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Student perceptions of the Clip Chart Management System

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STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE CLIP CHART MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

by

Karin D. Compise

A Dissertation Submitted to the
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STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE CLIP CHART MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE CLIP CHART MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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Karin D. Compise
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the best family in the world: my husband Dax and my children Dax, Jr. and Zoe. Without their constant support and encouragement, I would not have been able to pursue my dreams of higher education.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of my chair, Dr. Ronald Hallett. Dr. Hallett helped me to narrow the scope of my original idea in order to privilege students’ voices. He also was a great source of encouragement. In addition, I would like to acknowledge my other committee members, Dr. Sylvia Turner and Dr. Kellie Cain for their guidance and encouragement. Most importantly, I am so thankful my adult participants and their children were willing to share their experiences and perceptions with me. Their stories are the heart of this dissertation.
Student Perceptions of the Clip Chart Management System

Abstract

by Karin D. Compise

University of the Pacific
2019

Six children between the ages of seven and eleven and their parents were interviewed to gather perceptions of the Clip Chart Management System. The Clip Chart system is a behavior system used in many primary classrooms where teachers move students’ clothespins up and down a chart in response to students’ behavior. Some findings from this qualitative case study are: students experienced feelings of shame and embarrassment, students compared their clips to their peers’ clips, and students labeled other students as “bad.” Some parents appreciated the consistency of behavior monitoring, but other parents felt that the system was ineffective and contributed to their child’s negative feelings about school. The findings of this study suggest the need for much more research if this method is continued to be implemented in schools.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Publicly displayed behavior charts are tools widely used throughout primary classrooms. A simple Google search of the words “clip chart behavior system” yields millions of web pages and images of charts in all kinds of child-friendly themes. A search of the same words in the online marketplace Teachers Pay Teachers reveals over 1,700 results of clip chart packages that you can purchase, download, print and then hang on the classroom wall. Currently the most popular package has a multi-colored chevron-striped theme.

Clip charts are typically displayed in a prominent place in the classroom and students are told by their teacher to move their clips up and down in response to negative or positive behaviors. Although I knew of the charts’ existence and usage for several years, I first began questioning their effectiveness when my daughter, then five, was unwilling to befriend a classmate who was regularly at the bottom of the chart. As my awareness heightened, I began witnessing students at my own school reporting on peers’ behaviors during their recesses and lunch periods. In talking with parents, I learned that the clip chart is a part of many families’ daily conversations about school. Instead of asking, “What did you learn today?” many parents ask, “What color were you on?” Additionally, parents would hear about their children’s classmates’ behaviors. One parent even told me that she began questioning the parenting skills of the children who are always at the bottom of the chart.

Though this behavior chart is used by most primary teachers I know, it seems that it raises many red flags. Are students really reporting out on other students’ behaviors? Does the public nature of the clip chart influence how students form relationships? Does moving one’s clip affect self-efficacy? Are students being treated equitably? Does the constant recognition of the program affect intrinsic motivation? How do students perceive the clip chart? The
remainder of this chapter will briefly review the problem, the theoretical framework, the purpose of the study, as well as my research questions and the significance.

**Background**

Behavior management is the process of shaping students’ behavior in order to create a classroom environment where meaningful learning can take place (Walker & Shea, 1999). Behavior management is best implemented through taking time at the beginning of the year to have students learn all of the routines and procedures needed throughout each day (Lester, Allanson, & Notar, 2017). Well developed routines have shown to directly impact social and emotional development as well as reduce behavior problems (Ostrosky, Jung, Hemmeter, & Thomas, 2003). Teaching the exact desired behavior of a routine allows all students to understand what is expected and leave no confusion (Lester et al., 2017). Routines and procedures should be practiced regularly until they become the natural habits of the class (Lester et al., 2017).

When routines and procedures are not well established, teachers may have difficulties with managing behavior. Poor behavior management is correlated with negative behavioral and social outcomes, as well as long-term negative academic effects (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008), and children with disciplinary issues drop out of school at a more frequent rate than their peers (Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992). Additionally, teachers report that the primary factor for leaving their jobs relates to issues of behavior management (Liu & Meyer, 2005).

There are many different philosophies, and little agreement about which behavior management strategies are most effective, resulting in limited instruction within teacher credentialing programs (McCann, Johannessen, & Ricca, 2005; Smart & Igo, 2010). This lack of
coverage in teacher education programs leaves many teachers unprepared for the realities in the classroom.

**Description of the Problem**

Surprisingly when searching the same terms “clip chart behavior system” in Google Scholar, results were unrelated to the popular behavior management system. A search of the same terms within my university's library database revealed nothing related as well. It bothered me that I could not find any research regarding the use of this common behavior management strategy. I reached out to Rick Morris, the creator of the Clip Chart Management System via email to ask about the research on which his system is based. Morris replied,

> The research is based upon all of the studies done that show being positive is more effective than being negative. However, if you’re looking for a specific study done on the Clip Chart or may have inspired its creation, I’m afraid you’re out of luck. Something may have been done, but I’m not aware of it. Sorry I couldn’t be more helpful (R. Morris, personal communication, June 4, 2016).

This system is widely used and promoted in credentialing programs though there is no published research that either supports or opposes its use. This lack of research is alarming. As an exploratory project, this study focuses on students’ perspectives of the clip chart. My hope is that this research can serve to inform school teachers and leaders who are choosing to implement the clip chart system.

**Theoretical Framework**

Because the clip chart system consists of a publicly displayed chart where students’ clips are moved up and down, I chose Social Comparison Theory as a lens with which the research could be viewed. According to Social Comparison Theory, individuals must compare themselves with other individuals in order to make judgments about their behavior (Moschis, 1976). Festinger was the first to propose social comparison as a theory in 1954, but it has
evolved for decades (Suls & Wheeler, 2013). Festinger found that individuals use groups to evaluate their abilities and opinions and that these comparisons lead to pressures toward uniformity (Suls & Wheeler, 2013). Wheeler added to the theory in 1966 and found that people who identified with people they perceived to be just above themselves, were motivated to compare themselves upward (Suls & Wheeler, 2013). In 1977, Brickman and Bulman furthered the theory when they found that comparisons involving unequal status can create bad feelings like resentment, envy, or discomfort (Suls & Wheeler, 2013). Classrooms are ripe with social comparisons (Dijkstra, Kuyper, van der Werf, Buunk, & van der Zee, 2008), and children as young as four compare themselves to their peers (Dijkstra et al., 2008). These comparisons affect how students feel about themselves (Dijkstra et al., 2008) which contributes to their academic achievement (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996).

Another phenomenon I noticed about the clip chart was that students were often reporting their peers’ behaviors. Dijkstra and colleagues (2008) explain that when individuals are stressed, they feel better when they compare themselves to others who have it worse off than they do. When others have abilities that are not comparable, we designate that person with a superior or inferior status (Festinger, 1954). Status in the classroom has effects. Classrooms where there are noticeable variations in status have increased rates of classroom bullying while classrooms where the students are all on an equal peer standing have high levels of engagement and community (Audley-Piotrowski, Singer, & Patterson, 2015).

Teachers can unknowingly play into this separation of status as well when they employ management strategies. Classroom management strategies that punish negative behaviors and provide extra emotional support to selected students were found to affect peer perceptions of the student receiving the treatment (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015). Knowing that social
comparisons are evident in the classroom (Dijkstra et al., 2008), and that comparisons can lead to changes in status (Festinger, 1954), teachers may want to take caution when implementing classroom strategies that visibly rank students’ names for all to see.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore students’ experiences and perceptions of the clip chart behavior management system.

**Research Questions**

This study will attempt to answer the following questions about students’ perspectives about the clip chart management system:

1. What are students’ perceptions about the clip chart system?
2. How do these perceptions affect the students’ experiences and feelings about school?
3. How do parent’s reactions about the clip chart influence students’ perceptions?

**Descriptions of the Study**

The above questions were explored through interviewing students and their parents. Since this topic has not yet been researched, I proposed using a qualitative approach. A goal of qualitative research is to understand a phenomenon from the participants’ perspectives (Algonzzine & Hancock, 2016). The type of qualitative research I used is a case study. Using a case study design allowed me to study the experienced phenomenon of the clip chart system and present my findings in a way that highlighted the experiences from the students’ perspectives.

To gather the students’ perspectives, I interviewed 6 students between 7-11 years old about their experiences with the clip chart system. I also questioned the parents of these students to gather information to help tell their story. Each student’s story is presented as a narrative, and then themes relating to Social Comparison Theory as well as other themes that emerged are explained.
Significance of the Study

This study begins to address the gap in the current research in this area as currently there are no published studies about the clip chart management system. Systems such as the clip-chart that are not based in research, but are used in classrooms all over, must be studied for their effects on students before blind implementation. Rick Morris, until his recent retirement, spoke regularly throughout the country promoting his chart and he was endorsed by many colleges, school districts, and county offices of education. This strategy is used with confidence all over, and it is assumed that there is no harm to students, but what if there is? What if this type of public display causes anxiety in students, or shaming or labeling of peers? What if students experience issues with self-confidence or efficacy due to the chart? What if peer relationships are affected? We do not know the answers to any of these questions, because the opinions of the students have not been sought nor have the effects been studied.

This study attempts to obtain the perspectives of students and parents of the clip chart system. What do they believe that it is being used for? How does it affect their school experiences? Highlighting students’ and parents’ perspectives may affect the future implementation of this program.

Researcher Perspective/ Researcher Positionality

The use of publicly displayed clip charts in primary classrooms is something that until recently was not a concern of mine. My son, now in high school, did not experience this type of public behavior tracking. Years ago, when I taught primary grades, teachers in my schools did not use systems like this. It was not until my daughter referenced the behavior chart when explaining that she did not want to be friends with a peer, that I began to take notice.
To be completely honest, the use of a publicly displayed chart to record behavior is odd to me and I find myself absolutely flummoxed as to why teachers think that it is okay to use with children. Most teachers would agree that publicly posting grades is unethical; I wonder why publicly posting students’ behavior is not thought of similarly. I am aware of my bias and it is because of my bias that I feel that this research is urgent. Students’ perspectives of this system, whether positive or negative, need to be explored and revealed in order for educators to decide if it is working the way it is intended.

Chapter Summary

Clip Charts are used throughout primary classrooms but have not been studied for their effects on children. As there is no research that supports the use of the clip chart system, Chapter Two reviews research on topics that I believe are related to the clip chart: classroom management, positive reinforcement and punishment, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, shaming, self-efficacy, peer relationships, peer rejection, Social Comparison Theory, and exploring the dominant narrative.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Throughout California and before his recent retirement, Rick Morris, was a sought-after classroom management speaker. He promoted many different management strategies that were widely implemented by elementary teachers. He was affiliated with 35 school districts, seven county offices of education, and University College at University of the Pacific in Stockton (Morris, 2014). One of his most popular strategies is the “Clip Chart Behavior Management System.” He promoted the clip chart as a “simple discipline strategy for promoting positive behavior” (Morris, 2014, p. 1). Most primary teachers in the schools in my area use his system or a system similar to it. Here is how he described its implementation:

Clip Chart—the name I’ve come to call it; you can call it whatever you wish—consists of just two items. 1. A laminated strip of paper that has been divided into seven levels. 2. A set of clothespins with the name of a student written on each one. The clothespins are clipped to the left and right edges of the Ready to Learn level of the chart. During the course of the day, the clothespins move up and down the chart based upon the behavioral choices each student makes. Good behavior causes the clothespin to move up one level. Conversely, inappropriate behavior will cause the clothespin to move down one level (Morris, 2014, p. 2). See Figure 1.
As his books and website do not cite specific research on which his system is based, I contacted him through email. I asked him about the research he used to create his method. Morris replied that the chart is based on the idea that “being positive is more effective than being negative,” but that no specific study related to the clip chart has taken place (R. Morris, personal communication, June 4, 2016).

Though there are other types of behavior charts that teachers use in classrooms, this study refers to this specific type of chart. The remainder of this chapter reviews research related to this system of public behavior management. The themes reviewed are: classroom management, positive reinforcement and punishment, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, shaming, self-
efficacy, peer relationships, peer rejection, Social Comparison Theory, and finally exploring the dominant narrative.

**Why Might Teachers Use the Clip Chart?**

Currently there is no published research that supports or opposes the use of the clip chart system, but there is research regarding the reasons that teachers may use it.

**Classroom Management**

Classroom management has been described as “the key to learning” (Lester et al., 2017, p. 398), and it can be defined as “a well-planned set of procedures and routines for avoiding problems, and having a plan in place for when misbehavior does occur” (Lester et al., 2017, p. 399). It is an area of teaching where most teachers struggle at one time or another. In fact, new teachers report that difficulties related to management are the hardest aspects of teaching (Hertzog, 2002).

Under the umbrella of classroom management is behavior management (Capizzi, 2009). Behavior management is the process of shaping students’ behavior in order to create a classroom environment where meaningful learning can take place (Walker & Shea, 1999). There is little agreement about which behavior management strategies are most effective resulting in limited instruction within teacher credentialing programs (Smart & Igo, 2010).

Effective behavior management is integral to both student and teacher success in the classroom. Even though children with disciplinary issues drop out of school at a more frequent rate than their peers (Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992), teacher programs offer little training in behavior management (McCann, Johannesen, & Ricca, 2005). Poor behavior management is correlated with negative behavioral and social outcomes, as well as long-term negative academic effects (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008). Teachers report that the primary factor for
leaving their jobs relates to issues of behavior management (Liu & Meyer, 2005).

School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a systematic approach for increasing positive behaviors and addressing problem behaviors in ways that are less punitive than in the past (Solomon, Klein, Hintze, Cressey, & Peller, 2012). As of 2012, more than 30 states reported using SWPBS approaches (Solomon et al., 2012). Many schools in Northern California promote speakers and workshops to help improve classroom management strategies as part of their SWPBS professional development. The remainder of this literature review is focused on the clip chart—one popular type of behavior management strategy shared widely among teachers to meet the needs of SWPBS.

“Clip Up”

When students are displaying behaviors that are positive, teachers ask students to “clip up.” Students then move their personal clothespin to a higher level on the chart. The clip chart system relies on this type of positive reinforcement in order to promote positive behaviors (Morris, 2014).

Positive reinforcement and extrinsic motivation. Behavior management is often achieved through behavior modification techniques such as operant conditioning. Operant conditioning uses rewards and punishment to shape students’ behavior (Edwards, 1994; Skinner, 1953). Systems that incorporate stickers, tokens, charts, points, and prizes attempt to control behavior through tangible rewards. Rewards are given for desired positive behaviors. Kohn (2001) argues that the reason praise and rewards can work in the short run is that young children are hungry for their teacher’s approval.

Since reinforcement can strengthen behaviors (Edwards, 1994; Mayer, Lochman, & Van Acker, 2005; Skinner, 1953), behavior systems like the clip chart are popular tools teachers use
to shape behaviors with positive reinforcement. Systems like this that use consistent and proactive positive reinforcement have been very effective with students that have severe behaviors (Mayer et al., 2005) and it can be a helpful strategy for preventing general classroom behavior problems (Ritz, Noltemeyer, Davis, & Green, 2014).

In Rick Morris’ Clip Chart Handbook, he encourages teachers to allow kids to not only earn their way up the chart, but to allow students to go up and “off” the chart (Morris, 2014, p. 2). He suggests teachers can wear necklaces throughout the day displaying the clothespins belonging to those extraordinary students. He even suggests adding bling in the form of adhesive jewels to students’ clothespins that would symbolize how many times they have gone “off the chart” (Morris, 2014, p. 23). This bling, of course, would be on public display for all to see and admire.

Some school and district administrators encourage their primary teachers to use the clip chart as part of their School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS or sometimes just PBS) classroom strategies. SWPBS suggests using acknowledgement for the successful attainment of the established behavior objectives (Solomon et al., 2012, p. 107). "Acknowledgement systems can be similar to a traditional token economy historically used in behavioral intervention systems. In addition to tokens or tickets, acknowledgement is also provided to emphasize positive social attention from teachers as an important prosocial source of positive reinforcement” (Solomon et al., 2012, p. 107).

**The downside of positive reinforcement.** Though positive reinforcement is often cited among educators as effective for shaping behavior, Dweck (1986) believes that the research supporting its effectiveness is misunderstood. She (1986) asserts that the research shows that “continuous reinforcement schedules are associated with poor resistance to extinction and
errorless learning” (p. 1043). In an educational setting, positive reinforcement could strip from students the opportunities to learn from making mistakes.

Other researchers are critical of positive reinforcement as well. Kohn (2001) argues that positive reinforcement increases students’ dependence on adults. Additionally, he suggests that when students are accustomed to positive reinforcement, like praise or rewards, the student is not behaving himself but rather the praise is behaving the student (Kohn, 2001).

Using rewards to control behavior results in decreased levels of autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2016; Kohn, 2001), and can in fact “foster an external perceived locus of causality” (Deci & Ryan, 2016, p. 13) meaning that students are less inclined to take personal responsibility for their actions. An unintended consequence of using positive reinforcement as a behavior management tool is that students look towards the teacher to determine whether or not a behavior is worthy of merit. Dweck (1986) believes that extrinsic factors can trigger maladaptive motivational behaviors such as being motivated to behave in certain ways because they are expecting a reward or another desired outcome (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Students who look to others to evaluate their ability, choose lower-level tasks to complete because they must be sure that they will be successful (Dweck, 1986, p. 1043). These students also will quit early if they fear that they cannot correctly complete the task (Dweck, 1986).

Kohn (2001) suggests that praise and rewards can cripple pleasure while motivating students to just earn more praise. Teachers use these types of behavior conditioning techniques to shape student behaviors (Edwards, 1994) without realizing that praise and rewards can destroy motivation (Deci & Flaste, 1996; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999) and undermine independent pleasure and intent (Edwards, 1994; Kohn, 2001). Gardiner (2014) argues that the perception of the receiver—not the intent of the giver—determines the outcome of these rewards, and Kohn
argues that praise “reduces all of human life to behaviors that can be seen and measured which then ignores the thoughts, feelings, and values that lie behind behaviors” (p. 3).

**Intrinsic motivation.** When people are motivated intrinsically, they feel initiative and ownership (Deci & Ryan, 2016) and can find joy in things like "smelling the roses, being enthralled by how the pieces of a puzzle fit together, seeing the sunlight as it dances in the clouds, feeling the thrill of reaching a mountain summit” (Deci & Flaste, 1996, p. 46). Autonomy supported classrooms where students are given choice and positive feedback tend to contribute the most towards intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2016). We can promote student intrinsic motivation by supporting student autonomy in the classroom, by giving them meaningful choices regarding their own educations, and by setting up situations where they can demonstrate their competence and skill (Deci & Flaste, 1996).

Teachers can encourage autonomy when they seek to understand students' perspectives rather than telling kids what they must do. Words like “should,” “must,” and “have to” have shown to have a negative effect on intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2016). Teachers who are more controlling tend to use rewards, punishment, and evaluative pressures which have all been found to undermine autonomous motivation (Deci et al., 1999).

Teachers may use the clip chart method because it is an easy way to maintain “control” of their students by playing into the need for students to seek approval (Kohn, 2001). Teachers have an inclination to control students, yet react negatively when administrators try to control teachers (Glaser, 1986). In fact, teachers may control their students more tightly when they themselves feel like there is excessive control placed upon them by administrators (Edwards, 1994). This control does not take into consideration what is best for students in terms of learning
or development (Edwards, 1994), and in places where there is a lot of control, people take a shorter path to the desired outcome (Shapira, 1976).

The recent accountability movement has created environments where teachers are feeling like they have very little control. In the name of accountability, the practice of teaching is becoming more standardized (Kruse, 2016). In a study of teachers’ responses to the accountability movement, Genesh (2007) found that teachers felt stuck, and even fearful to deviate from the standardized way in which they were to be teaching. Teachers felt a lack of control over their own ability to meet students’ needs (Genesh, 2007).

Excessive control has been shown to create adverse relationships between teachers and students, which can result in the very behavior these systems are meant to decrease (Glasser, 1986). Students who can no longer cope with the controlling demands of the school often become discipline problems and fall further behind their more compliant peers (Edwards, 1994). Their plight is dismissed with the declaration that they are just not interested in learning (Edwards, 1994). Children who are at risk of academic failure are particularly vulnerable to excessive control (Edwards, 1994).

Intrinsic motivation is a natural motivator for humans who seek out and engage in activities that they find valuable; the reward is the enjoyment (Deci & Ryan, 2016). Students who look inwards for evaluation of their ability choose hard, challenging tasks (Dweck, 1986). However, once students are conditioned with rewards or praise, learning has less intrinsic value to them (Kohn, 1993). In fact, rewards are actually counterproductive (Kohn, 1993). While a behavior system like the “clip chart” depends on extrinsic motivators to shape behavior, intrinsic motivation and autonomy can be negatively affected (Deci et al., 1999), and as incentives
become larger or more tangible, intrinsic motivation, creativity, and ethical behavior can decline (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014).

“Clip Down”

The clip chart system focuses on positive reinforcement as being the key motivator. However, Morris (2014) goes into detail to explain how best to address correcting students’ misbehaviors by clipping students’ clothespins “down.” Students move down one clip at a time at the teacher's request. Morris does point out a unique feature of the clip chart is that students can go back up once they go down.

Negative reinforcement. The clip chart behavior system relies on punishment or the fear of punishment (in the form of the student publically being asked to “clip down”) to establish control. Smart and Igo (2010) found that most teachers use punishment in the classroom, especially when students break class rules. They interviewed teachers that admitted to using shame and embarrassment as a behavior management technique (Smart & Igo, 2010). Additionally, in surveying teachers, they found that some teachers even admitted that embarrassment was an effective form of punishment (Smart & Igo, 2010). One problem with using punishment in schools is that when students are punished for an undesirable behavior, there is rarely a plan for teaching the appropriate behavior (Taylor, 2011). This results in repetition of the undesirable behaviors, and the cycle continues. In a study of using exclusion as a negative reinforcement method, researchers found that approximately one third of students received an explanation when they were excluded, and when the students were asked why they were punished, the students complained that it was only because the teachers did not like them and were treating them unfairly (Romi, Lewis, & Salkovsky, 2015).
“Teachers and students do not ascribe the same meanings and intentions to students behavior, and this inconsistency contributes to the alarming referral patterns” (Milner & Tenore, 2010, p. 563). Unfortunately, the students who are particularly vulnerable to excessive teacher control are children with multiple risk factors, students who enter with self-regulation problems, students with learning impairments, and students who are distrustful of adults (Edwards, 1994; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). In a class using a clip chart behavior system, are these students the ones who most end up at the bottom of the chart?

Teachers in urban settings have greater concerns regarding behavior management due to students having diverse languages, experiences, ethnicities, religions, and abilities that most often are different from the teachers’ (Milner & Tenore, 2010). Most disciplinary referrals are issued from the classroom teacher and the majority of those referrals are for students of color as well as students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Milner & Tenore, 2010). In urban schools, many teachers leave after their first year because of failing to manage the behavior of diverse learners (Wilkins-Canter, Edwards, Young, Ramanathan, & McDougle, 2000).

Classroom management literature has paid little attention to cultural diversity resulting in a discipline gap (Milner & Tenore, 2010). The discipline gap relates to the inequitable distribution of suspension rates across race and special needs students (see Figure 2). Teachers need to adopt “culturally specific techniques” to navigate this discipline gap (Milner & Tenore, 2010). However, many teachers adopt colorblind ideologies where they pretend that they do not see color (Milner & Tenore, 2010). As a result of ignoring important dimensions of students’ identity, teachers are “attempting to manage fragmented, disconnected, and incomplete students” (Milner & Tenore, 2010, p. 567).
(Dis)Connections. In a study of 11,001 students in 19 middle schools, researchers found that students of color are treated differently in the classroom resulting in increased infractions (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). In referencing the same study, researchers explained that "Students of color, and particularly African American students, overwhelmingly receive harsher punishments for misbehavior than did their White counterparts" (Milner & Tenore, 2010, p. 563). Misunderstandings or (dis)connections can take place when teachers interpret students’ behaviors through the lens of the dominant culture’s norms (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003, p. 270). Eighty percent of the teachers in urban schools are inexperienced and come from the white middle-class (Ladson-Billings, 2001), and the techniques designed by these teachers do not always meet the needs of students from different cultures or ethnicities (Grossman, 1995, p. xvii).

Most teachers are not even aware of their subconscious biases which affect their pedagogical, curricular, assessment, and management decisions resulting in differential treatment of culturally diverse students (Milner & Tenore, 2010). Behaviors and behavioral expectations are culturally influenced causing cultural misunderstandings and (dis)connections among
teachers, administrators, students, and parents when there are different cultures represented (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Weinstein et al., 2004).

Although well-meaning, these teachers are acting in ways that actually discriminate against students from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. Such discrimination occurs when teachers do not recognize that behavior is culturally influenced; when they devalue, censure, and punish the behaviors of non-mainstream groups; and when they fail to see that their management practices alienate and marginalize some students, while privileging others. (Weinstein et al., 2003, p. 270).

Different cultures take turns speaking differently, use voice differently, and give respect to authority differently (Weinstein et al., 2003). Urban children expect more direct verbal commands than most suburban or rural students and may ignore comments and commands that are expressed like a question rather than direct in an attempt to maintain harmony as well as avoid challenging authority (Gay, 2010). Asian students abide by “traditional values and socialization that emphasize collectivism, saving face, maintaining harmony, filial piety, interdependence, modesty in self-preservation, and restraint in taking oppositional points of view” (Gay, 2010, p. 105). Gay (2010) researched a specific African American speaking style called “call response” where students speak freely in response to their feelings about what the teacher is saying (pg. 91). Many teachers who are not culturally aware, determine this style to be disruptive. Another cultural difference that is often misperceived is when African American students “gain the floor” or get participatory entry into conversations through personal assertiveness. . . rather than waiting for an “authority” to grant permission (Gay, 2010, p. 91). If students communicate in a way that is culturally appropriate for them yet perceived as disrespect by the teacher, it is fair to ask them to clip down?

Children who possess the cultural capital of the dominant class are rewarded in school and can take advantage of classroom learning opportunities resulting in stronger academic achievement (Jennings & Diprete, 2010). However, students who do not possess this cultural
capital recognize distances between themselves and their teachers and may see their behavior as a way to further distance themselves from who they perceive to be as uncaring teachers (Milner & Tenore, 2010). In order for teachers to develop respectful relationships with children who are culturally different from them, teachers must become aware of, recognize, and honor these differences by implementing culturally responsive communication processes (Brown, 2003, p. 278). Teachers must see their own behaviors through the eyes of the students (Kohn, 2008), and to do that we must take time to understand our students’ behaviors, perceptions, and cultural norms.

We protest that the student has it all wrong, that the intervention really is fair, the consequence is justified, the reward system makes perfect sense. But if the student doesn't share our view, then what we did cannot possibly have the intended effect. Results don't follow from behaviors, but from the meaning attached to behaviors (Kohn, 2008, p. 6).

**Shaming.** When teachers determine that children misbehave, they may ask the child to “clip down.” The student gets up in front of her peers and walks to the clip chart to move her clip down. This act has been dubbed “the walk of shame” in a critique of the clip chart written by Jennifer, a teacher and the author of the blog “Simply Kinder” (2015).

When informing students of their misbehavior, teachers should take care not to shame or embarrass them in front of their peers (Trussell, 2008). But some teachers use shame as a form of punishment (Smart & Igo, 2010). According to Thomaes, Stegge, and Olthof (2007), students who are exposed in a shameful way may respond outwardly with fury. They also found that students with already low self-esteem tend to become more aggressive in response to situations in which they experience shame (Thomaes et al., 2007). Children who display aggressive and disruptive behavior tend to be rejected by their peers (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Thomaes et al., 2007), and when teachers highlight a student’s negative behavior they may be unintentionally
reinforcing peers’ negative perceptions of the student (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015). Can public shaming through behavior charts encourage students to label their peers’ behavior and give students ideas about with whom they should or should not associate?

**Peer rejection.** Peer rejection has been shown to produce major changes in students’ emotions (Blackhart, Nelson, Knowles, & Baumeister, 2009), and has affected students as young as six years old (Nesdale, Zimmer-Gembeck, & Roxburgh, 2014). It has been associated with aggression (Coie & Jacobs, 1993), more disruptive behaviors, poor academic achievement, lower IQ scores (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002), and is the most widespread cause of anxiety (Baumeister & Tice, 1990; Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; Nesdale et al., 2014). Peer rejection is correlated to negative parenting, ADHD, and conduct disorders as well (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

People who experience rejection can develop rejection sensitivity which causes them to lash out in anger and retribution and has also been linked to distorted cognition (Nesdale et al., 2014). Some students who act out in aggressive ways tend to experience more rejection from peers which can in turn cause even more aggression creating a cycle of aggression and rejection (Baumeister & Finkel, 2010).

Researchers have found serious effects in the classroom stemming from peer rejection. Teachers may intentionally or unintentionally highlight negative student behaviors such as aggression or disruption which can reinforce a student’s negative reputation among their peers (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015). This can cause peers to perceive that student in a negative light which can result in rejection (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015). Researchers found a clear connection linking levels of depression to how a student thinks peers perceive him or her (Bandura et al., 1996).
Peer rejection has been linked to decreased participation within the whole class as well as in cooperative groups (Ladd, Herald-Brown, & Reiser, 2008). When students believe that they are receiving less attention than they deserve, they respond in reducing effort (McCullough & Tabak, 2010). Buhs and Ladd (2001) warn that students who experience rejection and negative treatment may continue down a path where they will become more withdrawn from the school environment and experience loneliness (Baumeister & Finkel, 2010). Additionally, upon interviewing the peers of the loner students, it was found that the other peers perceived that the loner was rejecting them, and so they would reject the loner in return (Baumeister & Finkel, 2010). More dramatically, in studying school shooting cases, Leary, Kowalski, Smith, and Phillips (2003) found that the majority of school shooters had experienced peer rejection and loneliness which caused their tendencies towards violence.

Classroom behavior management models need to recognize the role that peer relationships have on children’s development (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Positive peer reputations are predictors of positive mental health as well as future social competence (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), but negative peer reputations can have a long-term effect. Teachers need to pay special attention to how students view classroom and behavior management systems such as the clip chart. No matter what teachers decide to do, the thing that matters is how the students interpret the information (Kohn, 2008).

**Self-efficacy.** Self-efficacy refers to how students see themselves and their abilities (Lin-Siegler, Dweck, & Cohen, 2016). Self-efficacy affects how students are motivated, how they behave, how they think (Bandura, 1993), as well as their confidence in attempting challenging tasks (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Pawlina & Stanford, 2011; Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). High self-efficacy creates a feeling of control (Bandura, 1991) which
can have protective factors against futility and despair (Bandura et al., 1996). It has been linked to high academic achievement, and in fact can be used as a strong predictor of future achievement (Bandura et al., 1996; Lin-Siegler et al., 2016). Self-efficacy in young children has been shown to shape career aspirations (Bandura et al., 1996).

How students see themselves has a great effect on how students attempt to solve problems and deal with difficult situations (Hall, Pearson, & Reaching, 2003). Teachers can have an effect on developing students’ self-efficacy through developing a framework for problem solving (Lin-Siegler et al., 2016). Students who struggle with learning would most likely persevere through the difficult work if we framed difficult problems and mistakes as opportunities for learning (Pawlina & Stanford, 2011). No matter the quality of instruction, the belief students have in themselves to succeed is a far greater measure of success (Pawlina & Stanford, 2011).

Similar to high self-efficacy, students with growth mindsets view failure as a part of the learning process (Dweck, 2006). Dweck emphasizes that by developing a growth mindset, people realize that through effort they can grow, learn, and efficiently respond to their world while people with a fixed mindset tend to avoid challenges and fear failure and making mistakes; they do not want others to see them as failures or not smart (Dweck, 2006). Performance goals, such as behavior chart rewards and labels, are more oriented toward students with fixed mindsets while learning goals are more oriented towards students with a growth mindset (Dweck, 1986).

Students' beliefs about themselves, their environment, and the requirements for intellectual success can influence their motivation and, as a result, their performance in school (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) and their behavior (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). People's perceptions about themselves influence how, when, and if they tackle problems (Seligman, et al.
Unless people believe that they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act (Bandura et al., 1996). Children who believe they can exercise some control over their own learning and mastery of coursework, achieve success in their academic pursuits (Bandura et al., 1996). It does not matter how high-quality the instruction may be if students do not believe that they belong and can succeed (Lin-Siegler et al., 2016). By supporting children's developing sense of agency and self-efficacy, teachers give children confidence in their ideas, their understanding of challenges, and what they do to work with those challenges (Pawlina & Stanford, 2011).

**Competition and Status**

The clip chart behavior system is displayed in a prominent place in the classroom and all students’ names are placed on the clips (Morris, 2014). Students move their clips up and down in view of the class. Unmentioned in Rick Morris’ handbook is the reason for the public nature of the chart. For what purpose would all students need to see other students’ names? The only logical explanation is that students must be motivated by comparing themselves with peers. Social Comparison Theory explains that individuals must compare themselves with other individuals to be able to judge one’s own behavior against others’ behaviors (Moschis, 1976).

Our evaluations of our abilities, or self-efficacy, is dependent on others' opinions of our abilities (Festinger, 1954). If we do not have access to other opinions, we look for criterion reference points to evaluate ourselves (Festinger, 1954). When people find that others share their opinion, they become more confident in that opinion. On the other hand, if they discover that people do not share their opinion, they become less confident (Festinger, 1954).

Classrooms are ripe with social comparisons (Dijkstra et al., 2008). Children as young as four compare themselves to their peers (Dijkstra et al., 2008). Children's belief in their ability to
do things well relies upon how they stack up in comparison to others (Dijkstra et al., 2008) which contributes to their academic achievement (Bandura et al., 1996).

The front and center placement of the clip chart coupled with the regular attention to students who are moving their clips up and down may contribute to status in the classroom. Festinger found that people who are more driven and competitive are more likely to allocate "inferior status" and "superior status" to those he/she is competing against (1954). This may explain why students feel the need to report the behaviors of their peers. When others have abilities that are not comparable to ours, we designate that person with a superior or inferior status (Festinger, 1954). Status in the classroom has effects. Classrooms where there were noticeable variations in status had increased rates of classroom bullying while classrooms where the students were all on an equal peer standing had high levels of engagement and community (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015).

Both high and low status groups work to maintain their separation (Festinger, 1954). If this is true in classrooms using a clip chart, this could mean that students who are regularly at the top of the chart work to maintain their separation from students at the bottom of the chart. People tend to move in groups with abilities and opinions similar to their own (Festinger, 1954). Teachers can unknowingly play into this separation of status as well when they employ different management strategies. Classroom management strategies that punish negative behaviors and provide extra emotional support to selected students were found to affect peer perceptions of the student receiving the treatment (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015).

In talking to parents and friends casually about their experience with the clip chart, several people shared that their children were regularly reporting on their peers’ behaviors. This might be to either elevate their own behavioral standing or to play down their negative behaviors.
Perhaps it is because when individuals are stressed, they feel better when they compare themselves to others who have it worse off than they do (Dijkstra et al., 2008).

**Why Do We Use It?**

Why do teachers use the clip chart if it is not grounded in research? Perhaps it is because these are the methods shared with teachers during their preparatory programs. Programs impart methods and strategies labeled as “best practices” to new teachers, and the teachers are expected to accept these practices without question (Krise, 2016). Teacher programs often simplify the art of teaching by only focusing on the practical basics while ignoring theory (Krise, 2016). Without theory and/or background knowledge, how would a new teacher know that not all methods and strategies are research-based?

In the case of the clip chart behavior management strategy, no formal research has been conducted, but nearly every primary teacher I know uses it. Perhaps teachers choose methods like the clip chart out of struggle and exhaustion, or maybe it is because they turn to each other instead of to the research when looking for solutions. Teachers make decisions about what happens in the classroom, and “those half-conscious decisions are tied in many instances to such matters as social class allegiances and to self-interest generally” (Kleibard, 1992, as cited in Slattery, 2012, p. 42). Referring to the above quote, perhaps the decision to use it is based on a “half-conscious decision” about its appropriateness followed by plausible-sounding reasons for its use.

The clip chart gives value to children who are already familiar with the behavioral norms of a traditional classroom and demotes children who are do not come to school with those norms. “The kiddos who would behave and make good choices no matter what always were at the top of the chart, while the students who had difficulty always seemed to struggle” (Lisa, n. d.). Right
out of the gate, students who struggle with behavior norms are publicly labeled as “less than.” Is this perpetuating the dominant narrative?

The idea of hegemony refers to the idea that the dominant narrative is enforced through social norms or unwritten rules that everyone seems to agree upon (McLaren, 1998, as cited in Slattery, 2012). Hegemony “can affect classrooms when a teacher does not encourage or allow students to question the prevailing values, attitudes, historical interpretations, and social practices in a sustained and critical manner…. Hegemony insures that minority and marginalized persons remain silent and silenced by coercion and domination” (Slattery, 2012, p. 38). Using a clip chart publicly reinforces the rules and social norms established by the teacher, and it visually ranks students according to their adherence to these norms.

It was not until I read Peggy McIntosh’s paper listing 26 ways in which white people experience privilege (1992), that I fully realized my privilege as a white middle-class female. It is not that I refused to acknowledge my privilege before that, I just had not thought of it, which is yet another example of my privilege. I would argue that most white elementary school teachers are both unaware of their privilege as well as their role in perpetuating the dominant narrative. “The failure of the dominant group to see themselves as a part of the solution—or even a part of the discussion—is one of the most intractable problems we face as we explore cultural and ethnic issues” (Slattery, 2012, p. 172). For change to occur, teachers must recognize their role.

**Chapter Summary**

Clip charts use praise and negative reinforcement to reinforce desired behaviors. Praise and shaming have been shown to impact intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivators have been shown to undermine intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and academic achievement. Shaming can lead to peer rejection. Peer rejection can lead to aggression, low achievement, and
low self-efficacy. Clip charts use comparison which promotes competition which impacts classroom status. Low status can also lead to peer rejection, low self-efficacy, and low motivation. Teachers who are unaware of how his/her students’ cultures view competition and comparison, may unintentionally be causing harm in students’ status, peer relationships, self-efficacy, as well as academic achievement.

Does controlling students’ behavior through shame, labeling, competition, and extrinsic motivation with the clip chart lead to peer rejection, low self-efficacy, aggression, mis/distrust between teach/student, and decreased intrinsic motivation? Because teachers widely use this under-researched management tool, it is imperative that we study its effects on children, from their perspective.
Chapter 3: Methods

Clip charts have not been formally researched, yet are broadly used throughout primary classrooms. Teachers may find them an effective tool for behavior and classroom management, but what do students perceive about their use? How do they view them? How do their parents’ reactions influence their perceptions? Gathering perspectives of students through interviews will give insight about their perceptions. This chapter reviews the methodology and methods chosen in order to research these perceptions. I explain why case study is the chosen methodology and I also explain my methods and lay out a design plan for the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore students’ experiences and perceptions of the clip chart behavior management system.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions about students’ perspectives about the clip chart management system:

1. What are students’ perceptions about the clip chart system?
2. How do these perceptions affect the students’ experiences and feelings about school?
3. How do parent’s attitudes about the clip chart influence students’ perceptions of the chart?

Methodology: Case Study Design

The clip chart behavior management system has not yet been studied, even though the strategy is used widely in primary classrooms. Given the limited understanding of these behavioral interventions, a qualitative approach offers the opportunity to explore the perceptions of students and families influenced by clip charts. The goal of qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives (Algozzine & Hancock, 2016).
Qualitative studies are helpful when little is known about an issue and more knowledge is needed (Algozzine & Hancock, 2016). The qualitative research design I chose for this is a case study.

Case studies are desirable when a how or why research question is being asked about a current phenomenon over which the researcher has no control (Yin, 2009). Case studies also afford the researcher to gather in-depth and richly descriptive data (Algozzine & Hancock, 2016). Exploring perceptions of students and parents through case study allows me to gather stories, quotes, and anecdotes via personal interviews in order to bring to life the phenomenon of the clip chart. A case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Investigating real-life phenomena through a case study (Algozzine & Hancock, 2016) without affecting the holistic integrity or the characteristics (Yin, 2009), enables me, the researcher, to tell a story that has not yet been told.

This study focuses on multiple “cases.” The cases are six students, who I interviewed to unwrap their experiences and perspectives of the clip chart. Although my level of analysis is the students, I also interviewed students’ parents to get a broader picture of the students’ experiences. As this is an exploratory study, having multiple cases allowed me to compare varying experiences.

There are several identified critiques about using case study as a research methodology. Some critiques of case studies are that they can take too long and can result in too much data, they do not establish causal relationships, and there is little ability to generalize the results (Yin, 2009). Other challenges that I planned for were identifying participants and gathering data from children.
As a qualitative researcher who is exploring experiences and perspectives of the clip charts, I was not looking for causal relationships nor was I looking to generalize results. However gathering too much data as well as taking too much time were possible challenges I anticipated when I planned my methods.

Another challenge was identifying willing participants who had experiences with the specific chart I was studying. I was prepared to use the method of “snowball sampling” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) where participants suggest other possible participants, but my network of friends and coworkers proved to be a sufficient sample.

I also planned for challenges in gathering data from children participants. I intended to incorporate informal games as needed to help break the ice. However, because I knew most of the children I interviewed, breaking the ice was not really an issue. All of the children were very willing to share and contribute to the study.

As a parent, I know that free time is an issue. Finding time for families to meet with me, answer my questions, and reflect in a meaningful way was a challenge. Maintaining a flexible schedule and being willing to reschedule was helpful in meeting this challenge.

**Overview of Study**

The research questions guiding this study were designed to investigate perceptions about the use of the clip chart management system. To answer the questions, I had to gain access to students and parents who have experienced the clip chart. After I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board, I used my network of friends to find willing participants who have had experiences with the clip chart. Once a few parent participants agreed to be interviewed, and initial interviews took place, I planned to ask the participants if they knew of other families who
might want to participate. Yin (2009) suggests participants can be a good source for referring additional participants.

To develop my interview protocol, I thought about questions that addressed the areas I reviewed in the literature as well as questions that would directly relate to the research questions. I also tried to make sure that my questions did not show any bias for or against the use of the clip chart.

For both parents and students, the first few questions were designed to get the participants to think about their experiences with the clip chart. With parents I asked questions about how often they speak with their children about the chart, whether their child talks about peers in relation to the chart, and how they believe their child might be affected by the chart. I also asked parents about their beliefs about the teacher’s purpose of the chart as well as the school’s behavior goals and how they communicate mainly to determine whether or not the parents had a positive or negative perception of the chart. When I spoke with the children, I asked specific questions about how the chart worked, and who was on the top and the bottom. I asked them to tell me about how someone (or they themselves) clipped up and down the chart. I asked why they believe the teachers use the chart and if they would ever use a chart like that.

The follow up questions I asked were usually to get more details about the initial question. Most of they follow up questions were phrased like, “Tell me more about that time,” or “Why do you think that?” These follow up questions were not pre-planned. One question that I asked at the end of my interview proved to be helpful: “What else can you tell me?” With one of my less talkative participants, I explained that the clip chart had not been formally researched and that it was very important that the perceptions of students were gathered. I think this made
him more inclined to offer his perceptions to me. The interview protocol I used can be found in the appendix.

Each parent was asked to sign an informed consent before our interview. I then asked the parent about their child’s experiences to gain an understanding about whether the child had positive or negative experiences with the clip chart. It was important to choose children who were able to recall specific events and feelings related to the chart. I had planned to interview up to 12 parents first, in order to gather a larger sample of children from which to draw. I wanted to ensure that the children I chose to interview had varied experiences. My intentions were to interview no less than four and no more than six participants. This range was to ensure that I could gather a variety of experiences, but still keep the data manageable.

Once I had willing participants and informed consent letters were explained and signed, and assent was given, I interviewed children about their perceptions of the clip chart system.

Participants

I initially talked to eight different parents in order to identify six children who have had a wide range of experiences with the clip chart. The first family had a child with positive experiences, the second family also had relatively positive experiences. I then interviewed my coworker and her two children. One child had a relatively positive experience and the other was somewhat negative. I wanted to find a couple more children that had neutral or negative experiences so that I could have a wider variety. One of the parents I talked with had children who experienced a different type of behavior chart so I decided to not include her children. Two other parents were familiar with the clip chart, but their children were very well behaved and had only positive experiences with the clip chart. Finally, I talked with a family friend and her
daughter as well as a parent from our school and her son. All of the participants were recruited from the Central Valley of California, and were part of my network of friends and coworkers.

In addition to the convenience of locating the study in the region where I live, I knew that the majority of the schools in my area use the clip chart in the primary grades. I intended to use the strategy of “snowball sampling” to recruit these participants. Snowball sampling is a method in which the researcher identifies a few participants who have experienced the phenomenon to be studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Then these members are used to identify other possible participants. In reality, I was able to find the participants through my network of friends and coworkers. Two of the families attend my church; one of those parents is also a coworker. My good friend suggested to interview her spouse and stepson. One participant and her mother were good friends from when my daughter was in preschool. The last parent was a parent at our school as well as an acquaintance from the teacher preparatory program where I teach classes. The children participants ranged in age from seven to eleven, and attend different schools in my area. It was important that the children were old enough to be able to explain their perceptions and experiences so I made sure to recruit children between 7 and 11 years old.

Families were compensated with $25 gift cards at the end of our time together.

**Role of the Researcher**

In this study, I was an observer and a listener. I avoided providing suggestions or coaching. I was adaptive and flexible, and asked pre-planned questions. Though I have personal and professional views about clip charts, I focused on privileging the participants’ experiences while collecting data and conducting analysis.
**Data Collection**

Data was collected mainly through student and parent interviews as well as with field notes and observations. First parents were interviewed, and then once at least two positive response students and two negative response students were identified, the students were interviewed. The table below outlines my data collection steps.

Table 1. Data Collection Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Talk with several parent(s) to determine whether their child uses the clip chart management system and briefly ask about the type of experiences their child has had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ask if parent and child were willing to be interviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interview parent and child separately (so they are not able to influence each other)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Audio record interviews and take observational notes in field journal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Write narratives that summarize data from parent and child interviews and field journal notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Continue steps 2-5 with each additional parent and child participants until I have children with a wide range of experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>As the summaries are written, identify emerging patterns, and craft questions to ask students and parents during subsequent interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once I spoke with several of the parent participants, and identified possible student participants, I collected data through in-depth interviews. I asked questions and had several students draw pictures of their classroom clip charts. I visited with parents in 20-30 minute interviews and I talked with children for 15-20 minutes, as long as they were willing to share. I met with some families in their homes, some in my home, and others in my classroom. I initially planned to meet with participants up to three times to gather more information or to clarify
comments or stories as I collected data and patterns emerged. In reality, I only met with children and parents for one interview because I gathered all of the data I needed during the first interviews. There was no need to meet again. I had not anticipated that the parents and children would be so willing to share their experiences.

**Parent/Guardian interviews.** Before each interview, after consent forms were signed, parents were asked for assent and were reminded that the interviews were being recorded. I continuously checked with the participant(s) throughout the interview to make sure that I was capturing their comments and stories correctly. I asked questions that gave me a sense of what the child was like at school, how the child was with their friends, and their perceptions about how their child felt about school. I then asked questions about how they believe the clip charts affected their child’s behavior, relationships, and self-efficacy. I asked parents about daily conversations they have with their child regarding the clip chart, and if their child ever talked about other classmates in relation to the clip chart. I asked whether they believe their child viewed their experience with the clip chart as positive or negative.

**Student interviews and drawings.** Once students were identified, before each student interview, I asked for assent. I intended to play a game with the children to help establish trust, but most of the children were familiar with me and that was not necessary. One child was new to me, and I was able to establish trust and make a connection by talking with him about mutual acquaintances at his school and soccer team. With the rest of the children, I began by starting a conversation about school and friends. Next I showed an example of the clip chart and then asked the child if he/she has something like that in their classroom. I then asked the younger children to draw a picture of how the clip chart looks in their classroom. I did not ask the older children to draw the chart; I just had them explain it to me. I continued to ask questions about
who in their class was at each level, if the child ever moved on their clip, what was the experience of moving the clip like, etc. I also asked what their perception is of why the teacher used the chart (See Interview Protocol in the Appendix).

**Field journal.** Reflexive or field journals can be a source of data for researchers (Kara, 2015). I used a field journal to record my thoughts, observations, and methodological decisions (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). My journal was used to note observations I had, questions I wanted to follow up with, or other ideas that popped into my head. This field journal did not include names of children, parents, or any other identifiable information.

**Data Analysis**

Data collection and analysis is a process that happens simultaneously (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I analyzed data in two steps: first as I was collecting the data and then after all narratives were complete. My steps for data analysis can be found in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>After the first student and parent(s) interviews, gather data from transcriptions and field journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Identify emerging themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Write narrative after first student participant and parent(s) are interviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adjust interview protocol for subsequent interviews if themes arise that are unexpected and then follow steps 1-4 for each additional participant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>After narrative summaries have been written for each participant, determine whether additional interviews are needed to address areas that weren’t address during the first interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Complete individual case summaries with data from follow-up interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cross case analysis- compare and contrast themes among all cases</td>
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</table>
After the initial student was interviewed I transcribed the recordings. Then I read the transcript and jotted down notes and comments in the margins about the data. These notes and comments informed subsequent interview questions as well as served for the initial codes/themes. Next I wrote a narrative about the student. This narrative captured students’ perspectives and the experiences shared with me by themselves and their parents. After this narrative was written, I interviewed the next participant. I compared the transcript with the first interview, developed additional codes, and then completed the narrative for the second participant. Data analysis continued on in this way until narratives about each students’ perspective were developed. I continued to compare the narratives to see if I needed to ask participants additional questions. I knew I was finished with each case when all of my questions were asked and I had nothing further to explore.

While reading the transcripts, I developed codes initially by looking small bits of data that was relevant to my research questions. This process is referred to as open coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I wrote notes and comments in the margins of my transcripts, as mentioned in the previous paragraph. Then I reviewed my own notes to look for a way to group them together. Each transcript was coded in this way.

When all the interviews were complete, and the individual student narratives were finished, I began a cross-case analysis. I compiled all codes/themes related to my theoretical framework of Social Comparison Theory. For example, I looked for themes of competition and comparison among children and how that may have been brought into the home. Next, I looked across all cases for themes related to the literature such as self-efficacy, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, teacher-student relationships, shaming, and/or peer rejection. To stay focused on the purpose of the study, I regularly stepped back from the data and reflected on my three research
questions. I compiled the data in terms of the themes that emerged to create a synthesis of findings, but I also told the participants’ stories in a narrative style. I felt it was important to include a lot of direct quotes in order to capture the students’ perspectives. The stories of the children were written in a way that is true to what was shared.

**Trustworthiness**

As a researcher, I made efforts in several areas to establish trustworthiness throughout my study. Establishing trustworthiness is the ability for a researcher to “persuade his or her audience (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to” (Lincoln & Guba, p. 290), or in other words the ability to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability within the study. There are several techniques suggested by researchers to help increase trustworthiness. Techniques incorporated were: prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, member checks, providing a “thick description,” and using a reflexive journal.

Prolonged engagement is the act of spending a sufficient amount of time with the participants in order to build trust, check for misinformation, and the learn the “culture” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). While interviewing parents and students, I took time to establish trust. I spent time with the students’ parents first so that students knew it would be okay to speak with me.

In a study about gathering student voice regarding cultural diversity, Hajisoteriou and colleagues (2017), began their interviews with games like hangman and they also incorporated drawings to help child participants to relax. This technique proved to be quite successful. They also explained to the children that the interview was going to be more of a friendly talk than a formal interview (Hajisoteriou et al., 2017). I planned to begin my student interviews in an
informal way so that I can earn a little bit of trust. In reality, I knew most of the students I interviewed and all students were eager to share with me.

Peer debriefing is another technique that aids in establishing credibility. It is explained as “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). Throughout this study I checked in with peers who gave critical feedback and asked hard questions. I also talked with two other fellow teachers, who had no interest in the outcome of this study, but readily gave honest feedback and tough critiques.

Member checking is another strategy that can help establish trustworthiness. Member checking is a process where the researcher shares collected data with the participant in order to “check” whether or not the data is an accurate representation. This technique is most crucial for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, Hallett (2012) cautions that member checking could possibly be harmful if the researcher has collected and compiled data that could negatively alter the participants’ perception of their reality. For example, if I collected data about a students’ relationship with peers or with his or her teacher and then I interpreted it in a light that was less favorable than the student’s or parent’s perspective, sharing that information could be damaging to both the parents and student. To avoid these issues, I did not hand over my complete narrative of the child, but instead, I asked clarifying questions throughout and after the interview process. Additionally, during and after the interview, I shared a summary of what I understood to be conveyed and I asked the participant if they had anything more to add. This ensured that my report is credible, and it shielded the participants from insights I have that may differ from their perspectives.
Researchers suggest that well written and trustworthy case studies provide a “thick”
description. When “the description is sufficiently ‘thick,’ then reading it is very similar to being
there” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 214). To achieve this task, I took a thorough description of the
setting and context of the interview, as well as the processes that occurred during the interview
(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition to describing the students, the setting, and details I
observed throughout the interviews, the opportunity to interview parents allowed me to get a
much more detailed perspective of the student participants. These details provide that thick
description which will speak to readers.

To record my observations and thought processes during this study, I kept a reflexive
journal. Researchers use field journals or reflexive journals to record information about their
own thinking as well as methodological moves and processes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As much as I have a tendency against the use of the clip chart because of my personal
experiences with my daughter and the experiences some of my students have had in previous
classrooms, I know that many teachers use this system because they believe that it is the best
system available to them and I know that there are students and parents who appreciate its use. I
kept an open mind when listening to parents and students share their perceptions. I also was
aware of the possibility that my study may not find anything inherently wrong or right with the
clip chart. Going into the study with all of this in mind added to the credibility of what I found.

Ethical Considerations

I took measures to preserve parents’ and students’ anonymity and kept all documents and
recordings secure. I use aliases for participants’ names as well as for anyone or anyplace
mentioned by participants during their interviews. Students and parents completed an informed
consent prior to participation in the study. Additionally, each time I interviewed students I asked for verbal assent.

As a mandated reporter of child abuse, I understood that if during interviews I became aware of a situation in which a child was put into harm’s way, I would have had to report the incident to Child Protection Services. Thankfully there was no indication of abuse.

**Limitations**

This study gives privilege to young students’ voices. As such, one limitation is the ability to truly capture students’ perceptions through interviews. Interviewing children is not an easy task.

Since the student perspective is what I was after, teachers or other educators are not part of this study. This means that teachers are unable to add perspective about the use of the charts. Future research should explore teachers’ perspectives about its use.

**Chapter Summary**

In order to study the phenomenon of the clip chart behavior system, it is important to gather the perceptions and experiences of both students and parents. This study, through interviews with both parents and students, gathered these perceptions.

Interview data was transcribed and coded for themes related to the research questions as well as to identify themes that might have occurred unexpectedly. Up to this point no formal research has been published regarding the use of the clip chart in the primary classroom. This study begins to fill the gap in the research related to this widely-used tool.
Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, I explain what I found during my interviews of parents and students about the clip chart behavior system used in students’ classrooms. I interviewed subjects in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What are students’ perceptions about the clip chart system?
2. How do these perceptions affect the students’ experiences and feelings about school?
3. How do parent’s attitudes about the clip chart influence students’ perceptions of the chart?

This chapter is organized in two parts. In the first section, I provide a summary of each individual case and the data that came up during my interviews. My purpose for doing this is to highlight each students’ perception and experience of the clip chart system. The second part of this chapter is a summary of the themes that emerged during my interviews.

Participant Narratives

I interviewed six children between the ages of 7 and 11. Carly is in first grade, Noah is in second grade, Nathaniel and Kaya are both in third grade, Jamie is in fifth grade, and David is in sixth grade. The narratives are organized in order of positive feelings and experiences to relatively negative feelings and experiences. The children come from two different school districts and one independent charter school that is not affiliated with a school district. All of these schools are located in the same Central California city. These children and their parents have varied perceptions of and experiences with the clip chart. Table 3 below shows demographic information for each participant.
Table 3. Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Noah</th>
<th>Jamie</th>
<th>Carly</th>
<th>Nathaniel</th>
<th>Kaya</th>
<th>David</th>
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<td>Susie</td>
<td>Susie</td>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>Liz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>First</td>
<td>Third</td>
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<td>Sixth</td>
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<td>Caucasian/African-American</td>
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**Noah.** My first interview was with Noah. Noah is a 7-year-old boy who I know from my church. Noah attends second grade at a charter school in town. I know that Noah is an exuberant boy from observing him and his family each week at church. He lives with his mother, father and younger brother.

Before I interviewed Noah, I wanted to speak with his mother, Laura. She told Noah to get his little brother and go play out in the backyard. It was at this point that Noah yelled loudly at his brother who was in another room, the brother responded by yelling, and the mother shouted at both boys to go outside. This exchange was not negative in any way, quite hilarious in fact, and I got the feeling that the family communicates in this loud way pretty regularly.

Once the boys were out back playing, Noah’s mother Laura seemed really excited to talk with me about her son. She smiled often, spoke quickly, and sat on the edge of her chair, eagerly awaiting each of my questions. She responded to each question after pausing to think, and sometimes she even corrected her first response when she gave more thought to the questions.

Laura explained that this year Noah’s behavior chart changed in color. Each student
starts on green and they can go down to yellow and red, but they also have the ability to go up to star. Laura felt that Noah “really wants approval” and that is why he “immediately tells us” what color he is on each day. It is typical for him to be on green or star, but if he goes a week without getting on star, he “feels like he failed” that week. She believes that this system works for him, helps him to be reflective about his behavior, and reminds him to behave better in school. She did mention, however, that in addition to sharing his own colors on the chart, Noah tends to report other students’ behaviors to her. “He’ll also tell me oh so and so got on yellow and so and so got on red. Um which I don’t know, to me, like as a parent, I’m like wait, that’s not your business.”

Laura mentioned that she has seen Noah reflect on his behavior more and more now that he is a bit older. When he was in kindergarten and first grade, the colors on the chart did not seem to affect his behavior that much, but beginning last year in second grade and even more this year in third grade, he seems to be reflective of his behavior. She believes the chart motivates him to behave better. She mentioned that there was one day, where he was put on yellow, and he cried saying, “Everyone knew that I got on yellow.” But she assured me that this was the only time he had a negative response to the chart.

Laura explained that they talk about the chart every day afterschool, but it is Noah who usually initiates the conversation. “Pretty much almost immediately after school he’ll be like ‘I got on green today; I got on star today,’ and so far those are the only two he’s gotten.” This year, the teacher relates the chart colors to character traits, and because of that, Noah has learned to “stop and reflect” when his color has been changed. At home, once each week, they are prompted by Noah’s teacher to talk about the week’s behavior. Noah writes a one sentence reflection, the parents sign it, and then they return it to the teacher on Monday.
I asked more about how Noah talks about other students’ behaviors. She believes he only talks about others when it is negative things, like “So and so got an red, so that means they’re getting a phone call home tonight.” I asked her why she thought Noah reported negative behaviors to her, and after thinking, she related him to herself. She explained that even as an adult, she wants to please people, and she wants to make herself look better than others. She recalled that as a child, she would compare herself to others and feel good when she did better.

When asked if she thought Noah would report other students’ behaviors at home if there was not a chart in the classroom, Laura shared that when Noah was in preschool, there was not a chart, and the only time he reported behaviors was when someone punched someone else. “I think that was the only time we talked about behavior before the behavior chart.”

I asked Laura if the behavior chart at school carried over into how behavior is managed in the home. Laura immediately said no, but after some thought, she recalled times when she was frustrated with Noah’s behavior at home and she would ask Noah, “Would you act like this at school?” and Noah would reply, “No, because we’re on a clip chart.” She thinks that because he behaves so well at school, she cuts “him more slack” than on days where he does not have school.

When asked about whether or not the behavior chart affects Noah’s feelings about school, Laura replied that Noah enjoys school for the most part. She did not feel like the chart affected his feelings one way or another. But she did share that the chart could perhaps make Noah feel more “pressure” to behave. She shared that at home they encourage him to always do his best, in all subjects as well as the behavior chart. Laura said that the chart could possibly affect other students’ feelings about school. She recalled an experience that she had while helping in Noah’s classroom last year. One of the kids said, “I just hate school,” and when she asked why, he
replied, “Cuz I just get on yellow every day!” She explained that this is mostly likely because he did not have a lot of parent involvement at home.

I asked Laura for her final thoughts about the behavior chart. She first shared that Noah enjoys his friends yet this year he feels like he can not talk to any of his friends. He tells her, “We are not allowed to talk ever.” She feels like this may be the reason his is on green and does not get to move up to star. She also ended with “The only other thing is… oh …maybe someone who feels like they’re on yellow or red all the time couldn’t be friends like or something? I don’t know, I’m not good at child psychology.”

When I was finished interviewing Laura, she went outside to get Noah. Noah came in and we sat at their kitchen table. He folded his hands on the table and looked at me like he was ready to begin. He was eager to answer my questions. I asked Noah to tell me about his classroom. He shared all about the types of lessons that they have each day, their routines, going to the library, and “specialty” classes. He did not mention a behavior chart at all. When I asked him to tell me about the behavior chart, he said, “If you do something when the teacher’s teaching like talk or play, like you have to change your color once or if you like hurt someone you have to change your color to red and then you stay there. The colors are star, green, yellow, and red.” He told me that “If you’re good all day you just stay on star, and if you’re like bad, you have to go to green. Then if you do it again you have to go to green yellow and then if you do it again you go to yellow and if you do it again you go to red.” He shared that in the morning, everyone begins on star. This was surprising to me because I got the impression from his mother that everyone starts on green and students have opportunities to go up to star.

Noah shared that “When you’re just sitting and you have to do work and you mess around, like the teacher sees you, and if you do it twice you have to change your color.” I asked
Noah to share about whether or not he had ever had to change his color. He shared, “Like today I had to move my color because my friend was like annoying me and I didn’t want to be mean so then I just wanted to tell her to stop but then I just had to, I felt like I had to talk to her because I didn’t want to be a mean friend so then like she told me and my friend to go change our colors.” I asked him how he felt about that, and he said that it made him sad. I asked if there were people in his class who were always on stars, and he said yes. He said they were always on stars “because they listen and they don’t mess around and they try their best.”

When I asked Noah to tell me about students who were always on red, he shared, “There’s this kid named Manny in my class and he always doesn’t do his work and he doesn’t do very much of his work so then like he always ignores the teacher so then like the teacher tells him to change the color so he doesn’t do it so she has to go do it for him.” I asked Noah if he believes that the chart helps Manny change his behavior and he believes that it does because it can help him learn from his mistakes.

Finally, I asked Noah if he would use the chart if he were a teacher and he replied yes because he would want students to change their colors if they were bad.

**Jamie.** My next interview was with Mike and Jamie. Jamie is a fifth grader at one of the most esteemed schools in our city. I am acquainted with Jamie’s step-mother, she is a good friend of mine, but this was my first time meeting Jamie. I know that Jamie is very involved in sports. He is involved in competitive travel teams in both baseball and soccer. My friend’s weekend plans revolve around Jamie’s constant games and tournaments. Jamie’s father Mike came over to my house for our interview. Jamie and Mike were both dressed in athletic wear and were headed to a soccer practice after our Saturday morning interview. I was impressed with Jamie when he, unprompted, reached out his hand to shake mine. He was extremely polite
and respectful for a 10-year-old. After Mike chatted with my husband for a few minutes about the football game that was on, Jamie went into my son’s room and checked out his computer and video games. At this point, Mike and I went into the living room where we began our interview.

Mike knew that the main focus of my study was the clip chart, so when I asked him to tell me about a typical school day for Jamie, he launched into how every day after school, Jamie was excited to get into the car and tell him about his behavior in terms of the chart. “I would pick him up and he would hop in the car and we’d say hello and I’d ask him how was the day. He would give me different answers, ‘Uh today was good. I got this on the chart. I was the only one in the class that made whatever.’ If it was red, he would let me know about what he did and what got him to that goal that day.” Mike then explained that he would bring up the other kids in the class, and ask him “How was Jackie today?” and Jamie would tell him, “Oh, Jackie got in a lot of trouble today.” Then Jamie would tell him about what color Jackie got on the chart. Mike would ask about other kids in the class and “where they stood.” Mike said that Jamie was always really excited when he was the one at the top.

I asked Mike if the chart was always the first topic of conversation after school. He said depending on the day, the first topic would typically be about practice or if there was not practice that day, they’d talk about homework. But he did ask Jamie about the chart pretty much every day. He clarified that this was a couple of years ago during the grades he used the clip chart. This year, in fifth grade, they do not use a chart like that anymore. He shared that they still have conversations after school, and he seemed pleased to share that Jamie is typically the one who initiates the conversation now by asking, “Dad, how was your day today?”

When I asked Mike if he felt the clip chart affected Jamie’s feelings about school, he believed that it did. He shared that it seemed to affect his mood when he got into the car after
school. Mike stressed that Jamie had to answer the question honestly. “There were times when there was a recess taken away. But when it was good, it was like Christmas. It was good you know. He was excited. He was more willing to address it on his own rather than me ask him. He would pop in the car some days, especially on the good days, he would be ‘I was on the top of the chart today.’” Jamie was excited to share his behavior on the days when he was rewarded, but not excited to share it on days where his clip moved down.

Mike shared that at home, they would reinforce the behavior messages that came from school. He was praised and rewarded for good days; for example, he would get to schedule weekend activities with his friends or go get ice cream. Mike said that on bad behavior days there was no reward and some things were taken away. He emphasized that it was not that bad, there were just times where they “had to put him in check a little bit.”

Mike explained that sometimes Jamie would come home and say, “I didn’t do anything wrong … I did what she asked me to do.” Or “I wasn’t talking and she thought I was and it wasn’t me.” Mike felt that when Jamie got in trouble for things he did not believe he did, he began to feel negative towards school. Mike emphasized that these moments led to conversations about honesty and being “upfront.” I asked Mike if he felt that these experiences or his placement on the chart ever affected Jamie’s confidence. Mike felt pretty strongly that they did not. He said that Jamie never hesitates to raise his hand, he always thinks he has the answer, and his teachers and coaches always report that he is “upfront,” which I interpreted as meaning that he speaks his mind and is unavering in his confidence.

Mike reported that his biggest concerns were about how the teachers communicated behavior to him and Jamie’s mother. The school seemed quick to suggest that Jamie was “overly active.” The school asked several times if Jamie had ever been tested for ADHD. Mike spent
quite a while sharing about how this was the pattern for a while. He felt that the teachers should have spent time getting to know Jamie and trying to figure him out. Jamie is very “sports active” and “school might not be the most electric thing for him.” Many different times teachers would jump to the idea of testing or medication instead of just troubleshooting. He said that moving him up to the front of the classroom helped and discovering that he needed glasses helped. Mike understood that the teachers were busy and that there was a lot going on in the classroom, but that they should not go right to the medication.

I asked Mike if the clip chart had any effect on Jamie’s relationships with his peers. Mike shared that “If someone is doing worse than him, he’s all ‘I feel bad for him’ and he would always stand up and help them out.” He pointed out that Jamie is sensitive towards others who are “not as good as he is in sports or whatever.” Mike believes that their conversations about reflecting on how fortunate Jamie is has helped him be more empathetic.

At the end of our interview, I asked Mike if there was anything else he wanted to share, and he just reiterated that he believed the teachers were quick to jump to conclusions about Jamie instead of figure him out. At this point, Mike went off to watch football with my husband, and Jamie joined me in the living room. Jamie had great eye contact for a child his age, and he seemed willing and eager to answer my questions.

I asked Jamie to tell me about the classroom where he most remembered the clip chart being used. He described the classroom as small, but really colorful. He mentioned that it “was outstanding to other classrooms.” He explained that the clip chart had four levels: “Outstanding, Good Job, Almost There, and Teacher’s Choice.” He explained that there were clips with names of all the students. “If you did really good, then you move up to the teacher’s necklace. It keeps going until you get to the teacher’s hair. If you did that you get a little candy.” He
remembered how fun that was. I asked what a student would have to do to make it to the
teacher’s hair, and Jamie shared, “Mostly just pay attention, do what you’re supposed to do, stay
on task. That’s what we had to do.” Sometimes if students were doing really well, they could
clip up two times on the chart.

I asked Jamie about what would happen to make a student clip down. He shared that it
would be just the opposite of clipping up. Students who were not on task and not paying
attention might have to clip down. Jamie remembered having to clip down for talking to his
friend. He had to move his clip from “Good Job” back to the middle of the chart where they
begin each day. He said that every day they begin in the middle of the chart and you can move
up or down. “If you get stuck on Teachers’ Choice, the whole day either she takes away your
recesses or she takes away your candy if you have candy. If you moved all the way down, she
takes your candy away or she can call your parents.” Jamie recalled a time when he clipped
down. He cried because the teacher took his candy.

When I asked Jamie who was usually at the top of the chart in his classroom, he
immediately responded that Cassie was. He described Cassie as “One of those kids who was
already like mature.” I asked if Cassie needed the clip chart as a reminder to behave, and he
said that “She didn’t really need a reminder to pay attention.”

In answering my question about who was at the bottom, Jamie brought up a student
named Joey. He remembered that Joey had a difficult time in the classroom. “I think Joey,
he…you know wasn’t like mental but he was like…he had a seizure and something
happened…so he was one of those kids.” Jamie explained that the chart did not really help Joey
improve his behavior because the teacher never explained why he had to move his clip and she
rarely called his parents. Jamie believed that Joey never really internalized being moved on the
clip chart, “It didn’t really get to his head. He really wouldn’t acknowledge that thing but he knew that he had to move.” Joey ended up moving to another school that year.

I asked Jamie if kids ever seemed embarrassed when moving their clips in front of each other. He shared that all of the kids cried when they went down. Typically, the students were to move their own clips, but sometimes the teacher would have to do it if kids were too emotional. “Some kids were really emotional...people that are emotional when they get in trouble ... they cry you know because everybody laughs sometimes.”

Jamie believed that the chart did not really help the students. I asked him if he would use it if he was a teacher, and he said no. “I mean like some kids it helps, but not all.”

When I asked Jamie if there was anything else at all he could tell me, he recalled initial confusion that the bottom of the chart was labeled “Teacher’s Choice.” “To be honest with you I thought that Teachers Choice was a good thing.” He believed that the teacher would only choose positive and fun things to do with the kids. “So I always thought that, and I didn’t know what she meant.”

Carly. My friend Susie has three children. She is a parent at our school, but last year she began teaching at our school as well. I intended to interview her just about her son Nathaniel who I knew had issues with the clip chart, but once she started talking about Nathaniel, she began comparing his experiences to her daughter Carly. I had not thought of interviewing Carly because I did not realize that she was already seven years old. I asked Susie if I could interview Carly in addition to Nathaniel.

Carly is the middle of Susie’s three children, but she is the only one who was adopted. Susie and her husband began fostering Carly when she was less than a year old. She was born to a drug-addicted mother, but fortunately Carly did not show any signs of addiction as a newborn.
Carly was formally adopted into the family when she was four years old. Carly is full of life. She knows no strangers, gives amazing bear hugs without question, has a head full of ringlets, and has confidence beyond her years. Carly has a speech impediment, but she has a booming voice so she is not hard to understand.

When I interviewed Susie about Nathaniel, she expressed that she was not a fan of the clip chart system, it had not been a good experience for her son. However, when I asked her about Carly’s experiences, Susie said, “She was like the exact opposite. She very much strives to get that color like, ‘I got on purple!’”

One day Carly dropped down to the bottom of the chart after she told a child that she was going to stab him with a pair of scissors. Susie knew that Carly had impulse control issues—they have dealt with those for years. Susie was shocked and irritated that a threat like that was dealt with on the clip chart. She believed that the teacher should have immediately sent Carly to the principal’s office. After this day of being on the lowest color, Carly tried really hard to get to the top of the chart for at least the next four or five days. Susie believes that Carly tried hard to get to the top because she seeks approval. “She does a lot of things for attention; it doesn’t even matter if it’s negative or positive attention.” After reflecting again on the stabbing threat, Susie was critical of using the chart to assign consequences to children’s actions. Susie explained that after hearing about the threat, Carly received a consequence at home, but it was not because of the clip chart. “It wasn’t because of the chart; it was because of her actions. I feel like there’s just natural consequences … I don’t think it has to be attached to a color.”

Susie said that when Carly or Nathaniel end up on the bottom of the chart, she asks them what they did to end up there. “‘Oh you got on a bad color, what did you do’ and they’re like ‘I don’t know.’ They don’t even know what they did.” She again expressed frustration with the
chart, “It’s not going to stop their behavior.”

Susie believes that this year Carly’s teacher is not quite as organized as she was when Nathaniel was in her class two years ago. With Carly, they do not see a weekly report like they did when Nathaniel was in that class. Susie remembers that in the past with Nathaniel, the teacher would highlight where it needed to be signed and send it back home if Susie missed the signature. This year, Susie has not seen any highlights or marks on the paper. Susie said she even forgot about it until like a month ago, “I was like ‘Oh yeah, there’s this calendar back here in the folder, oops’, and uh it doesn’t look like she checks it anymore so I don’t know.”

Overall, Susie does not like the clip chart, nor does she believe it helps Carly in any way. “We don’t have a, like at work, I don’t give you a gold star every time you do your job. We have to internalize it. We have to work harder for ourselves, not for the approval of whoever.”

At this time, I had the pleasure of interviewing Carly. Carly is so delightful, and bright and honest. Her big curly hair and her bright mis-matched clothing completely match her booming and confident personality. Carly was very eager to answer my questions.
I asked Carly to finish drawing the clip chart that her brother started drawing (see figure 3). Since Nathaniel drew the top half of the chart, Carly worked on the bottom half. As she was finishing the drawing, she began explaining what the colors meant. I pointed to the bottom of the chart, “So what does this say right here?”

“Bad.”

“What is the color above that?”

“Orange. Once someone got on the baddest color!” Carly shared this information like it
was a secret. She was shocked and she wanted to let me know about it.

“Really?”

“Uh-huh. It was Sammy”

“What happened?”

“He had to go out of the classroom. He didn’t make good decisions. And we didn’t like it so we all gave him stop signs and he ignored them!”

“He ignored the stop signs?”

“Mmhmm. But today he went on pink!” Carly was so excited to share this information. She was as proud of Sammy earning a spot on pink as any child would be proud of their own behavior.

Carly continued to give labels to the bottom of the chart. It was clear that the labels she gave were not the actual labels that the teacher used. Using age-appropriate spelling, she labeled yellow as “bad,” orange was “almost to the baddest color” and red, at the bottom of the chart, was “too bad.”

I asked Carly to tell me about how her teacher used the chart in the classroom. This is where she began telling me all about the students in their class, their numbers, and where they end up on the chart. “Well, usually there is 24 of us and for the whole entire day she thinks about if all 24 of us get up to pink. Or if maybe sometimes Henry, his number is 14, he goes down to yellow, and today, Lily went on to orange.” She wrote 14 next to yellow and 22 next to orange. “And Lana, who is 19, she always gets on pink. And Chris and Tracy, I think Tracy is eight. And once I went on pink, but now I get on purple, blue, or green.”

I was a little confused when she explained that her teacher waits all day to decide who goes where. I asked her more about it and she explained that yes, it is at the end of the day when the teacher clips them up. However, she explained that “Today, I got on purple. Usually I get on
purple, but usually I do a good deed but she forgets to clip me up to pink.” When I asked her about how she feels when the teacher forgets, her response was touching and hysterical at the same time. “I feel happy because I don’t care if I get on pink. I don’t really want to be on pink that much because we get sweets and I don’t want to get sweets in my mouth. Mommy wants us to have a diet with no sweets. I want to like get on ‘sweets’ not that much.”

I asked Carly what happens when students find out they are at the bottom of the chart. She explained that “Sammy, 11, he likes to make bad choices. Once he didn’t want to do ‘Ownership’ and the rules.” I recognized that word “Ownership” from our primary classes’ chants. Students participate in daily chants with specific character traits and I know that teachers work to incorporate these words into their daily lessons. When I asked what “Ownership” meant, Carly just said, “Ownership, Wisdom, Learning, and Safety.” I asked her for more explanation about what that meant. She said “It means you have to do the whole entire thing at recess and inside the classroom.” It was obvious that her class had experience reciting the traits from the chant, and her understanding of the meaning of the words was limited to making good choices in the classroom and outside on the playground. She explained that Sammy does not learn because his behavior never really changes.

I moved back to the clip chart and asked Carly why she thinks her teacher uses it. She explained that they have calendars and they get a little stamp for each day. Referring to her teacher she said, “She uses this calendar so she can know which one is bad and if you’re on red, you’re gonna have to stay in for your whole entire three recesses.” When I asked if being on red would help someone change their behavior, she said, “When I’m on red, where I’ve never been, I would be like ‘Oh, I can’t do that anymore cuz I’m going to be on red again.’”

Finally, I asked Carly whether or not she would use a clip chart if she were a teacher.
She immediately said she would. I asked her if she would make any changes. “I would clip everyone up to pink.” When I asked why, she said, “Because I want everyone to feel happy.”

Nathaniel. Susie’s son is Nathaniel. Nathaniel has been in my daughter’s class since kindergarten. He is an extremely bright boy who, in Susie’s words, “marches to the beat of his own drum.” I have had many conversations with Susie about Nathaniel’s struggles with behavior in school. I remember a few different occasions when Susie would have to go into Nathaniel’s class and talk to him about his behavior. I believe that his more difficult behavior is when the environment is inflexible and unaccommodating. Nathaniel is very social, but he seems to take more interest in following where his curiosity leads him than in socializing with peers.

As far as the clip chart, Nathaniel did not have the same experience as his sister. When I first asked Susie about Nathaniel’s experiences, she shared that he has had publicly displayed charts every year from kindergarten through third grade. She explained that she “noticed from kindergarten onto third grade, teachers forget to move it down because we’re busy.” Susie is also a teacher. “A lot of the times he would start wherever they start like in the middle or wherever, but he would feel like he didn’t do well because he didn’t move up. He didn’t move down, but he didn’t move up either and so even when he had a good day, still it wasn’t good.” Nathaniel would not believe that his day was any good if someone else got better than he did. Susie said that he would share where his classmates were on the chart, but she never knew which was good or not because “Every year it changed, so I was uncertain about what was good and what was bad. It was so inconsistent.” She just felt like it was never a positive tool for Nathaniel. She would tell him, “‘I don’t care what color you’re on as long as you’re doing your best,’ and for him it just it was stuck in him that he had to produce this better color.”
Susie said that in most grades, Nathaniel would come home with a paper explaining what he got each day. She would also get Class Dojo messages when they were on “bad colors.” Class Dojo is a technology-based program many teachers use for parent communication purposes. She said that Nathaniel received a “bad” message like this at least once per month. Susie never really referenced the chart with her children, especially with Nathaniel. Susie really wanted him to “internalize” his behavior. She also explained that he was a “special child; he’s just kind of interesting.” She believes that he understands when he is and when he is not doing his best, and she never relates that to the chart. She tells him, “‘It’s like it’s all you boy, you are making choices. If you’re making bad choices you are going to get consequences at school, but ultimately you’re not trying your best which is not good … if your best is the second worst color, then that was your best that day.’ I don’t know… I don’t think it should be attached to a color.”

Susie believed that teachers implemented charts to use fear to control their classes. “I think the intention is that you know there’s always that chance to go up, but you kind of chip away at a child when they’re thinking they’re doing good.” She did not like that students were put on lower colors because of mistakes they made. She mentioned that her youngest daughter is currently in a Transitional Kindergarten class and she was clipped down for shaking her head back and forth. Susie said that usually her child is “a dream” in class and never is reprimanded or punished. This particular day, she was shaking her head, just to “feel it on her face,” and she was told to clip down because she was not working. Her daughter came home and cried and cried and now she has a fear against clipping down. “I don’t know. Like little by little every time my children get into school and we have another issue, I’m like ‘I don’t think this is working’ you know.”
She believes that students never really understand and learn from the consequence of their behavior. She thinks that “You’re low and once you get low enough like there’s no way to dig yourself out, and I think kids realize that and they’re like ‘well screw it. I’ll just be me cuz at his point I’m already on orange.’” She remembers volunteering in Nathaniel’s class and hearing the teacher say, “Everyone in table group number one, go clip up; everyone in table group two, go clip up”; and so on, but Nathaniel would be fiddling with his finger or something and so she would clip everyone up but him.” She was frustrated that the students were supposed to be completely focused and facing forward for the entirety of the class period; “I’m like they are first graders.” She also was mad that Nathaniel would be singled out for things like fiddling with his finger. She realized that the teacher was trying to use the clip chart to get Nathaniel to conform to the rest of the group. “He started to see that pattern and just like gave up. He didn’t want to work.”

I questioned Susie about how she believed the clip chart affected Nathaniel’s love of learning. She shared that he absolutely loves to learn, but that this clip chart has affected the whole idea of school for Nathaniel. She shared that at home, he is really curious and he loves to learn. He can already code Arduinos, and he loves learning random facts. She believes that our STEM-focused school (Science Technology Engineering and Math) is the absolute best place for him, but she believes that “He just doesn’t quite fit into this mold of the student that they want. He’s quirky.” He is having a better year this year and Susie attributes that to the fact that the teacher seems to be more patient and flexible, “She gives him the space that he needs.”

Susie shared that the clip chart forced Nathaniel to compare himself to other students. She believes that “a lot of his self-esteem stemmed from that chart.” He would come home and say “So-and-so got better than me,” or “Everyone got on the high color and I was the only one
that wasn’t.” He would go home and report to his parents, “I’m sorry I was on red.” She knew that the teacher told him she would call, but Susie said that many times Nathaniel would report to her even if the teacher did not call. He was always honest, and he always felt bad. She believes that it even affected his friendships. She knows her son is “not a follower. He doesn’t want to do what other kids do so he’s had some peer-related issues.” She does believe that “as he’s getting older and I think it’s the fact that they’re not using it a whole lot this year, but he’s feeling I think more confident.”

When Nathaniel came to talk with me, he launched right into his feelings about the clip chart, “So I kinda actually don’t like the fact of the clip chart this year but also I did like them in the past probably three years because I think it’s a good idea to like have um a child’s clip to see if they are bad or good in school.” I asked him to draw a picture for me of the chart he remembers most. He began drawing the chart that he had in his first grade classroom. This is the chart pictured during Carly’s interview. Nathaniel drew the top part and then began explaining. “Basically like the colors of the clip chart, it’s kind of like the colors of the rainbow except it’s not and if you get on red, then it’s just the end of the day for you.” He shared that there were consequences like parent contact and taking away recess or even getting extra work.

Nathaniel explained that everyone starts on “Ready to Learn.” To move up, you have to be “doing good in class,” or “doing good in line.” I asked him what would cause a student to clip down. He explained, “usually playing around is the number one thing; and then probably not listening to the teacher.”

I asked him if he ever had to move his clip. “Um yeah, a few times. In first grade. In kindergarten, that’s the best, like to where my clip got. And then in second grade some other people got on red a lot. In second grade, pink and all these good colors went down and all the
bad colors went up.” I asked him if that confused him. “Yeah on the first day we had the clip chart, I got up to yellow which is actually above ‘Ready to Learn’ and I was like ‘Oh no!’ I’m like, ‘Wait!’”

I wanted to know more about his experiences clipping down so I asked about how he felt when he clipped down. “Well another way I can put this is, feeling really guilty and then just clipping yourself down twice when you’re only supposed to clip down once. For example, if you do something really really mean, and you feel guilty, you just want to go crazy, and you feel really sad and you feel really miserable; you clipped yourself down and you just feel like this is not enough. I should get in trouble, like way more. That’s what happens to me, because I usually (makes exploding sounds) all the way down.”

I asked if when he clipped down it helped him to think about what he did or if it made him angry. “I think, personally, it makes me a little more angry. But after awhile I calm down. And then later I think, ‘Why did I do that?’ Because usually in our class I give away two tickets cuz I’m feeling really miserable at that moment and I just give two tickets away, and then later on the next day, I was like, um, cuz each prize is worth one ticket and I just gave away my last two tickets.” I thought it was interesting that Nathaniel regretting giving his tickets away more than the behavior that caused the clip to move down.

I asked Nathaniel if he recalled any specific students who were regularly at the top of the chart. “No not really, except for Amanda. Amanda Mathers.” I asked him to tell me why she was at the top. “She’s always really paying attention in class. She’s always trying to get that free time.” When I asked him if he thought that the teacher noticed that she tried hard, he changed the subject.
He told me a strategy that the teachers use. “But also another thing you can do with the clips, is at the end of the day and you really didn’t spend much time with the clips, you can remember all the processes that your students did and clip up all the people who were good and clip all the people who were bad down.” I asked him if he thought the teachers regularly forget to move the clips. “Um yeah. They usually forget about the clips and what we did in first grade was after awhile everyone gathered around the clip chart when our teacher was clipping up.” I asked him when this happened, and he explained it was at the end of the day when everyone was packing up. “Whoever clipped down, they’re like ‘aww’ and whoever clipped up was like ‘yeah!’

I asked Nathaniel if he could recall anyone who was regularly at the bottom of the chart. He shared that there was one boy who clipped down regularly and when I asked if the chart seemed to help this boy’s behavior he thought, “I think it actually.... no. No.”

When I asked why he believes teachers use a chart like that, he shared “To keep track of everybody’s learning and see how well they’re doing. Cuz she wants to see if um people are doing bad, and if they are then she can probably call home and she could probably tell the parent and that they are doing bad and give them a punishment probably.” Next I asked if he would use a chart like that if he were a classroom teacher. “Um I don’t know. I think personally, I think it would put a little bit too much pressure on the kids.” I asked more about the pressure. He gave a scenario. “Um like, ‘Ugh why am I on orange?’ and somebody’s on pink and the person who was on pink was bragging and bragging about everything and then the orange person just felt miserable when they went home.”

Nathaniel shared that he would try an individual clip chart if he were the teacher. He walked around my classroom and demonstrated how the individual chart could be on the side of
each student’s desk. I asked why that would be better. “I think because they can only focus on their work. And just in case if the teacher clips them up without noticing, they just look, and they would be like ‘yes!’ So just in case if a person is right here, with an individual clip chart right here, and another person is right here, they don’t even notice. So that person doesn’t brag that the person got on orange.”

**Kaya.** Kaya is an 8-year-old girl who is in the third grade. She has been a friend of my daughter’s since they attended preschool together. Kaya has an infectious giggle and a huge smile. She is very athletically inclined and plays basketball on teams throughout the year. I can not remember a time when I have seen Kaya upset.

Kaya attends school in a neighboring district. I have had many conversations with Kaya’s mother, Nicole, about school. Kaya has not had the most positive experiences at her school, and often her mother would share her concerns with me and seek my advice since I am a teacher. I know that Kaya has speech services and in the past she has struggled with reading. I asked Nicole to tell me more about Kaya’s school experiences. Nicole explained that in preschool, Kaya was loved, the environment was relatively peaceful and happy, and they always felt comfortable and welcome. Kindergarten, on the other hand, was different. It was loud and unfriendly compared to preschool. The girls would not play with her so she would play with the boys. The boys were rough so she would be by herself for a lot of the time. This was a big transition for her since she had a pack of friends from preschool she played with every day. The girls at kindergarten would say mean things to her which would lead her to defend herself. She began getting into trouble because of this. Nicole said that a couple of boys bullied her in kindergarten as well. As Nicole was telling me this, I was thinking about how unbelievable it
sounds since our relationship with Kaya has been nothing but positive. It is hard to imagine her needing to defending herself from bullies.

Nicole explained that first grade was better than kindergarten because the teacher “wasn’t biased.” She believed that the kindergarten teacher did not believe Kaya, but believed the other girls’ stories instead, and the teacher also felt that “boys will be boys.” In second grade, Nicole remembered that there was a boy who said he was going to kill Kaya. The boy ended up getting expelled because he had a history of issues. This year in third grade, one boy “grabbed her private part and twisted it.” This caused a huge situation where several children were involved to get the boy off of Kaya. Nicole said that she was “crying and screaming for help.” The boy was suspended for this action. While listening to Nicole, I was thinking about many people would try to change schools after all of that, but Kaya was actually at one of the best schools in her district. Until recently students were only eligible to attend Kaya’s school if they were academically advanced; it was the district’s designated GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) school.

Nicole said that now the only reason she is ever in trouble is for talking. All the teachers “know Kaya because she’s so friendly and she laughs and she’s so warm and always hugging people. So I always hear good stuff.” I asked Nicole to tell me about the clip chart in Kaya’s classroom. She said that this year is the first year she has seen it used. “It starts at the top and if she has to talk to them more than once she moves it down. One time, Kaya actually ended up off the chart.” She said that the teacher “told her to be quiet and Kaya was still talking. And so yeah. She took her off the chart for that one.” I asked her if there was a consequence for that day and Nicole said, “She moved Kaya, her desk, to the front of the door. I didn’t like that because I feel like you’re isolating her. I didn’t like that and her dad really didn’t agree with
that. So it was like maybe if you can move her in front of you or beside you instead of putting her by herself. And that actually worked a lot because she’s getting in less trouble.”

Nicole explained that this year, the only time she finds out about Kaya’s behavior is if the teacher texts her. When she asks Kaya how her day was after school, she does not believe that Kaya is giving her the full truth, “Of course she’s not going to tell me she got in trouble. Sometimes she will but most of the time she’s not going to say anything….so I pretty much don’t know.” I asked Nicole to tell me how often she thinks Kaya has to clip down. She is under the impression that Kaya only clips down an average of three times each month. Each time the teacher texts her, she talks to Kaya and then she does not hear anything so she assumes her behavior improves. When Kaya starts getting talkative in class again, Nicole will get another text, talk to Kaya, and then she will not hear from the teacher for a while.

I asked Nicole if Kaya talks about any other kids in class in regards to the clip chart. Nicole said that Kaya tells her pretty much everything after school. She will tell her who was behaving and who was not. Kaya tells her mom that when her name is clipped down it is usually because someone is talking to her. “She is like, ‘Mom. He keep talking to me and I tell him to be quiet but then I’m the one always getting in trouble.’ And I’m like, ‘Are you sure?’ and I’m like, okay…and so then I take note of it. And then let’s see.” Nicole laughed aloud when she explained that she was definitely more eager to talk about other kids’ behavior than her own, “She don’t want to get in trouble with mom!” I asked Nicole if Kaya shares both positive and negative comments about her peers. At first Kaya said, “She does both. I can honestly say she does both. ‘Well such and such did good today,’ or stuff like ‘She dress cute,’ or ‘Her hair was cute.’ Stuff like that.” But then she thought more about it, “Let me see … no. Mostly the
behavior thing is if they’re bad. Yeah…She’ll say something. That’s weird. I’ve never paid attention to that until now."

I asked Nicole about whether or not the chart has affected Kaya’s feelings about school. She believes that she is really only bothered by it if she gets in trouble for talking but the other people who were talking to her do not get in trouble. She said that in this grade she does not feel that way very often. However, in kindergarten, the teacher showed favoritism to the boys and yelled at Kaya a lot. Nicole felt like Kaya was targeted and Kaya did not want to go to school. Now it is different. She is happy to go to school.

Nicole does not believe that the clip chart has much effect at all on Kaya’s relationship with friends or her confidence. At this time, Nicole’s demeanor changed, and she said regarding Kaya’s confidence being affected, “No. Not with the behavior chart. It’s not the behavior chart but the other thing that does, you know how they have the AR? And then they have what student is doing really good and what students are still struggling? That affects their confidence more so than the behavior chart I’ve noticed. Because she’s like ‘Mom,’ she won’t say she’s not smart, but she’s just like ‘Ugh…,’ she has that attitude like ‘Ugh.’” The AR program Nicole referred to is called Accelerated Reader. It is a reading comprehension program where students earn points for reading books and completing tests. It is popular in many school districts. Apparently, Kaya’s teacher displays this information publicly. Because I wanted to explore the public nature of this chart, I asked more questions about how it is posted. She explained that the students’ names and scores are on this chart. The names are at the top if the scores are high and at the bottom if the scores are low. Nicole explained that this has definitely affected Kaya’s confidence about her academic abilities.
I asked Nicole to tell me anything else she could about the behavior chart, and she said that the only thing that bothers her is that the teacher will “make the kids get up and move their own clip.” She thought, “I wonder should you do that or should they do that? I don’t know. And then yeah, because all the kids get to see who’s doing good and who’s doing bad. Yeah, I don’t know.” I asked her if Kaya ever mentioned being embarrassed about that and Nicole responded, “No, she hasn’t. Hmmm. Now I feel like a bad parent because I never really asked her too much about that. I ask her how her day and everything but oohh I never asked her about that.”

At this time, Nicole left to run some errands, and I called Kaya to come downstairs from my daughter’s bedroom so we could talk. Kaya relaxed on our couch and within our first minute was laying on her belly, then she was up and down, laying on her back. She made herself very comfortable, but while she talked she moved from position to position. I could tell that sitting still was not in her nature.

I asked Kaya to draw a picture of the clip chart that hangs in her classroom (see figure 4). She began drawing and then as she was labeling, she was giggling and asking me to help her with spelling. She forgot two of the labels for the chart and so she explained, “I just forgot those two on what it said so I just put normal and perfect.” Then she asked if she spelled “Hollywood” right. I told her I could tell what it said, but I asked her why it said Hollywood on her classroom behavior chart. She just giggled and said she had no idea. As she continued filling it out, the labels for the bottom three colors said, “Take 1,” “Take 2,” and the one at the bottom said, “Cut.” Kaya explained that the unique labels are because her whole classroom has a “superstar” theme, but I understood that she meant “movie star.”
I asked Kaya how her teacher uses that chart and she explained that everyone starts on red, or “Normal.” The clips are not labeled with their names, but their numbers. Kaya explained that sometimes she moves up one or down one when her teacher tells her to. It usually happens because she is talking or playing around. Kaya said that sometimes, if a lot of people are talking the teacher will announce that just the talkers should go move their clip down and she will wait for them to get up and go clip down. “But if she knows you were talking, she’ll just say our names and say ‘go move down’ if we don’t get up.” If a student makes it all the way to the top, “Hollywood,” students get to pick something from a prize box. Then Kaya said, “If like also if we get an answer right we can also go and get a ticket, then we put our name on it then we
put it in the popcorn box…which I have no idea why she calls it that.” I asked her if she thought it had to do with the movie theme and she said yes. She explained that there was a raffle every Friday, if the teacher remembered. I asked her if the teacher ever communicated to the parents if a child made it to Hollywood, but Kaya said no. I asked about what happens when a student gets to “perfect.” Kaya said, “It doesn’t really matter on the Perfect or the Normal one. But if we get down to Take 1 we have to owe 5 minutes or ten minutes of recess. Take 2- our whole entire recess. Cut- parent call. But she always ends up forgetting to do that. Sometimes she’ll just give us a whole lot of chances.”

I asked if she could recall specific students who regularly make it to “Hollywood.” Kaya said that it is really hard to get up on Hollywood, but that she remembers Linda has. She said that she’s not the only one, but she forgot all the other ones. I asked her the same questions about which students are on the bottom of the chart. She said that there’s a lot and that it is the same students over and over who end up on the bottom. This is when I began asking Kaya about her personal experiences. I asked her where she usually ends up. “Sometimes on Cut, sometimes on Take 2.” After I showed my surprise, she giggled and said, “Sometimes on Perfect.” I asked her where she was most of the time and she said, “Cut.” I had a shocked look on my face and she just giggled. I teased her a little bit, and then I asked her about how being on Cut all of the time made her feel.

“Tell me about that. How does that make you feel?”

“Um…well she never even contact my mom, which is funny!” she said through giggles.

“If she did call your mom more, do you think that would change your behavior?”

“Um yeah, kind of.”
I asked Kaya if she ever talked with her mom about the chart. She told me that she did not. In fact, she said, “No. Actually I don’t ever think I even talk about it.” I asked her if she would talk about it if she were at the top of the chart and she said, “Yeah, yeah.”

“Well sometimes my partners just talk to me and I have to move down because they’re talking to me.”

“Tell me about how it happens in class.”

“They have to move down too?”

“Well sometimes, but not all the time.”

I asked Kaya if she was ever embarrassed about moving her clip in class or being at the bottom of the chart. She was only embarrassed the first time it happened, and now she just gets mad because she has to lose her recess. She can tell other kids get embarrassed though because some of them cry. I asked Kaya if she ever wanted to be up on “Hollywood.” She started explaining how there are alternative ways to move up on the chart. “Sometimes some people stay after school to move up. I’m always one of those people.”

“You stay after school to move up?”

“Yeah.”

“How does that work?”

“Well, it’s like we have like cleaning people right? Like during school time if we do our job, that doesn’t really count as moving up because you’re doing it. But if you stay after school and do it, you can move up.”

“So if you stay after school, it’s to clean?”

“Yeah.”

“And how often do you do that?”

“Uh I do that every single day. But mostly now I’m on Take 2.”

“So you’re not all the way down to Cut?”
“No.”

“But every day you start here?” I pointed to Normal.

“Well not really. Well if we did the cleaning thing, in the morning we will usually start up here, because then we would actually know that we cleaned or did something after school.”

“Okay, so it gives you like a little boost the next day?”

“Yeah. That’s why I usually do it so I don’t end up being on Cut.”

I was curious about how many students from her class usually ended up in different places on the chart. She had difficulty telling me how many were in each spot, but she did say that very few students make it up to Hollywood, the majority of the students stay on Normal, and quite a few students end up on levels near the bottom. Referring to Cut, she explained, “Um, sometimes there’s like one here because sometimes we’ll have like one every single day but not. But some of them are close...like me. Once I didn’t even have to move down.”

“Oh, once?”

“Yeah,” giggling.

“So did you stay on normal that whole time?”

“I started on perfect.”

“Oh because you did chores the previous day?”

“Yeah.”

“So you stayed on perfect and you never had to move down?”

“Yeah.”

“How did you feel that day? Did you feel any different that you would on another day?”

“I was happy. But sometimes I’ll just have to move down on normal. But sometimes it will just stay like that. I think that happened like five times? Or four. I don’t know.”
“Okay. It sounds like there’re a lot of kids in your class that have to go down to Take 1, Take 2, or Cut.”

“Yeah. There’s a whole lot of bad kids in my class.”

“Really?”

“Yes.”

“So why would you call them bad kids?”

“Umm. because they always end up getting in trouble.”

“What do they do to get in trouble do you think?”

“Sometimes they’ll talk, play, yeah. Kind of like that.”

“Why do you think that they’re talking and playing around at school?”

“Um, I don’t know.”

“Why do you talk during school?”

“Um, because sometimes I’m just bored.”

“Do you think it’s mostly cuz you’re bored or do you have other things…” she cut me off.

“Mostly because I’m bored.”

David. My last interview was with David and his mother, Liz. Liz is a parent at my school who is also in her second year teaching at a nearby school in my district. Though I had met her several times. I really connected with her a couple of years ago when I bumped into her at our county office of education and we began talking. At that time, she was deeply concerned for her son who was getting in trouble quite a bit in his fourth grade classroom. She felt like he was misunderstood and he was being written off as a troublemaker. She did not feel like the school was supporting him at all. It was hard for her to tell me this because she knew I worked there and knew the teacher and all the other staff members.
I knew David well since he was a part of my school community. He is hard to miss. He has this great head of red hair, a face full of freckles, and a raspy voice. He is the kind of kid who can not walk past a puddle, even when kids are all around him. He does not see the kids; he just sees the puddle. David is happiest when he can build, fix things, discover things, jump up or shout out when he’s excited, and so on. He can not contain his exuberance. That day, two years ago, when talking with Liz about David’s behavior issues, Liz started crying. I remember her sharing about how David has had many more tough years than happy years. I remember her saying that she just did not know what to do. My heart went out to her. It was hard for me to hear as well as I had so much pride in my school community. When I began studying the clip chart, I knew I had to reach out to Liz to get David’s perspective.

Liz knew that I was exploring the clip chart, so when I sat down with her for our interview, she launched right into it. “His first year having a clip chart was first grade. Prior to that he loved school.” She explained how he used to skip off to preschool and kindergarten with a smile and full of excitement. But first grade was another story. “From the first week of school even, I would see him come out to the car and be sad because he always struggled to clip up. He would either end the day where he started or he would end the day at the bottom of the clip chart. So I just saw his spirit of school just disintegrate.” She said that behavior has always been an issue for him, but first grade was the first time that “it was in front of everyone that he had this open struggle.” His confidence was affected by the chart. She said that instead of having conversations with David about his behavior, and how he could make better choices, she instead worked on raising his self-confidence.

David had a clip chart in second grade as well, but it did not seem to affect him as greatly as it did in first grade. Liz seems to think that the first grade teacher just put more emphasis on
it. She blames that clip chart for diminishing his love for learning. In third grade, his teacher did not use a clip chart. She recalled a recent “memory” surface on social media from when he was in that third grade class. “I’m going to cry. It was the week that he started back (in January), it was that first week of school and we were sitting at the dinner table and I just saw that spark of love of school come back in him and that was the first time I had seen that since kindergarten.”

In fourth grade, his teacher had a clip chart, “And again we had a terrible year of school.” In fifth grade, there was no chart and he was back to being excited about school. That year she noticed that when she asked him about his day, he would be honest about his behavior and his choices and he would be reflective of how he could have handled it. Liz did not shy away from explaining that David has always had issues with his behavior, but she definitely pointed out that the clip chart never made his behavior better in any way. It just harmed his self-esteem.

I asked Liz to tell me about how the school communicated David’s behavior to her. She said that in first grade, there would be a paper that would come home at the end of the week with the different colors he ended up on each day. She thought that was ridiculous. “He’s seven. He doesn’t remember why he had a bad day at the beginning of the week.” When he was older, she would only hear from David’s teacher if he ended up on parent contact. David would tell her every day, but the teacher did not communicate anything unless it was negative. “So it’s like those times throughout the day where he’s clipping up and clipping down, how is that helping him be more aware of his behavior if I can’t have that conversation whit him?” Liz felt like she should have been contacted to come in and work with the teacher about David’s behavior—just the three of them. Instead, the teacher used the chart which was “putting it out there for everyone to see and know that he gets labeled as the kid that struggles.”
Liz recalled a conversation she had to have with David. He was complaining about being clipped down when it was not his fault which is something he believed happened often. “We would have to have these conversations about how ‘If you’re that kid who is always on the radar, sometimes you get blamed for things that you didn’t do.’” I asked her if these experiences of being falsely accused affected his relationships with his teachers. “Oh for sure. Yeah.” Liz then explained how David just hated his first grade teacher because he felt so low all of the time. Now that she is a teacher herself, she knows how important first grade is in students’ reading development. She believes that his current challenges and negative feelings associated with reading all stem from that horrible year. “We lost a whole year because of the negative ramifications that could possibly just be from that stupid clip chart.”

I asked Liz if David ever talked about other students’ behavior regarding the clip chart. He did. She said it was a little disheartening. Instead of describing peers as friends or in terms of their interests or abilities, he shared about the color they landed on. She also she believed that the parents who volunteered in the classroom felt like because of David’s behavior, parents might have told their children not to play with him “because he may not be the best influence.” She believes behavior “should be a private relationship that you have with your teacher. The clip chart makes it public, for everyone to see.”

She had a friend who was a parent volunteer in David’s first grade class. The friend told Liz that she felt that David was unfairly targeted by the teacher. “Like her eyes were always on him.” This actually made Liz feel validated that someone else noticed what she was hearing from David at home.

Again, Liz shared about how the clip chart really hurt David’s self-esteem. She admitted that she “didn’t do a very good job of being like non-biased in front of him. Just because he’s
my son, I love him, and I would tell him, ‘Don’t let that clip chart define you.’” I clarified whether she was working with him to build David’s self-esteem rather than support the teacher’s behavior policies, and she responded “Yeah…which is not me at all! Like I’m always, like here’s your teacher’s perspective. That was something I felt like I had to undo the brokenness that was going on at school. I feel like I would have been more supportive if I felt like his spirit wasn’t broken. He was always ending up on the bottom or not clipping up and he would see all these other kids clip up. And he’s seven… like just… yeah.”

I asked whether there were any other issues about it and she continued on. “The years where I look back where he didn’t have a clip chart, it wasn’t like a night and day difference with his behavior, it was more like about his love of learning. He would come home and no longer be fixated on whether he ended up on the clip chart or where Johnny ended up on the clip chart or what he did to make that decision. Those years that he didn’t have it, it was more like ‘I learned about this today, and did you know this mom?’”

She believes that teachers who use this chart would not use it if their own child struggled with behavior and/or self-esteem. When she became a teacher, she knew that she would never use this chart. She believes that teachers use the chart to incentivize kids to make better choices. “But I feel like in the busyness of school and things happening, it’s just too easy for kids to say ‘That kid is the kid who struggles with behavior.’ I don’t think the clip chart is the best way to positively reinforce a kid. The kids are either going to become fixated on the clip chart and every choice that they make is not ‘How I’m going to learn this math problem?’ it’s ‘How am I going to learn this so I don’t clip down?’ She makes sure that her students are talked to individually and privately about behaviors, and that everyday her students leave with a smile.
Liz went a little off topic and shared about an experience she had with an uber-confident parent when David was in first grade. The parent told her, bragging, that she had a clip chart at home for her daughter. The parent said, “I don’t know about you, but I’m preparing my children for the real world.” This struck Liz as ridiculous. Liz looked at the parent and said, “Have you ever worked anywhere that had a clip chart where your boss would say, ‘You did a terrible performance today, you better go clip down.’ No we don’t do that. You don’t sit in your annual review with all of your coworkers. It’s a private review with you and your boss.” She just thought it was ludicrous that a parent believed it was helping prepare for “the real world.”

When I was about to end our interview, I asked Liz for any last thoughts or comments. “The humiliation part is the part that really bothers me.” She shared that some of her old students came to visit her during her lunch and, knowing that she was going to come and talk to me about this subject, she asked the students about their thoughts on the clip chart. One of the girls, now in fifth grade, recalled how embarrassing it was to have to clip down in front of her peers. She even called it, “The Walk of Shame.”

I met with David right after meeting with his mother. He came in and was ready to talk. He did explain that since he was 11, and we would be focusing on his experiences from five years ago, that he would most likely have difficulty remembering. I assured him that it was fine and anything he could tell me would be helpful. The very first thought that he shared was about how embarrassing it was. “Clipping down. When you walk up there, my teacher would tell me to walk up specifically to me. She wouldn’t clip me down; I had to clip myself down so it was embarrassing to walk back up there and clip down in front of the entire class, I don’t know, it made me feel embarrassed I guess.”
He remembers being really focused on the clip chart rather than actually learning anything in class. He was always trying to figure out what to do to move up.

Honestly there was like, there was a lot of teacher’s pets who get to the top at the very beginning of the class, I don’t know what you had to do cuz I barely ever got up there. I can’t explain it myself. I was trying to focus on clipping up. Sometimes I can’t always clip up; I’d clip down sometimes. But then when you’d clip down, you can’t really clip back up; It’s hard to clip back up.

When I asked him why clipping back up was hard, he began talking about how it affected his self-esteem. He explained that when he clipped down, “It gets you down and you feel like you can’t get back up cuz you stay down there and it gets worse and worse until you have to call your parents.”

I asked David if he remembers specific kids who were always at the top. He started talking about a girl named Alison; he shared that Alison was good in class when the teacher was watching, but she was “sassy” towards other kids. His face grimaced when he said her name. David told me that a lot of the kids who did well with the clip chart were actually mean towards other kids when the teacher was not looking.

David explained that he most likely would not use a system like this if he were ever a teacher. If he could make changes to it, he said he would either cut the bottom and one from the bottom off of it or use a system like Class Dojo. Class Dojo is an online system where students can earn points for different behaviors and the teacher can keep the points private. Teachers also use this system for communicating with parents. He believes his mom uses that system for her classroom and that she never takes points away once students earn them.

Toward the end of our interview, I explained to David that I really just wanted to hear anything he had to say at all about the clip chart and his feelings and experiences about it. “I didn’t really want to go to school depending on the clip chart because I’d get kind of angry at it
because every day I know I would almost, I mean practically every single day to be honest, I would clip down. Sometimes I would clip up, but all the time, most the time, I’d probably clip down. Usually most of the time it didn’t get to the point where I’d have to call my parents but it was like two or three times that that happened, but yeah.”

I asked David about his fourth grade year because his mom mentioned that he went from no clip chart in third grade to having one in fourth grade again. David explained that in fourth grade, his teacher did begin with a clip chart, but after a short time, she stopped using it. She then switched to Class Dojo, but that did not last long either. “She kind of flipped around with a couple things and then I started to get a star chart.” He told me about how the star chart was individualized for him. It was something that only he and the teacher knew about so he was not embarrassed about it. “It helped me a lot because like when I’d have a lot of stars, like five stars you get a candy, ten stars you get a Starbucks, and then 15 stars you can have hot chocolate for the class and stuff. So I was better at my behavior cuz when I noticed that I could get Starbucks and candy and stuff I really started to change my behavior because it would benefit me.”

Themes

In analyzing the codes that emerged from both the child and parent participant interviews, there were many common themes. Occurring most often were codes of comparison, confusion, embarrassment, teacher inconsistencies, using the term “bad,” and negative feelings towards school. Less common, but still evident in half of the interviews were false accusations. Table 4 shows which codes emerged from each child during the child and/or parent interviews. The table shows that each theme occurs in three or more cases, and it also shows that each child experienced four or five of the seven different themes.
Table 4. Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Noah</th>
<th>Jamie</th>
<th>Carly</th>
<th>Nathaniel</th>
<th>Kaya</th>
<th>David</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>False Accusations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Using the term “bad” to label students or the chart</strong></td>
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<td>X</td>
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**Comparison.** Five out of the six participants shared experiences and feelings that I categorized into the “comparison” theme. Nicole shared that Kaya talks about other children who are lower on the chart than he is. She explained that she thinks he does this to make himself feel better. Nicole noticed that Kaya only reports the behaviors of her classmates to her when they are negative as well. Mike seemed to emphasize that Jamie enjoys being on the top of the chart. He had several comments during our interview that indicated that being better than others is important to Jamie. I believe Carly was comparing her classmates, when she was writing all of their numbers on the different levels of the chart. Her vocal intonation as well as her facial expressions told me that some students were definitely more behaved than others. Nathaniel would tell his mother that his day was not a good day if someone else in the class earned a color
higher than he did on the chart, and he often would share his color, but in relation to other students’ colors.

**Confusion.** Four out of six students indicated that there was some confusion surrounding the chart. Jamie explained that his teacher never explained to students why their clip was moved. He also chuckled when he thought about how confused he was initially about the “teacher’s choice” band of the chart. He thought it was positive. Carly shared that she did not really ever want to get on pink (which was the highest color in her class) because she doesn’t want to have any candy. She might have some confusion about the intentions of the chart. Susie explained that each year, with each different teacher, the colors changed and she was confused about what was positive and what was negative. Nathaniel also shared that he had confusion between the colors in first and second, “all these good colors when down and all the bad colors went up.”

**Teacher inconsistency.** Another theme that came up in four interviews was teacher inconsistencies. Susie, being a teacher herself, sympathized with the teachers. She knows that teachers are often too busy to stay consistent with management systems. She mentioned that the calendar in the back of Carly’s folder hadn’t been signed off by the teacher in a while. Carly, even at age seven, believes that her teacher forgets to clip her up to the top of the chart. Nathaniel believes that teachers usually forget about the clips. Kaya said that her teacher forgets to call home when she is on “Cut.” David shared about how his teacher “flipped” from program to program.

**Embarrassment.** Embarrassment was a theme that emerged in four of the interviews. Laura mentioned that Noah was embarrassed when he had to clip down one time because everyone knew he got on yellow. Though Jamie did not share that he ever was embarrassed, he said that his classmates cried when they had to move their clips. He believed that they would cry
because other people would laugh. Kaya did not mention being embarrassed, but her mother, Nicole, wondered if having students get up and move their own clip was appropriate. She did not know how she felt about that. The most vocal about embarrassment was Liz and David. Liz believes that the public nature of the clip chart puts a child’s behavior issues on display for everyone to label. She believes it is humiliating. David shared about an experience where he was really embarrassed to walk up to the chart, turn around, and face his peers. He felt as if everyone was staring at him. He even remembers his face feeling flushed.

**Using “bad” as a label.** In four of the six interviews, the word “bad” was used to describe children and parts of the behavior chart. In some cases, students used “bad” to describe themselves. Kaya and Jamie both explained that when students are bad, they have to change their card. Susie described the colors at the bottom of the chart as “bad” colors. When Carly was labeling the bottom of the chart, she couldn’t remember the actual labels in the classroom so she made up her own: “bad,” “almost to the baddest color,” and “too bad.” Carly even mentioned that the teacher stamps a calendar so she can know which students are bad. Nathaniel said that if you land on orange, it is a bad color and that means you’re doing bad in school. Kaya described the levels of the chart by saying that the top half were the good ones and the bottom half was bad. Kaya also said, after she mentioned that she was at the bottom nearly everyday, that there are a lot of bad kids in her class. Carly, Noah, and Nathaniel also told their parents about students who were behaving badly.

**Negative feelings about school.** Five out of six of the interviews revealed that the clip charts have caused negative feelings about school. Even Noah who had relatively positive experiences with the chart, felt like he had failed if he goes a week without getting to the top. Mike shared that when he picked Jamie up afterschool, his mood was affected if his clip had
gone down that day. Susie shared that even if Nathaniel had a good day, he wouldn’t feel good about it unless his clip went up to the top. Once he believed that he could not get to the top no matter how hard he tried, he gave up trying. Nathaniel said that when his teacher asked him to clip down, sometimes he would feel so guilty he would just clip down twice. Kaya did not share that the clip chart bothered her that much, but she does get mad when her recess is taken away.

Again, Liz and David were the most vocal about negative feelings. Liz noticed immediately in first grade that David was sad about clipping down. He felt defeated. He felt like he could never clip up. He did not want to go to school because he would get angry at the clip chart.

**False accusations.** Another theme that was common among half of the participants was that students felt as if they had to clip down for things that they did not do. Mike and Jamie both shared that Jamie felt that many times the teacher accused him of doing something he did not do which began to affect the way he felt about school. Nicole shared that many times Kaya has complained that she is getting in trouble when her classmates talk to her and she asks them to be quiet. Liz said the same thing about David. He felt that he clipped down often for things that were not his fault and that it caused him to have trust issues with his teacher.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter the data from the interviews were presented and analyzed into themes. Each participant's interview was summarized and direct quotes highlighted perceptions and experiences.

In the next chapter, I will attempt to make sense of the findings and answer the research questions. I will draw conclusions, revisit the literature, and make recommendations for practice as well as further research.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study first began over three years ago when I became aware of the use of clip charts in classrooms at my school. I scoured research databases looking for any formal research conducted around the idea of the clip chart, public behavior charts, color charts, etc. Surprisingly, I found nothing. As I began thinking about how to study this chart, I started talking about it with friends. I realized that many students and families have had negative experiences with the chart, but since so many of the teachers seem to use it and accept it to be appropriate, my friends did not really question its use.

I informally asked coworkers and other teacher friends about why they used it in their own classrooms. Most answered that it was effective in helping kids monitor their behavior. Some answered that it was part of their school-wide discipline or PBS policy. Others said it was what their master teacher or teacher preparatory instructors used and recommended. I began to understand why teachers used it, but I wondered about the students’ perspectives. Do students really seem to view it as a tool that helps them to behave? Could there be more to their perception? My many questions evolved into the following three questions on which my research was focused:

1. What are students’ perceptions about the clip chart system?
2. How do these perceptions affect the students’ experiences and feelings about school?
3. How do parent’s attitudes about the clip chart influence students’ perceptions of the chart?

My review of literature is focused on areas that I believed to be related to this type of public behavior chart. I read research about classroom management theories and strategies, and positive and negative reinforcement. I included research about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation since the chart is based on rewarding and punishing students (clipping up and clipping down). I found information about teacher and student (dis)connections because I thought that there might
possibly be a difference between teachers’ intentions and students’ perceptions. I found research on shaming since the chart is publicly displayed, as well as information on peer rejection because my daughter referenced the chart when explaining that she could no longer play with a classmate. Finally, I believed that the chart must really be based in competition and comparison, so I sought out Social Comparison Theory as a theoretical framework.

To answer my questions, I interviewed six children between the ages of seven and eleven as well as their parents. The parents helped me to get a bigger picture of the children’s experiences and perceptions. I first interviewed the parents, and then separately, I interviewed the children. These interviews provided data which I coded and sorted into seven themes. The themes are comparison, confusion, embarrassment, teacher inconsistencies, using the term “bad,” negative feelings towards school, and false accusations.

In this chapter, I began by summarizing the research study and explaining the themes that emerged. Next I respond to the research questions and return to the framework of Social Comparison Theory. Finally, I offer recommendations for educators as well as future research.

**Students’ Perceptions**

My first research question was “What are students’ perceptions about the clip chart system?” The interviews of children and their parents helped me to gain access to the children’s perceptions.

**Confusion.** My findings suggest that the children experienced a lot of confusion related to the clip chart. Student participants were confused about teacher expectations, particularly how to clip up and how to clip down. David had no idea what he even needed to do to move his clip up and he often did not know why he had to clip down. Most of my participants shared that the teachers never really explained why you had to clip up or down. Perhaps teachers just assume
that children understand how the system works. The labels of the chart were also confusing. One year red was bad, and the next year it was good. One year pink was good and the next year green was good. Kaya even had “Hollywood” as a label on her chart. I remember how she laughed and said, “I don’t know why it says that.” The label of “teacher’s choice” really confused Jamie. He thought for sure it meant something positive, when in reality this label appeared to involve disciplinary action.

If a chart like this is used as the primary source of behavior management, every child should know exactly what the behavioral expectations are for each level. If students are confused about how to move up and down on the chart, the students are likely also confused about the behavior expectations.

In the literature review, I did not directly address confusion, but I did address topics related to (dis)connections between teacher and student. Mainly these (dis)connections were a result of cultural differences (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). In my study only two children were of a race other than Caucasian and I did not ask students about the ethnicity of their teachers. However, I found it interesting that Kaya, an African-American girl with dark skin, was at the bottom of the chart nearly everyday. She did not seem to be affected by it, and was even happy to tell me that she could easily earn her way back up the chart by cleaning in the classroom every afternoon. I was shocked when she began describing how cleaning in the classroom helped her to start in a different place on the clip chart. I wonder what message this teacher’s actions are inadvertently sending to Kaya. Is she internalizing the fact that her teacher is rewarding her (or punishing her) with cleaning the classroom? How is this experience shaping Kaya? What will she think of this two or three years from now?

This behavior management system was not clear and concise. The subjectivity of clip
charts made it difficult for children to learn from mistakes and comply with the behavioral expectations. If it is unclear, such as many of these students experienced, students are reduced to just trying to please the teacher without any real internalization or understanding of behavioral norms. Positive reinforcement with rewards create conditions where students are just trying to earn the prize (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

**Bad.** Another theme that emerged related to students’ perceptions was using the term “bad” to describe themselves, their peers, and the bottom levels of the chart. Though several children described levels of the chart as bad or certain behaviors as bad, a few children actually said that students were bad. Carly believed that the teacher needed the chart to determine which kids were good and bad. I found it to be a little startling that parents as well as children referred to students as bad.

Kaya just flat out said, “We have a lot of bad kids in our class.” This was after she told me that she was at the bottom of the chart nearly everyday. I remember how disappointed I felt that this was her belief. I was shocked in realizing that she must be labeling herself as bad since she was regularly at the bottom of the clip chart. She also experienced the public ranking of the Accelerated Reading chart. Did she consider herself dumb as well? I did not have the heart nor did I feel it was appropriate to ask Kaya, “Are you bad?” Instead I tried to encourage her by telling her that I really enjoy talking with my friends, and I often get bored which would cause me to be at the bottom of the chart too.

Though teachers would most likely encourage children to view certain behaviors as positive or negative, it is obvious that students are actually viewing the children who exhibit those behaviors as positive or negative. The public nature of the clips with either names and/or numbers allows students to attach labels of good or bad to themselves and their peers.
Management strategies where students see that negative behaviors are punished and extra support is provided to selected students have been found to affect peer perceptions of the students receiving the treatment (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015). In addition, viewing yourself as having bad behaviors is much different than viewing yourself as ‘bad’ and can have detrimental effects. Children run the risk of developing fixed mindsets, or the idea that their abilities are fixed (Haimovitz & Dweck, 2017).

**Teacher inconsistencies.** One of the emerging themes that I would categorize under student perceptions was that mixed messages were sent to the students due to inconsistent implementation of the chart. Susie and Liz, both teachers, knew that teachers get busy and it is nearly impossibly to actually keep up with any type of system that requires constant attention. Mike, though not a teacher, shared that he knew teachers are too busy to thoroughly explore students’ needs. Nicole, Liz and Susie all admitted that they did not receive consistent communication from teachers about the chart.

The students, however, perceived these teacher inconsistencies as forgetfulness. Kaya believed that the teacher never contacted her mother because she forgot. Carly and Nathaniel both believed that they often did not get to clip up because the teacher forgot. Do they really believe that their teacher forgot or are they internalizing that they are not good enough to actually clip up? When you are seven and eight years old, do you tell yourself that the teacher forgot to clip you up in order to preserve your dignity? When both Nathaniel and Carly talked about how the teacher would decide at the end of the day who clipped up and who clipped down, I had an image of children standing around waiting for the teacher to bless them with approval. Programs that rely on positive reinforcement increase students’ dependence on adults (Kohn, 2008). When teachers are inconsistent with a program where students are constantly monitoring their
placement on the chart, children could be internalizing messages of worthiness, unworthiness, or even rejection. Teachers must see their own behaviors through the students’ eyes (Kohn, 2008).

**Students’ Feelings About School**

My second research question was “How do these perceptions affect the students’ experiences and feelings about school?” Common themes were negative feelings about school, experiencing false accusations, and experiences of shame and embarrassment.

**Negative feelings about school.** Five of the six children interviewed revealed that the clip charts have caused negative feelings about school. I was not surprised to learn that some of the children felt bad when their clips were moved down, but there were some comments that I imagine would be surprising to the teachers who implement this system. David mentioned that he was almost fixated on the chart to the point where he and his mom both believed that he never really developed the early reading skills he should have had in first grade. He was so worried about clipping up or not clipping down that he had a difficult time focusing in class, and he would just get angry at the chart. Fast forward to fifth grade where several years of test scores as well as evaluations and special education testing demonstrated that reading was a relative weakness for David. His academic potential was high, his IQ high, but the reading skills never fully developed. This has resulted in a special education placement for reading. His self-esteem was impacted and he felt hopeless. Liz blames the chart for making him hate school, drastically affecting his reading achievement, and taking away his love of learning.

Both Nathaniel and Noah had experiences related to the chart where they felt as though they were failures if they could not clip up. Nathaniel’s negative experiences were more common than Noah’s, but Noah and his mother still expressed this concerning sentiment. I cannot
imagine a teacher knowingly implementing a system that could make any student, not to mention well-behaved students like Noah, feel this way.

Nathaniel explained that there were times when he was asked to clip down because of something that he may have done or said to another student. When he clipped down, he would feel so guilty that he would clip himself down two or three more times because he felt that he just was not being punished enough. He even mentioned that he would give some of his prizes away to the student he offended. It was obvious that Nathaniel desired the ability to solve the problems and right his wrongs with the person he offended, but the clip chart took his sense of agency away. Would the outcome have changed if Nathaniel was given the opportunity to talk with the classmate? Perhaps the teacher could have facilitated a bit of problem solving or reconciliation. It seems as though the clip chart did not solve problems in this situation and most likely intensified Nathaniel’s feelings of guilt and helplessness. In the literature, I did not specifically address areas regarding teachers or adults inhibiting students’ abilities to take responsibility, however we know that extrinsic motivators like rewards can negatively affect autonomy (Deci et al., 1999). Also, we know that the inconsistencies that occur from teachers and students not having the same intentions about behavior have been shown to contribute to increases in office referrals (Milner & Tenore, 2010).

**False accusations.** One of the reoccurring themes was regarding being falsely accused of something by the teacher. Half of the students had experiences where the teacher would occasionally accuse them of doing things that they were not doing. This happened with the students who seemed to clip down more often. I believe that since these students often had behavior issues, the teacher most likely blamed them for actions that may have happened in their vicinity instead of actually investigating the misbehavior. The result of being falsely accused of
something caused David to distrust his teacher as well as the clip chart system, and it caused Jamie to have negative feelings toward school. Nicole mentioned that Kaya complained of this occasionally too. When questioned about this by the students, it seems as though the teachers did not take the time to investigate whether the children were truthful. All of the students felt like they were treated unfairly by the teacher, but they shrugged their shoulders and gave into a “what could I do?” attitude.

This phenomenon was not something I anticipated before interviewing the children, therefore I did not look for research about this topic of being falsely accused. However, I found myself wondering if this happened with other classroom management systems. As a classroom teacher for over 22 years, I know that there have been many times where I have falsely accused a student of doing something that I thought he or she did. However, there was never a chart or point system or punishment that was publicly enacted as a result of my accusation. If I falsely accused someone, typically the student or nearby students would let me know, I could follow up with the student, and then apologize. My number one goal was to establish and build trust with my students, not shame them in front of everyone and then ignore their pleas.

With the clip chart system, a child acts up, the teacher calls out, “Karin, go clip down.” Karin could say, “but it wasn’t me…” and the teacher would respond, “I said, ‘Go clip down.’” There is not room for children to self-advocate in a situation where there might be a false accusation. This type of situation, as seen with David, Jamie, and Kaya, creates a lack of trust between the child and the teacher. We know that rewards systems can “foster an external perceived locus of causality” (Deci & Ryan, 2016, p.13), and in cases where students know that they are being falsely accused, they might have a harder time taking responsibility for their behaviors even when they are at fault.
Shame and embarrassment. The public nature of the chart, and having students walk up in front of their peers, caused four out of six of the children to share feelings of shame and embarrassment. Students shared that their peers laughed at them and stared at them when they had to clip down. One parent shared how she heard the walk to change your clip called “the walk of shame.” Teachers have been known to use shame and embarrassment as a form of behavior management in the classroom (Smart & Igo, 2010), and there is rarely a plan for teaching the appropriate behaviors (Taylor, 2011). This is particularly true for students who have low self-esteem to begin with; they tend to become aggressive in response to situations where they experience shame (Thomaes et al., 2007).

If teachers investigated their students’ perspectives of the behavior chart, they might discover that the chart can cause feelings of fear, anger, anxiety, and guilt, as well as shame and embarrassment. Degrading and humiliating children without a thought of preserving a child’s dignity, should never be an accepted way to encourage compliance (Goodman, 2017).

Parents’ Attitudes

My last research question was “How do parents’ attitudes about the clip chart influence students’ perceptions of the chart?” Two parents seemed to have more positive attitudes and perspectives, two parents had negative attitudes toward the chart, and one parent did not really have strong feelings or beliefs about it at all.

Positive attitudes. Noah’s mother Laura seemed enthusiastic about the clip chart and about how she felt her son responded to it. She believes that it helps him to be much more reflective about his behavior. She encourages Noah to do well in school and to do his best on the chart. She did seem to think that it could be discouraging for other children, but as far as her son, she believed it was effective. When she mentioned that she heard another child express that
he hated school because of the clip chart, Rachel explained that the child had very little parental support. I thought it was interesting that she believed that parental support or a lack of it might explain that child’s frustration with the clip chart.

Mike and Jamie had similar feelings. Mike seemed to enjoy how the chart was an easy way to find out about his son’s behavior. He reinforced the chart at home through rewards and punishments when Jamie had “good” days and not so good days. I believe that both Mike and Jamie have competitive personalities and seeing Jamie at the top of the chart gave them a sense of “winning.” Several times through both of their interviews, words and phrases related to winning and competition were mentioned. Jamie even talked about how it was fun, yet silly, to earn your way up to the teacher’s hair.

Both Mike and Rachel expressed that they enjoyed knowing their children were doing well when they were at the top of the chart. I would be interested to know if parents whose children are typically at the top of the chart have more positive attitudes about the chart in general. This could be an area for future research.

**Apathetic attitudes.** Nicole was not as aware of the clip chart as other parents were. She thought that her daughter was on the parent contact level only a few times throughout the year for talking, and that the teacher only reached out when it was necessary. She believed that those phone calls with the teacher were able to change Kaya’s behavior for a short time at least. She did not really reinforce the chart at home because she was only aware of it a few times so far this school year. Kaya, who giggled throughout our entire interview, seemed unaffected by the chart even though she ended up on the bottom most days. She seemed to think of the chart as a game she plays with the teacher and the other students. She may be communicating an apathetic attitude about the chart as an act of self-preservation. I wonder if Kaya would care more if the
teacher made her mother more aware of what was going on in the classroom.

**Negative attitudes.** Liz and Susie were not shy at communicating their displeasure with the chart. Both parents shared how they tried to dissuade their boys from believing that the chart defined them in any way. Both parents felt that the chart hurt their boys’ self-esteem and feelings about school. Both Nathaniel and David had negative experiences and feelings about the chart. The mothers’ attitudes were a result of the boys having a difficult time with a chart. This makes it difficult to say whether the parents’ attitudes affected the students’ feelings and perceptions or if the students’ experiences and perceptions actually caused the parents’ attitudes. This might be something to explore in a future study with a larger sample.

In general, from my small sample, I can conclude that parents with children who typically do well in the classroom have positive attitudes about the chart and parents with children who have behavioral issues have poor attitudes. I believe Nicole’s apathetic attitude is more about the teacher’s lack of communication than about Nicole’s involvement or Kaya’s experiences. I did not consult previous research regarding how parents’ attitudes affect their children’s perceptions. This would be an area of future research.

**Social Comparison Theory**

The theoretical framework I chose for this study was Social Comparison Theory. Social Comparison Theory is the idea that we can really only judge our own behavior in relation to other individuals’ behaviors (Moschis, 1976). Festinger (1954), the originator of this theory, believed that we evaluate our abilities in reference to other people’s opinions of our abilities, but when we do not have access to those opinions, we look to criterion reference points. The clip chart’s hierarchical labels, serve as a type of criterion reference point which allow students, teachers, and classroom visitors to compare different students in the class and make meaning of
their placement on the chart.

Research suggests that young children are capable of comparing themselves to their peers and their belief in their abilities is often dependent upon how they compare (Dijkstra et al., 2008). People who are more driven and competitive, like Jamie and his father Mike, are more likely to allocate "inferior status" and "superior status" to those he/she is competing against (Festinger, 1954). The clip chart system seems to cater to competitive students who want to find themselves at the top. For Jamie and his father, the top of the chart, or even the teacher’s hair, was a goal to achieve. The clip chart is also effective for students like Noah, who according to his mother, might need to see that he is better than others in order to feel proud of himself.

Social Comparison Theory explains that both high and low status groups work to maintain their separation (Festinger, 1954). If applied to the clip chart, students who are regularly at the top of the chart may work to maintain their separation from students at the bottom of the chart. Kaya and David were examples of this phenomenon. Kaya seemed to be content to be at the bottom and David admittedly gave up trying to move up the chart. Carly helped illustrate this effect when she described and labeled all of the students places on the chart. She knew who was regularly at the top and who was regularly at the bottom. During her interview she was so excited about one of her classmates moving to the top of the chart. Her excitement and surprise showed that being at the top was atypical for this student. Future research might explore whether or not students at the top of the clip chart tend to separate themselves from students at the bottom of the chart.

Though upward comparison is the norm, research has shown that when people are stressed, they feel better when they compare themselves downwards toward others who have it worse off than they do (Dijkstra et al., 2008). This is also true of children who have low self-
esteem (Wills, 1981). This type of comparison occurred in nearly all of the participants. Participants were willing to tell their parents all about how their peers were doing, especially if the peers were doing worse on the chart than they themselves were. Noah’s mother wondered aloud why her son was telling her about other children, then she realized that it might have just been to make himself feel better in comparison.

Social Comparison demonstrates how very young children do not seem to be negatively affected when compared to their peers, but that changes when they reach the age of seven years old (Ruble, Boggiano, Feldman & Loebl, 1980). At that age, upward comparisons can affect students’ self-concept and impair motivation (Ruble et al., 1980), and the effects are worse when students are out-performed by someone they view as unskilled in comparison (Lapan & Boseovski, 2017). When students clip down, the clip chart uses upward comparisons to motivate students to move back up to the top or beyond. This research shows how students might not be motivated to clip back up. This was evident in the experiences of David, Kaya, and Nathaniel. They did not seem motivated at all to clip back up when they were asked to clip down. In fact, researchers suggest that knowledge of “relative failure can be detrimental” if children do not have opportunities to learn from negative feedback, such as clipping down (Lapan & Boseovski, 2017, p. 1970). This is particularly harmful because none of the students shared that teachers ever took the time to explain why the students had to clip down, nor did they teach children what they needed to do to clip up.

Though social comparison does not seem particularly harmful in children younger than seven, there is little research on how social comparison affects the development of children’s self-concept over time (Lapan & Boseovski, 2017). “Children construct their self-concept based on the social relationships they have, the feedback they receive, the social comparisons they
make, and the cultural values they endorse (Brummelman & Thomaes, 2017, p. 1769). Studying the effects of comparison over time is definitely a suggestion for future research.

**Recommendations for Educators**

There are many behavior management systems for teachers to utilize. Based upon the findings of this study, clip charts may not be the ideal approach. Even Nathaniel and David commented that individual supports for students with behavior needs are a much better choice. The public nature of a clip chart invites comparisons, judgments, negative feelings, and confusion. Noah, Noah’s mother, and Mike, Jamie’s father, seemed to enjoy the consistency of the information that the clip chart gave them, and Noah and his mother liked that the chart gave Noah a chance to really reflect on his behavior. However, this information was helpful to them only because it showed that their behavior was better than other children’s behavior. Other behavior management approaches use regular feedback to communicate with parents, teachers, and students in ways that are not at all displayed publicly. This could include individual daily or weekly progress notes such as the one my daughter brought home daily in second grade. At the end of the day, students would complete a form by responding to reflective prompts about academic learning as well as behavioral goals. Once students completed the form, the teacher would initial it and the students would take it home in a folder. I enjoyed reading, in my daughter’s handwriting, what she enjoyed learning about and her reflection of her behavior. This approach provided meaningful writing practice and was an effective communication tool. I created an example of this type of form which is included in the appendix.

**Evaluate behavior and management needs.** I think it is important for teachers to really evaluate what they are trying to accomplish with their behavior management system. Do they need to reinforce every students’ behavior including the children who easily abide by class
policies? Do they need to address just a few students’ behaviors? There is not a one-size-fits-all system for every group of students. Teachers need to evaluate their students’ needs and tailor a program this is helpful while avoiding harm. Research tells us that praise and rewards can destroy motivation (Deci & Flaste, 1996, Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999), and that students who look to others to evaluate their abilities choose lower level tasks to ensure success (Dweck, 1986). Teachers should consult research in creating their programs, and these program must be reevaluated each year with each new group of students. Working with students to create individual programs with their buy-in would be much more effective to help struggling students than a program in which the students have absolutely no choice and are subject to public shaming.

**Question everything.** It is common for teachers to use and accept strategies and programs that are promoted by teachers and their districts without question. So many programs and strategies are promoted with profit-seeking agendas and little research to support their claims. Educators must evaluate whether or not these strategies could pose any risk to students. In doing so, teachers should take care to remember why they went in to the profession in the first place. Most often it was to connect with children and inspire them to be successful in their futures. It most definitely was not to control children and shape them into compliance. When reviewing strategies and/or programs, be sure to question whether or not the program is meeting students’ needs in a way that preserves their dignity.

Another recommendation would be to question students when behavior challenges arise. When children act out, there is always an underlying reason for their behavior. Sometimes getting to the heart of problem behaviors just takes some one on one time to build trust.

**Dignity and respect at the center.** Supporting and protecting the dignity of each child
should be just as important as creating a safe and orderly environment (Goodman, 2017). The clip chart system fails to acknowledge the role of shaming in creating compliant, approval-seeking children. Shaming should never be a tool in shaping behavior. The clip chart system does not protect the dignity of the children, especially the most vulnerable children with behavior needs. Discipline should be a private matter (Goodman, 2017), and it should never be publicly posted or up for public comment. When disciplining children, educators must take into account cultural differences, misunderstandings related to age and social development, as well as emotional sensitivities. The clip chart does not take any of these factors into account.

**Administrators and teacher preparation programs.** Educators should prioritize implementing research-based strategies and be highly skeptical of taken-for-granted practices. It is alarming that a system in which students are publicly called out to clip down in front of their peers is so widely accepted and promoted throughout teacher preparatory programs and school district PBS plans without any research base to support those decisions. When strategies like the clip chart are promoted, teacher preparation programs are sending a message to teachers that correcting behaviors is a simple process that can be taken care of with a convenient colorful gimmick. This neglects the difficult work that is required to determine how to meet students’ needs. Programs should instead spend time training future teachers how to build relationships and trust with students and to promote self-regulation without shaming.

Finally, behavior management is less of a problem when instruction is truly engaging and relevant. This happens when teachers are taught how to teach children, create rigorous and relevant curriculum, and engage all learners at all levels. This does not happen with power-stripping district mandates that inform teachers to implement nicely-packaged expensive boxes of curriculum with fidelity. District professional development and teacher preparatory programs
should put their efforts into successfully training and empowering teachers to create engaging lesson plans, assessments, and appropriate interventions. Little training would be needed to manage behavior if the focus was less on behavior and more on engaging all learners at all times.

Recommendations for Future Research

The clip chart system is widely used throughout primary classrooms in the United States. This study explored the perceptions of a small group of students and parents. More research is necessary to explore the effects of this management system as well as inform its future use, or preferably abandonment, among educators. Additionally, other systems of public display and reporting exist where students are compared and judged against other students, for example the Accelerated Reader display. It would be interesting to further explore how students and parents internalize these public displays of comparison that researchers consider to be a form of shaming (Goodman, 2017). As educators, we need to ask ourselves if these methods of comparison serve a purpose of labeling and/or separation of which we are not truly aware?

Future studies involving the clip chart should look at surveying larger samples of parents, students, and teachers about perceptions and intentions of the chart. In previous paragraphs I suggested that areas of study could be whether parents’ perceptions affect students’ perceptions or if it is the other way around. I also suggested a study to determine whether students seek to separate themselves from peers who score at the top or bottom of the chart. It would also be interesting to see if students who have positive perceptions are only the students who tend to be toward the top of the chart.

I would hypothesize that this system works for children who are already well-behaved, but it does not work, and possibly might harm children who have behavioral difficulties. Even more worrisome, does this system cause additional pain and difficulty for children with
behavioral needs? Does it affect academic success like we saw in David’s case? Does it affect relationships like Nathaniel’s mom suggested? Does it harm children who have special needs? More studies are needed to determine the answers to these questions.

Another question that is important to explore is whether or not the clip chart system disproportionately affects students of races that differ from the teacher’s race. The research about teacher and student (dis)connections points to the fact that students of color are treated differently in the classroom (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Weinstein et al., 2004), and receive harsher punishments for misbehavior than Caucasian students (Milner & Tenore, 2010, p. 563). Knowing the racial makeup of Kaya’s teacher as well as her classmates, and seeing how each student ends their day on the clip chart would provide much more information about whether or not the (dis)connection between Kaya and her teacher are a result of cultural and/or racial differences. We know that African-American students account for a disproportionate number of suspensions and referrals (Milner & Tenore, 2010). I wonder if the clip chart system could be at the nexus of these issues. A study that explores connections between students at the bottom of the chart and their race would be quite interesting.

Conclusion

This study afforded me the opportunity to study a classroom strategy that has bothered me for some time. While interviewing children and their parents I found that the clip chart system is capable of more harm than good. It contributed to confusion and labeling in the classroom as well as personal feelings of shame and embarrassment. The chart was even blamed for one child’s inability to develop early reading skills. Students who weren’t affected negatively by the chart were students who did not require any type of intervention strategy to modify behavior. They would have behaved well without a reward system.
While working on this dissertation, I had many conversations with people about the use of public charts and their benefits and disadvantages. I found that most people never previously considered these charts to be harmful, but after some thought they tended to agree that public charts might not be the healthiest way to address classroom behavior. It has even come up that public charts are used in adult workplaces as well. In fact, just the other day, my mother, who works a couple of hours each day at a popular fast food restaurant dining room, shared that a new chart in their break room has magnets with all of the workers’ names and places to put checkmarks. The checkmarks denote negative behaviors. My mother found this chart highly discouraging. She noticed that a coworker, Alicia, had a checkmark next to her name and now she wonders what Alicia did. The check caused my mother to think poorly about Alicia.

In conclusion, this study has provided more questions than answers, and necessitates more research in this important area. This study included only six students, but two of the students had extremely negative experiences with the chart that without doubt caused unintended harm. It could be possible that clip chart systems are causing and have caused harm to students, especially students with behavior needs, all over our country. This harm could be academic as well as social. More research is needed to determine the long-term effects of this popular system.
References


Retrieved from http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2t36g571.pdf


APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT (ADULTS)

BENERD SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH SUBJECT’S CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE CLIP CHART MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Name of Lead Researcher: Karin Compise, [phone], k_compise1@u.pacific.edu
Name of Faculty Advisor: Dr. Ronald Hallett, [phone], rhallett@pacific.edu

Your consent is being sought to participate in a research study, and your participation is entirely voluntary.

A. **Purpose of Research.** The purpose of this study is to explore children’s perceptions and experiences regarding the clip chart management system, a publicly displayed chart many teachers use in primary classrooms. This chart has not yet been studied, though it is widely used without question throughout elementary schools. In this study parents will be interviewed about their children's experiences with the clip chart.

B. **Duration of Participation.** The expected time involvement of participation in this study will be one to two months.

C. **Research Procedures.** Participants will be interviewed in 2-3 sessions that will last 20-60 minutes. The interview will be taped with an audio recorder for transcription purposes.

D. **Foreseeable Risks.** The interview process for this study involves asking questions about your child’s past experiences. These questions may trigger emotions related to past events. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

E. **Benefits.** A benefit of participating in this study is knowing that your input may inform how the clip charts are used in the future.

I. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We will take reasonable steps to keep confidential any information that is obtained in connection with this research study and that can be identified with you. Measures to protect your confidentiality are: participants names will not be used, records will be kept in a locked cabinet in my home, I will be the only person coming into contact with data, records will be coded and de-identified.

Upon conclusion of the research study, the data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked or otherwise secured location and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the research is completed.
II. PARTICIPATION

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have a child who has had experiences with the clip chart behavior system in his/her elementary school classroom.

We expect to have up to 12 adult participants take part in this study. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have.

Your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

III. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

All data collected as part of this research will be coded so that participants’ confidentiality will be maintained. Additionally, this data will not be shared with anyone else or used for future research studies.

IV. UNIVERSITY CONTACT INFORMATION

I am the lead researcher in this study and I am a graduate student at the University of the Pacific, Benerd School of Education. This research is part of my dissertation for my Doctorate in Educational Administration and Leadership.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at [phone], or by email at k_compise1@u.pacific.edu or Dr. Ronald Hallett, [phone], rhallett@pacific.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project or wish to speak with an independent contact, please contact the IRB Administrator, Office of Research & Sponsored Programs, University of the Pacific at (209) 946-7716 or by email at IRB@pacific.edu.

V. COMPENSATION

Your family will receive a $25 Target gift card as payment for your participation.

VI. DISMISSAL FROM STUDY

It is possible that we may decide that your participation in this research is not appropriate. If that happens, you will be dismissed from the study. In any event, we appreciate your willingness to participate in this research.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND SIGNATURE
I hereby consent: (Indicate **Yes** or **No**) To be audio recorded during this study.

___Yes___No

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you have been afforded the opportunity to ask, and have answered, any questions that you may have, that you willingly agree to participate in the research study, that you understand that you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

Signed: ___________________________ Date: __________________________

Research Study Participant (Print Name): __________________________

Participant’s Legally Authorized Representative (Print Name): __________________________

Description of Representative’s Authority: __________________________

*Researcher Who Obtained Consent (Print Name): __________________________*
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT (CHILDREN)

BENERD SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
CONSENT FOR MINOR RESEARCH SUBJECT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE CLIP CHART MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH: Your child is invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. The purpose of this study is to explore children’s perceptions and experiences regarding the clip chart management system, a publicly displayed chart many teachers use in primary classrooms. This chart has not yet been studied, though it is widely used without question throughout elementary schools. If you agree to have your child participate, your child will be interviewed up to three times in your home, at a time that is convenient for you. I will ask questions about the chart, their feelings about the chart, and any other experiences related to the chart. Participation is entirely voluntary. Your child will be asked to answer questions as well as draw a picture of the chart they have had in their classroom and describe it. During the interview, the conversation I have with your child will be audio recorded so I can capture all of the details your child shares. All recordings will only be listened to by me, and they will be deleted after I transcribe them.

DURATION OF PARTICIPATION: The expected time involvement of participation in this study will be one to two months.

FORSEEABLE RISKS: The risks associated with this study are very minimal. The interview process for this study involves asking questions about your child’s past experiences which may trigger emotions related to past events. Your child may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your child’s involvement at any time if you choose. The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study are the ability to participate in a new research area which could lead to changes in future implementation practices of the clip chart system. Your experiences may inform how the clip charts are used in the future.

PARTICIPATION: We expect to have up to 6 children take part in this study. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will not affect your child’s grades or participation in school, and will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you or your child are otherwise entitled. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you are free to discontinue your child’s participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you or your child are otherwise entitled.

COLLECTION OF INFORMATION: All data collected as part of this research will be coded so that participants’ confidentiality will be maintained. Additionally, this data will not be shared with anyone else or used for future research studies.

COMPENSATION: Your family will receive a $25 Target gift card as payment for your participation.
YOUR AND YOUR CHILD’S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to allow your child to participate in this research project, please understand your child’s participation is voluntary and your child has the right to withdraw his/her assent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he/she is otherwise entitled. You are also free to withdraw your consent to allow your child to participate in this research project at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits. Even if you give permission for your child to participate, the Lead Researcher or another member of the Research Team will speak with your child to confirm your child assents to participate in the research study. Your child has the right to refuse to participate or answer particular questions.

We will take reasonable steps to keep confidential any information that is obtained in connection with this research study and that can be identified with your child. However, as an educator, I am a mandated reporter of child abuse. If your child were to disclose any information that characterized abuse or neglect, I am mandated to report what was shared to Child Protective Services.

Measures to protect your child’s confidentiality include: all consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet in my home, no one other than myself will be accessing the data, all data will be coded and stripped of identifiable information.

Upon conclusion of the research study, the data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked or otherwise secured location and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the research is completed.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions, Concerns, or Complaints: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research study, its procedures, risks and benefits, you should ask the Lead Researcher or Faculty Advisor:

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your child’s rights as a participant, please contact the University of the Pacific Institutional Review Board (IRB Administrator) to speak to someone independent of the research team at 209-946-7716 or IRB@pacific.edu.

It is possible that we may decide that your child’s participation in this research is not appropriate. If that happens, your child will be dismissed from the study. In any event, we appreciate your willingness to allow your child to participate in this research.

I hereby consent for my child: (Indicate Yes or No)

___Yes___No
Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you have been afforded the opportunity to ask, and have answered, any questions that you may have, that you willingly agree to permit your child to participate in the research study if your child assents to such participation, that you understand that your child may withdraw his/her assent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

____________________________________________________
Name of Child (Please Print)

____________________________________________________
Signature(s) of Parent(s), Guardian or Authorized Representative   Date

____________________________________________________
Printed Name of Parent(s), Guardian or Authorized Representative

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.
APPENDIX C: ASSENT FORM

ASSENT FORM (children)

Child's Name: ____________________________

I am interested in learning about what you think about your classroom’s behavior chart. No one seems to ever ask what the children think about it, and I think it is important that we understand their point of view. I would like you to help me understand what you think about it.

I am going to talk with you and ask you some questions about school. You can stop our conversation whenever you want. In fact, if you do not want to talk with me at all, you do not have to. Also if you have any questions about what we are doing, ask them at any time.

If you do want to talk with me, please sign your name on the line below. Your parent(s) have already told me that it is alright with them if you want to talk with me. Remember, you do not have to, and once we start you can rest or stop whenever you like.

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APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Interview Questions for Parents:
1. Tell me about your child’s experiences at school.
2. Can you walk me through a typical school day?
3. How do you learn about your child’s behavior at school?
4. Tell me about the conversations you have with your child about their behavior. How often do you speak with your child about the chart?
5. Does your child tell you about other classmates in regards to the clip chart? If so, what does your child say?
   a. Why do you think your child tells you about other children’s behavior?
   b. Do you think other families talk about your child’s behavior? If so, do you think the clip chart plays a role
6. What do you think the teacher's purpose is for implementing the chart?
7. What are the school’s behavior goals and how are they communicated to parents?
8. How does the school communicate positive and negative behaviors?
9. Has the clip chart impacted how you manage behavior in your home? If so, how?
10. How do you think your reaction to the chart influences your child’s feelings about school or behavior?
11. What effect does the clip chart have on your child’s love of learning?
12. How do you think the clip charts affects your child’s confidence at school?
13. What effect does the clip chart have on your child’s relationships with friends?
14. What else can you tell me?

Interview Questions for Children:
1. Tell me about your classroom.
2. I know some teachers use a chart like this in their classrooms (show picture). How is this different from the one in your classroom?
3. Can you draw a picture of the clip chart that you have in your classroom?
4. What do you have to do to get to the top? What do you have to do to get to the bottom?
5. Tell me about a time when someone had to move their clip.

6. Did you ever have to move your clip? Can you tell me about that? How did you feel?

7. Who was always at the top in your class? Tell me why you think they were always at the top.

8. Who was always at the bottom? Tell me why you think they were at the bottom. How did the chart help their behavior to change?

9. Why do you think your teacher uses the chart?

10. If you were a teacher, would you use a chart? Why or why not?

11. What else can you tell me?
APPENDIX E: SAMPLE DAILY REFLECTION FORM

Today I learned about: ________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

When I think about my behavior today, I would give myself:

😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊

I chose this face because: __________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

Teacher’s Initials: _____ Comments: ________________________________

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Parent Signature: ____________________________
Comments: __________________________________

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