

Exploring the impact of the Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) behavior intervention on teacher-student relationships and teacher perception of students with challenging behaviors.

by

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B.S., University of Kansas, 1998

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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
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Abstract

This qualitative case study evaluates the impact of the Tier 2 behavior intervention known as Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) on student-teacher relationships and their perceptions of each other, especially in the case of students experiencing behavioral challenges, such as anti-social behavior in the classroom, that typically results in removing the student from the learning environment. The theoretical frameworks guiding the study are educational equity theory, transactional theory, and self-efficacy theory. The research design focused on four student and teacher participant pairings in grades 6, 7, and 8 attending a rural middle school in the Midwest of the United States. The student participants were recommended for participation by the grade-level teacher teams based on data in the areas of attendance, discipline, grades, hallway passes, and behavior screeners. The pairings completed a relationship survey and experienced an interview with the researcher prior to, during, and at the end of the CICO intervention. The following research questions were explored: (1) What is the effect of positive relationships between student and teacher, specifically at the middle school level, and in what ways does this relationship impact the goal of educational equity for all students regarding access to the curriculum?; (2) In what ways, if any, does the use of the CICO intervention impact teachers' perceptions of students with behavioral challenges?; and (3) How does the use of the CICO intervention impact students' perceptions of the teachers who implement this intervention?

The findings suggest that the CICO intervention has potential to allow for the structured, purposeful growth of positive student-teacher relationships that produce students who are better prepared for their educational futures.

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When I first attended college, I finished in three and a half years because I was so ready to be done with school. After two years in the “real world” as a television producer, I returned to school and have never left! I first earned my graduate teaching licensure and master of arts in education, and I thought that was enough. A few years later, however, I decided to pursue a master of arts in educational leadership, and I thought that was enough. Several years later, I find myself here, at the final stages of earning my educational doctorate. I sure hope this is enough. The last three years of working on my doctoral degree have required sacrifice from my personal family and my school family, and for their unending support, I am forever grateful. Greg, Dana, Ben, Will, Derek, Ethan, Mindy, and Twyla, you have all been my “best professional friends” and supporters for the past three years, and you have sacrificed your time to listen to me talk through my research and bemoan Chapter Five, and I cannot imagine doing school leadership without you as my team.

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Of course, no acknowledgment section would be complete without a nod to the author’s family, and mine has provided unconditional love and support not just for the past three years but

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to educators who desire a paradigm shift in our educational community—away from punitive disciplinary procedures that do nothing to actually change behavior and toward restorative practices that form relationships and actually *teach* children how to maneuver their worlds in a way that promotes positive interactions instead of angry encounters. We are becoming the majority, even when the world is critical of our path, and I hope my work contributes to your efforts in some small way. Do no harm, educators. Teach, love, and inspire children to assume positive intent in the world and express grace in the face of anything else.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

As a classroom teacher for 11 years, I only wrote one discipline referral as a result of student behavior, and it was because I witnessed a fight in the hallway. So, when I transitioned to an assistant principal position and spent most of my days working with student discipline, I became aware of vast inequities related to students with behavioral challenges and their ability to remain in the general education classroom long enough to access the curriculum in the same way as their non-behavior-challenged peers.

Students who struggle with behavior in class are frequently sent to the hall, to the principal's office, to a "time out" room, to a special education room, or to an alternative school. Over time, these exclusions from the classroom create learning gaps, which in turn create more problematic behavior and more exclusions from learning. If the cycle is not interrupted, the student continues down a path of failure throughout school and into adulthood. Over the past nine years as an administrator, I have sought out interventions that will impact student behavior in a way that allows students to remain in class, accessing the curriculum in an equitable way to their peers, and I have consistently identified interventions that have one main point in common—a direct relationship between student and teacher. One such intervention, Check-In/Check-Out (CICO), has shown positive impacts for students who appear to misbehave to gain teacher attention, and it has shown potential for students whose behaviors are motivated by attention from peers and escape (or avoidance) behavior.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the intervention on teacher beliefs about students with behavior challenges. Additionally, there is an overarching focus in this study on the necessity of positive relationships between student and teacher, specifically at

the middle school level, as well as the importance of educational equity for all students regarding access to the curriculum.

Origins of Student Behavior

Student behaviors stem from a handful of categories, including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or trauma, Emotional or Behavior Disorder (EBD), educational deficits, and race and gender.

The ongoing ACEs research reveals significant connections between chronic conditions, quality of life and life expectancy in adulthood, and the trauma and stress associated with ACEs, including physical or emotional abuse or neglect, deprivation, or exposure to violence (Bethell et al., 2014). The research study performed by Bethell et al. assessed the association between ACEs and factors affecting children's development and lifelong health and revealed lower rates of school engagement and higher rates of chronic disease (Bethell et al., 2014). Ask any educator about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the answer will be the same: until our students' physiological, safety, and love/belonging needs are met, school lessons are not going to be in the forefront of their minds. ACEs are also associated with an increased risk for school dropout. A 2018 study from Morrow and Villodos collected data from 728 adolescents and their caregivers who participated in the Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect and from child protective services records. In addition to ACEs correlating directly with dropout rates, the researchers discovered indirect effects through poor reading achievement and elevated externalizing and internalizing problems (Morrow & Villodas, 2018). The consequences of high school dropout are often severe and may include reduced quality of life and an increased risk for joblessness, criminality, and single parenthood. A portion of the responsibility for dropout rates related to ACEs may be attributed to school engagement, meaning the entirety of a student's

bond to school. Connection to school develops over time as students experience academic success, active participation in schooling and school-related activities. The results of school engagement (or lack thereof) show up in attendance, behavior, and course success or failure (Morrow & Villodas, 2018). It is clear that a large portion of students arrive in schools (even elementary schools) with challenges that can have lifelong effects if educators are not well-versed in methods to assist these students in connecting to school early on and regularly.

Children with disabilities such as emotional/behavior disorders (EBD) make up another group that is at high risk for lifelong negative impacts as a result of behavior. Children with disabilities pursue fewer postsecondary educational opportunities, are often unemployed or underemployed, and present mental health challenges (Lewis et al., 2017). EBD students traditionally exhibit poor social skills and low academic performance and, as a result, are at greater risk of incarceration as juveniles *and* as adults -- one-fifth of students with EBD are arrested at least once before they leave school, and more than half are arrested within a few years of leaving school (Lewis et al., 2017). Students with EBD also experience the highest rates of unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness, and mental health issues. Public schools cannot boast a strong record of meeting these students' needs, despite the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

In 1991, the Peacock Hill Working Group advocated the use of systematic data-based interventions to work with EBD students, along with continuous assessment and progress monitoring, provisions for practicing new skills, treatment matched to problem, multi-component treatment, programming for transfer and maintenance, and commitment to sustained intervention (Lewis et al., 2017). Yet, still today, there exists a gap between the instructional and proactive recommendations based in research and evidence and the practices educators can put into place

with students. There also still exists a prevailing reliance on non-evidence-based exclusionary discipline practices to address challenging behavior (Lewis et al., 2017). These discipline strategies come in the form of timeout, office discipline referrals, detentions, suspensions, or expulsions, and while they may work for students who are traditionally successful in school, students who experience behavioral challenges are not typically deterred by being excluded from the classroom.

Outcomes of Student Behavior

When a student struggles with content in school, especially during the middle school years as they become extremely self-centered and self-conscious, anxiety over content can manifest itself as challenging behavior in the classroom. In a 1999 study, DiPerna and Elliott found five predictor variables concerning student skills/behaviors related to overall success in school: prior achievement, interpersonal skills, study skills, motivation, and engagement (Walker et al., 2010). Students with well-developed skills in these areas tend to perform better than those who have challenges in these areas. In related studies, researchers confirmed that both self-concept and social skills are directly related to academic achievement, and in yet another study, general education students consistently rated higher on these factors than students who were identified as academically and/or behaviorally at risk, or students with learning disabilities (Walker et al., 2010). Students who do not know how to “be a student” in the traditional sense are at a disadvantage from the beginning, and the behavioral displays that result cause teachers to take the focus away from the learning in order to deal with the frustration.

Students are often at risk for reasons such as race and gender, among others. Students from African American backgrounds are disproportionately disciplined as compared to their Caucasian peers, and they are also more frequently referred to special education services for

behavioral disorders at a higher rate than their White peers (Vincent et al., 2011; Lewis et al., 2017). Students from Latino backgrounds who have language barriers are often accused of “inappropriate” behaviors such as overlapping speech, back-talk, or noncompliance that may be seen as “disrespect” or “defiance” (Vincent et al., 2011). Gender differences present another opportunity for students to be identified as “at-risk” behaviorally speaking, especially based on office referral data related to male students. In a study of 11,000 students in urban, Midwestern school districts, the results showed that boys received significantly more referrals than girls. It is true that boys are more likely to engage in physical aggression and girls may be more likely to engage in relational aggression, so the physical aggression related to male students is more likely to result in office referrals than the more covert acts of relational aggression (Kaufman et al., 2010).

With each type of student who exhibits problematic behaviors in school, one of the most alarming side effects is a loss of valuable instructional time. Students who are often excluded from the classroom because of their negative behaviors fall further and further behind academically and are more likely to misbehave because of instructional deficits, creating a cyclical pattern that leads to dropout and the development of chronic patterns of challenging behavior, which can lead to a “school to prison pipeline” (Lewis et al., 2017). Not only is exclusion from classroom lessons ineffective at addressing problem behavior, it also does very little to prevent future undesirable behavior. In fact, exclusionary tactics just identify to the behaviorally challenged student specifically which type of behavior will remove him or her from an uncomfortable learning environment that is not working for him or her anyway (Lewis et al., 2017).

When considering behaviorally challenged students and their experiences being removed from the classroom with less access to the professionally trained teacher who can provide the most effective instruction, it is important to determine why this presents a challenge. Evaluating the concerns through the lens of a theoretical framework can illuminate why the problem is distressing.

Theoretical Framework

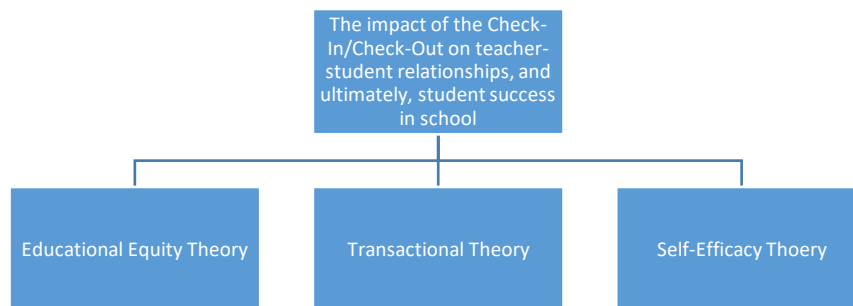


Figure 1. Theoretical Frameworks

This study is driven by not just one theoretical framework, but three: Educational Equity Theory, Transactional Theory, and Self-Efficacy Theory, and each framework leads into the next when considering how educators can keep behaviorally challenged students in the classroom environment.

Educational equity could be evaluated between two classrooms based on: the allocation of financial, physical, and human resources in each class, the amount of time per week each class has to learn specific topics like math and art, the content of the curricula addressed in each classroom, the appropriateness of the pedagogy employed in each classroom, the specific learning inputs and outcomes for both individuals and specific groups (girls, low SES, African Americans, ESOL, SPED, etc.), or the morale of the learners in each class. Additionally, the teachers—an essentially important resource in the classroom—can also measure the equity

within their own individual rooms just as well (Davidman & Davidman, 1998), and when one student or a handful of students is being sent out of the classroom, for whatever reason, and missing out on academic instruction, educational equity is not in play. Sirotnick (1997, p. 78) identified equity as “concerned with the allocation of resources to groups, is assessed quantitatively, and is conceptually linked to the idea of excellence.” His definition of excellence includes practices and outcomes in the school that are associated with high levels of learning for all students, and in 1990, Sirotnick explained that “equity is indicated when there are no systematic differences in the distribution of these conditions, practices, and outcomes based on race, ethnicity, economic status, or any other irrelevant grouping characteristic (1990, p. 159). Another voice in the theoretical world of educational equity is Eisner who, in 1991, explained that “equity is achieved in education not only by giving students an opportunity to come to school; it is also influenced by what they find when they arrive” and that “school programs that create a very narrow eye of the needle through which all children must pass diminish educational equity” (1991, p. 17). Essentially, to create educational equity among the students this study focuses on—those with disruptive, antisocial behaviors who are identified as having Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), risk-factors for Emotional/Behavior Disorders (EBD), or other risk factors such as gender, mental health concerns, race, etc.—educators must focus on implementing targeted interventions that do not discriminate based on differences other than what is the function of the behavior. The Positive Behavior Systems (PBS) approach includes an “ongoing process of research-based assessment, intervention, and data-based decision making focused on building social and other functional capacities, creating supportive contexts, and preventing the occurrence of problem behaviors” (George, 2018). While PBS is the system traditionally and commonly utilized within Special Education settings, the *school-wide* Positive

Behavioral Interventions and Supports system (PBIS) was introduced in the 1997 amendments of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997) and employs behavioral, educational, and social science evidence to key in on respecting students' dignity and well-being *across* educational settings (George, 2018). PBIS systems include the implementation of interventions at three tiered levels: Tier 1 focuses on *universal* positive behavioral supports such as proactively teaching prosocial behaviors like making an introduction, accepting "no" for an answer without arguing, and disagreeing with a peer or a teacher in an appropriate manner; Tier 2 includes *targeted* interventions for students who are not responding to the universal approaches in Tier 1 and employs strategies that bring together identified students and their classroom teachers to work one on one to reduce the likelihood of antisocial behaviors and increase the likelihood of prosocial behaviors that lead to overall well-being for the student; Tier 3 is the most *intensive* level of intervention and is the focus for students who are not responding to Tiers 1 and 2. Tier 3 connects students and their families to resources beyond the classroom, such as mental health agencies, social services, and medical evaluations. The students identified as needing Tier 2 interventions work directly with their teachers using evidence-based systems such as Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) to identify the behaviors that are antisocial and causing them to miss out on time in the classroom and the related instruction. The specifics of this intervention will be further discussed in Chapter 2, as CICO is the focus of this research study because it has been proven by McDaniel et al. (2018) to produce positive behavioral change. These same researchers found that "without an intervention, the students who were nominated and rated by their teachers as exhibiting high levels of problem behaviors did not decrease their level of risk" (McDaniel et al., 2018). The educational equity theoretical framework requires that educators make efforts to provide students equitable resources, attention, etc., and CICO is an intervention that is proven to

reduce behavioral challenges that often directly cause educational inequity. There is a possible limitation to the use of PBIS interventions such as CICO, however, in the effort to achieve education equity. Researchers examined the longitudinal associations between initial implementation of school-wide PBIS and student academic and behavior outcomes, and “results showed that both fidelity and years implementing were positively but not statistically significant predictors of reaching achievement yet sustaining schools had significantly higher mathematics achievement” (Kim et al., 2018). This study suggested that schools may need intensive technical assistance during initial implementation and that PBIS interventions such as CICO may not result in improved academic outcomes until they have been sustained for enough years to establish “effective learning environments” (Kim et al., 2018). The implications of the PBIS systems and the associated interventions show that movement is possible toward educational equity, but that teaching staffs may need more intensive support over time, leading to the next theoretical framework: transactional theory, which suggests that not only do student behaviors influence teacher behaviors, but teacher behaviors also influence student behaviors—it is a reciprocal relationship (Doumen et al., 2008; Loukas et al., 2009; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, et al., 2008; Sutherland & Morgan, 2003; Sutherland & Oswald, 2005). For example, if students exhibit behaviors that make a teacher react negatively, students may, in turn, increase their negative behaviors (Doumen et al., 2008). The resulting negative student behavior prompts further negativity from the teacher. Therefore, when a change in teacher-student relationships is the goal, the reciprocal relationship of teacher and student behaviors must be addressed before the change will happen, and as is made clear in Bauer & Baizano’s (2016) work, change in education is hard because: 1. Data and knowledge are not the same; 2. We start with solutions; 3. We address symptoms of problems; 4. Best practices aren’t; and 5. Structural change is easy;

cultural change is not. In this case, the goal of implementing CICO as an intervention strategy to decrease challenging behaviors and result in more time for the students within the classroom impacts both sides of the reciprocal relationship. Teachers must have knowledge in the form of understanding what data should lead to a recommendation for intervention. They must know that an intervention like CICO by itself is not a solution and that there will be work required by both parties to create effective change in the status quo. They must recognize that changing the symptoms of the problem is not the goal—preventing the underlying problem is the goal. They must accept that despite their best intentions of using “best practices,” sometimes students need something more, something different. And everyone involved—teachers, administrators, students, and parents—must recognize that simply implementing a structure such as CICO will not immediately result in educational equity and that a cultural shift must occur in all parties. This is a focus of this study, to identify student and teacher perceptions of the effects of the CICO intervention on the reciprocal relationship between teacher and student and to question whether the intervention could be expanded to impact more than just behavioral challenges in students and to have that desired effect on academic skills that were lacking in the Kim et al. (2018) study.

The final theoretical framework, self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997), focuses on the determination of people’s outcomes as a direct result of their beliefs about their capabilities. If a person believes he or she can change something, it is more likely that the person will create that change, and if the person does not believe he or she can change something, it is less likely the effort will be made for the change to happen. Bandura perceived self-efficacy as a strong predictor of behaviors and, as a result, has a significant effect on “academic performance, both directly by affecting quality of thinking and good use of acquired cognitive skills and indirectly

by heightening persistence in the search for solutions” (p. 216). He recommends that teachers need to cultivate their students’ sense of self-efficacy by providing frequent and explicit feedback while monitoring progress and affirming students’ capabilities. Also, they can recognize students’ academic accomplishments and use of cognitive strategies. Further, Bandura argues that teachers can diminish students’ self-efficacy by degrading student performance, which causes students to doubt their abilities to achieve academic success, and they are more likely to disengage in school and display problem behaviors. Teacher self-efficacy is also key as “teachers with a high sense of efficacy tend to view difficult students as reachable and teachable and regard their learning problems as surmountable... Teachers of low perceived efficacy are inclined to invoke low student ability as an explanation of why their students cannot be taught” (p. 242), which results in segregating and stigmatizing students. Self-efficacy is necessary, therefore, in both students and teachers for the relationship to skew positive and produce desired outcomes. The CICO intervention focuses on positive interactions between student and teacher on a regular schedule, and another focus of this study is to determine whether this specific intervention is enough to increase self-efficacy in both parties and whether teacher and/or student will experience a shift in thinking as a result.

Ultimately, the theoretical frameworks underlying this study join in this way: relationships are *transactional* so both students and teachers must possess *self-efficacy* and believe their individual actions can positively influence their relationships before their behaviors will change and *educational equity* can be achieved. If teachers and students do not recognize the role their interactions play in the quality of teacher-student relationships, they will have little motivation to change those interactions. If teachers and students do not connect changing their

interactions with changes in the students' academic and behavioral learning, the likelihood of changing those interactions decreases.

Problem Statement

Because students exist in our schools who are at-risk of behavioral challenges that may lead to educational inequity, there exists a problem that needs to be examined. Students challenge teachers, so teachers remove those students from the classroom to “protect the learning of others.” But who protects the learning of the students removed from the classroom? The research shows that student failure in primary and middle school years creates a cycle that leads to massive deficits and negative outcomes in high school and beyond, so the purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of the Check-In/Check-Out behavior intervention on the relationship between teacher and student to determine whether the intervention can be used as more than just a behavior intervention to improve the likelihood of teachers and students working together to maintain every student's status inside the learning environment. This problem leads to three central research questions.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of positive relationships between student and teacher, specifically at the middle school level, and in what ways does this relationship impact the goal of educational equity for all students regarding access to the curriculum?
2. In what ways, if any, does the use of the Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) intervention impact teachers' perceptions of students with behavioral challenges?
3. How does the use of the CICO intervention impact students' perceptions of the teachers who implement this intervention?

Summary

Ultimately, there is a variety of reasons for behavioral challenges at school, and the adults in these students' lives need to understand them better. If a behavior intervention could strengthen the relationship between the teacher and the students, that strategy could be beneficial for students, especially in the middle grades, before poor grades and lack of credits start preventing the possibility of success.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

Problem

Do no harm. Three simple words that hang in the classrooms of hundreds, if not thousands of teachers, in the United States; if only following that expectation was that simple. Do no harm covers a multitude of rules and common practices that aim to make classrooms safe spaces for teachers to educate and students to learn. But disruptive behaviors are doing much harm in our modern classrooms, and these behaviors are more frequently coming from school, family, and community risk factors that present a formidable challenge to educators attempting to present a comprehensive, effective, and efficient method of combatting antisocial behaviors in schools (Sprague et al., 2001). Parental involvement in education is key to student achievement and results in increases in student grades, test scores, and overall academic outcomes, as well as more positive student behaviors (Gould, 2011). These successes are even more profound when students live with both biological parents. Dr. Jonathan A. Gould, of Saginaw Valley State University, conducted a study in 2011 that showed evidence of higher student satisfaction with school among students living with both biological parents as opposed to students not living with both biological parents. In his study of 100 middle school students, only 1/3 of his study participants lived with both biological parents. The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2021 that the number of children living with both biological parents has decreased by 15% since 1968, and in 2020, 70.4% of students fit into this category (Hemez & Washington, 2021). The challenges brought about by families consisting of only one parent, or a biological parent and a stepparent, or even grandparents raising the children contribute to inconsistency in the child's life, which play out in social experiences that are reactive, aversive, infrequent, haphazard, and trial-and-error learning experiences. The resulting antisocial behaviors students exhibit have made society,

communities, families, and educators more aware of the massive adjustment problems our children present and how our youth are more at risk now than ever before of delinquency, violence, and school failure that will eventually involve them in the criminal justice and/or mental health systems (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sprague et al., 2001). The challenges are exacerbated by the ever-increasing diversity of our population of students enrolled in schools, including more cultural diversity, more students who speak English as a Second Language, students coming from families struggling with poverty, and students who are less prepared to enter school and have a greater range of learning and behavioral challenges. Inside each school building, all these various backgrounds form together into a complex environment of people, policies, routines, and procedures that all must work in harmony to produce a coordinated whole, and within that complexity exist three types of students: the typically developing students; those students at risk for behavioral and academic problems; and those students who already have serious behavioral and academic difficulties (Sprague et al., 2001).

Researchers like Sugai and Horner (1994) have identified schools as the ideal place to organize efforts against the increasing antisocial behavior children exhibit, and educators see this as both a blessing and a curse. The biggest problem, though, is that educators rarely can invest the resources, time, and expertise necessary to implement long-term change—our resources, time, and expertise are continually more and more thinly spread across the myriad of needs education is challenged with which to contend. As a result, educators tend to focus on correcting the immediate problem with simple solutions—a general solution to a complex problem continues to disappoint when it inevitably fails. And in the face of a deficit of complex solutions, school practices tend to continue that harsh pattern of punishment from the home and end up increasing problem behaviors in the school (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). School personnel tend to

utilize punitive disciplinary strategies that include a lack of clarity about the rules, expectations, and consequences and that—because they do not work to reduce disruptive anti-social behaviors—end up without the support of the school faculty. Exclusion, suspension, expulsion, verbal reprimands, and detention provide an immediate break from the problem behavior, but positive long-term change is not the result. Even efforts to work with antisocial students in the more progressive approaches of counseling, insight-based therapies, and improving self-esteem end up being used in isolation, away from the setting in which the disruptive behaviors continue to occur and without the teacher and peer factors that are most likely a crucial component of the intended change in behavior, resulting in failure to improve the behavior (Sprague et al., 2001; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1996; Lipsey, 1991, 1992; Lipsey & Wilson, 1993; Tolan & Guerra, 1994 as cited in Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Ultimately, ineffective “band-aid fixes” result in increased problem behavior such as truancy, vandalism, intimidation, and harassment, creating a school culture that feeds on its own negativity and does not support a productive learning environment.

Lewis & Sugai (1999) suggest that the 5-15% of students who are “targeted” for at-risk behavior in any given school find themselves in this group because of poor peer relations, low academic achievement, and/or a chaotic home environment, and targeted students typically require more practice in learning behavioral expectations to ensure learning success (Lee et al., 1999). In fact, multiple researchers agree that students with challenging behaviors receive less academic instruction than their non-disruptive peers and have a history of academic failure, especially in reading and math (Kauffman, 1997; Kerr & Nelson, 1998 as cited in Scott et al., 2000; Gage et al., 2018; Nelson et al., 2011; Berry Kuchle et al., 2015 as cited in Sinclair et al., 2019; Reid et al., 2004). Poor reading and academic failure have been identified as some of the

most powerful predictors of problem behavior and social failure, including high school dropout, delinquency, and involvement in the criminal justice system (Reid et al., 2004; Macguire & Loeber, 1996; Morrison & D’Incau, 1997; Gottfredson et al., 1996 as cited in Reid et al., 2004), and so a pattern emerges. Antisocial behavior leads to academic failure, which leads to more problematic behaviors, which leads to the criminal justice system and failure in life. Obviously, a dangerous cycle exists for our students and needs to be interrupted.

One challenge in interrupting this cycle is easily expressed in a statement from educator Rita Pierson in a recent Ted Talk: “Kids don’t learn from people they don’t like.” Satter (2013) completed a study to analyze the perspectives of students with challenging behaviors to see what they believe contributes to student-teacher relationship quality. The study focused on students in grades 5-12 attending two different alternative public schools for students with disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviors. One focus group of teachers was also conducted at a third alternative school to provide comparison data for the student responses. The findings of this study suggest that the current service delivery model creates barriers to developing and maintaining positive student-teacher relationships. With students who express challenging behaviors, teachers are often intimidated and, therefore, distance themselves from the student; in these cases, forging positive relationships between teacher and student is often very difficult (Satter, 2013), and it is no surprise that students with challenging behaviors are at an increased risk of school failure (Farley et al., 2012; Lane, Menzies, et al., 2012; Lane, Barton-Arwood, et al., 2008). Why do teachers become intimidated when students exhibit challenging behaviors? After all, every pre-service education program includes a “classroom management” component along with child psychology courses. However, as Newberry states in her 2010 work:

“There are noticeable differences in how teachers approach and interact with different students in the classroom even as they strive to create caring relationships with all their students. How such diversity forms is not well understood, even though these relationships have been discussed for [years] across cultures and grade levels.”

In a 2007 study, Hamre et al. discovered that “teachers who reported more depression and lower self-efficacy and teachers who were observed to provide less emotional support in the classroom tended to report more conflict with students in their classroom than expected” and Newberry (2010) argues that “through interaction, parties condition each other to respond and behave in certain ways as they interact.” Once again, the transactional theory is applicable; interactions between teachers and students in the classroom are extremely important, “especially for students whose classroom behavior proves challenging and difficult for teachers to manage” (Newberry, 2010). And yet, teachers must learn the subtle nuances of how to form those relationships with students for their students to learn the art themselves.

Teachers are more likely to respond positively to cooperative students, who end up enjoying a supportive relationship that leads to improved academic behavior (Newberry, 2010). Conversely, students with emotional and behavioral needs present physically and psychologically exhausting challenges to teachers, and the negative relationship that results is very difficult to change (Newberry, 2010). When students experience reading deficits without intervention, over time the deficit expands and becomes more impenetrable when it comes to intervention application, and behavioral deficits act in much the same way. Students with problem behaviors tend to violate social norms and expectations, including verbal and physical aggression, coercion, non-compliance, and low levels of academic engagement, which have a negative impact on the students’ abilities to interact successfully with teachers and peers and

cause major disruption to the instructional environment, which typically causes the school personnel to remove the student from the situation—even to the point of placement in an alternate school location (Nelson et al., 2011; Reichle, 1990 as cited in Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sinclair et al., 2019; Bradley et al., 2008; Crimmins & Farrell, 2006). However, research shows their outcomes in these more restrictive settings do not improve (Lane et al., 2008; Lane, Wehby, et al., 2005a, 2005b).

A large majority of the students placed in alternate settings are identified as having an emotional or behavioral disorder (EBD), and the number of EBD students educated separately from the general education classroom is three times higher than any other disability: more than 52% spend at least 60% of their time in these alternate classrooms (Turton et al., 2015). Students identified as EBD or as being at risk for EBD present a conundrum regarding the reasons for their behaviors. Compared to peers in other high-incidence disability groups, EBD students show lower reading and math scores, dropout rates of 50% or higher (Lewis & Sugai, 1999), lower graduation rates, higher rates of course failure and grade retention, lower likelihoods of attending post-secondary school, and a 70% arrest rate within three years of leaving school (Reid et al., 2004). Children with EBD are typically male, behaviorally disruptive, noncompliant, verbally abusive, and aggressive and often bring about negative reactions from others, alienating peers and adults, which ends up unintentionally preventing these students from the benefits of learning. Placing EBD students and/or students at risk for EBD into alternative school locations or even separate classrooms within the same school creates a sense of “otherness” within the students, their peers, and even their teachers and prevents the expected equity of education through the lens of which this research study will be conducted. Students are at risk in schools today for so

many reasons mentioned throughout this text already, and the answer is not separation or alienation.

Another issue with students who present challenging behaviors is the fact that their teachers prioritize intervening with problem behavior rather than academics, which limits the amount of time focused on academic instruction for both the disruptive students and his/her peers, and at least two research teams have found that teachers actually provide even less academic instruction to the students exhibiting the disruptive behavior (Sinclair et al., 2019; Wehby et al., 2003 as cited in Sinclair et al., 2019). The results of a literature search focused on why teachers react to disruptive behavior this way yielded three possible answers. First, Sinclair et al. (2019) found that many teachers feel unprepared to teach students with challenging behavior because general education teacher programs often require few courses in behavioral management or special education (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006 as cited in Sinclair et al., 2019) and this leads to teachers and the paraprofessionals assisting in the classroom feeling inadequate in their abilities to respond successfully to challenging behavior. Teachers who are new to the profession rank responding to disruptive behavior as one of their most challenging tasks; it places the greatest demands on their time and interferes with teaching and learning (Gage et al., 2018; George, 2018). Teachers spend a tremendous amount of time on behavioral challenges that could be spent on instruction instead, often 80% of the class time; this causes teachers to feel that their instruction is negatively impacted, and student learning suffers, so it is easiest to simply remove the problem (Sugai & Horner, 1994 as cited in Scott et al., 2000; Hendrix et al., 2018).

A second possible explanation comes from Gage et al. (2018), who studied teachers with little to no classroom management skills contrasted with teachers with average to above average skills. Students in the poorly managed classrooms had much less engagement and experienced a

much lower average of teaching time than those in the well-managed classrooms. Interestingly, there was no variation in characteristics such as gender or ethnicity in the teachers, so the differences are probably due to variables in professional development and knowledge or beliefs about pedagogy and instruction. This idea might attribute teachers' inability to provide instruction to disruptive students to a lack of classroom management. The result is that students with EBD or who are at risk for EBD need teachers with clear management and intervention skills to keep them in the general education classroom, provide them access to high-quality academic instruction, provide them the ability to engage with that instruction, and increase their academic performance.

The third possible explanation for why teachers are unable to handle disruptive students in the classroom stems from the need in our modern society to raise a well-educated populace that allows us to see economic growth and social integration (Bru, 2006). This movement has led schoolwork over the years to become more theoretical and less practical, and despite the resurgence of Career and Tech Education (CTE), students still spend most of their days in theoretical classes as opposed to hands-on classes. For students who prefer practical application and who fail to see a connection between what they are learning in the traditional classroom setting and what they want to do post-high school, they may see school as a worthless institution whose norms one should oppose, and the result may be a grudge held against the person at the head of the classroom—the teacher—whom the student holds responsible for the conflict he or she is feeling. Students may simply avoid the unfavored work to reduce stress or react aggressively toward the teacher assigning the work, especially if that work is accompanied by a fear of failure on the part of the student. Especially during adolescence, students are highly susceptible to social comparison and competition because of their heightened awareness of self

as they try to determine an identity, and this pressure to achieve creates in students either a cognitive competence that correlates with on-task behavior or a poorly perceived cognitive competence, which correlates with off-task and disruptive behavior—the idea being that avoidance and failure is better than effort and failure (Bru, 2006). Albert Bandura (1997) maintains that a belief in self-efficacy influences how an individual will persevere in the face of obstacles and failure, and as a result, students with fragile academic self-esteem may be reluctant to invest much effort into academic tasks, for fear of rejection by peers. Bru's study in 2006 shows that a low-perceived cognitive competence, perceived low relevance of schoolwork, and the belief that norm-breaking behavior elicits peer approval all increase the likelihood of off-task behavior and opposition in the classroom, which in turn cause frustration on the part of the teacher and a tendency to remove the disruptive student from the classroom environment, furthering that cycle of failure on behalf of the student.

Purpose

With the problem clearly identified, the literature is helpful in also defining steps toward a solution, and in the case of disruptive behavior, the solution begins with prevention. School-wide approaches to discipline, which include defining a small number of school-wide expectations, teaching the expectations, rewarding performance of expected behaviors, implementing clear consequences for rule infractions, and using student outcome data for on-going evaluations, increase structure and support which encourage students to exhibit prosocial behavior (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2002, Nelson et al., 2002, and Taylor-Greene et al., 1997 as cited in Hawken & Horner, 2003). While school-wide systems are effective for up to 85% of the population, students with more complex behavior problems, such as those at risk for or identified as EBD, need targeted and intensive interventions before the severity of the

behavior increases and the student is removed from the classroom to the point of academic deficits piling up (Hawken & Horner, 2003; Sprague et al., 2001; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Lewis et al., 1998; Colvin et al., 1993 and Taylor-Green et al., 1997). This is where a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) can come in handy—sometimes. Research supports a connection between FBAs, which identify the function of a problem behavior and the events that predict when it will occur (Turton et al., 2015), and a reduction in problem behaviors like aggression, talking out, and noncompliance, as well as an increase in prosocial skills like following directions and interacting appropriately with peers (Hawken & Horner, 2003). While FBAs most effectively address student behavior, the resulting intervention choices need to be simply and easily implemented by general education teachers with limited training to address the problem behavior. If teachers feel ill prepared to deal with these types of challenges, have insufficient time to meet about behavior plans, and believe that disruptive behavior is best handled outside of the classroom (Hendrix et al., 2018), they may be reluctant to implement with fidelity because of the same poorly conceived cognitive competence that their disruptive students may be experiencing (Sinclair et al., 2019). In lieu of an intervention system the teacher can easily put in place, educators will rely on traditional approaches to discipline, which may reinforce the disruptive behavior by accident (Shumate & Willis, 2010). Multiple researchers have identified two to three sources of reinforcement (the “function” of the FBA) for problem behaviors: attention from the teacher, attention from peers, and escape from instructional demands (Vollmer & Northup, 1996 as cited in Shumate & Willis, 2010; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sinclair et al., 2019). If a teacher removes a disruptive student from the classroom setting and it turns out the function of the student’s behavior is to escape the academic demands, the behavior has just been reinforced and the

student now believes that disruptive behavior will result in what was originally desired and problem behaviors will increase.

Much research has been focused on strategies to respond generally to inappropriate behavior, and the consensus, as represented by the work of Simonsen et al., 2008, is that these strategies should include the following:

1. Brief, contingent, and include specific error correction
2. Performance feedback (reward for proper behavior)
3. Differential reinforcement (praise for proper behavior)
4. Planned ignoring (dependent on whether teacher attention is a reinforcer)
5. Response cost (removal of reward for undesired behavior)
6. Time out from reinforcement (as a result of undesired behavior)

Behavior contracts provide an opportunity for teachers, administrators, and counselors to define expected behaviors and associated consequences for students, including increased student productivity, increase on-task behavior and daily assignment completion, improved school grades, and improved student self-control. The positive feedback accounted for in both the research-based strategies and in the behavior-contracts is associated with increased academic engagement and decreased disruptive behaviors. While negative feedback also has its place, reprimands are predictive of future negative teacher-student interactions that are easily prevented (Gage et al., 2018). Specific praise has shown itself as the strongest tool in the classroom teacher's toolbox, resulting in increased on-task behavior, student attention, compliance, positive self-referent statements, and cooperative work, as well as improved correct responses and work productivity (Simonsen et al., 2008). Opportunities to respond and active teaching, along with effective classroom management, also show positive effect sizes, and overall, Chetty et al.

(2011) found that raising the quality of teaching, based on value-added scores, from the bottom 5% to just average raises predicted student lifetime income by \$250,000 (as cited in Gage et al., 2018). But, because schools do not always have the resources to provide this level of teacher training or this level of individualized intervention for the 10-15% of students in need, the recommendation is for schools to implement a tiered system of interventions, with a resource-efficient targeted intervention for the at-risk level of students (Colvin et al., 1993; Lewis et al., 1998 as cited in Hawken & Horner, 2003). This targeted intervention approach is consistent with the Effective Behavioral Support (EBS) model recommended by Walker et al. (1996), which has come to be known as the foundation for the Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) model currently used by schools across the United States. The EBS model establishes school-wide discipline systems for all students in all locations, efficient targeted interventions that remediate problem behavior patterns, and intensive, individual interventions for those students with chronic problem behavior (Hawken & Horner, 2003; Sprague et al., 2001). Additionally, effective incentives and motivational systems are developed and carried out to encourage improved behavior, staff commits to the intervention over the long term and to monitoring, supporting, coaching, debriefing, and providing booster shots as necessary, as well as participating in training and regular feedback about effectively implementing the interventions. Positivity is a high priority in any EBS/PBIS system and any interventions within the system, and teachers learn to communicate high and positive expectations, have more positive than negative interactions, catch problem behavior before escalation, and provide a large amount of positive reinforcement (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). According to Cook et al. (2014), behavior interventions that focus on positive interactions between students and adults have shown improved behavior for students with attention-seeking behavior but show little effect on students

with escape-motivated behavior, and there is no information on whether it influences peer behavior. Shumate and Willis (2010) also conducted research on disruptive behavior of three students motivated by teacher attention and implemented a high rate of teacher attention based on an absence of disruptive and off-task behavior, as well as a differential reinforcement of alternative behaviors, and the disruptive behaviors of all three students fell to nearly zero. Along with positive adult interactions and praise, studies have found daily progress reports to be an effective intervention progress monitoring tool with which to provide students specific daily behavioral feedback and to increase the validity of decision-making in reference to increasing or decreasing targeted interventions (Stage et al., 2012).

Significance

Positive teacher-student relationships have been proven to improve outcomes for students with challenging behaviors by decreasing those problem behaviors over time (Birch & Ladd, 1998; Silver et al., 2005; Liew et al., 2010; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Roorda et al., 2011). Perry (2006) wrote about the shift over the past 5,000 years in our society from small, transgenerational hunter-gatherer bands of 40-50 individuals (in which a child under the age of 6 would have four developmentally mature persons who could protect, educate, enrich, and nurture the developing child) to our current reality of defining a caregiver-to-child ratio of 1:4 as a “best-practice” ratio for young children (1/16th the relational ratio the human brain is designed for) (Ludy-Dobson & Perry, 2010). Perry points out that “our children also spend many hours a day watching television; they spend very few hours in the socioemotional learning opportunities created by interactions with older children, younger children, aunts, uncles, nephews, grandparents, or neighbors. In contrast to our ancestors, we live in a relationally impoverished world” (p. 45). The poverty of relationships leads to children who are vulnerable and never learn

to be socially appropriate, empathetic, self-regulating, and humane. By the time they reach age 10, they have only had the number and quality of social interactions of a 5-year-old, and this socioemotional immaturity leads to conflict between teacher, parent, and peer expectations and the child's ability. The child acts like a 5-year-old in a world of 10-year-old expectations and falls behind, frustrating teachers and isolating him from peers, causing feelings of inadequacy, uselessness, and stupidity (Perry, 2006). Negative experiences in their earliest relationships cause children to rarely feel safe in new, healthy caregiving situations, and they end up avoiding close relationships. They can rely on aggression and control as ways to protect themselves. Howe & Fearnley (2003) describe that "close relationships are the one thing these children avoid. Their developmental agenda is to control and not to engage people. This denies them exposure to the very experiences they need. So long as they remain unable to relinquish control and relate fully and accurately with their carers and therapists, the children make little emotional or developmental progress" (p. 380). These feelings often result in selfishness, being self-absorbed (and self-loathing), and an incapability of empathic, humane behavior. Along with exposure to domestic violence and violence in the media, these characteristics place a child at risk for aggressive or violent behaviors. The solution is to increase the number and quality of relational interactions and opportunities for the high-risk child (Perry, 2006). And when creating the child's individual plan for intervention, the primary objective is to ensure experiences that are relevant, relational, repetitive, and rewarding—exactly what the programs like Check, Connect & Expect, the Behavior Expectation Program (aka Check-In/Check-Out), and the Daily Report Card focus on to reduce disruptive behavior (Stage et al., 2012; Hawken & Horner, 2003). The targeted intervention that is the focus of this research study, the Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) system, provides the student immediate feedback regarding behavior (via teacher rating on a

daily progress report) and increased positive adult attention contingent on appropriate social behavior, which has repeatedly been shown to reduce problem behavior and increase academic engagement in students, as well as reduce the number of office referrals for students in the program (Hawken & Horner, 2003; Turtura, 2014). In the CICO program, the student “checks in” with an adult before school, with teachers each period of the day, and “checks out” with an adult at the end of the day and takes a daily progress report home to parents for signatures and positive praise. The data collected each week is summarized and utilized to determine success and next steps. The CICO system’s structural goals, according to Filter et al. (2007) are to:

1. Increase antecedent prompts for appropriate behavior.
2. Increase contingent adult feedback.
3. Enhance the daily structure for students throughout their school day.
4. Improve feedback to families about student behavior.

Considering the requirements mentioned earlier about effective research-based strategies for classroom management and targeted interventions, CICO seems to hit the high notes. It includes specific feedback, attention from adults, structure including expectations, and positive praise. In fact, Hawken and Horner’s 2003 study found that teachers were able to implement CICO with fidelity and reduce the variability of problem behavior, along with some decrease in the level of problem behaviors, and students became more consistent in participating in class without causing disruptions. Multiple studies all show CICO to be effective in decreasing problem behaviors in students (Hawken & Horner, 2003; Turtura, 2014; Filter et al., 2007). The CICO intervention promises what Mihalas et al. (2009) describe as the best step toward positive results: “an interaction between adults and students, whereby the adult does what is best for the welfare of the student, taking into account the student’s developmental level and associated needs” (p. 110).

This interaction is demonstrated when a teacher cares for the student by acknowledging the student's feelings, addressing their needs, and reflecting on how their own actions influence the student's results. Tools used to evaluate teacher and student perceptions of their relationships include *The Teacher Student Relationship Inventory* (TSRI) (Suldo et al., 2013), which focuses on three dimensions: the teacher's perception of how willing a student is to ask for help, satisfaction with the relationship, and conflict that may result in limiting interactions (Ang, 2005), and *People in My Life*, a scale that includes questions about how students perceive their relationship with their teachers. Perry (2006) suggests that trauma-related symptoms are related to dysfunction of neural systems in the lower, less plastic parts of the brain. The number of repetitions required to change brainstem neural organization is far greater than the number required to change the cortical neural organization. In other words, it is easier to change beliefs than feelings. It's not that a child won't change; it is just that change will not occur unless sufficient repetitions are provided (p. 43)—repetition that is required in the daily CICO intervention. Perry (2006) argues that “we can contain behavior by regulating emotional dysfunction with medications, but we cannot create new, healthy neural networks. Therefore, medication use alone does not have an enduring positive impact on maltreated children” (p. 44). Instead, it is up to the adults most frequently interacting with the students to focus on repeated, positive relationship building that will ultimately lead to positive outcomes for the student.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for this qualitative case study regarding whether teacher and student opinions of one another are impacted by the implementation of the Check-In/Check-Out tier 2 behavior intervention. The epistemological commitment undergirding this methodology is constructivism because the research questions are solely focused on extracting personal experiences from student and teacher participants and determining findings based on their collective interaction with the construct around which this research is organized—the CICO behavior intervention. Yazan (2015) and Merriam (1998) both describe the foundation of qualitative research as individuals experiencing the world and making sense of it as a result of those interactions. This approach will allow for an in-depth understanding of both teachers' and students' experiences as a result of the behavior intervention and provides a way to utilize the qualitative data to understand the ways in which the intervention impacts both parties.

Setting, Participants, Etcetera

The design of this case study is a Multiple Holistic Design (Yin, 2002), which includes students and teachers as two separate but related units of measurement. Yin's approach was appropriate for this study because case study research "focuses on answering questions that ask how or why...and researchers have little control of events that are happening at present" (Yin, 2009), and Multiple Holistic Design case studies allow for replication and an understanding of the factors that allow for a successful outcome in one case but less than successful outcomes in another. The selection of four students and three teachers for this study resulted in an admittedly small study, but the repetition of pairings using the same CICO intervention structure was able to produce variations in experience and allow questions to be asked about the possible reasons for

this variance. The sample for this study was drawn from a convenience population of Midwestern middle school students (all from the same school) who are identified as exhibiting “challenging behaviors”; a description of these behaviors will accompany the introduction of each participant later in this chapter. The students were identified based on data in the categories of office discipline referrals, behavior screener results, attendance, hallway passes, and grades. The data for office discipline referrals, attendance, and grades was pulled from the Student Information System (Power School). The data for the hallway passes was pulled from an electronic hall pass program called SmartPass that the students use daily to be excused to the hallway. The students ask permission from the teacher, then enter name, destination, and length of time requested into the app on their technological devices, and the teacher enters an approval code to allow the time to start counting down. The data for the behavior screener was pulled from the FastBridge Assessment Suite database that houses Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS) data. The purpose of the SAEBS behavior screener and the categories in which students are evaluated to produce the screener results will be described in detail later in this chapter. All this data was pulled together by the researcher into a spreadsheet format, and specific grade level spreadsheets were shared with the grade level teacher teams. At the participating school, grade level teacher teams review this “behavior data” at the conclusion of each quarter of the school year. To determine a list of students who need more than just the building-wide Tier 1 PBIS interventions:

1. Teachers use predetermined thresholds to identify students who fit into the Tier 2 and Tier 3 categories.
 - a. Office Discipline Referrals: students who had 2-5 ODRs in a quarter were considered Tier 2 students, while 6+ ODRs qualified them as Tier 3 students.

- b. Attendance: 10% of days in the quarter missed counted as Tier 2, while 15% or more qualified as Tier 3.
 - c. Grades: one “F” grade equaled Tier 2, and any more than that identified a student needing Tier 3 interventions.
 - d. Hallway passes: 10% of time in the hallway equaled Tier 2, and 15% of time in equaled Tier 3.
 - e. SAEBRS: comes with its own thresholds, which will be covered in more detail later in this chapter.
2. Teachers utilized their personal and professional knowledge of each Tier 2 and Tier 3 student to discuss whether each student would benefit from outside support or direct teacher support. This narrowed the list down to a smaller number of Tier 3 students (outside support) and a larger number of Tier 2 students (direct teacher support).
 3. Working with **only** the Tier 2 list, grade level teams determined which students would be introduced to the CICO intervention and which students would be introduced to other teacher-invented interventions like Breakfast Club, which is solely a morning greeting to ensure attendance, or Teacher Carousel, which requires students stay after school with a rotating teacher each day to catch up on schoolwork.
 4. Once student identification happens, teacher teams begin working on identifying which of them will be the CICO partner for each student and then begin the process of onboarding the students and parents, which will be described in detail further in this chapter.

As a result of the grade-level team recommendations for CICO students for this study, teacher samples were a result of which teacher was the homeroom instructor assigned to each

student. A requirement of the CICO intervention is that each student be paired with an adult who daily checks in and out with the student—to discuss behavior, progress, setbacks, etc. These teachers are selected based on their current relationship status with the student: whether they already have the student in class at the beginning and/or end of the day, whether they already have the student in a homeroom environment, etc. At this Midwestern middle school, the CICO teacher partner is almost always the homeroom teacher; the rare exception to this rule is when the principal, assistant principal, or counselor is the one initiating the CICO recommendation for a student; then, the administrative staff member becomes the CICO partner.

Prior to introducing the student and teacher participants of this study, it is important to explain the training process these teachers underwent to learn to implement the CICO intervention. At the time of this study, the teachers at this middle school had been implementing the CICO intervention for two school years, and all the teachers in the school were trained using the following steps:

1. The principal and assistant principal had attended a state level Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) conference and specifically a session on CICO before implementing training with teachers on the intervention. The school also participated in the local educational service center's work with MTSS behavior interventions, and the principal and assistant principal worked with the MTSS behavior team representative to prepare for teacher training.
2. Teachers were introduced during pre-service at the beginning of the first implementation year to the background associated with the introduction of CICO as a behavior intervention, and they participated in discussions about which students they could see needing this intervention.

3. Teachers were given access to all the electronic materials they would need to implement this intervention with students:
 - a. Parent/student information letter & signature page.
 - b. The “Basic” CICO Daily Points Sheet (see figure 2 below).
 - c. Alternate CICO Daily Points Sheets (an “emoji” version for students with low cognitive abilities, a “no parent signature” version for students with challenging familial situations, etc.).
 - d. A checklist of CICO partner responsibilities to accomplish each day (check-in, circle points, award “school money” to be used in the school store, add up points at the end of the day, check-out).
 - e. A list of potential tangible rewards to use with students as they approach large cumulative amounts of points—used to extrinsically motivate students.
4. Teachers walked each other through “modeling” scenes to practice the hourly points conversations with their CICO students; no negative comments and no specific notes written on the sheet, just a score and an explanation of the goal for the next day.
5. Teachers walked each other through “modeling” scenes to practice the check-in and check-out conversations with their CICO partners.
6. Final reminders included keeping every CICO conversation positive in nature.

**CICO DAILY POINTS
BASIC**

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teachers: Please indicate You Got It (3), Almost ~~There~~ (2), or Not Yet (1) regarding the student's achievement for the following goals.

Expectations	1st Hour			2nd Hour			3rd Hour			4th Hour			5th Hour			MTSS Time			6th Hour			7th Hour			Homeroom		
Be Respectful	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Be Responsible																											
Give Your Best Effort																											
Total Points																											
TEACHER INITIALS																											

Check In = 2 points _____ initial Check Out = 2 points _____ initial Daily Goal = 68/85 (80%) Daily Score _____/85

Figure 2. CICO Daily Points Sheet (Basic)

None of the student participants of this study had ever participated in the CICO intervention before, and only one of the three teachers had practiced being a CICO partner before. Two of the teacher partners were new to this middle school in the research year; however, they had been trained to implement the intervention in the same way at their previous in-district schools.

Participants interviewed and surveyed were Jane and Wesley, 7th grade students, and their homeroom teacher, Mrs. Jones; Caleb and Lisa, 6th grade students, and their homeroom teachers, Mrs. Riley and Mrs. Bryant (all names are pseudonyms to protect participant identities). Each student was selected based on data from the first quarter of the 2021-2022 school year, and each was selected by their grade level teacher teams for specific concerns based on the structure explained earlier in this chapter.

Jane's discipline records were not concerning, but her attendance, grades, and behavior screener scores were. This school utilizes the Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS), administered via the FastBridge suite of assessments, which includes both a teacher version and a student version of the screener. The SAEBSR utilizes a 19-item rating scale that teachers complete about their students' social, academic, and emotional behaviors. It is

designed for use across grades K-12 and is grounded in the belief that school success is predicated not just by academic achievement but also by success in multiple behavioral domains. SAEBRS evaluates student functioning in terms of overall general behavior (19 items), as well as Social Behavior (6 items), Academic Behavior (6 items), and Emotional Behavior (7 items) (FastBridge, 2022). Each SAEBRS item has a score value of 0-3. During interpretation of the results, Total Behavior is the first category teachers observe, and subscale scores in each of the other categories are only interpreted if the Total Behavior score indicates risk. The benchmark levels in SAEBRS for Total Behavior are (FastBridge, 2022):

- High Risk: 0-24
- Some Risk: 25-37
- Low Risk: 38-57

The benchmark categories for the subscale scores are:

Scale	High Risk	Some Risk	Low Risk
Social	0-7	8-13	14-18
Academic	0-5	6-10	11-18
Emotional	0-11	12-16	17-21

Not only do the teachers evaluate students for risk-potential three times per year (fall, winter, and spring), but the students assess themselves using MySAEBRS. It consists of 20 items in the Total Behavior category, 7 items in Social Behavior, 6 items in Academic Behavior, and 7 items in Emotional Behavior. Students in grades 2-12 are eligible for this self-screener during the same three windows as the teachers (fall, winter, and spring). When interpreting results from the student self-screener, teachers follow the same structure as with the SAEBRS and begin with the

scores in Total Behavior. The benchmark levels in MySAEBRS for Total Behavior are (FastBridge, 2022):

- High Risk: 0-25
- Some Risk: 26-34
- Low Risk: 35-60

The benchmark categories for the subscale scores are:

Scale	High Risk	Some Risk	Low Risk
Social	0-9	10-13	14-21
Academic	0-6	7-9	10-18
Emotional	0-7	8-11	12-21

Jane’s self-assessment score for SAEBRS in the Total Behavior category was a 21, which put her in the “high risk” category, and the teacher score for her was 37—just barely within the “some risk” range. Specifically concerning was the fact that the subscores within the screener highlighted Jane’s struggle as both internal and external. Her MySAEBRS scores were Social – 11, Academic – 6, and Emotional – 6. These challenges showed up in her attendance during the first quarter of the year as well, when she missed 31 class periods within nine weeks of school (equivalent to three and a half days of instruction). Additionally, her grades suffered, and she earned two D’s and one F, all in core classes. Jane used 17 hallway passes during the nine-week time period. Because this hall pass data collection was new for the school in the 2021-2022 year, the grade level team was not sure of thresholds to be able to use this information in decision making, but the data helped create a “baseline” picture of Jane’s status entering the Tier 2 intervention conversation. The ultimate decision to implement the CICO intervention with Jane came from the grade level team, whose comments, across the board, zeroed in on Jane lacking

confidence in herself and in her abilities to perform well in school. The team wanted to try the CICO intervention with Jane to increase the number of positive interactions she experienced throughout the day, ensure the likelihood that she would enjoy coming to class and participating, and encourage more work completion through daily check-ins. Jane represented several categories of being at risk for challenging behaviors that were described in the first two chapters of this study. She experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) with her parents in her early adolescent years and, as a result, lived with her aunt and uncle during the first half of the school year, and she attended counseling sessions with a therapist weekly (within the school), as well as social group sessions twice a week (also within the school). As far as the categories DiPerna & Elliott (1999) identified as necessary for school success, Jane showed a lack of *interpersonal skills*, and the grade level team specifically identified deficiencies in emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, assertiveness, leadership skills, self-confidence, verbal communication, non-verbal communication, and a positive attitude. She also lacked *prior achievement*, with failing transfer grades following her from her previous school. Her *engagement* and *study skills* also appeared non-existent before implementation of the intervention. The one area identified that Jane *did* exhibit was *motivation*. She expressed a desire to fit in better at her new school and to be a more confident person in classes. Unfortunately, Walker et al. (2010) cited DiPerna & Elliott, saying that a lack in any of these five areas can result in a lack of self-concept (knowing who you are as a person) and social skills, both of which are essential for school success. An additional piece of pertinent information was that Jane moved back to her mother and father's home following the implementation of the CICO intervention, so data collected includes the post-CICO relationship survey from both Jane and

her teacher partner, but grade, attendance, referral data, and hallway pass data from the period following the intervention is not available.

Wesley is both alike and different than Jane. His attendance was a major concern, with 73 class period absences in the first nine weeks (equivalent to eight days of instruction). Wesley also had two office discipline referrals during this time, both because of behavior in classes that distracted himself and his peers from the lesson. One referral resulted from the teacher hearing Wesley making a rude comment under his breath to a peer, and the second occurred because Wesley refused to participate in an assignment in class and then refused to talk to the teacher about the situation in the hallway. It is important, at this point, to explain that Wesley deals with a diagnosis of anxiety, and he sees a therapist outside of school occasionally. Frequently, his reason for not attending classes during those first nine weeks was that his stomach was aching or that he had a headache, which his parents attributed to the anxiety. His self-assessment score on MySAEBRS, however, suggests a conflicting idea, and with a score of 42 for Total Behavior, he qualified for the low-risk category, which suggests appropriate self-actualization. The teacher score for this screener, however, was a bit higher (46) but still qualifies for the “low risk” category. The sub scores on the screeners show that Wesley’s struggles are more internal than external, with a Social Behavior score of 14, Academic Behavior score of 8, and an Emotional Behavior score of 6. Additionally, the hallway pass data shows a higher-risk concern than Jane’s data showed, with Wesley using a hall pass 41 times in the first quarter. The final piece of data for Wesley, and one of the most concerning, is that he ended the quarter with three F’s, one D, and two C’s. The grade level team decided that Wesley needed the CICO intervention to improve the positive interactions with adults throughout the day to ease the anxiety, to increase the number of days Wesley attended school by offering incentives through the CICO program, to

help Wesley increase his work completion, and to make him aware of the distractions he causes and participates in that keep him from focusing on the lesson in the classroom. Wesley represented a few types of “behaviorally challenged” students described in chapters one and two: he was male, tended to receive discipline for his aggression, was a child of divorce and re-marriage, and worked with supports for mental health challenges. The concern surrounding his grades and lack of achievement is supported by Lewis et al. (2017), where they argued that students excluded from class end up falling further behind academically, leading to dropout and chronic patterns of challenging behavior. Wesley’s lack of attendance (whether based on anxiety, academic struggles, or behavioral struggles) means he is excluded from the classroom, and he was removed from the classroom twice in a nine-week period for office discipline referrals, so he was on a path that did not suggest a positive outcome when the team selected him for the CICO intervention. He was lacking *prior achievement, study skills, engagement, and motivation*, which DiPerna & Elliott would argue means that he lacked in social skills and self-concept. Wesley, though, did have competent social skills and interpersonal skills; he was self-confident, communicated well both verbally and non-verbally, kept himself open to feedback, was mostly respectful to adults, and served as a leader for his peers. His negative attitude, lack of empathy, and inability to successfully resolve conflict did suggest a lack of self-concept.

Caleb was the very first student recommended for the CICO intervention during the 2021-2022 school year, and the recommendation came earlier than the end of the first nine weeks. He was a new student to the school, and the 6th grade team was having a very hard time figuring him out. His records from previous schools indicated major discipline concerns that included yelling curse words, throwing furniture, and becoming violent with adults, yet the teachers at this school had not seen much of that. What they were seeing was a student who

could not seem to focus on anything. He wanted to interrupt the class frequently and typically made statements that had nothing to do with the lesson. Caleb was a student with an Individual Education Plan, and he was enrolled in a combination of inclusive and self-contained classes throughout the day. He was also a student diagnosed with Autism and Oppositional Defiant Disorder, along with anxiety. Even though the team wanted to start him on CICO earlier than the end of the quarter, they evaluated his data at the same time as the other students to make sure their efforts were supported, and his attendance, discipline, and behavior screener all showed evidence of a need. Caleb was absent 60 class periods in the first quarter (equivalent to almost seven days of instruction); he had two office discipline referrals (one for yelling curse words and one for disrupting the lesson because a peer did not agree with him on which type of “muscle car” was the best); and his SAEBRS score from the teacher in the Total Behavior category was a 31, which fits in the “some risk” category. Caleb had not completed the self-assessment MySAEBRS survey, so it was impossible to determine whether his struggles were more internal or external. His hallway pass data was somewhere between Jane and Wesley, with 33 hall passes in the first quarter. Grade-wise, however, Caleb was on a stronger track, with all A's and B's. Despite all of Caleb's mental health needs, he had not been seeing a therapist or receiving services outside of occasionally visiting the school counselor. Because Caleb represented several categories of students at risk for challenging behaviors (Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, male, aggressive tendencies, and mental health needs) the team hoped the CICO intervention would help Caleb identify the correlation between his outbursts in class and his discipline issues, help him find a connection in a new school setting that would increase the number of days he attended school, and allow Caleb to experience more positive interactions with adults than negative to stave off the discipline issues reported by the previous school. The grade level team

(specifically his Special Education teacher) saw that Caleb lacked in *interpersonal skills, study skills, motivation, engagement, and prior achievement*—**all** the categories DiPerna & Elliott identified as necessary for academic success. Because he lacked in all these areas, Caleb also lacked in social skills **and** self-concept, which made him a very challenging student to work with in the classroom.

The final student participant, Lisa, was recommended for the CICO intervention by the grade level team solely based on attendance and grades. She ended the first quarter with two F's and 1 D, even though she would get the work started in class and do well with her work. One major problem was that she would frequently not finish the assignments or turn them in. The other big issue was her attendance. She missed 88 class periods (equivalent to almost 10 days of instruction), and even though she would have a great attitude in class and work hard, she just never would catch up from the days absent. Lisa's SAEBRS scores showed a little bit of risk but nothing to base the CICO intervention decision on, and teacher comments regarding Lisa were all positive except for her absences and lack of turning in assignments. She did have 41 hallway passes during the first nine weeks, which mirrors some of the other subjects in this study as a concern. The grade level team saw that Lisa lacked *study skills, motivation, and engagement*, but she did possess some prior achievement and interpersonal skills. Lisa loved talking with teachers about topics unrelated to school. The biggest concern was that her avoidance of work, and her lack of attendance, would lead to the same negative outcomes suggested by Lewis, et al. (2017): higher likelihood of dropout and chronic challenging behaviors. Ultimately, the grade level team hoped that the CICO intervention would provide a connection to school for Lisa, let her know that someone at school was always looking forward to meeting with her, and give her the support

she needed daily to see if her work was done and submitted, ultimately contributing to a more well-defined self-concept.

As far as teacher participants, Mrs. Jones just happened to have both Jane and Wesley in her homeroom class and was, therefore, assigned as both students' CICO partner. She was new to the middle school at the start of the 2021-2022 school year but had been in another building in the district and was familiar with the Tier 2 behavior intervention efforts and the CICO intervention. Mrs. Jones was a calm teacher with a quiet voice who treated students fairly but tended to maintain distant relationships with all students as opposed to developing close professional bonds with any individuals. She did not routinely use official referral forms but instead chose to work through most discipline concerns herself. Mrs. Bryant was also new to the building at the start of the year, but like Mrs. Jones, she had been in another building within the district prior and was familiar with the efforts, and she had Lisa assigned to her homeroom class. Mrs. Bryant was very similar to Mrs. Jones in her relationships with students. She was pleasant with everyone but kept most students at a distance instead of making strong professional connections with any of them. She, too, was not a frequent office referrer, and she chose to deal with most discipline within the classroom. Mrs. Riley, however, has been in this middle school for several years and was a part of the team that focused on developing the Tier 2 behavior intervention strategies to be used with students. She had spent much time over the previous two years working on implementing social skills into her classroom lessons and prided herself on being able to work with every student on an individual level. She, too, possessed a soft voice and calm demeanor, and she would rarely send a child to the hallway or to the office because of behavioral challenges. However, she was resistant at first to partner with Caleb, even though he was assigned to her homeroom. She had been forced to write an office discipline referral for him

because of the aggressive nature of the offense and the language incorporated, and she had been struggling to find any redeeming qualities in him. Ultimately, though, she decided that this partnership might help them both, so she agreed.

The participants for this study (and parents of the students) were provided informed consent forms in association with the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol, as well as debriefing forms (also part of the IRB protocol and provided in the appendix) to provide an understanding of the research questions and the purpose of the research, as well as the requirements involved for each participant. The consent forms, provided in the appendix, were required because the participants were children and needed to be protected from possible negative impacts of a research study. The IRB at Kansas State approved the research study based on the parameters it outlines to protect youth participants. Teacher participants also signed the IRB consent forms to ensure their willingness to participate based on the included explanation of the study and its purposes. Parents of each student participant, as well as the student and teacher participants, had the opportunity to ask questions and all ultimately signed the IRB consent forms as affirmation of willingness to participate.

Data Collection Methods

The study employed two Qualtrics surveys: The Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory (Ang, 2005) and the Student-Teacher Relationship Inventory (adapted from Ang, 2005), both of which were completed by both student and teacher participants before beginning the intervention, halfway through the intervention period, and at the culmination of the intervention period. Ang's original Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory was created to measure teacher perceptions of the quality of their relationship with students from Grade 4 through junior high school (Ang, 2005). Ang found importance in creating this survey because of research describing

fifth- and sixth-grade students who experienced poor relationships with teachers and scored poorly on self- and teacher-rated social and emotional adjustment compared with students who experienced positive relationships with teachers (Ang, 2005). She also described empirical evidence from Hughes et al. (1999, as cited in Ang, 2005) showing that the quality of teacher-student relationships predicts aggressive children's developmental trajectories. Positive teacher-student relationships produced less aggression after one year, while negative teacher-student relationships produced more. When Ang created this survey in 2005, she did so because there was a lack of inventories focused on relationships between teachers and older elementary and middle school-aged children (Ang, 2005). Adolescents rarely mention teachers as having influence in their lives, but studies of social support continue to point to teacher support as a significant predictor of motivation, academic achievement, and behavior (Alexander et al., 2001; Goodenow, 1993; Wentzel, 1997 as cited in Ang, 2005). Ang initially created a 20-item scale based on the affective items within existing measures of teachers' perceptions of teacher-student relationships, and she deleted four redundant items and reworded two. The scale then consisted of 16 items, and teachers rated the extent to which they agreed with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *almost never true*, 2 = *seldom true*, 3 = *sometimes true*, 4 = *often true*, and 5 = *almost always true*). The statements included in the Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory are:

1. I enjoyed having this student in my class.
2. If the student has a problem at home, he/she is likely to ask for my help.
3. I would describe my relationship with this student as positive.
4. This student frustrates me more than most other students in my class.
5. If this student is absent, I will miss him/her.

6. The student shares with me things about his/her personal life.
7. I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach this student next year.
8. If this student is absent, I feel relieved.
9. If this student needs help, he/she is likely to ask me for help.
10. The students turn to me for a listening ear or for sympathy.
11. If this student is not in my class, I will be able to enjoy my class more.
12. The student depends on me for advice or help.
13. I am happy with my relationship with this student.
14. I like this student.

In order to look at the reciprocal results from student perceptions of their relationships with teachers, the researcher adapted Ang's original inventory to fit the student perceptions of their teachers regarding similar statements, including:

1. I enjoy having this teacher in class.
2. If I have a problem at home, I am likely to ask this teacher for help.
3. I would describe my relationship with this teacher as positive.
4. This teacher frustrates me more than most other teachers in my classes.
5. If this teacher is absent, I will miss him/her.
6. I share this teacher with this teacher things about my personal life.
7. I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to learn from this teacher next year.
8. If this teacher is absent, I feel relieved.
9. If I need help, I am likely to ask this teacher for help.

10. I turn to this teacher for a listening ear or for sympathy.
11. If this teacher is not in my class, I will be able to enjoy the class more.
12. I depend on this teacher for advice or help.
13. I am happy with my relationship with this teacher.
14. I like this teacher.

Students used the same Likert 5-point scale to rate the extent to which they agreed with each statement (1 = *almost never true*, 2 = *seldom true*, 3 = *sometimes true*, 4 = *often true*, and 5 = *almost always true*). Teachers and students completed surveys prior to the CICO intervention being implemented, after four weeks of intervention, and at the end of the eight-week intervention period. Survey completion for students occurred in the researcher's office but at a table separate from the researcher's desk, and the average time for survey completion was five minutes. Teachers completed electronic Qualtrics versions of the surveys in their own classrooms and on their own time. Completion and return of surveys, however, was typically completed within a day of the researcher's request.

Within one to two days of survey completion, each participant was interviewed using an interview protocol created by the researcher to seek further explanation of survey responses. The entirety of the interview protocol is included in the appendix, but the basic structure for each question in both student and teacher interviews was as follows in this example from question 1 of the Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory:

If response to Q1 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Describe what it is like to have this student in class and explain why it is hard to enjoy having this student in class. In the rare instances that you DO enjoy having the student in class, what does that look like?*

If response to Q1 if “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” –

Describe what it is like to have this student in class and explain why you enjoy having this student in class. In the instances that you DO NOT enjoy having this student in class, what does that look like?

The goal of this format of interview protocol was to stay focused on the statements in the survey but to allow the participants to further explain their Likert rating to provide the researcher with a clearer understanding of the relationship between the two participants.

Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and was performed in the researcher's office. The interviews were recorded, with participant permission, via cellular device recording, and the interview questions were open-ended about the participants' feelings toward the teacher/student opposite the participant and the perceptions that are present as a result.

Interviews were conducted in person and were transcribed by the interviewer, who checked for errors along the way. Before each interview, the researcher reviewed the rules of the interview: participants would not be identified by name and there were no right or wrong answers, only answers to the questions based on the participants' thoughts and opinions. Each participant agreed to have the interviews recorded. The researcher also explained to both sets of participants that the interview was a “zero-judgment” zone, and each person should feel comfortable being 100% honest without fear of retribution. Each participant was reassured about the confidentiality measures taken (pseudonyms, protected recordings, etc.) to allow them to answer honestly and openly. During the interviews, participants were encouraged to ask questions if they did not hear a question or needed clarification. If clarification was necessary, the researcher reworded the question until the participant was able to understand and answer the question.

In addition to the qualitative data collection, each teacher mentor maintained the daily CICO point sheets which were included in the data collection. The study also considered student grades, student discipline records, and behavior screener data prior to, during, and after implementation of the behavior intervention, as this information supports the probability of whether the students can be predicted to succeed as they progress through school and helps to determine what types of impact the CICO intervention may or may not have had. The CICO point sheets were given to student participants during morning check-ins with teachers, and students carried them around to each teacher during each class of the day. After each teacher scored and signed the sheet, the student would carry it with him/her to the next hour's class. At the end of the day, the CICO teacher partner collected the sheets, added the points, and delivered the point sheets to the researcher, where the data was collected in an Excel spreadsheet. The grade, attendance, office referral, and behavior screener data were collected from the Student Information System (Power School) and from the FastBridge Suite of Assessments and maintained quarterly by the researcher in an Excel spreadsheet.

Data Analysis

Coding of interview transcripts occurred as interviews were completed, in three separate settings throughout a nine-week period (pre-intervention, mid-intervention, and post-intervention). The initial goal was to follow four pairings of students and teachers to make the transcription and coding manageable within the time frame. Coding each set of interviews forced the researcher to avoid overemphasizing any one theme early in the study and analyze the transcripts at the conclusion of the study. One participant set was unable to complete the final set of interviews at the conclusion of the intervention period. Wesley experienced a traumatic

concussion and was out of school for an extensive time during his recovery, so only his data before and during the intervention was considered.

The selective coding method was used throughout the study to identify themes/categories as they naturally began to emerge. As Yin (2002) suggests, theme identification should be able to happen chronologically and in a comparative manner. Throughout the course of the intervention period and subsequent interviews, the researcher was able to familiarize herself with the data and identify general ideas common among participants. The researcher categorized themes from the transcripts and created an initial list of codes. After reviewing the data consecutive times, the codes were revised and narrowed. The themes that emerged over the course of the interviews with the teachers were: teacher hesitation, frustrations, worries, shifts in attitude, positive concerns, celebrations, reflection, and hopes for the future. For the students, themes emerged in the following categories: positivity related to teachers, concern about sharing personal information, appropriate interactions, positive changes, uncertainty about ability to continue positivity, and desire regarding continuation of the intervention. The researcher's commitment to utilizing trustworthy data occurred via patterns revealed in participant data. Because the epistemological foundation of this study is constructive in nature, the qualitative data provided multiple versions of knowledge and can be evaluated based on a variety of personal experiences from the participants (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998). Once the initial code list was created, the researcher was able to narrow down the themes into the following categories for **all** participants: concerns regarding relationships, positive interactions, shifts in perspective, and celebrations. However, the themes that emerged from the teacher participants told a much more cohesive story than those of the student participants. Because the students all came to the intervention with differing backgrounds and reasons for participating, the teachers started from the same

perspective of being a bit unsure whether CICO would make an impact on their student partners but also willing to give it a go. The positive attitudes they all three experienced about their CICO partners at the end of the study period, in comparison with their concerned attitudes at the start, did show a positive impact of the CICO intervention—the shift in perception these teachers had about students identified as being “behaviorally challenged” for a variety of reasons.

Data from daily CICO intervention sheets was collected in Excel spreadsheet format and then evaluated for change over time. The data was ultimately displayed in a line graph within the Excel program to depict change in daily points achieved over the course of eight weeks. The point totals were recorded based on the 85 daily point scale provided by the CICO daily points sheet, and the line graphs simply showed the change in points each individual student experienced from day to day. As a reminder, the CICO daily points sheets provide each teacher throughout the student’s seven-period day to assign a possible 9 points: 3 points each for be respectful, be responsible, and give your best effort. In addition to the seven class periods, students received scores for the MTSS intervention time period and for the homeroom time period at the end of the day. The final four points came from remembering to check-in and check-out at the start and end of the school day. Total points possible each day were 85, and an average score of 68 points (80%) was the desired goal for each student, each day. Days absent are shown as “0” points, and the line dips to the base of the graph on those days, making it clear those days do not factor into the overall trends depicted by the rest of the graph. The researcher did use the “trend line” feature to evaluate the graphs for overall positive or negative trends, but the trend line was not included in the final “results” chapter as the graphs became too difficult to read with the trend line included.

Positionality/Subjectivity Statement

The researcher for this study works as an administrator in a Midwestern middle school and holds a bachelor of science in journalism, a master of arts in education, and a master of arts in educational administration, with 20 years of experience in the education field. Participants in this study all have direct relationships with the researcher, either as an employee or as a student; however, as the study is intended to inform the researcher about the impact of a program and to determine whether the program is useful for the researcher's school or whether it should be terminated, there is no inherent bias in the research study. The researcher does acknowledge that the CICO Tier 2 intervention had already been in place at this school for two years prior to this research study and that the staff at the school were supportive of CICO as an intervention because of the behavioral changes they had seen in students who had previously participated in the intervention. The researcher herself had seen the positive effects of the intervention on behavior and, sometimes, grades. Initially, this study was going to focus on whether CICO could be as effective with students whose function of their behavior was to gain peer attention or to avoid attention as research shows it to be with students who seek adult attention through their behavior. But over the course of time and reading the literature, it became clear that the intervention did show success in changing behaviors for students with all three functions of behavior, and that the real gap in information was whether this intervention had any impact on the relationship between teacher and student or whether it increased the equity of access to the classroom content for students with challenging behavior. This was the area that the researcher had no previous evidence to show or opinions to share, and since this is the focus of the current study, there is still no inherent bias.

The researcher has been trained in the skills necessary to carry out the designed study; graduate-level coursework in qualitative research at Kansas State University, as well as actual qualitative studies performed as a job responsibility, will ensure an effective and unbiased study.

Chapter 4 - Results

This study sought to explore the effect of positive relationships between student and teacher, specifically at the middle school level, and to determine what impact the use of the Tier 2 intervention Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) may have on teacher and student perceptions of one another. One goal of the research was to evaluate the intervention for its potential to help ensure educational equity for all students regarding access to the curriculum. The daily point sheets from the CICO intervention were collected and graphed to monitor students' growth or regression over the course of the study with respect to their behavior in the classroom (specifically focusing on respect, responsibility, and giving effort). The results were gathered from the four student research subjects over the course of 40 school days, and pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants. The students had the possibility of earning a total of 85 points each day (nine points possible per nine periods and four points possible for morning and afternoon "check-in") with a goal of earning 68 points or more (80%), and days absent were recorded as zero points. See Figures 3-6 for the results.

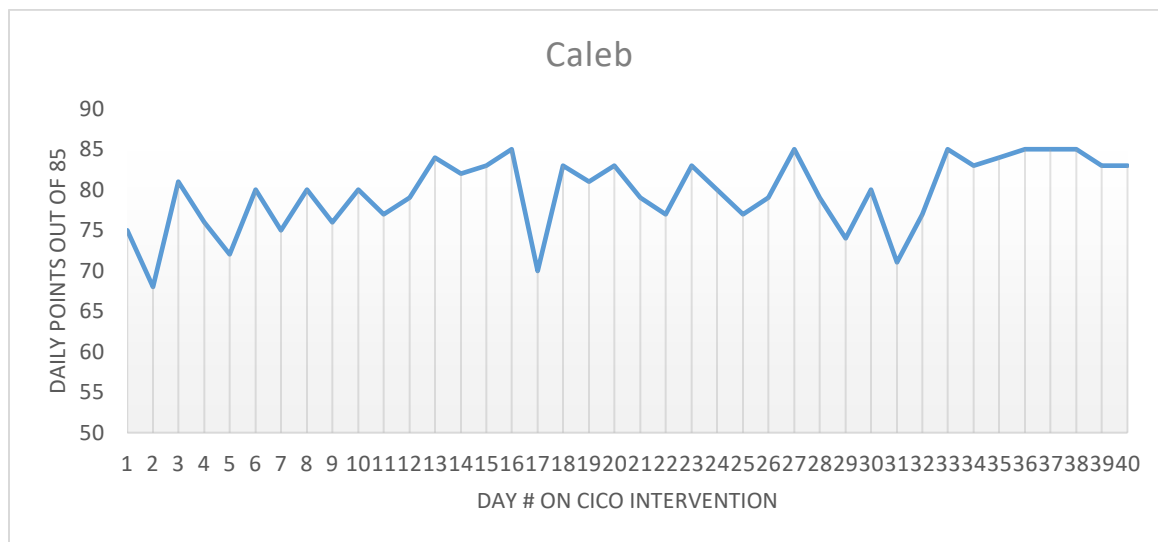


Figure 3. Caleb

Caleb maintained scores between 68 and 85 over the course of the 40 days of intervention implementation. His average scores were as follows for each week: Week One – 74.4; Week Two – 78.2; Week Three – 81; Week Four – 80.4; Week Five – 79.2; Week Six – 79.4; Week Seven – 80; and Week Eight – 84.2. Caleb did not miss school during the period of implementation, and he earned at least the goal of 68 points (80%) every day of the intervention period.

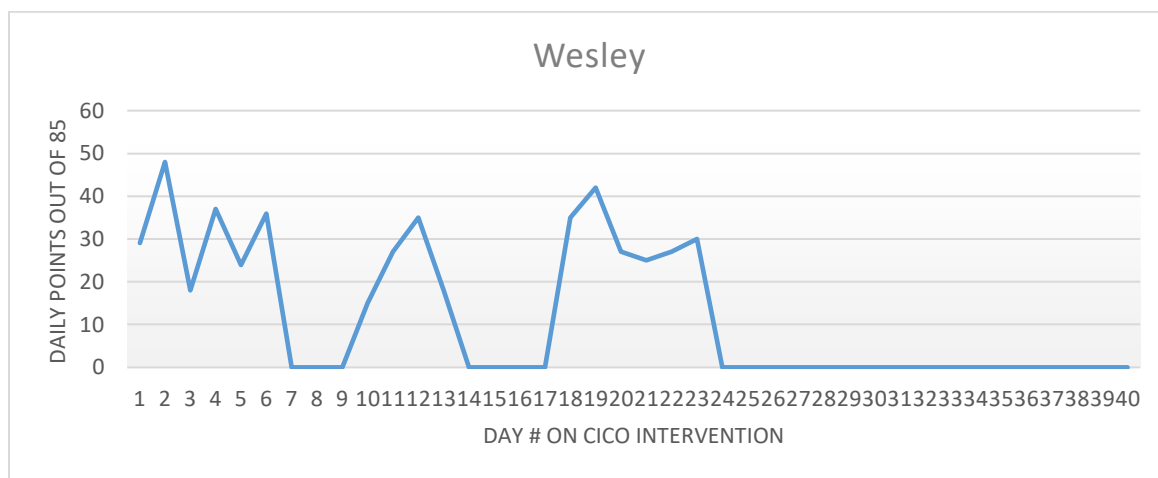


Figure 4. Wesley

Wesley maintained scores between 18 and 48 on the days he was present during the period of implementation. He was absent on days 7-9, 14-17, and then 24-40 because of his concussion and recovery time. His weekly averages are not as accurate because of his absences, but they are as follows: Week One – 31.2; Week Two – 25.2; Week Three – 26.7; Week Four – 34.7; and Week Five – 27.3. Wesley never earned the goal of 68 points or higher (80%), and in fact, only two of his daily scores reached above 40 (which is less than half of the total points possible – 85).

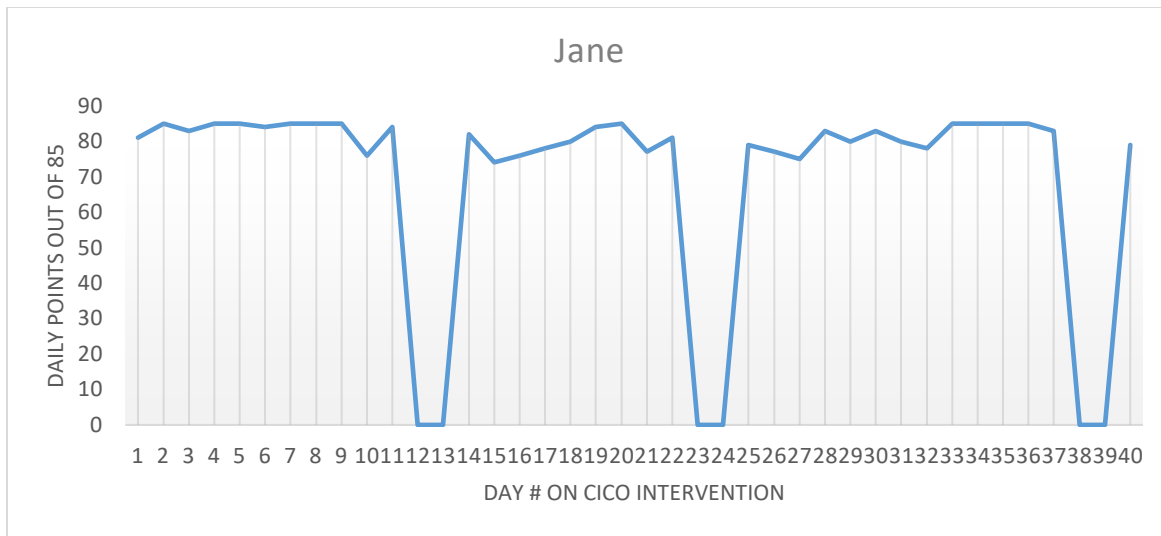


Figure 5. Jane

Jane maintained scores between 74 and 85 on the days she was present during the implementation period. She was absent from school on days 12-13, 23-24, and 38-39. Jane's weekly averages are more accurate than Wesley's despite her absences, and they are as follows: Week One – 83.8; Week Two – 83; Week Three – 80; Week Four – 80.6; Week Five – 79; Week Six – 79.6; Week Seven – 82.6; and Week Eight – 82.3. Jane was able to earn at least the goal score of 68 or higher every day that she participated in the intervention, and her daily scores did not vary more than a couple of points one way or the other each day compared to the day prior.

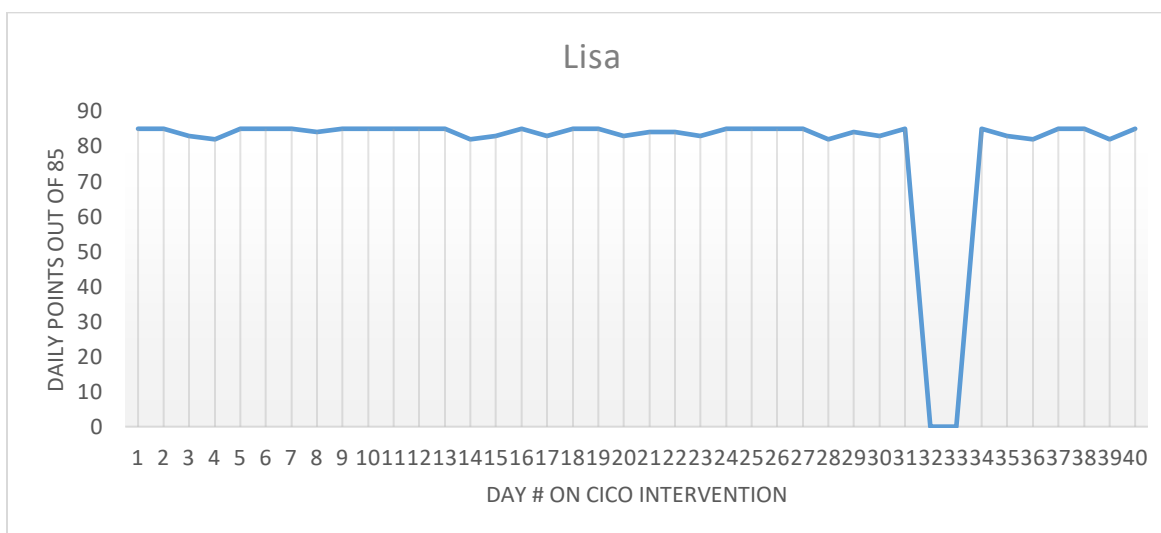


Figure 6. Lisa

Lisa maintained scores between 82 and 85 except for days 32 and 33, when she was absent from school. Her weekly averages are as follows: Week One – 84; Week Two – 84.8; Week Three – 84; Week Four – 84.2; Week Five – 84.2; Week Six – 83.8; Week Seven – 84.3; and Week Eight – 83.8. Lisa maintained the highest daily scores of any of the student participants, and her scores remained within a three-point range throughout the eight-week intervention.

Data was also collected pre-, mid-, and post-intervention in the areas listed in Tables 1-4.

Table 1. Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Intervention Grades

	Grades PRE-CICO		Grades MID-CICO		Grades POST-CICO	
Caleb	A	1	A	1	A	0
	B	5	B	4	B	2
	C	1	C	1	C	1
	D	0	D	0	D	2
	F	0	F	1	F	2
Wesley	A	0	A	0	A	0
	B	1	B	0	B	1
	C	2	C	3	C	1
	D	1	D	0	D	1
	F	3	F	4	F	4
Jane	A	2	A	2	A	N/A
	B	2	B	2	B	N/A
	C	0	C	1	C	N/A
	D	2	D	2	D	N/A
	F	1	F	0	F	N/A
Lisa	A	3	A	2	A	2
	B	1	B	2	B	1
	C	0	C	1	C	2
	D	1	D	2	D	1
	F	2	F	0	F	1

Because Jane moved back to her mother and father’s home at the end of the intervention, there was no post-intervention data for her, but the others all remained enrolled in the school beyond the eight-week intervention, and grade data was available from the grading period

following their exit from the daily CICO intervention. Caleb and Wesley both ended up with poorer grades both during and following the intervention period, with Caleb going from seven grades in the “A”, “B”, and “C” categories at the start of the intervention to only three grades in the “B” and “C” categories post-intervention, as well as two “D” and two “F” grades; Wesley went from three grades in the “B” and “C” categories and four in the “D” and “F” categories at the start of implementation to two grades in the “B” and “C” categories and five in the “D” and “F” categories post-intervention. Jane and Lisa both reduced the number of failing grades during the intervention period with Jane moving from one “F” to zero by the end of the intervention, and Lisa moving from two “F” grades to one.

Table 2. Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Intervention Office Discipline Referrals

	Office Discipline Referrals PRE-CICO	Office Discipline Referrals MID-CICO	Office Discipline Referrals POST-CICO
Caleb	2	1	2
Wesley	0	0	0
Jane	0	0	N/A
Lisa	0	0	0

The number of office referrals remained at zero for Wesley, Jane, and Lisa throughout the period of research, while Caleb was able to reduce his office discipline referrals during the CICO implantation, but then he increased again following the cessation of the intervention.

Table 3. Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Intervention Attendance

	Attendance PRE-CICO	Attendance MID-CICO	Attendance POST-CICO
Caleb	60 class periods absent	0 class periods absent	56 class periods absent
Wesley	73 class periods absent	192 class periods absent	32 class periods absent
Jane	31 class periods absent	48 class periods absent	N/A
Lisa	88 class periods absent	16 class periods absent	8 class periods absent

Attendance for Caleb followed the same pattern as his discipline referrals, and while he missed no days during the implementation of CICO, prior to and afterwards, his attendance was concerning. Wesley's attendance was not a discussion point because of his head injury. Jane's absenteeism increased a bit during the CICO implementation, but Lisa's absence rate decreased by a large percentage throughout the intervention and remained low in the period following.

Table 4. Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Intervention Hallway Passes

	Hallway Passes PRE-CICO	Hallway Passes MID-CICO	Hallway Passes POST-CICO
Caleb	33	22	0
Wesley	41	6	13
Jane	17	6	N/A
Lisa	41	43	15

Hallway pass data for Wesley was misleading because the low number during implementation was a direct result of his head injury and time out of school. However, his post-CICO hallway pass number was promising, as he was back in school post-injury during this data collection period. Both Caleb and Jane decreased their number of hallway passes used during the implementation period, and Caleb continued to decrease his hallway visits post-CICO. Lisa, on the other hand, continued her same pattern of leaving the classroom during the intervention period and only decreased the frequency once the intervention was finished.

The numerical data provided via the Student Information System (PowerSchool) and the FastBridge Suite of Assessments, in combination with the daily CICO points, hints at a bit of a mixed methods design to this study, but the numerical data was utilized to determine a baseline status for each student. For example, Caleb's attendance prior to the intervention was concerning, and it remained a concern after the intervention was completed, but during the intervention, he attended school every day. The data in Caleb's case suggests that his attendance may have resulted from the intervention, which may have changed the relationships he was

experiencing in school, which may have increased his willingness to feel connected and, therefore, attend school. Both Jane and Lisa were able to lower the number of failing grades during the intervention period, but Lisa earned a new failing grade post-intervention. When compared with the daily CICO point data, where both girls consistently earned the desired point total, this data could possibly suggest that CICO may have improved some sort of connection to the classroom that resulted in better grades.

Ultimately, though, the design of this study was focused on the qualitative method, and the next series of results provided the basis for the interview protocol. Students and their teacher partners completed the Student-Teacher Relationship Inventory or the Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory at the start of the intervention, midway, and at the conclusion of the research period. Each time a survey was completed, the researcher interviewed the subjects utilizing an interview protocol designed to allow the participants to more fully explain the thoughts and feelings that led them to select each survey answer. Again, Wesley's mid-study head injury prevented final surveys and interviews from being conducted for Wesley and his teacher partner, Mrs. Jones. The data from their first two surveys and interviews was included, however.

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey (adapted from Ang, 2005) asked 14 questions, and in the process of displaying the large amounts of data for analysis, the researcher determined that the survey results needed to be condensed. In examining the questions included in the two relationship inventories, the research identified that nine of the inventory questions could be classified as dealing with the "enjoyment of the relationship." Those questions are:

Q1. I enjoy having this teacher (student) in class.

Q3. I would describe my relationship with this teacher (student) as positive.

Q4. This teacher (student) frustrates me more than most other teachers (students) in my classes.

Q5. If this teacher (student) is absent, I will miss him/her.

Q7. I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to learn from this teacher (teach this student) next year.

Q8. If this teacher (student) is absent, I feel relieved.

Q11. If this teacher (student) is not in my class, I will be able to enjoy the class more.

Q13. I am happy with my relationship with this teacher (student).

Q14. I like this teacher (student).

The researcher identified the other five questions as focusing on “interpersonal interactions with teachers (students),” and those questions are:

Q1. If I have a problem at home, I am likely to ask this teacher for help/If this student has a problem at home, he/she is likely to ask me for help.

Q6. I share with this teacher things about my personal life/This student shares with me things about his/her personal life.

Q9. If I need help, I am likely to ask this teacher for help/If this student needs help, he/she is likely to ask me for help.

Q10. I turn to this teacher for a listening ear or for sympathy/This students turns to me for a listening ear or for sympathy.

Q12. I depend on this teacher for advice or help/This student depends on me for advice or help.

Tables 5 and 6 show the results of the questions from both students and teachers in the “enjoyment of the relationship” category. Over the course of the CICO intervention period, three

of the four students either maintained a positive perspective or increased their positive feelings about the overall relationships with their teachers. Caleb was the one student who contradicted himself in whether he felt good about the relationship and whether his teacher being present in his class was positive or not so positive. It is possible that his diagnosis of ADHD impacted his ability to answer the survey questions in a way that truly reflected his feelings and thoughts, or it could just be that, as a 6th grade student, his opinions were dependent on the type of day he was having.

Table 5. Student Responses Focused on Enjoyment of Relationship

<i>Q1. I enjoy having this teacher in class.</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO				L	C, W, J
Mid-CICO					C, W, J, L
Post-CICO					C, J, L
<i>Q3. I would describe my relationship with this teacher as positive</i>	<i>Almost never true</i>	<i>Seldom true</i>	<i>Sometimes true</i>	<i>Often true</i>	<i>Almost always true</i>
Pre-CICO				L	C, W, J
Mid-CICO				C	W, J, L
Post-CICO				C	J, L
<i>Q4. This teacher frustrates me more than most other teachers in my classes</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO	C, W, J, L				
Mid-CICO	W, J, L	C			
Post-CICO	C, J, L				
<i>Q5. If this teacher is absent, I will miss him/her</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO	C		W	J, L	

Mid-CICO	C		W	J, L	
Post-CICO			C		J, L
<i>Q7. I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to learn from this teacher next year</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO	W, J, L	C			
Mid-CICO	C, W, J, L				
Post-CICO	C, J, L				
<i>Q8. If this teacher is absent, I feel relieved</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-, Mid-, & Post-CICO	C, W, J, L				
<i>Q11. If this teacher is not in my class, I will be able to enjoy the class more</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO	C, W, J, L				
Mid-CICO	C, W, J, L				
Post-CICO	J, L	C			
<i>Q13. I am happy with my relationship with this teacher</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO			C	L	W, J
Mid-CICO			C	L	W, J
Post-CICO				C	J, L
<i>Q14. I like this teacher</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO			C		W, J, L
Mid-CICO			C		W, J, L
Post-CICO					C, J, L
*C = Caleb, W = Wesley, J = Jane, & L = Lisa					

Regarding the teacher version of these results, they revealed more growth in the positive perceptions of the relationships the teachers formed with the students over the course of the CICO intervention. Survey answers regarding Jane and Lisa either started positively and maintained that status or increased in the frequency of the teachers being able to answer in the affirmative. Regarding Caleb and Wesley, the same held true with just two exceptions: Mrs. Jones consistently reported finding Wesley sometimes more frustrating than other students; and although Mrs. Riley initially seemed to have a more positive perception of enjoy having Caleb in her class, at the end of the intervention period, she reported that she only found this to be true “often” instead of “almost always,” and her explanation in her final interview of desiring to find Caleb some friends may have impacted how she answered that question. Mrs. Riley’s journey with Caleb started off with expressions of frustration, but she described more and more positive outcomes during each successive interview. She explained during the first interview:

It’s harder with Caleb in the homeroom time, and I think it’s because it’s less structured, but he doesn’t follow instruction and that makes it really hard – especially at the end of the day. The students started complaining because he has trouble controlling himself. School is difficult for him, and so I would say that’s the positive that I recognize about him – that he has a hard time controlling it. I’m still getting to know him and he’s so different. He’s not consistent, so I am trying to figure out what is the trigger...He’s kind of free-range and does whatever he wants to do – getting out of his seat and blurting out. Some phrases from this portion of the interview key in on the frustration Mrs. Riley was feeling: “it’s harder with Caleb,” “less structured,” “doesn’t follow instruction,” “makes it really hard,” “students started complaining,” “trouble controlling himself,” “school is difficult,” “hard time controlling,” “he’s so different,” “not consistent,” “kind of free-range,” “does whatever he wants

to do,” “getting out of his seat,” and “blurting”—14 phrases focused on the negativity she felt toward Caleb prior to the CICO intervention. Within those phrases are a few areas where she did not seem to recognize *she* could make an impact. Because he struggles with “less structure,” she could have provided more structure for him or begin to teach him how to create his own structure within unstructured environments. If he “doesn’t follow instructions” and seems to be “free-range,” she could have utilized structure to make directions clear and in a way that he could understand, and incorporate movement so he could have handled his energy in a more productive way. When he “blurts,” she could have provided him a structure such as “talking chips” where he would get three chips or playing cards and would have to give up one every time he blurted; when the chips are gone, there is no more talking without a consequence. Because “school is difficult” for Caleb, she could have recognized that people shy away from things that are uncomfortable or difficult, so Caleb needed her to provide scaffolded support for his academic needs.

Fortunately, during the mid-CICO interview, her optimism regarding Caleb had grown:

He’s more focused and more pleasant. He’s been doing really good. He’s so slow to open up, but I think he’s just starting to feel safe with me, and I feel like I’m able to kid around with him now. We’re building the relationship both ways now. We’re not there yet, but we are building it. I can compliment him on things now and he will kind of take it. In those few minutes when he comes up to get his CICO paper, I can visit with him and that is working out really well. I’m just really pleased with how it’s going. His behaviors are changing, and that’s a big thing. He’s lightened up a little, and he’s more apt to talk where before he would just come in mad. Now, I don’t have to watch to make sure he isn’t going to poke someone with a pencil, so that’s good!

When he's gone, it's an empty void, and you just wonder what's going on. Is everything okay? Is he tardy? Is he in the office? It's not a relief – it's more about 'where is he?'

The reduction in negative phrases in this answer was quite inspiring. The only negative phrases included here were "slow to open up" and "not there yet" and even those were not truly negative. Identifying that Caleb struggled with opening up allowed Mrs. Riley to proceed slowly with trying to joke with him and visit during check-in times. The fact that she said their relationship was "not there yet" came right after explaining that the pair was indeed beginning to form a relationship. Contrary to Mrs. Riley's positive attitude during this second interview, Caleb's perception of their relationship remained relatively static from the first interview. He still felt uncomfortable sharing personal information; he still expressed a dislike of substitute teachers; and he still identified that he liked Mrs. Riley because they shared a love of history.

The positive changes in her perceptions of Caleb led Mrs. Riley, in her third interview, to reveal frustration with how to help Caleb with some personal issues she noticed:

Caleb is doing just awesome! He is not blurting out, and he is still relaxed and enjoyable to talk to. I really like him! Now, I worry about him. I want him to have friends, and I want him to be happy (she got teary-eyed here). He's just such a neat kid, and I know he struggles with friendships and knowing how to get along with people. I just wish I could help him.

The difference from the first interview, where Mrs. Riley was not able to relate to Caleb and just felt frustration toward him, to the last, where she had gained a liking for Caleb and wanted to reach him beyond the classroom to make him happier overall, was obvious. Taking the time each day to converse with Caleb, get to know him better, help him see the areas he needed to work on

and the times of day where he struggled the most, and to celebrate successes with him changed Mrs. Riley's perception of Caleb altogether.

The other teachers also reported more growth in their positive perceptions of the relationships with their students than the students reported.

Table 6. Teacher Responses Focused on Enjoyment of Relationship

<i>Q1. I enjoy having this student in my class.</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO			R, J-W	B	J-J
Mid-CICO			J-W	B	R, J-J
Post-CICO				R	J-J, B
<i>Q3. I would describe my relationship with this student as positive</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO			J-W	R	J-J, B
Mid-CICO			J-W		R, J-J, B
Post-CICO					R, J-J, B
<i>Q4. This student frustrates me more than most other students in my classes</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO		J-J, B		R, J-W	
Mid-CICO	B	R, J-J		J-W	
Post-CICO	J-J, B	R			
<i>Q5. If this student is absent, I will miss him/her</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO		R, J-W	B	J-J	
Mid-CICO			R, J-W, B	J-J	
Post-CICO			R	B	J-J

<i>Q7. I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach this student next year</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-, Mid-, & Post-CICO	R, J-W, J-J, B				
<i>Q8. If this student is absent, I feel relieved</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-, Mid-, & Post-CICO	R, J-W, J-J, B				
<i>Q11. If this student is not in my class, I will be able to enjoy my class more</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO	J-J	B	J-W	R	
Mid-CICO	J-J, B	R, J-W			
Post-CICO	R, J-J, B				
<i>Q13. I am happy with my relationship with this student</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO			R, J-W	J-J, B	
Mid-CICO			J-W	R, J-J	B
Post-CICO					R, J-J, B
<i>Q14. I like this student</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO			R, J-W	B	J-J
Mid-CICO			J-W		R, J-J, B
Post-CICO					R, J-J, B
R = Mrs. Riley J-W = Mrs. Jones responding about Wesley J-J = Mrs. Jones responding about Jane B = Mrs. Bryant					

In Tables 7 and 8, the researcher noticed an interesting trend within the four participants of this study. Both Lisa and Jane gained more positive perspectives of their interpersonal relationships with their teachers and grew in their willingness to share personal concerns with teachers, ask for help, and rely on their teachers for a listening ear. Both Wesley and Caleb, however, remained less than positive about sharing personal information and asking for advice from their teachers, despite the intervention requiring frequent one-on-one time between the participant partners.

At the beginning of the intervention period, Jane expressed:

Mrs. Jones is nice. She smiles and has a quiet voice, which I like because loud noises bother me. But I don't think talking to her about my life would be a good thing. She doesn't have time to listen to me complain – she has to deal with all these kids! But that's okay. She's still really nice.

Jane was attracted to Mrs. Jones's quiet voice and smiles, and Jane herself possessed a quiet, childlike voice and shyly smiled when teachers past her in the hallway. Jane also felt badly about requiring any time from Mrs. Jones to talk about personal topics; Jane had been shifted around from her parents to her aunt and uncle because the parents could not give her the time she required as their child. By the middle of the intervention period, Jane stated:

I like this CICO thing. It makes me feel like my teachers actually like me, and even though I am not doing too good with turning in work right now, they still give me good scores because I talk more in class. That's nice that they do that. And I think my friends like me more too because I'm happier.

During this second interview, Jane expressed higher levels of confidence in herself and in her ability to interact with other people. She recognized her lack of effort with grades, but she

celebrated that the teachers were still recognizing her efforts to participate orally, which seemed to give her the confidence boost she needed to feel better about herself.

Mrs. Jones noticed a happier Jane as well, and she explained, “I’m so happy to see Jane so happy. She is actually kind of too loud sometimes now! She is friendly with everyone, and she is proud when her CICO score is good. She also really likes getting the incentive each day of ‘money’ to spend in the school store.” Jane even started feeling more comfortable sharing some of her concerns from outside of school with Mrs. Jones. “She told me about being unhappy living with her aunt,” Mrs. Jones described. “She said she feels like a prisoner and she just tries to keep from making her aunt and uncle mad. She told me she has shared this with her mom, but [her] mom doesn’t want to move her in the middle of the semester.”

Jane also expressed a higher comfort level being open with not only Mrs. Jones, but all of her teachers. She said, “I like it here. All of the teachers are so friendly and helpful, and they all really care about how I am feeling each day. It’s nice to have someone to talk to.” Jane’s confidence level rose as a result of this change in her perspective.

On the male student side of the equation, though, there seemed to be a disconnect between the boys and their teacher partners. Caleb consistently explained his unwillingness to share personal information. He explained, “I really don’t think she’s the right teacher to tell that about, and I usually don’t have stuff like that to tell...I just don’t like sharing my personal life with anybody. I don’t think they need to know.” Caleb’s response made the researcher wonder whether this discomfort was because Caleb just did not like to share personal information with anyone, or did it have to do with the fact that Mrs. Riley is a woman? Would he have felt more comfortable sharing information with a male teacher?

During Mrs. Jones's initial interview, she stated that she really didn't "know much about Wesley at all because he is very unwilling to talk and unwilling to do much at all." After implementing the CICO intervention for four weeks, Mrs. Jones was a little more positive about her interactions with Wesley. She explained:

When we first started this process, Wesley was very concerned about having to give a paper to each of his teachers because he didn't want to 'look stupid' in front of his friends. So, doing it as an online form seemed to help him be more willing to follow through. Then, he and I were able to look at his results from the day and celebrate the good stuff, which helped him feel a little more comfortable in sharing things with me. As I got to know him a little better, I realized he's a pretty good kid who just has a lot of insecurities.

The fact that Mrs. Jones noticed Wesley's insecurities confirmed a possible reason why he was less comfortable sharing personal information or asking for support. Middle school students experience self-confidence struggles every day, and Wesley's anxiety and insecurities about friends judging him deterred him from fully opening himself up to the intervention goals. Again, though, could the disconnect be related to gender? Could it be, as the literature review showed, related to the fact that male students often relate with more physical aggression as opposed to emotional connections and it would not have mattered who the teacher was? With only four pairings, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about whether gender was a related factor, but it would be an interesting area for further research.

Table 7. Student Responses Focused on Interpersonal Interactions with Teacher

<i>Q2. If I have a problem at home, I am likely to ask this teacher for help</i>	<i>Almost never true</i>	<i>Seldom true</i>	<i>Sometimes true</i>	<i>Often true</i>	<i>Almost always true</i>
Pre-CICO	C, W, J		L		
Mid-CICO	C, W		J, L		
Post-CICO		C	J		L
<i>Q6. I share with this teacher things about my personal life</i>	<i>Almost never true</i>	<i>Seldom true</i>	<i>Sometimes true</i>	<i>Often true</i>	<i>Almost always true</i>
Pre-CICO	C, W, J		L		
Mid-CICO	C, W		J, L		
Post-CICO	C		J, L		
<i>Q9. If I need help, I am likely to ask this teacher for help</i>	<i>Almost never true</i>	<i>Seldom true</i>	<i>Sometimes true</i>	<i>Often true</i>	<i>Almost always true</i>
Pre-CICO				W, J, L	C
Mid-CICO			C, W	J, L	
Post-CICO					C, J, L
<i>Q10. I turn to this teacher for a listening ear or for sympathy</i>	<i>Almost never true</i>	<i>Seldom true</i>	<i>Sometimes true</i>	<i>Often true</i>	<i>Almost always true</i>
Pre-CICO	W		C, J, L		
Mid-CICO	W		C, L	J	
Post-CICO	C			J, L	
<i>Q12. I depend on this teacher for advice or help</i>	<i>Almost never true</i>	<i>Seldom true</i>	<i>Sometimes true</i>	<i>Often true</i>	<i>Almost always true</i>
Pre-CICO		W, J, L	C		
Mid-CICO		C	W, L	J	
Post-CICO			L	C, J	
*C = Caleb, W = Wesley, J = Jane, & L = Lisa					

The teacher responses to these questions reflected Jane and Lisa's changes regarding their willingness to share personal experiences and ask for help, and the teachers recognized that the girls felt more comfortable with both categories. Teacher reflections on the male students diverged a bit, though, with Mrs. Riley responding more positively about Caleb's willingness to ask for help at the beginning than at the end of the intervention, and Mrs. Jones experiencing a more positive perception about Wesley's willingness to open up than Wesley did. Regarding Caleb, Mrs. Riley explained:

I don't think he does that with anybody. I think it's just part of his personality. I think if I could build a bond with him, he might, but he doesn't even really talk about home or have input when we are talking about home and culture in the classroom. He doesn't give personal information very easily.

Throughout the study, Caleb remained consistent in his feelings about sharing personal information—he was not interested in doing that. In the beginning of the intervention, Mrs. Riley recognized that she did not really enjoy working with him, but she answered that he was “sometimes” willing to turn to her for a listening ear or sympathy. By the end of the study period, she answered that he “almost never” turns to her for a listening ear or sympathy. It is unclear why she changed her opinion about that question, especially considering the growth she experienced personally with her perceptions of Caleb and her ability to enjoy having him as a student in her class. A point to ponder, though, was that Caleb did end up reporting an increased affection for Mrs. Riley at the end of the implementation period and, after weaning Caleb off of the CICO intervention in the days following the close of the study, he requested to continue the daily points sheet and the daily check-ins. He found it to be a struggle to not have the consistent one-on-one check-ins throughout his day, and his behavior did take a step backwards, as

evidenced by the office discipline referral increase post-intervention. Caleb said, “Can I have the point thingy again? I think it would help me be better in school if I had to carry that around.” It is true that relationship-building takes time, and as the literature review showed, teachers do not always know how to approach relationship-building with students, despite the emphasis placed on it in the education world. It is also possible that students like Caleb, who represents children with ADHD, Autism, and emotional disorders, may have differing needs when it comes to relationship-building and changing behaviors in the classroom. Perhaps with more time, Caleb could become more comfortable with sharing personal information with Mrs Riley because of the structure she learned he craved. Perhaps it would happen simply because his attention-span was short and he needed more time. The definitive observation of this partnership, though, was that Mrs. Riley grew and learned and shifted her perception of Caleb during the CICO intervention period, and that teacher growth was the one consistent result across all participant pairs.

Table 8. Teacher Responses Focused on Interpersonal Interactions with Students

<i>Q2. If the student has a problem at home, he/she is likely to ask for my help</i>	<i>Almost never true</i>	<i>Seldom true</i>	<i>Sometimes true</i>	<i>Often true</i>	<i>Almost always true</i>
Pre-CICO	J-W, J-J	R, B			
Mid-CICO	R, J-W	J-J	B		
Post-CICO	R	J-J	B		
<i>Q6. The student shares with me things about his/her personal life</i>	<i>Almost never true</i>	<i>Seldom true</i>	<i>Sometimes true</i>	<i>Often true</i>	<i>Almost always true</i>
Pre-CICO	R, J-W	J-J, B			
Mid-CICO		R, J-W	J-J, B		
Post-CICO	R		J-J, B		

<i>Q9. If this student needs help, he/she is likely to ask me for help</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO			J-W	R, J-J, B	
Mid-CICO				R, J-W, J-J	B
Post-CICO			R		J-J, B
<i>Q10. The student turns to me for a listening ear or for sympathy</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO	R, J-W		J-J, B		
Mid-CICO		R, J-W	J-J	B	
Post-CICO	R			J-J, B	
<i>Q12. The student depends on me for advice or help</i>	Almost never true	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
Pre-CICO		R, J-W	J-J, B		
Mid-CICO		R, J-W	J-J, B		
Post-CICO	R		B	J-J	
R = Mrs. Riley J-W = Mrs. Jones responding about Wesley J-J = Mrs. Jones responding about Jane B = Mrs. Bryant					

Summary

The quantitative data focus on attendance, grades, office referrals, daily CICO points sheets, and hallway passes told a story full of holes. Some of the students' grades increased while others decreased. Some of the students' attendance improved while others declined. The story was the same for the other data categories. This data did allow a 20,000-foot view of the whole

student and his/her changes over the course of the intervention period. Where the story gained clarity, however, was in the relationship surveys and interviews conducted three times during the CICO intervention. The teachers experienced the most consistent improvement in their perspectives on all aspects of the relationships with their students—in their ability to enjoy the relationship and in their interpersonal interactions with their student partners. The female students' perceptions of their relationships with their teachers improved, and the male students' perceptions of their relationships improved in some ways and declined in others. The boys did not want to share their personal lives or ask for support much more after the CICO intervention than before, but overall, they did see some growth in the positive aspects of their relationships with their teachers, specifically in their desire to have their teachers present in class and in their happiness with their relationships.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

This research study began with my desire to keep students who struggle with behavior *in* the classroom. Too often, students misbehave and the teacher perceives the student's behavior as "preventing the other students from learning," prompting a swift removal from the classroom. My question was, "Who is making sure the *misbehaving student* is learning?" As expressed in the literature review, teachers tend to fall into this cycle of misbehavior leading to removal from the classroom because students who express challenging behaviors are intimidating and forging positive relationships between teacher and student is often very difficult (Satter, 2013). Despite delving into the reasons why relationship-building is so difficult between teachers and behaviorally challenged students, researchers have not been able to clearly identify a strategy to help teachers know how to spark that connection and foster its growth. Because students with challenging behaviors are at an increased risk of school failure (Farley et al., 2012; Lane, Menzies, et al., 2012; Lane, Barton-Arwood, et al., 2008), teachers recognizing the holes in their toolboxes when it comes to relationship-building with challenging students becomes essential.

In this research study, three theoretical frameworks guided my work: educational equity, transactional theory, and self-efficacy theory. Initially, my belief was that I would witness the larger growth from the CICO behavior intervention on the student side of the equation, but in reality, it was the shift in teacher perceptions of their students and the resulting adjustments the teachers made in their interactions with the students that really lean into these frameworks. It makes sense that teachers are the gatekeepers of educational equity. Their attitudes toward students can help or hinder; their lesson planning can include or exclude; their response to behavioral challenges and special needs of all kinds (ACEs, EBD, gender, race, etc.) can create positive or negative relationships with students. Remember Rita Pierson said, "Kids don't learn

from people they don't like.” In the absence of a positive relationship, students will fill the space with challenging behavior, and teachers who are ill-equipped and lacking tools to reverse the negativity will exclude students from the classroom, the lesson, and the learning. The tool at the heart of my research, the Tier 2 behavior intervention Check-In/Check-Out is one such tool that provides teachers an easily implemented tool that goes a long way toward building that relationship. Caleb was a student lacking in study skills, motivation, engagement, and prior achievement, creating a gap in his social skills and a complete lack of self-concept. Over the course of the CICO intervention period, though, he improved his school attendance, showing stronger engagement and motivation relating to school. He may not have improved his study skill immensely, but he was able to feel achievement in the fact that his behavior referrals decreased. Remember that he asked to continue the intervention after a cessation period because he knew CICO helped him be accountable and the structure produced the achievement he had enjoyed during the intervention. Jane was a student lacking in interpersonal skills, prior achievement, engagement, and study skills, which created a complete lack of self-concept, not to mention self-confidence. Over the course of the CICO intervention period, Jane's confidence grew; her study skills helped her pass every class, which in turn increased her achievement levels; and ultimately, she became more engaged in classes through discussion and participation. These are two students who were excluded from the classroom previously—either by their own lack of wanting to be seen (Jane) or by a teacher's command (Caleb)—who ended the intervention period on a better path. The CICO tool gave the teachers the structure, time, and opportunity they needed to learn about their students' needs and to accommodate them, creating greater educational equity.

The literature reviewed for this study revealed CICO was most effective in diminishing disruptive classroom behaviors in students whose behavior functioned to gain teacher attention and who proved unresponsive to Tier 1 practices and systems across multiple settings (Crone et al., 2010). The literature also recognized that students who maintain positive relationships with adults in school are more apt to graduate from high school and avoid the downfalls that come with failure in school, including poverty, addictions, and the school-to-prison pipeline. This study, however, showed that the teacher participants were the ones who have the greatest impact on whether that positive relationship forms, and the transactional theory comes into play. Transactional theory recognizes that one action impacts another, and in this case, the shift in teacher perception of their student CICO partners and their subsequent adjustments in their interactions with their student partners were a key step in modeling for the students how relationships can change and improve. The theory intimates that not only do student behaviors influence teacher behaviors, but teacher behaviors also influence student behaviors; it is a reciprocal relationship (Doumen et al., 2008; Loukas et al., 2009; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, et al., 2008; Sutherland & Morgan, 2003; Sutherland & Oswald, 2005). Jane was initially attracted to Mrs. Jones's soft voice and quiet demeanor, most likely because it matched Jane's personality at the start of the intervention. By the end of the eight weeks, though, Mrs. Jones had been able to celebrate the positive changes she had seen in Jane, and as a result, Jane was able to celebrate those positive changes out loud as well. Lisa was a student who struggled with engagement and frequently missed school, but Mrs. Bryant's ability to praise her attendance and make time to just chat with Lisa encouraged her to feel connected to school and improved her desire to attend. She is an example of the transaction necessary to combat what Morrow & Villodas (2018) reported as a portion of the responsibility for dropout rates—Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)—

which can be attributed to school engagement, meaning the entirety of a student's bond to school. Their research also exhibited students developing a connection to school over time as they experience academic success and actively participate in schooling and school-related activities. Lisa experienced this positive connection to the adults in the building through CICO and was able to take the skills modeled for her and put them into practice as she continued to improve her attendance.

The student participants in my study represented four types of “disconnected” students: the student with cognitive disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder, the student with mental health challenges such as anxiety, the student with low self-confidence, and the student with truancy problems. Each had varying improvements in disruptive behavior in the classroom while experiencing CICO: Caleb's office referrals decreased; Wesley's attendance and anxiety did not improve but Lisa's did; Jane simply felt more comfortable in her own skin and among her peers. But three of the four exhibited definitive progress in their relationships with teachers during the intervention, and that is a celebration of the self-efficacy they developed as a result. Lisa and Jane both progressed in their connections with their CICO teacher partners, and both grew in their ability to trust teachers enough to share their personal challenges. While Caleb still did not believe in sharing personal details at the end of the intervention, Mrs. Riley's poignant portrayals of the adjustments in their relationship, such as desiring to help him acquire friends and becoming emotional when talking about him, support the argument of a positive outcome beginning between the two. Caleb also requested continuing the CICO daily point sheet and check-ins, which hinted at his contentedness and desire for further relationship-building. The necessity of a school bond demands connectedness between students and teachers, and the CICO intervention teaches both parties alike to communicate honestly, rely on one another, celebrate

positivity, and dialogue about commonalities—all cornerstones to a successful interpersonal relationship.

Students struggling with content in school, especially during the middle school years as they become tremendously self-centered and self-conscious, causes anxiety that manifests itself as challenging behavior in the classroom. Success in school can be predicted based on interpersonal skills and engagement among other predictors (Walker et al., 2010). Teachers struggle with knowing exactly how to handle challenging behavior and tend to lean too heavily on “band-aid” fixes like detentions, suspensions, outside counseling, and other interventions that remove students from the learning environment. But during the course of this study, three teachers gained valuable understanding of the power of time spent on building a relationship with their students, causing four students to gain a bit of self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-confidence. In addition to the success within this small study, the school at the heart of the study had experienced successes in using the CICO intervention for two years prior, specifically in the areas of challenging behavior, attendance, and grades. So, is it possible to utilize the CICO intervention across grade levels for the benefit of teachers and their students? I believe the answer is yes. CICO is a strategy pre-service educator programs should share with every future teacher as a “classroom management” tool, as well as a method to develop relationships with students. Once those teachers are actively teaching in schools, the CICO intervention can be a professional development initiative used to get teachers looking at meaningful data (daily point sheets) to effectively determine how their efforts are impacting their students’ behavior and interpersonal abilities. Teachers in this study profited from implementing CICO by viewing their student partners as “whole” students and not simply “disruptive” or “challenging” or “disconnected” students, and they felt a desire to support them in ways they had previously never

considered. That could be a game-changer for every category of students labeled “at risk”—pure willingness on the teachers’ part to better understand the children by getting to know them as unique individuals.

Implications

The information gleaned from this study benefits teachers, counselors, and administrators working with students requiring Tier 2 behavioral interventions to maintain themselves in the classroom setting and to advance their favorable perceptions of teachers. Administrators and counselors desiring to improve teacher perceptions of “challenging” students also benefit. Children who experience negativity in their earliest interactions rarely feel safe in new, healthy caregiving situations, and they end up actively avoiding close relationships. They can rely on aggression and control as ways to protect themselves and “their developmental agenda is to control and not to engage people. This denies them exposure to the very experiences they need. So long as they remain unable to relinquish control and relate fully and accurately with their carers and therapists, the children make little emotional or developmental progress” (Howe & Fearnley, 2003, p. 380). The daily CICO intervention aids adults as they form the connections students need to advance emotionally and developmentally. Students receive praise consistently, as well as rewards both tangible and intangible, as a part of the process, creating trust, mutual understanding, pride, confidence, empathy, and growth. Teachers toil daily to form relationships with students because they recognize how valuable relationships are, but in the absence of a structure and a reason for specific, daily interaction, teachers cannot be effective with every student who needs them. The CICO intervention changes the narrative by teaching teachers how to model the behaviors students must learn to build their own positive relationships. Teachers interact with their students first thing in the morning by greeting them, asking them about the

morning and what is on the agenda for the day, modeling the skill of having a conversation. Throughout the day, teachers in classrooms provide feedback to the students about their behavior in each class regarding respect, responsibility, and giving their best efforts and then help the students not dwell on the negative but look toward making the next class more positive. At the end of the day, teachers provide the opportunity for students to have a conversation about how the day went and to deal with any concerning feelings heading into the evening. These interactions and social skill modeling opportunities allow students to feel connected and confident in their own abilities, which further allows them to remain in classrooms, focused on the learning and not on acting out for attention or for avoidance. Thus, the results of this study answer the initial research questions:

Question 1: What is the effect of positive relationships between student and teacher, specifically at the middle school level, and in what ways does this relationship impact the goal of educational equity for all students regarding access to the curriculum?

The student and teacher participants of this study experienced shifts in their perceptions of the relationships, but the teachers actually experienced growth in their understanding of the individual needs of their students and in their positive perceptions of their student partners. The teachers witnessed the students being better able to interact on an interpersonal level and to develop trust and closeness. The benefit of these skill gains for the students was more time inside the classroom, with full-time access to the professional educators best equipped to teach them, thus leveling out their access to the same instruction as their non-behaviorally challenged peers. The CICO intervention has been expanded in the study district to include elementary buildings and the high school, and teachers are experiencing similar outcomes with students at those levels. The benefit of implementing CICO at the elementary

level is the ability to respond quickly to any signs of behavioral issues, with students of all backgrounds and levels of intellect, and develop the relationship-building abilities students need to feel connected to school and confident in themselves. Teaching students to feel comfort in speaking with adults daily about classroom questions, school concerns, and even personal struggles allows children to trust that the adults in the school are invested and want to see them succeed. Forming trusting relationships with adults can be a towering challenge for students with ACEs in their pasts, but if educators can instill those skill sets early on and reinforce the skills daily and yearly, by the time those hormonal and self-conscious children become adolescents in middle school, relationships with adults could become the norm instead of something of which to be wary.

Question 2: In what ways, if any, does the use of the Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) intervention impact teachers' perceptions of students with behavioral challenges?

During interviews with the teacher participants, it became very clear that the CICO intervention made an impact on the teachers' perceptions of their student partners. Teachers clearly understand the gravity of their influence on students, but they do not always make the efforts necessary to invest time and energy into the students who need it most. The CICO intervention proved to be a positive intervention for all three teachers in this study. The teachers were able to experience enjoyment in their relationships with the students, and two of them were able to gain their students' trust through daily interactions and positive support. And even though Caleb's interview responses suggested otherwise, Mrs. Riley certainly felt the pair was on the road to developing more trust between the two. She experienced a clear shift in perspective regarding Caleb from the first interview to the last. She switched from being uncertain about starting the CICO intervention and believing it would not matter to being fiercely proud of Caleb

and wanting to help him form relationships with peers—another factor of connectedness that predicts school success. Having an impact on a teacher’s willingness to abandon her preconceived notions about a student will lead to replicating that experience with other students. Chetty et al. (2011) found that raising the quality of teaching, based on value-added scores, from the bottom 5% to just average predicted student lifetime income by \$250,000 (as cited in Gage et al., 2018), so any intervention that improves the quality of a teacher can have a direct impact on students’ lifetime success. Teachers dive into the field of education because they want to impact children’s lives, and over time, the frustrations of the “daily grind” with children, their parents, and colleagues can dim that initial desire to influence each child’s life in an uplifting way. Teachers struggle to find time in their busy days to implement “one more thing,” so an intervention like CICO that provides the structure and finite boundaries teachers tend to crave could have the same kind of impact that Mrs. Riley, Mrs. Jones, and Mrs. Bryant experienced in their understanding, patience, and willingness to meet their students’ needs. Gaining this tool could prove valuable in the goal of seeing each child learn, grow, graduate from high school, and become a contributing member of society.

Question 3: How does the use of the CICO intervention impact students’ perceptions of the teachers who implement this intervention?

The students designated for this study represent a range of “needs” that impacted each of them negatively, from spending time out of the classroom and in the principal’s office to earning low grades because of lack of focus and accountability, as well as being opposed to relationships within the school resulting from severe anxiety. These are all dynamics that can lead to failure in school and beyond. The students in this study, while expressing a variety of reactions to their teacher partners, all had eight weeks of one-on-one attention from an adult at school. In fact, the

structure of the CICO intervention required all seven of each student's teachers to spend at least a few minutes each day with each child. Perry (2010) points out that "our children...spend many hours a day watching television; they spend very few hours in the socioemotional learning opportunities created by interactions with older children, younger children, aunts, uncles, nephews, grandparents, or neighbors. In contrast to our ancestors, we live in a relationally impoverished world" (p. 45). Jane and Lisa reported a willingness to open up to their teachers and trust them with personal information, and Wesley and Caleb showed initial signs of opening up and the slightest glimmers of being willing to trust their teachers, suggesting that continuing the intervention **and** the relationship development over longer periods may prove fruitful for all four student participants. Developing a relationship takes time (often years) and working directly with a student every day to develop trust and support is a stepping-stone in a long path to achieving that goal. Students could benefit from consistent use of the intervention from one grade level to the next as an opportunity to hone their interpersonal skills and gain additional skills over time.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study, however. The case study method provides for the small participant size, but a sampling of four students and three teachers does limit the ability for the research to be generalized to larger populations. The study also included only female teachers, which could have an impact on the students' abilities to connect and prompts questions for further study about whether gender becomes a factor in developing relationships between teachers and students. This begs the question whether male teachers paired with male students would have differing results and whether male teachers paired with female students would have rendered similar or contradictory results to the gender-conflicted pairs within this study.

Additionally, the student participants only represented four types of behavioral needs and did not encompass all the broad categories of possible anti-social behaviors, so again the results cannot be generalized to the larger population. Because student participants were identified based on recommendations from grade level teams, the selection is limited to the teams' opinions of which students would benefit, based on the data provided in the quarterly Excel spreadsheets. It would be helpful to examine the quantitative information, such as attendance, discipline referrals, grades, etc., from the larger school population and select participants that specifically represent behaviors more likely to cause teachers to remove the students from the classroom. This would allow the results to determine if the intervention had a more immediate impact on students' abilities to remain in the classroom during instruction.

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the CICO intervention on students and teachers and their perceptions of their relationships; however, further study will be required to establish broad findings for the spectrum of behavior challenges that could be impacted by CICO.

Future Research

The results of school engagement (or lack thereof) show up in attendance, behavior, and course success or failure (Morrow & Villodas, 2018). School engagement requires a connection with the adults in the school building. Multiple researchers agree that students with challenging behaviors end up receiving less academic instruction than their non-disruptive peers and have a history of academic failure, especially in reading and math (Kauffman, 1997; Kerr & Nelson, 1998 as cited in Scott et al., 2000; Gage et al., 2018; Nelson et al., 2011; Berry Kuchle et al., 2015 as cited in Sinclair et al., 2019; Reid et al., 2004). Poor reading and academic failure have been identified as some of the most powerful predictors of problem behavior and social failure,

including high school dropout, delinquency, and involvement in the criminal justice system (Reid et al., 2004; Macguire & Loeber, 1996; Morrison & D’Incau, 1997; Gottfredson et al., 1996 as cited in Reid et al., 2004). Academic success also requires a connection with the adults in the school building, and teachers benefit from structure, support, and the knowledge of how it all benefits their students in order to be successful in forming those connections.

The most intriguing and useful themes from this study were the changes in teacher perceptions by simply investing a few minutes every day with a particular student and the confidence and pride the students experienced as a result of these daily relationship builders. The teachers saw the impact of their efforts on students, and the students experienced the advantages of having someone at school express concern daily. Future research is required, though, to validate these results for different varieties of student-teacher pairings, including students paired with teachers with whom they do not already have a positive rapport, teachers who tend to discipline most frequently paired with the most behaviorally challenging students, and teachers who do not believe they are responsible for forming positive relationships paired with any students.

To generalize the findings of this study to the broader school population, research must be done in other levels besides middle school and in schools from areas other than a rural environment and with differing “at-risk” populations (African Americans, English Language Learners, students who live in poverty, etc.). It would also be beneficial to employ an interview protocol that allowed for more fluid and organic responses to widen the conversation about relationships and enable students and teachers to share insight about other factors affecting their perceptions of their relationships besides the topics within the Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory and Student-Teacher Relationship Inventory surveys.

Conclusion

Relationships form life experiences, and educators can massively impact their students' life experiences in either positive or negative ways, frequently without ever knowing they are doing so. With an intervention like CICO, educators can systematically and thoughtfully cultivate positive relationship experiences for their students, and the traits the students gain as a result will propel them into their futures more prepared and confident in their own abilities. The teachers benefit as well, because they see the results of their concentrated efforts and know that replicating those efforts with more students can produce stronger, more confident, and effective humans who are better prepared to manage their futures. CICO is easy to implement and, in this study, produced behavioral and relational results that allowed teachers and students to develop relationships that can positively impact both parties. In a 21st century that has already seen so much divisiveness, this may be one way for educators and students to benefit from coming together in more positive and productive ways.

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Appendix A - Debriefing Statement (Guardian Version)

This study is called “Evaluating the impact of the Tier 2 intervention Check-In/Check-Out on the teacher-student relationship in middle school” and is being conducted by Jenna Delay, KSU Graduate Student/Doctoral Candidate.

The Check-In/Check-Out behavior intervention is a Tier 2 intervention used within the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to increase the likelihood of a behaviorally challenged student remaining in the classroom, accessing the curriculum in an equivalent way to his/her non-behaviorally challenged peers. There have been research studies conducted to show the positive impact of the intervention with students motivated by teacher- and peer-attention as well as success with students motivated by avoidance behaviors, but there is little research showing the impact either way of the intervention on teacher-student relationships. This study seeks to evaluate the impact of the intervention on teacher-student relationships to determine whether the intervention does more than improving student ability to remain in the classroom and access the curriculum.

The research questions at the heart of this study are:

1. What is the effect of positive relationships between student and teacher, specifically at the middle school level, and in what ways does this relationship impact the goal of educational equity for all students regarding access to the curriculum?
2. In what ways, if any, does the use of the “Check-in/Check-out” (CICO) intervention impact teachers’ perceptions of students with behavioral challenges?
3. How does the use of the CICO intervention impact students’ perceptions of the teachers who implement this intervention?

At the conclusion of the study, participants will be given the choice of having a copy of the full dissertation and/or just a copy of the results section of the study. These choices will be provided in writing via email.

Additional resources for study participants:

1. **Institutional Review Board Chair, Kansas State University** (for ethical concerns/information on one’s rights as a research subject): #IRB-10725
 - a. Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, (785) 532-3224

- b. Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, (785) 532-3224.
- 2. **Graduate Student Contact Information** (for questions related to the research): Jenna Delay, 785-210-4117, jdelayon@gmail.com
- 3. **Dissertation Committee Chairperson** (for questions related to the research): Spencer Clark, 785-532-5904, jspencerclark@k-state.edu
- 4. **Research references** (for those wanting to learn more about the research subject):
 - a. Ang, R.P. (2005). Development and validation of the teacher-student relationship inventory using expletory and confirmatory factor analysis. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 74(1), 55-73.
 - b. Bradley, R., Doolittle, J., & Bartolotta, R. (2008). Building on the data and adding to the discussion: The experiences and outcomes of students with emotional disturbance. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 17, 4-23.
 - c. Cook, C.R., Collins, T., Dart, E., Vance, M.J., McIntosh, K., Grady, E.A., & DeCano, P. (2014). Evaluation of the Class Pass Intervention for Typically Developing Students with Hypothesized Escape-Motivated Disruptive Classroom Behavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, 51 (2), 107-125. <https://doi-org.er.lib.k-state.edu/10.1002/pits.21742>
 - d. Filter, K.J., McKenna, M.K., & Benedict, E.A. (2007). Check In/Check Out: A Post-Hoc Evaluation of an Efficient, Secondary-level Targeted Intervention for Reducing Problem Behaviors in Schools. *Education & Treatment of Children (ETC)*, 30 (1), 69-84. <https://doi-org.er.lib.k-state.edu/10.1353/etc.2007.0000>
 - e. Lewis, T.J. & Sugai, G. (1999a). Effective behavior support: A systems approach to proactive school-wide management. *Effective School Practices*, 17(4), 47-53.
 - f. Lewis, T.J., Sugai, G., & Colvin, G. (1998). Reducing problem behavior through a school-wide system of effective behavioral support: Investigation of a school-wide social skills training program and contextual interventions. *School Psychology Review*, 27, 446-459.
 - g. Mihalas, S., Morse, W.C., Allsopp, D.H., & McHatton, P.A. (2009). Cultivating caring relationships between teachers and secondary students with emotional and behavioral disorders: Implications for research and practice. *Remedial and Special Education*, 30(2), 108-125.
 - h. Stage, S.A., Cheney, D., Lynass, L., Mielenz, C., and Flower, A. (2012). Three Validity Studies of the Daily Progress Report in Relationship to the Check, Connect, and Expect Intervention. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 14(3), 181-191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300712438942>

Thank you to all subjects for your participation in this research study. Your willingness to participate will be very helpful in determining how to help students in the educational community.

Appendix B - Debriefing Statement (Student Version)

This study is called “Evaluating the impact of the Tier 2 intervention Check-In/Check-Out on the teacher-student relationship in middle school” and is being conducted by Jenna Delay, KSU Graduate Student/Doctoral Candidate.

The Check-In/Check-Out behavior intervention strategy used help students stay in the classroom even when he or she is struggling to follow rules and/or stay focused on the assigned task. There is a lot of research that shows Check-In/Check-Out works to help students stay in class, but there is little research yet to show whether it has an impact either way on teacher-student relationships. We know that positive relationships with adults help students reach graduation more successfully, so this study’s goal is to see what impact Check-In/Check-Out has on teacher-student relationships to determine whether the intervention does more than keep students in class.

The research questions at the heart of this study are:

4. What is the effect of positive relationships between student and teacher, specifically at the middle school level, and in what ways does this relationship impact the goal of educational equity for all students regarding access to the curriculum?
5. In what ways, if any, does the use of the “Check-in/Check-out” (CICO) intervention impact teachers’ perceptions of students with behavioral challenges?
6. How does the use of the CICO intervention impact students’ perceptions of the teachers who implement this intervention?

At the end of the study, you will be given the choice of having a copy of the full dissertation and/or just a copy of the results section of the study. These choices will be provided in writing via email.

Additional resources for study participants:

5. **Institutional Review Board Chair, Kansas State University** (for ethical concerns/information on one’s rights as a research subject): #IRB-10725
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 - b. Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, (785) 532-3224.
6. **Graduate Student Contact Information** (for questions related to the research): Jenna Delay, 785-210-4117, jdelayon@gmail.com

7. **Dissertation Committee Chairperson** (for questions related to the research):
Spencer Clark, 785-532-5904, jspencerclark@k-state.edu
8. **Research references** (for those wanting to learn more about the research subject):
- a. Ang, R.P. (2005). Development and validation of the teacher-student relationship inventory using expletory and confirmatory factor analysis. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 74(1), 55-73.
 - b. Bradley, R., Doolittle, J., & Bartolotta, R. (2008). Building on the data and adding to the discussion: The experiences and outcomes of students with emotional disturbance. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 17, 4-23.
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 - e. Lewis, T.J. & Sugai, G. (1999a). Effective behavior support: A systems approach to proactive school-wide management. *Effective School Practices*, 17(4), 47-53.
 - f. Lewis, T.J., Sugai, G., & Colvin, G. (1998). Reducing problem behavior through a school-wide system of effective behavioral support: Investigation of a school-wide social skills training program and contextual interventions. *School Psychology Review*, 27, 446-459.
 - g. Mihalas, S., Morse, W.C., Allsopp, D.H., & McHatton, P.A. (2009). Cultivating caring relationships between teachers and secondary students with emotional and behavioral disorders: Implications for research and practice. *Remedial and Special Education*, 30(2), 108-125.
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Thank you to all subjects for your participation in this research study. Your willingness to participate will be very helpful in determining how to help students in the educational community.

Appendix C - Debriefing Statement (Teacher Version)

This study is called “Evaluating the impact of the Tier 2 intervention Check-In/Check-Out on the teacher-student relationship in middle school” and is being conducted by Jenna Delay, KSU Graduate Student/Doctoral Candidate.

The Check-In/Check-Out behavior intervention is a Tier 2 intervention used within the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to increase the likelihood of a behaviorally challenged student remaining in the classroom, accessing the curriculum in an equivalent way to his/her non-behaviorally challenged peers. There have been research studies conducted to show the positive impact of the intervention with students motivated by teacher- and peer-attention as well as success with students motivated by avoidance behaviors, but there is little research showing the impact either way of the intervention on teacher-student relationships. This study seeks to evaluate the impact of the intervention on teacher-student relationships to determine whether the intervention does more than improving student ability to remain in the classroom and access the curriculum.

The research questions at the heart of this study are:

7. What is the effect of positive relationships between student and teacher, specifically at the middle school level, and in what ways does this relationship impact the goal of educational equity for all students regarding access to the curriculum?
8. In what ways, if any, does the use of the “Check-in/Check-out” (CICO) intervention impact teachers’ perceptions of students with behavioral challenges?
9. How does the use of the CICO intervention impact students’ perceptions of the teachers who implement this intervention?

At the conclusion of the study, participants will be given the choice of having a copy of the full dissertation and/or just a copy of the results section of the study. These choices will be provided in writing via email.

Additional resources for study participants:

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 - a. Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, (785) 532-3224

- b. Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, (785) 532-3224.
- 10. **Graduate Student Contact Information** (for questions related to the research):
Jenna Delay, 785-210-4117, jdelayon@gmail.com
- 11. **Dissertation Committee Chairperson** (for questions related to the research):
Spencer Clark, 785-532-5904, jspencerclark@k-state.edu
- 12. **Research references** (for those wanting to learn more about the research subject):
 - a. Ang, R.P. (2005). Development and validation of the teacher-student relationship inventory using expletory and confirmatory factor analysis. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 74(1), 55-73.
 - b. Bradley, R., Doolittle, J., & Bartolotta, R. (2008). Building on the data and adding to the discussion: The experiences and outcomes of students with emotional disturbance. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 17, 4-23.
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 - d. Filter, K.J., McKenna, M.K., & Benedict, E.A. (2007). Check In/Check Out: A Post-Hoc Evaluation of an Efficient, Secondary-level Targeted Intervention for Reducing Problem Behaviors in Schools. *Education & Treatment of Children (ETC)*, 30 (1), 69-84. <https://doi-org.er.lib.k-state.edu/10.1353/etc.2007.0000>
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Thank you to all subjects for your participation in this research study. Your willingness to participate will be very helpful in determining how to help students in the educational community.

Appendix D - District Approval Letter

Abilene School District No. 435

213 North Broadway
Abilene, Kansas 67410
Telephone 785-263-2630 Fax 785-263-7610

Greg Brown

Superintendent of Schools
gbrown@abileneschools.org

Dana Sprinkle

Assistant Superintendent
dsprinkle@abileneschools.org

Joan Anderson

Board of Education Clerk
janderson@abileneschools.org

Kellin Bouray

Payroll and Food Service
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Pennie Randall

Treasurer/Accounts Payable
prandall@abileneschools.org

Board of Education

Jeff Bathurst

Kyle Becker

Randy Gassman

Robert Keener

Veronica Murray

Jennifer Waite

Chris West

To: Kansas State University Internal Review Board (IRB)

From: Greg Brown, Superintendent of Schools, USD 435

Re: Approval of Research Study for Mrs. Jenna Delay, Doctoral Candidate

On behalf of USD 435, I approve Mrs. Jenna Delay's use of middle school student and teacher subjects for her research project entitled "Evaluating the impact of the Tier Two intervention "Check-In/Check-Out" on the teacher-student relationship in middle school". This intervention is utilized within our schools as a part of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, and Mrs. Delay's research in this area will benefit the students and teachers in our district.

Mrs. Delay will follow proper procedures for researching with adolescent subjects, including the use of Informed Consent documents with the students and full explanation of the research methods and research questions with the parents/guardians of the subjects.

If you need any further information or assistance, I would be happy to help. You may reach me via email at gbrown@abileneschools.org.

Thank you!



Greg Brown, Superintendent
Abilene Schools, USD #435

Appendix E - IRB Consent Form (Guardian Version)



University Research
Compliance Office

IRB CONSENT FORM

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Informed Consent Template Form

comply@k-state.edu | 785-532-3224

PROJECT TITLE:

Exploring the impact of the Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) behavior intervention on teacher-student relationships and teacher perception of students with challenging behaviors.

PROJECT APPROVAL
DATE:

PROJECT EXPIRATION
DATE:

LENGTH OF
STUDY:

9 weeks

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jenna Delay

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: Jenna Delay, 785-210-4117, jdelay@abileneschools.org

IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224; Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

PROJECT SPONSOR:

Kansas State University

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

The Check-In/Check-Out behavior intervention is a Tier Two intervention used within the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to increase the likelihood of a behaviorally challenged student remaining in the classroom, accessing the curriculum in an equivalent way to his/her non-behaviorally challenged peers. There have been research studies conducted to show the positive impact of the intervention with students motivated by teacher- and peer-attention as well as success with students motivated by avoidance behaviors, but there is little research showing the impact either way of the intervention on teacher-student relationships. This study seeks to evaluate the impact of the intervention on teacher-student relationships to determine whether the intervention does more than improving student ability to remain in the classroom and access the curriculum.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:

The study will include a survey and an interview for each student participant as well as each adult participant pre-intervention, during the intervention (at the 4-week mark), and post-intervention (at the 8-week mark). The survey for teachers is the Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory (Ang, 2005). The survey for the students is adapted from Ang's 2005 survey, and I am referring to it as the Student-Teacher Relationship Inventory. These surveys each have 14 questions, and participants will answer questions based on a 5-point Likert scale. I will administer these surveys via Qualtrics, but participants will complete the surveys just before being interviewed, so they will complete the survey electronically in my presence. After completing the survey each time, I will interview my subjects using my interview protocol. The interview questions are an expansion on the survey questions. For example, the survey asks participants to use the Likert scale to respond to the following question: "If I have a problem at home, I am likely to ask this teacher for help". My interview protocol regarding that survey question, if the participant responds that this statement is "almost always true", is: "What does your teacher say/do that makes you feel comfortable asking him/her for help with problems at home?". I will also ask: "What time of day do you usually ask your teacher for help with these types of problems?". The goal of asking this question is to determine if the Check-In/Check-Out sessions are supporting these types of conversations. My interview protocol has a follow-up question for each possible answer for each of the 14 survey questions meant to prod for further understanding of each rating. The total time estimated to complete each survey/interview session is 1 hour, for a total of 3 hours per participant throughout the duration of the study.

It is important to note that the Check-In/Check-Out intervention is available to ALL students in the school who present a need – it is NOT required to participate in the study in order to participate in the intervention.

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RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:

The actual intervention used with this study presents a potential social risk for participants because peers could be aware that participants are using the intervention. In order to minimize the risk, the daily score sheet for the Check-In/Check-Out intervention will be made available electronically as well as on paper, and the participant will be able to choose a format.

The other risks are all related to the potential for students to share personal information as a result of the interviews. The interview protocol is designed to focus on specific actions/words that are used by the teachers that make the students feel either closer to or more distant from the teacher, but it is possible that students will voluntarily share personal stories or emotions. The risk will be minimized by reminding students that personal information is not required, but also that anything shared during the interview will be protected by the researcher. Names will also be changed for ALL subjects by using pseudonyms throughout the study and also by changing any names mentioned in the transcripts to these Pseudonyms before saving. In presenting the study to my middle school faculty (and my district leadership), the report will focus on a "Midwestern Middle School" and all of the identifying information will be changed through use of Pseudonyms for ALL participants.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:

The benefits of this study for Abilene Middle School is an understanding of whether this primary Tier Two intervention is actually making a difference in the lives of the people at the heart of the intervention. If not, the school will be able to abandon its use.

The benefits of this study to the educational community as a whole is similar to the school benefits. If there is added benefit to this particular intervention, then more school communities need to know about and use the strategy. If not, the community needs to be aware of the lack of effect.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

Electronic survey results will be collected as well as transcripts from interviews, which will be recorded via sound recording device.

The survey data will be stored in the Qualtrics system via K-State. The interview recordings will be stored on the graduate student's computer, which is password protected.

The data will be maintained for a period of 3 years beyond the initial collection. The interview recordings and transcripts will be destroyed by deletion from the computer. The survey results in Qualtrics will be destroyed through that system.

The graduate student for this study will maintain the only access to the data from the interviews, and this data is password protected. Regarding the Qualtrics survey data, the graduate student also accesses the system through password protection.

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS:

PARENT/GUARDIAN APPROVAL
SIGNATURE:

--

DATE:

--

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT NAME:

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:

DATE:

--

WITNESS TO SIGNATURE: (PROJECT STAFF)		
		DATE:

Appendix F - IRB Consent Form (Student Version)

**KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

**University Research
Compliance Office**

IRB CONSENT FORM

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Informed Consent Template Form

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PROJECT TITLE:

Exploring the impact of the Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) behavior intervention on teacher-student relationships and teacher perception of students with challenging behaviors.

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DATE:**

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STUDY:**

9 weeks

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jenna Delay

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PROJECT SPONSOR:

Kansas State University

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

Check-In/Check-Out is a way to help students improve their chances of staying in the classroom when they are struggling with following rules or staying focused on schoolwork. There is a lot of evidence that shows this strategy helps students, but this study seeks to determine the impact, good or bad, on teacher-student relationships. Positive relationships with adults is proven to help students make it to graduation successfully, and this study hopes to show whether or not the Check-In/Check-Out strategy can help with that goal.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:

The study will include a survey and an interview for each student participant as well as each teacher participant before we start the Check-In/Check-Out strategy, in the middle of the strategy (at the 4-week mark), and after we finish using the strategy (at the 8-week mark). These surveys each have 14 questions, and the answers are all based on your opinions, so there is no right or wrong answer. You will complete the survey online just before being interviewed. The interview questions are meant to help me understand the survey opinions more clearly. For example, the survey asks: "If I have a problem at home, I am likely to ask this teacher for help". Let's say you choose "almost always true". Then, my interview question will be: "What does your teacher say/do that makes you feel comfortable asking him/her for help with problems at home?". I will also ask: "What time of day do you usually ask your teacher for help with these types of problems?". The goal of asking this question is to determine if the Check-In/Check-Out sessions are helping you feel that way or if it is something else altogether. The total time estimated to complete each survey/interview session is 1 hour, for a total of 3 hours during the study.

It is important to note that the Check-In/Check-Out intervention is available to ALL students in the school who need it – it is NOT required to participate in the study in order to participate in the intervention.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:

Sometimes, students who use the Check-In/Check-Out strategy feel like they are being judged by their friends for using the system. In order to make you feel more comfortable with this strategy, you can choose to either take a paper copy of the daily score sheet to your teachers OR you can have an electronic version on your iPad. One other concern during this research study is whether or not you will feel comfortable being honest and open about your feelings regarding your teacher. Personal information and feelings are not required to be shared, but please know that anything shared during the interview will be protected by the researcher. Names will also be changed for ALL

subjects by using pseudonyms throughout the study and also by changing any names mentioned in the transcripts to these Pseudonyms before saving. In presenting the study to my middle school faculty (and my district leadership), the report will focus on a "Midwestern Middle School" and all of the identifying information will be changed through use of Pseudonyms for ALL participants.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:

The benefits of this study for Abilene Middle School is an understanding of whether Check-In/Check-Out is actually making a difference for students. If not, the school will be able to abandon its use. The benefits of this study also extend to other schools, teachers, and students. If Check-In/Check-Out is not benefitting students in their relationships with adults, other people in the educational community need to know as well.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

All of the data from this study will be maintained securely, either within my own password protected computer or at K-State. The information will be destroyed 3 years after the study is finished, so confidentiality is protected.

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS:

PARENT/GUARDIAN APPROVAL
SIGNATURE:

N/A (student consent form)

DATE: N/A

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT NAME:

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:

WITNESS TO SIGNATURE:
(PROJECT STAFF)

DATE:

DATE:

Appendix G - IRB Consent Form (Teacher Version)



University Research
Compliance Office

IRB CONSENT FORM

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Informed Consent Template Form

comply@k-state.edu | 785-532-3224

PROJECT TITLE:

Exploring the impact of the Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) behavior intervention on teacher-student relationships and teacher perception of students with challenging behaviors.

PROJECT APPROVAL
DATE:

PROJECT EXPIRATION
DATE:

LENGTH OF
STUDY:

9 weeks

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jenna Delay

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: Jenna Delay, 785-210-4117, jdelay@abileneschools.org

IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224; Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

PROJECT SPONSOR:

Kansas State University

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

The Check-In/Check-Out behavior intervention is a Tier Two intervention used within the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to increase the likelihood of a behaviorally challenged student remaining in the classroom, accessing the curriculum in an equivalent way to his/her non-behaviorally challenged peers. There have been research studies conducted to show the positive impact of the intervention with students motivated by teacher- and peer-attention as well as success with students motivated by avoidance behaviors, but there is little research showing the impact either way of the intervention on teacher-student relationships. This study seeks to evaluate the impact of the intervention on teacher-student relationships to determine whether the intervention does more than improving student ability to remain in the classroom and access the curriculum.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:

The study will include a survey and an interview for each student participant as well as each adult participant pre-intervention, during the intervention (at the 4-week mark), and post-intervention (at the 8-week mark). The survey for teachers is the Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory (Ang, 2005). The survey for the students is adapted from Ang's 2005 survey, and I am referring to it as the Student-Teacher Relationship Inventory. These surveys each have 14 questions, and participants will answer questions based on a 5-point Likert scale. I will administer these surveys via Qualtrics, but you will complete the surveys just before being interviewed, so you will complete the survey electronically in my presence. After completing the survey each time, I will interview you using my interview protocol. The interview questions are an expansion on the survey questions. For example, the survey asks you to use the Likert scale to respond to the following question: "If this student has a problem at home, he or she is likely to ask for my help". My interview protocol regarding that survey question, if the participant responds that this statement is "almost always true", is: "Do you have any idea why this student is likely to ask for your help?". I will also ask: "What do you attribute this success to?". The goal of asking this question is to determine if the Check-In/Check-Out sessions are supporting these types of conversations. My interview protocol has a follow-up question for each possible answer for each of the 14 survey questions meant to prod for further understanding of each rating. The total time estimated to complete each survey/interview session is 1 hour, for a total of 3 hours per participant throughout the duration of the study.

It is important to note that the Check-In/Check-Out intervention is available to ALL students in the school who present a need – it is NOT required to participate in the study in order to participate in the intervention.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:

The actual intervention used with this study presents a potential social risk for student participants because peers could be aware that participants are using the intervention. In order to minimize the risk, the daily score sheet for the Check-In/Check-Out intervention will be made available electronically as well as on paper, and the participant will be able to choose a format.

The other risks are all related to the potential for students to share personal information as a result of the interviews. The interview protocol is designed to focus on specific actions/words that are used by the teachers that make the students feel either closer to or more distant from the teacher, but it is possible that students will voluntarily share personal stories or emotions. The risk will be minimized by reminding students that personal information is not required, but also that anything shared during the interview will be protected by the researcher. Names will also be changed for ALL subjects by using pseudonyms throughout the study and also by changing any names mentioned in the transcripts to these Pseudonyms before saving. In presenting the study to my middle school faculty (and my district leadership), the report will focus on a "Midwestern Middle School" and all of the identifying information will be changed through use of Pseudonyms for ALL participants.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:

The benefits of this study for Abilene Middle School is an understanding of whether this primary Tier Two intervention is actually making a difference in the lives of the people at the heart of the intervention. If not, the school will be able to abandon its use.

The benefits of this study to the educational community as a whole is similar to the school benefits. If there is added benefit to this particular intervention, then more school communities need to know about and use the strategy. If not, the community needs to be aware of the lack of effect.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

Electronic survey results will be collected as well as transcripts from interviews, which will be recorded via sound recording device.

The survey data will be stored in the Qualtrics system via K-State. The interview recordings will be stored on the graduate student's computer, which is password protected.

The data will be maintained for a period of 3 years beyond the initial collection. The interview recordings and transcripts will be destroyed by deletion from the computer. The survey results in Qualtrics will be destroyed through that system.

The graduate student for this study will maintain the only access to the data from the interviews, and this data is password protected. Regarding the Qualtrics survey data, the graduate student also accesses the system through password protection.

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS:

**PARENT/GUARDIAN APPROVAL
SIGNATURE:**

DATE:

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT NAME:

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:

DATE:

**WITNESS TO SIGNATURE:
(PROJECT STAFF)**

DATE:

Appendix H - CICO Daily Points Sheet

CICO DAILY POINTS BASIC

Name: _____

Date: _____

Teachers: Please indicate You Got It (3), Almost There (2), or Not Yet (1) regarding the student's achievement for the following goals.

Expectations	1st Hour		2nd Hour		3rd Hour		4th Hour		5th Hour		MTSS Time		6th Hour		7th Hour		Homeroom	
Be Respectful	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Be Responsible																		
Give Your Best Effort																		
Total Points																		
TEACHER INITIALS																		

Check In = 2 points _____ initial

Check Out = 2 points _____ initial

Daily Goal = 68/85 (80%)

Daily Score _____/85

Appendix I - Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory (Ang, 2005)

Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory (Ang, 2005)

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 I enjoy having this student in my class

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q2 If the student has a problem at home, he/she is likely to ask for my help

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q3 I would describe my relationship with this student as positive

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q4 This student frustrates me more than most other students in my class

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q5 If this student is absent, I will miss him/her

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q6 The student shares with me things about his/her personal life

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q7 I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach this student next year

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q8 If this student is absent, I feel relieved

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q9 If this student needs help, he/she is likely to ask me for help

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q10 The students turns to me for a listening ear or for sympathy

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q11 If this student is not in my class, I will be able to enjoy my class more

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q12 The student depends on me for advice or help

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q13 I am happy with my relationship with this student

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q14 I like this student

- ☐ almost never true
- ☐ seldom true
- ☐ sometimes true
- ☐ often true
- ☐ almost always true

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix J - Student-Teacher Relationship Inventory

Student-Teacher Relationship Inventory (adapted from Ang, 2005)

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 I enjoy having this teacher in this class

- ☐ almost never true
- ☐ seldom true
- ☐ sometimes true
- ☐ often true
- ☐ almost always true

Q2 If I have a problem at home, I am likely to ask this teacher for help

- ☐ almost never true
- ☐ seldom true
- ☐ sometimes true
- ☐ often true
- ☐ almost always true

Q3 I would describe my relationship with this teacher as positive

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q4 This teacher frustrates me more than most other teachers in my classes

- ☐ almost never true
- ☐ seldom true
- ☐ sometimes true
- ☐ often true
- ☐ almost always true

Q5 If this teacher is absent, I will miss him/her

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q6 I share with this teacher things about my personal life

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q7 I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to learn from this teacher next year

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q8 If this teacher is absent, I feel relieved

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q9 If I need help, I am likely to ask this teacher for help

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q10 I turn to this teacher for a listening ear or for sympathy

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q11 If this teacher is not in my class, I will be able to enjoy the class more

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q12 I depend on this teacher for advice or help

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q13 I am happy with my relationship with this teacher

- ☐ almost never true
 - ☐ seldom true
 - ☐ sometimes true
 - ☐ often true
 - ☐ almost always true
-

Q14 I like this teacher

- ☐ almost never true
- ☐ seldom true
- ☐ sometimes true
- ☐ often true
- ☐ almost always true

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix K - Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

My name is Jenna Delay, and I am a doctoral student from Kansas State University. I want to learn about teacher and student perceptions of each other during the implementation of a behavior intervention called Check-In/Check-Out. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. There are no right or wrong answers and no desirable or undesirable answers. Each of the questions I will ask you are directly related to the questions you answered on the Qualtrics survey, and the goal is to try to understand your reasoning for the answers to those questions. I would like for you to feel comfortable saying what you really think, how you really feel, and what your real experiences have been. If it's okay with you, I will be recording our conversation since it is hard for me to write everything down while carrying on an attentive conversation with you. Everything you say will remain confidential, meaning only myself and my committee members will be aware of your answers – the purpose of that is only so we know whom to contact with further questions regarding this interview. Ready to start?

Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory

If response to Q1 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Describe what it is like to have this student in class and explain why it is hard to enjoy having this student in class. In the rare instances that you DO enjoy having the student in class, what does that look like?*

If response to Q1 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *Describe what it is like to have this student in class and explain why you enjoy having this student in class. In the instances that you DO NOT enjoy having the student in class, what does that look like?*

If response to Q2 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Do you have any idea why this student is unlikely to ask for your help? What do you attribute this challenge to?*

If response to Q2 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *Do you have any idea why this student is likely to ask for your help? What do you attribute this success to?*

If response to Q3 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Share with me the aspects of your relationship with this student that cause you to feel less than positive about it. How does it make you feel?*

If response to Q3 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *Share with me the aspects of your relationship with this student that cause you to feel positive about it. How does it make you feel?*

If response to Q4 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Describe what this student does that helps you NOT find him/her frustrating very often. How is this different than other students in the class?*

If response to Q4 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *Describe what this student does that causes you to find him/her frustrating very often. How is this different than other students in the class?*

If response to Q5 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Describe what class is like when this student is absent. How is that different than when the student is present?*

If response to Q5 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *Describe what class is like when this student is absent. How is that different than when the student is present?*

If response to Q6 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What have you told your students about sharing information about their personal life with you? What do you believe keeps this student from sharing with you?*

If response to Q6 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What have you told your students about sharing information about their personal life with you? What do you believe encourages this student to share with you?*

If response to Q7 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Explain what happens with this student that makes you feel this way.*

If response to Q7 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *Explain what happens with this student that makes you feel this way.*

If response to Q8 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *How are you able to feel this way about this student? What efforts do you consciously make to be able to feel this way?*

If response to Q8 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *How do you feel about this answer? Are you able to commit to any efforts to improve this feeling?*

If response to Q9 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What structures do you have in place in your class for students to ask for help? What is your prediction about why this student rarely asks you for help?*

If response to Q9 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What structures do you have in place in your class for students to ask for help? What is your prediction about why this student feels comfortable asking you for help?*

If response to Q10 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What opportunities do students have to speak to you about topics other than school and/or your content area? What thoughts do you have about why this student doesn’t turn to you for sympathy or support?*

If response to Q10 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What opportunities do students have to speak to you about topics other than school and/or your*

content area? What thoughts do you have about why this student turns to you for sympathy or support?

If response to Q11 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What are the reasons your classroom and class would be less enjoyable if this student were not present?*

If response to Q11 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What are the reasons your classroom and class would be more enjoyable if this student were not present?*

If response to Q12 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What opportunities are available for your students to ask for advice or help? What is your prediction as to why this student does not tend to ask you for advice or help?*

If response to Q12 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What opportunities are available for your students to ask for advice or help? What is your prediction as to why this student is willing to ask you for advice or help?*

If response to Q13 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What needs to happen to improve your relationship with this student?*

If response to Q13 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What aspects of your relationship with this student make you happy with the relationship?*

If response to Q14 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What reasons do you have for not liking this student very often? What could change that would alter your response?*

If response to Q14 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What reasons do you have for liking this student? What could change that would alter your response?*

Student-Teacher Relationship Inventory

If response to Q1 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Describe what it is like to be in this teacher’s class and explain why it is hard to enjoy being in this teacher’s class. In the rare instances that you DO enjoy being in this teacher’s class, what does that look like?*

If response to Q1 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *Describe what it is like to be in this teacher’s class and explain why you enjoy being in this teacher’s class. In the instances that you DO NOT enjoy being in this teacher’s class, what does that look like?*

If response to Q2 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Why are you unlikely to ask this teacher for help? What do you attribute this challenge to?*

If response to Q2 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *Why are you likely to ask this teacher for help? What do you attribute this success to?*

If response to Q3 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Share with me the aspects of your relationship with this teacher that cause you to feel less than positive about it. How does it make you feel?*

If response to Q3 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *Share with me the aspects of your relationship with this teacher that cause you to feel positive about it. How does it make you feel?*

If response to Q4 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *Describe what this teacher does that helps you NOT find him/her frustrating very often. How is this different than other teachers’ classes?*

If response to Q4 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – Describe what this teacher does that causes you to find him/her frustrating very often. How is this different than other teachers’ classes?

If response to Q5 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – Describe what class is like when this teacher is absent. How is that different than when the teacher is present?

If response to Q5 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – Describe what class is like when this teacher is absent. How is that different than when the teacher is present?

If response to Q6 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – What has this teacher told you about sharing information about your personal life with him/her? What do you believe keeps you from sharing with this teacher?

If response to Q6 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – What has this teacher told you about sharing information about your personal life with him/her? What do you believe encourages you to share with this teacher?

If response to Q7 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – Explain what happens with this teacher that makes you feel this way.

If response to Q7 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – Explain what happens with this teacher that makes you feel this way. What efforts do you consciously make to be able to feel this way?

If response to Q8 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – How are you able to feel this way about this teacher? What efforts do you consciously make to be able to feel this way?

If response to Q8 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – How do you feel about this answer? Are you able to commit to any efforts to improve this feeling?

If response to Q9 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What structures does your teacher have in place in class for students to ask for help? Why do you rarely ask for help?*

If response to Q9 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What structures does your teacher have in place in class for students to ask for help? Why do you feel comfortable asking for help?*

If response to Q10 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What opportunities do students have to speak to you about topics other than school and/or your content area? What thoughts do you have about why this student doesn’t turn to you for sympathy or support?*

If response to Q10 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What opportunities do students have to speak to you about topics other than school and/or your content area? What thoughts do you have about why this student turns to you for sympathy or support?*

If response to Q11 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What are the reasons the classroom and class would be less enjoyable if this teacher were not present?*

If response to Q11 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What are the reasons the classroom and class would be more enjoyable if this teacher were not present?*

If response to Q12 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What opportunities are available for you to ask for advice or help? Why do you not tend to ask for advice or help?*

If response to Q12 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What opportunities are available for you to ask for advice or help? Why are you willing to ask for advice or help?*

If response to Q13 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What needs to happen to improve your relationship with this teacher?*

If response to Q13 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What aspects of your relationship with this teacher make you happy with the relationship?*

If response to Q14 is “almost never true” or “seldom true” – *What reasons do you have for not liking this teacher very often? What could change that would alter your response?*

If response to Q14 is “sometimes true”, “often true”, or “almost always true” – *What reasons do you have for liking this teacher? What could change that would alter your response?*

Appendix L - Instructional Review Board Approval Letter



TO: J. Spencer Clark Educational Leadership

Manhattan, KS 66506

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 09/08/2021

Proposal Number IRB-10725

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, "Exploring the impact of the Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) behavior intervention on teacher-student relationships and teacher perception of students with challenging behaviors.."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted full approval. This proposal is **approved for three years from the date of this correspondence.**

APPROVAL DATE: 09/08/2021 EXPIRATION DATE: 09/07/2024

In giving its approval, the Committee has determined that: No more than minimal risk to subjects

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are subject to continuing review, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this approval period by URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the URCO.

Electronically signed by Rick Scheidt on 09/13/2021 3:11 PM ET

203 Fairchild Hall, Manhattan, KS 66502 | (785) 532-3224 | fax: (785) 532-3278