do you encounter when implementing PBS? How do you respond to these challenges?

28. How could the education system further support you in addressing the challenges you face?

Next steps:

29. What recommendations do you have for how the education system could further institutionalize positive behavioural supports as part of schools’ enactment of progressive discipline?

30. What advice, if any, do you have for beginning teachers who are committed to implementing positive behavioural supports in their teaching practice?

Thank you for your participation in this research study.