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House System: Increasing Community, Motivation, and Student Ownership

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Abstract

This study looked at the house system in an elementary setting to discover the students', teachers', and administrators' perceptions of how it influences motivation and the community of the school. The researcher's purpose was to understand if the participants felt that the elements of the house system motivated students to make positive choices and to see if the participants believed the house system influenced the community across campus. The data was collected through a student survey, observations, interviews with students, teacher, and the principal. The data was analyzed through the constant comparative method. The participants perceived that the house system allowed teachers to praise students easily. Students were able to recognize positive choices. The participants felt that the students were motivated by the common goal of their house or team. It was the community within the teams that motivated students to choose more positive choices in and outside the classroom.

House System Motivation

“GRIFFYINDOR!” Harry walked down to his new family, the screaming group of kids in the great hall covered in scarlet and gold—this is the image I continued to have in my head as my students were chosen for teams. Instead of an old, dusty hat and Dumbledore’s face of acceptance, there was a huge blow-up slide and 10 energetic teachers and administrators in colorful colors welcoming students into the different teams at the school. As the students slid down the slide, their eyes lit up with excitement and nervousness for their team. Once they picked out their color team out of the hat, teachers of the team would yell with excitement as they welcomed a new team member. Joy, color, and magic was in the air as students were chosen, just like Harry, to start a new adventure with this new family of sorts.

Ron Elementary School (all names are pseudonyms) for the first year in 2018-2019, implemented teams in their school based on the house system. Just like in *Harry Potter*, students drew out of a hat which team they would be in for the rest of their time at Ron Elementary. Then, throughout the year they had a chance to earn points for their team, so that their team could have a celebration at the end of the six weeks. It was always very colorful. At Ron Elementary there were five teams that students could be placed on: orange-endurance, blue-integrity, yellow-honesty, red-courage, and green-responsibility. Each team had a characteristic that students learned and practiced implementing into their lives. The teachers kept points for the teams in their classrooms and then added them to the school archive of points. Students had multiple chances to earn points for their team. Teachers gave points for positive choices, on-task behavior, student encouragement, proper hallway procedures, and showing the characteristic of their team. Teams hosted huddles every few weeks, and according to the team points, teams could have the chance to earn a celebration. Did students feel connected through the house

system? Were they motivated by the points, and the possibility of a celebration? These are all questions I explored.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to understand students', teachers', and administrators' perceptions of the house system at Ron Elementary and how it influenced students' behavior and motivation while also contributing to the community of the school. The house system was a system where every student in the school was placed in a house that they could contribute points to all year and be involved in activities. Throughout the year the students could earn points for their house. I wondered if the community the house system formed motivated the positive behavior of students. The research aimed to answer the following questions:

What happens when the house system is implemented at Ron Elementary to encourage students to make positive choices?

- How do students, teachers, and administrators perceive the impact the house system has had on motivation?
- How do students, teachers, and administrators perceive the impact the house system has on community in the classroom?

At the time of the research, I was a student in a graduate program and had a year-long student teaching placement in a third-grade classroom at Ron Elementary. My cooperating teacher and I taught English Language Arts and Social Studies to approximately 32 students. Ron Elementary is located on the north side of a small west Texas town, home to around 120,000 people. Ron Elementary serves around 650 students, kindergarten to fifth-grade. The student body of Ron Elementary school is represented by 14.9% African American, 68% Hispanic, 14.4% White, 0.5% Native American, and 2% mixed races. Over 92% of the Ron Elementary

population are economically disadvantaged, 26.2% are considered English Language Learners, and 7.1% are considered special education. Fifty-one percent of the student population are considered at-risk students.

Literature Review

In England, the house system started in boarding schools, grammar schools and comprehensive schools, in which the structure of the house system differed from school to school (Dierenfield, 1975). The original goal of the house system was to provide pastoral care to students living on the premises of the school. Housemasters were in charge of looking over the discipline and the care of the students in the houses. Dierenfield (1975) believed that the house system took some time and structure to implement correctly into schools. At the time he was writing his book he saw a need in American schools to implement the house system.

The house system has since been implemented at several American schools to create “joy, camaraderie, and close connections between children at different grade levels” (King & King, 2017, p. 14). The schools that implement this system have several houses, in which students in the houses compete in competitions, academic and athletic, participate in service activities, and leadership meetings (Green, 2006). Since the creation of the house system, students have been awarded points through the merit system or point system (Dierenfield, 1975). This is a way for students to compete against one another, while also choosing positive behaviors that will win points for their team. Green (2006) described a school where school points were awarded through kind acts of citizenship, personal academic achievement, competitions among the houses, and participation in community service projects around and in the school. The most famous school today that is known for using this system is the Ron Clark Academy (King & King, 2017). The Ron Clark Academy has fierce house competitions and house pride, which

encourages wild house spirits and healthy competition among students from all grade levels, kindergarten through fifth grade. The house system encourages the community between students of ages, all with one common interest, their house.

In recent research, Brennan (2012) at Most Holy Trinity Catholic School implemented the house system and found that the attitudes of individuals turned positive towards the climate of the school and decreased the problem of social marginalization. Green (2006) noticed a complete change in the way the students in the school interacted with one another, even the interactions in the cafeteria felt refreshed. Students were not focused on the negative school climate anymore, but of the academic achievement aspect of school as well. The implementation created relationships among students of different grade levels (Brennan, 2012). It also created relationships between teachers and students (Brennan, 2012).

It was also found that the community between students greatly influences the types of behavior happening among students. Cappella, Kim, Neal, and Jackson (2013) found in their research that students with aggressive behavior, hyperactivity, and inattention are all connected with the relationship that child has with the environment. Students with closer peer relationships are also seen to have more engagement in the classroom (Capella et al., 2013). Providing connection between students to improve engagement in the classroom is connected with student motivation.

Students are motivated to engage in positive behaviors through a variety of ways. In the elementary classroom, extrinsic motivation is what most teachers use to entice students to behave positively. Intrinsic motivation is defined as self-directed motivation. Saeed and Zyngier (2012), looked to see if students were more motivated through intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. In the research it showed that students who were intrinsically motivated showed more engagement in

the classroom. Alas, it also showed that not every student is going to be extrinsically motivated, which is why teachers must also use extrinsic methods to help students motivate themselves (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). These extrinsic methods include praise and rewards which in research have shown an increase in intrinsic motivation (Bear, Slaughter, Mantz, & Farley-Ripple, 2017).

Bear, Slaughter, Mantz, and Farley-Ripple (2017) found in their study that, “greater use of those techniques is associated with slightly greater extrinsic motivation and that greater use of praise and rewards is associated with slightly greater, and not less, intrinsic motivation” (p. 19). Teachers seen praising students more in the classroom had a decrease of off-task behavior in their classroom (Floress, Jenkins, Reinke, & Mckown, 2018). Therefore, it is recommended that teachers use praise in their classrooms as an intervention to decrease student behavior. Praise in the classroom helps motivate students and strengthens the student and teacher relationships in the classroom (Bear et al., 2017). Praise in the classroom, through a management program, resulted in less disruptions which allowed for more learning time in the classroom (Freiberg, Huzinec, & Templeton, 2009).

Praise and extrinsic methods are positive reinforcers which are related to Skinner’s (1965) behaviorism theory. Skinner (1965) in his, behavioral condition theory stated that by giving students reinforcement for their positive behavior we can help influence their choice in making more positive decisions towards positive behavior. In this theory, human behavior is continuously shaped and molded through reinforcement. Once one behavior is reinforced and learned then that behavior can help in other areas as well. This praise, or positive reinforcement must be immediate (Skinner, 1965). Positive reinforcement is a constant part of the house system through the points given to students showing positive behavior. The hope is that students will be motivated and learn the positive behaviors after receiving reinforcement for doing the same

positive behavior. It is also the hope that when giving other students this praise, students who are portraying negative behavior will be motivated to stop. Then with the point system they can slowly be conditioned to portray the positive behaviors in the classroom.

The research that has been conducted related to the house systems has shown both community and motivation has had a positive relationship with academic and social achievement. It also gives some information on how the house system could be a key empowerment tool to foster community. However, there is not currently any research that explores the house system and the perceptions of how it can motivate students in an elementary setting. My study will contribute to this line of research by focusing on how the community and point system of the house system can contribute to a greater amount of student motivation.

Methods

The research I conducted was a qualitative study. In order to answer my research questions, I thought about the data collection tools that would help answer my research questions. I explored ways that would help me gather student, teacher, and administrators' perceptions without controlling the content that they gave me. I decided the following methods would be the best way to collect my data and analyze it.

Participant Selection

The participants of the study included the principal of Ron Elementary, a Caucasian female. The teachers who participated were my cooperating teacher and the switch teacher. Both are Caucasian females. I sent home assent and consent forms with all the students. If the student brought back both forms with signed consent, then they fully participated in the research. Since the classes I taught were departmentalized, all the students who provided consent and assent to be participants in the two classes participated in the research. In the homeroom class, there was

eleven boys and five girls. The demographics of my class included 23% Hispanic, 32% African American, and 45% Caucasian. In my switch class, there were eleven boys and five girls. The demographics in my switch class included 32% Hispanic, 26% African American, 24% Caucasian, and 8% American Indian.

Data Collection

Overall this study lasted four weeks. In this time, I interviewed the principal in a twenty to thirty minute one-on-one interview. I gave out a survey to the students in the two third-grade classrooms (23 students in all) who consented to participate in the research. The survey included Likert scale questions and three to four open-ended questions. After looking at the results of the survey, I divided students into three groups: students who were motivated to positively behave, students who were indifferent, and students who were not motivated to positively behave by the house system. I chose one student from each classroom in every category. From the categories I randomly selected the students from each class. I interviewed the three students from each classroom in a ten to fifteen minute interview. I interviewed my cooperating teacher and the switch teacher for a one-on-one interview. Each interview lasted around twenty to thirty minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed.

Lastly, I observed at least one team huddle and one team celebration, of which I was a participant-observer. I took field notes or head notes during the observations (Hendricks, 2017). After writing field notes during the observations I reflected on the notes through journaling. Throughout the school year, I also kept a notebook where I could write down events that were related to the house system during the school year.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was an inductive coding of my interviews, surveys, and my observations using the constant comparative method (Hubbard & Power, 2003). I then organized my data manually by color coding and creatively connecting my data into codes. After reading through the data the first time I categorized codes, or level 1 codes. I used the level 1 codes that emerged in the first twenty percent of my data to code the remaining eighty percent of the data. These codes were constant themes I saw in my data. Then I went back through the initial level 1 codes to sort them into level 2 codes. My level 2 codes were the main themes that I found in my data. I developed around 20 level 1 codes and six level 2 codes (Tracy, 2013). I then created a codebook to help organize these codes, so that I could easily understand my findings (see the completed codebook in Appendix A). For the level 2 codes I wrote memos reflecting on the data categorized in those level 2 codes.

Findings

The level 2 codes uncovered within my data shows that the house system or team system, as it is known at Ron Elementary, was perceived to help students' motivation to act positively inside the classroom and outside the classroom. Originally, I connected the team system with Skinner's (1965) behaviorism theory. The team system does have strong behaviorism aspects, but the research uncovered another theory at work: Vygotsky's Social Learning theory. Vygotsky (1978) stresses that community has a strong role in "making meaning." This is precisely what the data presented. The participants felt that the community that was created at Ron Elementary through the team system was helping students own their learning, and gave meaning to the positive choices they were choosing. I learned through participants' beliefs that the social aspect of the team system truly gave students the motivation to act positively. The remainder of the findings section presents this theme through the six big ideas that were found in

my level 2 codes: common purpose, instant community, desire to earn points, recognize good choices, own the learning, and love of school.

Common Purpose

In the team system, random students were put together on one team with a goal in mind: to win a celebration through collecting points for the team. This was the common goal or purpose of each team. To get the celebration everyone on the team worked together to gain the points. Individual students gained points for their team by making positive choices at school. In my research, the students indicated that they were more willing to make positive choices because their team was depending on them. Students wanted their team to earn a celebration, and they knew that their team was counting on them, so they were motivated to make those positive choices.

The common purpose united the random group of students on each team. Students in interviews, when asked why they wanted to gain points for their team, said that it was for their team. Mrs. Trelawney in her interview noticed this when she said,

I think it motivates them to find opportunities to benefit their team. So where as if you're having a bad day and you just really don't feel like doing it today...and you just are having a hard time motivating... It's well I want to help my team. I can straighten up because I want to help my team. But I know that there are other people who are holding me accountable wanting me to earn points for my team as well.

In the survey (see in Appendix B), 90% of students checked agree or strongly agree with the statement "I want to try my hardest so that my team gets a celebration" (see Figure 1). The students believed in this common purpose, therefore motivating them to collect points.

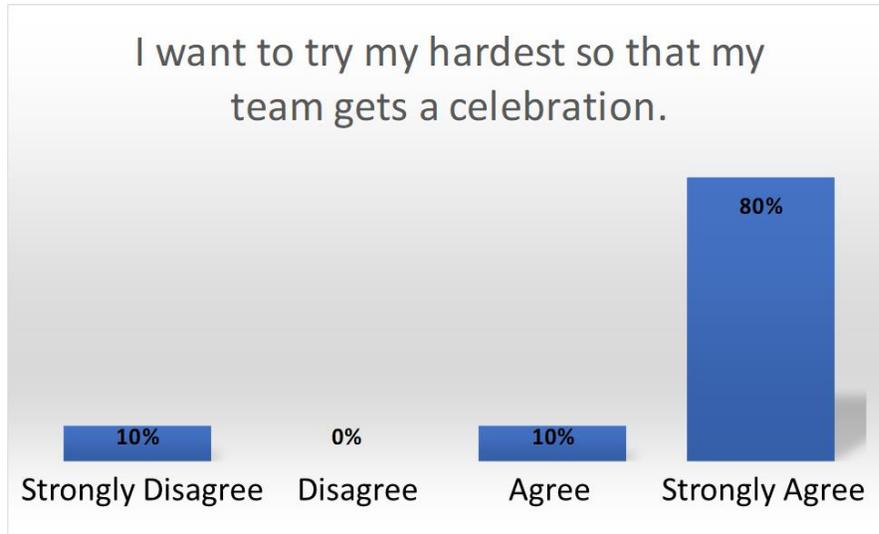


Figure 1. Survey results for the question “I want to try my hardest so that my team gets a celebration.”

To the students, the team system was an opportunity to think about more than just themselves. They grew as a unit. They felt that even if they did not win the celebration they still would grow as a team towards this one goal. It’s the idea that the team system is “bigger than yourself.” Romilda in her interview told me that the points “are really for them not for me,” talking about her team. The team was trying to earn these points together. The points were no longer for one person, but a whole group of people. Students felt motivated to benefit their team, knowing that it was not only about them, but about their whole team.

During my data collection the teams started talking about service projects. An aspect of the team system is that every team had a service project benefiting a charity or group. The serving aspect added to the common purpose of the team. Not only were they helping the team, but they were benefiting other people if they make the right choices. Team accountability was a huge factor in influencing right choices. Mrs. McGonagall, the principal, said that “When we serve together we are better.” Students in their interviews continued talking about their service

projects and how proud they were to be benefiting people who needed help. This further motivated them to be proactive with their decision making and their choices.

The common purpose created through the team system was perceived to motivate students to make those positive choices. Students believed it gave them a reason that was bigger than themselves, to continue making those choices that would benefit their community. This was recognized to be the biggest and most meaningful motivator in the data. The common purpose of the teams laid the foundation for the community.

Instant Community

The participants indicated that the team system created an instant community. The first week random groupings of students were put on a team together working towards the same goal. This community was created instantly, giving different students a common connection between them. This helped them bond with one another throughout the year. Students would be on their team for the rest of their elementary school days. In other words, they would forever be committed to the team, which created a great sense of belonging.

The perceptions of the community were similar for both students and teachers, as well as across campus. First, it was perceived to connect students and teachers across campus. Students were interacting with students not only in their same grade level, but with students that were in different grade levels. Colin, in his interview, noticed the reason for team huddles was to learn about the different people on the team. This goes to show that through the house system students felt that they were given the opportunity to interact with a diverse range of students and enjoyed learning about those students.

The interactions students were having with other students and teachers became more positive. Teachers and students told me about the positive interactions they had with their team

members. Students were given opportunities to bond with students on their team through positive interactions like the team handshake. Many teachers observed more positive interactions in the hallway with students. In the student interviews students told me how they would encourage one another on their team when another student earned a point for their team. Overall, it was noticed that the community created and modeled positive interactions among students. Colin in his survey results put that “I am in it to be nice to people” (see Figure 2). This is what he said motivated him to earn points for his team. Therefore, through these positive interactions students learned social and emotional skills within the community.

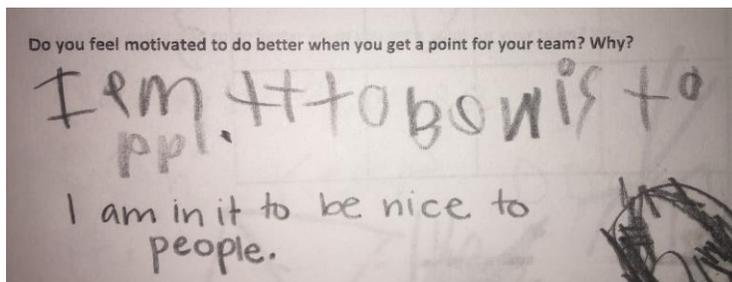


Figure 2. Colin’s answer to a survey question.

The team spirit was huge. Students were just super proud of their team and proved it with their enthusiasm and their excitement. They loved their team and were ecstatic to be a part of it. The random grouping placed different people on the team in a community helped create the instant students pulled their team color out of the hat.

It was the social opportunities created in the teams that helped students make meaning out of their choices. Being with the diverse group of people, engaging in positive interactions, and a wild team spirit is what was witnessed to be motivating these students to do their best.

Recognize Good Choices

Since the implementation of the team system the students started to recognize the good choices that they had to make. Not only were they motivated by the common purpose of their

team, but they started to recognize and understand the good choices that they had to make. Teachers and administrators pointed out the good choices by giving students points. The point system was created to highlight the good choices that students were making. The points did not have any value, Mrs. McGonagall said. They simply were tangible evidence that helped students connect their choices to positive feelings.

When asked how to earn points for their team, students were able to vocalize some of the behaviors that would earn them points. Students answered the survey question, “What are some positive choices you make that help you get points for your team?”, pointing out the positive choices. Student responses were “Have a bubble in your mouth,” “listen on the carpet,” and “following directions.” These responses showcase that students were able to vocalize the good choices they were making.

Teachers noticed students were motivated by their peers earning points. Mrs. Pomfrey (third grade teacher) observed that when she gave out points to a student, other students would fix their behavior to match the student making the right choices. As teachers were finding the positive choices students made and praised them through the team point system, students indicated that they were more motivated to participate in those good choices as well. In Mrs. Pomfrey’s class she encouraged students to participate in GoNoodle activities and students would receive points if they participated. The points motivated those students to participate that normally would not--if given the choice.

Not only were students recognizing the good choices, the teachers were noticing more positive behavior among the students. Mrs. McGonagall mentioned that since the implementation there had been a reduction in office referrals. It was less about the points that were being given out to students, but more about drawing attention to the positive behavior that

was being praised. Not only were students recognizing smart choices they could make, but the team system gave teachers an easy opportunity to praise students for making smart choices.

Desire to Earn Points

The majority of students had this desire to win points for their team. In most of the interviews and surveys students continued to let me know how much they wanted those team points for their team. From the student perspective, the points were the aspect that had the most value. There were some specific items students were particularly motivated by to earn those points. In the data there seemed to be an overwhelming amount where the students talked about this inner desire to earn these points.

The biggest desire of my students' hearts was the celebration. Even the student who said that he did not enjoy being on the team wanted a celebration and could tell me how he could earn those points for the team. This goes along with the theme of common purpose of the teams. They wanted to get the celebration for their team, but I noticed an individual desire to be a part of the celebration of doing the right things. Students in their surveys told me about how much fun they would have if they won for the six weeks and got to have a celebration. When asked, tell me why you enjoy being on a team at school Ginny wrote, "Because they can win," and Angelina wrote, "because it is fun and if we get the most points we get the biggest, biggest, biggest party ever!" (see Figure 3).

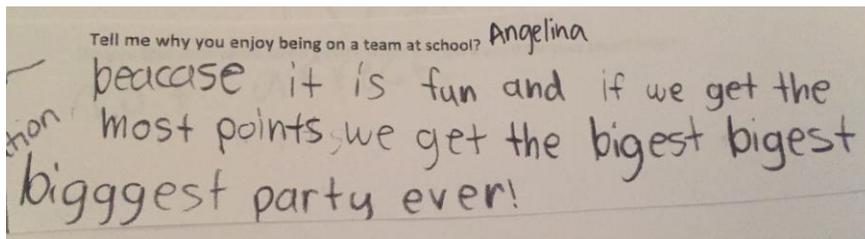


Figure 3. Angelina's survey answer.

My students had heard the rumors about how awesome these parties were and needed to experience it for themselves. When I asked Dean why he wanted a team celebration he told me “because I never been to one.” Those who already experienced a party this year told me they wanted another. Colin told me, “Yeah like we are close to one celebration so we can have another celebration again.” The idea of the celebration gave students the desire to participate in positive choices.

The data also uncovered this love of the friendships they made in the teams and the created motivations in the community. Along with the celebration, students wanted a chance to be with their friends. The friends they would see on their team were ones they do not usually see in their classrooms or on a daily basis. The building design of Ron Elementary did not give a lot of room for students to interact with different grade levels or to see them during the day. The team system provided an opportunity for students to see their friends who were not in their class. Romilda in her interview, said that she loved being with her team “because my friend who’s in third grade, and she used to be in my class in second grade, and she’s my favorite friend.” They were encouraged by these relationships and therefore had a desire to earn points for the celebrations.

Own the Learning

One of the goals of the implementation of the team system was to create a culture where students were owning their learning. The goal was for students to want to come to school everyday and enjoy learning. My data showed that students were doing just this and more. They not only created the culture where they love school, but they also took ownership of their choices.

First off, students internalized the character traits that went along with their team system. In fact they started to embody the character traits or internalize them. I noticed that students used the language in situations in class and outside of the classroom. This led conversations among peers and teachers to help students motivate themselves to try the difficult tasks. Students felt this language helped them take charge of their learning using the characteristics that will make them “better humans,” as said by Mrs. McGonagall. They invested in their team and in the process of making their team a better community and better citizens in the school.

For example, my students were taking a comprehension test on the book for the week. Mrs. Trelawney was walking around noticing some students who were becoming tired. She passed by Neville, who was in team endurance, and asked if he needed a break. Neville turned to her and said, “No, I’m enduring.” He took his character trait of endurance and applied it to his school work. He internalized it and took it as he could endure through the hard things in school. When asked in Colin’s interview about the character trait endurance, he said that he usually endures when they have to run track in P.E. In another situation, a student did not know directly what their character trait meant, but tried to understand the meaning. I asked Dean about what team integrity means, and he answered that he did not know. He continued to tell me that he thinks it might mean being nice to people.

Students started to really understand the character trait that was associated with their team and taking it to heart. Mrs. Trelawney said, “They, you know, are really understanding what their character trait is, what it means to have that. And they are looking for opportunities to share that with others through their actions or just through identifying that trait in others.” The character traits associated with the teams encouraged students to embody those in their everyday

actions. I do think some teams were better encouraging this behavior than others, but it was prevalent in the third-grade classes I observed.

Teachers were also able to have more meaningful conversations with students about their behavior. A teacher had a conversation with a fifth-grade student on team honesty because he was not making the best choices. When having the conversation with his teacher, he asked for some time before he could answer because he was on team honesty, and he wanted to give his answer honestly. The team system created value in these character traits that will help students become the best humans that they can be. It was observed to create opportunities for teachers to have conversations about behavior in a positive and meaningful way with students.

Ron Elementary created the culture where students are drawn to the engaging activities that the team system is provided. It changed students' attitudes where they wanted to come to school, and be involved in the engaging learning that is happening. Dean, in his survey answer said that the reason he enjoyed being on a team at school is he "likes to learn more" (see Figure 4). Students were taking ownership of their learning and taking ownership of their team. The team was someplace they belonged and encouraged their desire to be at school and be a part of the bigger team of team Ron Elementary.

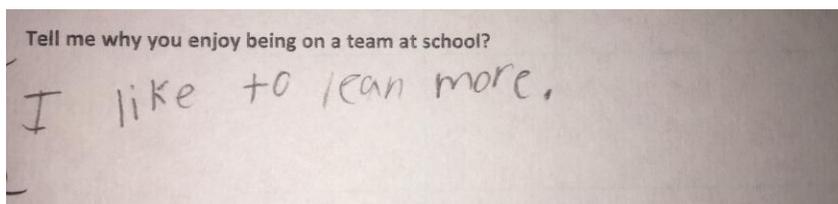


Figure 4. Colin's answer to a survey question.

Love of School

Mrs. McGonagall stated in her interview that the purpose of the team system was in the effort to get students to own the learning—to get them to start investing in their school and a

desire to be present. In order for them to take ownership of their learning, they focused on implementing the team system which helped students own their learning and encouraged a love of school. This was the initial purpose of the team system set out by Mrs. McGonagall. The impact noticed by teachers had done just this and more.

Students' attendance increased since the implementation of the house system. Students were wanting to be at school. Students felt their team as something that was important to them, so they brought it up to teachers and administrators. It also brought some of the fun back into school. Students in the survey when asked what they enjoy about being on team, wrote that being on a team is fun. It brought this energy and fun back into the school. Students wanted to come to school everyday. Students especially wanted to come on days where there were team huddles, so that they could see their team. Eighty-five percent of students in the survey put down that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that said, "I make sure that I come to school on days we have a team huddle or celebration" (see Figure 5). They wanted to be there.



Figure 5. Survey results of the question "I make sure that I come to school on days we have a team huddle or celebration."

The fact that students took ownership over their team and started to embody those character traits, and that the team system encouraged students to come to school was notable. In

fact, the team system was understood to have created this love of school. Students in the orange team huddle not only wanted to represent their own team in their emblem, but they wanted to represent Ron Elementary. They wanted to include all the colors of all the different teams. Students realized that even though they were all on separate teams, everyone was on team Ron. Teachers noticed more positive interactions with the entire school. The team spirit and community that was created, created a love of school. This motivated them to come to school and take ownership of their choices and their learning. The culture of the school as perceived by Mrs. Trelawney was that the students not only wanted to celebrate their team, but they wanted everyone to be successful, so they wanted to share this with everyone and include everyone in the school.

This is a major finding because it showcases the perceived impact the team system can have on the whole culture of the school. The fact students were motivated to make great choices and wanted to share their success with the whole school created a new community that is the whole school. It was noticed that the team system influenced school culture to be a positive and powerful place where students had the opportunity to take ownership of how the culture was created.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the team system implementation was perceived to have created a love of school, and motivated students to act positively. It gave character traits students could embody and share with others through their actions. The common purpose of winning a celebration was recognized to have motivated students to earn points for their team through their positive choices. Students wanted to earn those points for the bigger purpose of their whole team. They knew their team would benefit, so they were motivated to earn team points.

The teachers perceived this motivation as well. They noticed when they gave other students points, the other students started to make more positive choices. Teachers recognized that they could point out the good students were doing, so students started recognizing the positive behaviors that would earn them points. Teachers also noticed that students wanted to come to school to be with their team.

The implementation of the house system or team system created a positive school culture, where students were inclusive of difference and were having positive interactions with other students, teachers, and administration. Students and teachers alike were excited when they have the opportunity to be with their team. It gave them an opportunity to interact with not only their grade level, but with everyone on campus. The team system connected a diverse group of students and teachers and gave them a common connection and common purpose. Students were motivated by the relationships they created to be the best humans they can be at Ron Elementary and in the world.

Implications for Teachers

The team system implemented at Ron Elementary was a school-wide program. The team system or house system is a powerful tool to use to implement school wide because it connects the whole school together. It could be difficult to start the team system without proper training. Mrs. McGonagall (the principal) went to several trainings to help her understand the activities and important foundations the team system needs to be a successful implementation. I believe that the team system could be very powerful as a school-wide program, but I do think that a version of the team system could be implemented into a single classroom if it the opportunity of a school wide implementation is not possible.

Teams or houses in the classroom, grade-level, or two departmentalized classrooms could also be a powerful tool to help motivate positive behavior. Mrs. McGonagall gave me some tips for teachers who are interested in implementing teams into the classroom. The first key is make sure that the teams have a random grouping of students. Four to five teams in a classroom would be enough to have three or four students on each team in the classroom. Each team could create, or the classroom teacher could create the names for the teams. There needs to be time taken out for team huddles, where students can discuss ways they can gain points for their team. These would need to be facilitated by the teacher. Time needs to be taken out for celebrations for the team that is the winner. As the classroom teacher you would need to establish how often the celebrations would be and what they would include. Through this research I think it is the team system has the possibility to be powerful in just a classroom setting.

Something else that can be implemented into the classroom is creating a common goal or purpose in the classroom. In my research I noticed how powerful students working towards a common goal can motivate and establish a foundation for community. Even if it is just common behavior goals where all students are working towards a celebration, or an academic goal. This could be a way for students to be a part of something bigger than themselves. This should be a common occurrence in the classroom, so students are aware of the choices they must make.

There were some questions that were raised during the research that could be used for future study. Would the team system be perceived differently inside of the classroom? Are there correlations between the team system and motivation in behavior and academics? How could the team system be used as more accountability towards behavior? How does the social aspects of the team system improve academics? These are all questions that I encountered during my study.

I noticed many aspects of the team system were related to students' motivation, but I would research more on how it can attribute to students' academics.

Finally, this research shows the power of positive praise. Teachers were constantly giving out praise for students and that increased the positive behaviors they saw in the classroom. I think it is important to give tangible evidence to students, like team points, to help them associate the good choices they are making to the proud, excited feeling they get when they earn the reward. Praise is powerful. Giving students motivation to own their learning and choices is imperative in the classroom. As teachers we must find a way to motivate our students to engage in their learning. Through this research one of the best ways to do that is through community.

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Appendix A

Codebook

Name of the code	Level of the code	Definition	Example
Desire to earn points	II	Students have a huge desire to earn points for their team.	“Like if I get a point for my team I keep on try and get more points for my team and then I never stop trying to.” -Colin interview
-Good feelings associated	I	When students say they feel good, happy, or felt like they believe in himself or herself when they get points.	“Whenever I believe in myself sometimes I actually feel happy because you can do more stuff whenever you can believe you can.” -Hermione interview
-Motivation of team relationships	I	Students want to earn points because their friends on their team would be happy if they did.	“Because I get to be with my friends and also cause I get to have fun.” -George survey answer
-Wants a celebration	I	Students said they get points for their team to earn a celebration.	“Because it is fun and if we get the biggest biggest biggest party ever.” -Angelina survey answer
Recognizes good choices	II	Students understand the good choices and good behaviors that they have.	“Listen, be good, follow directions, be respectful.” -Colin interview
-More positive choices	I	Students have choosing more positive choices. Teachers see more positive choices in their class.	“Reduced office referrals. Just reduced you know negative behaviors between students.” -McGonagall interview
-Praise kids for good	I	Instead of correcting poor behavior. Teachers are pointing out the good choices so students notice good choices more.	“You’re making their minds eyes I can the good verses just pointing out what people are doing that’s not good.” -McGonagall interview

Instant community	II	The randomness of the teams creates an instant community bringing all types of people together. They are bonding with one another.	“This is just like us as a team (a circle), so once on team endurance, team endurance forever. SO just like a circle you will always be on orange team.”- Orange huddle
-Across campus	I	The team system involves all grade levels and is across campus.	“Teachers are coming and organizing students into teams of all different grade levels.”- Yellow Celebration
-Sense of belonging	I	Students feel like they belong with their team.	“So me and my team and blue team friends can go to the party!”- Angelina Survey
-Positive interactions	I	When the team system is encouraging positive interactions between students, and teachers.	“I have more positive interactions with students on a consistent basis and verses some negative interactions in the hallway.”- McGonagall interview
-Connection with different people	I	The team system includes many different people.	“Well we can talk...like something like we can learn more about out team and we can learn like know about more like people on your team.”-Colin interview
-Proud of who we are	I	The student and teachers talked about how they are proud of their team.	“I feel proud and glad.” -Dean interview
-Team spirit	I	The team is celebrating.	“Students are wearing their yellow team shirts. One student is wearing yellow star glasses.”-Yellow Celebration
Common purpose	II	Students on the teams have a goal of earning more points to win the celebration.	“I think it motivates them to find opportunities to benefit their team.”- Trelawney interview
-Serve together we are better	I	The service project the teams are doing are helping students make more choices as a team.	“It’s fun because we are helping the hospital, because we have a penny jar and we are going to put pennies in there to help the children’s

			hospital, so they can be better and stuff.”-Seamus interview
-Bigger than self	I	Earning points is not only for one student, but for the whole team. The students are not making choices for themselves, but for their team.	“The team is trying to earn points together. AND so it just becomes this thing that is bigger than yourself and it’s bigger than even your grade level.”-McGonagall interview
-Togetherness or collaboration	I	Teams are working together and there is a sense of “we can do this together.”	“There definitely is a sense of we are together in this and let’s try to gain some points for our team.”-Orange huddle journal
Love of school	II	The students or adults show a love for Ortiz. The whole school culture has shifted because of the team system.	“Because as a team leader I was just thinking about go team orange all the way and they kind of shifted that even though we are part of team endurance we are also a part of team Ron and want everyone to be successful.” -Trelawney interview
-Fun back in school	I	The team system is fun. Students have fun with their team.	“Hm I like being on it because like it’s fun and you get to play games and have celebrations.”-Dean interview
-Want to be at school	I	Attendance improved. Students have a desire to come to school each day.	“Because if I’m not here at school I miss the team huddle.”-Cedric survey
Own the learning	II	Students are taking charge of their learning and choices in the classroom.	“How about we create a culture that I own the learning. Me personally if I- If this is my school I love coming to my school so I can learn then we set the right path on why we want engaging activities to begin with.” - McGonagall interview
-Leads conversations	I	The character traits and points through the teams system gives teachers and students opportunities to have meaningful conversations.	“But I do think that if we are able to have conversations with students about some of the choices, and if they are poor I can say, now whose team are you on, what team are you on...we can talk about what can I

			learn from being on team endurance.” -McGonagall interview
-Excited/embrace	I	Students are excited to go see their team and are excited when they get a point for their team.	“I feel like excited because you get to see your friends and you get to work on stuff and stuff.” -Romilda interview
-Embodying character traits	I	Students are showing their characteristic through the choices they are making.	“There was one time where I asked (a student) him do you need a break, and he said no I’m enduring. So he really took that as I can do hard things, I ‘m going to keep trying and keep going.” -Trelawney interview
Student challenges at home	I	Students have more challenges at home that they bring to school.	“We just have a lot of needs as our kids...I know some challenges that they face.” -McGonagall interview
Not motivated	I	Students did not like or do not enjoy being on a team and they say it doesn’t encourage their choices.	“I do not like being on a team at school because I don’t like the color red.” -Draco interview

Appendix B
Survey Results

Out of 21 students who took the survey				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoy being on a team.	4%	4%	14%	76%
I love going to team huddles.	10%	4%	10%	76%
I want to come to school everyday.	10%	20%	33%	38%
I make sure that I come to school on days we have a team huddle or celebration.	4%	10%	28%	57%
I feel great when I get a point for my team.	4%	0%	20%	76%
When my friends get points for my team I feel great.	10%	10%	14%	66%
I make better choices for my team.	10%	4%	38%	47%
I encourage my friends to make better choices to gain points for my team.	20%	4%	28%	47%
I work hard, so I gain points for my team.	14%	0%	23%	62%
When I hear my friends get points, I change my behavior, hoping that I will get a point.	10%	10%	28%	52%
I want to try my hardest so that my team gets a celebration.	10%	0%	10%	80%
I always remember to say hi to people who are on my team.	23%	14%	33%	28%
I always give people on my team our secret handshake.	28%	4%	28%	38%
I love to see kids who are on my team.	4%	10%	23%	62%
I feel like I belong on my team.	20%	10%	14%	57%
On team huddle days, I go all out for my team (ex: wear team color)	23%	20%	38%	20%