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Special Education Teachers' Knowledge of the Discipline Section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 as it Relates to Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans

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The University of Southern Mississippi

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE DISCIPLINE

SECTION OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT OF

2004 AS IT RELATES TO FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT AND

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLANS

by

Tricia Michelle Cox

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

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This study explored the overall special education teachers' knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) as it relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans. The variables associated with this research included the special education teachers' route of certification, level of education, years or experience, and the type, quality, and time of training associated with Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans. The participants were special education teachers in the state of Mississippi. The research revealed no significant differences or relationships between any of the variables identified above. However, even though the study showed no significant relationships or differences in the variables, the overall low knowledge score for the special education teachers surveyed indicated exceptionally poor understanding of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 as it relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans.

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DEDICATION

My greatest supports were my husband, Dean, and my son, Jeffrey. Towards the end, my husband banned me from the boat, and would not let me out of the house to enjoy much of anything. He wanted this journey complete just as I did. My son encouraged me with his constant support and reassurance knowing this journey was very special to me. Without the two of you always supporting my long weekends of writing and hauling my computer and materials with us to every event and vacation, I could not have completed this process. I thank you both, and I love you dearly! My mother, Kay Arnold, traveled this doctorate journey with me as well. We pushed each other to the end. You can do this mom, keep on writing!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

        Purpose of the Study
        Statement of the Problem
        Research Questions and Hypotheses
        Definition of Terms
        Assumptions
        Delimitations
        Justification
        Summary

        Introduction
        Theoretical Framework
        Historical Perspective of Behavior
        School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (SWPBIS)
        Response to Intervention
        Legal Considerations Related to the Discipline Section of The Individuals
        with Disabilities Education Act as related to Functional Behavioral
        Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans
        Functional Behavioral Assessments
        Behavior Intervention Plans
        Traditional Route versus Alternate Route Teacher Certification
        Teacher Knowledge of the Discipline Section of IDEA (2004) as it Relates to
        Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans
        Summary

        Introduction
        Research Questions and Hypotheses
        Research Design

Participants
Instrument
Procedures
Data Analysis
Summary

Introduction
Descriptive Statistics of Participants
Data Analysis
Results of the Research
Summary

Introduction
Discussion
Limitations
Recommendations for Future Research
Recommendations for Policy and Practice
Summary

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Statistics shows that between 1-5% of students enrolled in public schools have

significant behavioral concerns. These behaviors manifest through poor social skills,

aggressive behaviors, suicidal and homicidal threats, and habitually disruptive behaviors.

However, of that population, 50% of the incidents dominate teachers' and administrators'

time (Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000). These behaviors monopolize valuable

instructional time in the classroom resulting in stunted student academic growth and

proficiency (Sugai et al., 2000). When dealing with student behavior, teachers and

administrators most often react to a punitive nature as a result of a confrontation with

parents, students, and other school authority figures. School officials indicate they would

prefer to utilize a proactive procedure. The proactive use of Functional Behavioral

Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) enhance students'

educational benefit (Gable et al., 1997; Scott, Nelson, & Zabata, 2003; Sugai et al.,

2000). Research postulates a change in the professional standing of school officials from

negative punishment to positive interventions.

The process used to complete an FBA and BIP involves a collaborative team

effort. An FBA team determines the environmental factors influencing the student's

behavior (Gresham et al., 2004; Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2001; Miltenberger,

2004). Sugai, Lewis,-Palmer, and Hagan-Burke (2000) describe an FBA as an

individualized evidence-based problem-solving approach to identify factors contributing

to the behavior and provides an outline to develop and implement an appropriate BIP. As Walker (1999) reminds FBA teams,

> Behavior occurs in a context, not in a vacuum. We need to consider the environment, as well as the child; we cannot assume that the problem is solely with the child. Behavior continues because it is reinforced. The misbehavior works for the student. The challenge is to identify the purpose or function the behavior serves, and attempt to identify a replacement behavior that is more acceptable and will serve the same purpose for the student. (p. 4)

A standard approach to determining environmental factors that enhance students' behavior is an FBA and BIP, which utilizes A-B-C data. Data collection provides several critical pieces of data: (A) antecedent or the immediate event preceding a behavior, (B) beahviro or the displayed behavior identified in measurable terms, and (C) consequence or the actions that prolong or enhance the behavior (Fox & Gable, 2004; Gresham et al., 2004).

An FBA and BIP includes three components: direct assessment, indirect assessment, and functional analysis (Horner & Carr, 1997; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Scott & Eber, 2003; Scott, Liaupsin, Nelson, & McIntyre, 2005; Zirpolli, 2005). A trained team gathers and analyzes the collected data to facilitate behavioral change (Gresham, Skinner, & Watson, 2001; Scott et al., 2005; Zirpolli, 2005). Research proves that behavior can be modified when an FBA and BIP are implemented with reliability and validity (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997; Scott & Eber, 2003; Scott et al., 2005).

We seem to forget everything we know about learning when it comes to dealing with behavior. Ninety-six percent of behavior is learned, and so it can be unlearned. Misbehavior becomes automatic, the student does not go through a cognitive process and decides to misbehave. When a student must unlearn an inappropriate behavior and learn an appropriate replacement behavior, it may take at least 4 to 6 times more practice. Behavior change is not a discrete event; it takes time. (Walker, 1999, p. 4)

Some behaviorists express concerns with improper training and professional development for team members, specifically teachers who responsible for completing an FBA and BIP process (Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2004; Doggett, Edwards, Moore, Tingstrom, & Wilcznksi, 2001; Drasgow, Yell, Bradley, & Skinner, 1999; Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004). The validity and reliability of the process can compromise the result of effectively changing student behavior (Crone et al., 2004; Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004). Researchers encourage the use of various methods to validate input and ensure data is not misconstrued by team members (Drasgow et al., 1999). A review of the literature has demonstrated a general lack of training and professional knowledge among school officials responsible for an FBA and BIP process.

FBAs and BIPs assist not only the students displaying inappropriate school behaviors, but also classmates directly affected by the misbehaviors (Crone et al., 2004; Doggett et al., 2001). The implementation of an FBA and BIP allows students to continue progressing in the general education curriculum while demonstrating their actual abilities and proficiency levels upon extinction of the undesirable behaviors (Doggett et al., 2001). Deficient supports can potentially lead to unsuccessful educational

experiences for at-risk students (Doggett et al., 2001; Kauffman, 2005). Lack of knowledge and understanding of the IDEA (2004) disciplinary procedures prompted school officials to delve further into this uncharted territory (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007).

School district special education administrators and school psychologists concur, there is little research as to a particular procedures for school-based FBAs (Nelson, Roberts, Rutherford, Mathur, & Aaroe, 1999). Typically, district administrators task school psychologists and positive behavior support personnel to train other team members in the development of an FBA and BIP (Kauffman, 2005; Zirpolli, 2005). Writing effective FBAs and BIPs requires collaboration and follow-up trainings (Broussard & Northrup, 1997; Sailor et al., 2000; Scott et al., 2003; Scott, Meers, & Nelson, 1999) as required by IDEA 1997 & 2004.

The 1997 and 2004 amendments to IDEA initiated change regarding school officials' institution of a disciplinary action to students with disabilities. The change to IDEA ensured the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the student's least restrictive environment (LRE) (Horner et al., 2004; Kauffmann, 2005; Lee & Jamison, 2003; Miltenberger, 2001; Miltenberger, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997). The amendments require data-driven interventions and decisions prior to disciplinary action and encourage proactive, rather than reactive, measures (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2009; Ingram, Lewis-Palmer, & Sugai, 2005). The requirement for an FBA and BIP comes into play when the disciplinary action is found to be a manifestation, or direct result or impact, of the student's identified disability (IDEA, 2004).

The 1997 revision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) demonstrated a paradigm shift from student accessibility to the local education agencies (LEA) accountability of student growth within the general education curriculum (Gresham et al., 2004; Quinn et al., 2001). The 1997 revision resulted from the 1980's war on drugs initiative that instated the zero tolerance policy (Skiba, 2004). IDEA (1997) mandated an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) committee must consider the use of an FBA immediately upon a discipline infraction involving weapons, drugs, or bodily harm to self or others or upon a change of placement (out of school suspensions, alternative placements, etc.) involving more than 10 cumulative days (IDEA, 1997; O'Neill et al., 1997; Scott & Eber, 2003). However, the 1997 amendment to IDEA did not provide IEP committees guidance responsibility, assessments to utilize, and how to train school staff on the completion of an FBA (Carr et al., 1999; Quinn et al., 2001; Sugai et al., 2000).

The 2004 amendments provided further clarification on the requirements of FBAs and BIPs and required school officials to use this proactive measure of behavior support (Fox & Gable, 2004; Gresham et al., 2004; Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Yell, 2006). IDEA (2004) mandates specific actions of when the IEP committee must consider an FBA and BIP as well as what to include in the final report (Dukes, Roseburg, & Brady, 2008; Yell, 2006; Yell, 2007). The IEP committee makes the final determination as to the necessity of an FBA, and who will be involved the process and development (Fox & Gable, 2004; Kauffmann, 2005; Yell, 2006; Yell, 2007).

IEP teams struggle to use FBAs and BIPs in a proactive manner (Crone & Horner, 2000; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Jolivette, Barton-Arwood, & Scott, 2000; Martin & Pear, 1999; Scott et al., 2005). Five years after the mandate for FBAs and BIPs in the 2004 revision of the IDEA, research continued to find poor rates of teacher knowledge about the purpose and the process surrounding FBAs and BIPs. Kircher (2009) found only 40% of teachers were able to identify the most important outcome of an FBA process, 17% correctly answered questions about federal legislative requirements, 36% understood the four functions of learned behavior, and 11.4% had knowledge a student's placement could change regardless of the manifestation determination review (MDR) when the discipline action relates to weapons, drugs, or serious bodily harm. Ladner (2009) found only 30.6% of teachers reported they were adequately prepared to manage challenging behaviors, and 46.8% said they had not received training on FBAs. Even though it is required by IDEA (2004), teams are less likely to request an FBA due to violations of the school code of conduct involving weapons, drugs, or bodily harm when involving the first incident of misbehavior (Katsiyannis, Conroy, & Zhang, 2008).

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

Research demonstrates a need for teachers to understand the requirements and purpose of the FBA and BIP process as outlined in the discipline section of the IDEA (2004) (Crimmins & Farrell, 2006; Kircher, 2009; Ladner, 2009; Wagner, 2005). Teachers behave in a different manner toward students who display aggressive and antisocial behavior and tend to avoid student engagement for fear of prompting an aggressive outburst (VanAcker, Boreson, Gable, & Potterton, 2005). Lack of teachers' knowledge and understanding of how to effectively teach desired behaviors results in

students becoming labeled as emotional and behavioral disordered (Lago-Delello, 1998). Reinforcement of inappropriate behaviors may occur by teacher reprimand or adverse reactions. These reactions may result in students with severe emotional and behavioral needs displaying aggressive or non-compliant behaviors (Sugai, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Sugai et al., 2000). Teachers are typically reactive instead of proactive resulting in negative student engagement (Sugai, 2007; Walker, 1999).

Lack of team training results in teacher frustration and lack of understanding of FBAs and BIPs (Sailor et al., 2000). Wagner (2005) suggests that when the use of previous strategies, interventions, or environmental changes have not been useful to improve the outcomes for a student who demonstrates deficits in social, emotional, and behavioral areas may be the direct result of a lack of adequate training. Crimmins and Farrell (2006) found that providing teachers with 15-20 hours of in-service training and follow-up activities and coaching support is one example of an effective model for training.

Research on the effectiveness of an FBA as an intervention tool in school settings indicates the need for further data to determine if teachers understand IDEA (2004) discipline requirements in addition to how and when to utilize an FBA and BIP (Gresham et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 1999). There is little research to determine the deficiency level among teachers regarding their knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA as it relates to FBAs and BIPs. Lack of knowledge regarding an FBA and BIP requirements and process directly affects student success and it stands to reason teachers cannot implement initiatives when they have not received appropriate and effective training.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 as it relates to functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and behavior intervention plans (BIPs)?

2. To what extent does special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs relate to the type, quality, and time of teacher training?

3. To what extent does special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs differ between alternate route and traditional route teachers' and level of education?

The following research hypotheses guided the study:

H1. There was not a statistically significant relationship between special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs and the number of hours, type, and quality of teacher training.

H2. There was not a statistically significant difference between alternate route special education teachers and traditional route special education teachers' overall knowledge score of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs.

H3. There was not a relationship between special education teachers' overall knowledge score of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBA and BIP and their years of teaching experience and level of education.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided:

1. *Alternate Route Teacher* – for the purpose of this study, refers to a teacher who did not complete an approved traditional teacher education program, but received an alternative educator license through the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). Alternative route teachers have earned a bachelor's degree or higher level of education, and meet approved alternative licensing criteria including (Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Educator Licensure Guidelines, 2014).

2. *Behavior* – what people say or do, has one or more dimensions, is observable, describable, and recordable, affects the environment, potentially unlawful. For the purpose of this study, behaviors break school and/or class rules as identified in school handbooks and school safety laws (Miltenberger, 2004).

3. *Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)* – an individualized plan that includes strategies for dealing with students' inappropriate behaviors, identifies positive and negative reinforcements, defines the responsibilities of the child's team members for implementing the BIP, provides measurable student outcomes, and includes a modified discipline ladder if needed (Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004).

4. *Behavior Modification* – modifying the undesirable or inappropriate behavior and replacing it with an appropriate, desirable behavior (Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004).

5. *Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)* – education provided to students with disabilities that ensures access to the general curriculum with an emphasis on

special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs assuring their rights are protected (Yell & Drasgow, 2000).

6. *Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)* – for the purpose of this study, the process of gathering information about the antecedents and consequences functionally related to the occurrence of a problem behavior. This also provides information such as the antecedent of the behavior, time, and place of the occurrence, environmental causes, frequency, duration, intensity, and school personnel involved in the inappropriate or negative behavior (Miltenberger, 2004, Scott & Carron, 2005).

7. *Individualized Educational Program (IEP)* – a written program for a child with a disability. The plan is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting including the parent, student, administrator, special education teacher, general education teacher, and any related service providers in accordance with Sec. 300.320 through Sec. 300.324 or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 to provide measurable outcomes related the their specific deficits and disability (IDEA, 2004).

8. *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)* – a United States Federal Law that governs how states and public agencies identify students who meet the criteria as a student with a disability and provides early intervention, special education, and related services. It addresses the educational needs of children with disabilities from birth to age 21 (IDEA, 2004).

9. *Knowledge of the BIP Process* – a variable measured by the researcher-developed survey and investigated for this study. For the purpose of this study, the BIP

process refers to a teacher's understanding of the BIP process (IDEA, 2004; The

Mississippi Department of Education State Board Policy 7219).

10. *Knowledge of an FBA Process* – a variable measured by the researcher-developed

survey and investigated for this study. For the purpose of this study, an FBA

process refers to a teacher's understanding of an FBA process (IDEA, 2004; The

Mississippi Department of Education State Board Policy 7219).

11. *Local Education Agency (LEA)* – a public board of education legally constituted

within a State for either administrative control or direction of public elementary

schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, or school district of a

State (IDEA, 2004).

12. *Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)* – to the maximum extent appropriate,

children with disabilities are educated with children non-disabled peers in the

general educational setting as long as the nature or severity of the disability of a

child can be accommodated and modified with the use of supplementary aids and

services (IDEA, 2004).

13. *Manifestation Determination (MDR)* – a process to determine if the relationship

of the student's disciplinary action and their identified disability; and to determine

if the student's IEP was appropriate and implemented with validity and fidelity

(Kauffmann, 2005).

14. *Procedural Safeguards* - designed to protect the rights of children with disabilities

and their parents, including the right to participate in meetings, to examine all

educational records, to obtain an independent educational evaluation, right to

written notice when the school proposes to change or refuses to change the

identification, evaluation or placement of a child and provides several ways to resolve disputes including mediation and due process hearings (Wright, 2014).

15. *Progress Monitoring* – the process of analyzing data and trend lines to determine student response to specific interventions based on identified goals outlined in their individualized education program (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Ingram et al., 2005).

16. *Response to Intervention (RTI)* - a method of academic and behavior intervention used to provide early, systematic assistance to children who are having difficulty learning. RTI seeks to prevent academic and behavior failure through early intervention, frequent progress monitoring, and intensive research-based instructional interventions (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2009; Ingram et al., 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

17. *Special Education Teacher* – a teacher who provides specialized instruction and support services to students with disabilities. For the purpose of this study, a special education teacher holds a license issued by the Mississippi Department of Education, and is considered highly qualified to teach students with disabilities (Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Educator Licensure Guidelines, 2014).

18. *School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (SWPBIS)* – an approach designed to improve the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices for school-wide classroom behavior management and discipline procedures (Ingram et al., 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

19. *Traditional Route Teacher* - for the purpose of this study, a traditional route

teacher completed a traditional teaching program through an approved teaching

certification program, and is currently licensed in their current area of instruction

through the Mississippi Department of Education (Mississippi Department of

Education, Office of Educator Licensure Guidelines, 2014).

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all respondents correctly self-identified as special

education teachers and the data collected was accurate. Finally, the researcher also

assumed that the participants had at least a basic understanding of the discipline section

of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs.

Delimitations

Delimitations imposed upon this study include: it is limited to those teachers who

participate in the Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children (MS CEC) state

conference in spring 2015. Participants include special education teachers employed

throughout the state of Mississippi. An insufficient amount of responses was collected at

the MS CEC state conference. Due to this limited response, additional IRB approval was

obtained, and an instrument was forwarded to teachers in 11 southerly districts of

Mississippi whose Superintendents granted permission for the survey.

The study only represents the knowledge of the special education teachers

surveyed. Generalization of the results to schools throughout the United States of

America may be difficult. The participants surveyed have varying knowledge of the

discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs. The data was collected

via online questionnaire survey utilizing Qualtrix. The demographic data collected was

limited to the size of the district, teacher certification, position, years of experience, and type, quality, and the amount of time of teacher training in FBAs and BIPs.

<div align="center">Justification</div>

Disruptive behaviors are those significant enough to interrupt valuable instructional time, and interfere with the learning process of the student and other classmates (Adelman & Taylor, 2006; Drasgow & Yell, 2001). Administrators spend an average of 20 minutes per student to address the incident and students lose 45 minutes of valuable instructional time per event (Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Providing another means of dealing with disruptive behaviors through effective classroom management techniques may reduce student time out of the classroom (Doggett et al., 2001; Ellis & Magee, 1999; Gresham et al., 2001). A way to effectively change inappropriate, disruptive behaviors utilizes school-wide positive behavior intervention and response to intervention models. These models lead to the development of FBAs and BIPs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Sugai & Horner, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Sugai, Horner, & Sprague, 1999).

When used in conjunction with a response to intervention model for academics, school-wide positive behavior intervention support (SWPBIS) model assists in identifying at-risk students. This model reduces the rates of high school dropouts, retention, and suspension/expulsion (Gresham et al., 2004; Lewis & Ingram et al., 2005; Scott et al., 1999; Scott et al., 2003). Early intervention strategies may successfully eliminate several key factors that are associated with the issues referenced above (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007; Gresham et al., 2004). This model should identify at-risk students early

in their school careers and assists LEAs in providing educational benefit through access to the general education curriculum.

There are multiple risk factors associated with lack of student success beginning in their elementary years and ultimately resulting in high school dropouts. The risk factors include poor academic and behavioral performance, excessive absences and increased discipline (Cannon & Lipscomb, 2011; Glennon, 2009; Karweit, 1991; Wagner, 2005). Students identified with a disability have a greater risk of incarceration during their juvenile years, lower standardized test scores, and are more likely to drop out of high school (Glennon, 2009). Students who repeat two or more grades are considered to have a 100% probability of demonstrating high at risk factors. Those factors include becoming a high school dropout, increased juvenile delinquency rate leading to incarceration, low-income rates, and poor social and emotional adjustment in adulthood (Costenbader & Markson, 1997; Glennon, 2009; Karweit, 1991). *Education's Next Horizon* (2010) states "National statistics indicate that nearly 80% of students held back two or more years in elementary or middle school leave the public education system without a diploma" (p. 4). Current graduation rates, dropout rates, retention rates, and suspension/expulsion rates correlated with the need for training and continued professional development in the area of behavioral and academic interventions (Glennon, 2009).

Retention, social promotion, and dropout rates in Mississippi indicated that 88% of socially promoted students, especially those occurring in elementary and middle school years, were likely to drop out of school by age 17 (Woodruff, 2009). The national dropout rate for students age 16-24 who earned a GED or high school diploma sits at 7%,

while Mississippi students drop out at a rate of 13.9% (Stillwell & Sable, 2013). The national graduation rate is commensurate with Mississippi's rate of 75.5% (Ebner, 2013). The data demonstrates that LEAs continue to lose 25% of our exiting high school students with most being at-risk students exhibiting behavior problems (Ebner, 2013). The graduation rate for students with emotional and/or behavior disabilities stands extremely low at 44% (Stillwell & Sable, 2013), and this population has the lowest post-secondary participation rate, next to those with an intellectual disability (Wagner, 2005). As compared to national averages, Mississippi continues to have a high dropout rate and suspension/expulsion rate for at-risk students (Mississippi Department of Education, 2013).

According to the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Mental Health in Schools (Losen & Martinez, 2013), there is an increased trend in retention rates for the past 25 years. In a study published by the Public Policy Institute of California, 7.5% of students were retained prior to the third grade with boys at a much higher rate of retention than girls (Cannon & Lipscomb, 2011). The UCLA group's findings indicated that retained students should immediately have academic or behavioral interventions at the beginning of the next school year. Retained students did not learn at a faster or higher rate than their peers placed in the next grade and only reading skills improved if retention took place before the second grade (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Kennelly and Monrad (2007) determined that retention in elementary and middle school grades was the strongest predictor to students becoming high school dropouts. Teams making decisions regarding retention must consider the increased probability of suspension and expulsion rates that co-exist and typically increase for retained students (Losen & Martinez, 2013).

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) published *Out of School & Off Track: the Overuse of Suspension in American Middle and High Schools* in which the data revealed the suspension of over two million students during the 2009-2010 school year (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Despairingly, students with disabilities are suspended at twice the rate (13%) as compared to their non-disabled peers (7%) (Losen & Martinez, 2013; OCR, 2014). Students who were suspended once during their freshman year of high school doubled their chance of dropping out of school. The increase from 2.4% of elementary school student suspensions to 11% at middle and high school levels alarms researchers (Losen & Martinez, 2013; OCR, 2014). Conclusively, the suspensions were for non-aggressive behaviors nor did they include weapons or drugs.

Most suspensions were for code of conduct violations such as dress code and tardiness, not including assault, weapons, or drugs (Losen & Martinez, 2013; OCR, 2014). Suspension rates have a direct correlation to student learning; a result of missing valuable instructional time ultimately affects students' ability to obtain post-secondary employment (Skiba, 2004; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Skiba et al., 1997; Wagner, 2005).

As a result of lost instructional time due to suspensions or expulsions, the students' ability to obtain post-secondary employment with a competitive salary is directly affected (Wagner, 2005). The national median income for adults over 25 years of age who are high school dropouts is a staggering $19,404 yearly, compared to the overall median household income of $51,371 (Holzer & Martinson, 2006; U.S. Department of Commerce Enocomics and Statistics Administration, 2012). Schools should attempt to reduce suspensions and expulsions that in turn will reduce the dropout rate (Glennon, 2009).

There is a direct correlation between retention, suspension, and dropout rates involving at-risk students (Glennon, 2009; Losen & Martinez, 2013; OCR, 2014). Students at-risk demonstrate an increased probability of becoming juvenile delinquents or future incarcerated convicts (Losen & Martinez, 2013; OCR, 2014). The alarming concern for this group of students is the lack of teacher knowledge, training, and ability to effectively work with at-risk students and assist in building relationships to facilitate future success (Glennon, 2009). Owings and Kaplan (2001) describe several long term key effects of grade level retention. They found no correlation of positive effects on student achievement; retained students have an increased drop-out rate, and increased discipline problems. Allen, Chen, Willson, and Hughes (2009) indicate if students only repeat the grade level, obtaining the same instruction as the previous year, and are not provided with intensive intervention, then retention is pointless. Retention in itself is not an intervention. Intense academic or behavior interventions must accompany retention. The key to student success could lie in expanding teacher knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to the implementation of FBAs and BIPs.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Although national rates for dropout, discipline, and graduation have increased, the need for increased teacher knowledge in the area of FBAs and BIPs is still evident due to the high rates of students with disabilities affected in these areas. In 1997, IDEA mandated the use of an FBA and BIP as part of the process involving students with disabilities through discipline practices. The 2004 revision of IDEA provided specific criteria required in an FBA and BIP. The OCR recommends a change in policies and procedures and suggests targeting discipline practices specific to student intervention

prior to the use of suspension (Losen & Martinez, 2013). The practices and procedures should include systemic behavioral and academic interventions without racial biases to decrease the number of minority suspensions (Losen & Martinez, 2013; Sugai 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2009). Nearly 200 million adults over age 25 have not achieved a high school diploma or GED, 20% of students with disabilities in high school are suspended, and African American students are suspended and retained at a higher rate (Losen & Martinez, 2013; OCR, 2014). The OCR encourages the intervention of problem behaviors as soon as they are evident as well as training the teachers and administrators working to assist in student success (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Through the examination of data compiled from previous research, it is evident schools are failing to meet the behavioral, social, and emotional needs of students, specifically those students identified as students with disabilities.

This study examined the overall knowledge of special education teachers related to the IDEA (2004) requirements of the discipline section and FBAs and BIPs. The data collected was used to determine if there was a relationship or difference between teacher knowledge of the law and specific variables.   All participants were certified teachers, general education or special education, in the State of Mississippi. Chapter II of this study provides an in-depth review of the current literature related to the discipline section of IDEA as it relates to FBAs and BIPs. A discussion of the methodology in Chapter III is followed by an analysis of the results in Chapter IV. Finally, a discussion of the limitations and recommendations for future research is provided in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

According to the United States Department of Education, frequent and disruptive behavior is the most problematic issue facing educators and administrators. In a Dear Colleague letter published January 8, 2014, Mr. Arne Duncan, United States Department of Education Secretary of Education, reminded national, state, district, and school-level leaders that we must review our current discipline practices which currently reflects zero-tolerance initiatives and in a reactive rather than proactive approach as a whole (U.S. Depatrment of Education, 2014). Mr. Arne Duncan stated the following based on 2014 unpublished OCR data:

> Nationwide, data collected by our Office for Civil Rights show that suspensions and expulsions disproportionately impact youths of color and youths with disabilities. For example, data show that African-American students without disabilities are more than three times as likely as their white peers without disabilities to expelled or suspended. Although students who receive special education services represent 12% of students in the county, they make up   19% of students suspended in school, 20% of students receiving out-of-school suspension once, 25% of students receiving multiple out of school suspensions, 19% of students expelled, 23% of students referred to law enforcement, and 23% of students receiving a school related arrest (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, p. i).

Studies found 95 % of discipline referrals are for minor infractions that result in out of school suspensions or expulsions due to the number of compiled referrals and the student discipline ladder (Boccanfuso & Kuhfeld, 2011). Sugai et al., (2000) indicate approximately 1-5% of children in the United States are diagnosed with severe behavior disorders. Students with emotional and behavioral deficits have increased rates of suspension, absenteeism, and retention (Koyanagi & Gaines, 1993; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). The most concerning statistic, 50% of students with emotional and behavior deficits fail to graduate from high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Researchers find that dealing with school behaviors on a case-by-case basis through Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) provides a more efficient and holistic framework for student success (Ingram et al., 2005).

This chapter introduces background information on the theoretical framework related to the basis for FBAs and BIPs. Following the theoretical framework, a historical perspective of behavior gives detailed information on how FBAs and BIPs developed and previous use of the assessment. Next, is an overview of legal considerations related to the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Act as it relates to the requirement of FBAs and BIPs. Next follows an exploration of the requirements for an FBA and BIP as outlined in the IDEA of 1997 and 2004. Then a review of the School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention System (SWPBIS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) takes place. Following SWPBIS and RTI, an overview of traditional and alternate route teachers. An in-depth review of the definition and requirements for an FBA and BIP and an examination of the literature on teacher knowledge of IDEA as it relates to discipline and FBAs and BIPs, completes chapter two of the literature review.

Theoretical Framework

During the 19th Century, people considered individuals with mental illness or mental retardation as being insane and referred to them as being idiots (Kauffmann, 2005). During this era, many individuals were placed in insane asylums or remained home suffering abuse and neglect. Well into the early 20th Century, children with behavioral or mental disorders finally began to receive appropriate care and education; although often separated from their typical age peers (Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2001; Miltenberger, 2004).

One of the most prominent behavior modification theorists was Ivan Pavlov whose experiments with respondent conditioning involved creating a conditioned response in dogs. These experiments led to the conclusion that creating predetermined responses was possible. Edward Thorndike founded the law of effect theory that posits one's behavior is likely to be repeated when it produces a favorable impact on the environment (Miltenberger, 2004). John B. Watson originated that environmental factors and events influence behavior (Miltenberger, 2004). B.F. Skinner originated experimental analysis of behavior and basic behavioral principles involving operant behaviors (Miltenberger, 2004).

Skinner (1974) defines operant conditioning as the consequence of the behavior, whether positive or negative, which influences the future occurrence of the same behaviors. The behavioral approach, based on Pavlov's theory of Classical Conditioning and Skinner's theory of Operant Conditioning, has two major assumptions (Miltenberger, 2004). First, the basis of the problem is the behavior itself, and second, the behavior is a function of environmental factors (Kauffman, 2005). For students to be successful, a

proactive response to identifying these assumptions will assist in student academic and behavior success (Kauffmann, 2005).

Operant conditioning is a behavior or response that the environment controls or influences based on presented circumstances (Miltenberger, 2004; Skinner, 1974). In this theory, consequences are the reinforcers that increase or maintain the behavior at the current rate. The punisher decreases the rate, duration, and intensity of the behavior. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning involves the observable, overt behaviors as measured through direct observation (Miltenberger, 2004; Skinner, 1974).

Classical conditioning, also referred to as Pavlovian conditioning, is the relationship between stimuli and unconditioned responses (Zirpolli, 2005). These behaviors, usually not controlled by the individual, are typically involuntary. The behaviors occur automatically when presented with the certain stimuli (Zirpolli, 2005). This theory provides the basis for many current behavior modification techniques used today by educational personnel to enhance and change student behavior (Miltenberger, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005).

The difference in the two theories, classical conditioning and operant conditioning, is apparent. In the past, classical conditioning has taken place during behavior therapy in a therapeutic or clinical setting for covert behaviors and mental illness (Miltenberger, 2004). Whereas, Operant conditioning is the use of behavior modification of overt behaviors and most often utilized in the educational setting; overt behaviors and operant conditioning theory is the basis of this research (Zirpolli, 2005). However, as teachers become more familiar with behavior modification, both classical

and operant conditioning are both utilized in the school setting (Miltenberger, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005).

In the early 20th century, research began with the behavioral principles identified by Skinner as the foundation of behavior modification. Azrin and Lindsley (1956), Bijou (1957), and Baer's (1960) studies involved children. Goldiamond (1965), and Verplanck (1955) conducted studies of adults with behavioral concerns. Ayllon and Azrin (1964) and Ayllon and Michael's (1959) conducted studies involving individuals with mental illness. Ferster (1961), Fuller (1949), and Wolf, Risley, and Mees' (1967) research focused on individuals, who at that time, were called Mentally Retarded. These research efforts involving humans assisted in establishing the behavior modification principles and procedures that are still in use (Miltenberger, 2004). Twentieth-century initiatives drove the many legislative actions leading to the assistance of students with disabilities and to mandate humane treatment.

Historical Perspective of Behavior

Social and emotional learning often refers to the development of student's self-awareness, self-management, and decision-making skills (Zins & Elias, 2007). For behavior to change, the person demonstrating the act must obtain a benefit from the behavior. Moreover, it must be measurable by others observing the act for frequency, duration, and intensity (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004). Behaviors exhibited by children fall into two primary categories. External behaviors or overt behaviors often manifest as aggressiveness, acting out, and tantrums (Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Sugai et al., 2000; Zirpolli, 2005). Internal behaviors or covert behaviors manifest

as socially withdrawn, self-harm, or harm to others or objects (Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Sugai et al., 2000; Zirpolli, 2005).

According to Miltenberger (2004), behavior modification analyzes and modifies inappropriate or non-adaptive behavior. Effective behavior change involves the use of academic and instructional strategies, student encouragement, and teacher-led motivation to drive student success (Payton et al., 2008). Behavior modification changes the undesirable or inappropriate behavior and replaces it with an appropriate, replacement behavior (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005). Effective behavior modification involves a focus on the behavior and manipulating and understanding environmental events to be changed or eliminated (Iwata, Kahng, Wallace, & Lindberg, 2000). The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) published a position paper in 2009 in which the NASP delegate assembly supported the use of a multi-tiered problem-solving approach to the behavioral, social, emotional and academic deficits of students at-risk.

Historically, researchers have found several questions common among researchers when prioritizing behaviors in a school environment (Drasgow & Yell, 2001; O'Neill et al., 1997). First, determine if the behavior is dangerous to the student or others. Next, is the behavior interfering with the academic performance or placement of the student? Third, are the social abilities of the student impacted by the behavior? Are there parental impacts due to the behavior in question? Upon changing the behavior, will it produce positive outcomes academically and socially (Drasgow & Yell, 2001; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005)? All of these questions lead to the

one broader issue, can these behaviors be addressed through effective School Wide

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports?

<div align="center">School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (SWPBIS)</div>

School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (SWPBIS) is the use of

multi-tiered school-wide positive behavioral supports that facilitate social values, living,

and learning with the student and family (Ingram et al., 2005). For SWPBIS to be

effective, stakeholders must take ownership of the program through identifying, adopting,

and sustaining effective policies and practices to ensure a successful system (Ingram et

al., 2005). The purpose of SWPBIS is to teach students social skills and replacement

behaviors. This includes 3 phases or levels (Ingram et al., 2005; Walker, 1999) which

coincide with the Response to Intervention (RTI) model promoted by Fuchs and Fuchs

(2006, 2007, 2009).

<div align="center">Response to Intervention (RTI)</div>

Response to Intervention (RTI) is defined as "a multi-step or tiered approach in

which student progress is carefully monitored to make good instructional and

intervention decisions" (Sugai & Horner, 2009, p. 225). It is viewed as a standard

intervention process effectively to improve academic and behavioral deficits (Ingram et

al., 2005; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2009). The use of this universal system of intervention is

effective in reducing problematic behaviors (Fairbanks et al., 2007) through the use of

data-driven decision-making by team members (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007). The data, when

displayed in a graphical format, provides reliable and easily interpretable information for

the committee to make appropriate student decisions (Ingram et al., 2005). A concept to

remember is RTI and SWPBIS are both processes to identify the specific academic,

behavioral, social, and emotional deficits of the student (Horner & Carr, 1997; O'Neill et al., 1997; Sugai et al., 1999; Todd, Horner, Sugai, & Colvin, 1999). There are several stages in the RTI model to assist teams in providing effective interventions in the students' deficit area(s).

The primary tier of the RTI model involves all students within the school. This tier utilizes universal screeners to identify students with possible academic or behavioral deficits (Crone & Horner, 2000; Gresham, 2007; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2005). The goal of the primary tier of SWPBIS and RTI is to promote appropriate student behavior (Ingram et al., 2005). Approximately 80-90 % of all students should respond to school-wide measures for academic and behavior instruction (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). School staff members should implicitly teach, model, and replicate the expected behaviors throughout their daily lessons, school functions, and other school-sponsored events or activities. A referral to tier II of RTI may be needed for those students who do not respond to school-wide measures after documented differentiated instruction.

Tier II of the RTI model involves the 10-15 % of the student population which does not respond to school-wide academic and behavior measures at Tier I (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007). The goal of tier II RTI and the secondary tier of SWPBIS is to reduce repetition of specific, reoccurring behaviors. Fuchs and Fuchs (2007) indicate students require more intense differentiated instruction possibly at a lower level of academics and behavioral interventions. Teachers utilize universal screeners completed during Tier I to identify academic or behavior deficits and choose research-based scientifically proven interventions unique to the student needs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005). Tier II targeted interventions take place 3 days per week for 20 minutes each day or as

outlined by the program utilized (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2009) and includes frequent progress monitoring. Teachers utilize a tier II behavior plan, sometimes referred to as a Behavior Support Plan (BSP), for students demonstrating inappropriate behaviors (Ingram et al., 2005). Some supports implemented during this tier could include mentoring, social skills lessons within a group and group counseling. Students who do not demonstrate progress at a sufficient rate of improvement (ROI) as identified in their goal, are referred to the next step after 4-8 weeks of documented intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Scott & Eber, 2003).

Tier III of the RTI model and SWPBIS involves 1-5 % of the student population. This group of students has not responded to school-wide measures at tier I or tier II for academic or behavioral deficits (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Fuchs & Fuchs 2007). The goal of tier III and SWPBIS is to reduce the intensity and duration of specific student behaviors by teaching replacement behaviors and skills (Ingram, et al., 2005; Walker et al., 1996) and reduce the amount of missed instructional time. Research by Fairbanks et al. (2007), found the RTI model, currently utilized for academic interventions, prevents problem behaviors within the school. SWPBIS works jointly with the RTI model within school settings (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Ingram et al., 2005). At this tier teachers and other support, staff members determine if the student's behavior warrants an FBA and BIP (Ingram et al., 2005; Walker, 1999). Students typically require individual intervention for academics, social skills, and counseling to address emotional and/or behavioral deficits (Marzano et al., 2005; Ingram et al., 2005). School psychologists, counselors, social workers, mental health members, and positive behavioral support personnel could be supports at this level of need (Ingram

et al., 2005). For those students who are not improving at a sufficient rate of improvement (ROI) and not identified as a student with a disability, the next step includes a request to the Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation and Eligibility Team (MET) (IDEA, 2004).

The MET determines if the data indicates a disability and if so, does the data indicate the need for a comprehensive assessment as available through IDEA (2004). Upon referral to MET and a decision to evaluate for a possible disability, students are afforded all rights allowed to students with disabilities under the IDEA until an eligibility determination is completed (IDEA, 2004). As part of this comprehensive evaluation process, if not already completed, the team may suggest the completion of an FBA. Conclusively, when the implementation of interventions lacks validity and fidelity, legal action can take place.

<div align="center">

Legal Considerations Related to the Discipline Section of the Individuals

with Disabilities Education Act as related to Functional Behavior

Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans

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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1997 and 2004

Federal legislative action for students with disabilities began in 1975 with The Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EHCA) or Public Law 94-142. EHCA was passed by Congress upon the realization that twelve to eighteen thousand handicapped children were excluded from school as a result of being labeled behavioral problems. Students were expelled or suspended on the grounds of discipline infractions (Yell & Katsiyannis, 2000; Zirkel, 2011). EHCA later became The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997, and was later revised in 2004 as the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Improvement Act. IDEA 1997 and 2004 amendments came about to ensure students with disabilities received their due process rights and to reduce the number of students with behavioral deficits from being excluded from school (Zirkel, 2011).

When considering discipline for a student with disabilities, the Local Education Agency (LEA) should always examine the ramifications resulting from Goss v. Lopez (1975), 419 US 73-898, (Miltenberger, 2004; Zirkel, 2011). Court officials found that public school students had a right to ensure and protect their interest in education at a minimum of due process rights before the assertion of a disciplinary action (Weber, 2013). To keep students' due process rights intact and within zeor-proper disciplinary action, specific court rulings have suggested and mandated, an FBA (O'Neill et al., 1997; Weber, 2013).

The 1997 revision to IDEA mandated the use of an FBA and BIP when the disciplinary action involves weapons, drugs, or bodily harm to students with disabilities. The 1997 amendments responded to parents and schools advocating for a proactive response to the discipline of students with severe behaviors (O'Neill et al., 1997; Russo, Osborne, & Borreca, 2006). Revisions to the discipline section occurred as an attempt to level the playing field in response to the zero-tolerance initiatives adopted in the 1990s. Zero-tolerance initiatives significantly impacted students with disabilities' least restrictive environments (LRE) and reduced the ability of schools to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) (Drasgow & Yell, 2001; Scott et al., 2005; Skiba, 2002; Sugai et al., 2000; Yell & Drasgow, 2000).

Research data indicate 70% or more of the principals surveyed concluded their knowledge of special education law was inadequate for supervision of special education programs specific to compliance with Procedural Safeguards, FAPE, and LRE (Copenhaver, 2005; Hirth, 1998; Weber, 2013). This lack of knowledge is cause for concern, and leads to formal state complaints (Yell, 1998). Administrators continue complacency in enacting zero-tolerance initiatives which hinder school districts' and teachers' ability to teach replacement behaviors to at-risk students (Copenhaver, 2005; Sugai et al., 2000; Yell, 1998). It stands to reason, if school administrator's knowledge continues at such a small percentage, teacher's knowledge will not increase since their school leader is unable to model effectively and train in this litigious area (Sugai et al., 2000; Yell, 2007).   Dieterich (2000) reminds school staff who complete this process that IDEA (2004) remains ambiguous and provide little to no process or specific requirements for an FBA. Advocates for an FBA model led research to contradict the validity of the zero-tolerance initiative and set the legal foundation for later revisions of IDEA discipline procedures (Skiba, 2002; Quinn, 2000).

Stemming from the weak interpretation of the 1997 reform to IDEA, legislators again revised the discipline section of IDEA in 2004 to provide more guidance. However, questions remain in regards to the process and methodology utilized during an FBA (Crimmins & Farrell, 2006; Crone & Horner, 2003). School staff discover that their teams continue to be confronted by the lack of procedures, numerous policies, and various forms (Crone & Horner, 2003). The 1997 revisions of IDEA did not provide enough clarity for school teams to implement the requirements effectively. However, the

2004 amendments to the discipline section of IDEA provides more guidance as to when to consider an FBA.

> 300.530 (b) (1) A child with a disability who is removed from the child's current placement, pursuant to paragraphs (c) *above* or (g) *below* must (i) Continue to receive educational services, as provided in §300.101(a), so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; and (ii) Receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment *(FBA)*, and behavioral intervention services, and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation *to prevent said behavior from recurring*. (IDEA, 2004 p. 118)

IDEA specifies completion of an FBA when the incident involves weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury, regardless of the manifestation determination review (MDR). Completion of an FBA must take place when specific incidents of behavior consistently interfere with the students' learning, learning of others, or the teacher's ability to teach, or when the incident involves removing a child with a disability for more than 10 school days for misconduct that could or could not be a manifestation of their disability. The 2004 revision of IDEA also states upon disciplinary action involving a student with a disability the IEP committee must immediately consider the need for an FBA and BIP if one is not already in place. If one is currently in place, the committee must review, and as necessary revise, the plan to ensure there is not a repeat of the same behavior (IDEA, 2004). Consideration of students' due process rights must take place prior to enacting disciplinary action. An FBA is required, according to IDEA (2004), only if the incident

in question is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability. IDEA (2004)

states:

> 300.530 (b) (e) *Manifestation determination.* (1) Within *ten (*10*)* school days of
>
> any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a
>
> violation of a code of student conduct, the LEA, the parent, and relevant members
>
> of the child's IEP *committee* (as determined by the parent and the LEA) must
>
> review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any
>
> teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to
>
> determine— (i) If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and
>
> substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or (ii) If the conduct in
>
> question was the direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the IEP. (2) The
>
> conduct must be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability if the
>
> LEA, the parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP *committee* determine
>
> that a condition in either paragraph (e) (1) (i) or (1) (ii) *above* was met (IDEA,
>
> 2004, pp. 118-119)

A Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) analyzes the disciplinary action in

question, determines if there is a direct correlation to the disability, and if the disability

inhibited the student from making appropriate choices. The MDR also establishes if

identified supports, accommodations, and modifications were in place. A MDR also

ensures fidelity and validity of the implementation of the individualized education

program (IEP). Upon completion of a MDR, the IEP committee must review the

students' FBA and BIP. If these are not in place, the committee must immediately

request the completion of an FBA and BIP as per IDEA (2004),

300.530 (b) (f) *Determination that behavior was a manifestation.* If the LEA, the

parent, and relevant members of the IEP *committee* make the determination that

the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP *committee*

must— (1) Either—(i) Conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless the

LEA had conducted a functional behavior assessment before the behavior that

resulted in the change of placement occurred, and implement a behavioral

intervention plan for the child *as required by paragraph (d)(1)(a) and (b) above*;

or (ii) If a behavioral intervention plan already has been developed, review the

behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior;

and (2) Except as provided in paragraph (g) *below*, return the child to the

placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the LEA

agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral

intervention plan when a manifestation of the student's disability. (pp. 118-119)

Continuous display of aggressive and disruptive behaviors, social withdrawnness,

substance abuse, and property destruction remain the leading initiators of an FBA (Scott

& Eber, 2003; Scott et al., 2005; Skiba, 2002). Devastatingly, committees do not

consistently recommend the use of FBAs, which has led to numerous legal cases (Scott et

al., 2005). Courts have interpreted IDEA as a student's Individualized Education

Program (IEP) must include proactive behavior programming when behavior is a result of

the student's disability or identified within the psychological evaluation process

(Dieterich & Villani, 2000).

Training school staff on how to develop and implement effective FBAs and BIPs

came about with the 2004 revision of IDEA (Quinn et al., 2001). In a review of case law,

the lack of training and procedures provided by IDEA of 2004 brings legal ramifications

linked to lack of knowledge on FBAs and BIPs resulting in a costly mistake for districts

(Weber, Killu, Derby, & Barretto, 2005). In an effort to reduce discipline and repeat

referrals, IEP committees continue to utilize an FBA and BIP process as a reaction to

discipline procedures (Crone & Horner, 2003; VanAcker et al., 2005).

 Court Cases Related to the Discipline Section of IDEA of 2004 as it relates to FBAs and

BIPs

Zirkel (2011) found professionals have difficulty distinguishing between what

they must do and what should occur for students displaying behavioral deficits. He

stated,

> …but the legal literature specific to FBAs and BIPs is much more limited in both
>
> quantity and quality. Both of these intersecting literature streams reflect a notable
>
> misunderstanding of the legal requirements for FBAs and BIPs (.e., the minimum
>
> that must be done) and fail to differentiate professional best practice (i.e., the
>
> optimum amount to do). Moreover, a compressive and systematic analysis of the
>
> case law is missing. (Zirkel, 2011, p. 177)

Weber's (2013) Loyola Law Review references a court case in which there was not an

FBA and BIP for a child with Autism (R.E. v. N. Y.C. Department of Education, 2012).

The court found in favor of the parents and required the addressing the behavior through

an FBA and BIP. In another case (New Milford Board of Education v. C.R., 2011), the

court ordered the school district to provide in-home therapy to address self-stimulation

and aggressive behaviors, as well as parent training (Weber, 2013). In the court case of

Lauren P. by David and AnnMarie P. v. Wissahickon Sch. District (2007), the courts

found the school district negligent in providing a free appropriate public education

(FAPE) when the child's IEP committee indicated the need for improvement in tardiness

and completing assignments. The findings stated that the team should have implemented

a BIP to address the student's behavior deficiencies rather than placing the responsibility

back on the student and her family (Slater, 2008).

Orange (CA) Unified School District, 20 IDELR 770 (OCR 1990) found that

holding a student as accountable as all other students in regards to discipline is not

acceptable when the school or local education agency (LEA) is aware of a problem

behavior that is severe enough to warrant intensive management. The court case of Elk

Grove (CA) Unified School District, 25 IDELR 759 (OCR 1997) found that a child with

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) should have been offered a BIP at the

time his behaviors began to interfere with his classroom performance and he no longer

responded to the school-wide positive behavior support system in place for all students.

Functional Behavioral Assessments

O'Neill et al. (1997) define an FBA as "a process of gathering information used to

maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of behavioral support" (p. 3). A functional

behavioral assessment is a process used to identify the purpose of an identified problem

behavior in order to design and implement a meaningful behavior intervention plan

(Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005; Walker, 1995; Walker, 1999). The noted

behavior is a function identified to change the undesirable behaviors and replace them

with behaviors that are more appropriate. The use of this assessment as a collaborative

process provides an effective method for changing inappropriate behaviors (Lee &

Jamison, 2003; Scott & Eber, 2003; Walker, 1999). This process provides relevant

results and information used to determine why a behavior exists (Horner & Carr, 1997; Iwata, Vollmer, Zarcone, & Rodgers, 1993; Lennox & Miltenberger, 1989; Neef, Shade, & Miller, 1994; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Hagan-Burke, Horner, & Todd, 2001).

IEP committees utilize an FBA to identify behavioral supports for students' areas of weaknesses whether social, emotional or behavioral (Kauffman 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997; Walker, 1995). IDEA (2004) does not define how, when, or who is responsible for an FBA. Walker (1999) and Kauffman (2005) both identify this as a concern leading to the lack of understanding and efficient use of an FBA. Walker (1999) states "one person should not be responsible for an FBA, although one person may coordinate the process as a case manager. The team is the IEP team including the parent" (p. 4).

FBAs are preventative measures utilized to change undesirable behavior before escalating to more significant and challenging behaviors (Zirpolli, 2005). The efficient use of an FBA process has provided positive and useful results for students and parents (Lee & Jamison, 2003; Scott & Eber, 2003). FBA development utilizes a collaborative team effort to identify the behavioral, social, and emotional needs of the student (Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2000; O'Neill et al., 1997; Sugai et al., 1999; Walker, 1999).

An FBA determines the purpose of the behavior for the student and how the behavior interferes with the student's learning (Barnhill, 2005; Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005). One must consider how the behavior affects others, include a description of the problem behavior, discover the event that triggers the undesired behavior, and identify the consequences used to maintain the behavior

(Barnhill, 2005; McComas, Hoch, & Mace, 2000; Mattison, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997; Quinn, Gable, Rutherford, Nelson, & Howell, 1998). Preparing for and conducting an FBA includes identification of the behavior to be changed, environmental factors contributing to the behavior, collection of data related to possible factors, developing a hypothesis of the identified behavior, identification of replacement behaviors, testing the hypothesis, and specified progress monitoring the intervention data (Kauffmann, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Ingram et al., 2005). Driven by the 2004 revisions of IDEA, *Mississippi State Policies Regarding Children with Disabilities under the IDEA Amendments of 2004 State Board Policy 7219* (2013) now provides five primary outcomes for an FBA process that must be included in the final FBA. The outcomes are:

1. Identification of a clear description of the problem behavior,

2. Identification of the events, times, and situations that predict when the problem behaviors will and will not occur on a daily basis,

3. Identification of the consequences maintaining the behavior,

4. Development of a summary statement of the problem behavior, and

5. Collection of direct observation data to support the summary statement. (p. 3)

Gresham, Watson, and Skinner identify four phases of an FBA as being descriptive, interpretive, verification, and treatment implementation and monitoring (Gresham et al., 2001). The descriptive stage involves describing what the behavior looks like and when the behavior occurs. The interpretive phase explains the purpose, function, or why of the behavior. This phase also provides clear, concise descriptions of the problematic behavior, the environmental factors associated, and data review including records reviews, direct and indirect observations, rating scales, and teacher and student

interviews. The interpretive phase identifies the consequence or the effect of the behavior as well as the development of the hypotheses and summary statements. The final phase of treatment implementation and monitoring involves the development of the BIP.

    Descriptive Phase - The first phase of an FBA should pass the stranger test, meaning the behavior is described well enough for a stranger to identify the student based on the description. This phase also includes an observation of conditions under which the behavior happens.   This phase includes various methods for obtaining FBA data (Gresham et al., 2001). Research suggests including indirect and direct assessment and functional analysis (Barnhill, 2005; Gresham et al., 2001; Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004; Scott & Kamps, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2000).   Indirect assessment involves a records review of the student's history and review of checklists and rating scales completed by current teachers and the child's parent (Barnhill, 2005).   Direct assessment involves the observation of the student and the behavior to make determinations of the function of the behavior (Kauffman, 2005; Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005). The assessments occur in the natural school setting where the behavior manifests and provides information on how the behavior directly influences the function of the behavior (Barnhill, 2005; Kauffman, 2005; Zirpolli, 2005). All three assessments are vital components of an effective FBA.

    Indirect assessments involve interviews, questionnaires, and scales completed by those directly involved with the student on a daily or weekly basis to gather information on the identified problem behaviors (Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004). A review of historical records, behavior rating scales, and other teacher completed checklists are several items use to identify key elements. The key elements are the operation of the target behavior,

the identification of the antecedent, and the definition of the hypothesis of the function of

the behavior (Gresham et al., 2001; Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004). All of these indirect

assessments assist in the identification of the antecedent, behavior, and consequence of

the target behavior. They also assist to identify essential characteristics, past interventions

attempted, and possible conflicts affecting the target behavior (Gresham et al., 2001;

Walker, 1995). Indirect assessments require less time on an FBA developer's part, but

require teachers and other immediate school staff to provide information on their

interpretation of the function of the behavior (Barnhill, 2005; O'Neill et al., 1997).

Both, Functional Assessment Interviews (FAI) and Functional Assessment

Checklists for Teachers (FACTS) provide useful information for indirect assessments

(March et al., 2000; O'Neill et al., 1997). These two assessments involve an informal

interview with the teachers who have a key teaching role (March & Horner, 2002; March

et al., 2000; O'Neill et al., 1997). Parent and student interviews are completed to obtain

their interpretation of the problem behavior (Horner & Sugai, 2004; March & Horner,

2002; Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997). Teachers, parents, and students

provide valuable information as to the function of inappropriate behaviors that often

cannot be determined by simple observations (Barnhill, 2005). This process can be very

time consuming on the person who is responsible for gathering and analyzing the data,

but it is a vital component to an effective FBA (Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004).

As a form of indirect assessment, an FBA team requests and utilizes Antecedent

Behavior Consequence (ABC) logs which are kept by teachers to determine a possible

antecedent or trigger to the behavior (Miltenberger, 2001; Ingram et al., 2005). In

addition, tally charts and scatter plots are useful to determine baseline data to develop

BIP goals and objectives (Miltenberger, 2001; O'Neill et al., 1997; Ingram et al., 2005).

The Behavior Adolescent Scales Checklist (BASC) and the Attention Deficit Disorder

Evaluation Scales (ADDES) provide valuable information as to the function of the

behavior. These assessments also ensure validity and fidelity of responses to indirect

assessments and observations through standardized assessments (Neilsen & McEvoy,

2004). The BASC and ADDES provide the team with scores to determine the functioning

range of the student and provide specific areas of deficits for the team to utilize when

developing BIP goals and objectives.

A review of historical records involves reviewing attendance, discipline, and

grades from current and previous years to determine if a pattern of behavior exists

(Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004). In the event a BIP is already in place, data analysis takes

place to determine the effectiveness of the current interventions and identify baseline data

(Fuchs & Fuchs, 2009). Portions of the indirect assessment procedures can be more

subjective in nature and are best utilized in conjunction with direct assessment measures

(Barnhill, 2005; Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004).

Direct assessment involves a team member observing and recording the identified

problem behavior, antecedents or triggers of the behavior, and consequences of the

behavior. Frequency, duration, intensity, and latency of the behavior are documented

through different measures (Neilsen & McEvoy, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997).

Observations take place in more than one setting to determine if key personnel are the

environmental factors influencing the inappropriate behavior (Zirpolli, 2005). The use of

a scatter plot or tally charts to document the identified target behavior of the student

provides valuable information to the team. This data is used to set a sufficient rate of

improvement at annual goal setting time and identify short-term instructional objectives

(Crone et al., 2004; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004). As part of the direct

assessment procedure, the observer utilizes a peer-to-peer comparison to identify how

significantly different the student's behavior is from their peers (Crone et al., 2004;

Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004. The use of this form of assessment is to confirm

data provided by others in the indirect assessment (Gresham et al., 2001) and ensure data

is reliable.

     Interpretive Stage - The second phase or the interpretive phase, involves

descriptive analysis to interpret the data from the first phase of an FBA. Descriptive

analysis involves developing a hypothesis and summary statement of the identified

problem behavior (Crone & Horner, 2002; Gresham et al., 2001; Kauffman, 2005;

Miltenberger, 2004). An FBA identifies and provides a clear description and function of

the problem behavior (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Walker, 1999). Often times,

the function of the behavior is to gain peer or teacher attention, to escape or avoid a non-

preferred task, to gain power of the situation, or to enact revenge due to a previous

encounter (Sugai et al., 1999; Scott et al., 2005; Walker, 1999). Appropriate

identification of the function of the behavior is likely the most crucial component of an

FBA (Walker, 1995; Walker, 1999). Events, time, staff, and situations help to identify

the function for the student's behavior.

     An FBA identifies events, times, staff, and situations that that trigger the

behaviors and the consequence of the behavior. The topography, duration, intensity,

latency, and frequency of a behavior also provide crucial information as to what

maintains the behavior for the student (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Walker,

1999). This data includes the length of an inappropriate behavior, how often the behavior takes place, what the setting look like when the behavior occurs, and how intense the behavior becomes (Crone et al., 2004; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005). Another important concept of an FBA is defining if the inappropriate behavior is a skill deficit or a performance deficit. A skill deficit involves a skill a student cannot perform, and a performance deficit involves as skill the student can perform but chooses not to engage in (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Walker, 1999).

An FBA clearly identifies what maintains the behavior for the student and develops a summary statement of the problem behavior utilizing the observation data (Crone et al., 2004; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997). Determining what events maintain the student's behavior provides data for teams to find a more appropriate replacement behavior. For example, if a student is yelling out in response to stimuli in the classroom (noise, tapping, lights buzzing), the team can determine if the child needs a sensory diet to assist in changing the behaviors (Scott et al., 2005). The summarized data of an FBA drives the development of the BIP and begins the treatment implementation and monitoring phase of an FBA (*Mississiippi State Policies Regarding Children,,* 2013).

<div align="center">Behavior Intervention Plans</div>

Treatment implementation and monitoring phase - The treatment implementation and monitoring phase of an FBA is the final stage, and involves strategies and materials needed for dealing with inappropriate behaviors developed and outlined in the BIP. A BIP is designed to shape and modify undesirable behaviors of a student (Sugai et al., 2000). The BIP should not be utilized as a plan for disciplinary action (Kauffman, 2005;

Miltenberger, 2004; Sugai et al., 2000; Walker, 1999). Upon identifying the problem

behaviors through an FBA, *Mississippi State Policies Regarding Children with*

Disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 2004

Mississippi State Board Policy 7219 (2013) specifies components that must be included

in the BIP. The BIP must include a statement of the problem behavior, strategies and

materials needed for dealing with inappropriate behaviors, positive and negative

reinforcements, responsibilities of team members including any training required for the

team members, student outcomes with implementation and review dates, and, if

necessary, a modified discipline ladder (*Mississippi State Policies Regarding Children,*

2013.)

The implementation of a BIP requires a great deal of knowledge and time on the

team's part (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004). This process proves much more

difficult when involving older students with higher cognitive abilities and complex social

and emotional issues (Kauffman, 2005). Even though this process appears menial, it can

eliminate problem behaviors simply through encouragement of appropriate, desirable

behaviors.

The BIP guides school staff to identify the replacement behaviors to reduce the

problem behaviors, determine appropriate intervention strategies, and identify

reinforcement's specific to the student (Ingram et al., 2005; O'Neill et al., 1997; Walker,

1999). The BIP should identify changes needed in the student's environment to assist in

positive outcomes for the students' behavior and to develop alternative replacement

behaviors to serve the same function of the inappropriate problem behavior (Ingram et

al., 2005; *Mississippi State Policies Regarding Children ,* 2013; O'Neill et al., 1997). The

BIP is a guide utilized by school staff in an effort to reduce identified inappropriate

student behavior while teaching appropriate replacement behaviors and is a necessary

support for students displaying inappropriate or undesirable behaviors (Ingram et al.,

2005). However, teachers need training as outlined as a requirement of IDEA (2004) to

complete and implement a BIP. Effective implementation will result in improved

educational benefit for the student and provide a proactive approach in regards to

behavioral issues (Ingram et al., 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005).

The BIP includes a statement of the problem behavior, as identified in an FBA,

clearly identifying the function of the behavior and how the function maintains the

behavior (IDEA, 2004; Ingram et al., 2005; O'Neill et al., 1997; Scott & Eber, 2003;

Mississippi State Policies Regarding Children, 2013,). Providing a statement that defines

the operation of the behavior allows for adjustment of the classroom settings, materials,

and curriculum to the needs of the student (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; O'Neill

et al., 1997; Walker, 1999). It is important for those involved to understand clearly why

students react or act in the inappropriate way (Crone et al., 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997).

Many times, the behavior is avoidable when the teacher understands the antecedent and

how to use other strategies to obtain the end result (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004;

O'Neill et al., 1997)

Strategies may include chunking or highlighting portions of lengthy assignments,

scaffolding assignments to the student's level and increasing the work level over time,

and providing cues to avoid confrontation with students. There are other numerous

strategies teams can utilize such as changing seating, allowing the student frequent

breaks, as well as other differentiated instructional methods of instruction and assessment

(Ingram et al., 2005; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997; Scott & Eber, 2003; Zirpolli, 2005).   Teachers also need to be aware of setting triggers, and learn to avoid those triggers when possible while teaching replacement behaviors (Walker, 1999). When students display success with these strategies and materials, teachers should provide immediate reinforcements (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Ingram et al., 2005; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997; Scott & Eber, 2003; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Zirpolli, 2005). Utilization of effective strategies decreases inappropriate behaviors, increases appropriate behaviors and leads into effective reinforcements (Sugai & Horner, 1999; Sugai et al., 2007).

Possibly the most important component of a BIP is reinforcements which allow students to feel satisfied upon completion of a task or time frame (Crone et al., 2004; Ingram et al., 2005; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; O'Neill et al., 1997; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Zirpolli, 2005). The use of consequences and reinforcements drives an effective BIP. Utilizing a preference inventory to identify preferred and non-preferred activities helps ensure student buy-in to their plan (Crone et al., 2004; Ingram et al., 2005; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Zirpolli, 2005). Team members must understand their role in the BIP for behavior to change (Crone et al., 2004; Ingram et al., 2005 Kauffman, 2005; O'Neill et al., 1997; Scott et al., 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Walker, 1995; Zirpolli, 2005)

Ensuring all team members understand their responsibilities of the BIP assists not only student success, but facilitates in assisting districts to be legally compliant in the event due process occurs (Scott et al., 2005; Slater, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2009). LEAs must provide adequate and effective training for team members to understand their

responsibilities and how to manage the BIP (Scott et al., 2005; Slater, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2009). Data collection of student outcomes (goals and short-term instructional objectives) provides valuable insight into student success (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Hanley, Iwata, & McCord, 2003; Ingram et al., 2005). The BIP clearly identifies the responsibilities of team members throughout the process for implementation and monitoring (Crone et al., 2004; Ingram et al., 2005; Scott et al., 2005; Slater, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2009). Identifying who is responsible for each component of the BIP, such as counseling, social skill training, check-in/check-out, reflections, and weekly progress monitoring of the student goals, is an essential component to success (Crone et al., 2004; Ingram et al., 2005; Scott et al., 2005; Slater, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

The BIP must outline the student's outcomes, or annual goals, and short-term instructional objectives (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Ingram et al., 2005). Implementation and review of data is an essential key to a successful BIP (Crone et al., 2004; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Ingram et al., 2005). Review of trend lines or sufficient rate of improvement (ROI) guides teams' decisions in changing a BIP (Crone et al., 2004; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Ingram et al., 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2009). Identifying student goals and outcomes and reviewing these daily have a significant impact on students meeting their goals and short-term instructional objectives (Crone et al., 2004; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Ingram et al., 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2009). The team must identify the baseline as determined in an FBA and set realistic goals at a sufficient rate of improvement (ROI) (Sugai & Horner, 2009; Crone et al., 2004). Continuous review of these goals help students in meeting their ROI.

The final required component of a BIP, a modified discipline ladder, is only for those students who cannot maintain behavior through the use of a standard student code of conduct policy (Crone et al., 2004; Ingram et al., 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2009). Some students may need extra warnings, redirections, and assistance prior to beginning the student handbook ladder (Crone et al., 2004; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005). A modified discipline ladder should dictate at what point referrals to the office happen, if restraint is to be utilized, and a crisis management plan (Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2004; Zirpolli, 2005).

A crisis management plan is a vital, but not required, component of the BIP. This plan is essential when behaviors are self-injurious, aggressive, suicidal, or homicidal (Crone & Horner, 2003; Crone et al., 2004; Ellis & Magee, 1999; Gresham et al., 2001). An outline of when restraint will be utilized and the length of time utilized prior to requesting additional assistance should be included. This plan defines the student's crisis team and at what point to initiate that team (Crone & Horner, 2003; Crone et al., 2004; Gresham et al., 2001; Kauffman, 2005; Miltenberger, 2005)

Interventions that utilize an FBA and BIP procedure are more effective than consequence and reinforcement methods when used over an extended period of time (Ingram et al., 2005; Kern, Gallagher, Starosta, Hickman, & George, 2006). However, for an FBA and BIP to be implemented by teachers, more knowledge of the law needs to be provided for intensive training and professional development (Crone & Horner, 2003; Doggett et al., 2001; Ellis & Magee, 1999). The intent of IDEA (2004) was not for teachers to focus on teaching behavior and lessen the focus on academics, but to develop

plans that will enhance behavior and academic success for all students (Gresham et al., 2001; Yell, 2006)

Traditional Route Teacher Certification versus Alternate Route Teacher Certification

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 put an emphasis on hiring highly qualified teachers. NCLB defines highly qualified as a teacher who holds at least a bachelor's degree, full state certification, and adequate knowledge of core subjects. The traditional route to certification involves completing a program through an approved university and passing all state requirements to obtain licensure. States initiated alternate route programs to allow teachers an alternative to traditional route programs. However, the perception quickly arose that alternate route teachers were not adequately prepared to effectively teach (Finn, 2003). Finn (2003) also determines, through a review of literature, that few studies have shown a correlation between student achievements based on the teachers' route of certification.

Those changing careers from professional to education through alternate route certification are typically older and with varying degrees and professional occupations. The National Center for Education Information (NCEI) determined alternate route teachers have a higher retention rate due to their vast experiences in other fields (NCEI, 2005). While alternate route teachers may lack immediate knowledge in teaching methodology, pedagogy, classroom management, and curriculum planning, they bring a vast array of knowledge from the experiences in other fields (NCEI, 2005). Pairing an alternate route teacher with a traditional route teacher assists in developing those necessary teaching skills (Marzano, 2010).

In 2007, Walsh and Jacobs found that grade point averages did not significantly differ from traditional and alternate route teachers, and further research did not indicate one teacher was stronger than the other. Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2006) did not find a difference in professional knowledge examination scores between traditional and alternate route teachers. Gatlin (2009) indicates alternate routes teachers are more prepared with content knowledge, but traditional route teachers are more prepared to deal with classroom management and multiple teaching strategies.

While there is no direct finding that one route to certification is better than the other, it is evident both bring significant advantages to the children they teach. Providing adequate training and professional development to each of the two groups will enhance their ability to teach effectively. Adequate training and professional development for both routes will assist in facilitating student success.

Teacher Knowledge of the Discipline Section of the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (2004) as it relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments

and Behavior Intervention Plans

Since the 1997 and 2004 amendments to the discipline section of IDEA which now require the use of FBAs and BIPs, little research has been conducted on the level of teacher knowledge specific to this area (Zirkel, 2011). Research demonstrates a lack of literature on legal requirements of FBAs and BIPs that prompted The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) in 1998 to complete a survey of 45 state directors. The research found only nineteen states had policies and procedures in place for an FBA, and BIP requirements and the others were planning on developing the policies and procedures in the near future (Zirkel, 2011). Leal-Georgetti

(2012) survey of school administrators found over 75% was below prerequisite knowledge of IDEA of 2004 in general. It is a safe assumption if school leaders are incompetent in their knowledge of IDEA of 2004; teachers are most likely less competent than their administrators.

There have been numerous research projects on administrators' knowledge of IDEA (2004) in general, but only small portions of the research projects are related to the discipline section specific to FBAs and BIPS. Most research reviewed involved teacher perspective and knowledge of an FBA and BIP process and procedure, not specific to teacher knowledge of the discipline section requirements of IDEA (2004).

Research conducted by the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda (2008), found more than 50% of new teachers said training during their teacher preparation programs for teaching students with disabilities, in general, was not adequate to implement needed strategies in their classrooms. It can be assumed if teachers were not taught how to teach those with disabilities in general, they are not prepared to deal with those students displaying severe behavior problems in their classrooms (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda, 2008).

Astoundingly, more than half of the districts surveyed indicated administrators backed down from irate and discontent parents, and almost 80% of teachers stated they had students they felt should have been removed from their classrooms for severely disruptive behaviors that hindered the learning of others (Public Agenda, 2004; Scott & Carron, 2005; Scott et al., 2003). Sadly, 30% of the teachers indicated they considered changing professions due to the unrealistic expectations for behavior intervention and the

intolerable student behaviors (Public Agenda, 2004). Finally, more than 70% of these same teachers stated students with disabilities should be treated and punished like all other students unless the behavior is a direct relation to their disability area (Public Agenda, 2004). The same teachers stated that those with disabilities were disciplined less or lightly due to their disability and administrator fear of lawsuits (Scott & Carron, 2005; Scott et al., 2003; Public Agenda, 2004). These statistics show that professional development related to discipline and IDEA (2004) is lacking, and should be implemented to inform teachers better on how to deal with chronic behavior problems in their classrooms.

IDEA (2004) includes a requirement for LEAs to provide professional development in the area of FBAs and BIPs to increase teacher knowledge of the requirement. LEAs must provide effective professional development in regards to academic and instructional practices. However, research long before the IDEA of 2004 requirement questioned the effectiveness of quality in special education as a whole according to a report published in 1990 by Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch. Instruction of students in a self-contained special education class focused primarily on control of the behavior and very little on academic instruction. In essence, research found students did not receive an appropriate education to facilitate social skills and academic growth. This in turn leads to reintegration into the general education classroom or going a step further, becoming productive citizens upon exiting the school system (Knitzer et al., 1990). Zirpolli (2005) notes it is important for teachers to utilize behavior management to promote healthy behavior, just as they teach academics. Effective teaching will influence student outcomes for academics and behavior (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Scott et al., 2005).

Historically, completion of FBAs took place in clinical settings; this fact prompted Broussard and Northrup (1995) and Lewis and Sugai (1996) to conduct research on an FBA process for students displaying inappropriate behaviors in the general education setting. Their combined research determined the use of an FBA and valid implementation of a BIP, staff could teach students appropriate behaviors within the classroom setting. Broussard & Northrup (1995) and Lewis and Sugai (1996) proved the procedures used, both similar to clinical setting procedures, were effective in changing the inappropriate behaviors within the general education setting with classroom teachers responsible for the interventions.

Studies of teachers found when provided intensive training and allowed time to plan interventions, teachers' knowledge and perspective of efficient FBAs and BIPs increased (Bergstrom, 2003; Crone, Hawken, & Bergstrom, 2007.) Supporting this research, Abbott (2005) concludes frequent contact with parents increased the effectiveness of the plans. Watson-Stewart (2009) found teachers' knowledge of an FBA process increased from a mean score of 72% on the first assessments to a mean score of 88% on the second assessment after training took place supporting findings of Quinn et al. (2001) and Scott et al. (1999). However, Watson-Stewart (2009) warns readers to use these results cautiously as the mean score increase was only 3 points demonstrating difficulty in knowing if their knowledge increased sufficiently.

In 2009, Ladner concludes that over 40% of teachers indicated little to no training or did not know if they had received any training in FBAs and BIPs. Surprisingly, Ladner (2009) found 50% of teachers felt behavior interventions could be effective when utilized effectively. Mostly, if the teachers surveyed indicate not receiving or do not

know if they received training, it can be assumed their knowledge of the requirements of IDEA (2004) as it relates to discipline is poor. Conclusively, adequate training and set procedures are effective in changing teachers' perspective of an FBA and BIP. However, it is not an indicator of whether teachers will implement an FBA and BIP procedures (Watson-Stewart, 2009). The child-specific interventions completed within the general education setting can reduce problematic behaviors when the interventions outlined in an FBA and BIP are implemented with integrity, validity, and fidelity (Broussard & Northrup, 1995; Lewis & Sugai, 1996; Reid & Nelson, 2002).

Research continues to support that many teachers do not see themselves as responsible for initiating an FBA process and do not feel students with chronic behavior problems should remain in their classroom (Couvillon, Bullock & Gable, 2009; Kircher, 2009; Scott et al., 2003). Teachers also continue to feel it is not their role to teach appropriate behaviors. Teacher knowledge of an FBA process was insufficient and indicated they needed more training in the area of instruction for students with behavior problems (Blood & Neel, 2007; Couvillon et al., 2009; Kircher, 2009).

Engstrom (2013) reveals Virginia teachers who received training in pre-service training at the college level and during professional development days within their districts perceived the training as moderately to very effective. Moreno's (2008) research corresponds with approximately 50% of respondents stating they received some type of training at the college level and considered themselves as knowledgeable about an FBA and BIP process. Astoundingly, only 30% of teachers indicated receiving any type of formal professional development in relation to FBAs and BIPs within their school district (Moreno, 2008).

Teachers perceive student misbehavior as a choice students make and indicated

sending those students to the office was a useful tool for solving the problem (Blood &

Neel, 2007; Kircher, 2009). Fifty-two percent of teachers called the office or sent

students out of their room as a response to chronic behavior issues (Kircher, 2009).

Teachers have varying views on how to handle discipline based on their individual

teaching style, and very few found an FBA effective in changing problem behaviors

(Blood & Neel, 2007; Kircher, 2009). It is evident through the research reviewed that

respondents do not understand the process and demonstrate a lack of understanding

concerning instruction for behavior (Kircher, 2009). As Iwata et al. (2000) indicate,

Watson-Stewart (2009) found teachers have the ability to learn an FBA procedures and

understand the requirements.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

According to Zirkel (2011), there is a lack of literature on the legal requirements

of IDEA as it relates to discipline and FBAs and BIPs. The legal requirements remain

unclear to those responsible for training as well as to those required to complete the

process and implement an FBA and BIP. More than 10 years after the IDEA (2004)

mandates for FBAs and BIPs for students displaying chronic and repetitive behavior

problems, research continues to find school staff does not understand the purpose or

procedure for effectively developing an FBA and BIP (Engstrom, 2013). In a report

published by Public Agenda (2004), approximately 49% of teachers stated that they were

accused of unfair disciplinary actions toward students. Public Agenda (2004) also found

that over 70% of teachers felt their teaching was significantly affected by chronic

misbehaving students. Students who display frequent and habitual problem behaviors

make up approximately 1-5% of the current student population (Sugai et al., 2000). These disruptive behaviors are significant enough to hinder instruction and interfere with the learning process. To diminish these behaviors, teachers must learn to utilize an FBA and BIP procedures outlined in the IDEA (2004) discipline requirements. The goal of an FBA and BIP is to diminish aggressive and non-aggressive behaviors and assist in positive outcomes (Ingram et al., 2005; Miltenberger, 2004).

Federal legislation of IDEA (2004) influenced the development and use of an FBA and BIP. Teachers must become more knowledgeable regarding IDEA (2004) and the discipline requirements related to FBAs and BIPs. Court cases such as the case of Lauren P. by David and AnnMarie P. v. Wissahickon School District reinforces the need for training of teachers to understand the function and legal requirements of IDEA (2004) discipline requirements in relation to FBAs and BIPs. Other cases found consideration of an FBA and BIP take place for students displaying inappropriate behaviors and no longer responding to school-wide measures. Lack of knowledge and understanding of an FBA and BIP process hinders effective intervention for students displaying emotional, behavioral, or social concerns.

School-wide positive behavior intervention supports (SWPBIS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) are essential components to the success of students with behavioral challenges. Appropriate use of these prevention methods assists students in becoming successful citizens. The goal is to reduce inappropriate behaviors with positive interventions and rewards. Both of these interventions create baseline data necessary for developing an FBA to drive the BIP.

An FBA and BIP become tier III interventions outlining concrete steps teachers and parents must take to facilitate the success of the student. The BIP must be progress monitored and modified if the data indicates that the student is non-responsive or not improving at the expected ROI. An effective BIP will eliminate problem behaviors when utilized as outlined. However, research demonstrates that teacher knowledge of IDEA (2004) discipline requirements and implementation of an FBA and BIP is inadequate.

In conclusion, the research reviewed shows a need for this study to determine if, in fact, teachers have increased their knowledge of IDEA (2004) discipline requirements as it relates to FBAs and BIPs since 2009. Teacher knowledge of the IDEA (2004) discipline requirements in regards to FBAs and BIPs is a highly litigious area. This results in parents invoking their right to have advocates at IEP meetings when their child demonstrates a lack of educational benefit. The literature review shows a continued gap in the knowledge of teachers pertaining to IDEA (2004) discipline requirements, FBAs, and BIPs, including training, procedures, and implementation. Future research is needed to determine the level of knowledge in the area of discipline specific to students with disabilities as required by IDEA (2004).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter III provides information on the research design related to this study. This study used a quantitative approach to investigating teacher knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs. An outline of the research questions and hypotheses is included in this chapter. Participant information, data collection procedures, and methods for statistical evaluation for data analysis are also outlined.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study answered the following research questions:

1. What is special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 as it relates to functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and behavior intervention plans (BIPs)?

2. To what extent does special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs relate to the type, quality, and time of teacher training?

3. To what extent does special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs differ between alternate route and traditional route teachers and their level of education?

The study answered the following research hypotheses:

H1. There is no statistically significant relationship between special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs and the number of hours, type, and quality of teacher training.

H2. There is no statistically significant difference between alternate route special education teachers and traditional route special education teachers overall knowledge score of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs.

H3. There is no relationship between special education teachers' overall knowledge score of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBA and BIP IDEA and their years of teaching experience and level of education.

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative approach to analyzing the data collected via online survey methodology. The survey included two sections: demographics and scenario based application of knowledge questions. The demographic data was utilized to determine relationships between teacher knowledge and type, quality, and time of their training. The demographic data also determined the differences in teacher knowledge between alternate route or traditional route teachers and their level of education. An overall knowledge score was applied based on the teachers' correct responses to the knowledge section of the instrument.

Participants

Participants in this study held a valid teaching license issued by the Mississippi Department of Education and were school level special education teachers who teach pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.   Participants indicating they were not a classroom level

teacher were not allowed to complete the survey. The survey was provided to those

participants of the Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children State Conference and

those teachers within the 11 approved districts of southern Mississippi. All participant

responses remained anonymous through the use of Qualtrix online surveys.

Instrument

The survey was conducted via an online survey, and the instrument was 20

questions, inclusive of demographics. The content of the instrument was validated by a

panel of four experts using a validity questionnaire (Appendix A). A pilot test of the

instrument ensured the reliability.

The survey instrument (Appendix B) was developed by the researcher who

established required content validity and reliability. Permission to pilot the study was

obtained by the researcher from a local school district. IRB approval was obtained for

the pilot study (Appendix C). The instrument included two parts: Part one, questions 1-7,

includes demographic information of the level of teaching, years of experience, level of

education, certification route, and type, quality, and approximate time of training; Part

two, questions 8-20, pertains to the discipline section of IDEA (2004) teacher knowledge

of the law regarding an FBA and BIP requirements.

The researcher utilized a team of four expert panelists to ensure the instrument

content validity by checking that answers were correct, that content answered the

research questions, and the use of precise wording. The panelists also deleted

unnecessary items and added any additional items to ensure that the research questions

are answered. The panel included a retired behavior support specialist and school

psychometrist with an extensive background in the utilization and functions of an FBA.

Three directors of special education ensured correct answers regarding the law and content. The use of these four panelists ensured content validity. The four panelists ensured accuracy of the following questions or statements. First, they ensured the survey contain language that is understood by teacher. Second, that the questions regarding the discipline section of the IDEA (2004), as it relates FBAs and BIPs to obtained an accurate score, specific enough for the topic. Third, they ensured no questions were offensive or obtrusive to the participant, and should be excluded from the survey. Fourth, that the answers were correct. Finally, the panelists ensured there were no other statements or questions that should be included. Upon completion of the panel of experts review, revisions were made. One director suggested one change to the answers of question 10 to clarify the answer choices. The panelists made no other suggestions. The researcher made the suggested change.

To ensure instrument reliability, the researcher used 15 teachers from the approved pilot district. These participants did not participate in the data collection in the live research study. These participants ensured readability, understanding, and flow of the questionnaire. Upon completion of the pilot study, no concerns arose with the instrument reliability. None of the participants indicated difficulty or concerns. No questions were missed by the participants, and no participants correctly answered all questions.

Part one of the instrument used descriptive statistics to determine the possible interaction of the data obtained in parts two and three of the instrument. Part two was used to determine teacher knowledge of the discipline section of the IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs through the use of multiple choice answers. The responses were

scored according to teacher correct answers. There is a total of 13 possible correct

answers. Each correct answer is worth 1 point. The raw score was converted to a percent

correct.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

Upon the successful proposal of this dissertation, the researcher obtained

permission for a local school district which would not participate in the final study to

conduct a pilot study of the instrument. The researcher obtained IRB approval to conduct

the pilot study. Upon completion of the pilot study, data was analyzed to ensure no

concerns with the instrument existed.

The researcher obtained permission from the MS CEC Board President (Appendix

D). The researcher then obtained IRB approval prior to collecting this data. (Appendix

E). A booth was set up at the MS CEC state conference February 4-5, 2015. Only 66

participants completed the survey at this conference. Due to the low number of

participants, a second round of surveys were needed to reach the power recommendation

of 200-210 completed surveys.

For the second round of data collection, the researcher sent requests to

approximately 20 districts (Appendix F). Eleven districts responded and provided the

researcher permission to send the survey link to the special education director. Upon

receipt of the 11 confirmations, the research again requested IRB approval (Appendix G).

The special education director then forwarded the consent document (Appendix H) and

survey (Appendix B) link to the district special education teachers.

The participants in both rounds of data collection were offered prizes for

completing the online surveys, and indicated their desire to be registerd for the drawing

by giving their name and email address at the end of the survey. The prizes included, but were not limited to, one $50.00 gift card. On the last day of the MS CEC state conference, names were drawn for the prizes. At the end of the second round of data collection, a name was also drawn. The winners were notified by email. Finally, upon closing the online survey, the researcher downloaded and entered the data file into Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyze demographic questions 1 through 7 of the instrument. The use of frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used to describe participant answers. An independent t-test was used to answer hypothesis 2 while multiple linear regression explained hypothesis 1 and 3. The dependent variable was teacher knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA as it relates to FBA and BIP requirements. The independent variables were the type, time, and quality of training, years of experience, the highest level of education, and route of certification (traditional or alternate). The alpha was set at .05.

Summary

This study investigated teacher knowledge of The IDEA (2004) as it relates to the discipline section and FBA and BIP requirements. There are three research questions and three research hypotheses that the researcher investigated. The researcher utilized a panel of experts to ensure the instrument content validity, and pilot the survey with a minimum of 10 teachers in a school that will not participate in the research. The procedure included permission to conduct the research at the MS CEC state conference and permission from 11 districts in the southern part of Mississippi. The study was

conducted via online survey methodology. IRB approval was requested upon successful

proposal of this research project to collect pilot study data, MS CEC Conference data

collection, and for the 11 school districts in southern Mississippi. Upon completion of the

study, the data was analyzed using SPSS to obtain descriptive statistics, t-test, and

multiple regression data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The results of this study determined the knowledge of special education teachers

in regards to the discipline section of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of

2004, as it relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans.

The study determined if there was a significant relationship between the teachers'

knowledge score and the type of training, number of hours, and quality of training they

attended. The study also determined if there was a statistically significant difference in

teachers' knowledge scores and their route of certification, alternate or traditional.

Finally, the study assessed the relationship between teachers' knowledge scores and their

years of experience and level of education. Survey methodology was utilized to complete

the study. First, the link was provided to approximately 200 teachers at the Mississippi

Council for Exceptional Children state conference. Sufficient data was not collected at

that conference. Links to the questionnaire were then provided to the directors of special

education in 11 southern school districts in Mississippi. This chapter describes the results

of the data collected through these questionnaires.

The sample included special education teachers who attended the Mississippi

Council for Exceptional Children state conference and special education teachers within

11 school districts in southern Mississippi. There were approximately 200 attendees at

the MS CEC state conference; 66 of whom completed the survey. The conference had a

return rate of approximately 33%. Nearly 500 teachers were given access to the

questionnaire through their special education directors, and 135 were completed for a return rate of approximately 27%. A total of 205 valid questionnaires were completed.

Descriptive Statistics of Participants

Demographics - Participants provided demographic information about their years of experience, grade level(s) taught, level of education, size of their school district, route of certification, and type, quality, and time of training. Descriptive statistics was utilized to describe the information, and frequency tables were generated for these variables. Of the 205 participants, the mean number of years experience was 13. The minimum years of experience is one year and the maximum years of experience is 44 years.

Table 1 outlines the frequencies and percentages for the participants' level of education. Of the 205 respondents, 103 (50.2%) hold a masters' level degree, 86 (42%) hold a bachelors' degree, and 16 (7.8%) hold a specialist or doctoral degree.

Table 1

Level of Education (N=205)

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor	86	42.0
Master	103	50.2
Specialist/Doctoral	16	7.8
Total	205	100.0

Table 2 outlines the frequencies and percentages for grade level experience. Teachers were asked to mark all grade levels currently taught. The grade levels taught are

dispersed evenly from grades kindergarten through twelfth grade with grade 5 having the most respondents (n=61). Respondents were able to choose more than one grade level.

Table 2

Level of Teaching Experience

Grade Level of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Pre- Kindergarten	21	3.2
Kindergarten	45	6.8
First	51	7.7
Second	54	8.1
Third	55	8.3
Fourth	56	8.4
Fifth	61	9.2
Sixth	52	7.8
Seventh	52	7.8
Eighth	43	6.5
Ninth	44	6.6
Tenth	45	6.8
Eleventh	44	6.6
Twelfth	40	6.0
Total	663	100

Table 3 outlines the frequencies and percentages for the size of the respondents' school district. Of the 205 respondents, 97 respondents (47.3%) were in districts with

2001-5000 students. Sixty-four respondents (31.2%) were in districts with less than 2000

students, and the remaining 44 respondents (21.4%) were in districts' with more than

5001 students.

Table 3

Size of District (N=205)

Size of District	Frequency	Percentage
<2000	64	31.2
2001-5000	9	47.3
5001-8000	31	15.1
>8000	13	6.3
Total	205	100

The 205 respondents categorized themselves into two routes of licensure,

alternate or traditional routes. Of the 205, 76.1% of respondents (n=156) obtained

traditional route licensure and 23.9% of the respondents (n-49) received alternate route

licensure.

Table 4 outlines the quality of undergraduate training based on the respondents'

answers. Of 205 respondents, 53.2% (n=109) did not participate in any undergraduate

training. The other 46.9% (n=96) stated they received training in their undergraduate

coursework. The respondents (n=96) rated their undergraduate training on a scale of 1-5

with 1 being poor, 2 being low average, 3 being average, 4 being above average, and 5

being excellent. Of those 96 respondents, 7.2% (n=7) rated their training as poor, 14.5%

(n=14) rated their training as low average, 33.3% (n=32) rated their training was average,

28.1% (n=27) rated their training as above average, and 16.6% (n=16) rated their training as excellent.

Table 4

Quality of Undergraduate Training (n=96)

Quality of Training	Frequency	Percentage
Poor (1)	7	7.2
Low Average (2)	14	14.5
Average (3)	32	33.3
Above Average (4)	27	28.1
Excellent (5)	16	16.6
Total	96	100

Table 5 outlines the amount of time the respondent received in undergraduate training. The respondents (n=96) provided the amount of time they spent in undergraduate training on a scale of 1-4 with 1 being less than 1 hour, 2 being 1 to 3 hours, 3 being 3 to 5 hours, and 4 being more than 5 hours. Of those 96 respondents, 4.2% (n=4) received less than 1 hour of training, 20.8% (n=20) received 1-3 hours of training, 25% (n=24) received 3-5 hours of training, and 50% (n=48) received 5 or more hours of training.

Table 5

Number of Hours for Undergraduate Training (n=96)

Hours of Training	Frequency	Percentage
<1 hour	4	4.2
1-3 hours	20	20.8
3-5 hours	24	25.0
>5 hours	48	50.0
Total	96	100

Table 6 outlines the quality of graduate training based on the respondents'

answers. Of 205 respondents, 59% (n=121) did not participate in any graduate training.

The other 41% (n=84) stated they received training in their graduate coursework. The

respondents (n=84) rated their graduate training on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being poor, 2

being low average, 3 being average, 4 being above average, and 5 being excellent. Of

those 84 respondents, 1.2% (n=1) rated their training as poor, 3.6% (n=3) rated their

training as low average, 40.5% (n=34) rated their training was average, 32.1% (n=27)

rated their training as above average, and 22.6% (n=19) rated their training as excellent.

Table 6

Quality of Graduate Training (n=84)

Quality of Training	Frequency	Percentage
Poor (1)	1	1.2
Low Average (2)	3	3.6
Average (3)	34	40.5
Above Average (4)	27	32.1
Excellent (5)	19	22.6
Total	84	100

Table 7 outlines the amount of time the respondent received in graduate training. The respondents (n=84) provided the amount of time they spent in graduate training on a scale of 1-4 with 1 being less than 1 hour, 2 being 1 to 3 hours, 3 being 3 to 5 hours, and 4 being more than 5 hours. Of those 84 respondents, 4.2% (n=4) received less than 1 hour of training, 20.8% (n=20) received 1-3 hours of training, 25% (n=24) received 3-5 hours of training, and 50% (n=48) received 5 or more hours of training.

Table 7

Number of Hours for Graduate Hours (n=96)

	Frequency	Percentage
<1 hour	1	1.1
1-3 hours	14	16.7
3-5 hours	25	29.8
>5 hours	44	52.4
Total	84	100

Table 8 outlines the quality of school or district level professional development or training based on the respondents' answers. Of 205 respondents, 30.7% (n=63) did not participate in any school or district level professional development or training. The other 69.3% (n=142) stated they received training in their school or district level professional development or training. The respondents (n=142) rated their school or district level professional development or training on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor, 2 being low average, 3 being average, 4 being above average, and 5 being excellent. Of those 142 respondents, 1.4% (n=2) rated their training as poor, 9.9% (n=14) rated their training as low average, 41.55% (n=59) rated their training was average, 34.5% (n=49) rated their training as above average, and 12.7% (n=18) rated their training as excellent.

Table 8

Quality of School or District Level Professional Development or Training (n=142)

Quality of Training	Frequency	Percentage
Poor (1)	1	1.4
Low Average (2)	14	9.9
Average (3)	59	41.55
Above Average (4)	49	34.50
Excellent (5)	18	12.7
Total	142	100

Table 9 outlines the amount of time the respondent received in school or district level professional development or training. The respondents (n=142) provided the amount of time they spent at school or district level professional development or training on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being less than 1 hour, 2 being 1 to 3 hours, 3 being 3 to 5 hours, and 4 being more than 5 hours. Of those 142 respondents, 2.1% (n=3) received less than 1 hour of training, 32.4% (n=46) received 1-3 hours of training, 22.5% (n=32) received 3-5 hours of training, and 43% (n=61) received 5 or more hours of training.

Table 9

Number of Hours of School or District Level Professional Development or Training Hours (n=142)

Hours of Training	Frequency	Percentage
<1 hour	3	2.1
1-3 hours	46	32.4
3-5 hours	32	22.5
>5 hours	61	43.0
Total	142	100

Table 10 outlines the quality of state department training, consortium training, or consultative training (outside of their school district), based on the respondents' answers. Of 205 respondents, 49.3% (n=101) did not participate in any state department training, consortium training, or consultative training. The other 50.7% (n=104) said they received training through state department training, consortium training, or consultative training. The respondents (n=101) rated their state department training, consortium training, or consultative training on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor, 2 being low average, 3 being average, 4 being above average, and 5 being excellent. Of those 101 respondents, <1% (n=1) rated their training as poor, 7.7% (n=8) rated their training as low average, 38.5% (n=40) rated their training was average, 38.5% (n=44) rated their training as above average, and 14.4% (n=15) rated their training as excellent.

Table 10

Quality of State Department Training, Consortium Training, or Consultative Training (n=104)

Quality of Training	Frequency	Percentage
Poor (1)	1	<1
Low Average (2)	8	7.7
Average (3)	40	38.5
Above Average (4)	40	38.5
Excellent (5)	15	14.4
Total	104	100

Table 11 outlines the amount of time the respondent received state department training, consortium training, or consultative training. The respondents (n=104) provided the amount of time they spent at state department training, consortium training, or consultative training on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being less than 1 hour, 2 being 1 to 3 hours, 3 being 3 to 5 hours, and 4 being more than 5 hours. Of those 104 respondents, 2% (n=2) received less than 1 hour of training, 26% (n=27) received 1-3 hours of training, 36% (n=37) received 3-5 hours of training, and 36% (n=37) received 5 or more hours of training.

Table 11

Number of Hours for State Department Training, Consortium Training, or Consultative Training (n=104)

Hours of Training	Frequency	Percentage
<1 hour	2	2.0
1-3 hours	27	26
3-5 hours	37	26
>5 hours	37	36
Total	104	100

Table 12 outlines the quality of professional development based on the respondents' answers. Of 205 respondents, 48.3% (n=99) did not participate in any professional conferences. The other 51.7% (n=106) stated, they received training through a professional conference. The respondents (n=106) rated their professional development on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor, 2 being low average, 3 being average, 4 being above average, and 5 being excellent. Of those 106 respondents, <1% (n=1) rated their training as poor, 4.7% (n=5) rated their training as low average, 27.4% (n=29) rated their training was average, 54% (n=57) rated their training as above average, and 13.2% (n=14) rated their training as excellent.

Table 12

Quality of Professional Conference (n=106)

Quality of Training	Frequency	Percentage
Poor (1)	1	<1
Low Average (2)	5	4.7
Average (3)	29	27.4
Above Average (4)	57	54.0
Excellent (5)	14	13.2
Total	106	100

Table 13 outlines the amount of time the respondent received at a professional conference. The respondents (n=106) provided the amount of time they spent at professional conferences on a scale of 1-4 with 1 being less than 1 hour, 2 being 1 to 3 hours, 3 being 3 to 5 hours, and 4 being more than 5 hours. Of those 106 respondents, 2.8% (n=3) received less than 1 hour of training, 24.5% (n=26) received 1-3 hours of training, 32% (n=34) received 3-5 hours of training, and 40.5% (n=43) received 5 or more hours of training.

Table 13

Number of Hours of Professional Conference (n=10)

Hours of Training	Frequency	Percentage
<1 hour	2	2.0
1-3 hours	27	26
3-5 hours	37	26
>5 hours	37	36
Total	104	100

The instrument contained only one section that measured the respondents'

knowledge of the discipline section of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of

2004, as it relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans.

Descriptive statistics was used in the analysis of the respondents' overall knowledge

score. The first seven scenario based questions were answered using multiple choice

answers. The next five questions were scenario based, and required a yes or no answer.

The final question required the respondent to put the answers in the correct order.

Upon analyzing the data, 50% or more of the respondents correctly answered 9 of

the 13 questions, and less than 50% of the respondents correctly answered the remaining

4 questions. Table 14 outlines the frequency and percent for each knowledge question.

Of the 205 respondents, 51.2% (n=105) answered question 8 correctly, 29.8% (n=61)

answered question 9 correctly, 58.5% (n=120) answered question 10 correctly, 34.6%

(n=71) answered question 11 correctly, 67.8% (n=139) answered question 12 correctly,

75.6% (n=155) answered question 13 correctly, 39% (n=80) answered question 14

correctly, 57.1% (n=117) answered question 15 correctly, 75.6% (n=155) answered

question 16 correctly, 73.7% (n=151) answered question 17 correctly, 74.1% (n=152)

answered question 18 correctly, 58.5% (n=120) answered question 19 correctly, and

45.9% (n=94) answered question 20 correctly.

Table 14

Frequency of Correct/Incorrect and Percent Correct for each Knowledge Question
(n=205)

Question #	Frequency Incorrect	Frequency Correct	Percent Correct
Q8	100	105	51.2
Q9	144	61	29.8
Q10	85	120	58.5
Q11	134	71	34.6
Q12	66	139	67.8
Q13	50	155	75.6
Q14	125	80	39
Q15	88	117	57.1
Q16	50	155	75.6
Q17	54	151	73.7
Q18	53	152	74.1
Q19	85	120	58.5
Q20	111	94	45.9

Table 15 represents the overall knowledge, quality, and time of training. The overall knowledge score ranged from a 0, meaning at least one respondent obtained 0 correct answers, to 13 meaning at least one respondent answered all knowledge questions correctly. The mean overall knowledge score was 7.4 with a standard deviation of 2.96. The quality of training ranged from 0, meaning the quality was poor to 5, meaning it was excellent. The mean overall score for quality was 1.85 with a standard deviation of 1.31, and is interpreted as low average training. The amount or time of training ranged from 0 hours to 20 hours of training. The mean for overall training time was 8.1 hours with a standard deviation of 5.8.

Table 15

Overall Knowledge Score, Quality of training, Time of training (n=205)

Score	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Knowledge	0	13	7.4	2.95
Quality of Training	0	5	1.8	1.3
Amount of Training	0	20	8.1	5.8

Results of the Research

The researcher formed three research questions and three hypotheses for this study. The goal of the first research question was to determine special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 as it relates to functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans. The first hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant relationship between special education teachers' overall knowledge score and

the type, quality, and time of training. Using a multiple linear regression model, the

researcher found that there no statistically significant relationships in the overall special

education teachers' knowledge score and type, quality, and time of training

($F(7,167)=1.203$, $p=.304$, $R^2=.048$). The hypothesis was not supported. Table 16

reflects the unstandardized and standardized coefficients, and significance related to

teacher knowledge scores and their type, quality, and amount of training. There were no

significant variables.

Table 16

Relationship Between Teacher Knowledge Scores and the Type, Quality, and Amount of Training

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	Significance
Undergraduate coursework	-.524	-.090	.402
Graduate coursework	.725	.125	.269
School/District provided professional development	-.383	-.052	.604
State department, consortium, or consultative training	.543	.092	.426
Professional conference	-.618	-.104	.413
Quality of training	.745	.297	.166
Amount of training	-.162	-.286	.183

The goal of the second research question was to determine, to what extent special

teachers' knowledge scores of the discipline section of IDEA (2004), as it relates to

FBAs and BIPs, differed based on type of teacher certification (traditional or alternate route)?

The second hypothesis stated there would be, a statistically significant difference between alternate route special education teachers' knowledge and traditional route special education teachers' knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs. The researcher used an independent samples t-test to analyze the data. With an alpha of .05, the researcher found no statistically significant difference in the overall knowledge score between the special education teachers' route of certification ($t(203) = .583$, $p = .560$). The hypothesis was not supported. Of the 205 total participants, 156 were traditional route teachers with a mean score of 7.48 and a standard deviation of 3.05. Of the 205 total participants, 49 were alternate route teachers with a mean score of 7.20 and a standard deviation of 2.66. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variance was not significant indicating no issues with equality of variance. Table 17 reflects the type of teacher certification route and mean score with standard deviation.

Table 17

Teacher Certification Route with Mean Score and Standard Deviation

Route of Certification	Total Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Traditional	156	7.48	3.05
Alternate	49	7.20	2.66

The goal of the third research question was to determine special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 as it relates to FBAs and BIPs and their level of education and

years of teaching. The third hypothesis stated there would be a statistically significant relationship between special education teachers' overall knowledge score and their years of teaching and level of education. Using a multiple linear regression model with an alpha of .05, the researcher found no statistically significant relationships in the overall knowledge score, years of experience, and level of education ($F(3,201)=.687$, $p=.561$, $R^2=.010$). The hypothesis was not supported. Table 18 reflects the unstandardized and standardized coefficients and significance related to teacher knowledge scores, and their years of experience and level of education. There were no statistically significant variables.

Table 18

Relationship Between Teacher Knowledge Scores and Their Years of Experience and Level of Education

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	Significance
Years of Experience	7.00	.043	.554
Bachelor's Degree	.332	.055	.464
Specialist's & Doctoral Degrees	1.02	`.093	.201

Summary

This study included 205 participants from 11 districts in southern Mississippi and those participants from the MS CEC State conference. Data for this quantitative study was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, Multiple Linear Regression analysis, and independent t-tests were used to determine significant relationships and differences among the variables. The data is reported in this chapter.

The researcher's data determined that there were no statistically significant relationships in the overall knowledge score and type, quality, and time of training. It was also determined that there are no statistically significant differences in the overall knowledge score and the special education teachers' route of certification. Finally, the researcher found that there are no statistically significant relationships in the teachers' overall knowledge score and years of experience and level of education. Chapter V will provide a discussion and evaluation of these results.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This research was completed to help identify special education teachers'

knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of

2004 as it relates to functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans.

The following will discuss and review information and implications obtained from the

data.

Discussion

The first goal of the research was to determine special education teachers' overall

knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of

2004 as it relates to functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans.

The mean score for teacher's overall knowledge was 7.4 out of a possible 13 points that

equal to 56.9% correct. This score indicates, in the researcher's opinion, that teachers do

not know how to interpret and apply the law based on actual scenarios from day to day

special education activities. In 2011, Zirkel's research found little research conducted on

the level of teacher knowledge related to this specific area. Copenhaver's (2005) and

Leal-Georgetti (2012) indicate that principals' overall knowledge of special education

law is inadequate for supervision of special education programs specific to compliance

with procedural safeguards and due process. If school level leaders have a poor

knowledge of special education law and requirements, it stands to reason, teachers whom

they supervise would also have poor knowledge. Weber et al. (2005) find teachers lack

sufficient knowledge regarding FBA and BIP requirements which have resulted in costly

mistakes for districts. The researcher found limited research on teacher knowledge of this specific area of IDEA (2004).

The first hypothesis states there was not a statistically significant relationship between special education teachers' overall knowledge score and the training or professional type, quality, and time. The research found there were no statistically significant relationships in the overall knowledge score and type, quality, and time of training. However, it is concerning and disheartening that the overall knowledge score was very low in general, and the lack of knowledge is supported throughout the research. Ladner (2009) concludes, 40% of teachers indicated that little to no training or did not know or remember if they had received training. This percentage is commensurate to the 52% of respondents who indicated they had no type of training. Research supports that for FBAs and BIPs to be implemented effectively by teachers, they need professional development targeted to increase their knowledge (Crone & Horner, 2003; Doggett et al., 2001; Ellis & Magee, 1999). Encouragingly, it was found that teacher's knowledge of an FBA process increased from a score of 72% to 88% after intensive and specific training (Watson, 2009; Quinn et al., 2001; Scott & Meers, 1999). The researcher warns that this research was based on the teacher's knowledge of a process developed by a district to complete an FBA, not specific to the requirements of IDEA (2004). Engstrom (2013) finds Virginia teachers who received pre-service training at the college level (undergraduate) and professional devleopment days within their districts had a moderate to effective rate of improvement in their knowledge. Moreno (2008) finds 50% of respondents had received some type of training at the colledge level (undergraduate or graduate) and considered themselves knowledeable about FBAs and BIPs. A devastating

statistic to this researcher is that only 30% of teachers stated that they received any type of professional development from their school districts in relation to FBAs and BIPs (Moreno, 2008). Breaux and Wong (2003) find that districts using a teacher induction or mentoring program, specific to special educators, have a lower turnover rate. Crone & Horner (2003) state that teachers and adminstrators continue to use antequated reactive responses to discipline procedures. If teachers are indicating at a high percentage, 40%, and 52% respectively, that they have not received any type of training, it is assumed that with specific training and professional development, their knowledge scores in this area would increase with the type of training provided.

The second hypothesis states that there is not a statistically significant difference between alternate route special education teachers' knowledge and traditional route special education teachers' knowledge of the discipline section of IDEA (2004) as it relates to FBAs and BIPs. The research found, there are no statistically significant differences in the overall knowledge score and the special education teachers' route of certification. Of the 205 total participants, 156 were traditional route teachers with a mean score of 7.48, and 49 were alternate route teachers with a mean score of 7.20. Even though there was a small difference of .28 points in overall knowledge scores, the difference was not significant. Again, the overall knowledge score was very low and concerning. While the researcher did not find research specific to FBA and BIP trianing and type of teacher certification of alternate route or traditional aroute, there is some research regarding if there is a difference in the overall effectiveness of the two routes. Finn (2003) finds there is no correlation between student success and teacher certification based on the teacher route of certification.

The third hypothesis states that there is not a statistically significant relationship between special education teachers' overall knowledge score and their years of teaching and level of education. The researcher found there were no statistically significant relationships in the overall knowledge score and years of experience and level of education.   While the overall knowledge score was very low, it supports the fact that special education teachers, regardless of route, do not know how to interpret the law, and apply it to scenarios within the everyday school setting. Yet again, while the researcher found limited literature on this topic, Walsh and Jacobs (2007) finds that the teachers' grade point average did not significantly differ from alternate route to traditional route teachers, and did not indicate one route produced a stronger teacher than the other. Both routes bring different advantages to the students they teach, and adequate training and supervision should be provided to enhance and grow the weaknesses of each route to asisst in student success.

<center>Limitations</center>

The limitations identified during the research that could impact the results is, data was collected during two different times. First, the researcher conducted a survey at the statewide Conference for Exceptional Children conference. Those results represented the entire state, but were limited in number. Due to the limited number of surveys, a second set of data was obtained from eleven districts, and represents only the southern quarter of Mississippi. This is a limitation in the ability to generalize the results to one specific location of Mississippi. It is assumed teachers that answered each of the research questions in the demographic section of the survey with honesty and integrity.

One final possible limitation lies in the survey instrument itself. The instrument was developed by the researcher, and content validity and reliability were established by a panel of experts and a pilot study. However, it should be noted that even though no statistically significant findings came about, it could be due to the instrument used to collect data.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Future Research</div>

This study was limited to only special education teachers in the selected area. Most research encourages the use of a team approach to conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments. For this reason, the researcher recommends further research statewide to assess the overall knowledge of general education teachers, behavior specialists, counselors, administrators, and other crucial team members involved in this process. It would be ideal if all districts in the state of Mississippi would participate; this would provide the Mississippi Department of Education to data to drive the development of technical assistance, and professional development needs to districts.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Policy and Practice</div>

The researcher recommends that the Mississippi Department of Education as well as local educational agencies utilize this information to provide targeted professional development in the area of functional behavior assessments and IDEA (2004) requirements. It is evident in the overall teacher knowledge score from this research that understanding is deficient in this field. The researcher would ultimately like to see a statewide manual on the process for an FBA and BIP. Mississippi students are a transient group, and if more consistency were provided through the proactive measure of an FBA and BIP, it would enhance smoother transitions for the student.

Summary

This research study was completed to identify special education teachers' overall knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 as it relates to functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans. While none of the research hypothesis was true, and no relationships or differences were found, the data provides educational leaders with the knowledge needed to implement and provide targeted professional development.

There is a desire to learn more and better understand this section of the IDEA (2004) so that teachers and administrators can help students grow not only academically, but socially and emotionally. Professional development will not only help with the behavior aspect of students' needs, but also facilitate academic growth and development for all students.

APPENDIX A

VALIDITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Special Education Teacher Knowledge of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) as it relates to Discipline and the requirement of a Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan

Thank you for volunteering your time to assist me in the development of this survey. Your input is crucial with respect to the survey itself and the development of my dissertation overall. Your willingness and consideration to participate in this study is greatly appreciated.

Please rate the included survey based on the following information:

1. Does the survey contain language that can be understood by teachers who have participated the functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention plan process?
   _____
   _____

2. Does the survey address specific and appropriate issues in the statements, as it relates to the discipline section of IDEA (2004) and Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans?
   _____
   _____

3. Do you find any of the questions offensive or obtrusive?
   _____

4. Are there any questions that you would exclude from the survey?_____
   _____

5. Are there any other statements that you would include that are ***not*** a part of the survey?_____
   _____

6. Are the correct answers provided? _____

7. If not, what answers are incorrect and what is the answer in your professional judgment? _____

8. Please make any other comments or suggestions about the survey below:
   _____

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Special Education Teachers' Knowledge of the Discipline Section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as it relates to Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans

Demographics

1. Are you currently employed as a Special Education Teacher with a valid Mississippi license?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. At what level are you currently teaching (circle all that apply)?

Pre-K	K	1st	2nd
3rd	4th	5th	6th
7th	8th	9th	10th
11th	12th	Other: _____	

3. Including this year, how many years of teaching experience do you have? _____

4. What is your highest level of education?
   a. Bachelor
   b. Master
   c. Specialist
   d. Doctoral

5. What most accurately describes your school district population?
   a. <2000 students
   b. 2001 – 5000 students
   c. 5001 – 8000 students
   d. >8000 students

6. Which route to teacher certification did you take?
   a. Alternate Route
   b. Traditional Route

7. Check yes or no if you have participated in any of the following types of training in the discipline section of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 as it relates to Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans.

If yes, please complete the quality of training and approximate time of each.

Type of Training	Quality of Training 1 = Poor 5 = Exceptional	Approximate amount of time
A. Undergraduate Coursework YES NO	1 2 3 4 5	< than 1 hour 1 – 3 hours 3 – 5 hours >5 hours
B. Graduate Coursework YES NO	1 2 3 4 5	< than 1 hour 1 – 3 hours 3 – 5 hours >5 hours
C. School/District provided Professional Development YES NO	1 2 3 4 5	< than 1 hour 1 – 3 hours 3 – 5 hours >5 hours
D. State Department Training, Consortium Training, or Consultative Training (agency outside of School District) YES NO	1 2 3 4 5	< than 1 hour 1 – 3 hours 3 – 5 hours >5 hours
E. Professional Conference YES NO	1 2 3 4 5	< than 1 hour 1 – 3 hours 3 – 5 hours >5 hours

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING THE DISCIPLINE SECTION OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT 2004 AS IT RELATES TO FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENTS AND BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLANS

Choose the best answer the following questions.

8. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 states the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) committee **must** consider or review and revise a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) for all of the following except?

   a. The behavior involves weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury.
   b. The behavior interferes with the student's learning, other students' learning, or the teachers' ability to each.
   c. **The behavior is demonstrated at home on a daily basis.**

9. School administrators **must** do which of the following first upon enacting any disciplinary action by a student with a disability?

   a. **Provide the student and parent with their due process and procedural safeguards rights.**
   b. Initiate an IEP committee meeting to review the data related to the behavioral incident.
   c. Meet with school staff members involved in the behavioral incident.

10. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that a Functional Behavioral Assessment **must** be considered or reviewed and revised for all of the following except?

    a. The behavior incident results in a change of placement for the student.
    b. **The behavior incident places the student in school suspension for 3 consecutive days due to the behavior incident.**
    c. The student is suspended for 10 or more than cumulative school days.

11. IDEA states the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) committee **must** consider completion of or a review/revision of a Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) when?

    a. **Prior to the IEP committee changing the placement of the child and regardless if the disciplinary action is a manifestation of the student's disability.**
    b. Prior to the IEP committee instituting IEP changes as a result of disciplinary action.
    c. Previous interventions are successful according to the data reviewed by the IEP committee.

12. IDEA (2004) requires all of the following to be reviewed at a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) except?

    a. All relevant information provided by the school (IEP, observations, behavioral data, current psychological reports).

    b. **All current medications the child takes at home on a weekly basis.**

    c. All relevant information provided by the parent (outside diagnosis, private assessments, etc.).

13. Morgan brought firecrackers to school and lit them in the boys' restroom. The student is Autistic, and has a current functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and behavior intervention plan (BIP) in place. This behavior incident violates the student's code of conduct as firecrackers are considered to meet the criteria of a weapon. Due to Zero-Tolerance initiatives, the school's administrators recommend the student be expelled to the district's alternative educational setting. The IEP committee completed a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) and concluded that the BIP was not implemented with fidelity. The student was to be checked each morning for items that were not allowed at school due to his inability to understand consequences for his actions. The school staff did not check Morgan on the day of the incident. What does IDEA (2004) state must happen in this situation?

    a. Change the student's placement regardless of the result of the MDR.

    b. **Return the student to the previous placement and ensure the BIP and IEP are implemented.**

    c. Send the student to a hearing committee for a determination.

14. By what day **must** the IEP committee meet to complete a manifestation determination review (MDR)?

    a. 3rd day after the incident takes place

    b. **10th day after the change in placement**

    c. 5th day after the change in placement

BASED ON THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS, DETERMINE IF IDEA (2004) REQUIRES THE USE OF AN FBA.

Caleb is a student with a disability in the area of Other Health Impaired (ADHD). The IEP committee has completed an FBA and BIP to address the misbehaviors. The BIP has been changed 3 times over the last 6 months. However, the data shows that the IEP committee's efforts have been unsuccessful in changing the misbehaviors. The school's principal has referred him to the hearing committee for consideration of placement in the district's alternative education program due to habitual misconduct involving behaviors such as out of seat, talking out of turn, and aggressiveness towards peers.

15. Does IDEA (2004) require a Manifestation Determination Review in this instance?
    a. **Yes**   b. No

16. Does IDEA (2004) require the IEP committee to review/revise the current FBA if the student is placed in the Alternative School setting?
    a. **Yes**   b. No

Billy is a student with a disability in the area of Orthopedic Impairment as a result of Cerebral Palsy. He is non-verbal, and his sole means of communication is with an augmentative communication device. He is physically aggressive with peers on the playground and during unstructured times (hallways, bus, and cafeteria). Teachers are concerned about the safety of his peers. The IEP committee has not requested an FBA. However, his classroom teacher has implemented a BIP, but the data does not demonstrate an improvement in behavior over the last 12 weeks. As a result of Billy's current discipline ladder position, the administrative team has recommended a change in placement to the elementary behavior modification program. The IEP committee conducted a manifestation determination review, and it was determined that the behavior is related to his disability. However, the IEP committee determined placement in the behavior modification program to be the student's least restrictive environment and the best placement for intensive interventions to address the behaviors.

17. Does IDEA (2004) require the team to consider an FBA due to this change in placement?
    a. **Yes**   b. No

Susie is a student with a disability in the area of Emotional Disability. She is being referred to the hearing committee for consideration of placement at the district's alternative school for possession of a knife with a blade longer than 2 inches. The IEP committee has not considered an FBA and has not implemented a BIP prior to this behavior incident.

18. Does IDEA (2004) require a Manifestation Determination Review?
    a. **Yes**   b. No

19. Does IDEA (2004) require an FBA and BIP prior to a decision for placement?

a. Yes   **b. No**

USING THE SCENARIO BELOW, PLACE THE STEPS IN ORDER FROM 1ST TO 3RD AS IDEA (2004) INDICATES THEY SHOULD HAPPEN.

20. Dean is a student with a disability of Other Health Impaired – Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, who has a current functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and behavior intervention plan (BIP) in place. Dean brought and consumed synthetic marijuana at school. The school administrators are recommending expulsion to the district's alternative educational setting.

    a. *2*   Review and revise an FBA/BIP to ensure the displayed behavior is addressed in an FBA and BIP and appropriate services are provided.

    b. *1*   Complete a manifestation determination review.

    c. *3*   The school may place Dean in the alternative educational setting for up to 45 days.

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION PILOT

STUDY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
  Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 15010901
PROJECT TITLE: Teacher Knowledge of the Discipline Section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 as it Relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Tricia M. Cox
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology
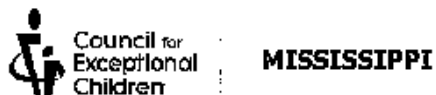DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 01/13/2015 to 01/12/2016
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX D

MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN RESEARCH APPROVAL

Council for
Exceptional
Children   **MISSISSIPPI**

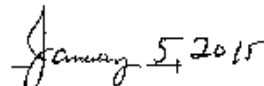The voice and vision of special education

To Whom it May Concern:

Ms. Tricia Cox has requested permission to collect data during the MS-CEC State Conference. This letter documents that she has permission to collect data at this state conference as it relates to her study entitled, *Teacher Knowledge of the Discipline Section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) as it relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans.*

Surveys will be administered between sessions at the MS CEC State Conference on a voluntary basis. I understand that no participant, school, or district will be named and that I can request a copy of the composite findings of the study. I also understand that participation is voluntary and participants may choose to end their participation at any time without penalty.

_____   January 5, 2015
MS CEC Board President   Date

APPENDIX E

IINSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FOR MS CEC CONFERENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
  Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 15012902
PROJECT TITLE: Special Education Teachers' Knowledge of the Discipline Section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 as it Relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Tricia M. Cox
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 01/30/2015 to 01/29/2016
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX F

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION FOR

SCHOOL DISRICTS

**THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
  Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: CH15012902
PROJECT TITLE: Special Education Teachers' Knowledge of the Discipline Section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 as it Relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans
PROJECT TYPE: Change to a Previously Approved Project
RESEARCHER(S): Tricia M. Cox
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 03/03/2015 to 03/02/2016
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The University of Southern Mississippi Consent Document Teacher Questionnaire

Purpose: As special education teachers of students with disabilities attending public school in Mississippi you are being asked to participate in research designed to help us better understand teacher knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as it relates to Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans. This research is being conducted by Tricia M. Cox, a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Thelma Roberson, at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Description of the Study: As a participant, you are being asked to complete a survey on your knowledge of the discipline section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) as it relates to functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans. The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes of your time. The results will be shared with interested parties when the study is complete by contacting the researcher using the provided contact information.

Benefits: You may be eligible to receive 1gift card in the amount of $50.00. Your input will better help us drive professional development opportunities in this area.

Risks: There are no known risks to the participants. The identity of the participant as well as the district in which they work will be kept confidential. There is no identifying information provided as part of the survey questionnaire.

Subject's Assurance: Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to participate at any time without penalty. Refusing to participate will no way affect your or your standing as an educator. If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact the researcher, Tricia M. Cox at 228-348-0105 or Dr. Thelma Roberson at 601-266-4556. Overall results of this study will be available to you after June 2014, upon your request.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee. This committee ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, Box 5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001 or call 601-266-6820.

By returning the completed questionnaire, you are indicating your consent to participate. The consent form is yours to keep for future reference. Please place the completed questionnaire in the designated area, and the researcher will collect all questionnaires in the sealed envelope at the end of the specified survey period.

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