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Teachers, Students, and Challenging Parent Behavior:

Middle and High School Teachers' Perceptions of Challenging Parent Behavior

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Abstract

Research on teacher stress has identified lack of parental support as a demand often reported by teachers (Lambert & McCarthy, 2006; McCarthy, 2000). This study presents findings from teachers' responses to open-ended questions from a survey that addressed the relationship between teachers and parents with difficult behaviors. The participants were a sample of 292 teachers across 9 middle and secondary schools in a southeastern state of the United States. They had an average of 11.27 years of teaching experience with a standard deviation of 8.93 years and consisted of 73.9% females and 26.1% males. AQUAD was used for the analysis of qualitative data. The questionnaire was developed by Everaert and van der Wolf (2006). The open-ended questions are related to (1) teachers' experiences with difficult parents in the current school year, (2) reasons why teachers perceive particular behaviors as difficult, (3) how teachers handle parents' difficult behaviors in general, and (4) teachers' recommendations for other teachers for handling difficult parent behaviors. Findings revealed that stressful encounters between teachers and parents are often related to classroom behavior or academic achievement of students. Teachers described hostile parent behaviors, overprotective behaviors, and uncooperative behaviors as most challenging. Efficient approaches as described by teachers will be presented. The findings from this study may contribute to reducing teacher stress by highlighting behaviors and skills that haven't proven to be helpful to the teachers in this study in working towards productive teacher-parent relationships (Cox, 2005).

Teachers, Parents, and Challenging Student Behavior

One of the predictors of teacher stress and burnout consistently mentioned in the literature are potentially stressful interactions with parents (Sakharov & Farber, 1983; Lambert & McCarthy, 2006). Stress according to the transactional model proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) occurs if a person encounters life demands and appraises them to be higher than available resources to cope with those demands (Sapolsky, 1998). Teachers who experience this imbalance between resources and demands over an extended period of time are at risk for the negative effects of stress, which can include health problems and psychological burnout (McCarthy, Kissen, Yadley, Wood, & Lambert, 2006). It is not surprising that teachers are the largest homogenous occupational group investigated in burnout research, comprising 22% of all samples (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

In a study by Markov and Martin (2005), a total of 800 new public school teachers in the US reported as greatest sources of stress and anxiety reported administrative, classroom management and testing responsibilities (34%), dealing with unmotivated students (28%), and working with parents (20%). Challenging parent behavior included interruptions of instructional activities, parental dissatisfaction, high expectations, and unwillingness to collaborate.

The benefits of effective home-school partnership are positively correlated with student outcomes (Pianta & Walsh, 1996). The quality of relationship between teachers and parents is particularly crucial if student-related behavioral, social or academic concerns are to be addressed (Sheridan, Erchul, Brown, Dowd, Warnes et al., 2004). Especially when dealing with challenging student behavior (Lambert & McCarthy, 2006; McCarthey, 2000), the responsibility of teachers and parents can become a contentious issue (Miller, 2003; 1994).

According to Power (1985), the relationship between teachers and parents is heavily influenced by student behavior. If concerns about student behavior occur, teachers are more likely to perceive parents as “problems” as compared to “partners” or “consumers” (Hood, 1999). Parallel to the appraisal component in the transactional model of stress by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), it is often on the basis of attributions rather than of objective information that both teachers and parents act upon, if interactions between teachers and parents become stressful.

In addressing student behavior, studying attributions is important (Miller, 1999), because teachers, students, and parents are three distinctly different groups and may therefore have conflicting attributions, perspectives and interpretations of student behavior. A psychosocial perspective, which combines the interrelation of social factors and individual thought and behavior (Miller, 2003) can contribute to a better understanding of the consequences of difficult student behavior on each of the groups in this triangle. While positive behavior support strategies have much to offer for teachers to manage challenging student behaviors in the classroom, the effects of the complex processes in this triangle on teacher stress gain more and more importance, especially in a time of teacher shortage and attrition.

Research has shown that teachers perceive parents and home conditions as major causes for student misbehavior in the classroom (Miller, 1995). The 14 teachers in an interview study by Miller (1995) reported “lack of parental co-operation” as a major contributing factor to challenging student behavior. In another study by Miller (1996), 71% of a group of 24 teachers, who had implemented behavior support interventions for students with challenging behavior in collaboration with educational psychologists, indicated that students’ difficulties were related to their home environments; however, a study by Miller and Black (2001) presented vignettes of real home-school interventions mediated by educational psychologists to 206 10 and 11-year-old

students and 30 teachers. Findings showed that students thoughts of parents as being more capable than teachers to support them in terms of changing their behavior. In addition, a survey of 105 students conducted by Miller, Ferguson, and Byrne (2000) found the following 4-factor model using an exploratory factor analysis: (1) fairness of teachers' actions, (2) pupil vulnerability, (3) adverse family circumstances, and (4) strictness of classroom regime.

Miller, Ferguson, and Moore (2003) replicated this study using 141 families. They examined the structure of attributions for challenging student behavior as indicated by parents and compared their results to the Miller et al. (2000) study on students' perceptions. For parents, using an exploratory factor analysis, the following 3-factor model emerged: (1) fairness of teachers' actions, (2) differentiation of classroom demands and expectations, and (3) student vulnerability to peer influences and adverse family circumstances.

This study showed that there is agreement between parents and teachers in terms of viewing home conditions as an important contributor to challenging student behavior in the classroom; however, parents and students also agree in viewing certain teacher behaviors, more specifically behaviors perceived as "unfair" as important factors related to challenging student behavior (Miller et al., 2002).

Using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire based on the 11 types of challenging parent behaviors identified by Seligman in his book "Conducting effective conferences with parents of children with disabilities" (2002), van der Wolf and Everaert (2005) conducted a pilot study with 121 Dutch elementary teachers. Using principal component analysis, they found 7 types of challenging parent behavior to be significant. Those were perfectionist parents, unsatisfied parents, uncooperative parents, neglectful parents, overprotective parents, uninvolved parents, and fighting parents. Hostile parent behavior, parents as professionals, dependent parents, and

overly helpful parents could not be confirmed in the Dutch sample; however, unsatisfied parents emerged as an additional parent behavior category.

Using the same questionnaire by Wolf and Everaert (2000), Prakke, van Peet, and van der Wolf (2008) conducted a Multiple Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis in six countries. For the US sample, they found the same 7 types of challenging parent behavior again; however, neglectful and fighting parent behavior did not meet the cut-off point of .70 set by Nunnally (1978) and were therefore not included in further analyses.

Prakke and van Peet (2007) reported the following percentages for five types of challenging parent behavior as derived from the 24 items scale that measured the incidence of challenging parent behavior experienced by teachers for the US sample (see Table 1). The uncooperative parent had the highest incidence score (33.7%) and is followed by the overprotective parent (17.5%). The unsatisfied parent has the lowest frequency (15.9%).

Uncooperative parent behavior includes not showing up to parent-teacher meetings or being unwilling to assist their child with homework. The overprotective parent is excessively concerned about the wellbeing of the child. The uninvolved parent initially agrees to collaborate with the teacher and to support the child, but does not follow through. The least stress was experienced with unsatisfied parents and by perfectionist parents.

Little research has been conducted on teachers' experiences with challenging parent behavior and their perceptions and recommendations on effective ways of working productively with parents. The purpose of this paper is to analyze and interpret US teacher responses to the following open-ended questions regarding their perceptions of collaborating with difficult parents:

1. Describe the behavior of the most difficult parent you have to deal with in the current school year.
2. This behavior is the most difficult for me because ...
3. How, in general, do you handle this parent's difficult behavior?
4. What recommendations do you have for other teachers for handling this kind of behavior?

Method

This study is part of a larger survey that addressed the relationship between teachers and parents with difficult behaviors and included data from 3059 participants collected in 2007 in the Netherlands (n=212), Italy (1063), India (n=252), Hong Kong (n=581), Russia (n=661) and the US (n=292). In Russia, the US, Italy, and India, uncooperative parent behavior was correlated with the highest stress scores. In the Netherlands and Hong Kong, teachers perceive overprotective parent behavior as most stressful. The least stress is perceived from unsatisfied parents (Netherlands, Russia, Italy, and India). But in Hong Kong and the US, uninvolved parents are perceived as least stressful (see Table 2).

Instrumentation

The questionnaire consists of five parts (Prakke, 2007). The first part assesses demographic information. The second part presents open-ended questions about the most challenging parent behavior. In addition, the second part includes a scale for Challenging Parent Behavior, which assesses 11 types of challenging parent behaviors on a scale from 0 to 4 using 24 statements concerning the extent to which the most challenging parent behavior occurs. This part is based on the work of Seligman (2000). This part of the questionnaire provides also 24 items concerning the effects on work based on the Index of Teaching Stress (ITS) by Green,

Abidin, & Kmetz (1997). In the third part, background data on the parent is also collected. This part includes also the Effectiveness in Dealing with Parents scale with 11 items on a scale from 0 to 4, and fourth part, the Parent and Community Support scale, consists of 19 items on a scale from 0 to 4. It evaluates preventative factors at the institutional level such as social support provided by colleagues and contribution by parents derived from the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE) Information Management System (IMS) by Keefe (1992). The fifth scale was the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) by Goldberg (1978). The GHQ measures teachers' perceived current level of mental health functioning on a scale from 0 to 4. Twelve items address the frequency of recent experiences with differing stress symptoms. The GHQ has been used as part of occupational stress assessments, sense of well-being, etc.

The US data set included another four scales for Self Acceptance (from the Preventive Resources Inventory (PRI) (McCarthy & Lambert, 2001), Teacher Support, Administrative Support and Perceived Stress.

Participants

The participants were a sample of 292 teachers across 9 middle and secondary schools in a southeastern state of the United States. 81.3% were secondary school teachers. They had an average of 11.27 years of teaching experience with a standard deviation of 8.93 years and consisted of 73.9% females and 26.1% males. 63% of the challenging parents were parents of an eldest or only child. In none of the countries this percentage was lower than 50%. This may be related to the fact that parental expectations for eldest and only children are usually higher than for later born children.

Data Analysis

AQUAD was used for the analysis of qualitative data. A total of 1 415 responses were coded across all four questions and across 292 participants through a process of open coding according to grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This was accomplished by using the constant comparison method, which involves attaching codes to individual text segments. Conceptually, codes are at a higher level than the coded text segment.

Code system. Codes were collapsed into meaningful categories (also known as level II codes) through building code catalogs according to the four research questions and by grouping related codes. Table 3 provides an abbreviated version of the established code system. Frequencies were calculated for each type of parent behavior and its sub-categories.

Findings

1. Most Challenging Behaviors

It has to be said that almost 80% of all teachers had something to say when asked about difficult parent behavior and 20.3% of the participants (n=59) did not reply to the first question. Out of 292 participants, 22.6% were explicitly related to behavior and 23% were related to academic issues. 2% mentioned racial issues and 52% exclusively referred to the challenging parent behavior.

Eight out the 11 types of challenging parent behavior that were found by Seligman (2000), could be found in analyzing the responses to the four parent behavior related open-ended questions in this study. Those were hostile parents, overprotective parents, uncooperative parents, unsatisfied parents, perfectionist parents, neglectful parents, uninvolved parents, and professional parents (see Table 4). Percentages are shown in graphs 1 through 3.

The following quote by a teacher illustrates hostile parent behavior well and shows that informing parents about their perceptions of student behavior observed in their classroom is a delicate matter and can be like “*walking on egg shells.*”

The parents called a meeting with all 4 teachers to discuss their child’s progress. During the meeting I brought up some concerns about the child’s behavior – slow to get started, defiant at times, not on task at times, etc. The mother began questioning me and trying to turn the situation around and blame me. She stared me down during the conference and would not shake my hand when I offered at the end.

The strongest category of overprotective parent behavior had its responses coded as “*denial,*” meaning that parents thought that their child “*could do no wrong.*”

On the other hand, one teacher described a parent as *aggressive* in such a way that any further comments on a particular student to the parents may only lead to more difficulties for both the student and the parent.

Parent entered the classroom with a confrontational demeanor and asked what problem the child and I were having. Then she listened to what I had to say (the child told a story differing from my own), turned to the child, yelled at her, grabbed her by the collar and took her to the bathroom.

2. *This behavior is difficult because...*

2.4% of all participants (n=7) did not respond to this question. 18 % of the responses indicated that a lack of results due to unproductive parent-teacher interactions was most difficult (see Table 5). 12.3% of the participants’ responses in this study have experienced feelings of frustration from unsuccessfully trying to collaborate with parents. Teachers perceive the lack of

support or “back-up” from parents as difficult and as a barrier to effective home-school collaboration. There are also emotional consequences to this as can be illustrated by the following teacher comment,

I find it frustrating to work with someone who doesn't believe that they are part of the problem and therefore I am the problem. This is the implication. Accountability and responsibility as well as kind hearted and intentional consciousness are very important to me. I do not like being implicated as “the problem” when really, the problem lies elsewhere.

9.6% of the coded responses showed that realizing that no support can be expected from a student's home environment has been perceived as difficult. 8,8% of the responses had to do with loosing either instructional and preparation time or personal time.

7.9% of the responses were related to teachers being challenged by their own perception of “*doing their best*” and at the same time being “*accused of wrong-doing*” and “*not being listened to.*” 6.9% of the responses referred to insulting or offensive statements directed to them by parents.

Eleven responses described teachers questioning their own ability as teachers. Six responses referred to the impact of challenging interactions with parents on their well-being, life at home or stress levels. For example, one teacher commented, “*I was under a tremendous amount of physical/emotional stress. It affected my personal life negatively and my job performance.*” Other comments were, “*It threatened my well-being*” or “*I was so shocked.*” Dealing with challenging parent behavior can evoke emotional reactions in teachers, e.g., feelings of helplessness and considerations of leaving the teaching profession. It can cause

otherwise talented teacher to question their professional competence and potentially lead to the decision to leave teaching.

3. How handle?

In response to question 3, twelve different approaches to handling difficult parent behavior could be identified. 26.5% of all participants did not respond to this question. Most responses referred to administrative support as a major contributor to being able to attend to the primary task of teaching rather than having to spend a lot of energy into dealing with upset parents. The other categories are listed in Table 6.

One parent offered an interesting approach to handling challenging parents using diplomacy. She said, *“Provide alternatives, most of which are very difficult so they will choose the “easiest” one (that I wanted along). Praise their concern for student and their support for education.”*

4. Recommendations

In answering question 4, teachers provided recommendations based on their experiences of dealing with challenging parent behaviors. Interestingly, they included interpersonal skills such as listening and being patient and understanding as well as being available for meetings and conferences. One teacher explained:

I find that staying calm and listening respectfully for as long as it takes usually works. After the parent finishes talking, they will usually calm down to the point where they can then hear what you are saying and you can eventually get them on your side.

Other responses included, *“Let the parent talk. Most of the time, they just want to be heard.”* and *“Don’t take it personally – it usually isn’t.”*

It is interesting that 54.7% of the coded responses under question number four were related to interactions skills, thus pointing at some recognition that a barrier to communicating effectively with parents originates in a lack of specific interaction skills. One example for a teacher's recommendation of how to approach difficult encounters with parents reads:

Always maintain your composure even if the anger builds; this is but a moment in the long life of good one creates – hard words to live by, it doesn't always help, but with schools convening under parents these days, it is the only viable solution.

Another suggestion included, *“Always praise good things first before venturing into the negative arena.”*

One parent's suggestion of dealing productively with difficult parent behavior illustrates the pressure that teachers may be perceiving when working with parents:

Act like you feel the exact same way as the parent and that you love their child with all of your heart. Privately tell them all of the things that you have done “off the record” to give their child 2nd chances and help them and discipline them without having to place this on their permanent record (because you love their child so much). Ask them to back you up in “one more chance” in which you administer your own discipline “off the record.” The parent will help and the child will be forced to change with teacher and parents teamed against them.

Another teacher's more hopeful and less manipulative response was:

Always keep an open mind and really think about what actions will do the student the most good. I feel it is ok to be flexible, and the parents should have a say in how their son/daughter is dealt with. It's usually just because they care.

Summary

Teachers in this study suggested preventive and proactive practices to avoid difficult interactions with parents. The focus was on efforts to increase mutual understanding, dialogue, and collaboration. They also describes skills and strategies to achieve these goals. According to Seligman (2000), when dealing with hostile parents it is important to remember that parental anger is in many cases not related to the teacher, but can have its sources in many other areas. Among those can be unconscious rejection of the child or family-related difficulties. A good example is a teacher who reported about a father whom she described as follows:

He was very abrupt. Talked very loudly. He acknowledged how difficult his daughter is but was tired of being called so he basically projected that frustration toward me, blaming me for her last issue.

Just like neglectful parent behavior, overprotective behavior can be a response to socially not acceptable feelings of rejection towards the child (Seligman, 2000). Accusations of the teacher as being unable to teach, to deal with challenging student behavior or to meet an individual student's needs should therefore not be taken personal.

Nevertheless, parents' concerns may as well be valid and legitimate and therefore need to be taken serious. If a teacher listens to a parent's perspective, shows interest for the student, begins a meeting "*with at least two positives before venturing into the negative*" as one teacher suggested, parents will be relieved and more convinced that the teacher is doing what is best for their child. Inviting a parent to provide their perspective and to voice their concern, can be a very helpful first step in winning parental support.

Similarly, parents whose behavior is perceived as "uncooperative" because they refuse to accept responsibility for their child's behavior in school, may genuinely not be experiencing any behavior difficulties with their child at home. Or perfectionist parents, who are overly concerned

with their child's behavior or academic achievement, may truly be having problems with the child at home. It is then that genuine parental efforts to support their child and the teacher may founder on attributions of uncooperative behavior or denial through the teacher.

Another important advice when working with an upset parent is to “*not to respond in kind.*” In this study, over half of the coded responses emphasized the crucial importance of staying calm, maintaining composure, but to end meetings when either of the participants becomes verbally abusive. Setting boundaries was also important when dealing with perfectionist parents.

Working with involved-uninvolved parents who say the right things, but never carry out anything, can be frustrating. Again, understanding possible reasons can help to encourage parents to engage in a constructive relationship with the teacher and school-related activities. Only after having genuinely listened to a parent's perspective, the teacher should firmly but politely and based on documented evidence present his or her observations to the parent.

Recruiting administrative or other professional support was mentioned in response to both the third and the fourth question in this study and was seen as a strong source of necessary support. On the contrary, parents who go straight to the principal are perceived as a threat to teachers' sense of professional competence as one teacher put it, “*I did not even get a chance to explain.*”

Limitations

There are disadvantages to analyzing singularly responses to open-ended questions of a survey instrument. The answers to open-ended questions analyzed in this study may not accurately reflect teachers' real world handling of challenging parent behaviors. Even though the benefit of open-ended responses is that they can bring to light finer details of teachers'

perceptions, generalizations cannot be made easily. Future research should therefore employ narrative approaches as well as observational data.

Implications for research

Indepth interviews with teachers may yield better insights into the issue of attribution and contribute to an understanding of the nature of teacher-parent relationships in the context of challenging student behavior or academic achievement problems. A survey based on findings from such a study may potentially help to understand attributions as a way of making sense of challenging student behavior.

Additionally, it can be said that the emphasis in the existing research on causal attributions for challenging student behavior in the classroom has focused on the perspectives of teachers. Given the findings of this study and a range of other studies showing that teachers attribute difficult student behavior in the classroom to parent and home circumstances, it is important to explore how parents' views differ. There is a need for research that explores parents' and students' perspectives on causal attributions for challenging student behavior and more specifically, on difficult teacher behavior.

Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to analyze teacher responses to open-ended questions and to provide insight into the actual nature of challenging parent behavior as perceived by teachers from the US data sample. It will be interesting to compare the findings from this sample with the findings from the samples from the other participating countries. Also, several teacher responses included reports of challenging interactions between teachers and parents associated with differences in ethnicity or cultural background.

Teachers in this study provided a wealth of valuable experiences and reported important skills and strategies that have the potential to minimize teacher stress and to facilitate home-school collaboration and parent involvement (Cox, 2005). For example, the findings have shown that an awareness of possibly constructive as well as destructive teacher behaviors can significantly impact the problem solving process and may provide directions for teacher preparation and in-service training. In finding ways to productively collaborate with parents when dealing with challenging student behavior, it is important to consider the mediating effect of the presence of an external person to work towards mutual understanding and agreement.

From a psychosocial perspective as outlined by Miller (2003), the data analyzed in this paper revealed the interplay and interrelationship of social factors and individual behaviors and attributions. It is only in consideration and acknowledgement of this complex relationship that teachers, parents, and students can engage in productive and solution-oriented encounters, where everybody's views can objectively be valued as an essential source of information.

Traveling the “*potentially unsettling territory of emotions such as anxiety, threat and shame*” (Miller, 2003, p. 77), successful behavior management in the classroom goes beyond positive behavior support as described in many textbooks. A psychosocial perspective that highlights the perceptions and behaviors of all involved parties can potentially contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between teachers, parents, and challenging student behavior.

Table 1.

Incidence Scores by Parent Type

Parent type	US
1. Uncooperative	33.7%
2. Overprotective	17.5%
3. Uninvolved	16.7%
4. Perfectionist	16.3%
5. Unsatisfied	15.9%

N=252

Table 2.

Most and least stressful parent behavior by country

Country	Most stressful behavior	Least stressful behavior
Netherlands	Overprotective	Unsatisfied
Hong Kong	Overprotective	Uninvolved
Russia	Uncooperative	Unsatisfied
USA	Uncooperative	Uninvolved
Italy	Uncooperative	Unsatisfied
India	Uncooperative	Unsatisfied

Table 3

Code System Established

Parent Behavior	Incidences	Occurrences
Hostile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parent blames or accuses teacher - aggressive towards teacher - disrespect - questioning teacher ability and activities - interfering with instruction - parent goes to principal directly without communicating with teacher - parent threatens 	39 38 31 18 11 10 8
Overprotective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - denial - has unrealistic expectations - demanding - excuses - defensive - parent takes sides (lies for child) - enabling - parent does not want consequences for behavior 	37 23 14 13 12 7 6 2
Uncooperative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parent does not respond 	41
Unsatisfied parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parent expresses dissatisfaction 	13
Perfectionist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parent is involved with progress of child to an excessive degree - attaches inappropriate amount of importance to education of child 	13
Neglectful parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - child falls asleep in class - parents take little notice of the child 	7
Uninvolved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parent has intention to co-operate, but does not do it - does not accept responsibility 	7
Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parent knows everything better, maybe a teacher 	4

Table 4

Most Challenging Parent Behaviors

Number of Coded Responses n = 354	Percentage	Behavior
155	43.8%	Hostile
114	32.2%	Overprotective
41	11.6%	Uncooperative
13	3.7%	Unsatisfied
13	3.7%	Perfectionist
7	2.0%	Neglectful
7	2.0%	Uninvolved
4	1.1%	Professional

Graphs 1-3. Percentages for Most Challenging Parent Behaviors

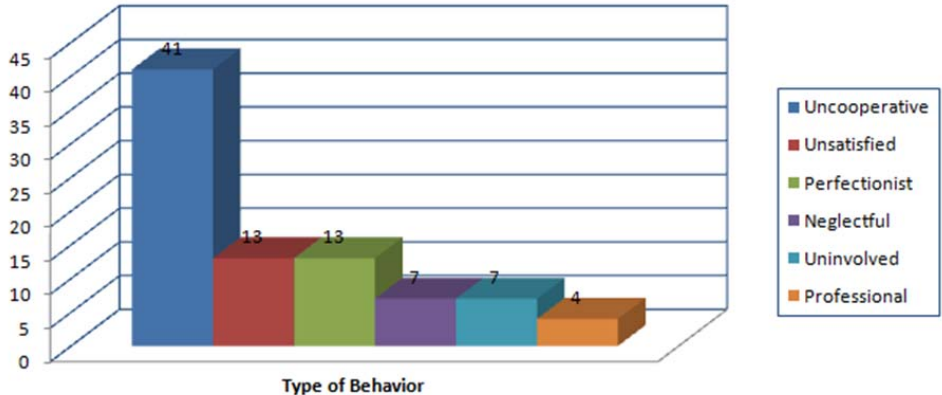
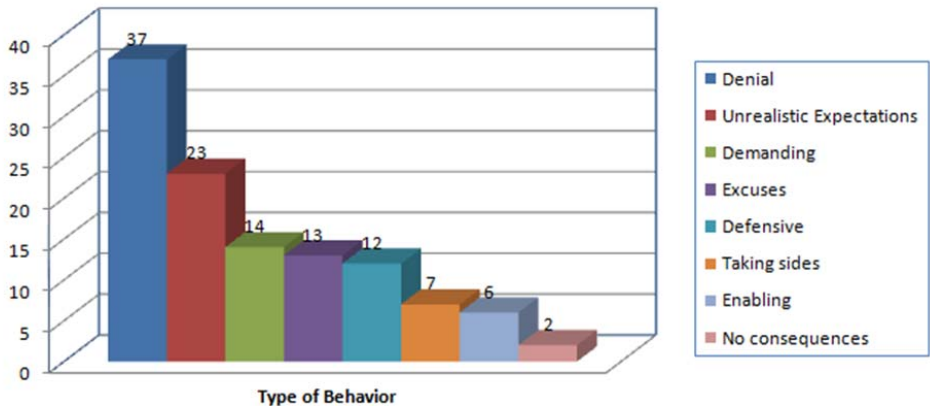
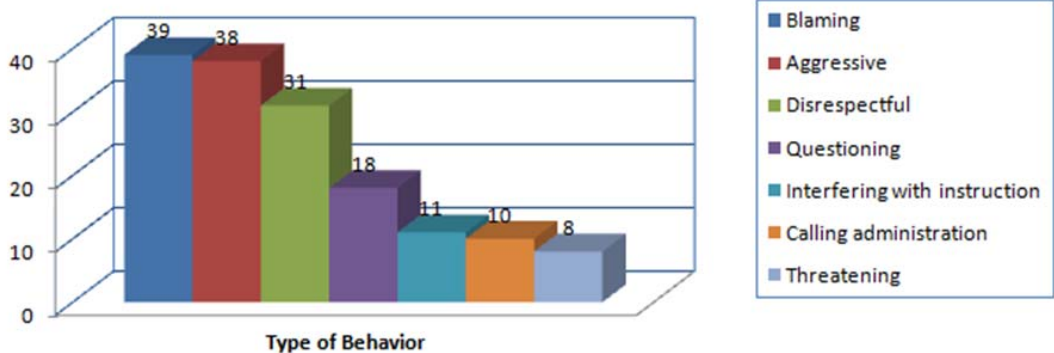


Table 5

This behavior is difficult for me because...

Number of Responses n = 251	Percentage	Difficult because...
45	18.0%	No results
31	12.3%	Frustrating
28	9.6%	No support
26	8,8%	Time consuming
23	7.9%	I do my best
23	7.9%	Not listening
20	6.9%	Offensive
11	3.8%	Question myself
8	2.7%	Concerned about student
6	2.1%	Impacts personal life/ adds stress

Table 6

How handle?

Number of Responses n = 386	Percentage	Behavior
63	16.3%	Administrative/ professional support
63	16.3%	Listen/ stay calm
62	16.0%	Communicate/ suggest strategies
53	13.7%	Don't take it personal/ professional
47	12.1%	Explain/ suggest strategies
32	8.3%	Set boundaries/ ignore/ avoid
24	6.2%	Have documentation
19	5.0%	Persistent
13	3.4%	Always start with a positive
5	1.3%	Encourage involvement
3	0.8%	Home visits
2	0.5%	Pray about the situation

Table 7

Recommendations

Number of Responses n = 424	Percentage	Recommendation
64	18.2%	Listen/ stay calm
58	16.5%	Professional/ firm/ have clear purpose/ be assertive, persistent
44	12.5%	Explain/ suggest strategies/ set contracts
40	11.4%	Have documentation/ evidence/ research
36	10.3%	Administrative/ professional support
33	9.4%	Team of teachers for support (mediators)
20	5.7%	Show understanding/ have student's best interest in mind
19	5.4%	Don't take it personal
16	4.6%	Be positive, confident, honest, compassionate
15	4.3%	Set boundaries/ end conversation if attacked

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