Teacher Self-Efficacy in Responding to Problem Behavior: Strategies and Supports

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Teachers encounter escalating emotions and problem behaviors of students in their classrooms regularly. The interactions between students and teachers result in a range of outcomes that impact future relationships between teachers and students, student engagement in learning, and the climate of the learning environment. Therefore, it is important to develop an understanding of effective strategies to de-escalate student emotions and problem behavior. Also, training and supporting teachers in ways that increase their capabilities and confidence to manage complex interactions in the classroom is critical. Self-efficacy research rooted in Bandura's (1977, 1997) work identified four theoretical sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and emotional and physiological states that promote confidence in one's performance. Teachers shared their confidence level in using self-identified strategies to de-escalate students' emotions and problem behavior. In addition, teachers shared the ways they learned to use the strategies. The ways that teachers learned strategies informed the *sources* of self-efficacy that influenced teachers' confidence specific to de-escalating students' emotions and problem behaviors. The findings of the study demonstrate that all four sources of self-efficacy influenced teachers' capabilities and confidence in responding to students' escalating emotions and problem behavior. Additionally, training and supports for teachers designed around Bandura's (1977, 1997) sources of self-efficacy may foster both the capabilities and confidence in using strategies to de-escalate students' emotions and problem behavior.

Keywords: disruptive behavior, teacher self-efficacy, alternative education, classroom

behavior management

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Preface

The decision to apply to a doctoral program and commit to embracing the process came much later in my career. The three-year journey to a completed dissertation was inspired by countless individuals. Individuals who have touched my life both personally and professionally over 30 years in education.

To the educators, mentors, leaders, and students who shaped my experiences, beliefs, and most importantly my passion for better understanding human interactions, empathy, and a true commitment to young people, I am indebted to you. You will never truly know the impact that each of you have had on me. *Thank you!*

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1.0 Introduction

Teachers face challenges meeting the needs of diverse learners every day. Addressing the continuum of students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs within a classroom setting has become increasingly challenging for teachers (Lehr & Lange, 2003). Approximately 20 percent of adolescents have a mental health diagnosis (Merikangas, et al., 2010; National Institute of Mental Health, 2016), and half of those students have a behavior or conduct disorder (Merikangas et al., 2010). Of specific concern are the interactions between a student and teacher when a student's emotions and behaviors begin to escalate.

Interactions between students and teachers result in a range of outcomes that impact future relationships between teachers and students (Obsuth et al., 2017). This includes student engagement in learning and the climate of the learning environment (Bear, 2014; Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008). In addition, a lack of training to prevent problem behavior and to reduce the intensity of escalating emotions or problem behavior undermines teachers' confidence (Stough & Montague, 2015; Stough, Montague, Landmark, & Williams-Diehm, 2015). That confidence is partially rooted in a broad social cognitive theory called self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997, 1986).

Self-efficacy is defined as a set of beliefs that an individual develops specific to one's "perceived capabilities to attain designated types of performances and achieve specific results" (Pajares, 1996, p. 546). The initial step in studying teacher self-efficacy when responding to escalating emotions and behaviors of students involved reviewing the literature. Despite numerous studies on self-efficacy, no literature exists on the self-efficacy of teachers when de-escalating students' emotions and problem behaviors. Related research surrounding the development of

teacher self-efficacy in specific classroom management techniques (Emmer & Hickman, 1991; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990) provides context for understanding a teacher's perceived capabilities to effectively navigate interactions with students demonstrating escalating emotions and problem behavior.

Teachers' willingness, ability, and readiness to address students' challenging behavior increases as their self-efficacy regarding classroom management improves (Baker, 2005; Dickie et al., 2014). Therefore, teachers' classroom management skills should be developed through training and support early in their careers. Yet, Stough and Montague (2015) found that both novice and experienced teachers reported a strong need for more training in classroom management. Additionally, teachers crediting preservice training opportunities in classroom management as valuable reported that they would have benefited from experience with students exhibiting disruptive behavior (Stough & Montague, 2015). The intersection of teachers' self-efficacy specific to classroom management with de-escalating students' emotions and problem behavior is a critical aspect of teachers' work.

Bandura's (1997) four theoretical sources of self-efficacy (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and emotional and physiological states) provide useful constructs for understanding a teacher's work. The self-efficacy of a teacher when responding to escalating emotions and problem behaviors motivates the teacher to continue to engage in complex interactions. Therefore, gaining a better understanding of the development of self-efficacy specific to de-escalation in classroom settings is imperative.

Learning more about the perceptions of Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) teachers, with little prior training on how to work with students with behavior disorders, will be primary to the investigation. The study aims to determine if self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977)

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influences teachers' de-escalation practices. Additionally, learning how supports such as training, modeling, encouragement, and self-awareness influence the capacity of a teacher to manage the escalation of a student's emotions and behaviors will be explored.

Three bodies of research informed this study: 1) self-efficacy, 2) Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) programming, and 3) interactions between teachers and students when students escalate. These three areas of research created a foundation for the conceptual framework for this study. A constructivist paradigm framed data collection and the research questions.

The constructivist paradigm underscores the importance of the researcher's values in designing and participating in research (Mertens, 2015). Although the researcher is not independent of the research, they seek to understand experiences through participants' perspectives in the research process. During the process, researchers and participants socially construct knowledge during reflection and ongoing interactions (Schwandt, 2000). Together participants lived experiences and the ongoing interactions will create a new understanding of knowledge. The research questions focus on the self-efficacy of educators and the socially constructed realities specific to working with students who demonstrate escalating emotions and problem behaviors.

Research questions were formulated based on gaps in the literature on both the experiences of AEDY teachers and the absence of research on teacher self-efficacy specific to the de-escalation of student emotions and problem behaviors. This study will address the following two research questions. First, *how are Bandura's theoretical sources of self-efficacy reflected in teachers' reported experiences with students' escalating emotions and problem behaviors?* Responding to student emotions and problem behavior requires both self-awareness and skills that successfully de-escalate situations. The development of teachers' self-awareness and de-escalation skills

fosters both physical and psychological safety for everyone. Understanding how teachers have developed the self-awareness and skills to intervene effectively will provide evidence to support the types of professional learning that are most meaningful. Bandura's (1997, 2012) sources of self-efficacy frame four ways adults may become confident in their ability to effectively de-escalate a student's emotions and problem behaviors. The literature suggests that mastery experiences are the most critical self-efficacy orientation of the four sources (Bandura, 2012). One objective of the inquiry is to discover if the other sources (vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and emotional and physiological states) also shape teachers' self-efficacy specific to the complex interactions that transpire when a student's emotions and problem behaviors escalate.

Next, *what specific training and support influence teachers' perceived self-efficacy in effectively dealing with students' escalating emotions and problem behaviors?* Teachers participate in many professional training initiatives. The ability to understand what training and support influenced teacher's perceived self-efficacy when responding to students with escalating emotions and problem behavior will help target the specific training and support necessary to develop teacher self-efficacy.

This research will contribute to the literature surrounding AEDY programming. The research will also contribute to literature surrounding teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management and the use of de-escalation strategies. In addition, the research will inform aspects of training and support that increases teacher self-efficacy, specific to de-escalation of students' emotions and problem behaviors.

2.0 Literature Review

Schools across the country are charged with educating a broad continuum of learners with diverse experiences and needs. The challenge for schools to educate all of America's children has become an unrelenting one (Lehr & Lange, 2003). Students who exhibit highly disruptive and potentially aggressive behavior are of significant concern. As Fleisig (2002) explains:

> During the last quarter century, a dramatic rise in aggressive and highly disruptive behavior has been noted in our society. This increase has been reflected not only in families but also in the institutions that serve the public, such as schools, hospitals and health care organizations. In most cases, these organizations have been unprepared to address these issues. (p. 4)

Merikangas et al. (2010) find that 49.5 percent of adolescents (13-18 years old) attending school reported having met at least one of the diagnostic criteria for a mental health diagnosis, while 22 percent had a serious mental illness. "A serious mental illness (SMI) is defined as a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder resulting in serious functional impairment, which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities" (Merikangas et al., 2010). Merikangas et al. (2010) also find that half of those diagnosed with SMI had behavior and conduct disorders, 8 percent of adolescents had some type of anxiety disorder, and 11 percent were diagnosed with mood disorders. The statistics are alarming given that in a Report of the National Advisory Mental Health Council's Workgroup on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Intervention Development and Deployment published in 2001, "one in 10 children and adolescents suffers from mental illness severe enough to result in significant functional impairment." The increase in numbers of young people diagnosed with mental health disorders who present with

disruptive behavior implies that school personnel must be ready to address students' social and emotional needs through both prevention and intervention.

Finally, students who have experienced traumatic events or ongoing toxic stress could potentially present behaviors that are disruptive as a result of physiological and psychological responses (Dods, 2013). Although a number of youth who have experienced trauma are diagnosed with mental health disorders, many others may go undiagnosed. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES) (Felitti et al., 1998) indicates that more than half of respondents reported experiencing at least one adverse childhood experience, while another 25 percent reported experiencing two or more adverse childhood experiences. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as experiences that often cause household dysfunction such as drug and alcohol use, a household member with mental illness, domestic violence, or a household member participating in criminal behavior (Felitti et al., 1998). The exposure to ACEs creates stress in children that can interrupt normal development if the stress is toxic over time (Sacks & Murphey, 2018). Sacks and Murphey (2018) further find that "children who have experienced ACEs are more likely to struggle in school and have emotional and behavioral challenges" ("Adverse" section, para. 1).

The statistics illustrate the need for educator awareness that an unexpected number of students have been exposed to traumatic situations, and that the exposure has likely resulted in an increase in the number of students demonstrating disruptive behavior in the school and the classroom setting. In addition, students who have mental health disorders or prior exposure to trauma may or may not be receiving special education services. In summary, all students have the potential to become upset emotionally and potentially to escalate behaviorally. Students with mental health diagnoses or who were exposed to traumatic situations have an increased likelihood

of exhibiting both internalizing or externalizing behaviors that interfere with their own learning and the learning of others. Given the likelihood of escalating emotions and behavioral outbursts and the focus on inclusive environments, all educators would benefit from increased knowledge and skill development in classroom management strategies and de-escalation techniques.

The goal of the study is to better understand the self-efficacy of teachers who are charged with responding to students who exhibit disruptive behaviors. Specifically, the study explores settings known as Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) programs in one Mid-Atlantic state. The review of literature begins with an explanation of the setting for the research. The literature review then moves to an explanation of the underlying theoretical concept of self-efficacy. Lastly, the reader finds a section on the link between teacher self-efficacy and classroom interactions.

2.1 Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) Programs

Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) programs serve public school students who meet eligibility criteria under the Pennsylvania (PA) Public School Code. The PA Public School Code of 1949 defines a student who is disruptive as one who "poses a clear threat to the safety and welfare of other students or the school staff, who creates an unsafe school environment or whose behavior materially interferes with the learning of other students or disrupts the overall educational process" (Article 14, Section 1901-C). The remainder of this section will briefly explore AEDY programming in Pennsylvania.

AEDY programs in Pennsylvania require approval by the state through an application process. Various schools and organizations apply to operate AEDY programs. AEDY programs

exist in public school districts, vocational-technical schools, some charter schools, and intermediate units (Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), 2020). In addition, private providers often run AEDY programs as private alternative education institutions (PDE, 2020). The state monitors all programs through year-end data submission. In addition, the PA Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education monitors AEDY programs serving students with disabilities to ensure appropriate delivery of necessary supports and services. AEDY programs must renew the application for approval to operate every two or three years, depending on the program type (PDE, 2020).

School districts frequently identify and contract with one or more approved programs to ensure a continuum of options for students when an AEDY placement is necessary. The school district may identify its in-house program, one or two outside programs, or a combination of their in-house program and programs operated by public or private organizations. The home school district refers students to the AEDY program. Each referral requires information specific to the disruptive behavior or school code violation. Referrals also include information on actions taken by the home school district prior to referral. Additionally, demographic data, including whether a student has a disability or has English Language Learning (ELL) needs, are part of the referral (PDE, 2020). Student placements in AEDY programs are intended to address behavioral needs on a short-term basis; therefore, placement review occurs every 45 days. Progress on behavioral goals determines services and supports for students at each 45-day review. Students continue in the program or transition back to public school based on the findings of the 45-day review. Occasionally, a review indicates a need for more intense therapeutic supports or other specialized services.

Specific guidelines exist to operate the program for disruptive youth, including a minimum of 20 instructional hours each week, two and one-half hours of counseling per week in individual or group sessions for each student, and the establishment of individualized academic and behavioral goals (PDE, 2020). The 20 hours of instruction address math, English, social studies, science, and health/life skills. The instruction is delivered at the student's grade level and aligned with the sending district's course requirements. AEDY program staff are most often certificated in a subject area in general education, while AEDY programs that serve students who require special education supports must employ special education teachers to provide instruction (PDE, 2020).

2.2 Competencies Needed to Teach in AEDY Programs

Foley and Pang (2006) indicate a need for educators who work in alternative programs to be highly competent in the understanding of general education standards and curriculum, behavior management strategies, positive behavior supports, and knowledge of community resources. Teachers working in alternative education settings may need to overcome attitudes that include stereotypes of students perceived to have lower reachability (Demanet & Van Houtte, 2012). Overcoming stigma and stereotypes regarding students referred to alternative educational settings may be directly linked to the effort the teacher puts forth in building relationships through persistence and support. Student-teacher relationships were found by McNeely (2005) to be the prime predictor of decreasing behaviors that put students at risk for exclusionary practices such as time out of the learning environment, suspensions, and expulsion. Student-teacher relationships that focus on the best interest of the student and meet the student where they are developmentally

depict caring on the part of the teacher (Mihalas, Morse, Allsopp, & Alvarez-McHatton, 2009). Noddings (2005) defines caring as a situational response to a person's needs. The relationships that alternative education teachers develop with each student, regardless of the history and skills the teachers bring to the relationship, will maximize the opportunities to reduce the misconduct (Demanet & Van Houtte, 2012; Dods, 2013), lessen emotional and behavioral escalation, and meet the student's needs (Mihalas et al., 2009). Teachers may also benefit from experiences that revisit deficit perspectives, interrogate perceptions of social inequalities, and provide opportunities for dialogue that reduce attempts to fix perceived problems that students experience (Sleeter & Owuor, 2011).

The expertise necessary to address the needs of students placed in AEDY programs has often resulted in teachers suggesting a need for additional personnel who specialize in addressing emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs (Lehr, Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2009). The suggestions reflect teachers' perceived lack of knowledge surrounding the science of human behavior, effective interventions, and exposure to working with students who exhibit disruptive behavior. Aside from gaining perspective surrounding a student's history and developing strong student-teacher relationships, Kerr and Valenti (2009) state that the use of effective strategies in a welcoming classroom environment help to avoid the escalation of emotions and behavior of students. Therefore, the utilization of effective instructional practices that engage all students, and clear and concise expectations, rules, and requests, minimize potential escalation of student emotions and behavior (Kerr & Valenti, 2009).

Effective communication and collaboration skills are crucial to teachers' success in AEDY programs. Teachers need highly effective communication and collaboration skills when working with others in distinctly different roles. Effective communication and collaboration skills ensure

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that programming addresses the specific needs of individual students who have diverse academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs (Foley & Pang, 2006). The task of effective communication and collaboration requires excellent oral and written communication skills, as well as refined active listening and problem-solving skills. Ross and Bruce (2007) suggest that professional development focusing on the "sources of efficacy can contribute to creating more confident teachers" (p. 59).

2.3 Teacher Self-Efficacy

Bandura's (1997) four theoretical sources of self-efficacy (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and emotional and physiological states) provide useful constructs for understanding teachers' work. A brief explanation of this theory follows, including a short review of its application to teaching. Lastly, we consider how responding to a student's disruptive behavior may be linked to an educator's perceived self-efficacy.

"Self-efficacy is embedded in a broader social cognitive theory" (Bandura, 2012, p. 11). Individuals' beliefs about their capabilities are a result of the ongoing interactions of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors during various activities and under specific conditions (Bandura, 2012). The beliefs individuals develop regarding their capabilities during given activities and under specific conditions occur in four ways. Mastery, the strongest predictor of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2012), develops when an individual is determined to overcome barriers and learns to make adjustments during an activity and under specific conditions until they achieve success. Vicarious experiences form one's self-efficacy through observing others who are similar and who are persistent in their efforts. Bandura (2012) also referred to this source of self-efficacy

as "social modeling," which raises one's hopes by seeing someone similar achieve success (p. 13). Next, verbal and social persuasion influences one's belief in himself/herself, which, in turn, may increase one's resolve during difficult situations. Verbal and social persuasion occurs when encouragement is offered specific to one's ability to master skills and complete tasks (Bandura 1997). The final method of influence on developing self-efficacy is a person's emotional and physiological states. The conditions or situations that exacerbate anxiousness and mental or physical exhaustion directly affect perceptions of one's own self-efficacy. When one's perception of self-efficacy is questionable, the individual may experience discouragement and relinquish the desire to persist. Bandura (1993) argues that "there is a marked difference between possessing knowledge and skills, and being able to use them well under taxing conditions" (p. 119). The development of skills occurs through formal professional development and informal modeling of colleagues' use of skills. In addition, teachers learn from being encouraged to implement a new strategy and then practice that skill. Teachers' self-efficacy depends on their confidence in using new skills. Individual teachers' belief in their capabilities are therefore not only related to their use of a skill but are a result of their perception of how effectively they use the skill in a variety of situations and under different conditions.

Researchers have devoted extensive time and effort to defining self-efficacy through an educational lens and identifying ways to quantify the construct (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) theorize that self-efficacy is multi-dimensional and places emphasis on seeing teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy as different facets of teacher self-efficacy. Teaching efficacy is specifically defined as the beliefs teachers have regarding their ability to bring about student learning (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996). Both Ross, Cousins, and Gadalla (1996) and Raudenbusch,

Rowan, and Cheong (1992) find that teaching efficacy is related to Bandura's outcome expectancy, while personal teaching efficacy is the judgment of one's abilities to achieve specific goals. Outcome expectancy is a person's estimate that certain behaviors will result in a specific outcome, such as believing students will learn new material. Personal teaching efficacy varies for teachers based on how successful and prepared the teacher feels and by how engaged the students are in learning. Benz, Bradley, Alderman, and Flowers (1992) and Ross et al. (1996) establish that one's years of teaching experience, knowledge of a content area, and expertise in assessment and teaching strategies are factors that contribute to a teacher's perceived self-efficacy as well.

Research has revealed that a teacher's perceived self-efficacy does, in fact, influence instructional behavior (Holzberger, Philipp, & Kunter, 2013; Milner, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Many cross-sectional studies support the effect of teacher self-efficacy on innovative teaching methods (Guskey, 1988), student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998), and teacher well-being (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000).

Holzberger, Philipp, and Kunter (2013) identify a critical consideration specific to cross-sectional research, indicating that self-efficacy should not be solely a determining factor but "may also be regarded as an outcome of educational processes" (p. 775). In a longitudinal study, Holzberger et al. (2013) find "that self-efficacy impacts instructional quality more proximally" (p. 782). This suggests that self-efficacy may involve a reciprocal process in which self-efficacy increases as a result of success and decreases if success does not occur.

Finally, other cross-sectional studies indicate that teachers' beliefs and actions in classroom management play a major role in the development of self-efficacy (Emmer & Hickman, 1991; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). Classroom management aims to maintain order, promote student engagement, and facilitate self-discipline (Bear, 2014). Numerous approaches exist. A

management system approach is rooted in the various techniques chosen by the teacher (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Teachers choose techniques that prevent problem behavior, such as generating norms that promote order, sustaining students' attention with engaging lessons, building student-teacher and student-student relationships, providing praise, and identifying a continuum of consequences (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).

Markedly, the two most interesting findings in the O'Neill and Stephenson (2011) research on teacher self-efficacy specific to classroom management include, first, the increasing number of studies done in this area, and, second, the number of scales created to measure teachers' self-efficacy specific to classroom management. Additionally, the majority of scales were created without reference to research explicit to classroom management at the time. Regardless, the classroom management area of self-efficacy is found to be the most distinctive (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The uniqueness of the classroom management factor may support, in part, why this area of teacher self-efficacy has increasingly gained popularity among educational researchers as a separate field of study over time (Emmer & Hickman, 1991; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011).

Brouwers and Tomic (2000) studied self-efficacy and its relationship to teacher burnout specific to three domains (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment). They argue that emotional exhaustion is directly related to teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy, while teachers' self-efficacy then shapes both the depersonalization and personal accomplishment experienced by the teacher (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). Moreover, a multivariate meta-analysis of 16 studies showed a moderate relationship between teacher-efficacy and burnout's three domains. This study concludes that personal accomplishment has the largest effect, indicating that teachers with low self-efficacy specific to classroom management feel a lesser sense of accomplishment (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014). These findings provide evidence

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that Bandura's self-efficacy is critical in developing proficiencies in instructional and behavioral management in the classroom. Teachers' self-efficacy is also vital to reducing teacher burnout and emotional exhaustion through the development of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social and verbal persuasion, and the management of emotional and physiological states that create heightened anxiousness.

Teacher performance literature that focuses on how teacher behavior is influenced by feedback supports the importance of how efficacious beliefs are both formed and are critical to teacher performance (Akkuzu, 2014). This finding is best captured by Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) when they describe how the three "components of 'triadic reciprocal determinism' suggest that environmental factors (e.g., feedback) affect both personal factors (e.g., self-efficacy belief) and behaviors (e.g., teaching performance)" (p. 39). Other contextual elements that influence self-efficacy include student abilities (Medway, 1979) and teacher influence (Guskey, 1987). Medway (1979) finds that teachers attributed a student's school difficulties to the student, often due to the student's lack of motivation, minimally affecting the teacher's perceived self-efficacy, if at all. Guskey (1987) finds that when individual students performed poorly, the teacher reported less of an impact on their perceived self-efficacy than when a group of students performed poorly. The contextual factor of situational variables viewed as outside of the control of the teacher served as a buffer in affecting the teacher's perceived self-efficacy.

In summary, teacher self-efficacy is a complex multidimensional construct that is influenced by various contextual factors and other theoretical constructs. Guskey (1987) argues that "by considering the context variables that affect measures of teacher efficacy it is hoped we will gain a better understanding of this construct and its influence on the teaching and learning process" (p. 46).

2.4 Behavioral Escalation in the Classroom Setting

The plan for responding to behavior is first demonstrated in a teacher's classroom management plan. Nelson (1996) identifies an important problem with practice, indicating that "educators have not traditionally viewed the low-level disruptive behaviors that are commonly found in classrooms as the building blocks for chronic and dramatic behavior" (p. 150). The dramatic behavior that Nelson (1996) alludes to is behavior that escalates and may result in physical harm to others. Therefore, practices specific to responding to escalating emotions or behaviors are vital. Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai (2008) reviewed evidence-based classroom management practices and placed them into five empirically supported categories essential to an effective plan:

> (a) maximize structure; (b) post, teach, review, monitor, and reinforce expectations; (c) actively engage students in observable ways; (d) use a continuum of strategies for responding to appropriate behaviors; and (e) use a continuum of strategies to respond to inappropriate behaviors. (p. 353)

Teachers who employ strategies in all five categories create a very strong class-wide foundation that increases predictability and structure while reducing the number of students who need additional supports. The teacher also has the ability to adjust the plan as needed. The plan can be strengthened through increased frequency or intensity of specific categories as indicated by student responses.

The intensity of escalating emotions and behaviors by an individual student who demonstrates highly disruptive and frequent episodes may require a crisis plan in addition to a predictable and consistently implemented class-wide plan. The crisis plan may provide a support within a Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) or be a separate but clearly articulated plan to

support the student in returning to a calm state. A crisis plan should include both prevention and intervention steps. An individual student crisis plan can be parceled into seven phases, identified as calm, triggers, agitation, acceleration, peak, de-escalation, and recovery (Colvin & Scott, 2015). Each phase should integrate strategies intended to return a student to a condition of calm (Colvin & Scott, 2015; Shukla-Mehta & Albin, 2003). Prevention strategies maintain the calm of a student by teaching and reinforcing prosocial behaviors, academic skills, and learning strategies while providing accommodations that allow access to learning in advance of emotional and behavioral dysregulation (Colvin & Scott, 2015; Shukla-Mehta & Albin, 2003). Intervention strategies during the calm, trigger, and agitation phases are critical to avoiding a full-blown crisis situation that can harm student-teacher relationships, harm student self-worth, and risk physical injury to teachers and students. Shukla-Mehta and Albin (2003) recommend knowing the student's triggers, intervening early by identifying any indication that the student is struggling to remain regulated, distracting or redirecting the student to something that the student is good at and at which the student can show responsible behavior, and, at all costs, avoiding the act of escalating with the student. The final phases of the crisis plan address the steps necessary to maintain safety and return a student to the learning environment (Colvin & Scott, 2015). AEDY programs require that each student have a behavior plan that targets the disruptive behavior that caused them to be transferred to the AEDY program (PDE, 2013). Crisis plans frequently strengthen the behavior plan developed for the individual student.

The escalation of student emotions and problem behaviors that often begin as disruptive behavior are most concerning. The escalation of behavior is often the result of a student demonstrating an initial low-level behavior that results in an adult's reactive response that further escalates the student's behavior, creating a disruption in the learning environment (Kerr & Valenti,

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2009). In addition, Evaldsson and Melander (2017) identify the role that student agency plays in non-compliant responses to teacher reproaches and the conflicting issues that arise during the interactions. The sequential interactions between the student and teacher require a combined effort that escalates behaviors and emotion and is rooted in order, authority, and accountability (Evaldsson & Melander, 2017; Macbeth, 1991). The escalation can result in acts of aggression and the exclusion of students from the educational environment (classroom or the school), directly affecting their opportunity to engage in learning.

Additionally, Woolfolk, Rosoff, and Hoy (1990) find that teachers' self-efficacy is often influenced by their pupil control ideology and successful experiences with student learning and managing the classroom environment. Willower, Eidell, and Hoy (1967) describe teachers' pupil control ideology on a continuum. Custodial orientation defines one end of the continuum, while humanistic orientation defines the opposing end of the continuum. Control ideology dominates in the "traditional school that provides a rigid and highly controlled setting concerned primarily with the maintenance of order. Students are perceived as irresponsible and undisciplined persons who must be managed through punitive measures" (Woolfolk et al., 1990, p.139). An educator's reactive response to gain control over student behavior can escalate both the student's emotions and behavior and the teacher's emotions and behavior. Teachers' responses to either minor problem behavior that is not severely disruptive to the classroom or to major behavior that is severely disruptive to the classroom have the potential to escalate the interaction. Adult responses that further escalate an interaction are more likely if the teacher has not been properly trained to manage problem behavior (Kerr & Valenti, 2009; Shukla-Mehta & Albin, 2003) and has a custodial orientation of pupil control ideology (Willower, et al., 1967; Woolfolk, et al., 1990).

Escalating interactions between students and teachers in schools negatively impact student-teacher relationships. Student perceptions of the student-teacher relationship motivate students' behavior (Obsuth et al., 2017). Therefore, students' perceptions following an escalating interaction may result in negative beliefs about the relationship (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2019). Teachers must consider their own attitudes, emotions, and behaviors when thinking about a plan to help a student who may escalate emotionally and behaviorally. Austin and Sciarra (2016) studied the common approach of addressing problem behaviors by focusing on the student's disruptive behavior rather than also considering the teacher's strengths and needs in the interaction. Austin and Sciarra (2016) assert that:

> The very real problem with this perspective is that it fails to acknowledge the fact that the teacher and student are always in a relationship with each other, and that all relationships are recursive, the teacher's cultural influences as well as her emotional and psychological states are as important to the quality of the relationship as the student's. (p. 231)

Interactions that escalate student emotions and problem behavior, regardless of the precipitating variables, result in an increased risk of poor outcomes. The poor outcomes involve a negative impact on academic, emotional, social, and behavioral skill development (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2019). Understanding teacher self-efficacy during student interactions that involve escalating student emotions and problem behavior may inform decisions regarding teacher training and support. The informed decisions will better prepare teachers with de-escalation strategies that build teachers' capabilities and confidence, and so improve teachers' self-efficacy. The improved teacher self-efficacy will result in decreased risk of poor outcomes when students' emotions and problem behavior escalate.

2.5 Summary

Three bodies of research inform this study: 1) self-efficacy, 2) Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) programming, and 3) interactions between teachers and students when students escalate. There is a plethora of research on self-efficacy and the de-escalation of student emotions and behaviors in classroom settings. However, there is no literature on teachers' self-efficacy specific to de-escalating students' emotions and problem behaviors in AEDY settings. The next section outlines the methods used to conduct this study pertaining to the exploration of teacher's self-efficacy in de-escalating students' emotions and problem behavior in AEDY schools.

3.0 Methods

This chapter describes the setting, participants, and the human subject protections surrounding data collection. Next, the interview protocol and methodology for the study are explained. Lastly, details outlining the steps for analyzing data are also explained. The study was designed to answer the following two research questions:

1. How are Bandura's theoretical sources of self-efficacy reflected in teachers' reported experiences with students' escalating emotions and problem behaviors?

2. What specific training and support influence teachers' perceived self-efficacy in effectively dealing with a student's escalating emotions and problem behaviors?

3.1 Setting

The setting for this study was two Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) approved AEDY schools run by one organization in a Mid-Atlantic state. The schools have been in operation for over 50 years and serve students in grades 7 through 12 who are referred by nearby school districts. In addition, all students referred to the programs meet eligibility under PA Public School Code of 1949 as youth who demonstrate disruptive behaviors. Finally, all students admitted to an AEDY program must have a behavior plan to support student success (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2013).

The two AEDY schools were chosen as a convenience sample. The AEDY schools provided access to teachers who had experiences de-escalating students' emotions and problem behaviors.

The numbers of students attending the schools fluctuate throughout the year. Often, the census in the school building is low at the start of each school year. As the school year progresses, the average number of students in the school can reach thirty. Students are often in AEDY programs for short periods of time. Therefore, each school can serve upwards of 75 or more students in a school year. The largest percentage of students are generally male and 15 to 16 years old. Each school has an average of 12 content and special area teachers, four counselors, two student support specialists, and one special education liaison. Each school has one administrator on staff to oversee operations.

Student referrals to the AEDY program occur when their needs related to disruptive behavior exceed the school district's ability to meet those needs. The length of time a student attends an AEDY program varies by student. A team makes the decision to transition students back to their home district or to another placement. The team includes AEDY staff, personnel from the student's home district, family members, and the student. Student progress is evaluated every 45 days.

3.2 Participants

Volunteers from two AEDY schools within one organization were recruited for this study. Five male volunteers from both AEDY programs participated in the study. The number of teaching years in education ranged from 10 to 25 years. Four of the teachers reported their race as white

and one teacher stated he was black. Each teacher taught one primary subject: science, math, or social studies. Hereafter, fictitious names protect the anonymity of participants.

3.2.1 Recruitment and Consent Procedures

The researcher secured a letter of approval to conduct the study from the director of the school sites prior to conducting interviews (Appendix A). The researcher sent an email to the director of the school sites and the principals of the schools. In the email, the principals were asked to forward the email to all general education teachers who had worked for the alternative education setting for at least one calendar year, inviting them to participate. The email contained information about the purpose of the study, any potential risks and benefits of participation in the study, and the use of the results of the study. In addition, the email contained logistical information specific to the estimated time necessary for the interview and the scheduling of the interview.

On the day of each scheduled interview, the principal investigator reviewed a formal letter of consent and assigned the participant an identification number. The letter of consent (Appendix B) outlined the nature and purpose of the research study to each participant and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. In addition, the letter of consent articulated the opportunity to ask questions before and after the interview. The assignment of an identification number ensured anonymity during data collection, transcription, analysis, and future reporting.

Next, the researcher used the interview protocol (Appendix C) to conduct the interviews. The script described the research topic, purpose of the study, anonymity of participants, and the school, and provided contact information for any future follow-up (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The interview protocol was comprised of specific open-ended questions and potential probing questions to elicit details to individuals' responses. The outlined protocol ensured standardization

of the interviews across participants.

3.3 Interview Questions

This study used semi-structured interview questions. Brinkmann (2013) identifies four critical characteristics of semi-structured interview protocols. Those characteristics include "the interviewer's *purpose* of obtaining knowledge; they revolve around *descriptions* provided by the interviewee; such descriptions are commonly about *life world phenomena* as experienced; and understanding the meaning of the descriptions involves some kind of interpretation" (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 25). The interview questions were open-ended and derived from Bandura's theoretical framework of self-efficacy as well as the literature on self-efficacy, classroom management, AEDY programming, and the research questions (Table 1). Interview questions were designed using main questions, follow-up questions, and probing to gain a deep understanding of responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interview questions supported a conversational approach to inquiry. This strategy permitted the participant to expound on scenarios, student-teacher interactions, and classroom experiences in a broad as well as deep manner. Interviews were audio-recorded with permission from the participants.

Table 1. Rationale for the Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions	Rationale	Source(s)
RQ 1: How are Bandura's theoretical sources of self-efficacy reflected in teachers' reported experiences with students' escalating emotions and problem behaviors?	IQ 4: Have you ever dealt with a student who got upset in your classroom? Can you tell me about a recent situation with one student?	If general, open-ended questions are asked at the beginning of an interview the researcher processes concerns through a broader lens, and an improved understanding of the context can be formulated	Lehr & Lange, 2003 McNeely, 2005 Mertens, 2015 Milner, 2002
RQ 2: What specific training and support influence teachers' perceived self-efficacy in effectively dealing with students' escalating emotions and problem behaviors?	IQ 5: Now I would like to take *[not more than three]* of the strategies I heard you mention and talk about each one separately. How did you learn that? Who suggested it? Where did you hear about that strategy? When you use [*insert strategy*], do you get feedback from other people?	If the researcher focuses on the lived experiences of the participant, the conversation between researcher and participant can produce rich text for analysis	Bandura, 1997, 2012 Brinkmann, 2013 Emmer & Hickman, 1991 O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011 Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2001 Woolfolk, Rosoff & Hoy, 1990
RQ 1: How are Bandura's theoretical sources of self-efficacy reflected in teachers' reported experiences with students' escalating emotions and problem behaviors?	IQ 5: Now I would like to take *[not more than three]* of the strategies I heard you mention and talk about each one separately. How confident do you feel about using [*the strategy*] on a 1-5 scale?	If a participant describes a topic relevant to the theoretical orientation of self-efficacy, the researcher can probe with questions related to the confidence level of use to see if responses substantiate, or fail to substantiate the theory	Bandura, 1997, 2012 Brouwers & Tomic, 2000 Emmer & Hickman, 1991 McNeely, 2005 Merikangas, et al.,2010 Milner, 2002 O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011 Rubin & Rubin, 2012 Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2001 Woolfolk, Rosoff & Hoy, 19

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3.4 Ethical Safeguards

Participant anonymity was established through the assignment of an identification number given only to the participant at the time of the interview. The identification number, rather than the participant's name, appeared on all transcripts and documents related to the individual.

Data security occurred through the password protection of all documents and use of locked cabinets to house the audio transcripts and documents linked to the research for this study. The web-based application Dedoose was used for data analysis on a password-protected personal laptop.

3.5 Data Analysis

Transcription of the recordings followed the interviews. Creswell (2013) explains, "Reliability can be enhanced if the researcher obtains detailed field notes by employing a good-quality tape for recording and by transcribing the tape" (p. 209). After an initial and thorough examination of all transcripts and documents related to the research, transcribed interviews were uploaded and coded using a web-based application, Dedoose, designed for qualitative data analysis. The researcher reviewed and coded transcriptions in Dedoose with a deductive method known as directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis allows the researcher to use predetermined codes during initial coding. Initial coding was used to categorize transcribed text into the four theoretical sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and emotional and physiological states

(Bandura, 1997, 2012). A second level of coding helped the researcher identify specific exemplars aligned with Bandura's (1997, 2012) four sources of self-efficacy.

Coding captured statements that "often point to regularities or patterns in the setting" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 73). In addition, during coding, the researcher wrote analytic memos that captured the "researcher's reflections and thinking processes about the data" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 95). Specifically, Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) denote that analytic memos help to tie together various data pieces into clusters, which demonstrate instances of general concepts. Finally, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) suggest using an audit trail to achieve unbiased results. The audit trail process examines definitions of predetermined codes to increase accuracy. A colleague scrutinized the definitions in the codebook prior to the coding of transcripts in order to increase the reliability of coding. The multiple steps to analyze the transcript data allowed for a comprehensive view of patterns, themes, new ideas, and questions.

Throughout analysis, the researcher used strategies that improve the validity of qualitative studies. Creswell (2013) considers validation both a strength of qualitative research and "an attempt to assess the 'accuracy' of the findings" (p. 207). Specifically, prolonged engagement, in the form of the researcher's repeat visits to the setting and persistent observations during visits, provided additional context to participant interviews. In addition, the researcher's understanding of the culture of the setting gleaned from prior work with the Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) contributed to contextualizing the interview data. Finally, the detailed and specific characteristics of the setting and the participants in the study will help others to consider the transferability of the findings.

Using directed content analysis, experiences the teachers shared during interviews revealed patterns specific to the research questions. Regarding self-efficacy, teachers shared examples of

how they learned strategies to de-escalate students' emotions and problem behaviors. The examples provided insight into the sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) that influenced teachers' confidence in their capabilities. The ways in which teachers learned strategies were coded as sources of self-efficacy in Dedoose. Additional data was captured in Dedoose, such as the strategies that teachers reported using and the confidence they had using each strategy to de-escalate students' emotions and problem behaviors. Quotations depicting exemplars specific to sources of self-efficacy were also captured. Matrices, or tables, were created to illustrate results (Verdinelli & Scagnoli, 2013) for each of the four sources of self-efficacy (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social and verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological states). Findings were then summarized using the data tables. Conclusions based on the results revealed implications for training and support of teachers in AEDY programs.

4.0 Findings

This study explored teachers' interactions with students in the classroom. Specifically, teachers described the strategies they use to address students' escalating emotions and problem behavior. The study highlights the self-efficacy teachers experienced using these de-escalation strategies.

Bandura (2012) claims that one's self-efficacy is a result of ongoing interactions among personal, behavioral, and environmental factors during various activities and under specific conditions. Individuals' perceived self-efficacy is a reflection of their own beliefs about their capabilities. Specifically, Bandura's (1997) four theoretical sources of self-efficacy (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social and verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological states) provided a basis for the study. Two research questions guided the study:

1. How are Bandura's theoretical sources of self-efficacy reflected in teachers' reported experiences with students' escalating emotions and problem behaviors?

2. What specific training and support influence teachers' perceived self-efficacy in effectively dealing with a student's escalating emotions and problem behaviors?

The following sections provide an analysis of the strategies the teachers identified.

4.1 What Were the Strategies?

Each teacher shared a scenario specific to de-escalating a student's emotions and problem behavior. Self-identified strategies were derived from the shared scenario. At the end of the

interview, teachers added other self-identified strategies they had used in other situations. Table

2 illustrates the strategies each teacher identified.

Table 2. De-escalation Strategies Identified by Teachers

Teachers	Strategy
Gene	1. Connect with student & build rapport
	2. Provide wait time
	3. Remove student from environment
	4. Ask student about needs; "what do you want/need"
Lyle	5. Redirect student to a private space
	6. Replace staff/substitute staff who are targets
	7. Refer student back to the good they have done
	8. Give student space
	9. Use humor
	10. Pat student gently on shoulder
	11. Use gentle words: "This too shall pass"; "You're OK"
Vaughn	12. Use humor
	13. Listen actively
	14. Ignore foul language & trash talk
Otto	15. Give attention & establish connection
	16. Get out of the room with student & do something to calm down
	17. Ask student gently "what is going on" & give time to reply
	18. Avoid going immediately to issuing consequences for behavior
	19. Address the issue privately with the student
Silas	20. Provide wait time while remaining close but focusing on other students
	21. Prompt gently with expectations/ what needs to happen
	22. Give opportunity for student to escape

Interestingly, teachers identified a wide range of both verbal and non-verbal strategies. Strategies identified more than once included connecting with the student, getting the student out of the environment, using wait time, prompting, and using humor. Teachers did not identify identical sets of strategies. In some cases, teachers used two strategies simultaneously. For example, Silas described one strategy as providing both wait time and maintaining proximity to the student at the same time. Next, we examine how teachers learned the strategies.

4.2 How Did Teachers Learn the Strategies?

The researcher then asked the teacher how they learned each strategy. These responses appear in Table 3.

Table 3. How Teachers Learned the Strategies

Teachers	Strategy	Teacher statements describing how they learned the strategy
Gene	Connect with student & build rapport	Just using it in the classroom Just through experience Reading and being in a Master's level program TCI type training for escalating and de-escalating behaviors Mentor & cooperating teacher Cooperating teacher during student teaching Induction program here...mentor Administration observations Teacher meetings . . . they give feedback [strategies]
	Provide wait time	Probably just from experience Trial and error
	Remove student from environment	Trial and error Counselor, behavior specialists Colleague shared classroom with TCI training Cooperating teacher
	Ask student about needs: "what do you want/need"	Experience of "what's gonna work, what's not gonna work" Trial and error TCI training Cooperating teacher
Lyle	Redirect student to a private space	My own trial and error Watching them [other teachers] Colleague who was like a mentor Team leader would say to me do not personalize this
	Replace staff/substitute staff who are targets	Trial and error In an evaluation observation process. Where this is mentioned, this is written down in the observation evaluation It can be just simply talking about a kid with administrators In-service Bouncing back and forth ideas, thoughts [with teammates]

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		Listening to people on my team
	Refer student back to the good they have done	It's intuitive [as] a positive interrupter [because of] tangible reminder
	Give student space	Trial and error through the years Colleague who was like a mentor Hands-on training
	Use humor	Definitely practice Observe [team leader]
	Pat student gently on shoulder	Teammates
	Use gentle words: "This too shall pass"; "You're OK"	Teammates
Vaughn	Use humor	That comes natural
	Listen actively	Constructive criticism in professional development or at conferences Post-graduate study
	Ignore foul language & trash talk	Training [Colleague] in the program
Otto	Give attention & establish connection	Experience In-service meetings Mentor that didn't know he was a mentor
	Get out of the room with student & do something to calm down	Experience A teacher who [is] retired [now] . . . watching him do it
	Ask student gently "what is going on" & give time to reply	Experience
	Avoid going immediately to issuing consequences for behavior	It was experience Watching others [colleague] Positive Behavior Support . . . emphasis here I'm a really, really reflective teacher I have certain people . . . I'll take their feedback and I listen to it
	Address the issue privately with the student	I think it's so important, a person having dignity. . . I always want to maintain dignity
Silas	Provide wait time while remaining close but focusing on other students	That's just an experience thing really I've seen it work in class
	Prompt gently with expectations/ what needs to happen	Just learn from experience [Practicing in prior school as a] behavior specialist Great principals. . . seeing it Great teachers. . . seeing it
	Give opportunity for student to escape	Observing the work [behavior specialists in another school] [Watching] counselors [who] had the relationships

Teachers shared 64 statements specific to the ways they learned how to use management strategies to de-escalate a student. The five most common ways teachers reported learning strategies were trial and error, experience, watching colleagues and mentors, listening to colleagues and mentors, and training. All teachers reported that experience and watching a colleague or mentor influenced how they learned strategies. Teachers developed self-efficacy in conducting their teaching duties through the use of these strategies.

Because self-efficacy was a focus of this study, we now turn to a brief review of the self-efficacy construct as applied to the interview data.

4.3 What Is Self-Efficacy?

Self-efficacy is individuals' beliefs in their capabilities as a result of ongoing interaction among personal, behavioral, and environmental factors during various activities and under specific conditions (Bandura, 2012). Specifically, Bandura's (1997) four theoretical sources of self-efficacy provided a construct for understanding teachers' work in this study. To review, the sources of self-efficacy are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social and verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological states. Individuals develop mastery experiences by overcoming barriers and making adjustments until they achieve success. Vicarious experiences shape teachers' confidence when they watch others persist and succeed. Social and verbal persuasion increase teachers' resolve in overwhelming situations. The encouragement builds belief in future success. Finally, teachers' worry and mental or physical exhaustion signal self-efficacy concerns. Emotional and physiological states perceived as "normal" increase the

likelihood that teachers' confidence increases, resulting in persistence (Snyder & Fisk, 2016). Confidence and persistence build teachers' self-efficacy.

In this study, teachers rated the confidence they experienced in using each strategy. The next section reveals the confidence ratings for each strategy.

4.4 How Confident Were Teachers in Their Ability to De-Escalate Classroom Scenarios?

Teachers rated their confidence using each strategy. The researcher asked teachers to rate their confidence on a 1-5 scale. Table 4 shows how each teacher rated his confidence in using self-identified strategies.

Table 4. Confidence Ratings for Strategies

Teachers	Strategy	Confidence Rating*
Gene	1. Connect with student & build rapport	4
	2. Provide wait time	4
	3. Remove student from environment	2
	4. Ask student about needs: "What do you want/need"	4
Lyle	5. Redirect student to a private space	4+
	6. Replace staff/substitute staff who are targets	4+
	7. Refer student back to the good they have done	5
	8. Give student space	4+
	9. Use humor	4
	10. Pat student gently on shoulder	5
	11. Use gentle words: "This too shall pass"; "You're OK"	5
Vaughn	12. Use humor	5
	13. Listen actively	5
	14. Ignore foul language & trash talk	5+
Otto	15. Give attention & establish connection	4
	16. Get out of the room with student & do something to calm down	3
	17. Ask student gently "what is going on" & give time to reply	3
	18. Avoid going immediately to issuing consequences for behavior	5
	19. Address the issue privately with the student	5
Silas	20. Provide wait time while remaining close but focusing on other students	3.5
	21. Prompt gently with expectations/ what needs to happen	4.5
	22. Give opportunity for student to escape	4

*Key: 1-little to no confidence 2-some confidence 3-confident 4- more confident 5-very confident
Any '+' following a number above represents the quoted 'rating' as provided by the participant

The 1-5 rating identified how self-efficacious teachers felt about using each strategy. In other words, a low rating reflected a strategy that the teacher had little confidence in using. A high rating reflected strong confidence in using the strategy -- in other words, a sense of self-efficacy. Surprisingly, 82 percent of the confidence ratings ranked as "more confident" to "very confident." The high ratings likely reflect the participants' many years of experience, the self-selection of strategies they are confident in using, or both.

To review, all teachers had at least 10 years of experience teaching in the AEDY program. Bandura (1977) hypothesized that personal and contextual factors, including one's prior experiences, contribute to one's self-efficacy. Contextual factors, such as classroom dynamics and individual student interactions, also influence teachers' self-efficacy. Contextual factors may also impact teachers' confidence ratings. For example, Silas rated his confidence in using "a gentle prompt with a reminder" as a 4.5 (between more confident and very confident). The researcher inquired as to why the confidence rating was not a 5 (very confident). Silas explained, "It could be the relationship hasn't been fully formed. Because we get kids in a pretty quick rotation." In another example of not rating confidence as a 5, Otto shared:

It's wonderful if you're able to make it [work]. It's not always. I mean even a student you have a good relationship with, you might not do the exact right thing with that kid at the time . . . I mean, they're kids. Just teenagers. They have some [issues]. You don't know what they come in with.

Next, the researcher explores the sources of self-efficacy affirmed through teachers' responses.

4.5 How Are Bandura's Sources of Self-Efficacy Reflected in Teachers' Responses?

Teachers were not explicitly asked about self-efficacy. Instead, the researcher coded teacher identified strategies based on Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy. Every strategy identified by the teachers was aligned with one or more sources of self-efficacy during coding. Table 5 displays the number of times each teacher provided an example of a source of self-efficacy.

Table 5. Frequency Counts for Examples of Self-Efficacy Sources

	Mastery Experiences	Vicarious Experiences	Social/Verbal Persuasion	Emotional/ Physiological States	*Totals*
Gene	6	8	11	3	28
Lyle	5	7	7	5	24
Vaughn	1	0	4	2	7
Otto	6	3	3	1	13
Silas	2	6	2	3	13
Totals	20	24	27	14	85
% Self-Efficacy Source	24%	29%	32%	15%	100%

Overall, only Otto shared examples of mastery experiences more than other sources. The remaining four teachers shared more examples of vicarious experiences and social and verbal persuasion. Finally, teachers referenced emotional and physiological states least. It is important to highlight that teachers only provided examples of emotions or physiological states when asked directly how they felt about using a strategy. The findings surrounding emotional and physiological states should, therefore, be interpreted with caution.

The subsequent portions of this section focus on findings according to each of Bandura's sources of self-efficacy.

4.5.1 Mastery Experiences

Mastery occurs when difficult challenges are overcome by adjusting approaches until success is achieved. These experiences most strongly predict self-efficacy (Bandura, 2012). Mastery experiences were coded as ability and effort or persistence. Figure 1 shows reported mastery experiences.
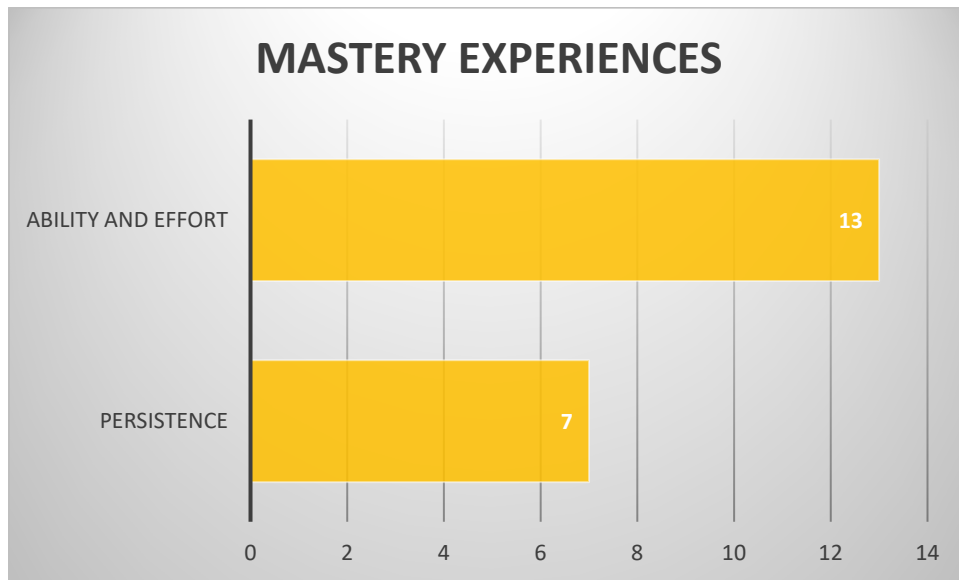

MASTERY EXPERIENCES

- ABILITY AND EFFORT — 13
- PERSISTENCE — 7

Figure 1. Mastery Experiences

Teachers captured persistence most often as "trial and error" in their examples. Lyle explained, "I have had many, many situations where kids had been escalated in my experience. So, it's trial and error through the years." Ability and effort showed up frequently as "experience." Examples pertaining to ability and effort were shared almost twice as often as persistence. Regarding ability and effort, Otto stated, "I feel like at first when I started trying this years ago, I would stumble upon things that worked. And I feel like now, they are happening more intentionally." Participants identified numerous examples in which they practiced identified

strategies and thusly they identified persistence. These mastery experiences contributed to self-efficacy.

4.5.2 Vicarious Experiences

Vicarious experiences shaped self-efficacy through teachers modeling strategies used by others. Teachers shared examples of individuals they observed who benefited them most. Teachers named colleagues, mentors, and supervisors they worked with as individuals they modeled. In addition, teachers identified experts who modeled the use of strategies during training. Figure 2 illustrates the tabulation of teachers' reported examples.
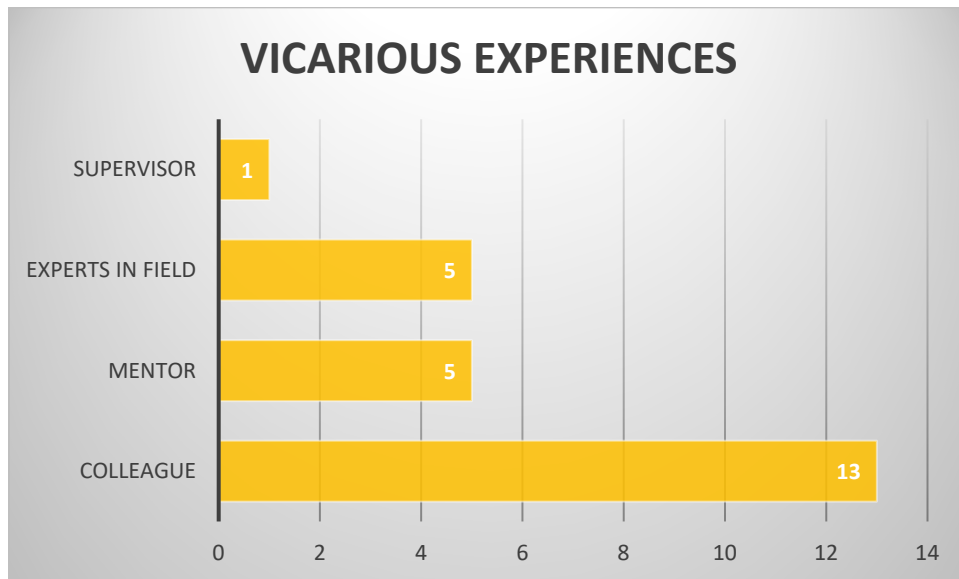

Figure 2. Vicarious Experiences

Vicarious experiences, along with social and verbal persuasion, represented the two most common sources of self-efficacy tabulated in this study. Vicarious experiences, the second most common source of self-efficacy identified in this study, were meaningful as supported by teachers'

examples of watching others model strategies. Colleagues were the most frequently named influencers of self-efficacy development through vicarious experiences. Gene commented, "I shared the room with another teacher who was about to retire. So, learning a lot from him and seeing it used definitely helped a lot." Lyle said, "I just developed it watching teammates," reflecting on an occasion when he provided a gentle reminder to a student that he would wait until the student was ready to talk. Mentors were also identified as important influencers of self-efficacy development through vicarious experiences. It should be noted that teachers were not asked if they were ever specifically assigned to a mentor. Therefore, this data presents an interpretation that may not be accurate. When teachers identified mentors as providing support, "mentor" was coded regardless of whether it was an assigned mentor or someone perceived to be a mentor. Lyle reflected on a veteran colleague, saying "she would model that behavior using humor at times to diffuse a volatile situation." He also stated, "My mentor from back some years ago certainly talked about it and certainly practiced it" in reference to giving an escalated student space. Lyle shared these experiences as important vicarious experiences. Teachers consistently provided examples of models who performed similar work with disruptive youth. Occasionally, teachers gave examples of colleagues or mentors in previous work settings. Most references to colleagues and mentors involved those who worked in the AEDY setting. Two teachers referenced experts in the field modeling strategies to de-escalate students' emotions and problem behavior. Those teachers identified hands-on training, specifically TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention) training, as an important contributor to vicarious learning experiences. In response to the question, "Did you see someone else do that?", Gene said, "A lot in TCI training." Finally, supervisors played a role in modeling strategies for one teacher. Silas noted, "I've had great principals; I've had some great teachers that I've worked around to see things." Together the multiple means of watching

strategies being modeled and teachers' years of experience in the field influenced self-efficacy in de-escalating student emotions and problem behavior.

4.5.3 Social and Verbal Persuasion

Social and verbal persuasion, the most common source of self-efficacy in the study, occurred when teachers were encouraged to use a strategy. Teachers reported that encouragement developed through suggestions or feedback. They identified individuals in various roles who encouraged them to use specific strategies. Such individuals included supervisors, experts who provided training and graduate coursework, mentors, and colleagues as those who provided encouragement. Figure 3 shows how often people in different roles encouraged teachers.
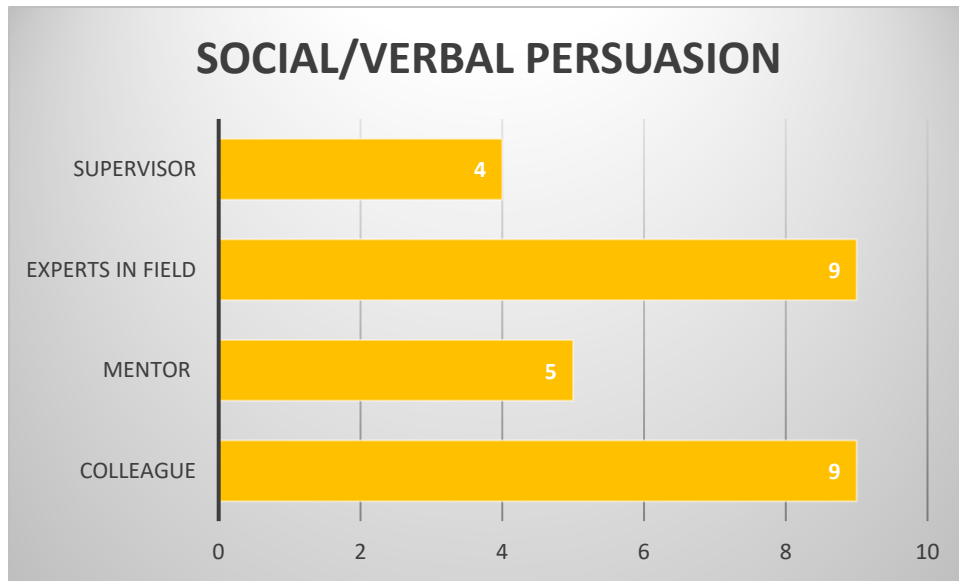

Figure 3. Social and Verbal Persuasion

Colleagues and experts in the field were mentioned most frequently as providing encouragement. Colleagues supported teachers with encouragement in several ways. Vaughn explained, "My teammates, we talk a lot about what is needed with these kids. There's an ongoing

conversation about techniques." Lyle added that "listening to people on my team" encouraged him to keep practicing a strategy until it worked for him. Finally, Otto expressed that he got "positive encouragement from the counselors and behavior specialists." Experts in the field consisted of both individuals providing training and those who supported teachers in their graduate coursework. TCI training and hands-on training were cited specifically. Five examples were attributed to mentors who provided encouragement through social and verbal interactions. Gene indicated that it was helpful to "just talk to him about classroom management strategies and behavior problems." It should be noted again that participants were not asked if they were ever assigned to a mentor specifically; therefore, this data may not be accurately represented. When mentors were identified as providing encouragement to teachers, "mentor" was coded regardless of whether it was an assigned mentor or someone the teacher perceived to be their mentor. Additionally, teachers identified that their supervisors encouraged them through statements such as, "simply talking to an administrator about a kid" and "through different administration observations." Encouragement through suggestions and feedback influenced teachers' self-efficacy. Individuals in a variety of roles and doing similar work provided encouragement, further contributing to the development of self-efficacy.

4.5.4 Emotional and Physiological States

Teachers reported how they felt (their emotional and physiological states) when using a self-identified strategy. The researcher coded both negative and positive responses. Negative responses were only coded if those responses demonstrated that the teacher overcame the feeling by persisting (Snyder & Fisk, 2016). Figure 4 illustrates the positive and negative emotions that contributed to the self-efficacy of teachers.
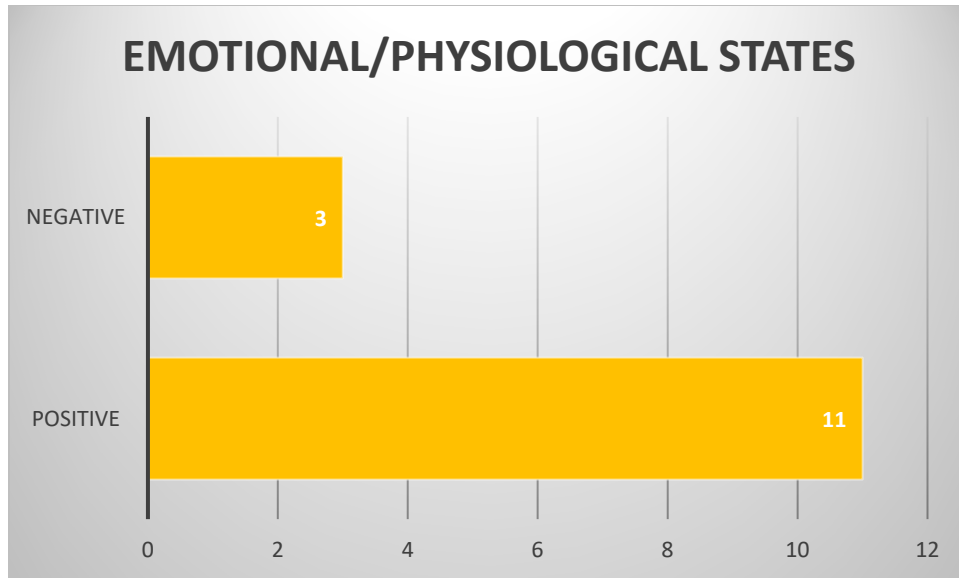
Figure 4. Emotional and Physiological States

The interviewer asked teachers to respond to how using a specific strategy made them feel. Positive emotional reactions of teachers represented 79 percent of the responses. Teachers replied, "I am passionate about that strategy," "It has definitely helped me out, I feel really good," and "It has worked over and over and over again." Three individuals provided examples of negative emotional reactions. Gene explained, "You get a lot of instant responses [from students], and it can be very stress-inducing." He concluded by remarking, "You really have to adapt, learn, implement, trust [yourself]" in reference to persisting even when a stress response occurs.

4.6 How Do Sources of Self-Efficacy Intersect?

Four of the five teachers indicated that all sources (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social and verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological states) influenced how they learned strategies. Interestingly, the self-efficacy sources represented an additive effect. Self-

efficacy is additive when more sources contribute to the development of a skill (Bandura, 1977). Otto shared how experience, watching others, and talking to others supported the development of his skills. He summarized the additive effects of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and social and verbal persuasion experiences nicely by stating:

> I mean even a student you have a good relationship with, you might not do the exact right thing with that kid at the time. And then that, even though you have a good relationship with them, it doesn't help. It doesn't hurt it, but at that moment you're trying to help the kid de-escalate. You're helping to maintain the effectiveness of the classroom for the rest of the students. And keep everything from melting down. So, if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. You immediately work for something else. You switch gears. But when it does work, it's beneficial because not only does it help in that moment, but that student feels like this person cares about me and gets me. And even build an even stronger rapport for later. Because they already kind of had a relationship with you.

Self-efficacy is enhanced when more sources contribute to skill development (Bandura, 1977).

Teachers in the study identified social and verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences as the most frequent sources of learning strategies. As noted in Table 4, social and verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences comprise 61 percent of the sources teachers identified when asked how they strategies. The sources also appeared to have had a configurative effect on mastery experiences in this study. A configurative effect occurs when one source depends on another (Bandura, 1977). Teachers repeatedly shared examples of mastery experiences as the intersection of "trial and error" and "experience." For example, Lyle described trial and error as, "Watching them [colleagues] and then trial and error. Learning from interactions that went sideways." Silas then shared his perspective on an experience with wait time. He said, "I think that's just an

experience thing really. There's no formula for how long a student is gonna need. So, you just [give] a little at a time." It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the intersection of social and verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences has an additive effect. The ability to practice the strategies over time resulted in mastery experiences, and so contributed to the self-efficacy of teachers in this study.

The next chapter returns the reader to the research questions underpinning this study. In addition, implications of the findings follow.

5.0 Discussion and Implications

The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How are Bandura's theoretical sources of self-efficacy reflected in teachers' reported experiences with students' escalating emotions and problem behaviors?

2. What specific training and support influence teachers' perceived self-efficacy in effectively dealing with a student's escalating emotions and problem behaviors?

The following section provides a discussion of findings as it applies to the implications for practice.

5.1 Implications for Training and Support in Schools

A discussion of implications for training and support that promote self-efficacy in de-escalating students' emotions and problem behavior follows. The training and support are examined through Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social and verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological states). Training and support facilitate important teacher competencies that are necessary for success in AEDY programs. The role of the administrator in designing opportunities for training and support is discussed as well.

5.1.1 Predictable, Structured, and Welcoming Classrooms Promote Mastery Experiences

Effective classroom management provides predictable and structured environments that are safe and welcoming for students. Teachers in the study consistently identified classroom management skills involving clear and concise expectations, and instructional practices that engage all students, as foundational classroom management strategies. The examples teachers provided in this study support Kerr and Valenti's (2009) finding that classroom management strategies create predictability and structure for students. A classroom management system that promotes a safe and welcoming environment also serves as a preventative strategy. A safe and welcoming environment is likely to reduce potential escalation of student emotions and behavior (Kerr & Valenti, 2009). Students' escalation of emotions and problem behavior are not likely to be eradicated by excellent classroom management. However, reducing the likelihood of escalation increases the probability of positive outcomes. Negative outcomes, such as absences from school and learning due to assigned suspensions or expulsion, inadvertent reinforcement of escalating behaviors, and opportunities for stigma or injury illustrate the importance of training regarding classroom management.

Administrators should avoid making assumptions specific to teacher competencies regarding effective classroom management. The classroom management literature identifies both the absence of training opportunities and gaps in training that negatively impact teacher self-efficacy (Stough & Montague, 2015; Stough, Montague, Landmark, & Williams-Diehm, 2015). In this study, participants identified that their self-efficacy was influenced by discussions with their mentors and colleagues. Therefore, developing a Professional Learning Community (PLC) or a similar means of creating regular opportunities to explore strategies with colleagues would benefit teachers. Exploring a few strategies at a time, discussing the purpose of the strategies, and sharing

experiences using the strategies among colleagues allow for deeper learning. An expectation to identify one strategy to use increases the likelihood that the new strategy may be integrated into teachers' repertoire of skills. Journaling and returning to the PLC with examples of how the strategy was used and where the strategy was most beneficial further reinforces the learning (DuFour & Fullan, 2012). Other important outcomes of PLCs include ownership of teacher learning and teacher self-reflection. A proactive focus on classroom management strategies in professional learning plans encourages ongoing growth and eventual self-efficacy involving classroom management skills. Self-efficacy specific to preventative strategies that reduce the chances of students' escalating emotions and behaviors supports the overall climate of the school and improved outcomes for individual students.

5.1.2 Mastery Experiences Depend on Strong Student-Teacher Relationships

Participants consistently identified that student-teacher relationships were a critical factor in de-escalating a student's emotions and problem behavior. As Gene stated, "It's all about getting to know them, which is going to help me out later on down the road." Positive student-teacher relationships are also a critical aspect of prevention strategies. The first component of training that participants repeatedly identified involved developing effective prevention strategies. Their perspectives align with McNeely's (2005) findings that student-teacher relationships are a prime predictor of decreasing behaviors that put students at risk for exclusionary practices. Placement in an AEDY classroom represents an exclusion from a student's classroom in the home school district. Therefore, emphasis on stronger student-teacher relationships in AEDY classrooms could reduce students' risk for additional exposure to exclusionary practices.

Teachers benefit from training on evidence-based classroom management strategies specific to developing strong student-teacher relationships (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008). Classroom management strategies such as clear expectations and routines that create structure and predictability, positive praise, and highly engaging instructional strategies are important strategies for receive training. Critical follow-up to training might include activities in large or small groups that promote discussion among colleagues. The activities and discussion can help teachers make connections with strategies they are using as part of an effective classroom management plan (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008). The connections also give purpose to other critical preventative systems and strategies employed by teachers as part of an effective classroom management plan, such as getting to know students and using their interests to build engaging lessons. Additionally, brief but intentional strategies used across a day are given meaning and are reinforced during training and follow-up activities. Examples of brief intentional strategies include using students' names during instruction and greeting students at the door.

Proactive and preventative measures, including strong student-teacher relationships, may also be key to more "trials" that prove successful when de-escalating a student's emotions and problem behaviors. Successful experiences over time lead to persistence and more effort, resulting in more mastery experiences. Otto explained:

> . . . when it does work, it's beneficial because not only does it help in that moment, but that student feels like this person cares about me and gets me. And even build an even stronger rapport for later. Because they already kind of had a relationship with you.

5.1.3 Mastery Experiences Require Practice

Mastery experiences require that teachers practice strategies in a variety of circumstances to become self-efficacious. Discussions with teachers regarding ways they learned to use strategies revealed patterned responses, such as "trial and error" and "experience." Teachers in this study all had 10 or more years of experience. The findings support research indicating that years of teaching experience contribute to teacher self-efficacy (Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996). Participants' responses indicate that practicing a strategy over the course of years proved successful. While the amount of experience or the number of trials needed to become self-efficacious could not be determined in this study, the successes that participants experienced over the years were important. The importance of experiencing successes is validated by Holzberger, Philipp and Kunter's (2013) work. Additionally, teachers identified the use of trial and error specific to the use of strategies as beneficial.

These findings illustrate the importance of administrators intentionally designing both formal and informal opportunities for teachers to practice using strategies. The researcher recommends intentionally designing two different types of training and support to be offered simultaneously. The first type of training requires role-play activities with colleagues, using scenarios that reflect common experiences in the school. This type of training can be accomplished through formal in-service experiences. The training should also be ongoing throughout the school year, perhaps as part of regularly scheduled meetings where all staff are present, providing multiple opportunities to contribute to and facilitate success.

Embedding training and support into day-to-day operations can include debriefing on situations when students' emotions and problem behavior escalated. Opportunities to debrief real experiences allow for "coaching" (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Coaching occurs both

formally and informally in schools. School administrators may identify formal mentors, "coaches," or other personnel to support teachers in unpacking events. School administrators may also use a combination of identified personnel and informal opportunities for staff debriefing throughout the day. Providing explicit scripts that structure unpacking an event may be beneficial for both formal and informal training opportunities. The script would include a prescribed set of questions that structures teachers' reflections of an event in which a student was de-escalated. The focus on encouraging future use of strategies that worked in a given circumstance is critical. Additionally, administrators should actively seek opportunities to explore other strategies to try in future situations. Self-efficacy is solidified through successes that teachers experience as a result of practice, reflection, and encouragement (Bandura 1997, 2012; Holzberger, Philipp, & Kunter, 2013; Pajares, 1996). The administrator's role in structuring and monitoring both informal and formal opportunities for practice and reflection through debriefing real experiences is vital. Ongoing practice and reflection promote a learning culture of effort and persistence that promotes mastery experiences, and, therefore, teacher self-efficacy.

Other variables may contribute to mastery experiences and high rates of self-efficacy (Ross & Bruce, 2007). Participants shared examples of using their school-wide acknowledgment system to both reinforce pro-social skills and to interrupt problem behavior. As Lyle explained, "It is an interrupter. It is a positive interrupter." Effective classroom management strategies using specific praise for students' pro-social behaviors, and other preventative strategies promote a safe and welcoming environment. The use of preventative strategies serves to support teachers in de-escalating students' emotions and problem behavior.

5.1.4 Vicarious Experiences: Watching Others Makes a Difference

Developing self-efficacy through vicarious experiences plays an important role in training and support of classroom teachers. The findings confirm that "social modeling" raises one's hope of being successful by seeing someone else achieve success (Bandura, 2012). Otto said, "I was looking at other people and I was like what are you doing different from me?" Opportunities to see colleagues and mentors successfully use de-escalation techniques increases teachers' beliefs in their own capabilities when using the techniques.

Designing and implementing mentoring programs aligned with the sources of self-efficacy in schools may foster both skill development and collegial relationships with teachers (Tschannen-Moran, & McMaster, 2009). Teacher mentoring programs that specify roles and responsibilities of mentors while intentionally connecting them with individual teachers contributes to developing necessary skills to de-escalate students. The findings of Synder and Fisk's (2016) research establish that colleagues must have credibility with and similarities to the person doing the learning. Additionally, the teachers in this study support the importance of the relationship between the mentor and colleagues, leading one to anticipate that mentors and mentees would need both structured and unstructured time to develop relationships. Administrators must identify criteria for eligible mentors and assignment of mentors to ensure the most successful outcomes. Using Bandura's (1977) sources to further frame mentoring activities (such as observing others to see strategies in use) provides formal structure for embedding training in day-to-day work. Additional activities that build dialogue and regular communication foster collegiality and trust. A well-designed mentor program is advantageous in other ways as well. Experienced teachers take on leadership roles and shared ownership of the programs. Eighty percent of teachers in this study referred to both watching others implement strategies *and* being encouraged to use strategies

as meaningful to building their self-efficacy. Therefore, *pairing* other sources of self-efficacy, such as social and verbal persuasion, with the observations of colleagues and mentors, improves results when replicating a strategy modeled by a colleague.

5.1.5 Developing Shared Goals and Responsibilities Through Communication and Collaboration

The first key area when cultivating a positive school culture involves developing shared goals and responsibilities for the program (DuFour & Fullan, 2012). As Gene explained, "behavior at this point, is so much more important . . . our goal is to send them back to their home school," referring to the objectives of the program and the focus on developing replacement behaviors. Administrators benefit from promoting shared leadership opportunities with teachers when developing program goals and objectives. A shared set of agreements provide a foundation for cultivation of a collective mindset specific to goals and objectives (DeFour & Fullan, 2012). Shared goals also promote communication that is clear and predictable, while giving purpose to training and ongoing collaboration. The participants in this study reported *daily* teacher meetings in which they focused on shared responsibilities related to the students they serve. As targets to achieve, shared goals provide a way to monitor progress as well (DuFour & Fullan, 2012). The ability to celebrate successes and adjust as necessary give meaning to teachers' work, while the focus on continuous improvement is sustained. Together, shared goals and responsibilities create a structure for communication and collaboration that promotes a culture primed for teacher learning.

5.1.6 Social and Verbal Persuasion: Collegiality and Collaboration Make a Difference

Participants in this study identified social and verbal persuasion as the primary means of promoting self-efficacy in de-escalating students' emotions and problem behaviors. Despite Bandura's (1977) finding that social and verbal persuasion is the weakest influencer of self-efficacy, participants indicated that formal and informal discussions with colleagues promoted collaboration and supported their development of self-efficacy.

The high rates of encouraging feedback provided to one another in the AEDY schools was evident through the following statement, "You must talk with your team. It's part of this job with troubled youth. Absolutely. So, it is bouncing back and forth ideas, thoughts." Other comments speak to the collegial nature of the program. Lyle said, "As teammates, we talk a lot about what is needed with these kids. There's an ongoing conversation." Otto explained:

> When I reach a point where I'm not sure or I feel like I've got three different possibilities and I'm not sure where to go, I'll approach them and I'll be like, hey, I've got a question…I'll take their feedback and I listen to it. I really consider it and I try to apply their kernels of wisdom.

Informal collegial interactions across environments are fostered by formal structures that encourage collaboration among staff.

Collaborative workspaces create opportunities for further interaction among teachers. Structuring communication and collaboration intentionally within a building supports teachers' professional and personal growth.   Intentional collaborative learning activities, such as Personalized Learning Communities (PLCs), may foster focused exploration of competencies important to AEDY teachers, such as developing and maintaining strong student-teacher relationships. Vaughn explained, "What you find very fast in these programs is that you don't

know anything. You have to listen to other people and their perspectives." PLCs allow for both embedded training through content discussion and ongoing collaboration. The discussions among peers, and encouragement specific to strategies that work for veteran teachers, lead to mastery experiences that result in teacher self-efficacy. The power of a PLC is dependent on diverse experiences converging while meaningful learning is rooted in the context of teachers' work environments (DuFour & Fullan, 2012).

Through increased interactions among colleagues, teachers may be encouraged to take risks in using new strategies. Teachers may also try strategies that were unsuccessful in the past, if colleagues have found those strategies to be effective. AEDY teachers clearly benefit from colleagues and mentors skilled in de-escalation strategies to both formally and informally "coach" the teachers.

5.1.7 Emotional and Physiological States: Self-Awareness is Crucial

In this study, training and support that created opportunities to experience positive emotional reactions (emotional and physiological states) increased teachers' confidence, which contributed to teachers' self-efficacy. The training opportunities had the additional benefit of building confidence to persist when negative emotional reactions (emotional and physiological states) such as feelings of stress or nervousness occurred. As Gene said, "You really have to adapt, learn, implement, trust [yourself]" in reference to persisting even when a stress response occurs.

The ability to persist under stress also requires self-awareness. Self-awareness develops over time through opportunities to learn and to reflect on successes and failures. Formal training that teaches strategies to de-escalate students' emotions and problem behaviors may support the development of teacher self-awareness. Self-awareness supports teachers in regulating their tone,

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volume, and body language in stressful situations. In addition, initial and later training should incorporate the critical concept that we can control only our own behavior. Participants in this study alluded to how their own self-awareness impacted their responses to escalating emotions and behaviors. Lyle indicated the need to "depersonalize" the interactions that occur during escalation of a student's emotions and behaviors. Otto explained, "A big part of it is letting go. And not feeling like I have to have control. Because you can't control other people." Quality training, together with formal and informal opportunities to interact and reflect with colleagues, foster teachers' self-awareness.

5.1.8 The Additive and Configurative Effects of the Sources of Self-Efficacy Matter

The findings of this study validate Bandura's (1977) hypothesis that teachers' self-efficacy may be a result of sources being both additive and configurative. Teachers' in this study shared multiple ways they learned strategies. The strategies they learned represented multiple sources of self-efficacy. In some cases, sources were additive, meaning that several sources of self-efficacy together promoted the confidence in the teacher's capabilities to use the strategy. In other situations, the sources were configurative, where sources of self-efficacy were enhanced by other sources. The participants identified the examples as learning experiences that contributed to their confidence in using the associated strategies. Their experience indicates that teachers benefit from intentional consideration of training and supports aligned with all four sources of self-efficacy.

5.2 Limitations

As with all research, limitations exist in this study. Key limitations include a small sample size and similarities in participants' years of experience. Five male teachers volunteered to participate. Unfortunately, in the midst of recruitment of volunteers to participate in the study, schools closed due to COVID-19. Closing of schools created a great deal of upheaval as teachers worked feverishly to transition to remote learning in the following weeks. The transition likely prevented additional volunteers from stepping forward during that time.

All five participants reported 10 or more years of experience. Although the commonalities among teachers allowed the researcher to see findings through a singular lens, the small and homogenous group created limitations. Questions remain as to how self-efficacy sources influenced teachers earlier in their careers. Specifically, questions remained regarding less-experienced teachers' development of mastery experiences. Small variations in data may have skewed results due to the small sample size and similar experience level. Therefore, findings should be considered with caution. Future research studies could focus on a larger sample size and recruitment of teachers with one to five years of experience.

Next, the researcher was a novice interviewer. During interviewing, this study would have benefited from probing interviewees' responses further. Deeper probing related to understanding how teachers felt using strategies may have yielded richer coding. Although practice interviews were conducted, future research studies may benefit from a simulated analysis. Specifically, a simulated analysis might prompt the researcher to consider ways to elicit more precise responses regarding emotional and physiological states.

Another limitation focused on the setting of the study. The study concentrated on two Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) schools situated within one larger

organization. The AEDY schools, as part of a large organization, share an organizational culture. Carrying out a study in one organization makes generalizing the results to other settings less valid. Future research studies might be done in public school AEDY programs or AEDY programs operated by other organizations across the state. There may also be benefits to studying the self-efficacy of teachers working in other 7-12 classroom settings where de-escalation strategies are necessary.

Teachers' extensive years of experience in the AEDY setting made it difficult to clearly determine if a particular source of self-efficacy was more influential in teachers' confidence in this study. Teachers shared examples of learning self-identified strategies in multiple ways. Learning strategies in multiple ways led to the conclusion that the sources of self-efficacy were additive and configurative. Given that self-efficacy was additive (more sources being available) and configurative (one source depending on another source), one source was not seen as more influential than another.

This study's design and findings align with Bandura's theory regarding causality (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Specifically, Bandura believed that sources of self-efficacy have a causal influence (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Unfortunately, like this study, most studies occur at one point in time. Therefore, causality is difficult to demonstrate (Bandura 1986, 1997; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Longitudinal research design, beginning with teachers in training, would allow for the study of teachers' development of self-efficacy over time.

5.3 Conclusions

This research began as a result of my role as a trainer and consultant. Experience with training and consultative work, specific to behavioral support, allowed for multitudes of interactions with teachers. Through these interactions, I witnessed the struggle educators have with the escalation of students' emotions and problem behavior. The challenges teachers experience led me to focus on this topic.

The purpose of the study was to bring new understanding to the plight and promise of teachers who work in AEDY programs. Participants in this study revealed ways in which they learned de-escalation skills and gained confidence in their capabilities. They generously shared their time and provided new ways of thinking about important supports in settings where educators need to respond to students' escalating emotions and problem behavior.

Teachers offered specific ways that Bandura's (1977) sources of self-efficacy contributed to their mastery of de-escalation strategies. Trial and error practice honed their skills, resulting in a set of preferred strategies. Teachers identified strategies that maintained a sense of calm as they responded to students' escalating emotions and problem behavior. They also benefited from watching others use various strategies. Teachers hailed the importance of collaboration and shared goals. In other words, vicarious experience and social and verbal persuasion proved to be powerful sources of the development of teachers' self-efficacy. Hopefully, this research will inspire others to adopt training and supports to foster teachers' self-efficacy in challenging classroom settings. Only then will teachers and students develop and maintain trusting relationships that allow both to realize their full potential.

Dear Leanna,

I am writing to let you know that I approve extending your current study within the Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) program; to include a total of ten interviews of staff who have at least one year of experience working in the AEDY setting. I understand the interviews will focus on the perceived self-efficacy of individual personnel as it relates to addressing students' escalating emotions and problem behaviors within the AEDY setting. Leanna Lawson, doctoral candidate in the University of Pittsburgh's Administrative and Policy Studies Department, will use the data as part of her dissertation research supervised by Dr. Mary Margaret Kerr.

As I understand the methodology, you will interview ten random teachers who have worked in AEDY for at least one full calendar year. The interviews will take 45-60 minutes, and will occur in a private room on a date and at a time you arrange with each participant. The initial interview questions will focus on the work with students in the AEDY program, specifically with those students who demonstrate escalating emotions and problem behaviors. The final interview questions will be specific to the educator's perceived self-efficacy surrounding interactions with students' who escalate emotionally and/or behaviorally in the school setting.

I understand that the interview data will be de-identified and that all responses will remain anonymous. At no time will the program or schools be disclosed in any published documents, as only the principal investigator will have access to the interview data. Teacher participation is voluntary and they may withdraw from the study at any time.

Best Regards,

School Administrator

Appendix B Consent Form

Study Title: Teacher Self-Efficacy: Responding to Escalating Student Behavior

Principal Investigator: Leanna Lawson, M.Ed., Graduate Student
                                   University of Pittsburgh, School of Education
                                   Department of Administrative and Policy Studies
                                   Telephone: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉
                                   Email: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉

Research Advisor: Mary Margaret Kerr, Ed.D., Research Advisor
                                   University of Pittsburgh, School of Education
                                   Department of Administrative and Policy Studies
                                   Telephone: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉
                                   Email: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉

Introduction:

    This research is being conducted to better understand the self-efficacy of alternative education teachers working with students who demonstrate escalating emotions and problem behavior. The interview questions are designed to gather your perspectives surrounding classroom experiences in which students' have demonstrated escalation and how competent you feel about de-escalating those situations. The aim of the research is to add to the body of literature specific to self-efficacy and AEDY programming.

    Participants in this study are grade 7-12 alternative education teachers, who hold general education teaching certificates. Teachers also must be employed at the AEDY program for at least one full calendar year to participate.

    If you agree to participate, you will partake in a one-time 45-60-minute conversational interview. The interview will start with simple questions regarding your years of experience and positions you have held. Followed by questions about experiences with students who demonstrate escalating emotions and problem behaviors. In addition, there are also questions about professional learning experiences that you have had.

    I will ask if you will allow me to audiotape the interview before we begin. All recordings, transcripts, and notes will be stored in locked cabinets and password protected. All of your responses will be de-identified. You will be assigned an ID number before the interview. Following the analysis, all audiotapes will be deleted.

    Your participation in this research study is voluntary and there are no costs or payments for participation in this study. There are also no direct benefits specific to participation in this study. You may choose not to answer any of the interview questions or withdraw from the research

study at any time. Your decision to participate or withdraw from the study will not affect your reputation as a professional. In addition, current or future evaluations or employment as a teacher will not be affected. Finally, any current or future affiliations with the University of Pittsburgh will not be impacted.

Due to the parameters of the study, I will not have any reason to withdraw you from this study without your consent. To withdraw from the study after the interview today, please forward me a dated, written request with your unique ID number provided to you prior to the interview. At that time, all data attached to the unique ID number will be expunged.

The University of Pittsburgh policy requires that you be informed that it is possible that authorized representatives from the University's Office of Research Protections may review your data for the purpose of monitoring the conduct of this study. Additionally, the University of Pittsburgh policy expects that all research records be maintained for at least seven years following the final reporting or publication of the project. Finally, your research data may be used for future research; however, this information would be shared and used in a de-identified manner.

There are very minimal risks surrounding participation in this study due to the strict protocols that have been outlined in order to conduct the research. There could possibly be a breach of confidentiality if through deductive measures others identify you as a participant in the study. The interview will focus on your professional role in the classroom and the skills you have learned, how you learned them, and your perspectives on how self-efficacious they help you to feel. The findings of the research will not identify you or your school, and will only be used for the purpose of the research.

Questions About the Study:

The principal investigator for this research is Leanna Lawson. If you have any questions or wish to receive a copy of the findings, you may reach Leanna at ████████ . If you have questions about your rights as a participant in the research, or other questions related to this study that you do not want to ask of the research team, please call the University of Pittsburgh Human Subjects Protection Advocate toll-free at (866) 212-2668.

Consent to Participate:

The above information has been explained to me and all of my questions, at this time, have been answered. I understand that I am encouraged to ask questions, share my concerns or complaints about any aspect of the research study at any time. I understand that any future questions, concerns or issues can be answered by a qualified individual at the Human Subjected Protection Office or by the principal investigator listed on the front page of this consent form at the designated telephone number or email address.

I understand that I may at any time contact the University of Pittsburgh Human Subjects Protection Advocate toll-free at (866) 212-2668 to discuss any questions, concerns, or issues that arose related to the study. By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research study. A copy of this consent form will be given to me.

_____   _____   _____
Printed Name of Participant   Signature of Participant   Date

Investigator Certification:

     I certify that I have explained the purpose and type of research study to the above-named individual, and I have discussed the potential benefits and possible risks of participation in the study. Any questions the individual has about this research study have been answered. Any future questions, concerns, or issues will be addressed as they arise. I further certify that no component of this research study protocol was started prior to this consent form being signed.

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date
Leanna Lawson, Principal Investigator

Interview Script: Thank you for participating in my research study. My name is Leanna Lawson. For this 45-60-minute interview, I appreciate any insights you can share surrounding the work you do with students who demonstrate escalating emotions and problem behavior. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You can stop the interview at any time or skip any questions. I will keep all transcripts confidential and will not share them. In fact, all data received from you will have an ID#. All stored data will have this number on it and not your real name [*Hand the participant an ID#*]. All responses are confidential, and data will be kept under lock and key. We will not associate the information you provide with your name or the name of your school in reports. Given these conditions, do you agree to participate in today's interview? [*If YES, continue. If NO, stop interview and thank them for their time.*] I would like to audio-record the conversations to check the accuracy of my notes. Do you agree to this? [*If participant agreed to have interview recorded, start recording. If not, prepare to take detailed notes.*] This research study is being completed as part of my doctoral work, in the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. I can be reached after the interview at ▇▇▇▇▇, as indicated on the consent form. Do you have any questions before we begin? [*Field questions*]

Interview Questions:

Let's get started.

1. How long have you worked for this school?

2. How long have you worked in education?

3. What is your position within the school?

As you know, my study is about working with students who get upset and become emotional or act out in a way that is disruptive in the classroom.

4. Have you ever dealt with a student that got upset in your classroom? *[Pause]* Can you tell me about a recent situation with one student? [*Pause*] Think for a few seconds about the situation. *[Pause]* Ready? *[Pause]*

    a. What was the student doing? *[Pause]*

    b. Now tell me what you did. How did you respond? *[Summarize the response by listing the strategies that were mentioned]*

5. Now I would like to take *[not more than three]* of the strategies I heard you mention and talk about each one separately.

    The first strategy was [*insert first strategy that was mentioned*]. [*Proceed with question 5a.-5f.*]

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    a. How did you learn that?

    b. Who suggested it?

    c. Where did you hear about that strategy?

    d. When you use [*insert strategy*] do you get feedback from other people? [*Pause*] Any kind of feedback that is verbal or non-verbal [*Pause*] Like colleagues, students, family members or anyone else.

    e. When you use this strategy, how does it make you feel? [*Pause*] Less stressed, more upset, stressed, mad . . .

    f. One more thing, how confident do you feel about using [*the strategy*] on a 1-5 scale. One being the least confident. [*Pause*] Tell me a little bit about why you chose that number. [*Pause*]

    This is great information. [*If a second strategy was noted continue, if not go to question 6*].

    Let's talk about [*the second strategy*]. [*Return to questions 5a.-5f. above and address in the same order specific to the second strategy*]

Thank you so much! [*If there is a third strategy continue, if not, go to question 6*]

Are you ok to work through one more strategy that you mentioned? [*Pause*] *[If yes continue, if no go to question 6*]. [*Return to questions 5a.-5f. above and address in the same order specific to the third strategy*]

6. Finally, are there other skills that you think could help you more effectively work with students who get upset that you have not mentioned? [*Pause*] What way(s) do you think is/are best to learn how to use these additional skills to be most effective? [*Pause*]

7. Thank you for your participation and the valuable perspectives you shared today. I greatly appreciate your time and attention. I have three additional demographic questions that are optional if you wouldn't mind. You are under no obligation to answer them. Let me tell you what they are and you can decide if you would like to respond to them. [*Read each question and ask the participant if they choose to provide a response*].

   a. What is your preferred pronoun?

   b. How old are you?

   c. What is your race?

At last, we are finished. Do you have any questions for me at this time? [*Pause*] If you have any questions in the future you will find contact information on the Letter of Consent. Please do not hesitate to contact myself or a University of Pittsburgh representative. Thank you again for your participation and the valuable perspectives you shared today!

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