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After ALICE: The Implementation of an Active Shooter/School Intruder Training
Program in K-12 Schools.

By

Deborah Gleich-Bope

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Dr. Kay A. Keiser

Omaha, Nebraska

May, 2016

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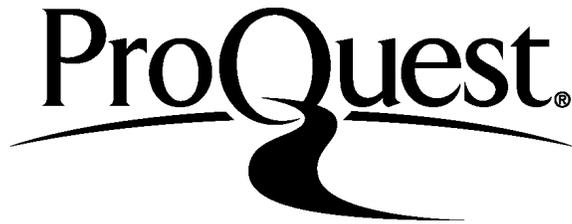
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After ALICE: The Implementation of an Active Shooter/School Intruder Training
Program in K-12 Schools.

Deborah Gleich-Bope, M.S., Ed.D

University of Nebraska, 2016

Advisor: Kay A. Keiser, Ed.D

Abstract

In an ever-changing world filled with violence, school districts are consistently faced with the task of having to help school-aged children deal with personal and public tragedies. Teachers and administrators should possess a skill set that will allow them to be positive and effective leaders and role models during times of crisis within the school building or district. Since many students are not yet mature enough to realize how to appropriately handle crisis situations, it is of great importance that school districts are providing knowledge and resources to their employees and students in order to effectively handle stressful situations. Since traditional lockdown methods are proving to be ineffective against school intruders, the US Department of Education is recommending a “Run, Hide, Fight” protocol to school districts when developing school safety procedures. The ALICE intruder alert program fits with this recommendation and many districts across the nation are adopting these procedures, or some that are similar, which are taught at the ALICE training. Districts are left to their own devices when it comes to implementing the ALICE procedures, and this study identifies how districts perceive the ALICE training as well as how they put the ALICE procedures into practices within their schools.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to anyone who has ever been affected by a school shooting or other act of violence on school grounds, including victims, families, friends, local police forces, and school employees. It is my sincerest desire that the work I have done will somehow help in the movement to end the violence and allow schools to create the safest environment possible for all our students and school staff members.

Acknowledgements

I owe a great deal of gratitude to an enormous amount of people as I have undertaken this venture of completing a doctorate degree in educational leadership. First and foremost, I need to lend my eternal gratitude to Dr. Peter Smith and Dr. Kay Keiser, who met me at a major crossroads in my life and were both willing to spend the time with me that I needed in order to make the decision that would forever change the course of my career. Along with being my teachers, they mentored me and supported me as I slowly achieved something that I never thought I could. Following behind them came a line of other professors that, with each course I completed, helped deepen my passion for education and helped solidify my decision to become an academic leader. My sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Richard Christie, Dr. Karen Hayes, and Dr. Jeanne Surface, who kept the fire alive for years with their expertise and their willingness to share it. For devoting their time to my work and for being a part of my committee, I thank Dr. Bridget Franks, Dr. Richard Christie, and Dr. Jeanne Surface. Lastly, in thanking those who taught and supported me, I need to be very thankful for Nancy Brosamle, who was the first principal I had that saw my true potential and encouraged me to run with my strengths. Nancy would always tell me that, no matter what I did, she knew I would be great at it. I feel so lucky that she was willing to provide opportunities for me to grow my skill set and continually improve as an educational leader, all the while never letting me forget that I had true talents in which could take me very far.

It really wasn't until I became a teacher in schools that served under privileged populations of students that I truly began to understand how wonderful of a life I had been given. Therefore, I thank my parents, Dolores Gleich, who taught me what a strong

woman truly was and never expected anything less than my best, and Bill Gleich Sr., who I am absolutely sure is one of the best fathers ever put on this planet, and who continued to love me no matter what good, or really bad, decision I was making. They both provided a life for me that most of my students would dream of, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Growing up as the youngest of six children certainly had its challenges, but being able to grow up with five siblings who are all completely different from one another has given me five role models from whom I adopted something positive that led to my success. Therefore, I thank my brother Bill Jr., for allowing me to watch his strong intellect lead his decisions and providing me a model of hard work leading to success. I thank my sister Patty, for being like a second mother as I grew up and introducing me into the world of education. I thank my brother Jim, for showing me how to stick to your belief system yet not being afraid to let down your guard when something moves you. I thank my brother Gary, who has never been more than a phone call away and has pulled me up to my feet time and time again when I was sure I couldn't get back up. Finally, I thank my sister Jeanne, who I grew up with and was my sibling, teammate, confidant, and best friend. She blazed the trail to higher academia, and I appreciate her allowing me to follow in her footsteps with nothing but support and encouragement. I love each one of them, and I hope all of them are proud of their baby sister.

Also, I would like to express my gratitude to my loving family, beginning with my wonderful husband, John. He has encouraged me, supported me, given me "tough-love" when I needed it, and has always made me feel like I mattered. John knows that I have a passion for life-long learning and has never suppressed it. I thank him for seeing

my passion for learning as a gift, not a hindrance, to our relationship. I thank my sons, Nate and Mark, who have given up time with their mother so that I could pursue my passion. They have kept the TV turned down, made dinner on nights that I needed to research, given up time with me so that I could attend classes, and helped me celebrate when I would get a step closer to reaching my goals. For all of that, I thank them both. There are absolutely no words to describe how grateful I am that we have been able to strike a balance in our relationships where love, encouragement, and support are both given and received mutually. I also need to thank my stepsons, Michael and Anthony. The weekends and summers they spend with us have become such a great distraction to my busy schedule, and I am grateful for every bit of happiness and laughter they have brought into my home. I thank them for being great brothers to Nate and Mark, and I thank them for treating me with the kindness and respect that they do.

Lastly, I thank every student that has entered my classroom or counseling office. It is my students that have blessed my life in a way that they will never know. It is my students that make me happy to go to work every day. It is my students that drive my passion to constantly improve so that I can provide for them the education they deserve. I thank them all for trusting in me to mold their minds and soften their hearts, to teach them academic knowledge as well as tolerance and acceptance for their peers, and to awaken their passions and help them recognize their strengths. And I thank my students for teaching me about what it means to be a true educator. As any teacher would agree, they will always have a special place in my heart, and they will always be “my kids.”

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On September 11th, 2001, Americans experienced a huge change in culture. Extremists took control of four American airplanes after take-off which were filled with innocent civilians who were not equipped or trained to defend themselves during an act of terrorism. The people working in the twin towers in New York City would have little to no time to react in defense of themselves when these same airplanes would be purposefully flown into their workplace at 8:46 a.m. and 9:03 a.m. (n.d., Timeline: Sept. 11, 2001, 2003). These Americans inside the World Trade Center were undoubtedly seen as easy targets for the terrorists who were aiming their attacks on our country.

However, by the time word had gotten out about the fate of the first three planes, an enormous shift occurred. The people aboard that last and final plane still in the air were no different than the people in the first three planes except for one exception: they had information the others did not have. They knew what had happened to the other flights, and they knew it was going to occur again... to them. Being complacent and adhering to your captor's demands was no longer going to work if they were to survive.

Therefore, a paradigm shift was a necessity in those passengers' minds. No longer did these passengers agree that the right thing to do would be to continue what others had done in the past during terrorist hijackings. It was time for a change, and that time was now. This last flight, United Airlines 93, reportedly crashed in Pennsylvania at 10:06 a.m. after crew and passengers decided to forego everything they had been taught were the right decisions to make and fought back against their hijackers (n.d., Timeline: Sept. 11, 2001, 2003). This complete shift in thinking took place in less than an hour and a half

with no formal research, no training sessions, and no public service announcements. It just happened because it had to.

Since then, new procedures and protocols have been adopted by the FAA and TSA that are designed to keep passengers safe. Since September 11th, flight crews are now receiving new and better training on how to handle hijacking situations, and flight passengers are always on high alert, especially when one of their fellow travelers is acting in any manner that might be considered unusual (Brown, 2007). Passengers are ready at a moments notice if they need to take their lives into their own hands if necessary when caught in the midst of the violent thoughts and ideas of others. So what happens when people with violent thoughts and ideas penetrate their way into K-12 schools? Are teachers adequately prepared to take their lives and the lives of their students into their own hands if they also find themselves at the forefront of another person's violent actions?

It seems that school violence, especially school shootings, has begun to become almost commonplace in our country. The earliest recorded school shooting to happen in the United States was in 1764. In July of that year, four Lenape American Indians entered a small schoolhouse in Pennsylvania where they shot and killed schoolmaster Enoch Brown and killed nine or ten children (n.d., History of School Shootings in the United States). Since then, there has been a steady stream of school shootings in America. Some of the more memorable ones are Columbine (1999), the Amish School shooting (2006), Virginia Tech (2007), and Sandy Hook (2012). In 2012, there were 14 reported school shootings in the U.S., and in 2013, there were over 30 reported school shootings in our country (n.d., History of School Shootings in the United States). Between the time of the Sandy Hook shooting and the summer of 2014, there

were 74 reports of firearms being discharged inside a school building or on school grounds by way of assaults, homicides, suicides, or accidental shootings (Diehm, 2014). Yet, many schools seem to have no substantial change in thinking. They still are training their students and teachers to be passive by hiding, locking doors, and staying quiet. However, school shootings are still occurring, students and staff members are still being injured or killed, and it is a guarantee that another school shooting is going to occur in the near future. School shootings occur throughout the United States, at both K-12 schools and universities, and have been averaging, based on data collected during an 18 month study in 2013-2014, at least one per week (Stein, 2014).

On September 11th, when the old ways of protecting lives had been proven ineffective, a shift in protocols and practices occurred in under 90 minutes that has sustained itself for over a decade. It would seem that this same shift would have occurred in our schools by this time, especially seeing the death toll which results from school shootings continue to rise. People are wondering why protocols and procedures don't seem to change in our schools when it comes to protecting people from gun violence. Children and teachers seem to remain as "sitting ducks" to armed intruders that get past the locked doors. Positive changes have occurred in the Airline and Security industries since September 11th, an event that was unpredictable to the majority of American citizens (Brown, 2007). Future school shootings are easy to predict in the U.S. and it is almost a certainty that they will happen (Stein, 2014). School districts owe it to their students and educators to bring about progressive changes and new procedures that are meant to create safer school environments for the children and less desirable locations for active shooters looking for easy targets.

Even the federal government agrees that traditional “lockdowns” are no longer the best practice in schools when it comes to active school shooters. In June of 2013, the U.S. Department of Education, along with the support of five other government agencies, published an updated guide for school emergency plans. In a section devoted to the appropriate response during an active shooter situation in schools, the guide explains a threefold response strategy (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

The first response of staff and students during an active shooter situation is to run, not only from the location of the shooter but away from the building itself, but only if this can be done in a manner that will not put lives at risk. If staff and students are not in a position to run, the next response to be taken is to hide and be as silent as possible. This second response has been the norm for schools in an active shooter situation, and school personnel have been trained to hide their students and themselves while staying as quiet as they can. However, the third response the U.S. Department of Education is advocating in the updated guide is to fight. The guide states, “If neither running nor hiding is a safe option, as a last resort when confronted by the shooter, adults in immediate danger should consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items in their environment, such as fire extinguishers and chairs.”(p.65) The guide makes a point of stating, however, that this response tactic is in no way a justification for school personnel to possess firearms and/or bring them on school grounds. They instead suggest that adult school staff members “fight” in a way that is within their comfort level. They also state the staff member’s choice in whether to confront an active shooter with an aggressive manner is optional and will never be a requirement of their job (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Due to the backing of the U.S. Department of Education to allow school staff to begin to fight back when intruders breach school security measures, active shooter training programs are becoming increasingly utilized by schools in order to retrain their staff into this new way of thinking. One such program, called ALICE, claims to align with the new standards of the Department of Education (ALICE Training Institute, 2014). ALICE is an acronym, which stands for ALERT, LOCKDOWN, INFORM, COUNTER, and EVACUATE. The program is based on these five premises, or steps, that should be utilized in the event an armed intruder enters the school or comes onto school property (ALICE Training Institute, 2014). By comparing the ALICE program with the new guidelines published by the U.S. Department of Education, it seems to indeed align with the new procedures laid out in the school emergency guide. This may be an indication that the passive measures taken by schools in the event of an armed intruder are becoming a thing of the past. A more active role by school personnel is supported by the federal government, and training programs are available in order to help teachers and staff understand their options better when faced with a dangerous situation, as well as instruct them as to how to make the best decisions during a frightening time which could save their lives and the lives of their students.

The shift in thinking that occurred on September 11th, 2001 in less than 90 minutes occurred as a result in an attempt to save lives. Similarly, the shift in thinking that is occurring now among school districts and educators, though it has taken what many believe is a substantially long time, is being done in an attempt to save lives. Only time will tell if these training programs will be successful in deterring shooters from entering school buildings and in protecting the lives of the innocent people involved in these harrowing situations. However, any efforts taken by school systems that attempt to

create safer school environments for both staff and students will more than likely be supported through public opinion and should continue to be applauded by communities across the country.

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework

There are many different theories related to behavioral change. One of these theories, the Diffusion of Innovations, was developed by Everett Rogers during his doctoral studies at Iowa State University. The first edition of his diffusion model was published in 1962 and is currently on the fifth edition.

Diffusion is the process by which (1) an innovation (2) is communicated through certain channels (3) over time (4) among the members of a social system. An innovation is defined as an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. Communication is the process by which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. A communication channel is the means by which messages get from one individual to another. The time dimension can be seen as the process by which individuals share knowledge of the innovation, how early or late an individual adopts an innovation, or the rate at which an innovation is adopted. A social system is defined as a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal (Rogers, 2003).

The innovation-development process consists of all the decisions, activities, and their impacts that occur from recognition of a need or a problem, through research, development, and commercialization of an innovation, through diffusion and adoption of the innovation by users, to its consequences. This process begins with a problem or need (or the awareness of a future problem or need) which leads to basic research and applied research in order to develop a solution. This development of an innovation is the process

of putting a new idea into a form that is expected to meet the needs of an audience of potential adopters. Once this occurs, the innovation is subject to commercialization, which encompasses the production, manufacturing, packaging, marketing, and distribution. Commercialization is the conversion of an innovation from an idea into a product or service. Once this occurs, the innovation begins to be diffused to potential adopters in either a cautious or expedited way, depending greatly on the priority of the problem or need. Finally, in the last stage of the innovation-development process, the consequences of the innovation are recognized as either the adoption or rejection of the idea (Rogers, 2003).

When an innovation is diffused into a group of people who may have an interest in adopting it, the potential adopters can be divided into five categories: 1) innovators, 2) early adopters, 3) early majority, 4) late majority, and 5) laggards. Innovators, which make up on average 2.5% of potential adopters, are usually the first to be willing to try a new idea and have an innate desire to take risks. The innovator plays an important role in the diffusion process in that they are the first to launch a new idea into a system of potential adopters. The early adopters, which make up on average 13.5% of potential adopters, serve as a role model of sorts to other members of a system. These are the people whom others check with when deciding if they would like to adopt the new innovation. The early adopter is usually respected by others and has a reputation of having successful uses of new ideas in the past (Rogers, 2003).

The early majority, which makes up in average 34% of potential adopters, is the group of people that adopt an idea just before the average member of a system. Since they did not adopt too early nor do they adopt too late, they are an important link in the diffusion of the innovation. The late majority, which makes up on average 34% of

adopters, will adopt a new idea just after the average member of a system. Peer pressure or economic necessity may be the catalyst that leads to the adoption of the innovation.

The late majority do not adopt innovation until most others in their system do so. Finally, the laggards, which make up the remaining 16%, are the last in a social system to adopt a new idea. Laggards are wary of change and tend to be suspicious of innovations. They need to be certain that a new idea will not fail before they adopt it (Rogers, 2003).

Problem Statement

With each passing year, incidents of school violence seem to be on the rise, especially with outside intruders infiltrating the schools with the intent to do harm to staff and students, regardless of age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. This is a nationwide problem that affects each and every one of our students and school employees. School shootings occur throughout the United States, at both K-12 schools and universities, and have been averaging, based on data collected between December 2012 and June 2014, at least one per week (Stein, 2014). Based on this data, no school employee is exempt from this concern of school intrusions and, therefore, no school employee should be denied the opportunity to train for such an occurrence. In agreement with the United States Department of Education, the time has arrived to create new professional development opportunities to educators that will properly and appropriately prepare them in the event of a school intrusion. With this in mind, the US Department of Education has recommended that school districts move away from a “lockdown-only” policy and adopt a “Run, Hide, Fight” policy instead.

Many options for training in such a policy exist for educators. One such training available to school districts that is based on the “Run, Hide, Fight” recommendation is the ALICE intruder model. ALICE is an acronym, which stands for ALERT,

LOCKDOWN, INFORM, COUNTER, and EVACUATE. The program is based on these five premises, or steps, that should be utilized in the event an armed intruder enters the school or comes onto school property (ALICE Training Institute, 2014). A typical training for this program lasts for two days, though the organization has developed specialized training classes and seminars for districts that are unable to devote that amount of time but are still interested in the program (ALICE training field notes, 2014). During the two day training, participants are given background on the troubles associated with a “Lockdown” procedure as a sole-source strategy for school intrusions. They are taught statistical data relating to school shooters, 911 response time for law enforcement and medical personnel, and numbers of those killed or wounded in attacks on schools. Participants are also taught the meanings associated with each letter of the ALICE acronym and they are taught the actions related to each term.

The purpose of this study is to understand how this model is being implemented by the districts who have provided the ALICE training to their employees. The researcher will examine through a quantitative and qualitative questionnaire how these districts are instructing their staff and students to use the concepts taught in the training sessions as well as the perceptions of the newly trained staff towards the new procedures.

Research Questions

Through the use of a questionnaire, the researcher will obtain information from participating school districts in order to study the following research questions.

1. How positive are the responses of school/district leaders on the ALICE Training Questionnaire?
2. How influential was the ALICE training on implementation of changed or new school safety policies and procedures in the participating districts?

Definition of Terms

Intruder Response Training. Any program designed to teach its participants about the options in response to a violent intruder entering their place of business, facility, or school (Kozlowski, 2009).

Lockdown. For the purpose of this study, a lockdown will be defined as a school intruder response protocol used by schools in which students and teachers lock doors of the classrooms, as well as outside doors, and hide inside the rooms.

School Intruder. For the purpose of this study, a school intruder will be defined as a person, disconnected with the school, who enters a school, or comes onto a school's campus, in order to cause some sort of unwanted disruption.

School Intrusion. For purpose of this study, a school intrusion is the act of entering school ground by a school intruder or school shooter.

School Shooter. For the purpose of this study, a school shooter will be defined as anyone who enters the campus of a school with a gun and/or other deadly weapons in order to do harm.

School Violence. For the purpose of this study, school violence will be any violent incident occurring on school property during school hours that could potentially cause serious or mortal harm to another.

Assumptions

The ALICE program was a choice made by district personnel in order to prepare themselves and their school staffs for a school intruder situation. It can be assumed that the reason these participants attended was to learn about intruder response tactics for their schools. Other assumptions are that the subjects going through the training are all voluntary participants in some capacity and that the concepts and skills learned in the

ALICE training will be shared by the school districts who have participated. Lastly, there is an assumption that the questionnaire that has been developed for the purpose of this study will be easily understood by all potential participants that intend to complete it.

Limitations

One limitation to this study is that the ALICE Training Institute employs several different trainers who travel the country in order to teach their protocols and procedures. Therefore, not all groups are guaranteed to have received the exact same training in the exact same manner. Another limitation is that participating school districts may already have an intruder policy in place within their district and may be participating in the ALICE training simply to enhance their existing program. A limitation also is that the data collected by the researcher can only be gathered from the school districts that chose to participate by completing and returning the questionnaire in the allotted time frame.

Delimitations

A delimitation of this study is that the data collected by the researcher will be only from those school districts that participated in the training during the 2014-2015 school year only. Those school districts who took the training towards the start of the school year may have had more time to implement changes in their districts than those that participating in the training towards the middle or end of their school year, therefore creating another delimitation. Another delimitation is that the data collected will be from those school districts that will voluntarily complete and return the questionnaire, thus eliminating results from districts that participated in the training but were unable or unwilling to complete the questionnaire.

Role of the Researcher

In April of 1999, I was driving home from my job as a sixth grade teacher when I heard the news about the Columbine Shooting on the car radio. This was only my second year out of college, and the shock of the incident that was felt throughout the country hit a special nerve with me for some reason. It had never occurred to me through my college classes in education that school violence, especially gun violence, was something that I would need to face as a teacher. This issue was never discussed in my undergraduate education and I was certainly not prepared for the realization that I needed to think about what I would need to do if I were ever to experience anything like the violence at Columbine. However, little did I know that 12 years later I would be personally experiencing the aftermath of a school shooting right in my own school district.

The events of Columbine never left my thoughts during the next several years of my teaching career, and I began to follow similar incidents that were occurring in our country. I also began to experience other crises and tragedies I saw befalling my students and my schools. I experienced students who needed to face major injuries and illnesses, both for themselves and their family members. I experienced families in turmoil through divorce, fires, incarceration, substance abuse, and other devastating family matters. I experienced the morning of September 11th as I was teaching a 5th grade classroom, and was left with the task of explaining a terrible world event to my young students. Nothing in college had ever prepared me for any of these things, and I had to take the time to teach myself about the best ways to handle these situations so that I could continue to be an effective teacher while having empathy and tact in the face of terrible situations.

In 2006, I was preparing to send my first child to kindergarten, with another little one that would soon follow, knowing that they would both eventually face their new

classmates, maybe even themselves, experiencing some sort of event that would change their lives in a negative way. It was a scary thought. It was especially scary having the realization as well that there was a chance, though very small, that my sons could face someone in their schools that was there to do harm and, God forbid, they would get in the way of that. It was during this time that I began to formally research school crises, tragedies, and violence, and I began to collect data on the subject to better inform myself on how to handle such situations, both as a mother and a teacher.

In 2007, I was asked to present my research to undergraduates at a local university, which was also my alma mater. Though many of the undergraduates were dumbfounded by the sheer volume of tragedies they could face as a teacher, the majority of attendees seemed grateful to have had the subject presented to them so they could begin to think about the subject of school crises and violence. Inspired by the attendees' positive responses, I continued my research and added to it each year.

Then, in 2011, I was faced with a school tragedy in my own district. On the first day back after winter break, a student entered Millard South High School and opened fire in the school office, mortally wounding the vice principal, injuring the principal, and turning the gun on himself. I was a school counselor on staff at Millard Public Schools and a member of the District Crisis Team. We were sent to respond to the staff and students in the aftermath of the shooting and set up a make-shift counseling center in one of the larger auditorium-style classrooms. The response by the students was so overwhelming that we actually had to form groups of students to work with in order to see all those who wanted to process what had occurred. I worked at Millard South for three days, speaking to students and staff to offer any support I could give, helping those dealing with survivor's guilt, hearing questions of "why?" from those who were close to

the injured and the shooter, and preparing to turn the school back over to those who were given the task of moving forward from this event. It was one of the best and worst experiences of my life.

Then in 2012, the Sandy Hook shooting occurred. At the time of the shooting, I was sitting in my own son's first grade classroom during a parent/students art activity day. I learned of the shooting shortly after I left the school. I openly cried in my car as I grieved for those parents who lost their child to such a senseless event and I was infuriated to learn that these poor teachers were doing exactly what they had been taught to do with their students, procedures that eventually cost them their lives. This was the moment I realized that there needs to be change, and that we, as educators, can't shy away from this subject any longer at any age group. I laid in bed with my own first grade son that night, holding him tight, realizing that the world had changed that day for so many of us, and we had to begin to fight back through education, training, and better school policies and procedures. Shortly after the Sandy Hook Shooting, I was excited to learn that the US Department of Education had officially endorsed a "Run, Hide, Fight" protocol in American schools. However, to my chagrin, this idea has been slow to filter into school district's procedures.

I have felt passionate about this subject since 1999 when the idea of school violence became a very real subject through the news of the Columbine tragedy. I believe that schools are better prepared since the time of Columbine, but also still ill-prepared as the number of these occurrences begins to accelerate as well as vary as to the types of schools in which these events are occurring. Many of the procedures the districts are following seem antiquated, and I would endorse the idea of more districts rethinking their

current policies for school intruders and taking steps to better prepare students as well as staff for potentially violent intrusions.

Significance of the Study

The “Run, Hide, Fight” recommendation by the United States Department of Education is slowly trickling into our nation’s schools, but a shocking number of districts are still adhering to a “lockdown-only” protocol that has been proven by research to be ineffective in saving lives. While lockdowns are useful, the simple procedure of locking down a building and hiding from a potential attacker is no longer considered the best practice to use. With high-stakes testing guiding the methods we use to educate students in their academic content areas, teachers are consistently being trained in research-based instructional practices that are proven to be effective. It raises the question of why school districts seem slow to implement substantial change to their safety policies when it comes to armed intruders coming onto school property while our students are sitting in their classrooms and threatening their lives and the lives of teachers and staff members. School districts spend much time and money to professionally develop their staff in academic areas, but little time and money to instruct them how to properly and effectively protect the lives of their students and themselves if the worst case scenario were to occur.

Unfortunately, many administrators and teachers adhere to the idea that they are immune to such violence in their schools for various reasons. However, if one were to ask the staff and students of Columbine, Arapahoe, Virginia Tech, Marysville Pilchuck, Sandy Hook, or Millard South if they thought it would ever happen to them, one can safely assume they would have answered in the negative. They would have been wrong. The subject matter of armed school intruders is also an uncomfortable topic among

educators, who certainly did not enter the profession with the notion of having to protect their lives and the lives of their students on the forefront of their minds. However, school shootings are on the rise, they are certain to happen again, and better teacher development must occur in order for teachers to feel empowered to be able to handle stressful and frightening situations.

This study will show how many school districts who have been trained in the ALICE program, which is based around the “Run, Hide, Fight” recommendation by the US Department of Education, are utilizing it in their districts in order to better prepare themselves in the event of an armed intruder who has intent to do harm comes onto school property. This study will indicate how the ALICE training has affected the feelings of preparedness for teachers and students, as well as how districts have used the concepts taught in the training have supported their district’s safety procedures and protocol, thus creating a safer and more secure school environment.

Chapter 2

Review Of Literature

Tragedy is everywhere. It can be found on the news, in the newspapers, and in online articles. But to many, these are simply stories. Rarely do people truly comprehend how these stories have impacted the lives of other people. When tragedy happens in schools, it can affect only a few people or it can devastate the entire school community. The following are some examples of different types of tragedies that schools have faced:

*In April of 2001, four students from Oak Hill Middle School in Newton, Massachusetts, were killed when their U.S. tour bus crashed in Canada. The tour bus was apparently in the wrong exit when it flipped over shortly before dawn, police said (“Four Children Killed When U.S. Tour Bus Crashes in Canada”, 2001).

*The Cleveland School massacre (also known as the Stockton schoolyard shooting) occurred on January 17, 1989, at Cleveland Elementary School at 20 East Fulton Street in Stockton, California, United States. The gunman, Patrick Purdy, who had a long criminal history, shot and killed five schoolchildren and wounded 29 other school children and one teacher before committing suicide (“Slaughter in a School Yard”, 2001).

*In Georgia, 2012, Gainesville High School Principal, Chris Mance, died on a Sunday morning at Northeast Georgia Medical Center after a brief battle with esophageal cancer (Gill, 2012). He was 50 years old.

*The father of a deaf student was shot and killed by a police sniper in 1998 after he planted a pipe bomb outside the Orange County Board of Education in Costa Mesa, California, and held two administrators hostage at gunpoint (Willon, 1998).

*On Wednesday, March 4, 1908, shortly after 9:00 a.m., while school was in session, Collinwood's Lake View Elementary School in Collinwood, Ohio, became engulfed in flames when overheated steam pipes ignited nearby wood joists. The fire spread quickly and roughly half of the students were unable to escape ("Collinwood School Fire", 1998). In the end, 172 children, two teachers and one rescuer perished in the fire.

*On May 22, 2011, a tornado touched down in Joplin, Missouri, killing 161 people, injuring hundreds more and destroying thousands of buildings, including Joplin High School (Zagler, 2012). Five other Joplin Schools were also destroyed, with four more among the damaged structures.

*In Urbandale, Iowa, Urbandale Middle School student, Grace Chance, 14, died of brain cancer in January 2012 (DeMasters, 2012). The illness was diagnosed in the summer.

*In 2008, a man charged into a school in Portsmouth, Ohio, where his estranged wife was a teacher, firing a gun before stabbing her as her fifth grade class watched ("Teacher Stabbed by Husband at Ohio Elementary School; Husband Later Found Dead", 2008). He later was found dead in his home after apparently shooting himself during a standoff with police. The teacher, Christi Layne, underwent surgery and survived.

*In 2011, a series of bomb threats sent via the internet were received by Orange Public Schools in Pepper Pike, Ohio, which shut down the schools for three days (Trump, 2012). When the schools reopened to the students, there was heightened security present in the buildings and a high level of anxiety among the school community.

*On September 19, 1999, 20 year-old Jacqueline "Jacqui" Saburido was riding in a car with friends when it was hit by an impaired driver and high school student, 18 year-

old Reggie Stephey. Two of her friends were killed instantly, while two others suffered minor injuries. The car caught fire and Saburido, trapped, suffered second and third degree burns to over 60% of her body, but survived despite her doctor's expectations. Stephey was sentenced to a prison term of eight years for the crime (Schwartz, 2011), ("A Sobering Message to Drunk Drivers", 2002).

Crisis and tragedy is inevitable. It is almost guaranteed to happen during the course of our lives and in the lives of our students. It is sad. It causes grief. It inundates people's lives with changes and adjustments. However, when school personnel are equipped with the skill set needed to appropriately and effectively deal with these crises, school districts and their individual buildings can get past the hard times while still ensuring the emotional and academic success of the students who are most affected by them.

Public and Personal Tragedies and Crises

Crisis and tragedy in the schools could easily be divided into two sub-categories: public and personal. Public tragedies can be those which affect an entire school building. The sudden or unexpected death of a student or staff member can result in a chaotic state for the school building affected and how schools respond to the death can either help or hinder the healing process (Poland, 2004). The suicide of a student, a parent, or a staff member can be especially difficult since suicide can be difficult to explain to children in that there is no true "explainable" cause of death as there would be in a death by cancer or another medical illness (The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children and Families 2001). The physical trauma or traumatic experience of a student may have a profound effect on their physical health, mental health and development, and how students process trauma depends on their age and level of

development (“The Effects of Trauma on Schools and Learning”, n.d.) The attempted kidnapping in or around school grounds, a bomb or bomb threat, damage to the school done by fire or tornado and school shootings (or just the mere threat of a school shooting) may cause ongoing feelings of concern in students for their own safety and the safety of others. Traumatic world events such as September 11th, the Challenger explosion, Hurricane Katrina and the assassination or attempted assassination of a government leader can seriously interrupt the school routine and the processes of teaching and learning (“The Effects of Trauma on Schools and Learning” n.d.).

Personal tragedies can be events that affect one or few of the students in the classroom. A sudden or an expected death of a family member or close friend can be devastating to a young person especially if this is their first experience with death since they may have an unrealistic perception of what grief entails (Poland 2004). The suicide of a family member or a close friend can leave a child sad, angry, shocked, confused, or numb (The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children and Families, 2001). A stillbirth in the family can cause an intense feeling of disappointment and loss in all members of the family. Young children may be upset and clingy or show no obvious signs of sadness. Slightly older children might be afraid that their parent or themselves could die, too. Teenagers can become sullen and withdrawn at the loss of the infant (“Children and Miscarriage or Still Birth”, 2012). Diagnosis of critical health issues concerning a loved one (physical or mental) can cause a myriad of emotions in students such as sudden crying, looming fears, or intense anger, often leaving the adults in their lives feeling helpless and guilty (Richfield, 2012).

School Shootings

Recorded school shootings date clear back to 1966 (“School Shooting”, 2012; “Timeline: US Shooting Sprees – History of School Shootings”, 2008). Since then, the amount of school shootings around the world, as well as in the United States, has been staggering. As a matter of fact, America leads the world in school shootings (James, 2007). When people hear the phrase “School shootings,” their imagination usually pictures a high school setting, where one or more young males have embarked on a rampage against their fellow students and teachers. However, this is not always the case in a school shooting. In the year 2000, the youngest victim of a school shooting at that time, first grader Kayla Rolland, six years old, was shot and killed by a classmate in Mount Morris Township, Michigan. The shooter was also six years old (Rosenblatt, 2000). In January 1979, Brenda Spence, 17, got a rifle for Christmas and used it to shoot into an elementary school across the street from her home in San Diego. Eight children and a police officer were injured and two men lost their lives protecting the kids (Parole Denied in School Shooting, 2001). Neither of these stories fits into what most view as the typical scenario of a school shooting.

So who are school shooters? No one knows. Profiling potential shooters has proved to be unsuccessful (Dolan, n.d.) Some school shooters do well in school (extremely well, actually) while others do poorly. Some school shooters come from the typical American family households, while others come from broken homes. School shooters do not look or act any certain way. A member of the secret service, Robert A. Fein said, “What caused these shootings? I don’t pretend to know and I don’t know if it’s knowable. We’re looking for different pieces of the puzzle, not for whether kids wore black clothes “(as cited in Dolan,n.d.)

However, some similarities among school shooters have come to light due to research conducted on school shooters. They are primarily male and are between the ages of 15-19 years old. They all have some connection with the school, whether it be that they were once a student there, currently a student there, or are connected to a staff member. School shooters work alone and rarely have an accomplice. Only two school shootings on record were committed by more than one person; Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado and Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Lastly, they all suffer from some sort of mental illness that inhibits their ability to have rational thoughts (Langman, 2009).

In research done by psychologist Dr. Peter Langman in which he closely studied ten school shooters, these young men were able to be cataloged into one of three groups: psychopaths, psychotic, or traumatized. He discovered that many of these school shooters had delusional thoughts, experienced different levels of paranoia, and possessed a distorted view of reality. Dr. Langman was able to distinguish some commonalities, though varied, among the school shooters he studied that may or may not be directly related to their mental incapacities. He found that all were angry (angry at their own life and at the world in general), all displayed a lack of empathy for their actions, and all shooters had extreme reactions to normal negative events. Many had suicidal tendencies, many felt like “failures” in certain aspects of their lives, and many are involved in “fantasy” types of activities, including books, movies, and other types of role-playing games (Langman, 2009).

School procedures for teachers and administrators in the event of a school shooting vary from district to district. The International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Bureau of Justice Assistance suggests several actions take place in the event of a

school shooting, which include getting the students out of harm's way and alerting the appropriate school personnel and/or 911 and locking down or evacuating students, depending on which is the safest option (International Association of Chiefs of Police/Bureau of Justice Assistance, n.d.) In a chaotic and terrifying situation such as this, it is difficult to say what exactly teachers should or should not do. A teacher's primary role should be to keep the students and themselves as safe as possible. Teachers should follow district procedures as closely as possible, provided they will keep the students and themselves from harm.

Also, teachers must be vigilant in reporting any student that has spoken or written anything that could be taken as a threat even if it is heard second hand from another student. This can be hard to do, especially if the student is well-liked or has a strong academic record that a teacher may be afraid of tarnishing (Booth, 2011). Unfortunately, these "threats" could be the only warning sign given in order to avoid a serious crisis. Several school shooters of the past had done or said things at school that could have been clear warning signs to teachers and students that something was amiss with this particular person. For example, the Columbine shooters left behind diaries that chronicled their thought processes and plans for violence. Eric Harris had an unnatural preoccupation with guns and used them as topics for his school assignments, along with drawing pictures of guns, making videos involving guns, and playing violent video games involving firearms. Dylan Klebold wrote a research paper for a class about Charles Manson and the infamous Manson murders, and began to refer to his friends by color names, which was exactly what Manson had done with his followers (Langman, 2009).

While this study does possess a focus on recommended protocol and procedures for school shooters, it is important to recognize many other tragedies that can befall

students, families, and staff that can adversely affect the school climate and learning environment in K-12 schools.

Accidental Deaths and Homicides

Some deaths are expected, usually resulting in the end of a terminal illness. Some deaths are sudden, usually resulting from an accident or some sort of violent act. All deaths are a loss.

The leading causes of death among children ages 5-14 are (1) accidents, (2) cancer, and (3) homicide. Two of these are preventable causes of death. The leading causes of death among adolescents and young adults ages 15-24 are (1) accidents, (2) homicide, and (3) suicide, all three of which are preventable. Auto accidents are responsible for the largest number of these accidental deaths. Some of the other top causes of accidental deaths are drowning, fire, falls, and poisoning (“Death Among Children and Adolescents”, 2010).

But not all deaths are accidents. Homicides are responsible for many deaths of school-age children. The following examples are three young victims of homicide that occurred in the area of Columbus, Ohio. All three were students. Their deaths affected their families, classmates, teachers, and all other staff members even though their murders occurred outside of the school building.

*Emily Rimel (1999-2004). Emily was kidnapped, raped, and murdered by a family friend. She was five years old at the time and a kindergarten student at Madison Elementary in Groveport, Ohio (“Ohio Jury Convicts Man of Kidnapping Girl”, 2005).

* Valerie McCreary (1992-2007). Valerie was a student at Pickerington North High School in Pickerington, Ohio. She was 15 years old when she, her Mother, and her dog were murdered by her step-father in November of 2007 (Candisky, 2007).

*Dennis Lewis (1990-2008). Dennis was a senior at East High School in Columbus, Ohio. He was 17 years old when he was shot and killed by a masked intruder who broke into his home. He died defending his mother. He leaves behind a twin brother, Darris. They have never found his killer (“Dennis Lewis Murder Timeline”, 2010).

Students will also experience death in their families. It seems the death of a grandparent would most likely be the student’s first experience with death among family members, but students can also lose their own parents, siblings (including stillbirth), aunts and uncles, cousins, or a family pet. It is important that teachers remember that, while some of these deaths will be expected, others will be very sudden. It can be more difficult or traumatic for a child when the death is unexpected and they are unprepared for the loss and the feelings that follow it which can lead to complicated grief and an inability to express their feelings (Goldman, 2001).

When teachers have a student that has experienced a death of someone they cared about, they need to communicate to that student that they are there for them. Teachers should let them know that their feelings are justified and normal, even if they did not know the person as well as they may have liked. Teachers need to be patient with these students. They need to remind them that grieving takes time and that it is a process that gets easier every day. Also, teachers can encourage their students to share their feelings with others by talking, writing, or drawing. Teachers can encourage them to continue with their life and keep up with their regular activities and they can help them do something tangible to remember their loved one, such as a grief box or planting a tree in their memory. Lastly, teachers can utilize some of the literature written especially for children and teens regarding death and they can contact any local organization that

specializes in helping young people deal with feelings of loss and grief (Goldman, 2001).

School administrators also have a vital role in responding to a death in the school community. The school leader should be sure to verify the facts about the death and be willing to reach out to the family in order to offer assistance. They should alert the district crisis team to help in assessing the potential effect the death may have on the building. School leaders should coordinate a strong line of communication among the staff, schedule a staff meeting as soon as possible, protect staff members from the media if necessary, and give staff and students opportunities to express their emotions. School leaders can also consider a memorial activity in honor of the deceased as a way to help staff and students help and begin to move on as well as show the school's support to the grieving family (Poland, 2004).

Bomb or Bomb Threat

One of the first incidents of deadly school violence recorded in the United States took place in 1927 in Bath Township, Michigan. In this tragic event, 45 people were killed and 58 were injured when the school was bombed (Bauerle, 2007). In recent years, the use of explosive devices in the school setting has increased (Dorn, 2001). Experts attribute this to the unprecedented access to internet sites that provide instructions on how to assemble homemade bombs as well as the incredible availability of books which teach how to construct bombs (Dorn, 2001; Newman, 2005).

All school personnel must treat any bomb threat seriously and recognize the potential danger. They must also cooperate with local law enforcement who will usually take over the situation. Training should be provided to all staff members regarding appropriate actions to be taken if a bomb threat should occur. Since a large number of

bomb threats across the nation have been made by students using their cell phones, and teachers need to be familiar with their district's policies regarding the use of cell phones by students as well as policies regarding bomb threats in general (Dorn, 2001; Newman, 2005; Trump, 2012).

World Events

World events can affect students due to the sheer volume of media coverage that is available in today's society. The last successful attempt to harm an American President was the shooting of Ronald Reagan in 1981. Reagan survived the shooting, but wounded was Jim Brady, Reagan's press secretary. He became partially paralyzed and was confined to a wheelchair. Many school children, elementary, middle, and high school, were watching when the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded after takeoff in 1986. It was carrying the first teacher to go into space. All aboard were killed. The events of September 11th, 2001, began in the early morning hours when children all over America were hurrying to school. Many teachers were left with the task of trying to explain these events to their students.

What can teachers do when they are left with this task? Teachers can turn anything into a "teachable moment", and these events can be used in the same way. Instead of trying to hide the incident, teachers can try to use it to communicate lessons to their students in an age appropriate way. When tragic world events occur, young children can feel confused, sad, or helpless. Teachers should try to prevent these feelings in their students by explaining what has happened to the class and how the event may affect their lives. Some may even wish to get involved and teachers can facilitate this in a positive way if they wish (Goldman, 2001). Lastly, teachers should reassure

students that they are safe at school and communicate to parents what has been discussed in the classroom.

Physical Trauma

Physical trauma can affect a classroom, especially when the victim of the trauma has been altered, either physically or by the acquired need of special apparatus in order to function.

Elementary students may show signs of stress following a trauma by way of complaints about stomachaches or headaches or they may have significant changes in their behavior such as increased irritability, aggression, or anger. They may also show a change in their school performance, attention span, or level of concentration. Middle and high school students may feel a bit more self-conscious about their emotional responses to a traumatic event. They may engage in self-destructive behavior and there may be a change in their interpersonal relationships with family members, teachers, and classmates. These students may also experience a change in their school performance, attendance, and behavior (“The Effects of Trauma on Schools and Learning”, n.d.)

Teachers can do many things to accommodate both the traumatized student and the other members of the class. Upon the student’s return, the teacher should let the student know they are there for them and they want to help them in any way they can. A teacher should also prepare students for the return of the injured classmate by providing accurate information on how the student will look and, possibly, act differently as well as what the injured student can and cannot do. The teacher can also model an appropriate response to the injured student in which the students can emulate (“Dealing with Crisis at School”, 2012). Lastly, it may be very beneficial for the teacher to allow the entire class to let them help with any preparations or changes to the classroom environment that the

returning student will need, including assigning the injured student a “buddy” who can help with instructions, transitions, and assignments (“Meeting the Needs of Students with Traumatic Brain Injury”, 1996)

Diagnosis of Serious Illness

Critical health diagnosis can occur to students themselves, as well as to their loved ones. This includes any physical or mental conditions, including addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. In any of these cases, knowledge is power for both the student and the adults. For kids of all ages, the two key factors are information and reassurance. With parent permission, the teacher should explain the illness in a realistic, age appropriate manner to the students. The teacher should tell the children the name and symptoms of the disease and find out what the students know or what they have heard about the disease so they can correct any wrong information they have (Marquina, 2012). By educating the students as well as themselves about whatever disease the afflicted student may have, teachers can calm the students’ fears and help them assimilate.

Divorce

Various studies of the rates of divorce in the United States show significant differences when a comparison is made in 1st, 2nd and 3rd marriage breakups in America, in that the marriage breakup for the first marriages is 41% to 50%; the rate after second marriages is from 60% to 67% and the rate for third marriages are from 73% to 74% (“Divorce Statistics and Divorce Rate in the USA”, 2012). The United States has the highest percentage of single parent families. The most common are those headed by divorced or separated mothers (58%) followed by never married mothers (24%). Other family heads include widows (7%), divorced and separated fathers (8.4%), never married fathers (1.5%) and widowers (0.9%). There is racial variations in the proportion of

families headed by a single parent: 22% for White, 57% for Black and 33% for Hispanic families (Feitey, 2003)

Children do not adjust to divorce in a short amount of time since divorce is a long process, full of different events and changes. Researchers believe that children react to divorce in three stages, the initial stage, the transition stage, and restabilization. In the Initial Stage, parents are making decisions to end the marriage. For some children, if the living situation at home has been volatile, separation can be a relief. However, the stress of the divorce is inevitable and only a very small number of children are happy that a divorce is coming. In the transition stage, the family separates and one or both parents will move to a new home. The family will make new arrangements for children, housing, money, custody, and visitation, at this point. This stage can last as long as two or three years. The restabilization stage occurs when the new life begins to be normal and the family is used to all the changes that divorce created in their lives. The fears and anger are not as strong in this stage. For some families, this stage can last up to five years (Karuppaswamy, 2010).

When it comes to the matter of divorce, the biggest fear of most children is change. Children fear the change in their circumstances once the separation and divorce happen. They may often wonder where they may be staying, whom they may be staying with, and so on (Ghare, 2011). Teachers must be sure to remind the grieving student that school will always be the same, and it will always be a “safe place” for them to get away from the problems at home. Since divorces and the healing process from the divorce can sometimes take quite a number of years, teachers need to remind the student often that they care about them.

Responsibilities of Teachers and Administrators at Times of Tragedy and Crisis.

As school and classroom leaders, teachers and school administrators have a responsibility to the students, parents, and community to follow guidelines and procedures that will provide a safe and caring environment to children during times of tragedy. Both teachers and administrators must show empathy and understanding for the student who is affected by the tragedy and provide a listening ear. Educators must prepare the individual classes as well as the school building as a whole for the return of students who have experienced a crisis as well as maintain as much consistency and continuity in the school as possible. Lastly, school personnel must be educated and able to recognize the signs of grief, anxiety, or depression in a student, which can include changes in eating and sleeping habits, regression, a loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed, fatigue, angry or aggressive behavior, an increase/decrease in affection towards others, or preoccupation with morbid thoughts (Goldman, 2001)

All school personnel should read and be prepared to carry out the district's crisis intervention plan. This is a plan put in place by all districts in case of any kind of crisis occurring in or around the school. The purpose of crisis intervention plans is to provide schools with prompt and effective responses to emergency situations in order to reduce the stress in the aftermath of a tragic event as well as detail the proper procedures to address an ongoing crisis situation (Benjamin, 2012). It should include information on bomb threats, fires, shootings, hazardous spills, kidnappings, power failures, weather emergencies, intruders, firearms, and drugs and/or alcohol. The crisis intervention plan must clearly delineate individual staff members' roles and responsibilities during a crisis and teachers should keep the plan handy in their classrooms.

There are many resources available for teachers on crisis management and grieving children. The quickest and easiest way to find information on crisis intervention

and prevention is the internet. Also, teachers can use their school and public library to gather books and videos on any subject they may be faced with. Many communities also have local organizations who work with children who are grieving. Teachers can always contact these organizations for help in any situation. Sometimes these organizations even offer workshops for teachers and other school personnel in order to educate them on grief and healing. Teachers also need to utilize the school counselors and psychologists in their building. Teachers can utilize these staff members as a knowledgeable resource and ask them to get involved, especially if the situation seems like more than they can handle. School counselors and psychologists are especially trained for crisis situations.

The Importance of Professional Staff Development

The goal of any professional development program is to inform and change teacher behavior as a result of new information (Barnett, 2003). As education professionals continue to conduct and provide research to develop effective educational practices for those working within the schools, administrators and teachers must be prepared to become life-long learners and have the ability to adapt to ever-changing practices and procedures. In all aspects of education, improvements are being made on a continuing basis in order to provide safe, secure, and welcoming learning environments which use the best instructional, research-based practices. With constant improvements comes constant change.

However, with a heavier workload being placed upon classroom teachers and other school personnel, asking for staff members to implement changes on a yearly basis can pose many problems with teacher buy-in and staff morale. Many institutions may even ignore employee development opportunities due to over-focusing on the “here and now,” an inability in continuing to implement new ideas, and simply running out of time

(Lipman, 2013). Regardless, the benefits of professional development in the schools far outweighs any of the negative aspects, especially when teachers are able to see how the new information can benefit themselves, their responsibilities as an educator, and their students.

Professional development in the schools has come a long way. Creating these sessions to be inviting, engaging, and effective are foremost in the mind's of the creators and presenters, putting aside for good the days of the "sit and get" lectures (n.d., 2005). Nowadays, professional development sessions are geared more toward collaboration of teachers in the form of coaching, study teams, and opportunities for peer support (n.d., 2005; National Academy of Sciences, 2005; Six Sigma, 2014). While the sessions are directed at keeping teachers abreast on all the latest research and changes, they also are providing opportunities for reflection, assistance in implementing any necessary changes, and allows teachers to make their own decisions regarding what they would like to learn more about (n.d., 2005; Frost, 2015; Lebeau, 2007; National Academy of Sciences, 2005). Lastly, today's trends in professional development for educators are purposefully bringing employees to higher levels of skills and knowledge which, in turn, will instill a higher confidence level among staff and a more professional feeling within the school building (Frost, 2015; Lebeau, 2007).

Case for Improved Staff Development for Intruder Response From Eye Witness Account

Rodney Mauler, Campus Security Officer at Arapahoe High School in Colorado, was on his lunch break on December 13th, 2013 when a student, 18 year old senior Karl Pierson, entered the building armed with a machete, homemade Molotov cocktails, and a rifle. He opened fire with the intent of killing a teacher. He fired his first rounds in one

of the main hallways. Mauler and his fellow co-workers heard the words “shooter” and “library” come across the radio and responded to the call (personal communication, 2014).

At the time, the school had taught lockdown as a procedure to their students and staff, but also advocated fleeing from the school if possible and fighting back if necessary. Many students ran when the shots rang out, Mauler stated, and ended up in different places outside of the building, and many students did go into lockdown in the classroom, which happened “pretty quick.” He also reported that some students hid because “That’s what they were told to do.” Kids in the library, the second location the shooter opened fire, were hiding when Mauler arrived there, even though there were two doors they could have ran out of in order to escape the building. Mauler stated, “The reality is that we are taught to be sheep. That’s our country. You don’t fight back, you let the professionals handle it, and I think that’s the worst advice you can give to people.” (personal communication, 2014). The shooter missed his intended target and, instead of pursuing him, committed suicide by gunshot in the library.

Mauler was also a responder during the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School. He was working investigations for the local police department and, at the time of the shooting, the school’s procedure was to simply lockdown, and law enforcement’s procedure was to contain the perpetrator(s). “I had friends that were there pretty quick and had AR-15’s. [They] wanted to go into the school and were told, “No, we are going to contain the problem,” and so the shooters, Klebold and Harris, continued killing people.” Mauler stated, “Now, law enforcement at that time, and anybody with any common sense, knew that was stupid, but that was the accepted procedure so you got to go by it.” (personal communication, 2014).

Mauler feels that things have evolved in a positive direction since the time of Columbine. The Columbine shooters left 24 wounded and 13 dead. The Arapahoe shooting resulted in only one fatality, a female student sitting in one of the main hallways, and had no others wounded. When asked if, before Columbine, he had ever thought it would happen to him, Mauler responded, “No..... There will be more ‘Klebold’s’ and ‘Harris’s’ and there’s going to be more ‘Karl Pierson’s’ all the time, and this will happen again.” When asked if he ever thought it would have happened at Arapahoe High School, he responded, “No, it was pretty surprising. It’s such a good school. It was a great school and it is still a great school” (personal communication, 2014).

Rodney Mauler was present during the time of two school shootings. He witnessed both the perspectives of law enforcement and school personnel. He witnessed the violence, the chaos, the fear, and the aftermath of these frightening and deadly situations. And it was Mauler and a co-worker who carried the sole victim of the Arapahoe shooting out of the hallway and toward medical personnel, knowing that she was unlikely to survive her wound, and hoping that she would die with family and not inside the school. When asked what advice he would give to school administrators on what they should do in the event a shooter enters their building, Mauler stated, “I’m not a person that believes in being passive.” “Going over to Columbine, and seeing the look of terror on those kids faces that came out, and seeing the same thing at Arapahoe High School, that really bothered me.” Mauler also added, “I don’t like the fact that we are taught to have an attitude that we are supposed to be passive and that hopefully all the bad will go around us. Locking down I think has its value. I guess my preference would

be to flee or fight. And I think if you fight, you might save somebody else's life”
(Personal Communication, 2014).

Intruder Alert Programs Designed for Schools

Several years ago, providing training to your school employees on what to do if an armed intruder were to enter the halls of your school was not even a thought in the minds of school administrators. However, the school shooting epidemic in this country has led to several school leaders realizing that they need to not only educate students but to maintain a safe and secure environment on school grounds at all times. Therefore, many companies and organizations have been established that are providing professional developments and different types of training efforts for school personnel in order to be better prepared for the event of a school shooting.

TAC ONE Consulting, founded in 2007, is one of these training organizations. This company is located in Denver, Colorado but travel the country providing courses in teacher/faculty training for school shooters as well as a myriad of other courses for law enforcement as well as civilians. TAC ONE offers an eight hour course which addresses active shooters and other violent incidents on school grounds. They also offer an online course as well for teachers and school staff for anyone who is unable to fit an eight hour course into their schedule (TAC*ONE Consulting, 2015).

SafePlans, located in Jefferson City, Missouri, was founded in 1993 with the mission of keeping people and places safe from harm. They have developed a training course called Intruderology, which is designed to provide strategies that schools and businesses can use in order to combat violent intruders and other threats. They instruct on prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Similar to TAC ONE, the

Intruderology program also can be utilized to educate school personnel as well as law enforcement, and Intruderology can be learned by way of instructor-led classes or by online courses (SafePlans, 2015).

Rhode Island police officer, Allan Garcia, is the President and CEO of School Violence Solutions, another such company that provides active shooter training to individuals. Since 2003, he has been involved in active shooter response training with many organizations and in many different methods. School Violence Solutions offers educators a four-hour presentation in their own school that will provide training in recognizing, preventing, and reacting to active school shooter situations. Just as TAC ONE and Intruderology offer their trainings to law enforcement, School Violence Solutions encourages police officers and teachers to train together in order to establish a common plan between both entities if a school shooting were to occur (School Violence Solutions, 2015).

For the purposes of this study, the ALICE training program will be placed in the forefront of the research. The ALICE program is similar in nature to TAC ONE, Intruderology, and School Violence Solutions.

The ALICE Intruder Alert Program

The ALICE intruder alert program was developed in Texas by a law enforcement officer named Greg Crane. Greg is married to an elementary principal, and the plan was developed after Greg learned of the lockdown procedures at his wife's school, which was primarily to lock the classroom doors, hide, and wait for police to arrive. He simply felt this was not enough and that his wife and her students were easy targets for school shooters. He decided to develop a program so people could learn to do more in an active school shooting situation than hide and wait for first responders (ALICE Training

Institute, 2014). Therefore, the ALICE training program was developed. ALICE is an acronym, which stands for ALERT, LOCKDOWN, INFORM, COUNTER, and EVACUATE. According to the ALICE plan, these five steps do not need to be followed in any particular order, but rather provides options for school staff when faced with an active shooter in their building (ALICE Training Institute, 2014).

The ALERT component is designed to let as many people know as quickly as possible what is occurring inside the school building when an active shooter is on campus or in the building. ALERT means to use the PA system, text or email others, or make phone calls in order to get the word out quickly, and in very clear terms, that help is needed. The program deters the use of any “code words” that could be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

The LOCKDOWN step encourages staff to barricade and silence the rooms they are in. However, this is not a step to rely on in order to be kept safe from an active shooter. This is when school staff can buy time in order to make decisions on what steps need to be taken next in regard to their survival.

The INFORM piece encourages people inside the school to keep everyone (first responders outside the building as well as others inside the building) informed in real-time. This means to keep giving constant updates in regard to what is happening inside the building as events unfold. This can give teachers and their students the knowledge that it is safe for them to flee the building or to stay where they are, and can give law enforcement more knowledge of where to apprehend the assailant.

The COUNTER component gives ideas on how to distract and reduce the shooter’s ability to hit his/her target. It focuses on disruptive actions so as to keep the shooter from accomplishing their objective, which is to shoot at an easy target and take

lives. This only occurs in the event that a person finds themselves face to face with the shooter. This step is about survival.

The final piece, EVACUATE, encourages people to escape the situation if they know they can do so without putting their life and other's lives in jeopardy. If they know they can do so safely, they need to run (ALICE Training Institute, 2014).

Conclusion

Crisis and tragedy in the schools happen every year, maybe several times during the year. When examining the sheer volume of students that come in and out of the schools and classrooms each year, chances are great that every school will be faced with a myriad of public and personal tragedies in which they will need to manage in a way that will not impede the learning of the students. By providing strong procedures and guidelines for school personnel to follow, as well as strong professional development opportunities regarding tragic and violent school events, school and district administrators can create a stronger sense of empowerment among their employees for the times in which they are faced with a serious tragedy or a dangerous situation. These crises can be better dealt with when school personnel are well versed in the most effective ways to confront situations that can cause fear, grief, anxiety, or confusion in their students.

When schools are aware of the different tragedies that could possibly befall them and are mindful that no situation is hopeless, it creates a sense of empowerment among the staff, especially when they are equipped with the necessary skill set needed to handle any difficult, tragic, or even deadly situation that may present itself during the school year.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to better understand the perceptions and the implementation of the intruder response training known as ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) for utilization by school districts. In order to complete this study, the researcher will be using a mixed methods questionnaire sent to participating school districts in order to gather data pertaining to the ALICE training program. At this stage in the research, the ALICE program will be generally defined as an intruder response training program that currently supports the United States Department of Education's recommendation of a "Run, hide, fight" intruder protocol, and is currently being utilized by school districts throughout the nation.

Design

The design used in this study will be a mixed method model, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. The purpose of a mixed methods design is to concurrently collect both quantitative and qualitative forms of data, combine and analyze the data, and use the results to better understand a research problem (Creswell, 2012). The design of the study will include a Likert-scale/open-ended questionnaire which will be sent to districts across the nation that have previously trained their school personnel by allowing them to take part in the ALICE training programs provided by certified ALICE trainers. The questionnaire will be used to gain insight into the educator's perceptions of the ALICE training program as well as the methods in which the policies and procedures have been put in place within their district as a direct result of the training.

At the beginning, the questionnaire asks the responders if their district has had any experience in the past with armed school intruders in order to gain awareness as to

the district's first hand knowledge of violent intruders on school grounds. The questionnaire consists of 10 Likert-scale questions which are designed to collect data on how each district has utilized the information and procedures learned at the ALICE training. The Likert-scale will allow the participants to choose from 5 selections: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. Likert-scales are one type of interval scales which theoretically contain equal intervals among responses. These scales have become a popular type of interval scale used in research (Creswell, 2012). The questions asked using the Likert-scale will pertain to changes in policy and procedures implemented after the training, perceptions of staff and students of the ALICE program and training, methods used of presenting the new information to both staff and students, and training staff and students in the ALICE protocol.

The questionnaire also contains four open-ended questions. These questions are designed to collect more specific data on methods and materials used to train staff and students, willingness of staff to accept the ALICE procedures, the reasons that led to the school district participating in the training, and their willingness to recommend the ALICE program to other school districts. By providing open-ended questions, respondents are able to voice their experiences freely and are not confined to choosing a pre-created answer option (Creswell, 2012).

According to research done by John W. Creswell, questionnaires are effective ways to collect data for several reasons. Questionnaires are a convenient way to reach a geographically dispersed sample of a population, and questionnaires provide a quick way to collect data. Questionnaires are also economical, since mailed questionnaires only require the cost of paper and postage, and electronic questionnaires sent over the internet are essentially free of cost. One downfall of using questionnaires is that the researcher

runs the risk of yielding a low response rate since responders lack any real connection to the study and do not feel a direct responsibility to return it (Creswell, 2012).

Research Questions

1. How positive are the responses of school/district leaders on the ALICE Training Questionnaire?
2. How influential was the ALICE training on implementation of changed or new school safety policies and procedures in the participating districts?

Participants

After an initial contact by phone with an appropriate district representative, the questionnaire will be sent by US mail or by email to school districts who have taken part in the ALICE training program during the 2014-15 school year. The names of these districts will be obtained through the ALICE Training Institute Website and Facebook Page, and will include school districts in varying parts of the United States of America. The mailing addresses will be obtained through an internet search and will be verified during the initial phone contact by the researcher. Participants will be asked to answer 10 Likert-scale questions and four open-ended questions in order to gather data. If the district asks for a paper copy, the researcher will allow 45 days for the return of the completed form. If the district asks for an emailed copy, the researcher will confirm the email address by phone and allow 14 days for the electronic return of the completed questionnaire.

Data Collection

All questionnaires, which are completed and sent back within the allotted time frame, will be compiled and studied for common themes and trends among the responses as well as outliers. The scaled questions utilizing a Likert-scale will be reviewed, tallied,

and averaged. The open-ended questions will also be compiled and studied in order to discover common threads and themes, as well as outliers, among the responses.

Instrument

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher in order to have a tool that is aimed specifically at gathering data about the perceptions and implementation of the ALICE program components (See Appendix A). In order to develop the questionnaire, the researcher took part in a two-day observation of and participation in the ALICE intruder training model in real time. The observation of and participation in the ALICE training gave the researcher first-hand knowledge of the program's mission, strategies, curriculum, and training procedures. It also provided first-hand knowledge of the training experience through an educator's lens, and provided a better understanding of the expectations and outcomes of the training.

The questionnaire, which is two pages in length, was modeled after similar questionnaires that have been used to gather data from schools or school districts. It contains one self-identification question in which participants can select from three possible responses, 10 Likert-scale questions in which participants can choose from five possible responses, and four open-ended questions in which participants are free to answer in the manner they choose.

The instrument was tested for content validity by submitting the questionnaire along with various research to a designated district research review committee. The purpose of the committee review was to examine and evaluate each individual question to determine if the questions were worded in a way that would lend itself to gathering the correct data the researcher is seeking. The district research review committee is associated with the researcher by employment. Six individuals from this research review

committee reviewed the instrument and provided four suggestions for revisions, which the researcher clarified or revised. None of the committee members had been through the ALICE training.

The questionnaire will either be mailed out through the United States Postal Service and will include a self-addressed stamped envelope for easy return upon completion or will be sent electronically through an online data collection site, depending on the preferences of each district contact person.

Data Analysis

After the allotted days pass from the initial sending of the questionnaire to potential participants, the researcher will compile all completed surveys received from school districts. The researcher will examine the responses in order to determine if the responses vary based on the self-identified demographic of each participating district. There will also be an examination of the Likert-scale questions in order to obtain averages in the responses as a whole. The open-ended questions will be studied in order to discover common themes among the responses. The researcher will also be noting any question response that is unique in comparison to other responses.

In evaluating how district responses relate to research question #1, the researcher will review the average score for each Likert-scale question on the ALICE Training Questionnaire. This will help the researcher determine how positive the responses were as a whole group. The researcher will also review any questionnaires that have vastly different responses than the majority of the group. The researcher will make efforts to determine the cause for the difference based on the remaining questions on their questionnaire. Research question #2 will be addressed by comparing positive, affirming

responses with those that are more negative in nature. Responses on these open-ended questions will be studied for common themes by the researcher.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to better understand the perceptions and the implementation of the intruder response training known as ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) for utilization by school districts. In order to complete this study, the researcher contacted 72 school districts by phone in varying States nationwide, all of which had been scheduled to receive ALICE training during the 2014-2015 school year. The researcher was able to send out 52 IRB approved questionnaires to the contacted districts. The questionnaires included 10 Likert Scale questions and four open-ended questions. All districts preferred receiving the questionnaire by an email including a link to an online survey website utilized by the researcher. Out of the 52 questionnaires sent out, the researcher received 31 of them back from 13 different States. From these 31 responses, the researcher was able to address each of the study's research questions.

1. How positive are the responses of school/district leaders on the ALICE Training Questionnaire?

The questionnaire contained 10 Likert scale questions, eight of which were designed to gather information regarding the participants' perceptions regarding the ALICE training. After tallying and averaging all responses on the 31 completed questionnaires, each of these eight questions scored positively.

Question number 1 (After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to present the concepts and procedures to our school employees) had 31, or 100%, respondents answering either "strongly agree" or "agree." Question 9 (Due to the ALICE training, we feel better prepared to react to a school intruder incident) had 29, or 93.6%, respondents answering either "strongly agree" or "agree." Questions 2, 3, 4, and 10

(After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to present the concepts and procedures to our students; After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to train our school employees in the ALICE procedures; After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to train our students in the ALICE procedures; Our district feels the ALICE training was valuable and a good use of time for our staff members who attended) had 28, or 90.3%, respondents answering either “strongly agree” or “agree.” Question 7 (The ALICE training has led to a feeling of empowerment among our staff in the event of a school intruder) had 27, or 87.1%, respondents answering either “strongly agree” or “agree.”

One particular question out of the eight seemed to be an outlier among the rest when it came to assessing the perceptions of the ALICE training. Question 8 (The ALICE training has led to a feeling of empowerment among our students in the event of a school intruder) had only 18, or 64.5 %, of those surveyed answer “strongly agree” or “agree”, while nine, or 29.0%, answered “not sure,” and two, or 6.5%, responded that they “strongly disagree.” This question had the lowest positive rating and the highest “not sure” rating out of the 8 questions. Data pertaining to Question 8 can be found in Table 1 and Table 2.

2. How influential was the ALICE training on implementation of changed or new school safety policies and procedures in the participating districts?

Out of the 10 Likert scale questions, two were designed to assess if the participating districts had changed their existing policies and procedures as a result of attending the ALICE training. These questions also scored positively among participants. Question 6 (Since the ALICE program, our district has moved away from a “lockdown only” policy for school intruders) had 28, or 90.3 %, of those surveyed answer “strongly

agree” or “agree,” and Question 5 (The ALICE training led to changes in our district’s policies regarding school intruders) had 26, or 83.9%, respondents answering “strongly agree” or “agree.”

It is important to note, however, that for Question 5, one district responded with “strongly disagree,” and for Question 6, two districts responded with “strongly disagree” as well.

Summary

The 31 questionnaires returned to the researcher exhibited many commonalities with a few outliers among the responses. After studying each individual rating and written answer, the researcher was able to make informed inferences and determinations regarding each of the research questions. A thorough interpretation of the data is discussed in the next chapter.

Tables Relating to Research Study

Table 1 – Frequency of Responses on ALICE Training Questionnaire

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to present the concepts and procedures to our school employees.	15	16	0	0	0
2. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to present the concepts and procedures to our students.	12	16	2	1	0
3. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to train our school employees in the ALICE procedures.	10	18	3	0	0
4. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to train our students in the ALICE procedures.	12	16	3	0	0
5. The ALICE training led to changes in our district’s policies regarding school intruders.	19	7	4	0	1
6. Since the ALICE program, our district has moved away from a “lockdown only” policy for school intruders.	20	8	1	0	2
7. The ALICE training has led to a feeling of empowerment among our staff in the event of a school intruder.	11	16	3	0	1
8. The ALICE training has led to a feeling of empowerment among our students in the event of a school intruder.	9	11	9	0	2
9. Due to the ALICE training, we feel better prepared to react to a school intruder incident.	18	11	1	0	1
10. Our district feels the ALICE training was valuable and a good use of time for our staff members who attended.	20	8	2	1	0

Table 2 – Percent of Responses on ALICE Training Questionnaire

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to present the concepts and procedures to our school employees.	48.4%	51.6%	0%	0%	0%
2. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to present the concepts and procedures to our students.	38.7%	51.6%	6.5%	3.2%	0%
3. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to train our school employees in the ALICE procedures.	32.3%	58.1%	9.7%	0%	0%
4. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to train our students in the ALICE procedures.	38.7%	51.6%	9.7%	0%	0%
5. The ALICE training led to changes in our district's policies regarding school intruders.	61.3%	22.6%	12.9%	0%	3.2%
6. Since the ALICE program, our district has moved away from a "lockdown only" policy for school intruders.	64.5%	25.8%	3.2%	0%	6.5%
7. The ALICE training has led to a feeling of empowerment among our staff in the event of a school intruder.	35.5 %	51.6%	9.7%	0%	3.2%
8. The ALICE training has led to a feeling of empowerment among our students in the event of a school intruder.	29.0%	35.5%	29.0%	0%	6.5%
9. Due to the ALICE training, we feel better prepared to react to a school intruder incident.	58.1%	35.5%	3.2%	0%	3.2%
10. Our district feels the ALICE training was valuable and a good use of time for our staff members who attended.	64.5%	25.8%	6.5%	3.2%	0%

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

Incidents of school violence can easily be seen on the news and through other various media outlets, and it is becoming all too commonplace to hear of students or outside intruders stepping onto school property with the intent to do harm. This is a nationwide problem that affects each and every one of our students and school employees regardless of age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Due to this issue facing our schools, the US Department of Education has recommended that school districts move away from a “lockdown-only” policy and adopt a “Run, Hide, Fight” policy instead, similar to that which the ALICE Training Institute provides. The purpose of this study is to understand how the ALICE model is being implemented into school districts’ safety procedures and policies by those who have been ALICE trained as well as how receptive these changes have been among staff members. The data collected by the researcher has indicated several noteworthy trends that have implications for improved school practices and policies when it comes to intruder alert protocols.

Discussion of Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was designed to gather information regarding positive responses of school/district leaders about the ALICE training. When looking at positive perceptions of staff regarding the ALICE concepts, it is important to examine the responses of participants to one of the open-ended questions on the survey. The first open-ended question asks respondents about changes in staff procedures after the ALICE training. Part of that question asks, “Do you feel your staff was open and accepting of the new policies and procedures?” Several participants addressed this question and the researcher compiled their responses, most of which were positive.

Nine responding districts indicated that their staff members were receptive to the changes and displayed a welcoming and accepting attitude. Three districts reported that their staff was skeptical, nervous, or reluctant at first to the new procedures, but they had better feelings about it, believed in the concepts and changes, and were eager to use the new information after the training was completed. One district reported that they had received positive feedback from their staff after the training occurred, and one district noted that the training made their staff “feel empowered.” One district said that the ALICE training positively reinforced the practices they currently have implemented in their schools. Two responses were not positive or negative in that these districts reported that their staff was apprehensive and had some reservation regarding the ALICE training, but neither mentioned if that attitude had changed after the training was complete.

After examining the responses gathered from districts that had been trained in the ALICE model, the majority of them indicated a positive perception of the newly learned policies and practices. The responses also indicated that most of participating districts had changed their existing policies and procedures as a result of attending the ALICE training, or were in the process of making changes, and these were supported by staff. Districts seemed to have embraced the ALICE concepts as they were taught, yet had the freedom to choose different methods in which they could utilize to effectively train their staff. Some district representatives reported working collaboratively with other inside and outside professionals in order to accomplish a successful training for teachers. All in all, the ALICE training seemed to be regarded as a valuable tool by teachers and staff, which catapulted positive changes in their schools when it came to school safety procedures.

Also, in noting the positive responses from teachers that had been trained in the ALICE procedures, it is important to recognize that none of the participating districts

reported that the training had frightened their staff or had made them fearful of school intruders. It was quite the opposite. Most districts reported that their teachers felt good about the new procedures and were welcoming to changes. ALICE teaches a “Run, Hide, Fight” model as recommended by the US Department of Education, and the teachers in the responding districts seem to be comfortable with replacing their old policies and procedures with those that are designed from the ALICE model.

As stated previously, responses regarding Research Question 1 were mostly positive. However, Question 8 on the ALICE Training Questionnaire, which took the focus off of teachers and on to the children, asked about students’ feelings of empowerment caused by the ALICE training and was not responded to as positively. Out of the nine districts that indicated a “not sure” response to Question 8, eight districts made comments relating to the unhurried progression of the implementation of the ALICE procedures in order to take it slow with the students. Two districts had responded in their questionnaires that they had partaken in discussions, via the classroom or assemblies, of the ALICE concepts with no mention of plans to move into drills. Two districts mentioned the use of literature designed specifically for children provided by the ALICE Training Institute, also with no mention of moving towards participation in drills. Two districts reported that they are beginning to discuss the ALICE concepts with the students with plans to move into performing drills at a later date. One district indicated that they had plans for the training with students to occur during the month of March, 2016, the month following their completion of the survey, and one district commented that their training had not begun in their schools and did not indicate when, if ever, it would take place. Of the two districts that chose the “strongly disagree” options on the

survey, there was no indication on either regarding any plans to implement the training, with one district still undecided if it will be implemented at all.

When studying these comments recorded on the questionnaires relating to Question 8, it could be a possibility that these districts were unsure of or disagreed to the ALICE training leading to a feeling of empowerment among our students in the event of a school intruder since the students had not yet fully experienced the ALICE training. The majority of the districts indicating a “not sure” or “strongly disagree” answer also seemed to have indicated a desire to move the students towards these procedures quite slowly, therefore not yet fully immersing them in the procedures of the ALICE model. This may be why they were apprehensive to indicate a positive answer to that particular question. Without the procedure being fully implemented, it can be difficult for school districts to determine what effect it has had on the attitude of the students since they are still in the learning process.

Discussion of Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was designed to study how influential the ALICE training was in creating change to existing school safety policies and procedures regarding school intruders. On the ALICE training questionnaire, there were open-ended questions that were designed to collect more specific data on changed or new school safety policies and procedures in which resulted from the ALICE training. These questions asked participants to indicate how staff was trained differently to implement ALICE procedures as well as how the ALICE concepts and procedures were introduced to students.

The first of four open-ended questions asked participants, “After the ALICE training, did you begin to train your staff differently for school intruder situations? If so, how was it done?” Several districts indicated that they had begun to train their staff

differently as a result of the ALICE training. Twenty-three participating districts recorded that they had partaken in some sort of training for their staff. Half-day training, teacher in-services, employee assemblies, and staff/professional development opportunities were all mentioned as different modes in which districts were providing ALICE-type training. Six districts specifically mentioned providing hands-on training or drills for staff with the ALICE procedures.

Some districts reported working collaboratively with other safety professionals in order to accomplish a successful training for staff members. Two districts specifically mentioned conducting training with certified ALICE trainers, five districts stated they provided training by partnering with their local law enforcement agencies, and one reported working with their School Resource Officer (SRO) in order to train staff. Districts also noted that they took part in training staff in ALICE procedures with the support of other educational entities. One district mentioned the involvement of their school board, another mentioned the involvement of the teacher's union, and another mentioned the involvement of a safety committee. One district stated that they have plans to train in the future, and only two districts reported having no plans to train their staff in the ALICE procedures.

Out of all 31 responding districts, 28 had made changes or had plans to make changes to their existing practices in their schools. Therefore, the research indicates that when the new ideas and procedures are shown to educational professionals through the ALICE training, most districts are able to implement these into their schools successfully. Research also shows that there are many different methods in which the new practices can be taught to staff and students. Many options for training seem to be available to districts according to the responses on the questionnaires, which may be why it is an

appealing model to implement since districts are free to go as surface-level or in-depth as they choose based on what they think is best for their schools.

Also, with 28 of the 31 responding districts taking steps to use the ALICE training to make changes to their existing practices, it would seem that the majority of those being trained see value in the training. School employees seem to leave the ALICE training with a vision of how their existing practices can be modified or improved by the new information acquired at the sessions. According to the questionnaires, some disperse the information to staff in order to allow them to use the training as they see fit while others continue on to provide hands-on training and drills in order to give their employees and students a more realistic view of how the new procedures will work. Regardless of their choice of staff and student preparation, the ALICE model is being implemented by the vast majority of districts who take part in the ALICE training along with a recommendation to other districts to do the same.

The second and third open-ended questions on the survey asked participants, “After the ALICE training, did school personnel begin to train their students differently for school intruder situations?” and “How were the new procedures introduced to the students?” Many districts had indicated on their questionnaires that they had developed ways to teach the ALICE procedures to their students, and there were many different modes in which districts were utilizing in order to accomplish this. The one most mentioned was some sort of verbal communication of information, such as classroom discussions, lessons, and conversations. This was reported by 18 districts. Five districts used assemblies in order to disperse information to their student bodies. Videos, some self-made, were used by three districts to inform students while one district stated they had used a PowerPoint presentation, and four districts reported the use of ALICE

materials specifically designed to teach their procedures to students. One district stated that they had borrowed and modified a curriculum from a neighboring district in order to train their students, but no specifics were given regarding the content.

Many districts also reported utilizing other methods when acclimating students to the new ALICE procedures. Six districts had included some sort of drills or practice, and one district reported creating “training stations” for their students. Five districts mentioned incorporating outside agencies into their students’ training, such as local law enforcement, fire and rescue, and/or ambulance personnel. One district had even worked with certified ALICE trainers when implementing the procedures with students. Six districts were intentional in including the parents of the students by informing them of the changes and/or involving them in the learning process.

Not every responding district had trained their students in the ALICE procedures. Three respondents stated that they had no plans as of now to train their students any differently since the ALICE training. Three districts reported that they were currently planning and developing the procedures they will be using to train their students in the new procedures. Two districts had noted that, though they had participated in providing information to their students, they were still planning to implement drills at a later time.

It is important to note, however, that for Question 5 (The ALICE training led to changes in our district’s policies regarding school intruders), one district responded with “strongly disagree,” and for Question 6 (Since the ALICE program, our district has moved away from a “lockdown only” policy for school intruders), two districts responded with “strongly disagree” as well. A possibility for the negative response for Question 5 may be that the responding school district indicated on their questionnaire that they had not yet decided if they were going to implement the ALICE training into their

schools and, as indicated in Question 10, they were not sure if their district felt as though the ALICE training was valuable. Therefore, an inference could be made that since the training had not been introduced to the untrained staff nor the students, the district therefore strongly disagrees that the ALICE training has led to changes in their district's policies regarding school intruders. This same district indicated a "strongly disagree" response to Question 6 more than likely for the same reasons for their "strongly disagree" response to Question 5. The other district that chose the "strongly disagree" option for Question 6 indicated on their questionnaire that, as of now, their local police force continues to promote a lockdown procedure when school intrusions occur, and therefore they have maintained their old practices.

Implications for Practice

Several of the 31 districts which responded to the ALICE training questionnaire indicated that they had changed, or were in the process of changing, their practices for handling school intruder situations. "Lock-down only" protocols have been in place for a very long time in our nation's schools, but the research shows that there is a great interest among school districts to move away from the old practices and adopt new ones that align closer to the "Run, Hide, Fight" model that is recommended by the US Department of Education.

One particular question on the ALICE Training Questionnaire asked participants if they would recommend the ALICE model to other districts. Not every responding district addressed this question, but 14 participants did make comments regarding their opinion on endorsing the training to others. One district commented that the "hunker-down" approach does not fit all scenarios, and would therefore recommend the ALICE training to other districts. Two districts specifically mentioned that other districts were

implementing the ALICE training in their schools and were encouraged by their participation, with one of these respondents stating, “Several districts in our area had been trained before us and we saw the positiveness in updating our procedures to give people more options during an intruder. Yes, I would recommend ALICE for other districts.”

Other districts seemed very fervent about the ALICE procedures and seem motivated and inspired by the new practices. Seven districts indicated a very positive response to the ALICE protocols stating that they would “100% recommend,” “definitely recommend,” “strongly recommend,” or “highly recommend” the training to other districts. One particular respondent stated, “I highly recommend it to every school, office, hospital, church, and any other facility that could benefit from it.” It seems clear that the ALICE training is perceived as valuable, even highly valuable, by those districts that participate in it.

Implications for Policy

Moving away from a “lock-down only” policy to a “Run, Hide, Fight” model can be harrowing for some educational professionals. Not only is it a sensitive topic, but it is a sensitive topic which involves our most precious asset: our students. Therefore, it is interesting to examine the reasons that cause school districts across the country to seek out and take part in trainings that teach educational professionals how to adopt a “Run, Hide, Fight” policy into their schools. The last of the four open-ended questions on the ALICE Training Questionnaire asked respondents, “What prompted your district to participate in the ALICE training?” The answers to this particular question are quite interesting to study.

Many districts, 20 out of the 31 respondents, referenced a desire to improve their existing policies or adopt new policies as their reason for taking part in the ALICE training. One district commented, “We needed to have something better than what we had.” Another district reported that they had learned about the ALICE training when attending a conference and “thought it was a better, common sense way” to handle school intruder situations. Some districts reported that they were purposefully looking to integrate something new into their schools and update existing policy. One district even commented, “We felt like we had to do more than just sitting in a corner and doing nothing else.”

Many of these 20 districts were inspired to enroll in ALICE training by others who had knowledge of or had been trained in the ALICE model. Five of these districts reported they took part in the ALICE training through a recommendation of their local police force or through a desire to partner with law enforcement in implementing new policies. Three districts reported they were following the lead of other districts that had already made changes in their policies and procedures, two districts were following the recommendation of their School Resource Officers (SRO), one district participated from a principal’s suggestion, and one district attended due to a recommendation from their district’s safety committee. The US Department of Education’s push for districts to move toward a “Run, Hide, Fight” policy inspired another district to become ALICE trained, and one respondent urged their district to participate since they had been trained in ALICE in their previous district of employment.

It is important to mention as well that it was noted on a few questionnaires that districts were motivated to attend the ALICE training out of concern for their student’s safety. Previous experiences or knowledge of other incidents of violence have motivated

some districts to examine their existing policies and consider changes. Three questionnaires indicated that their awareness of previous school shootings prompted them to take part in ALICE training. One respondent stated, “After Sandy Hook, we were able to convince the district that school intruder policy needed to be more advanced than the typical ‘lockdown’ protocol.” Another district stated, “We were prompted by the increased knowledge of incidents around the country.” One district had experienced a situation of some sort that had led to their interest of rethinking their school policies, stating, “We had an incident happen in the community that alarmed us and we realized we were not prepared or equipped to deal with an active intruder.”

When studying the research, it can be suggested that the “Run, Hide, Fight” model may be working its way into districts simply by reputation. There seems to be many entities with knowledge of the program that are able to influence others to take part in the ALICE training in order to improve their existing policies. Extremely few of the responding districts reported that they had actively researched and sought out the ALICE training, and the majority of the responding districts seem to enroll in the training based on what they had experienced or learned from various other professional sources. The research also indicates that, after the district representatives attended the training and were educated in the ALICE model, newly trained educational professionals are successful in taking the information back to their districts and utilizing it to make changes to their existing policies and procedures.

When examining responses on the questionnaires, it seems that some districts view the ALICE training as a lifelong skill that can benefit not only the students but also the community. One district put it very well when they wrote, “We have been looking for a better way to prepare for the worst for a few years. We found ALICE and feel much

better about our preparation and lifelong preparation for our students.” Another participant wrote, “I receive many comments from parents about being more aware of their surroundings and finding exits of buildings. One staff member used some of her ALICE training when she was being followed by someone in a nearby town. I feel as though we have trained our community, not just our school. That feels great.” As adults, people tend to follow procedures in crisis situations the same way they learned to handle them when they were in school. Fire and tornado drills performed in schools can be seen as the “norm” for society as a whole, and it appears as though some of the ALICE trained districts view the school intruder training as vital to creating a safer community “norm” when it comes to facing any dangerous situation that involve a perpetrator intending to harm others.

Implications on Future Research

If one were to conduct future research regarding the perceptions or implementation of the ALICE intruder alert practices and policies, there are several opportunities to continue upon the research completed in this study.

Initially, the researcher was interested in obtaining data regarding a third research question, specifically designed to discover if school district’s responses on the ALICE Training Questionnaire would vary based on their experiences with armed school intruders. This question was also included on the questionnaire as a self-identifier for responding districts. Unfortunately, only two of the 31 responding districts had experienced an armed school intruder, which was not a large enough group to be able to discern any true differences in responses. Therefore, this is still a question that could be studied at a later date, including schools that have experienced an armed school intruder before the ALICE training, schools that have experienced an armed school intruder after

the ALICE training, and schools that have not had any experience with armed school intruders.

Also, research showed that many districts who had participated in ALICE training had chosen to share the training through verbal communication, while others took the training a step forward by also providing more hands-on experiences or organizing drills for their staff and students. However, the research collected during this study was unable to discern if verbally sharing information about the ALICE procedures to staff and students was truly enough for participants to fully understand the new concepts and procedures, and be able to take part in them if a school intruder alert were to take place. Therefore, further research could be conducted which could study the most effective methods used by trained school districts to teach the ALICE concepts to their staff and/or students.

This study was successful in examining staff responses to the ALICE training, but was not strongly designed to determine how the students in ALICE trained schools were feeling about the new concepts, policies, and procedures for school intruders. As a matter of fact, Question 8 of the ALICE Training Questionnaire asked participants if the ALICE training had “led to a feeling of empowerment among our students.” However, this question became an outlier among the others since it was difficult for some districts to accurately gauge this response. It would be interesting to conduct another survey that is designed to gather information regarding the perceptions of students when it comes to the ALICE protocols. Therefore, perhaps Question 8 could be better answered by a survey completed by students who have been ALICE trained in their schools rather than by the adults who trained them.

Conclusion

In examining the research collected by the researcher, the learning, skill-building, and sharing relating to the ALICE training fits well into the Diffusion of Innovations Theoretical Framework. Diffusion is the process by which (1) an innovation (2) is communicated through certain channels (3) over time (4) among the members of a social system (Roger,2003).

An innovation is defined as an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption (Rogers, 2003). Intruder alert programs designed for schools is a relatively new idea, or innovation, for educators considering that this type of training was certainly not on the forefront of any school's agenda until recently, when incidents of school shootings began to steadily increase in our country. For the districts that have yet to adhere to the "Run, Hide, Fight" recommendation, these types of intruder training models are perceived as "new" ideas and practices, especially when all they had been taught to do up to this juncture is to simply "lockdown" and wait for help to arrive. The idea of barricading, fleeing, or fighting back against school intruders is a novel one to those districts who are still holding fast to old practices.

Communication is the process by which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. A communication channel is the means by which messages get from one individual to another (Rogers, 2003). In the case of ALICE, trained professionals, who usually have a background in security or law enforcement, are adept at being able to communicate the ALICE model effectively to their trainees. The ALICE Training Institute, along with other such organizations, have carefully crafted a training curriculum that shares information, along with teaching a skill set, by both classroom instruction along with real-world, hands-on experiences in order for every participant to have a full understanding of the program.

The time dimension can be seen as the process by which individuals share knowledge of the innovation, how early or late an individual adopts an innovation, or the rate at which an innovation is adopted (Rogers, 2003). As seen by the research, the time in which the newly trained ALICE participants disperse their new information throughout their districts has been reported differently by the responding districts. Some districts seemed to return from the training very motivated to make changes quickly, while others seemed to wish to think through the training and develop a well thought out plan in order to implement it to a social system. According to the theory, a social system (in this case, their administrators, teachers, staff, and students) is defined as a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal (Rogers, 2003), with the common goal in this case being a safe and secure school setting for all stakeholders.

When an innovation, such as the ALICE training, is diffused into a group of people who may have an interest in adopting it, such as school personnel, the potential adopters can be divided into five categories: 1) innovators, 2) early adopters, 3) early majority, 4) late majority, and 5) laggards. Innovators, which make up on average 2.5% of potential adopters, are usually the first to be willing to try a new idea and have an innate desire to take risks (Rogers, 2003). Many of the existing organizations that offer intruder alert training to school districts have been around for several years. In order to study the innovators, one would have to go back quite a few years and locate districts that were willing to try to adopt a program into their schools that hadn't yet been recognized as a priority of any sort to other districts.

The early adopters, which make up on average 13.5% of potential adopters, serve as a role model of sorts to other members of a system. These are the people whom others

check with when deciding if they would like to adopt the new innovation. The early adopter is usually respected by others and has a reputation of having successful uses of new ideas in the past (Rogers, 2003). When studying the research conducted by the researcher, one will notice that many of the responding districts mention these early adopters as those who inspired their district to participate. Early adopters included local police departments, neighboring school districts, School Resource Officers (SRO), administrators, district committees, and past trainees who saw the value in the training. These individuals or groups acted as role models for others when deciding if the ALICE training was an innovation in which they would be willing to adopt.

The 31 school districts that responded to the researchers questionnaire would most likely fall into the category of the early majority, which makes up in average 34% of potential adopters. This is the group of people that adopt an idea just before the average member of a system and are not adopting too early or too late (Rogers, 2003). These districts seem to fit into this category since they are being trained in the ALICE model at a time when districts are beginning to see value in this kind of training yet are not requiring it of their entire staff and student body. Many districts before them had been through the training and had already taken the steps to implement it into their schools. The group that was surveyed currently is recognizing that the ALICE training is a new idea that has benefits and seems to be working well for others, and that knowledge was the determining factor that led to their participation in the innovation of the ALICE training.

The late majority, which makes up on average 34% of adopters, will adopt a new idea just after the average member of a system. The laggards, which make up the remaining 16%, are the last in a social system to adopt a new idea (Rogers, 2003). The

continuation of districts adopting a “Run, Hide, Fight” protocol will be interesting to watch progress, especially as these last two categories of adopters begin to participate in ALICE or similar training programs. As the number of districts who participate in “Run, Hide, Fight” training programs rises, the districts that fit into the late majority group will feel more and more comfortable with adopting a change in their school’s protocols and procedures. However, the laggards, school districts that are extremely hesitant to participate in the “Run, Hide, Fight” recommendation, will more than likely hold steadfast and wait until they actually see the ALICE-type training make a true difference in the event of a school intruder before they decide to join the masses.

In all aspects of education, innovations are created and improvements are consistently being made in order to provide successful learning environments which utilize best instructional, research-based practices. With mass shootings on the rise in our country, school administrators are faced with the responsibility of improving current safety policies and procedures in order to provide the safest school environment as possible. This is more of a priority in today’s school than in schools of the past. This study was intended to gain insight into the perceptions of the educator’s that have taken part in a “Run, Hide, Fight” protocol training, specifically the ALICE training program, and to learn more about the diffusion of the ALICE policies and procedures within the participating districts.

A push for a change in school’s protocols and procedures when it comes to protecting people from gun violence seems to be a growing trend across our country. Students and teachers seem to be easy targets to armed intruders that enter schools with the intent to do harm. School districts are feeling obligated to their students and staff to bring about changes and new innovations and proven procedures that are meant to create

safer school environments. In June of 2013, the U.S. Department of Education, along with the support of five other government agencies, releases new guidelines for school emergency plans which supported a more active role by school personnel along with training programs, one of which being the ALICE model, that are designed to help teachers and staff understand their options better when faced with a school intruder.

The world is changing, and our students are faced with living in a society in which gun violence is becoming the “norm.” It is almost certain that our students will be faced with an incident of violence happening in their schools, neighborhoods, or communities, regardless of their zip code. However, when educators are provided with strong school safety policies and practices, they can appropriately and effectively manage these crises. School employees are ready for changes in school intruder policies and are generally accepting of them. With the right protocols in place, schools and districts affected by violent intruders are able protect themselves and their students, and to cope with the difficult times ahead while still supporting the emotional and academic success of the students.

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Appendix A

ALICE Training Questionnaire for Dissertation Study – University of Nebraska at Omaha

This survey is designed to collect feedback from school districts regarding their experience and implementation of the concepts and procedures learned during ALICE training. Upon completion, please mail the survey back to the researcher in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

State in which your School District is located _____

Total Number of Schools in your District _____

Please self-identify your district into one of these three categories:

____ Our district has experienced an armed school intruder (before ALICE training).

____ Our district has experienced an armed school intruder (after ALICE training).

____ Our school district has not experienced an armed school intruder.

Please choose the appropriate answer for the following questions:

Strongly agree = 5 Agree = 4 Not sure = 3 Disagree = 2 Strongly disagree = 1

1. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to present the concepts and procedures to our school employees.

5 4 3 2 1

2. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to present the concepts and procedures to our students.

5 4 3 2 1

3. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to train our school employees in the ALICE procedures.

5 4 3 2 1

4. After the ALICE training, our participants felt prepared to train our students in the ALICE procedures.

5 4 3 2 1

5. The ALICE training led to changes in our district's policies regarding school intruders.

5 4 3 2 1

6. Since the ALICE program, our district has moved away from a "lockdown only" policy for school intruders.

5 4 3 2 1

7. The ALICE training has led to a feeling of empowerment among our staff in the event of a school intruder.

5 4 3 2 1

8. The ALICE training has led to a feeling of empowerment among our students in the event of a school intruder.

5 4 3 2 1

9. Due to the ALICE training, we feel better prepared to react to a school intruder incident.

5 4 3 2 1

10. Our district feels the ALICE training was valuable and a good use of time for our staff members who attended.

5 4 3 2 1

Briefly answer the following questions regarding the utilization of the ALICE program in your district.

1. After the ALICE training, did you begin to train your staff differently for school intruder situations? If so, how was it done (in-school staff trainings, professional development sessions, whole district trainings, etc.)? Do you feel your staff was open and accepting of the new policies and procedures?

2. After the ALICE training, did school personnel begin to train their students differently for school intruder situations? Did they train at all levels (high school, middle school, and elementary)? If “yes”, please go to question number three.

3. How were the new procedures introduced to the students (classroom lessons, school assembly, etc)? What materials, if any, were used by those who were training the students?

4. What prompted your district to participate in the ALICE training? Would you recommend it to other districts?