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Teacher Perceptions of Students with Conduct Problems With and Without Callous Unemotional Traits

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Teacher Perceptions of Students with Conduct Problems

With and Without Callous Unemotional Traits

by

Casie L. Peet

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Education Specialist Department of Educational and Psychological Studies College of Education University of South Florida

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Abstract

Conduct problems describe behaviors that violate either age-appropriate societal norms or the rights of others. They include: physical or verbal aggression, theft, lying, arguing with authority, defiance, violation of rules, property destruction, fire setting, and truancy. Among youth with conduct problems, a subset display features known as callous-unemotional (CU) traits. CU traits, or interpersonal callousness, are exemplified in behaviors such as: (a) absence of remorse or guilt, (b) lack of empathy and, (c) callous use of others for personal gain (Frick & White, 2008). This study aims to fill the gap of examining these students in schools and which practices are currently being used to manage these students’ behaviors. Because students with callous unemotional traits are typically the students exhibiting the most extreme and aggressive forms of conduct problems, there is a need to discover effective ways to manage their behavior in order to maintain a safe and effective learning environment for all students. In this study, vignettes were used to make comparisons between youth with and without CU traits in the following areas: (RQ1) teachers’ attributive perceptions of conduct problems (i.e., Why do they think the child behaves this way?), (RQ2) teachers’ self-efficacy in addressing conduct problems in the classroom, (RQ3) the most appropriate educational setting for students with conduct problems, (RQ4) the type of behavior management strategies believed to be most effective, and (RQ5) the expected trajectory of the student. Teachers were most likely to attribute problem behavior of all students to home and within child factors but they were somewhat more likely to attribute home factors to the students with CU traits. Teachers additionally feel overall less efficacious in working with students with CU traits, had lower expectations of success, and were
more likely to recommend ongoing home-school collaboration. Participants in this study showed
overwhelming support for the fact that reinforcing interventions are more effective than punitive
interventions and knowledge of a wide range of interventions. The discussion describes
suggestions for future training to increase teacher competency in working with students with
conduct problems in the general education setting.
Chapter I: Introduction

Conduct problems describe behaviors that violate either age-appropriate societal norms or the rights of others. They include: physical or verbal aggression, theft, lying, arguing with authority, defiance, violation of rules, property destruction, fire setting, and truancy. Conduct problems that interfere with everyday functioning in social, academic, or occupational tasks may meet the criteria for either Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) or Conduct Disorder (CD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). ODD is diagnosed in the presence of an angry or irritable mood, argumentative or defiant behavior, or vindictiveness that impairs functioning; it is often a precursor to CD, particularly when the individual displays argumentative or defiant behavior or vindictiveness (APA, 2013). CD is the more severe of the two disorders and includes behaviors such as aggression to people or animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness or theft, or serious violations of rules. Conduct problems as indicated in this manuscript do not indicate the presence of ODD or CD; rather, they include a broad range of symptoms that may include the behaviors seen in ODD, CD, and other or un-specified disruptive or impulse-control disorders.

Among youth with conduct problems, a subset display features known as callous-unemotional (CU) traits. CU traits, or interpersonal callousness, are exemplified in behaviors such as: (a) absence of remorse or guilt, (b) lack of empathy and, (c) callous use of others for personal gain (Frick & White, 2008). In the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, a specifier was added under CD to identify the subset of individuals with both CD and CU traits. The specifier that indicates the individual has CD ‘with limited prosocial emotions’ is used when the individual’s typical interpersonal and emotional functioning consistently meets two or more of the following: (1) lack of remorse or guilt,
(2) callous lack of empathy, (3) lack of concern about performance, or (4) shallow or deficient affect. Individuals who meet this specifier are more likely to have a severity rating of “severe,” meaning they are more likely to display an excessive amount of problems or problems that cause significant harm to others (APA, 2013).

Although youth with CU traits are estimated to make up less than 1% of the child population, they are a population of great concern because of their particularly persistent antisocial behaviors and trends of extreme aggression across the lifespan (Viding, 2012). Children who display conduct problems and CU traits generally represent the most severe manifestations of conduct problems and are at a higher risk to commit aggressive acts that cause serious harm to others compared to other youth with CD (Frick & White, 2008). Further, these children show exceptionally poor response to treatment and little to no responsiveness to punitive interventions (APA, 2013; Pardini, Lochman, & Frick, 2003). Many of the effective treatment strategies typically used with youth with conduct problems (such as discipline strategies like timeout) are characteristically ineffective for these children given their insensitivity to punishment (Frick, 2001).

To date, much of the research on CU traits has focused on adult populations and in particular, incarcerated adults. In the research completed with youth, there has been a primary focus within the juvenile justice system, private practice, or other facilities that treat children and adolescents with severe conduct problems. However, once symptoms reach a level of severity that requires specialized facilities or warrants the involvement of the juvenile justice system, CD becomes more difficult to treat. Thus, it would be beneficial for research to examine more closely how these children are treated in schools before symptoms necessitate specialized attention given that intervention for CU traits is more effective for younger children (Kimonis,
Ogg, & Fefer, 2014). Of the few studies that address antisocial characteristics and CU traits in schools, the focus of the research has been on bullying and relationships with peers (e.g. Viding, Simmonds, Petrides, & Frederickson, 2009).

**CU Traits in Schools**

Thus far, there has been no research on teachers’ perceptions of students with CU traits or how these students are managed in classrooms. Some research has found that behavior management strategies chosen by teachers for students with challenging behaviors are often punitive (Irwin, Davidson, & Hall-Sanchez, 2013; Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010; Rosen, Taylor, O’Leary, & Sanderson, 1990). However, not only have punitive interventions been found to be ineffective for youth with CU traits, they may have adverse effects as these students often respond to punishment with escalating anger and reactive aggression (Dadds & Salmon, 2003).

The focus of the current study is on how teachers perceive youth with conduct problems with and without CU traits. The focus on teacher perceptions was selected because perceptions influence many aspects of teacher-student interactions, including teachers’ selection of behavior management strategies, practices in the classroom, and confidence in working with challenging students (Dutton Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, & Collins, 2010).

Attribution theory as described by Weiner (2005), which separates attributions into three dimensions: locus, stability, and controllability is the framework guiding the development of this study. The locus of an attribution can be either internal (within-child factors such as personality or disorder) or external (environmental factors such as parenting or peer influence). The controllability of the attribution indicates the amount of control that the student has over the behavior. Finally, the stability of attributions refers to the duration and likelihood that the behavior is to continue or the expectation of the behavior to continue or improve. How a person
perceives the behavior of others governs how they will respond to the behavior (Weiner, 2005). This study used the principles of attribution theory to evaluate how teachers perceive students with conduct problems with and without CU traits.

Attributions for behaviors can directly affect the practices teachers use in the classroom to manage these behaviors. Additionally, attribution beliefs can influence the self-efficacy of teachers. The ultimate goal of this research is to determine how teachers respond to youth with conduct problems in varying forms (i.e., with and without CU traits). Specifically, vignettes were used to make comparisons between youth with and without CU traits in the following areas: (RQ1) teachers’ attributive perceptions of conduct problems (i.e., Why do they think the child behaves this way?), (RQ2) teachers’ self-efficacy in addressing conduct problems in the classroom, (RQ3) the most appropriate educational setting for students with conduct problems, (RQ4) the type of behavior management strategies believed to be most effective, and (RQ5) the expected trajectory of the student.

Causal Attributions of Conduct Problems

Miller (1995) suggested that teachers naturally and unavoidably make predictions of the cause of problem behaviors. Teachers’ causal attributions of conduct problems influence their attitudes towards the behaviors and ultimately impact practices employed by the teacher. Numerous studies have found that teachers are most likely to attribute the cause of inappropriate behaviors to home or child factors rather than teacher, classroom, or school characteristics (e.g. Brophy & Rohrkemper, 1981; Miller, 1995; Poulou & Norwich, 2000; Vernberg & Medway, 1981; Wilson & Silverman, 1991). However, home, family, and child characteristics are inherently less malleable than school characteristics, which are more within the teachers’ control. Dutton Tillery et al. (2010) hypothesized that decreased malleability of the perceived cause of
the problem behavior may decrease the degree of confidence that the teacher has in changing the behavior as well as discourage the teacher from taking a more active role in trying to influence the behavior. Further, Ashton (1982) held that the more confidence the teacher has in his or her own ability to change the behavior problems, the more the teacher meets the task of altering the behavior with enthusiasm and persistence. Vernberg and Medway (1981) identified two separate types of child factors: controllable and un-controllable. Un-controllable child factors refer to factors that the child can presumably not control such as delayed development or biological factors. When teachers believe the cause of problem behavior to be an uncontrollable child factor or an environmental factor (e.g. parental or home influences), they may see the problem as non-malleable and accordingly, believe they have limited power to change the behavior and take a less active approach in working to improve the behavior (Dutton Tillery et al., 2010; Vernberg & Medway, 1981). Conversely, teachers may feel more capable of influencing behavior when they believe the cause is under the child’s control (e.g. lack of effort or attention). However, if the teacher believes the cause of the behavior is a controllable child factor or that the behavior is intentional, the teacher is more likely to use punitive strategies (Brophy & Rohrkemper, 1981; Brophy & McCaslin, 1992; Vernberg & Medway, 1981), which have been established as ineffective for many students with conduct problems and specifically for those with CU traits. Thus, understanding how teachers perceive the causal factors of conduct problems can aid in understanding how teachers approach practices and management strategies.

Teachers’ beliefs about their students’ potential success in their classroom or educational trajectories can greatly impact how they treat their students. There is a large body of literature regarding teacher expectation effects and how teacher expectations of students influence teacher behavior and practices in the classroom. There have been several important findings that suggest
that teacher expectations play a role in how teachers interact students for whom they have high vs. low expectations. Students for whom they have low expectations of success receive more criticisms for failures (Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper & Baron, 1977; Good, Cooper, & Blakey, 1980; Good, Sikes, & Brophy, 1973; Rubie-Davies, 2007) and less praise for successes (Cooper & Baron, 1977; Fireston & Brody, 1975; Good et al., 1980; Rejeski, Darracott, & Hutslar, 1979; Rubie-Davies, 2007). This has serious implications for behavior management because praise, positive reinforcement, and acknowledging appropriate and rule-following behavior have been shown to increase positive behaviors and decrease disruptive behaviors in challenging students (Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Thus, if a teacher has low expectations of a student in terms of social or educational outcomes, it is more likely that he or she will engage in a number of behaviors that are contradictory to evidence-based methods of preventing or improving problem behavior in the classroom. Further, their beliefs concerning the origin and malleability of the conduct problems may affect teachers’ own confidence in their ability to work with difficult students effectively or, a teacher’s self-efficacy: “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (McLuaghlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1997).

**Teacher Self-Efficacy in Treating Conduct Problems**

Teachers’ self-efficacy has been found to greatly impact teachers’ behavior in the classroom. Specifically to conduct problems, teacher self-efficacy has been found to affect their levels of eagerness and perseverance when working with students with challenging behaviors (Ashton, 1982). Additionally, teacher self-efficacy has been found to be related to the selection of classroom management strategies (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Rubie-Davies, 2007; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). Teachers with low self-efficacy have been found to engage in detrimental
approaches such as showing less emotional support and displaying more conflict with their students (Hamre, Pianta, Downer, & Mashburn, 2007). Moreover, their beliefs of their own ability may also impact their behavioral or academic expectations of a student.

**Significance of the Current Study**

While there is much unknown about students with CU traits, one of the most poignant findings in current research is that these students are unresponsive to punitive interventions. Some research has stated that behavior management strategies chosen by teachers for students with challenging behaviors are often punitive (Irwin et al., 2013; Osher et al., 2010). Though punitive interventions have proven to be general ineffective for most students, students with callous unemotional traits are particularly insensitive to punishment as a form of behavior change given that their brains are in fact less reactive to punishments as evidenced by lower cortisol reactivity (Stadler et al., 2011), lower right amygdala reactivity (Jones, Laurens, Herba, Barker, & Viding, 2009), and lower heart rate change (de Wied, van Boxtel, Matthys, & Meeus, 2012) in response to stressful stimuli (White, Brislin, Meffert, Sinclair, & Blair, 2013).

Additionally, they lack the ability to anticipate punishments that follow misbehaviors (Pardini et al., 2003). This is in contrast to other children who lack only the ability to anticipate punishments in the moment such as students with ADHD however when probed about hypothetical situations, students with ADHD are aware of consequences for their actions and students with CU traits are unable to identify likely consequences for misbehaving. All of these findings indicate that punitive interventions are inherently less effective for youth with CU traits at any age. Moreover, the use of punitive strategies may in fact be destructive in the treatment process as it may cause the student to escalate negative behaviors (Dadds & Salmon, 2003). Finally, it has been established that teacher beliefs regarding cause of problem behaviors, their own self-efficacy in
managing the behavior, and expectations for the student may impact the selection or fidelity of implementation of interventions used in the classroom. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to further understand teachers’ perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards students with conduct problems in order to understand how these students are approached in a school setting. Data collected from individual interviews with the use of vignettes allowed the researcher to determine teacher perceptions of the cause of conduct problems, their confidence in changing student behavior, their beliefs regarding the most appropriate educational setting for students with conduct problems, and their attitudes regarding the effectiveness of reinforcing and punitive intervention types. The use of two separate vignettes describing conduct problems (illustrating one child with CU traits and one without CU traits) permitted the researcher to compare how CU traits affect these beliefs surrounding conduct problems.

**Research Questions**

1.) What do teachers hypothesize to be the cause of conduct problems among children?
   a. Are their hypotheses about causation similar for children with and without CU traits?

2.) How confident are teachers that they can effectively change the behavior of children with conduct problems?
   a. Is their confidence similar for children with and without CU traits?

3.) What do teachers believe is the most appropriate educational setting for children with conduct problems?
   a. Are their beliefs about the most appropriate education setting similar for children with and without CU traits?

4.) Do teachers perceive reinforcement-based or punishment-based interventions to be more
effective for children with conduct problems?

a. Are their perceptions of effective interventions similar for children with and without CU traits?

5.) What are teachers’ expectations for students with conduct problems in terms of education and social trajectories over time?

a. Are their expectations regarding educational and social trajectories similar for children with and without CU traits?

**Key Terminology**

**Callous unemotional (CU) traits.** Callous unemotional (CU) traits are generally defined as a lack of remorse, absence of empathy, and a callous use of others for personal gain. CU traits make up one of three primary constructs of psychopathy in adults but have recently been studied in youth because of their stability through the lifespan (Frick & White, 2008).

**Conduct problems.** In this manuscript, conduct problems are defined broadly as behaviors that either violate the rights of others or cause conflict between the individual and societal norms or authority figures. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal and physical aggression, lying, theft, defiance of authority, serious violation of rules, and property destruction. Symptoms under this definition may fall into the general category of disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorders as defined by the DSM-5 (APA, 2013).

**Punishment-based intervention.** A punishment-based intervention is one in which the student is punished for negative or undesirable behavior either by the presentation of an aversive stimulus (positive punishment) or the removal of a desired stimulus (negative punishment).

**Reinforcement-based intervention.** A reinforcement-based intervention is one in which the student is reinforced for positive or desired behavior either by the presentation of a desired
stimulus (positive reinforcement) or the removal of an undesired stimulus (negative reinforcement).

**Teacher self-efficacy.** One’s perceived self-efficacy is one’s belief in his or her own capacity to perform a task or produce a goal (Bandura, 1977). Teacher self-efficacy has been explicitly defined in the literature as “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (McLuaghlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1997, p.137).
Chapter II: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on conduct problems and callous unemotional (CU) traits among youth in schools and how teachers perceive and respond to students who display these behaviors. Conduct problems refer to behaviors that violate social norms or the rights of others including physical or verbal aggression, theft, lying, arguing with authority figures, defiance, violation of rules, property destruction, fire setting, and truancy. All of these behaviors are problematic to teachers and can disrupt the classroom and educational setting. Conduct problems are seen in a number of disorders as stated in the DSM-5, namely Conduct Disorder (CD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), and other or un-specified disruptive and impulse-control disorders, although CU traits are most commonly associated with CD. For the purposes of this study, conduct problems are conceptualized as a series of behavioral symptoms that may fall into Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or other or un-specified disruptive and impulse control disorders. Because ODD and CD make up a large portion of individuals who display CU traits, these two disorders are discussed in more detail below. Further, due to the limited literature pertaining to CU traits in schools, this chapter will focus on research in the area of conduct or behavioral problems in general and in schools, callous unemotional traits in general, and research surrounding individuals with CU traits. Additionally, two theoretical frameworks that are relevant to how teachers perceive and respond to youth with conduct disorders (i.e., attribution theory and teacher self-efficacy) will be reviewed.

Conduct Problems in Schools

It is unquestionable that conduct problems such as non-compliance, calling out, disrupting other students, lying, cheating, or aggression create a strain on the learning
environment and affect not only the individual’s capacity to learn but also impact the other students in the classroom. Many studies have demonstrated that problem behaviors are a major source of stress for teachers and may contribute to teacher burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). Students with behavioral problems are treated differently within different schools based on the system of supports used by individual school districts or states. Using a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) model, students with behavioral problems may be provided with additional supports if their behavior is impacting their learning or the learning environment. Tier one supports are universal supports that every student receives regardless of need such as a universal positive behavioral support system or school-wide or class-wide behavior management systems (e.g. token economies). One widely used approach to reduce problem behaviors in schools is School Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (SWPBS) (Sugai & Horner, 2006). SWPBS is a comprehensive, preventative system integrating data based decision-making and evidence based practices aimed at promoting positive behavior and managing responses to behavioral infractions. SWPBS’s foundation lies in applied behavior analysis and is directed by three primary principles: prevention, evidence based practices, and systems-level implementation (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Randomized controlled trials have shown positive impacts of SWPBS on discipline referrals, suspensions, behavioral problems, and school climate (Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2008; Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009; Horner et al., 2009; Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2012). Nonetheless, there remain students whose problem behaviors persist and require intensive and individualized intervention. The principles of SWPBS can guide the process of supporting these students with the use of data based decision making. However, it is of great importance that we continue to evaluate and develop effective individualized interventions to reach the students who do not respond to universal supports.
Students who require additional supports may receive a range of additional supports as decided by the student services team, such as a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) to determine the function of the behavior and a behavior improvement plan (BIP). A BIP is based on the results of the FBA and may include a range of interventions or supports such as small group skills training, rewarding appropriate behavior, or altering the environment to reduce the likelihood of the occurrence of the problem behavior. If the student’s behavior continues to be unresponsive to intervention, the student services or Individualized Education Program (IEP) team may decide to open a formal evaluation to determine if the student qualifies for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services.

Students with consistent and persistent behavior or emotional problems that affect educational performance and cannot be attributed solely to environment or another learning problem may qualify for ESE services or an alternative placement under the Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) category. This category may include individuals with ODD, CD, other conduct disorders, or subclinical levels of conduct problems that affect academic performance. Many students with an EBD label are moved to an alternative setting such as a classroom or unit specifically for EBD students. Unfortunately, outcomes for students who are identified as EBD are abysmal. Students labeled EBD show a consistent pattern of school disconnectedness, academic failure, poor social adjustment, and increased involvement with the criminal or juvenile justice system (Newman et al., 2011). However, it is important to note that many students with behavioral and conduct problems do not qualify for this category and thus, remain in general education classrooms with supports. Some of the students who remain in general education despite continual and pervasive conduct problems are there because of a social maladjustment clause. Social maladjustment is an exclusionary clause added to the EBD criteria,
meaning if a child’s behavior is attributed to social maladjustment without the presence of emotional disturbance, the student cannot qualify for ESE services. The social maladjustment criterion is extremely controversial due to the lack of consistent definition of social maladjustment. Definitions vary from persistent defiance of authority to willful refusal to meet standards of conduct. Many states have reworded or eliminated the exclusion clause prompting further controversy sparked by inconsistencies among states and eligibility requirements. Further, states vary in their opinion on whether students who are considered ‘socially maladjusted’ will benefit and therefore should receive ESE services.

Unfortunately, for many students who display chronic behavior problems in school, exclusionary discipline practices are used in lieu of intervention. Exclusionary discipline refers to practices that exclude the student from the learning environment (i.e. suspension and expulsion). Exclusionary discipline has been a hot topic in recent years, as the harm caused by excluding the student from the educational environment seems to greatly outweigh the degree to which behaviors are discouraged. Specifically, exclusionary discipline practices are associated with academic failure (MacMillan & Reschly, 1998; Rausch, Skiba, & Simmons, 2004; Safer, Reaton, & Parker, 1981), dropout (Costenbader & Markson, 1998; DeRidder, 1990), involvement in the juvenile justice system (Chobot & Garibaldi, 1982; The Civil Rights Project/Advancement Project, 2000), and illegal substance use (Schwartz & Wirtz, 1990). Although exclusionary discipline is associated with poor outcomes, it is widely used in many schools to handle challenging behaviors, indicating the need for more effective behavioral interventions.

**Oppositional Defiant Disorder**

Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) is a disorder within the scope of disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorders. In ODD, symptoms typically first appear in preschool years and may
serve as a precursor to CD (typically child-onset CD). To be diagnosed with ODD, an individual must display 4 of 8 symptoms across three categories: angry or irritable mood, argumentative and defiant, and vindictive. It is not uncommon for individuals to display the behavioral symptoms in isolation (defiance, argumentative and vindictiveness) and have an absence of the emotional/mood symptoms (angry or irritable mood). In these cases, there is a higher likelihood for the development of CD than for individuals who primarily display the angry and irritable mood symptoms. Moreover, symptoms of ODD are notably less severe than in CD and predominantly manifest as defiance and non-compliance rather than the violation of the rights of others (e.g. aggression). Because many of these symptoms appear in normal development (i.e. temper tantrums and non-compliance in toddlers; irritable and argumentative teenagers) it is critical to evaluate whether the behavior is age appropriate and causes distress or impairment in the individual. In contrast, none of the symptoms described in CD are standard in any stage of typical development. Additionally, ODD has a severity specifier that is determined based on the number of settings in which the symptoms are present (i.e., mild: one setting; moderate: two settings; severe: three or more settings). It is not uncommon for ODD symptoms to be contained within one setting (typically the home) as opposed to CD, which is frequently seen in multiple settings. The average prevalence rate of ODD is 3.3% but ranges from 1 to 11% (APA, 2013). In childhood, the rate of males to females with ODD is 1.4:1 but there is no discernable difference in gender across adolescent and adult populations (APA, 2013).

**Conduct Disorder**

Conduct disorder is a behavioral disorder that is expressed by a pattern of behavior that violates basic rights of others or societal norms and rules that causes significant impairment to the individual’s social, academic or occupational functioning. Individuals must display at least 3 of 15 criteria within one year and at least one criterion within the past 6 months (APA, 2013). These criteria are broken
down into four categories: Aggression to People and Animals, Destruction of Property, Deceitfulness or Theft, and Serious Violation of Rules (APA, 2013). In addition to CD being notably more severe, one of the primary differences between ODD and CD is the lack of emotional symptoms required for a diagnosis of CD. While both disorders include argumentative behavior, defiance of requests and non-compliance with rules, ODD additionally includes irritable or angry mood as a symptom category. The worldwide prevalence for CD is 3.2% (Canino, Polanczyk, Bauermeister, Rohde, & Frick, 2010).

Individuals with CD are a largely heterogeneous group in terms of causal and risk factors and outcomes. There are a number of risk factors that may contribute to the development, augment the severity, or worsen the prognosis of the disorder including: low IQ (particularly verbal IQ), parental rejection or neglect, harsh or inconsistent discipline, abuse, exposure to violence, instability and transience, peer rejection or association with a delinquent peer group, and family incarceration or psychopathology (APA, 2013). Further, individuals with CD frequently display biological differences compared to other individuals, including a slower resting heart rate, reduced fear response, and structural and functional differences in the brain, particularly in the emotion regulation area that controls fear and risk (APA, 2013).

There also is variability in outcomes of individuals with CD. CD can occur as early as preschool but onset is more typically seen between middle childhood and middle adolescence. Although adults can be diagnosed, symptoms are normally present in childhood or adolescence. Onset of conduct problems after the age of 16 is extremely rare. If the behaviors persist into adulthood after the child is 18, the individual may meet the criteria for antisocial personality disorder, in which case the CD label would be dropped. The trajectory and prognosis of a person with CD is extremely variable. Some individuals reach normal levels of social and occupational functioning. Others’ behaviors persist into adulthood signifying greater risks for substance use, criminal behavior, and a number of other
disorders. While some individuals begin with mild conduct problems and progress to more serious offenses, others display violence and aggression early.

Variations the development of the disorder as well as outcomes and individual responses to interventions make it difficult to intervene with this population. Determining the appropriate subtypes may help in designing interventions (Kimonis et al., 2014) and understanding the individual’s needs. The DSM-5 has three types of specifiers: Onset type, severity rating, and a limited prosocial emotions specifier.

**Onset Subtype.** Onset determination is the only specifier that is required when making a diagnosis. Childhood-onset is designated for individuals who show at least one symptom prior to age 10. If there are no symptoms prior to age 10, the clinician should specify the Conduct Disorder as adolescent-onset type. If there is not enough information to make this determination, the Conduct Disorder should be labeled unspecified onset. The distinction between childhood-onset and adolescent onset is essential because there are several principal differences in the prognoses of these individuals. Those with childhood-onset are more likely to have persistent conduct problem into adulthood, display aggressive behaviors and have disturbed peer relationships than those with adolescent-onset CD. Further, childhood-onset CD is more frequently comorbid with ADHD and other neurodevelopmental disorders than adolescent-onset CD.

**Severity rating.** Additionally, there is a severity rating of mild, moderate, or severe CD. To determine the severity of the CD, two criteria must be considered together. The first criterion is the number of conduct problems in excess to those required for a diagnosis (3 of 15 total). The more problems the individual displays in excess to the three required for diagnosis, the more severe the CD. The second criterion is the level of harm to others. The more harm that the individual’s actions cause to others, the more severe the CD. Mild CD indicates that the individual must have *both* few additional
problems and problems cause relatively little harm to others (e.g. lying, truancy). Severe Conduct Disorder is diagnosed when there is an excessive amount of problems or problems cause significant harm to others (e.g. extreme aggression, breaking and entering). The moderate severity rating is used for all individuals who fall in between mild and severe ratings as determined by the diagnosing clinician.

**Limited prosocial emotions.** The specifier that indicates the individual has Conduct Disorder ‘with limited prosocial emotions’ is used when the individual’s typical interpersonal and emotional functioning consistently meets two of four categorical descriptors over a 12-month period in multiple relationships and settings. The four categorical descriptors are: (1) lack of remorse or guilt, (2) callous lack of empathy, (3) unconcerned about performance, and (4) shallow or deficient affect. In research, these traits are typically referred to as callous unemotional (CU) traits and thus, limited prosocial emotions will be referred this way in this thesis. For individuals who meet this specifier, there are often a number of other characteristics such as thrill seeking behaviors, fearlessness, insensitivity to punishment, and they are more likely to engage in instrumental aggression for personal gain. These individuals are also more likely to be diagnosed with the childhood-onset specifier and a severity rating of severe.

**Callous Unemotional Traits**

Callous unemotional traits are often described as constructs encompassing three specific characteristics: lack of guilt or remorse, an absence of empathy, and a callous use of others for personal gain. This construct is most often used to describe psychopathy or Antisocial Personality Disorder in adults. However, the current literature now supports the importance of understanding these traits in children and adolescents throughout the developmental pathway of antisocial and aggressive behavior. Research suggests that the appearance of these traits in children and adolescents with antisocial or
conduct problems indicates a particularly severe and aggressive trajectory as compared to other youth with similar problems (Frick & White, 2008). This finding calls for a more thorough understanding of youth who present with these traits as they are at a higher risk to develop full Antisocial Personality Disorder as adults (APA, 2013). Discussed in the following section are the distinct cognitive, emotional, and personality characteristics of those who display CU traits. Additionally biological differences, risk factors, and outcomes for individuals with CU traits will be reviewed.

**Emotional characteristics.** Emotionally, those with CU traits have a lack of remorse and empathy and display callous use of others for personal gain. Specific to empathy, individuals with these traits have deficits in identifying or responding to fear or sadness in others (Frick, Ray, Thornton, & Kahn, 2014). Another study found that these deficits in empathy are stable over time (Dadds et al., 2009). Further, these individuals show low levels of fear, anxiety, and conscientiousness (Frick et al., 2014). The lack of these traits often lead to dangerous and thrill seeking behavior and seeking novel and exciting activities (Barry et al., 2000; Frick et al., 2003).

**Cognitive characteristics.** Cognitively, these individuals are predominantly insensitive to punishment and have been shown to have poor foresight in anticipating punishments following disobedience (Pardini et al., 2003). In addition to underestimating punishments when making a decision, these individuals are more likely to base their decisions on self interest and with little consideration for others (Sakai, Dalwani, Gelhorn, Mikulich-Gilbertson, & Crowley, 2012). Studies have shown that children with CU traits show normal results on theory of mind tasks (Frick et al., 2014), indicating that cognitively they are able to understand that others have different beliefs, desires, intentions, or perspectives than their own. Additionally, these children have been shown to be proficient in social problem solving (Waschbusch, Walsh, Andrade, King, & Carrey, 2007), indicating
that they understand social norms and are adaptive in social situations, yet they are nonetheless unable to emotionally empathize with others.

**Risk factors.** It is unknown what leads individuals to display CU traits, although there are a number of genetic and biological differences in these individuals as well as some identified risk factors. A review of the current literature conducted by Frick et al. in 2014 found that 42-68% of the variation in the level of CU traits among individuals can be accounted for by heritability (Frick et al., 2014). Further, there have been a number of studies that found shared genetic effects between conduct problems and CU traits (Bezdjian, Baker, & Tuvblad, 2011; Larsson, Andershed, & Lichtenstein, 2006; Taylor, Loney, Bobadilla, Iacono, & McGue, 2003; Viding, Jones, Paul, Moffitt, & Plomin, 2008; Waldman et al., 2011). Additionally, there are studies that have found biological differences between those with conduct problems and those with conduct problems and CU traits. For instance, individuals with CU traits frequently show lower heart rate change (De Wied, Van Boxtel, Matthys, & Meeus, 2012), lower cortisol reactivity (Stadler et al., 2011), and lower right amygdala activity (Jones et al., 2009) when presented with emotional or stressful stimuli. The review conducted by Frick et al. (2014) concluded that these biological markers were overall independent from the conduct problems and represent a unique subset of individuals. Finally, there are a number of parental risk factors within the literature, although the evidence is inconsistent. Some studies suggest that these traits may be associated with disordered attachment styles and behaviors such as making less eye contact with caregivers and low levels of physical and verbal affection (Dadds et al., 2012; Fite, Greening, & Stoppelbein, 2008; Pasalich, Dadds, Hawes, & Brennan, 2012). Overall, the literature suggests having a child with CU traits is more predictive of gradual changes in parenting styles and techniques than parenting is of the development of CU traits. Overall, this supports the idea that CU traits may be more influenced by biology and genetic differences than by environmental variances.
Treatment and outcomes. The most overwhelming finding in the literature concerning treatment of individuals with CU traits is the insensitivity to punitive interventions. In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (2014), individuals with CD and ‘limited prosocial emotions,’ or CU traits, are described as being insensitive to punishments. This is consistent with an abundance of research indicating that children with CU traits and conduct problems in general, show little to no response to punitive interventions (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Frick, 2001; Pardini et al., 2003). There are a number of potential reasons for this insensitivity to punishment including the fact that it has been found that their brains may be less reactive to punitive stimuli (White et al., 2013) and that cognitively these individuals have a more difficult time predicting consequences and punishments prior to misbehavior (Pardini et al., 2003). In addition to being found ineffective, it has also been suggested that punitive strategies may have an antagonistic effect as these individuals often respond to punishment with escalating aggression and anger (Dadds & Salmon, 2003). Though insensitivity to punishment has been well established and it is generally regarded that individuals with CU traits respond much better to reinforcing and reward-centered interventions, there is a lack of effective interventions for treating conduct problems in individuals with CU traits. In a review of the current literature of CU traits, Frick et al. (2014) found that 90% of the studies reviewed reported that higher CU traits are related to poorer outcomes to treatment. More specifically, the literature shows that individuals in the juvenile justice system with high CU traits were less likely to participate in treatment, showed lower quality of participation, show poorer institutional adjustment, and were more likely to reoffend than those with low levels of CU traits (Falkenbach, Poythress, & Heide, 2003; Gretton, McBride, Hare, O'Shaughnessy, & Kumka, 2001; O’Neill, Lidz, & Heilbrun, 2003; Spain, Douglas, Poythress, & Epstein, 2004). In samples of children between the ages of
seven and eleven, children with higher levels of CU traits showed longer lengths of stays in inpatient psychiatric settings and experienced more physically restrictive interventions (e.g. seclusion and physical restraints) (Stellwagen & Kerig, 2010a, 2010b). Additionally, a study controlling for conduct problems, found that individuals with CU traits consistently showed poorer staff ratings of improvement and showed more negative behaviors during intervention indicating that poor responses to intervention are not solely based upon the severity of conduct problems associated with CU traits (Haas et al., 2011). Despite the seemingly abysmal prospect of intervention for individuals with CU traits and conduct problems, some studies have shown that intensive, individualized, and comprehensive intervention can reduce conduct problems in these individuals. A comprehensive intervention involving ADHD medication, cognitive behavioral treatment, school consultation, parent training, peer relationship and social skills training, and crisis management showed similar rates of improvement between individuals with conduct problems with and without CU traits (Kolko & Pardini, 2010). In another study, Waschbusch et al. (2007) found that children with CU traits responded equally as well to the first part of a parent training program teaching reinforcement strategies but did not respond to the second part of the program, which taught punitive strategies of behavior management. Overall, comprehensive, intensive and individualized interventions that include multiple components (e.g. therapies, medication, parent trainings, school intervention) are the most effective for reducing conduct problems in this difficult to reach population, though these interventions are still markedly less effective than they are in children without CU traits.

It is important to note that the aforementioned studies, and indeed much of the research done regarding treatment outcomes in individuals with CU traits, are focused on targeting the reduction of antisocial and conduct problems. There has been very little research done
surrounding interventions targeting the reduction of CU traits, although a few studies have conducted additional analyses on the level of CU traits pre and post treatment. Three studies evaluating various parenting interventions in children with conduct problems found a reduction in the level of CU traits from pre-treatment to post-treatment and additionally, from pre-treatment to 6-month follow up (Hawes & Dadds, 2007), a 12-month follow up (Somech & Elizur, 2012) and a 20-month follow up (McDonald, Dodson, Rosenfield, & Jouriles, 2011). A final study looking at the responsiveness of CU traits in an intensive, comprehensive treatment program in adolescents found greater decreases in adolescents who received a more intensive intervention, but the decrease was found in parent reported CU traits only (Butler, Baruch, Hickey, & Fonagy, 2011). Though these studies are promising, there is substantial work required regarding the treatment of CU traits themselves.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

Having reviewed the literature on conduct problems, various conduct disorders, and CU traits, the remainder of the chapter will describe the theoretical frameworks that guide the study. Two frameworks— attribution theory and teacher self-efficacy— will be described, and the literature examining how these theories are related to teacher perceptions and practices in managing students with conduct problems will be reviewed.

**Attribution theory.** Attribution theory has been repeatedly applied in educational research regarding teacher and student behavior. Attribution theory describes a phenomenon first proposed by Heider (1958) in which individuals try to understand the behavior of others by piecing together information until they reach an explanation. Miller (1995) suggested that individuals working with students with challenging behaviors inevitably make predictions of the cause of the problem behavior. It should be noted that it might be beneficial for clinicians to
conduct attribution analysis to determine the cause of behaviors in order to tailor interventions to meet the needs of the client. However, attribution theory refers to a “naïve scientist” affect (Heider, 1958) in which the observer improperly or non-systematically infers causation of the behavior. Though accurate causal analysis may lead to more informed intervention (Murray & Thomson, 2009), Plous and Zimbardo (1986) found low reliability in causal explanations among clinicians, indicating that causal perceptions are highly variable among observers and thus may fail to provide accurate and valid information to inform intervention.

How a person perceives the behavior of others governs how they will respond to the behavior (Weiner, 2005). Accordingly, how teachers perceive misbehavior and to what they attribute the cause of misbehavior or conduct problems impacts how teachers react and address these problems in the classroom. A study conducted by Andreou and Rapti (2010) in Greece found that teachers’ attributions of the cause of challenging behavior were significantly related to practices employed by teachers, which is consistent with previous literature establishing links between causal attributions and discipline practices (Bibour-Nakou, Kiosseoglou, & Stogiannidou, 2000; Bibour-Nakou, Stogianniou, & Kiosseoglou, 1999; Mavropoulou & Padeliadu, 2002; Poulou & Norwich, 2000). With respect to the current study, the importance of using reward or reinforcement-based interventions as opposed to punitive interventions is of key interest given the overwhelming ineffectiveness of punitive interventions in students with conduct problems and callous unemotional traits.

Weiner (2005) conceptualized attribution theory into three dimensions: locus, stability, and controllability. The locus of an attribution can be either internal (within-child factors such as personality or disorder) or external (environmental factors such as parenting or peer influence). The controllability of the attribution indicates the amount of control that the student has over the
behavior. Finally, the stability of attributions refers to the duration and likelihood that the behavior is to continue or the expectation of the behavior to continue or improve.

**Locus.** There has been ample research surrounding teachers’ beliefs of the causes of problem behaviors in the classroom. Overall, the literature is generally consistent in finding that teachers are most likely to attribute student misbehavior to internal pupil factors (e.g. personality, disorder) and external family or home factors (e.g. parenting, home circumstances) rather than school factors or teacher factors (Bibour-Nakou, Kiosseoglou, & Stogiannidou, 2000; Brophy & Rohrkemper, 1981; Cothran, Kulinna, & Garrahy, 2009; Guttmann, 1982; Johansen, Little, & Akin-Little, 2011; Miller, 1995; Wilson & Silverman, 1991). Some studies have found results that indicate that teachers attribute problems to either pupil or family factors most frequently, but these results are inconsistent and vary across samples and methods. There have been overwhelming results indicating that teachers rarely consider teacher or school factors as the cause of conduct problems or problem behaviors but some note that teachers understand the importance of their role and responsibility in managing behavior (Poulou & Norwich, 2000). Thus, the typical locus of teacher attributions is external to the teacher but varies between internal or external to the child. The current literature regarding types of practices used based on the perceived locus of the cause of the behavior is limited and somewhat mixed. In one study from Greece in 2010, negative practices (threats and punishments) were predicted by both internal pupil attributions and school-related attributions, respectively (Andreou & Rapti, 2010). Conversely, another study found that when teachers attributed misbehaviors to teacher or school factors, they were less likely to use punitive actions and more likely to use neutral practices (Bibour-Nakou et al., 2000). Similarly, Poulou & Norwich (2000) also found that teacher or school related attributions were more likely to lead to positive or reinforcing practices.
**Controllability.** Vernberg and Medway (1981) categorized internal child characteristics into controllable and uncontrollable factors. Controllable factors include things that the child can presumably control such as lack of effort or attention, and behaviors may also be seen as intentional. Uncontrollable factors are those that the child has no control over such as developmental delays or ability level, meaning the student is not capable of accurate or appropriate performance. However, it is difficult to generalize teachers’ perceptions of controllability based on the external attribution they cite (e.g. family, environment, peer influence). For instance, while some studies find that teachers believe that family causal factors are mostly out of the child’s control (Andreou & Rapti, 2010; Fontaine, 2012; Vernberg & Medway, 1981), other studies have found that despite a family causal factor, the behavior may still be controllable by the child (Johansen et al., 2011). There is not an overwhelming consensus in the literature on whether teachers generally believe behaviors to be controllable or uncontrollable by students given that the most common attributions (child and family factors) can be classified as either controllable or uncontrollable. The literature surrounding types of practices employed by teachers based on the controllability or perceived intentionality of the behavior is more consistent. Several studies have found that teachers are more likely to respond punitively when they perceive the cause of the behavior to be controllable by the student such as a lack of effort or intentional misbehavior (Brophy & Rohrkemper, 1981; Brophy & McCaslin, 1992). A study in Greece by Andreou and Rapti (2010) concluded that teachers are more willing to help and show sympathy towards students who may be viewed as victims of their environment (e.g. family factors) and do not have control over their behavior. Consequently, students who are perceived to have more control over their behavior (e.g. internal pupil factors) are more likely to be met with punitive practices.
**Stability.** Teachers’ beliefs regarding the likelihood that the behavior is to continue or improve (i.e., teachers’ expectancy of the trajectory of the behavior) are closely associated to expectation effects. Since the classic study titled Pygmalion in the Classroom (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) found evidence of effects of teacher expectation on student achievement, expectation effects have been of great interest. The Pygmalion effect (also referred to as the Rosenthal effect or the self-fulfilling prophecy) was coined through the aforementioned study to describe the phenomenon that higher expectations lead to an increase in performance. Though the methods of Rosenthal and Jacobson came under much scrutiny, a line of research was nonetheless established regarding expectations and student success. An important aspect of these expectation effects is the implication that teachers treat students differently based on their expectations of success. While there has been insufficient research regarding generalized teacher perceptions on the stability of specific problem behaviors or the stability of behaviors based on specific attributions, there has been ample research considering how expectations of students impact teachers’ practices in the classroom. Many studies have found results in support of this and discovered that students with high expectations from their teachers are allowed more wait time when answering questions (Allington, 1980), are more likely to be prompted to give an improved response (Brophy & Good, 1970), are called on more often to respond (Rubovits & Maehr, 1971), and receive less feedback (Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper, 1979). Additionally, students with lower expectations are rewarded more often for inappropriate behaviors or incorrect responses (Kleinfeld, 1975; Weinstein, 1976), receive less attention, have less interactions with their teachers (Adams & Cohen, 1974; Kester & Letchworth, 1972; Rist, 1970), are seated farther away from the teacher (Rist, 1970), and receive less indicators of support from their teachers such as smiling or eye contact (Chaikin, Sigler, & Derlega, 1974). Finally, most
relevant to the current study, students with lower expectations not only receive less
reinforcement or praise for successes in the classroom (Cooper & Baron, 1977; Fireston &
Brody, 1975; Good et al., 1980, 1973; Rejeski et al., 1979) but also receive more criticisms for
failures (Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper & Baron, 1977; Good et al., 1980, 1973). Implications
of these findings are both important and relevant to the current study because if teachers offer
less praise and more criticism to students with low expectations, this may impact their choice of
intervention strategy for disciplinary or behavioral intervention. To date, there has not been
research specifically on disciplinary strategies or practices specifically used for behavior
management based on level of expectations.

Teacher self-efficacy. A teacher’s self-efficacy is “the extent to which the teacher
believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (McLuaglin, Bass, Pauly, &
Zellman, 1997). Self-efficacy was described by Bandura as a part of his social cognitive theory
(Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy of teachers has been of great interest since a study by the Rand
Corporation (Armor et al., 1976) linked teacher self-efficacy to student achievement. Since then,
the construct of teacher self-efficacy has undergone much development from a single construct
to a multidimensional construct, encompassing efficacy in multiple facets of teaching. Different
researchers measure teacher self-efficacy differently and, consequently, there is no universal
construct of teacher self-efficacy. For the purposes of this study, self-efficacy will be referred to
simply as the degree to which teachers feel confident in their own ability as teachers to affect the
performance of student. Specifically, self-efficacy is the degree of certainty that teachers have
that their own actions or practices can reduce or manage classroom disruptions and influence the
extent to which their students follow the rules of the classroom. A study conducted by
Holzberger, Phillip, & Kunter (2013) found evidence contradictory to their predictive hypothesis
and that classroom management ratings may predict self-efficacy rather than vice versa. The authors emphasize the importance of examining teachers’ self-efficacy as both a predictor and consequence within the educational process. Studies have consistently found that teachers generally have poor self-efficacy and do not feel prepared to manage externalizing and internalizing mental health needs in their students (Kidger, Gunnell, Biddle, Campbell, & Donovan, 2009; Mazzer & Rickwood, 2013; Rothi, Leavey, & Best, 2008; Walter, Gouze, & Lim, 2006). Further, several studies have shown that only a small number of teachers report feeling confident in their ability to manage students with disruptive behaviors (Coggshall, Bivona, & Reschly, 2012). It is important to understand the degree of confidence teachers have in addressing problem behaviors, as there is evidence that self-efficacy is associated with classroom practices.

**Teacher self-efficacy and classroom practices.** Teachers’ self-efficacy has been well reviewed in the literature and has been found to greatly impact teachers’ behavior in a number of ways. The degree that teachers believe they can influence a student’s performance affects their enthusiasm and persistence when working with students with difficult or challenging behaviors (Ashton et al., 1982). Specifically, teachers’ perceptions of their own efficacy has been found to be related classroom management strategies (Woolfolk et al., 1990), the use of more innovative practices in the classroom (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992), and success of various programs or interventions implemented in the classroom (Guskey, 1987). Further, teachers with low self-efficacy (who are not confident in their ability to impact the performance of their students) report more student-teacher conflict, provide less emotional support to students (Hamre et al., 2007), and are more likely to refer students for a special education evaluation (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Soodak, 2003). Thus, in understanding teachers’ perceptions of their efficacy in working with
challenging students, we may begin to understand how teachers select management strategies, and how they interact with their students.

A study by Andreou & Rapti (2010) found that when teachers attributed problems to pupil factors and felt high efficacy in classroom management, they were more likely to use rewards and positive incentives. However, when pupil factors were predicted without high efficacy, threats were far more likely to be used indicating that efficacy is a significant moderator between causal attributions and classroom practices (Andreou & Rapti, 2010). Self-efficacy may be impacted by the teacher’s causal attribution of the problem behavior. Additionally, one’s self-efficacy or perception of the efficacy of teaching in general may impact the perceived the stability of the problem behavior. Indeed, the relationships between attributions of behaviors, self-efficacy, expectation of success, and classroom practices are complex. The current study will explore causal attributions of conduct problems and teachers’ self-efficacy in their ability to improve their behavior. This is an important first step in determining how these factors may impact practices used by teachers in the classroom.

Conclusion

In summary, conduct problems are a serious problem in both the education system and the community as a whole. While the field has made strides in developing effective interventions to manage behavior such as positive behavioral supports and various behavioral contingency systems frequently used in the classroom, there is little evidence to support effective behavioral interventions for the students who exhibit the most severe forms of conduct problems. Further, the small percentage of students who display callous unemotional traits have yet to be examined within an educational context. This study aims to fill the gap of examining these students in schools and which practices are currently being used to manage these students’ behaviors.
Because students with callous unemotional traits are typically the students exhibiting the most extreme and aggressive forms of conduct problems, there is a need to discover effective ways to manage their behavior to maintain a safe and effective learning environment for all students. This study laid the groundwork for future research to look more into examining specific practices being used currently and to research effective interventions for this population. However, it is critical that we first evaluate teacher perceptions of these students to understand how they are currently being perceived. As mentioned above, teacher perceptions include the perceptions surrounding the cause of the behavior as well as their beliefs in their own ability to improve the behavior. Additionally, their perceptions can impact not only current practices being used in the classroom but also their willingness to implement new interventions (Fuchs et al., 1992). Thus, conclusions of this study may additionally guide how to most effectively work with teachers and advise effective practices.
Chapter III: Method

This chapter consists of a description of the qualitative research design, participants in the study, the development of the protocol and vignettes, procedures for data collection, and the proposed analysis strategy. A review of the literature indicated that there has been no research to date of teacher perceptions of students who display challenging behaviors and CU traits or social acceptance of interventions with these students. Due to the lack of research in this area, this exploratory study used a qualitative interview research method to gather information on teacher perceptions of students with CU traits and perceived effective interventions for this population.

Participants

The sample was a convenience sample of teachers in central Florida. Preschool and elementary school teachers were chosen because these teachers typically have a more active role in behavior management within the classroom than in middle school and high schools where students have more autonomy and independence. Preschool and elementary school teachers also implement behavioral interventions throughout an entire day (because students do not move between as many classrooms as in secondary settings), so elementary school teachers’ perceptions of these students as well as the feasibility of interventions with these students are of increased importance in comparison to those of secondary teachers. Further, primary teachers are favorably situated as interventionists given that early intervention is imperative to positive future outcomes (Forness et al., 2000). It has been hypothesized that antisocial traits, despite being fairly stable overtime, may be more malleable in childhood given the instability of personality traits in children (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000). This researcher recruited 12 participants based
on the findings of an experiment by Guest, Bunce, & Johnson (2006) that found saturation is typically reached within the first twelve interviews. Additionally, a small sample aided in gaining a more detailed understanding of teacher perceptions of students with challenging behaviors and CU traits. Criteria for participants require that they must be an elementary (K-5) classroom teacher in a general education setting. Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teachers who either teach in a self-contained classroom or provide push-in or pullout services to a variety of students were excluded from participating to control for additional training required for specialized teachers.

**Participant Recruitment.** To recruit participants, the primary researcher sent recruitment emails to her colleagues (e.g. school psychologists, graduate students, professors) to send out to teachers at their schools. Initial teachers who agreed to participate were asked to pass on the researcher’s information about the study (See appendix G) to any other teachers who fit the inclusion criteria for this study and asked to contact the researcher if interested. Possible participant information was never passed on to the researcher. The researcher's information (email, phone number) was passed on through a network of teachers. Interested participants contacted the researcher for more information. The researcher was thus never able to contact any participants unless that participant had personally reached out to the researcher first. Participants who contacted the researcher were sent basic information and the consent form to review before scheduling an interview. After reviewing the materials, if the participant was still willing to participate, an interview was then scheduled at a time and place convenient for the participant. Finally, an incentive of a $10 gift certificate to target was offered to participants.

The 12 participants in the sample were all female and 75% of the participants were white. 66% of participants held a Bachelor’s degree, while the remaining 33% held a Master’s degree.
Years of experience and age of participants was highly variable. A full breakdown of participant demographics can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
<th>Race/ Ethnicity</th>
<th>Current Grade</th>
<th>Highest Degree Held</th>
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</table>

**Measures**

The interview protocol (Appendix C) and vignettes (Appendix E) used were developed based on a review of the literature on youth with challenging behaviors with and without CU traits. Before the interview began, the participant was asked to fill out a short questionnaire indicating their personal demographics including age, race, and gender (see Appendix B). These questions were filled out on paper, as these may be more sensitive to discuss and participants were given the option to not specify.

Because CU traits occur in less than 1% of the population (Viding, 2012) and many of these students are unidentified until they are much older despite the fact that these traits to have been found in students as young as preschool (e.g. Kimonis et al., 2006), it is not reasonable to attempt to recruit teachers who currently have student with CU traits or even past experience with students with CU traits. Instead, vignettes were chosen because they can be helpful when
exploring topics that are difficult to address (Jeffries & Maeder, 2005). Further, vignettes do not require that participants have an abundance of knowledge pertaining to the subject (Jeffries & Maeder, 2005). This is relevant because while many teachers are familiar with student behavior and conduct problems, they may be unfamiliar with the term or construct of CU traits. Thus, using vignettes to describe child behavior and affect was thought to be more effective than explicitly asking the teacher about “callous unemotional characteristics in students”. Additionally, because there are so many variables and many students with CU traits also have conduct problems, the vignettes aided in understanding how teachers’ perceptions change only as a result of the CU traits. Thus, in order to evaluate teacher perceptions of this small portion of the population, vignettes were developed to represent two comparable students with similar conduct problems but describing one with CU traits and one without.

Vignettes (Appendix E) were designed using the DSM-5 criteria for conduct disorder and the common observable characteristics and behaviors of those who display callous unemotional traits. The vignettes are intended to establish differences in teacher perceptions and practices between these two students based solely on the appearance of callous unemotional traits rather than based on level, frequency, or pervasiveness of problematic behaviors (which is similar in both students) or on the basis of race, gender, socio-economic status, or disability status (which is not mentioned). To illustrate similar students, the researcher chose to describe the students with initials to eliminate gender perceptions (D.W. & L.P.) and with similar disruptive behavior. Further, each student was described as presenting aggressive behaviors since the beginning of the year to illustrate similar pervasiveness. Two aggressive events were described for each student. The primary difference between these students is in their reaction to their violence towards others, their demeanor towards the individual they harmed, and their level of remorse following
the act of violence. Further, the student with CU traits was described as (a) having more deficits in prosocial behaviors, (a) a leader of others with deviant behaviors, (c) being more manipulative and (d) having instrumental aggressive behaviors as opposed to reactive aggressive behaviors compared to the student without CU traits. Questions following the vignettes were developed based on the research questions pertaining to the teacher’s perceptions of causality of the problem behaviors, effective interventions for the student, and general perceptions of the trajectories of the student.

Following each vignette, two basic interventions types (see appendix F) were presented to the teacher, and the teacher was asked to select the intervention that he or she thinks would be most effective for the student and which intervention they would most likely choose for the student in their classroom. One intervention was reinforcing appropriate replacement behaviors while the other is providing punitive consequences for inappropriate behaviors. The purpose of this is to solely determine whether teachers believe these students would respond better to punitive interventions or reinforcing interventions and which one they are more likely to employ with these students. To eliminate bias of intervention types based on time or resources, neither described a specific intervention or specific guidelines, practices, tools, or methods of the intervention. Half of the participants received the reinforcing intervention first and vice versa to eliminate order effects.

Following the development and revisions of the vignettes and interview protocol, the interviews were pre-tested and piloted on a small sample of 2 general education elementary school teachers. This enabled the researcher to obtain feedback about the depth, quality and clarity of the interview questions and protocol to aid in any additional necessary revisions of the protocol. Further, these pilot sessions allowed the interviewer to obtain feedback regarding
interviewing technique and skills. For example, pilot participants were asked several follow up questions regarding the wording of the questions, the clarity of the vignettes, and any barriers to answering the questions (see appendix D).

**Procedures**

**Ethical considerations.** To begin, the researcher obtained approval from the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure all methods comply with the Human Research protection Program (HRPP). Several ethical considerations were made regarding this study as to ensure reliable data are collected and to protect the identities and rights of the participants. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms, chosen by the participants, throughout the recordings, transcripts and notes. Additionally, the participants signed informed consent about the study and was notified that the researcher is not affiliated with the district, state, or any department of education associated with the participant’s school. Participants were informed that the responses they provided would be kept confidently unless they provided information indicating a potential harm to self or others. If anyone else was mentioned in the interviews (co-workers, students, parents) those names were de-identified and kept confidential as well. All hardcopy data (informed consent, notes, demographics forms) was kept in a locked cabinet on USF campus and all electronic data was stored on a password-protected computer. Participants were assured that their practices regarding students would not be shared with any superiors including school assistant principals, principals, or any members of the district and that no information given by the participants would impact evaluations of job performance. This precaution was taken as to not influence any responses the participants may give in relation to their practices.
**Data collection.** To establish a comfortable interviewing environment, the interviewee chose the time and location (or the option of the phone interview) of the interview. The participant was asked to sign informed consent (Appendix A) to be interviewed and for audio to be recorded for transcription. Personal demographic information that may be more sensitive (i.e. race, age, and gender) was filled out along with the consent form on a short questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix B. During each interview, the researcher took field notes based on personal reactions and any qualitative notes that may not have been captured in an audio recording (e.g. facial expressions, uncomfortable movements, distractions such as a phone or persons entering the room). The duration of the interviews lasted between 25-35 minutes.

The interview opened with several introductory questions regarding the participants’ professional demographics. This was used both to establish rapport with the participant and to aid in the understanding the demographics and details of the sample. Half of the participants were presented the callous unemotional case first, and half were presented the callous unemotional case second to eliminate the possibility of an order bias. Each teacher was asked to read one of the vignettes and was then asked a series of questions about his or her thoughts regarding the student, practices the teacher thinks would be appropriate or effective for the student, what is causing the problem behaviors, and trajectories of the student illustrated in the vignette. Subsequently, the teachers were presented two basic interventions, one that was reinforcing or rewarding in nature (rewarding the student for positive behavior) and one punitive in nature (punishing the student for undesirable behavior), (see Appendix F). The teacher was then asked which intervention would be more effective for the student and to share any comments. The teacher was then asked to read the second vignette and asked the same questions and to choose which of the interventions would be most appropriate for the second student.
Following the interview, the teacher was thanked for their participation and was presented or sent their $10 gift card.

**Data Analysis**

Each of the interviews was transcribed and read multiple times to produce collective themes across participant interviews. Themes were derived question by question as well as holistically throughout the whole interview to encompass both the specific themes pertaining to the research questions as well as general thoughts and opinions expressed throughout the interview. After reading the entire dataset multiple times, the emergent themes were used to create a codebook (see Appendix H). The researcher separated the data into analyzable parts called “frames of analyses”. Each frame of analysis was coded with one or more codes from the established codebook created by the researcher. Further, each code was preceded with a code marking whether the participant was referring to the student with CU traits or the student without CU traits. This was to determine the frequency in which themes were expressed comparatively between the students with and without the presence of callous unemotional traits. All code counts were combined to determine frequency of each theme expressed across participant and frequency expressed in reference to each vignette.

Additionally, participant responses were recorded for the intervention selection chosen for each vignette. Finally, in order to answer each sub research question (how perceptions and attitudes change due to the presence of callous unemotional traits), four comparison codes were recorded (e.g. which student they felt more confident in working with) in order to determine how perceptions changed based on the presence of callous unemotional traits. For the purpose of reliability and consistency, four graduate students read the transcripts to determine the reliability
of the themes. Any disagreements between coders were discussed and coders came to an agreement resulting in 100% agreement in thematic and comparison codes.
Chapter IV: Results

This chapter presents the results of the 12 interviews conducted with teachers. The primary researcher used three types of codes: collective themes, comparison codes, and categorized answers in order to answer each research question. See Table 2 for a list of themes and types of codes that were used to answer each research question. Themes were generated based on frequently expressed ideas across transcripts. Interpretation of themes to how they answer each research question is presented in this chapter. The codebook, which includes each theme separated by domain and includes descriptions of each theme/subtheme, can be found in Appendix H.

Table 2: Themes and Codes Used to Answer Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Themes and Codes Used to Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| RQ 1: Predicted cause of the behavior | Theme 1: Home (3 subthemes)  
Theme 2: Within Child (2 subthemes)  
Theme 3: Environment (2 subthemes) |
| RQ 2: Teacher efficacy in working with students | Theme 4: Additional Supports (4 subthemes)  
Theme 5: Unconditional Persistence  
Comparison Code: Which student are you more confident in working with? |
| RQ 3: Most appropriate setting     | Theme 6: Least Restrictive Environment  
Categorical Code: Which setting does this student belong in? (3 categories) |
| RQ 4: Perceptions of reinforcement & punitive practices | Theme 7: Use of Behavioral Strategies (5 subthemes)  
Theme 8: Additional Strategies (3 subthemes)  
Intervention Selection: Which intervention do you believe would be most effective for this student? (reinforcement option and punitive option) |
Table 2 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ 5: Expectation of students' success</th>
<th>Theme 9: Expectations of Continuous Struggle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison Code: Which student do you believe has a greater change of being successful?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Described below are the results for each research question. Under each research question, the thematic domain is described followed by descriptions of each theme and subtheme. Tables are used to show the frequency counts for overall themes, individual subthemes and frequency counts separated by vignette to which the participant was referring. Following the descriptions of each theme or subtheme are examples of a coded frame of analysis. This does not include every frame of analysis that was coded with the specific codes but rather a number of codes meant to illustrate the meaning of the codes in the participants’ own words to maintain authenticity of the data. In parentheses following each verbatim example is the specific code matching to the frame of analysis (e.g. [CU1a]), identifying whether the participant was referring to the student with CU traits (denoted with a CU) or the student without CU traits (denoted with an NCU).

**Research Question 1: What do teachers hypothesize to be the cause of conduct problems among children?**

Participants identified a wide range of causes that they believed might have contributed to the conduct problems of each student. Participants offered causal attributions when initially asked about first impressions of each student about 25% of the time. However, participants were also directly asked what they believed to be the reason each student displayed problem behavior. All causal attributions were coded including both those offered spontaneously as well as those reported after explicit questions about causation. These perceived causes generated three themes: (1) Home Factors, (2) Within Child Factors and (3) Environmental Factors. Within these three
themes, subthemes were developed to describe more specific attributions. On the thematic level, Within Child Factors were mentioned the most followed by Home Factors and Environment.

Subthematic trends are described within the section of each theme.

Table 3: Domain I Theme & Subtheme Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>CU Frequency</th>
<th>NCU Frequency</th>
<th>Participants Discussing Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: Home Factors</td>
<td>Subtheme 1a: Home Practices</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Amanda, Pamela, Kimberly, Sarah, Marie Elise, Pamela, Kimberly, Julie, Noel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 1b: Maltreatment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Elise, Pamela, Kimberly, Julie, Noel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 1c: Other Home Factors</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kayla, Sheryl, Elise, Pamela, Kimberly, Violet, Julie, Noel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2: Within Child Factors</td>
<td>Subtheme 2a: Disorder or Emotional Disturbance</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kayla, Amanda, Sheryl, Elise, Julie, Sarah, Noel, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 2b: Social Skills Deficit</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kayla, Sheryl, Elise, Pamela, Julie, Sarah, Noel, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3: Environmental Factors</td>
<td>Subtheme 3a: Instructional Mismatch</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kayla, Sheryl, Pamela, Noel, Denise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 3b: Other Environmental Factors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sheryl, Elise, Julie, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 1: Home Factors. Home factors were often the first thing to be discussed when talking about the causes of conduct problems. Of the 12 participants, 11 attributed the cause of the conduct problem to at least one home factor for at least one of the students. Home factors included any causal attribution that related to the student’s home life, parents or parenting practices, or another unspecified ‘personal life’ factor. These home factors fell into three subthemes described below. The most common subtheme mentioned was Other Home Practices (1c). Further, each subtheme was mentioned 1-2 more times in reference to the student with CU traits than the student without CU traits. On the whole, Home Factors were mentioned 13 times in reference to the student with CU traits in comparison to 8 times in reference to the student without CU traits.

Subtheme 1a: Home Practices. The first subtheme is ‘Home Practices’, which includes various practices that participants guess occurred in the home that may contribute to the students’ conduct problems. This includes mentions of the student observing similar conduct problems at home by either parents or siblings resulting in the student modeling the behavior at school. Amanda described modeling specifically by one of the parents:

*I think my first thought is that this kid could see this happening at home. And that he thinks that it's normal and this is because he's seeing maybe his dad doing the same thing and that's what he thinks it should be. So he should just do that to other people.* [CU1a]

On the other hand, Pamela described modeling by a sibling in the home:

*It could be that they're modeling what they see at home and for instance they could have a sibling who has like is on the spectrum and that's how they like especially if they have an older sibling that’s like on the spectrum and those are*
some of their ticks that they might picking up on some of those too. [NCU1a]

Additionally, parenting practices such as a lack of consequences, structure, or behavior management at home were mentioned by Sarah:

*The parents might be the same way as not showing emotion or there [are] no consequences at home. So when there [are] consequences, at school, he acts up.* [CU1a]

**Subtheme 1b: Maltreatment.** This subtheme encompasses attributions including abuse, neglect, or trauma experienced outside of school. This code includes explicit mentions of abuse or trauma but also includes if a participant mentioned that the student has a lack of attention, love, or nutrition at home. A total of 5 participants mentioned casual attributions that corresponded to this code. Some participants explicitly mentioned trauma or abuse such as Elise:

...*some sort of trauma that's causing them to have outbursts.* [CU1b]

Other participants discussed specific neglectful practices such as a lack of attention similar to Kimberly:

*Um, maybe not getting enough love and attention at home...* [NCU1b]

Finally, two participants (Kimberly and Noel) hypothesized that the student was nutritionally neglected such as Noel who inquired:

*Um, what is this child's diet? Because when we talk hyperactive, but then having a flat demeanor, um, I don't know if that's like an emotional disturbance they're going on or if that's more related to like blood sugar or are they not eating the night before and then they come to school and have junk food in the cafeteria.* [NCU1b]
**Subtheme 1c: Other Home Factors.** This subtheme encompassed all other home factors that were not captured in Home Practices or Maltreatment. Eight of the twelve participants mentioned a causal attribution that fell within this subtheme. This includes vague attributions of home factors such as Kayla:

> *My initial thought is just kind of wondering what his home life is like and I'm wondering how involved his parents are. That's the first thing I would probably try to find out about him is if his parents are supportive; another thought is maybe there's something in his personal life.* [CU1c]

This subtheme also represents specific hypotheses about home situational home factors such as Violet who hypothesized a specific situation of family discord:

> *Um, maybe something happened at home where the child's parents probably aren't together. Um, maybe split apart from his, um, siblings or family members. Definitely something actually happening at home to where he's coming to school, displaying this type of behavior.* [CU1c]

**Theme 2: Within Child Factors.** Within child factors were the most common factor mentioned by participants in total. 10 of 12 participants attributed the cause of the conduct problem to at least one within child factor, for at least one of the students. Within child factors include mentions of both stable and malleable factors related to the child. These causal attributions fell within two separate subthemes: (1) Disorder, Emotional Disturbance, or Stable Personality Trait and (2) Social Skills Deficit. The first subtheme, which implies a more stable and characteristic factor was more likely to be described in the student with CU traits while the other subtheme which referred to a social skills deficit was more likely to be mentioned in reference to the student without CU traits.
**Subtheme 2a: Disorder or Stable Emotional Disturbance.** The first subtheme refers to any type of medical or behavioral disorder (e.g. ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder), unspecified disorder or disability, or stable emotional disturbance. While some of the participants mentioned an unspecified disability or disorder as the potential cause, several of the participants mentioned specific disorders (i.e. ODD, ADHD) similar to Kayla:

> Possibly with the disruption and the calling out and not staying in the area that they belong in and the constant talking they’re - that they have a little... not much control over themselves. So again that could be another possible sign of ADHD something I'd want to talk to the parents about. [NCU2a]

Participants also mentioned “emotional problems” or an “emotional disturbance” as the cause of the problem behavior. It is important to note that a “stable” emotional disturbance refers to when the student refers to an emotional problem as a disorder or character trait rather than “has trouble with controlling his/her emotions” which implies a skill rather than “has an emotional disturbance” which refers to a more stable trait. For example, Julie describes:

> Probably this has been going on for a while and showing no emotion being flat and all of that. It doesn't necessarily mean that. Okay. But it could indicate some very serious emotional problems that could need counseling or whatever. [CU2a]

Finally, participants at times mentioned multiple internal causes such as Denise who hypothesized both a disorder (defiance disorder) as well as an emotional disturbance:

> I feel like the student has defiance disorder, like they're more defiant than anything and yeah, they're incredibly defiant; or I feel like they have, um, they're like either emotionally disturbed. [CU2a]
Subtheme 2b: Social Skills Deficit. This code was used when participants attributed the cause of the student’s conduct problems to a social skill deficit including lack of socialization, lack of interpersonal skills, and lack of emotion regulation. There was a wide range in the vocabulary used to express a social skills deficit. Four participants specifically mentioned a lack of “coping” strategies or mechanisms while others described a lack of emotion regulation. Kayla references explicitly a lack of social skills while also describing that the student doesn’t know how to handle certain emotions:

[I think] that he needs, some social skills and some coping skills with what to do with his anger and frustration. I think they don't know how to handle uncomfortable emotions frustration and anger. [NCU2b]

There were also a few participants who noted that the student may “not be able to pick up on social cues” (Pamela) or “can’t see others’ perspectives” (Sarah).

Theme 3: Environmental Factors. Environmental factors include any causal attributions that were related to the students’ past or current environment (outside of the home). 8 of the 12 participants mentioned at least one environmental factor to one of the students. This theme was the third most cited attribution category with about half the frequency of within child or home factors. There was little difference between the amounts each subtheme was mentioned in reference to each student. Environmental attributions fell within two subthemes: Instructional Mismatch & Other Environmental Factors.

Subtheme 3a: Instructional Mismatch. This subtheme was used to illustrate all factors that were related classroom environment, behavior management, instructional strategies, or curriculum mismatches to the child’s ability level that may contribute to or cause the student’s undesirable behavior. Curriculum mismatches were discussed in terms of being gifted and bored
with the material (Kayla, Noel), having a learning disability (Sheryl) or having academic difficulties (Pamela, Noel). Additionally, general classroom environmental or instructional mismatches were references such as when Noel discussed a potential mismatch in the student’s learning style and her instruction:

> Um, as his teacher, I'd also be looking at how much I'm talking versus letting them talk to each other or letting them get the work done because it seems like he is one that would have to process his learning, um, orally and through talking or through movement. Um, so I would need to incorporate more of that within my teaching to help them understand. [NCU3a]

**Subtheme 3b: Other Environmental Factors.** Content coded with this subtheme encompassed environmental attributions that did not fall within the realm of classroom or instructional mismatches. This included general environmental references such as Sheryl:

> I try to look at the environment first, you know what's happening whether its the school or the home environment, before I, you know, blame the child or, you know, or look at the child you know see if there's like some kind of mental thing going on or disability or anything like that. And try to change that environment first so. [CU3b]

This subtheme also includes difficulties with peers (Elise), or learned behavior from interactions in past environments (Julie, Denise) or modeled from peers or TV (Marie).

**Research Question 1a: Are teachers’ hypotheses about causation similar for children with and without CU traits?**

Teachers were slightly more likely to attribute home factors to the cause of the student with CU traits’ behavior as opposed to within child factors for the student without CU traits. At
the subthematic level for within child factors, participants were more likely to attribute the conduct problems to stable emotional problems or a disorder for the student with CU traits than the student without CU traits. Specifically, 70% of the within child attributions for the student with CU traits were coded as a disorder or stable emotional disturbance in comparison to 39% of within child factors attributed to disorders or emotional disturbance. On the other hand, teachers were more likely to make attributions regarding the child’s skills, noting that the student has a social skills deficit when the student does not show CU traits. In summary, teachers noted more home-based causes and disorders for students with CU traits than for students with no CU traits.

**Research Question 2: How confident are teachers that they can effectively change the behavior of children with conduct problems?**

After asking teachers about their confidence in improving both students’ behaviors, two themes emerged. In the first theme, ‘Additional Supports’, participants identified a number of additional supports they felt would be necessary in helping reduce the behavioral problems of each student. The second theme was an overarching theme of ‘Unconditional Persistence’ that was present across both students and mentioned by 5 of the 12 participants.

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*Table 4: Domain II Theme & Subtheme Details*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>CU Frequency</th>
<th>NCU Frequency</th>
<th>Participants Discussing Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 4: Additional Supports</td>
<td>Subtheme 4a: Counseling/ Mental Health</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Amanda, Pamela, Kayla, Violet, Julie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 4b: Social Skills Training</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kayla, Amanda, Pamela, Sarah, Noel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Theme 4: Additional Supports.** All participants identified at least one additional support they would reach out to for help in working with the child for at least one of the vignettes. 9 of the 12 identified an additional support for both students. These additional supports fell into four different categories, which resulted in four subthemes: (1) Counseling/Mental Health; (2) Social Skills Training; (3) School Supports; and (4) Home School Collaboration. The first two subthemes refer to types of interventions indicated as necessary for the student’s improvement. The service provider of these supports was identified as a single provider other than the teacher, not indicated at all or a multitude of different service providers. The most common support described was ‘school supports’ with similar frequencies between students.

**Subtheme 4a: Mental Health Supports & Counseling.** Seven participants identified the need for mental health supports, counseling, therapy or unspecified work with a therapist or psychologist for one or both of the students described in the vignettes. While mental health supports and counseling is a broad term and can look very different across providers and based on the needs of the student, the theme illustrates the teachers’ perceptions that and mental health professional would be required in order to improve the students’ behavior. Participants typically

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme 4c: School Supports</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Sheryl, Elise, Pamela, Violet, Julie, Sarah, Noel, Marie, Denise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme 4d: Home School Collaboration</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sheryl, Violet, Julie, Noel, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 5: Unconditional Persistence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Amanda, Julie, Noel, Marie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
did not specify if this professional school based or not. Illustrating that some teachers felt little efficacy in working with this student and that a trained mental health professional would be better suited for helping the student (without specifying a specific type of intervention) is an excerpt from Pamela:

\[I\text{ mean I could put an intervention in but I think it would be more something like a trained psychologist or a therapist would be better implementing interventions.}\]

\[\text{[NCU4a]}\]

Other participants specifically mentioned the need for ongoing counseling or therapy such as Julie:

\[To me, this child needs some very serious continuous, you know, you can't just send them to a counselor one time. They need ongoing counseling. [CU4a]\]

**Subtheme 4b: Social Skills Training.** Similar to mental health supports and counseling, social skills training can take many different forms (e.g. individual, group), can target a variety of skills (e.g. interpersonal skills, emotion regulation), and can be provided by a range of providers (e.g. private therapist, school counselor). This subtheme describes the participants’ opinions that the student needs any type of social skills training (group, individual) targeting any type of social skill, by any provider outside of the classroom. Participants varied in how they described social skills training. Some explicitly stated the student needed “social skills training” such as Kayla:

\[I\text{ think that they definitely need some social skills so we could do that in a variety of ways. A lot of schools have social skills groups where they recommend kids to a group specific for social skills. [NCU4b]}\]

Others described types of supports or activities that they believe would be useful to the student.
that the researcher identified as types of social skills training. These descriptions could have illustrated learning interpersonal skills or emotion regulation skills as described below by Amanda and Sarah, respectively.

**Amanda:** *I think there is some sort of... like in my school we happen to have like a social group so kids that have social issues - or even I know some kids go to social classes. It's at [a local] hospital or something like that where they have those social classes and how to deal with people and interact and you know and then also with confrontations. I think that that would be the best support for this child.* [CU4b]

**Sarah:** *I don’t know the correct vocabulary or the verbiage, but just I guess anger management, something along those lines.* [NCU4b]

**Subtheme 4c: School Supports.** Some teachers were less sure of the types of supports the student needed but believed that they needed to reach out for support from others in working with this student. This was the most frequently used subtheme within the domain of Efficacy. 9 of 12 participants referred to reaching out to other school staff such as administration, guidance counselors or student support staff for help in working with this student such as Sarah:

**Um, yes, [I would reach out to] the guidance counselors and the school psychologist and administration.** [CU4c]

Other participants mentioned somewhat more specific support they would seek out from other school staff such as using a problem solving approach with the school team and making sure there were plans in place to work with the student that was consistent throughout the school such as Julie:

**Um, what I would say the other one too, but this one I feel even stronger is that**
you do need those team meetings and where you are meeting with the school psychologist, the school social worker or the parent, the teacher and anybody else who works with the child because a, if they have um, or you know, whoever to PE teacher if they have trouble in PE, which they probably will. Any of those people, you need to have occasional meetings where you're following up and you're picking something that you're going to work with and in a lot of times you could, you could pick strategies. So let's say you could say, okay, if this happens in PE or the lunchroom or in my classroom, we're all going to do the same thing. We're all going to either send to the office, we're all going to offer them a place to sit down and calm down. You know, together you work that out and you use the same strategies everywhere. [CU4c]

Subtheme 4d: Home School Collaboration. Half of the participants mentioned the importance of home-school collaboration in working with one of the students. This subtheme was mentioned more often with the student with CU traits (5 participants) in comparison to the student without CU traits (2 participants). An important note to this subtheme is that this did not include one-time informational communications home. Coding of this subtheme was restricted to participants emphasizing the importance of continuous communication about status of the student or the importance of aligning efforts at home for example when Violet said:

And we would definitely we would have those conversations with the parents about what are we doing at home what are we doing to promote good behavior.

[CU4d]

Theme 5: Unconditional persistence. Almost half of the participants in the study expressed the emergent theme of ‘Unconditional Persistence’. Several participants expressed this
sentiment multiple times that ‘you can’t give up’. This theme illustrates the teachers’ emphasis on continuing efforts to support this child despite the difficult behavior the student presents. This was often mentioned in conjunction with a statement implying poor outcomes for the Amanda that interventions may not work or that the student would be hard to reach such as Amanda and Noel:

*Amanda*: I would just have to try two I would just have to at least try. It may not work but at least I've got to try it. [CU5]

*Noel*: However, if supports are not in place or they're put in a less restrictive environment, um, I think that the chances [of leading a successful life] will decrease, but I wouldn't give up on the student. [CU5]

**Research Question 2a: Is their confidence similar for children with and without CU traits?**

For both students, teachers were most likely to reach out to school supports in general. The primary difference in efficacy themes between students was that teachers were more likely to emphasize continuous parental or home involvement for the student who displayed CU traits than the one who did not display these traits. 5 of 12 participants (42%) expressed the importance of parental/home involvement when working with this student in comparison to only one participant who suggested this support for the student without CU traits. MARIE specifically stated that:

*Student two's (student without CU traits) problems seem so much simpler. I encounter a lot of children, that just don't know how to deal with emotions they were never taught and with simple training and help they're fixed quickly. Whereas this first student's (student with CU traits) problems were more deeply rooted and it's going to take more time and more intervention to help fix, not fix*
them but like help them I guess and that students, going to need parent involvement- constant help. Where the second student, it can be something easily taught at school and if the parent doesn't follow through at home, this child could still be fine because they will understand- it's an easier problem to fix if that makes sense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Comparison Code: Teacher Self Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which student do you feel more confident in working with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student with CU Traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student without CU traits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comparison Code: Efficacy.** In addition to comparing thematic codes, a comparison code was also used to answer this research question (see table 5). Specifically, teachers either indicated spontaneously that they were more confident in their ability to work with one student versus the other or the researcher asked the participant which student they felt more confident in working with. 10 of the 12 participants (83%) felt more confident working with the student without CU traits than the student with CU traits. This is unsurprising given that students who display CU traits make up less than 1% of the population (Viding, 2012) and therefore teachers are less likely to have encountered a student like this in the past. Sheryl and Pamela, however, felt more confident in working with the student who displayed CU traits. In summary, most teachers felt more confident in working with students who did not display CU traits and also were more likely to solicit or suggest home-school collaboration efforts with the student who did display CU traits.
Research Question 3: What do teachers believe is the most appropriate educational setting for children with conduct problems?

To answer this research question, participants were asked about the type of setting they believed would be most appropriate for each student (see table 6). Their responses were categorized as one of three setting types: Basic Education, Intensive Supports, and Self Contained. Additionally, the theme of “Least Restrictive Environment” emerged as a core belief of many teachers that was considered when selecting the setting for each student (see table 7).

Table 6: Setting Selection Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selections for Student with CU Traits</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Selections for Student without CU Traits</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kayla, Sheryl, Elise, Pamela, Julie, Marie</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Supports</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kimberly, Violet, Noel, Denise</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Contained</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Amanda, Sarah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Category Code: Setting Selection. Each teacher was prompted to select the most appropriate setting for each student; therefore each participant’s views on setting are expressed here. See table 6 for a summary of each participant’s responses separated by vignette. The question was asked as an open-ended question; they were not given specific choices of types of classrooms therefore these categories were created by the researcher after evaluating the responses of the participants. The majority of participants (91%) believe that a general education setting would be most appropriate at least one of the students. 17 of 24 (71%) of selections were for general education. This refers to a typical classroom with largely non-disabled peers. The
next most common answer was “Intensive Supports”. It is important to note that intensive supports encompasses participants’ beliefs that the student should not be in a fully self-contained classroom but needs more support than a general education classroom can provide and therefore needs support from outside of the general education setting for example, Denise stated:

    Um, honestly that might be more beneficial to give the student more of that one on one time because it seems like they do not thrive in a whole group setting, but I wouldn't say like taking away general education from them as a whole would be beneficial. So maybe kind of having that extra time where they get to work one on one with somebody but also within a general [education] classroom. So maybe it's like an aid or like a resource teacher. [CU Setting – Intensive Supports]

Other teachers stated the need for some type of pull out support or partial days in a self-contained classroom and partial days in a general education classroom. Finally

Furthermore, several teachers emphasized that the student needed “more than a regular classroom” but did not indicate a fully self-contained or special education setting. Finally two teachers (Amanda and Sarah) selected a self-contained classroom for the student with CU traits. More specifically, both participants said this student would be best served in an “EBD” (Emotionally and Behavioral Disorders) classroom. Florida, like many other states, has an ESE (exceptional student education) category for students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Many districts have self-contained EBD classrooms specifically for students with this label that need additional supports including intensive behavior management and a smaller teacher to student ratio. Self-contained classrooms often maintain approximately a 1:6 teacher to student ratio.
Table 7: Domain III Theme Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>CU Frequency</th>
<th>NCU Frequency</th>
<th>Participants Discussing Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 6: Least Restrictive Environment</td>
<td>No subthemes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kayla, Sheryl, Pamela, Julie, Noel, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 6: Least Restrictive Environment.** Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is not a novel idea. In fact the term itself was used by participants but originated as a part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This concept refers to the requirement that students with disabilities should be placed in the least restrictive environment or in other words, should spend the maximum amount of time with nondisabled peers as possible while still being successful (IDEA Regulations Part 300, Subpart A, Sec. 300.114). Over half the participants (7 of 12) expressed sentiments of the importance of least restrictive environment. Some participants, including Noel emphasized that the student needed at least some time in a general education setting nothing that the student would benefit from having modeled behavior by nondisabled peers:

> Well, and I may not be popular with belief, but I 100 percent believe that this child right now belongs in general education. I think that until we've tried more interventions, I think that this child needs to be around typical peers that are going to be role models and people that he can look to for conflict resolution. How do they solve conflicts and hardships and you know, I want him to have that language. I'm afraid if, if we went to a classroom that was specialized for behavior or things like that, that he or she will be surrounded with not so great role models. Um, I don't see this, as um, you know, occasional temper tantrums, brief displays of rage. I feel like I have those kids in my classroom every year and
I think the best way to help them as with positive support from classroom teachers, but, and also from being around typical peers that can model best behaviors. [NCU6]

Four of the participants expressed that the child should be in a general education setting “for now” (Kayla, Julie, Marie, Sarah) indicating that before an alternative setting was considered interventions would have had to be put in place and the student would have failed to show improvement such as Marie:

As of right now I would say general [education]. As they continue to hurt children with intervention then they would need to be to changed to, to a more restricted.

But for now I think they're fine in general. [NCU6]

Research Question 3a: Are their beliefs about the most appropriate education setting similar for children with and without CU traits?

Half of the teachers believed that both students belong in a general education setting. However, half of the teachers that selected general education for the student with CU traits (3 of 6), included a sentiment about “general for now” indicating that a more restrictive environment may need to be considered in the future if the student did not improve such as Kayla:

However if it were to become an issue where he is a danger to others and he's a safety issue where he's hurting other physically frequently and then it's not really getting under control then I think that there might have to be an alternate setting considered for him. [CU Setting - General Education]

In comparison, only 1 of the 11 participants (10%) that selected a general education setting for the student without CU traits had a similar statement about considering a restrictive environment in the future. Overall, more teachers believed that the student with CU traits would be best
served in a more restrictive environment or with intensive supports than the student without CU traits. Every participant indicated either the same level of restrictiveness for both students or a more restrictive environment for the student with CU traits; no participants believed the student without CU traits needed a more restrictive environment than the other student.

**Research Question 4: Do teachers perceive reinforcement-based or punishment-based interventions to be more effective for children with conduct problems?**

To examine teachers’ perceptions of reinforcement based and punitive based interventions, participants were asked first what kind of supports would be most appropriate to provide for this student as well as to select one of two designated intervention they believed would be more effective in changing the student’s behavior. The combination of open and closed ended questions resulted in a large number of subthemes that fall under the fourth domain of “Interventions & Strategies”. Theme 7, “Use of Behavioral Strategies”, directly answers the research question regarding teachers’ perceptions of the use of reinforcement and punitive strategies. The second theme, “Additional Strategies” present the additional strategies teachers spontaneously offered in their interviews that they believe would be effective for reducing behavioral problems in each student. See table 8 for detailed frequency counts of each theme and subtheme in this domain. Teachers identified a large number of strategies they would employ when working with each student. The two most common strategies mentioned were the use of a behavioral reinforcement system (subtheme 7b) and the importance of a supportive caring relationship (subtheme 8a). Each of these two themes was described eleven times by participants across the students. Further, participants were more likely to recommend the use of behavioral strategies (theme 7) for the student without CU traits.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>CU Frequency</th>
<th>NCU Frequency</th>
<th>Participants Discussing Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 7: Use of Behavioral Strategies</td>
<td>Subtheme 7a: Antecedent Control</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 7b: Reinforce</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kayla, Amanda, Sheryl, Elise, Pamela, Violet, Julie, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 7c: Punish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pamela, Julie, Noel, Denise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 7d: Function of the Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 7e: Reinforcement, Always</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 8: Additional Strategies</td>
<td>Subtheme 8a: Supportive Adult Relationship</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kayla, Amanda, Sheryl, Elise, Kimberly, Julie, Noel, Denise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 8b: Classroom Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kayla, Elise, Julie, Sarah, Noel, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtheme 8c: More Information</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kayla, Sheryl, Pamela, Julie, Noel, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 7: Use of Behavioral Strategies.** Every participant mentioned behavioral strategies or expanded upon their perceptions of behavioral strategies in addition to being
explicitly asked to choose one of the intervention choices. Intervention choices (i.e. when a participant chose either the reinforcing or punitive intervention) were *not* coded as a theme. A theme or subtheme was only coded when it was an expansion on their choice or spontaneously discussed throughout the interview. Participants described three types of behavioral strategies to use when working with the students: antecedent control, reinforcement, and punishment. A key component of using behavioral strategies is determining the function of a behavior. Participants were not specifically asked about function, however seven did mention functions of behavior. Further, several general perceptions of behavioral strategies, specifically the use of rewards and reinforcements, emerged regarding reinforcement. The most common subtheme mentioned was subtheme 7b: Reinforce followed by subtheme 7e Reinforcement, Always, 7d: Function of the Behavior, 7c: Antecedent Control, and finally subtheme 7c: Punish.

**Subtheme 7a: Antecedent Control.** 7 of 12 participants described antecedent control or preventative strategies in which they express strategies they believe should be put in place to prevent problem behavior from occurring. This often took the form of planned ignoring, a common strategy used by intentionally ignoring negative behavior and giving clear attention to positive or desirable behaviors. Importantly, differential attention (giving attention to desirable behaviors while ignoring undesirable behaviors) involves both positive reinforcement and antecedent control. Therefore, statements that include both as described by Kayla below, are coded twice as antecedent control *and* reinforce:

*I would begin I would give him a lot of positive reinforcement and ignore all of the negative little you know the little noises and the little attention getting things need to be ignored so that he's getting negative attention of as little as possible but having opportunities to feel successful and good about the positive things that*
he's doing. [CU7a; CU7b]

Additional preventative strategies were expressed that altered the students’ environment to help the student experience success or to avoid triggers as described by using proximity control, changing seating assignments, sitting the student by a model student, giving the student scheduled breaks or changing other classroom or instructional strategies to accommodate the student or giving the student extra responsibilities to make them feel important such as Kimberly:

_I would keep them close to me. Their desk would be near me. I would do special things for him only. Um, proximity control, special jobs. Being my assistant pretty much. Like give him the clipboard with all the student names and like he could be in charge of taking attendance every morning for me. Hold the door like, okay, here you have the clipboard monitor or just make him feel like he's important._

[NCU7a]

**Subtheme 7b: Reinforce.** This subtheme was the most frequently addressed behavioral strategy among participants. 9 of 12 participants expressed reinforcement strategies would be most effective to use with one or both students. This subtheme code was used whenever a teacher said they would use a reinforcement strategy that included any type of reinforcement for positive behavior. Mentioned reinforcement strategies varied from structured behavior contracts to more informal reinforcement of positive behavior with attention. An example of structured a structured reinforcement strategy comes from Else:

_And then we also have our school we also have a check in check out program where basically a tracking where each subject area they get to earn points towards different rewards and things like not just so they are monitoring their_
own behavior subject by subject throughout the day instead of just talking at the end of the day. [NCU7b]

In addition to formal and informal reinforcement, this subtheme represents teachers’ sentiments that in order to impact behavioral change, the teacher will need to find ‘what the student will work for’ or ‘what motivates the student’, which indicates positive reinforcement strategies using things the student is motivated by or will work for as illustrated by Sheryl:

And I think that with positive reinforcement and just trying to figure out what motivates a child. And I think that could probably make a difference on depending on what's going on, try to again figure out what their motivator is might just be you know extra recess time that might be you know helping out in the classroom.

You know you just have to kind of figure out what motivates them. Just try to keep supporting them with the positive behaviors much as possible. [NCU7b]

**Subtheme 7c: Punishment & Consequences.** Of the three behavioral strategies (antecedent control, reinforcement, and punishment) this strategy was conveyed least often. In all but one instance, participants referred to the use of a punishment or consequence following an aggressive instance when the student hurt another student or staff as illustrated by JULIE’s comment:

Right. Well, again, as I said before, I would definitely have consequences just like - like you can't - once you get physical and someone's getting hurt, then I'm sorry, that's the time where [we use] consequences... [CU7c]

Participants mostly described negative punishments such as sitting out (Pamela, Julie) or removal from the classroom (Noel, Denise) but Pamela also suggested a positive punishment such as walking laps at recess.
**Subtheme 7d: Function of the Behavior.** In general, the function of a behavior refers to an immediate consequence that follows any behavior that maintains the behavior. In other words, the function is often a naturally reinforcing consequence that occurs in the environment. For example, if a student engages in a behavior such as screaming, and receives a reinforcing consequence following the behavior such as teacher attention, then screaming is likely to continue to occur when the student wants teacher attention. In sum, the function of this screaming behavior is gaining teacher attention. Effective behavior change results from two simultaneous processes: removing reinforcement following problem behaviors and (2) giving opportunities to access the reinforcement via positive behaviors. An illustration using the aforementioned function of attention would be to (1) purposefully ignore the screaming or other attention seeking behavior and (2) give deliberate attention to desirable behaviors such as sitting quietly. Similarly, the primary function identified was attention, which was mentioned by five different participants including Amanda:

*I think that you know he's just looking for attention, just "see me" any kind of attention, whether it's negative or positive attention. Because he's seeking that and then he's getting that from the adults. And so he's able to get that kind of one on one. But again it's still negative so it doesn't matter to him. [NCU7d]*

Attention seeking was mentioned by three participants, in reference to the student with CU traits, and two participants in reference to the student without CU traits. Additionally, Kayla identified manipulation as the function of the behavior [CU7d] and Violet identified the task avoidance as the function of the conduct problems [NCU7d].

**Subtheme 7e: Reinforcement, always.** In addition to mentioning the use of behavioral strategies, a theme emerged concerning teachers’ general perceptions of reinforcement strategies.
‘Reinforcement, always’ refers to the commonly expressed idea that reinforcement always works better than punishment and all kids respond better to reinforcement. As such, this theme was not coded as in reference to either student as it was a general perception and indicated applicable to all students. This theme was expressed by 8 of the 12 participants. Unsurprisingly, each of these participants did indeed choose the reinforcing intervention for both students. It was repeatedly expressed that you should “focus on the positives” (Sheryl, Kimberly, Sarah) and that research and/or experience has shown them that reinforcement always works better than punishment (Elise, Noel, Marie, Denise). Specifically, Sheryl expressed:

> I just don't believe in the punishment part. I just think that they need more positive than negative. If you punish them instead of reward them: you want to reward good behavior not punish. You know you want to focus more on the positives. [7e]

**Theme 8: Additional Strategies.** In addition to behavioral strategies, teachers naturally describe several additional strategies that they believe would be useful for the student. While these strategies do not directly answer the research question regarding teachers’ perceptions of behavioral strategies, the emergent themes have important implications moving forward as schools do not solely use behavioral strategies when working with students with conduct problems. There are often a variety of approaches schools take in working with these students and teachers’ perceptions of what strategies would be appropriate for these students is important for implementation fidelity. Therefore, these additional strategies are included themes in this analysis. The most common theme was the importance of supportive adult relationships followed by classroom social emotional learning strategies and gathering more information.
Subtheme 8a: Supportive Adult Relationship. One strategy that was cited just as often as reinforcement strategies was the importance of building a relationship with the student or the importance of the student having a supportive adult at the school. 8 of 12 participants mentioned building a relationship with at least one of the students. Most teachers who expressed this subtheme emphasized the importance of establishing a strong teacher-student relationship and making sure the student feels supported such as Julie:

*The first thing I would have to do is nothing's going to happen, in my opinion, nothing's going to change until I can have this child, even though they're angry or whatever, see that I care about them. This is a safe place and that even though they do terrible things, I'm really unhappy with that action, but I still really care about them.* [NCU8a]

Additionally, some teachers referenced the importance of developing a relationship in order to get to know the student, find out what may be going on with the student outside of school, or what motivates the student such as Sheryl:

*I think a huge part of teaching is developing a relationship with a student and kind of as we like to call it finding your student's currency and if you can find that one thing that they're willing to work for whether its just time just having lunch with the teacher or something like that that's a much better way to help them improve the behavior and also to help them become a more well-rounded person to have a better chance of a successful future.* [NCU8a]

Finally, some teachers mentioned that it would be helpful to have the student in a mentorship program or to link them up with someone at the school who can support them such as the guidance counselor who can serve as a positive role model or can show support in addition to the
teacher. For example Kimberly stated:

\[ I'd\ probably\ set\ him\ up\ with\ a\ mentor\ program - Big\ Brother,\ Big\ Sister\ or\ something.\ He\ needs\ somebody\ to\ stick\ with\ him,\ you\ know,\ to\ keep\ him\ oriented;\ \\
He\ just\ needs\ love.\ [NCU8a] \]

**Subtheme 8b: Classroom SEL.** Social Emotional Learning, also known as SEL, refers to a Framework for systemic social and emotional learning in schools. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), there are five core competencies that are addressed through the framework to help students acquire a rounded set of skills. These competencies are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Many teachers described strategies they would implement in their classroom for one or both of the students although it was suggested more often in reference for the student without CU traits. These strategies supported emotion regulation strategies, class-wide social skills lessons, or opportunities built into the classroom that allowed the student regulate his or her emotions in an upsetting event. Therefore, the researcher labeled this subtheme classroom SEL. Most teachers described creating a “cool down area” or area in their classroom where the student could go to calm down or use a coping strategy if upset such as Marie:

\[ Um,\ I\ would,\ I\ would\ set\ up\ like\ a\ calming\ area\ for\ him\ so\ that\ when\ he\ does\ feel\ angry,\ frustrated.\ He\ has\ somewhere\ to\ go\ get\ his\ own\ space\ that\ has\ something\ like\ a\ squishy\ ball\ to\ squeeze\ or\ you\ know,\ like\ a,\ a,\ something\ like\ a\ pillow\ to\ punch\ something\ that\ he\ could\ take\ his\ anger\ out\ on\ that\ isn't\ hurting\ other\ students,\ but\ he\ knows\ that\ when\ he's\ feeling\ this\ way\ you\ can\ just\ go\ there\ and\ then\ come\ back\ when\ he's\ ready\ to\ um,\ act\ appropriately;\ Just\ to\ calm\ down \]
corner thing, I think that would really help the student deal with his emotions properly. [NCU8b]

Other teachers discussed teaching the student specific strategies to deal with anger or frustration. While this may appear similar to social skills training, this code was used when the teacher expressed that she herself would be teaching the skills, making it a strategy rather than an outside support that impacted the teachers efficacy (as is subtheme 4b). For example, Kayla describes her classroom:

In my class I do whole classroom - classroom meetings in different social skill lessons. Knowing his behavior I could incorporate those into my whole class social skills lessons but then also working with him one on one in my classroom providing him with strategies or It's okay to feel angry and it can cause you to feel frustrated but you need to have some tools with how to equip how to handle that. I would also make sure I have a location in my room where this child could remove himself and at any time to that location. So for example like a cool down area just a safe spot where if he needs to if he's feeling anger coming on or frustration he knows he's he has the freedom to get up and move and go calm down at that spot. [NCU8b]

Subtheme 8c: More Information. The final strategy expressed across participants was the need for more information. This was expressed in two different ways: gathering information and collecting data. Half of the participants mentioned they wanted to find out more about the student such as if the student had displayed similar issues in the past, with other teachers or at home. Teachers were more likely to express the desire for gathering information in reference to the student with CU traits. To note, this theme is differentiated from Subtheme 4d: Home-School
Collaboration because 4d emphasized the ongoing collaboration with family members and this code was used when teachers expressed they wanted to find out more information from the parents one time such as Marie:

[I would suggest] talking to the parent, finding out what's going on at home who watches the kids, who does the kid live with, talking with the school psychologists and the social worker too finding out if there's any past history on the child. Has anyone else ever had issues with this? I'm checking to see if they've ever been tested or again if there's been notes and reaching out to past teachers if they have any in the district. [CU8c]

Two participants (Kayla and Denise) mentioned they would like to collect data to determine the cause and find out more about why the problem behavior is occurring such as Kayla:

I would want to really monitor and document all of those experiences that I am noticing with him and keep track of. I basically want to start collecting data on him to see if it has more you know is there something deeper rooted inside or if it is something that's more based on his environment perhaps. [CU8c]

**Category Question: Intervention Selection.** As previously mentioned, teachers were presented two basic interventions and asked to select which one they think would be most effective in changing each students’ behavior. An overwhelming majority, 83% of participants selected the reinforcement intervention for both students. One participant (Violet) selected the punitive intervention for the student with CU traits and two participants (Pamela and Violet) selected the punitive intervention for the student without CU traits.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Selection</th>
<th>Student with CU Traits</th>
<th>Student with No CU Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reinforcing Intervention</td>
<td>Kayla, Amanda, Sheryl, Elise, Pamela, Kimberly, Julie, Sarah, Marie, Denise</td>
<td>Kayla, Amanda, Sheryl, Elise, Kimberly, Julie, Sarah, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punitive Intervention</td>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>Pamela, Violet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 4a: Are teachers’ perceptions of effective interventions similar for children with and without CU traits?

In summary, teachers identified a wide number of strategies they believe to be effective in working with students with conduct problems. Several practices were more common for specific students, however. First, teachers were somewhat more likely to suggest antecedent control strategies for the student without CU traits. While 5 teachers mentioned these strategies for the student without CU traits, only 2 mentioned them for the student with CU traits. Secondly, more participants identified needing more information about the student who displayed CU traits. This included both gathering information from home and from past teachers as well as collecting data to determine the root of the problem. This may suggest that teachers are less confident in identifying the cause or reason for the behavior and less sure of strategies to use until they receive more information about the student. Conversely, teachers may feel more comfortable identifying and selecting the interventions for the student who did not display CU traits. Finally, teachers were more likely to recommend the use of various SEL strategies in their classroom for the student without CU traits. This was most often a “cool down corner” or similar emotion regulation area. While 6 participants described SEL strategies for the student without CU traits, only 2 described similar strategies for the student without CU traits.
Research Question 5: What are teachers’ expectations for students with conduct problems in terms of education and social trajectories over time?

To answer this research question, one theme emerged that captured some of the participants’ expectation that the student would continuously struggle or need continuous supports. This theme was mentioned in reference to both students. Further, the researcher used another comparison code. This included both spontaneous proclamations of one student have a greater chance of success than the other student as well as an explicit question about which had a higher likelihood of success. In addition to these two pieces of data used to answer the research questions, an additional theme emerged that fell within the domain of Attitudes and Perceptions. Several teachers expressed conflicting perceptions of remorse. A summary of the themes and subthemes for Domain V can be found in Table 10.

Table 10: Domain V Theme & Subtheme Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>CU Frequency</th>
<th>NCU Frequency</th>
<th>Participants Discussing Theme</th>
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<td>Remorse is Atypical</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remorse is Atypical - Non example</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amanda, Elise, Sarah, Noel, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme 9: Continuous Struggle. The theme of continuous struggle emerged from the interviews. Four participants implied that the student would either need continuous supports or would continue to struggle throughout their education or life. Amanda specific poor outcomes
for the student:

*He's you know and he'll be that he I'm sure doesn't know how to read. You know will probably fail third grade. You know or if they're in middle school they're going to be in some sort of detention center.* [CU9]

On the other hand, most participants offered general notions that the student would likely always struggle or would need constant, intensive interventions such as Noel:

*Improve? I think it's highly likely that you could improve this behavior. Um, I think it's something that he's always going to struggle with...* [NCU9]

**Research Question 5a: Are their expectations regarding educational and social trajectories similar for children with and without CU traits?**

Overall, participants had higher expectations of success for the student who did not show CU traits. While the theme of continuous struggle appeared in similar frequencies between the two students, the interviewer noted that teachers often spoke more optimistically about the student without CU traits, which is certainly illustrated in their comparison scores. Only one participant said they expected greater success from the student who displayed CU traits. These findings are not exceptionally surprising given that in fact, students who display CU traits show very poor outcomes in comparison to students with comparable conduct problems but no CU traits.

**Table 11: Comparison Code: Expectations of Success**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which student do you feel has a higher likelihood of success?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Elise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student with CU Traits</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student without CU traits</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kayla, Amanda, Pamela, Kimberly, Violet, Julie, Sarah, Marie, Denise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Sheryl reported she could not say one way or the other.*
Theme 10: Attitudes of Remorse. One additional theme was found in the data. While this theme does not directly answer any of the above research questions, these emergent ideas show perspectives on remorse from a subset of the participants. It should be noted that only three and two participants describe these subthemes, respectively. More participants expressed opposite ideas of remorse. However, these counter perceptions remain in order to illustrate the varying perspectives in the teacher population.

Subtheme 10a: Remorse Implies control. Three participants described the idea that showing remorse following a behavior implies that the student has control of the behavior. Control can also be seen as intentionality. For example, Marie:

[I feel like he is in control of his behavior] because he's taking fault, he knows he did it. He admits to like doing the act and he feels bad about it, but he does know what he's doing. [NCU10a]

Two other teachers expressed similar sentiments about believing that the student was more in control of their behavior because showing remorse implies that the student recognizes that the behavior is wrong.

Subtheme 10b: Remorse is atypical. This theme was describe by two participants (Amanda and Violet) who stated, respectively:

Amanda: And that shows that they do have some empathy. Because usually kids don't like they do that stuff and then they don't care. They don't even think to ask about the other person [NCU10b]

Violet: Um no my students don't typically like to apologize [NCU10b]
While these perspectives may represent these two teachers’ perspectives, they contrast other sentiments from six other participants who expressed explicit concern over the lack of remorse or empathy that the student with CU traits showed, for example Marie mentioned:

_I would also send them to the school psychologist because they don't have any remorse. So we need to find out if they're lacking empathy because that's a big deal._ [CU10b – non-example].
Chapter V: Discussion

The current study investigated teachers’ perceptions of students with conduct problems and the impact of callous unemotional traits on these perceptions. Past research has suggested that teachers’ perceptions of students may impact the practices or strategies that teachers utilize. Due to the fact there has been no research to date on how students with CU traits are treated in schools, the ultimate purpose of this study was to establish the ground work for how students with CU traits are perceived by teachers and what interventions are most likely to be selected by teachers. While there is little research on efficacious interventions in supporting students with CU traits, the most prominent finding is that these students do not respond to punishment but rather reinforcement interventions. Understanding how students are currently being treated in schools may help in identifying future directions for supporting these students in schools or additional gaps in the literature for future research. This chapter summarizes the key findings of the five primary themes: causal attributions of conduct problems, teacher self-efficacy, perceived appropriate setting, interventions and strategies, & expectations of success. The chapter will then describe the impact of CU traits on teachers’ perceptions. Then, implications of these findings for school psychologists and educational stakeholders seeking recommendations for working with students with CU traits and teachers of these students. Finally, limitations of this study and implications for future research and practice will be discussed.

Causal Attributions of Conduct Problems

Previous literature has remained generally consistent in finding that the most common perceptions of causal attributions of problem behavior are home factors and within child factors
as opposed to school factors (Bibour-Nakou, Kiosseoglou, & Stogiannidou, 2000; Brophy & Rohrkemper, 1981; Cothran, Kulina, & Garrahy, 2009; Guttmann, 1982; Johansen, Little, & Akin-Little, 2011; Miller, 1995; Wilson & Silverman, 1991). The findings of this research are consistent with previous findings. Overall analyses indicated that most causal attributions of conduct problems fell in the within child theme and the next most common attribution fell within the home factors theme. As the first analyses (to this researcher’s knowledge) evaluating teacher perceptions of students with CU traits, the initial results indicate similar findings as those without CU traits. Participants in this study were more likely to attribute problem behavior in students with CU traits to home factors followed by within child factors. While CU traits did not appear to have a great impact on the causal attributions in relation to the literature, teachers did believe the cause of the student with CU traits’ behavior was due to home factors more often than the student without home factors. This finding is not supported by the literature, as research has shown little to no impact of parenting factors on CU traits. Importantly however, the review conducted by Frick et al. (2014) found some disordered attachment styles and behaviors such as making less eye contact with caregivers and low levels of physical and verbal affection (Dadds et al., 2012; Fite, Greening, & Stoppelbein, 2008; Pasalich, Dadds, Hawes, & Brennan, 2012) but suggests an evocative relationship in that having a child with CU traits is more predictive of gradual changes in parenting styles and techniques than parenting is of the development of CU traits.

Within the theme of within child factors, another difference emerged between the two students. Teachers were more likely to hypothesize the student with CU traits had an emotional disturbance or a disorder whereas they were more likely to hypothesize the student without CU traits had a type of social skill deficit. This causal attribution is supported by the current research
that CU traits are likely caused by biological and heritable factors. In fact, there is much support for internal causes of the presence of CU traits such as lower heart rate change (De Wied, Van Boxtel, Matthys, & Meeus, 2012), lower cortisol reactivity (Stadler et al., 2011), and lower right amygdala activity (Jones et al., 2009) when presented with emotional or stressful stimuli. This indicates that teachers may be able to accurately identify that the student with CU traits shows a more stable personality difference than the other student thus showing less probability of successful behavior change.

**Teacher Self Efficacy in Conduct Problems**

Teachers in this study expressed varying degrees of self-efficacy in working with each student’s conduct problems. Overall, most of the teachers in this study felt more confident in working with the student without CU traits. This is unsurprising given the small population of students with these traits insinuates that most teachers have had little if any exposure to this population as well as poor outcomes of students with CU traits. As previously mentioned, higher CU traits are related to poorer outcomes to treatment in a review of the literature (Frick et al., 2014). So in fact, actual teacher efficacy, in addition to perceived efficacy, is likely lower with this population than with students without CU traits. Previous research has suggested that teacher self-efficacy may affect their selection of classroom management strategies, (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Rubie-Davies, 2007; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990), showing less emotional support, and displaying more conflict with their students (Hamre, Pianta, Downer, & Mashburn, 2007). Therefore, understanding that teachers tasked with working with these students often feel less efficacious, knowing ineffective practices are associated with low teacher self-efficacy highlights the importance of supporting these teachers.
However, this research also found that half the participants expressed the emergent theme of “unconditional persistence”. The theme was most often mentioned in conjunction with a statement of poor expectancy (e.g. it might not work, but you just have to try). Moreover, this theme was mentioned more often in the student with CU traits than in the student without CU traits. This finding is in contrast to some literature suggesting that low teacher self efficacy impacts teachers’ levels of eagerness and perseverance when working with students with challenging behaviors (e.g. Ashton, 1982). Together, the findings of low teacher self efficacy in working with these students in conjunction with the emergent theme of unconditional persistence illustrates teachers’ desire to work more effectively with these students but lacking the resources or expertise in doing so. Suggestions for improving teachers’ expertise in addressing behavior problems with and without the presence of CU traits are described in ‘Implications for Practice’.

**Perceptions of Appropriate Setting**

Due to the lack of research on this population in schools, there is no research supporting a particular type of setting for students with CU traits. The overwhelming support for keeping students with behavior problems in the general education setting as long as possible (as evidenced by participants’ categorical setting selections) as well as the emergent theme of ‘Least Restrictive Environment’ indicates that teachers have internalized this legal concept described by IDEA (IDEA Regulations Part 300, Subpart A, Sec. 300.114). The intent of LRE is to ensure that students who are served with ESE or Special Education services are included in ‘mainstream’ or ‘general education’ classes as often as possible and are able to spend as much of their time with non-disabled peers as they can. Participants in this study not only echoed this term but also elaborated on the importance of giving students’ with behavioral problems model peers, and opportunities to succeed in general education classes. This is an encouraging finding for our
education system as it indicates national policy has internalized in the teachers of our system. Nevertheless, this finding is not without implications. Despite understanding the importance of including students in the least restrictive environment, teachers remain feeling ineffective in working with severe behavior problems. Teachers’ desire to hold students in general education settings requires that general education teachers have the appropriate skills to serve these students. Of course, it should be mentioned that teachers are speaking in reference to a hypothetical vignette so perceptions may be somewhat different than practices or views in practice with real students. Implications for teacher training and consultation are described below.

**Interventions and Strategies**

Several important findings emerged regarding how teachers would support students with behavior problems in the classroom. The vast majority of participants selected the reinforcing intervention over a punitive intervention to improve both students’ behavior problems. Further, almost every participant spontaneously offered positive reinforcement strategies to improve the students’ behavior. This contradicts some previous research suggesting teachers are more likely to use punitive practices when teachers have low expectations of the student’s success (Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2002), as this study found that teachers did have lower expectations of success for students with CU traits but were just as likely to recommend reinforcing interventions. Further some research has suggested in the past that teachers are more likely to use punitive interventions if they believe the cause of the behavior to be a home or within child factor (Bibour-Nakou et al., 2000; Poulou & Norwich, 2000), which is not supported by this study. This finding is promising given that not only is positive
reinforcement more effective for all children but students with CU traits in particular because they have been found to be insensitive to punishment (APA, 2014).

Despite this promising finding, an important piece of behavioral interventions appears to be lacking in teachers’ skill repertoire. Across students, only two participants discussed the collection of data. Collection of data could include observational data collection (e.g. recording frequency or duration of the behavior), examining existing data (e.g. office discipline referrals), or collecting teacher or parent reported behavior. This information helps student services teams to create a more tailored intervention for students. Because data collection and analysis efforts require time and personnel resources, these practices are typically left for the most severe behavior problems in the school. However, data can be a useful tool in behavior intervention selection.

In terms of behavioral intervention, one of the most useful pieces of data is the function of the behavior. As previously described in chapter 4, a function is a consequence that maintains the occurrence of a problem behavior (e.g. attention seeking). An emergent finding of this research regarding functional analysis was two fold. First, most teachers described reinforcing interventions but did not mention any hypothesized function or suggest the process of determining the function of the behavior. While the theme of “Reinforcement, Always”, described by eight of the participants, showed that teachers are clearly aware of the effectiveness of reinforcement strategies and the benefits over punitive strategies, reinforcement strategies with students with severe behaviors should be used in as it relates to the function of their behavior. Secondly, most often when teachers did refer to the function of a behavior, teachers usually presumed that attention is the maintaining consequence. Teachers suggested planned ignoring and giving attention to positive behaviors. While attention is often the maintaining
consequence to problem behavior and this may be a good place to start, it is important that teachers understand the alternative functions that may be maintaining problem behavior. For example, if a student is being disruptive for the purpose of task avoidance, and the teacher is actively ignoring the disruptive behavior, the student is still receiving the reinforcing consequence of avoiding the task. Identifying the function of a behavior suggests individualizing intervention for students, which often occurs on a tier 3 level due to the required resources necessary to conduct assessment and individualization of the intervention. At tier 2, “one size fits all” interventions are often used such as ‘check in, check out’ and little assessment is utilized in these cases. Teachers’ responses to types of intervention that would be appropriate to provide for these students mirrored tier 2 interventions. Teachers suggest general reinforcement strategies, proximity control, social skills groups, and classwide SEL lessons and opportunities for emotion regulation. Some teachers did suggest somewhat more individualized approaches such as mentorship programs, therapy and individual counseling. It became clear when talking to these teachers that once students’ behavior reached a severity level needing individualization, teachers felt less efficacious in supporting these students. With teachers recognizing the need to keep students in general education for as long as possible and helping them to be successful with their peers, this study suggests that a gap in teachers’ skill repertoire is individualizing behavior interventions for each student.

**Expectations of Success**

As described in Chapter 2, a number of negative practices have been associated with teachers who have low expectations of success for their students. Specifically, students who are perceived to have lower chances of success are less likely to be called on, given less wait time when called on, receive less attention, have less interactions with their teachers, receive less
reinforcement or praise for success and receive more criticism for failures in the classroom (Adams & Cohen, 1974; Allington, 1980; Brophy & Good, 1970; Chaikin, Sigler, & Derlega, 1974; Cooper & Baron, 1977; Fireston & Brody, 1975; Good et al., 1980, 1973; Kester & Letchworth, 1972; Rejeski et al., 1979; Rist, 1970). Results of this study showed that teachers indeed do have lower expectations of success for students with CU traits. Combined with past research, these results suggest that teachers may use more negative practices with students with CU traits. They’re low expectations of success, however, are not inaccurate. As mentioned before, kids with CU traits show poor treatment outcomes and are often commit violent offenses and felonies. Regardless of their poor treatment outcomes, improvement of these outcomes depends on strong evidenced-based positive practices, which includes many of the practices that may be impacted by low expectation effects (e.g. less reinforcement for success and more criticism for failure).

**Impact of Callous Unemotional Traits on Teachers’ Perceptions**

Two additional subthemes emerged from the literature regarding students with CU traits. While neither finding answers a research question, these two themes help to shed some light on the overarching purpose of this research: to evaluate teachers’ perceptions of students with CU traits. Three of the participants referenced the sentiment that remorse indicates that the student has control over the behavior or is engaging in the behavior intentionally. This is an inaccurate perception as students often feel remorse for their previous actions or empathy for people they have hurt. Typically, children lack the executive functioning skills to predict the consequences of their actions (both punitive actions and impact on others) or emotion regulation skills to modulate their reactions in times of great stress. In these cases, showing remorse following the behavior does not indicate that the student has control over that behavior. Indeed one of the most
concerning things about students with CU traits is the danger of not empathizing with others and therefore committing violent acts without restraint. Further, two teachers (two of them the same who indicated remorse implies control) indicated that remorse and empathy is atypical of most students. On the contrary, research has shown that students with CU traits, such as the one described in the vignette, represent less than 1% of the population (Viding, 2012). These perceptions show that some teachers (albeit a small number of the current participants) have misconceptions surrounding remorse and CU traits in general. This indicates the need for additional training for teachers working with these students.

**Implications for School Psychology**

One of the most prevalent implications for this study was the need for additional teacher training in order to effectively respond to students with conduct or behavioral problems. This is evident in both inaccurate perceptions of these students but also two contrasting themes that emerged from the interviews. Teachers generally expressed both that they believe these students should be in a general education setting but feel these students need additional supports and they do not feel equipped to improve the behavior in a general education setting. These contradictory perceptions may implicate the need for growing behavior management training in teachers as a whole. Teacher trainings should address two specific components in order to increase teachers’ capacity to support students with conduct problems: (1) the use of the function of behavior and (2) strategies for family consultation.

The theme, ‘Use of Behavioral Strategies’ was one of the most common themes mentioned throughout the interviews. However, many of the participants’ answers did not fully address the function of the behavior. Some left out function altogether by jumping directly from the description of the problem behavior into an intervention that rewards replacement behaviors.
(with an undisclosed reinforcement). Others assumed the function of the behavior but did not incorporate it into supports provided to the student (e.g. reward a student seeking attention with attention for positive behaviors). Only several participants noted the need for any data collection to determine the appropriate intervention, and none of the teachers identified a functional evaluation in order to aid in intervention development. This suggests that while teachers do have a foundational knowledge in the principles of behaviorism and recognize that reinforcement strategies are more effective for most students, teacher trainings clearly need to delve deeper into what the function of behavior is and why it is important to consider this piece of data in intervention selection and development. Training teachers to individualize moderate behavioral problems on their own without the need for additional resources will help to keep students in the LRE and reduces the need to reach out to student services for some of the less severe cases in classrooms. This helps the students being supported in the classroom, the teacher in improving efficacy in working with moderate behavior problems, and decreases the referrals to the student services team so that they can work more intensely on severe conduct problems.

In addition to teaching the function, this study suggests the need for consultation in parent school collaboration efforts. Since the research supports that CU traits are highly heritable and are stable personality characteristics rather than behaviors influenced by their home environment, the findings that show poor treatment outcomes for these students make sense. Studies that have shown improvement in students with CU traits in either conduct problems or the reduction of CU traits themselves have all incorporated parent-training components (Hawes & Dadds, 2007; Kolko & Pardini, 2010; McDonald, Dodson, Rosenfield, & Jouriles, 2011; Somech & Elizur, 2012; Waschbusch et al., 2007). Compatibly, this study found that teachers were more likely to suggest home-school collaboration as a necessary support in working with
the student with CU traits than the student without CU traits. However, this finding in conjunction with the increased casual attributions of home factors in these students may imply that teachers approach working with parents of these students in an ineffective manner. As aforementioned, research suggests that parenting practices do not impact levels of CU traits and further that these students conduct problems have an evocative effect of negative parenting practices. Perceptions of home factors causing the students’ problems may lead to ineffective home-school collaboration. To illustrate, if a teacher believes a parent to be the cause of the students’ behavior, the teacher may approach the collaboration as a critic of their parenting practices, which may be met with parental defensiveness. Teacher education on research-supported causes of CU traits and education on the lack of impact of parenting practices may support effective home school collaboration by building an empathy towards the parent.

School psychologists are uniquely situated in schools to tackle these roles of teacher training, facilitating home school collaboration, and assisting teachers in with students with conduct problems. While building the capacity of teachers to manage problem behaviors in the classroom, it should be noted that students that display CU traits are often the most severe students in our society and likely will require more intensive supports for antisocial behavior. Therefore, results of this research in conjunction with the previous literature suggesting poor outcomes for these students, suggests that teachers do need the additional support for many of the students with severe conduct problems. In a multi-tiered system of support, students receive intervention based on level of need and increasingly intensive supports as students do not respond to lower level intervention. A full system tiered supports implemented in the context of data based decision making will help schools to build teacher capacity for working with students with mild and moderate behavior problems and ensuring teachers receive adequate support in
working with students with severe behavior problems, such as those with CU traits and antisocial behaviors.

**Implications for Future Research**

Of course, primary efforts in future research need to be made in identifying effective treatments for this population given that currently there are no outstanding forms of treatment that significantly reduce the likelihood of offenses and antisocial behavior in these students. While reinforcement strategies are superior to punitive strategies, they are still overall somewhat ineffective in reducing problem behavior in this population. This study suggests that teachers are indeed more inclined to use reinforcement strategies but it remains that we still do not know how to decrease conduct problems significantly in students with CU traits.

One note on expectations of success is the notion of “successful psychopathy”. Some research on adults has documented the success of individuals with callous unemotional traits. Cleckly (1941, 1976) documented in, *The Mask of Sanity*, instances of successful individuals with high status occupations (e.g. businessmen, scientists, physicians) who show similar biological reactivity characteristics as psychopathic individuals but lack antisocial behaviors. One hypothesized factor for this difference is high intelligence and executive functioning skills. Some research has suggested that psychopathic adults with high intelligence may avoid engaging in aggressive behavior not due to their concern for others but to avoid negative consequences (e.g. incarceration) (Myers, 2016). Other studies suggest that successful individuals with psychopathic traits display antisocial behaviors in a more sophisticated way such as white-collar crime (Babiak et al., 2010; Herve & Yuille, 2007) or forms of relational aggression (Babiak, 1995; Cangemi & Pfohl, 2009). While there has been less research done on successful CU traits in youth, some studies have suggested that not all youth who are high in CU traits have
externalizing behaviors. However, a recent study conducted by Myers (2016) found that adolescents high on CU traits and intelligence engaged in more aggressive acts. Thus, while research still suggests overall poor outcomes, this line of research surrounding “successful psychopathy” may hold important implications in the future for how to decrease antisocial behavior in these students despite their CU traits.

**Limitations of the Current Study**

There are several limitations within this study. One of the most notable limitations is the self-report nature and use of vignettes to evaluate teacher perceptions and practices of behavior management. This was necessary because of the small number of students who do exhibit CU traits. However, because the teachers were self-reporting the supports they would implement for each student, their responses may have been influenced by the perception of evaluation or an expression of best practices. Some research has shown some discrepancies between teachers reported practices and actual practices. Additionally, teachers may have answered in a way that they believe to be socially desirable. For example, it may be a more socially acceptable answer to favor reinforcement rather than punitive interventions.

An additional limitation to this study, and any qualitative study, is the potential of researcher bias. This may impact what themes emerged from the data based on what the researcher interpreted as important. To protect against bias and to add to the trustworthiness of the themes and coding of each transcript, the codebook was created in collaboration with another researcher and codes were reviewed by additional researchers to confirm reliability. Lastly, through the use of multiple examples and excerpts to represent the themes, the researcher provided evidence for interpretation.
The small and homogenous sample for this study limits the generalizability of these results. Specifically, these teachers were recruited from a single geographical region of central Florida. Educational systems vary greatly by state, district, and even school. Educational practices and emphases on systems level changing, embedding mental health supports in schools and classrooms, and implementation of multi-tiered systems of supports vary greatly across systems. In addition to the homogenous sample compilation, the sample was not randomly recruited. Because the sample was a group of volunteers and information of the study was spread via snowball sampling, the perspectives shared may not represent teachers as a whole. Volunteering participants may have offered due to their confidence in working with students with conduct problems. This may have resulted in an overestimation in overall teacher efficacy in working with these students.

**Summary**

Students with CU traits pose a great challenge to schools and classrooms. While they make up a small portion of students, they also represent some of the most severe antisocial behavior that we see in schools. An important starting point in working with teachers to support these students is evaluating teachers’ perceptions of these students and effective practices. This study found that consistent with previous research, teachers are most likely to attribute problem behavior of all students to home and within child factors but they were somewhat more likely to attribute home factors to the students with CU traits. Teachers additionally feel overall less efficacious in working with students with CU traits. A number of themes regarding additional supports emerged including the need for mental health professionals and school services support. Teachers were also more likely to recommend ongoing home-school collaboration for student with CU traits. According to the results of this study, teachers have generally lower expectations
for success for students that display CU traits, which is unsurprising given that they do have exceptionally poor treatment outcomes. This study additionally found that teachers have grasped the idea of Least Restrictive Environment and support the idea that students should stay with non-disabled peers for as much time as possible. The notion of LRE, however, implies that general education teachers are able to support a broad range of behavioral and academic problems, preventing students from being removed from the general education classroom. While participants in this study showed overwhelming support for the fact that reinforcing interventions are more effective than punitive interventions and knowledge of a wide range of interventions, the participants’ lack of knowledge regarding individualization of education suggests the need for further teacher training. Gaps in teachers’ repertoire that emerged from this study include education or consultation on the importance of functional analysis and applying functional assessment results to individualization of interventions. Further, some participant responses suggest the need for consultation in home-school collaboration efforts to ensure cooperative and effective relationship is established from the beginning and maintained.
References


American Psychiatric Association.


https://doi.org/10.1080/10862960802070442


Myers, T. D. (2016). Examination of the Successful Psychopathy Conceptualization in Youth with Callous-Unemotional Traits.


Appendices
Appendix A: Informed Consent

Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk

Pro # 00027946

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher to discuss this consent form with you; please ask her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called:

**Teacher Perceptions of Students With Conduct Problems With and Without Callous Unemotional Traits**

The person who is in charge of this research study is Casie Peet. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. Dr. Linda Raffaele Mendez is guiding her in this research.

The research will be conducted at the participant’s location of choice with the option of a phone interview.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers understand and work with students with conduct problems.

**Why are you being asked to take part?**

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you are a general education elementary school teacher.
Study Procedures:
If you take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- Fill out a short demographics survey and choose a pseudonym (a fake name), which will be used in all data analyses to ensure confidentiality.
- Participate in a 25-35 minute telephone or in-person interview with the principal investigator (Casie Feet) at a time convenient for the participant.
  - In person interviews will take place at a location of the participant's choosing.
  - Telephone interviews require that the participant have an Internet-enabled device as several documents will need to be shared during the interview.
    - The interview includes vignettes or hypothetical students and asks your opinion on these hypothetical students.
    - These interviews will be audio recorded so that the researcher can transcribe the interviews and analyze the data. Only the primary researcher and IRB-approved co-investigators will have access to these tapes and they will be destroyed 5 years after submitting the final report.
    - Following completion of the transcription, the transcript will be sent to you to look over to ensure your answers and thoughts were appropriately captured. You will be given the option to clarify any points you feel were not appropriately captured in the interview.

Total Number of Participants
About 12 individuals will take part in this study at USF.

Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal
You do not have to participate in this research study.

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your job status, employment record, employee evaluations, or advancement opportunities.

Benefits
You will receive no benefit(s) by participating in this research study.

Risks or Discomfort
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation
You will be compensated with a $10 gift certificate if you complete the interview in its entirety.
Costs
It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality
We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. Anyone who looks at your records must keep them confidential. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator and all other research staff.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study, and individuals who provide oversight to ensure that we are doing the study in the right way.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, including staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints
If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an unanticipated problem, call Casie Peet at (720) 987-4932.
If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu.

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study
I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study __________________________ Date ____________

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study __________________________

Social Behavioral
Version: #2

Version Date: 9-14-17
Page 3 of 4
Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent  Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
Appendix B: Personal Demographics Survey

Please circle the answer that best describes you.

**GENDER:**
- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to specify

**AGE**
- 20-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- 51-55
- 56-60
- 61+
- Prefer not to specify

**ETHNICITY**
- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Native American or American Indian
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Other
- Prefer not to specify
### Appendix C: Interview Protocol Questions

**Interview Protocol Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Affiliated Research Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll first ask you to tell me some information about yourself and then</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll have you read about a couple of students and how you might handle their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenging behaviors in class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>Preliminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your current position (grade, type of classroom)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>Preliminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long have you been teaching?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you always taught [grade, class type]?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>Preliminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your highest degree held?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce Vignette 1</td>
<td>RQ 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Vignette introduction and prompt participant to read the scenario.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>Preliminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your initial thoughts or opinions of this student?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td>RQ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the likely cause of this student’s behavior?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 6</td>
<td>Supplemental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel like the child is in control of their own behavior?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 7</td>
<td>RQ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a teacher, how likely is it that you could improve this student’s behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through the use of interventions or other methods?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 8</td>
<td>RQ 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What setting do you believe would be most appropriate for this student?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 9</td>
<td>RQ 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of supports do you think would be most appropriate to allocate to this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 10</td>
<td>RQ 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think is the most likely educational outcome for this student?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 11</td>
<td>RQ 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see this student leading a normal life as a functioning member of society?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce Intervention Types</td>
<td>Please read over these two types of interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 12</td>
<td>Which of these interventions do you think would be most effective for managing this student’s behavior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 13</td>
<td>Which intervention would you be more likely to choose for this student and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 14</td>
<td>Any final thoughts on effective strategies for this student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce Vignette 2</td>
<td>Read Vignette introduction and prompt participant to read the scenario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 15</td>
<td>What are your initial thoughts or opinions of this student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 16</td>
<td>What is the likely cause of this student’s behavior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 17</td>
<td>Do you feel like the child is in control of their own behavior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 18</td>
<td>As a teacher, how likely is it that you could improve this student’s behavior through the use of interventions or other methods?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 19</td>
<td>What setting do you believe would be most appropriate for this student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 20</td>
<td>What types of supports do you think would be most appropriate to allocate to this student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 21</td>
<td>What do you think is the most likely educational outcome for this student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 22</td>
<td>Do you think this student has a better chance of leading a normal life as a functioning member of society than the previous student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 23</td>
<td>Which of these interventions do you think would be most effective for managing this student’s behavior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 24</td>
<td>Which intervention would you be more likely to choose for this student and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 25</td>
<td>Any final thoughts on effective strategies for this student?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix D: Additional Pilot Interview Questions

**Pilot Interview Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Pilot Question</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Was there anything that was unclear in the interview or wording that needs to be adjusted?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Were you uncomfortable when answering any of the questions; how can this be improved?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Are there any other improvements that can be made to make this interview go more smoothly or efficiently?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Were the interview questions clear? Were you ever unsure what was being asked of you?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Did the interviewer probe for an appropriate amount of depth?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Interview Vignettes

Vignettes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Vignette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With Callous- Unemotional Traits</td>
<td>D.W. is a student in your class. Since the beginning of the year, D.W. frequently calls out and disrupts class. D.W.’s most disruptive behaviors are making noises during silent reading, arguing with adults about completing assignments, and running around the room. D.W. is hyperactive but often shows little emotion and has been described as “flat”. D.W. has few friends but is often considered the “ringleader” of a few other students who also display disruptive behaviors. You have observed D.W. convincing these other students into misbehaving such as refusing to comply with requests or bullying other students. Lately, D.W. has been getting increasingly frustrated and having frequent confrontations with peers. A month ago D.W. pushed another student to the ground during recess in order to win a game being played, causing the student to sustain a minor bump on the head. D.W. laughed at the student and was sent to the office. Last week D.W. kicked your teacher’s aide because she said she would not give D.W. a sticker until an incorrect problem was fixed on the worksheet D.W. was working on. D.W. was again sent to the office. When confronted later, D.W. expressed no remorse regarding hurting the aide and said it would likely happen again if she refused to give D.W. a sticker next time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without Callous-Unemotional Traits</td>
<td>L.P. is another student in your class. L.P. is often disruptive which consists of calling out, not staying in the seat or designated area, constantly talking to peers, and requiring constant redirections from you and other adults in your room. L.P. has several friends but engages in frequent confrontations if things do not go the way L.P. wants. However, despite L.P.’s occasional temper tantrums or brief displays of rage, L.P. is kind and typically very happy. Two weeks ago L.P. was arguing with a student and threw some nearby math blocks in frustration at the student. L.P. hit the student very hard and the student began to cry. L.P. was sent to the office. Upon debriefing with L.P. about the incident, L.P. inquired about the student and how bad they were hurt and apologized multiple times. A few days ago, L.P. punched a lunch aide during lunch after the aid scolded L.P. for yelling. L.P. immediately apologized when the aid jumped back and rubbed her arm. L.P. was sent to the office and asked the principal if writing the aid an apology letter was a good idea. The principal agreed and L.P. wrote an apology letter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix F: Interview Intervention Choices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reinforcing</td>
<td>The student’s behavior is evaluated at the end of each day on a rating scale of 1-5 on each target behavior identified by the teacher and school team. If the student earned 4 points or more, the student will receive a reward such as a prize from a prize box, a piece of candy, time with the teacher, or reinforcer identified by a reinforcement inventory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punitive</td>
<td>The student’s behavior is evaluated at the end of each day on a rating scale of 1-5 on each target behavior identified by the teacher and school team. If the student earned less than 3 points, the student will receive a punishment for example: loss of a privilege such as recess or lunch in the cafeteria with peers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Recruitment Flyer

Are you an Elementary School Teacher?

Research participants needed for 25-35 minute interview!
Location of your choice
$10 gift card to Target or Starbucks

Call or Email: Casie Peet
casiepeet@mail.usf.edu
(720)-987-4932

*The purpose of this study is to further understand teachers’ perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards students with conduct problems in order to understand how these students are approached in a school setting
Appendix H: Thematic Codebook

Domain I: Cause of the Behavior

1. Theme 1: Home Factors
   a. Subtheme 1a: Home Practices
      i. Teachers attribute home practices, parenting practices (e.g. lack of consequences) or observing specific behavior in the home (e.g. modeling what they see at home) to the cause of the student's conduct problems.
         1. Ex: modeling, no behavior management or consequences at home
   b. Subtheme 1b: Maltreatment
      i. Teachers note that they believe a contributing reason why the student is displaying conduct problems is due to maltreatment, which includes trauma, abuse, or neglect (e.g. lack of nutrition).
         1. Ex: trauma/abuse, neglect, diet, lack of attention, lack of socialization, maltreatment not otherwise specified
   c. Subtheme 1c: Other Home Factors
      i. Teachers note additional or unspecified home factor to the cause of the conduct problem (e.g. something going on at home).
         1. Ex: personal life, “something going on”, general support at home

2. Theme 2: Within Child Factor
   a. Subtheme 2a: Disorder or Emotional Disturbance
      i. Teachers identify a disorder or emotional disturbance as the cause of the problem behavior indicating a stable within-child trait.
         1. Ex: ADHD, psychopathy, EBD, Inner Demons, no remorse, anger
   b. Subtheme 2b: Social Skill Deficit
      i. Teachers attribute the cause of the problem behavior to a social skills deficit, which may include interpersonal skills or emotion regulation skills.
         1. Ex: emotion regulation, social skills, impulse control

3. Theme 3: Environmental Factors
   a. Subtheme 3a: Instructional Mismatch
      i. Teachers identify the cause of a behavior may be related to the classroom environment such as a curriculum, mismatch (e.g. work being too easy or too difficult), or a need for alternate instructional strategies (e.g. not being given enough opportunity to respond).
         1. Ex: gifted, bored, academic struggles, lack of opportunities to respond, SLD
   b. Subtheme 3b: Other Environmental Factors
      i. Teachers believe the cause of the behavior to be related to any other environmental factor that is present in the immediate environment (not home) such as peer conflict.
         1. Ex: “look at environment”, worked in the past

4. Theme 4: Function of the Behavior
   a. Teachers identify the function of a behavior such as attention seeking when discussing the student's conduct problems.
i. Ex: just looking for attention, attention seeking, task avoidance, trying to gain control, manipulating situation

Domain II: Efficacy

1. Theme 5: Additional Supports
   a. Subtheme 5a: Counseling or Mental Health
      i. Teachers believe the student needs additional supports in the realm of mental health, counseling, or therapy.
         1. Ex: Needs therapy, counseling
   b. Subtheme 5b: Social Skills Training (provider not specified)
      i. Teachers identify the need for social skills training (outside of the classroom). This may include specific trainings (e.g. anger management) or more generally "social skills training".
         1. Ex: Social skills groups, anger training
   c. Subtheme 5c: School Supports
      i. Teachers note that they would reach out to school supports for assistance in working with the student such as administration, guidance counselors or other student support staff.
         1. “Talk to admin and guidance”
   d. Subtheme 5d: Home-School Collaboration
      i. Teachers emphasize the importance of continuous and ongoing home-school collaboration with the student's parent/guardians.
         1. Ex: Consistent communication or collaboration with parent/home

2. Theme 6: Unconditional persistence
   a. Teachers express a sense of unconditional persistence, expressing they cannot give up on the student and sentiments of perseverance in working with the student.
      i. Ex: “Can never give up” “just have to try”

Domain III: Setting

1. Theme 7: Least Restrictive environment
   a. Teachers emphasize the importance of placing the student in the least restrictive environment and the importance of keeping students in the general education classroom with supports.
      i. Ex: discussion of partial, LRE, “not yet”; importance of being with model peers

Domain IV: Interventions & Strategies

1. Theme 8: Use of Behavioral Strategies
   a. Subtheme 8a: Antecedent Control
      i. Teachers identify strategies to implement in order to prevent the student from displaying conduct problems such as planned ignoring, altering instructional strategies, or placing the student by a model student.
         1. Ex: Planned ignoring, give more attention (general), alter Environment (seating change, switch classes, peer model, opportunities to “release energy”, instructional strategies)
b. Subtheme 8b: Reinforce
   i. Teachers suggest a type of reinforcement plan to reward the student for positive behaviors in either a formal sense (e.g. a behavior chart) or informal strategies such as giving differential attention to positive behaviors.
      1. *Ex: Token economy, behavior chart/contract, give incentives, something for them to work for*

c. Subtheme 8c: Punish
   i. Teachers note the necessity of a type of punitive practices such as taking away a privilege (e.g. recess) or sitting out of an activity.
      1. *Ex: Take away privilege, time out, consequence*

d. Subtheme 8d: Reinforcement, Always
   i. Teachers express the idea the reinforcement is *always* more effective than punishment for all students.
      1. *Ex: Punishment never works, children respond better to reinforcement...*

2. **Theme 9: Additional Strategies**
   a. Subtheme 9a: Supportive Adult Relationship
      i. Teachers propose that the student needs to feel supported by a caring adult either with the teacher (e.g. strengthening the student-teacher relationship) or with another adult (e.g. mentor program).
         1. *Ex: needs to know you care, show compassion, build relationship, needs to know you care, show compassion, build relationship*

b. Subtheme 9b: Classroom Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
   i. Teachers identify that the student would benefit from classroom SEL strategies such as class-wide social skills lessons or a calming area in the classroom the student can use to regulate emotions when frustrated.
      1. *Ex: cool down area, calming skills, cool down, breaks, classroom social skills training*

c. Subtheme 9c: More information
   i. Teachers report that they need more information on the student and express either gathering information (e.g. talking to parents or past teachers) or to being collecting data on the student's behavior.
      1. *Ex: “collect data”, use a behavior tracker, past teachers, talking to parents for to gather information (not working with parent consistently)*

**Domain V: Attitudes & Perceptions**

1. **Theme 10: Expectations of Continuous Struggle**
   a. Teachers express expectations that the student is always going to struggle and/or will need continuous supports throughout their education or throughout life.
      i. *Ex: will always struggle, will need constant support, will always need resources*

2. **Theme 11: Attitudes About Remorse**
   a. Subtheme 11a: Remorse implies control over behavior
i. Teachers note that the student does have control over the behavior (i.e. the behavior is intentional) because they show remorse and know that the behavior is wrong.

1. “The student does have control because the student is sorry afterwards...”

b. Subtheme 11b: Remorse is Atypical

i. Teachers express that remorse or being sorry for their actions is atypical in students.

1. Ex: “I’ve never had a student that wants to apologize”
Appendix I: IRB Approval Letter

July 18, 2017

Casie Peet
Educational and Psychological Studies
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review
IRB#: Pro00027946
Title: Teacher perceptions of students with conduct problems with and without callous unemotional traits

Study Approval Period: 7/18/2017 to 7/18/2018

Dear Ms. Peet:

On 7/18/2017, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
Study Protocol Version 1.7.14.17

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
Consent Form Version 1.7.14.17.pdf

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent documents are valid until the consent document is amended and approved.

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:
(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John A. Schinka, Ph.D.
John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board