A Case Study of the Implementation, Removal, and Residual Effects of a Departmentalized Structure in an Elementary School

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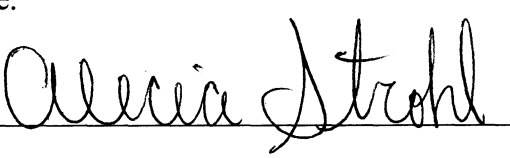
Signature 

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ABSTRACT

Twelve teachers in a rural elementary school were appointed by administrators to pilot departmentalized instruction for one year to determine its impacts on teachers and students and guide their decision regarding school-wide implementation. This three-part study explored the experiences and perceptions of the pilot teachers, compared pilot teachers' experiences in the departmentalized setting to the experiences of self-contained teachers within the same school, and investigated the pilot teachers' perceptions of shared leadership practices in regards to administrative decisions made about departmentalizing. This comprehensive qualitative case study is comprised of three separate comprehensive studies with individual and unique contributions to the limited research currently available on departmentalized instruction in elementary schools. The first study revealed teacher preference for the departmentalized instructional model over the self-contained model due to lighter workload, more focused and higher quality instruction, and increased self-efficacy. When participants' experiences and perceptions were compared to those of self-contained teachers in the second study, findings revealed departmentalized teachers experienced higher morale, lighter workload, and increased overall job satisfaction. The third study revealed reduced consistency and inclusion in shared leadership negatively impacted teachers' commitment, satisfaction, levels of morale, and collective efficacy.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The examination of a school's organizational structure can range from comprehensive to specific. From large-scale components such as which grade levels are served, to smaller issues like individual classroom schedules, the organizational structure of a school is comprised of numerous components on all scales. One of these components is the manner in which curriculum is taught to students. Elementary schools typically follow the self-contained model, in which teachers teach all subjects to one group of students each day. In the field of education, departmentalization is the dividing of core subject areas amongst two or more teachers and is most commonly found in middle and high school settings. This two-phase case study explored the process of implementing departmentalization in one elementary school from its trial year to its termination and also examined the experiences and perspectives of teachers who taught in this non-traditional setting.

Background

Various factors have increased teachers' workloads over time, including changes in policies, cuts in funding, and higher levels of accountability. Burnout, or "negative responses to the mismatch between job requirements and perceived abilities" (Brown, 2012, p. 48) is one major effect of increased workloads (Bridges & Searle, 2011). Chang (2009) discussed reasons for teacher burnout, such as emotional exhaustion, which may ultimately lead teachers to leave the teaching profession (p. 194). The most recent

published report by the National Center for Education Statistics containing data regarding teacher turnover revealed nearly 8% of teachers left the profession during the 2008-2009 school year (Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frolich, & Tahan, 2011). The major themes Chang (2009) found in his review of literature regarding teacher burnout were emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of inefficacy. Noting the relationship between these themes, he revealed exhaustion and depersonalization can ultimately cause the latter, a lack of efficacy. Efficacy, which he described as "an individual's beliefs in his or her own capabilities to pursue a course of action to meet given situational demands" (Chang, 2009, p. 197), was found to have a positive relationship with teachers' job performance (Brown, 2012; Khurshid, Qasmi, & Ashraf, 2012). Teachers spent more time, used more creative teaching methods, and fostered more positive student attitudes toward subjects in which they had the most self-efficacy in teaching (Eidietis & Jewkes, 2011; Schwartz & Gess-Newsome, 2008; Wilkins, 2008).

Effectively minimizing the trend of highly qualified teachers leaving the field due to burnout could ultimately improve student achievement, as Aud et al.'s report (2011) cited teacher experience as a student achievement indicator. On the elementary level, veering from a traditional classroom format is one way schools may tackle this dilemma. Transitioning to a nontraditional classroom organizational structure, such as the departmentalization model, can decrease workload and emotional exhaustion by allowing teachers to teach and prepare for fewer content areas and provide satisfaction through more focused teaching (Chan & Jarman, 2004, p. 70). Chan and Jarman (2004) highlighted the likelihood of retaining highly qualified teachers as a result of this transition in structure. Further, several studies revealed self-efficacy was fostered when

teachers taught the subject areas in which they were most confident, which departmentalization could make possible (Brown, 2012; Fantuzzo, Perlman, Sproul, Minney, Perry, & Li, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). These studies support the notion that residual effects of implementing a change such as departmentalization could potentially minimize the high teacher turnover rate by decreasing workload and exhaustion and increasing teacher self-efficacy.

Departmentalization is a type of team teaching in which teachers teach as specialists in one or more content areas (Delviscio & Muffs, 2007, p. 26). Typically in elementary school classrooms, classroom organizational structure follows a self-contained format, which operates under the assumption that "an elementary school teacher is a Jack (or Jill)-of-all-trades that is equally strong in all areas of the curriculum" (Chan & Jarman, 2004, p. 70). Because of the inherent format of the structure, teachers in departmentalized settings prepare for fewer subject areas than self-contained teachers, giving them more time to invest in preparation in each subject they teach. Some school districts are beginning to departmentalize at the elementary school level to meet the demands of accountability measures by giving students this specialized form of instruction from teachers (Delviscio & Muffs, 2007, p. 26).

The residual effects of specialized instruction were shown to result in improvement in student achievement rates (Bailey, 2010; Hood, 2009; Piechura-Couture, Tichenor, Touchton, Macissac, & Heins, 2006; Wilkins, 2008). Though some compromise might be necessary within a school to accommodate each teacher's subject preferences, departmentalization does provide the opportunity for teachers to specialize in their favored subjects, and offers benefits for the teachers who may have to

compromise. For instance, Lowery (2002) found specialized instruction built teachers' confidence and competence. Lowery's study revealed teaching fewer subjects improved subject-area attitudes by allowing teachers to focus on standards and teaching strategies in depth rather than spreading their time and talents over a wide range of subject areas. Later, Wilkins' (2008) found that teachers used more effective instructional methods in the subject areas toward which they had more positive attitudes. While Lowery's (2002) study showed an improvement in attitudes and teaching abilities through specialized instruction, Wilkins (2008) showed teachers used more effective teaching methods in subject areas toward which they had more positive attitudes. Thus, these studies can support the assertion that even if teachers are assigned to teach the subjects they least favor, their attitudes toward those subjects may increase regardless.

If such a format could potentially increase teacher self-efficacy and more importantly, student achievement, why are the majority of elementary school classrooms still self-contained (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Chang, 2008; Hood, 2009)? Self-contained classrooms are the status quo for elementary schools, so little research is available on the effectiveness of the structure, making the acquisition of stakeholder support to be difficult. Compared to changes in lunch schedules or time allotted for recess, a shift to departmentalization is a major change within an elementary school. Major changes require (a) sufficient time to be implemented, (b) commitment from stakeholders, (c) adequate resources, and (d) all involved to fully understand its purpose, implications, and implementation (Hope, 2002). With a constant stream of required policy pouring from federal, state, and local levels, administrators may not welcome the idea of implementing another whole-school initiative like departmentalized teaching. One way to integrate

such a change is by implementing through a pilot group of teachers before committing to a whole-school shift. Chan and Jarman (2004) suggest introducing departmentalization into the school by piloting the change with only the students whose parents request participation (p. 70). Piloting such a substantial change allows stakeholders to test its full-scale feasibility, identify potential problems, plan for logistical efficiency, and collect data to support the change (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

Allowing teachers to participate in the decision-making process is another advantage to piloting substantial changes before implementing them school-wide. Shechtman, Levy, and Leichtentritt (2005) cited research regarding shared decision-making to support their findings in a study about self-efficacy and noted it could be used to increase facets of teachers' work environment, including commitment, satisfaction, and levels of morale (p. 145). Like with most subjective topics, the terms used in literature varies regarding the inclusion of teachers in school decision-making. Most commonly, the practice is referred to as *shared leadership* or *distributed leadership* (Harris, 2012). The practice of shared leadership is one way to improve teachers' self-efficacy as well as the efficacy of the school as a whole, or the collective efficacy. "A supportive school leadership which provides norms, goals, and values which are shared by all or most teachers at school may increase the teachers' beliefs of their own ability and those of others within the school" (Brown, 2012, p. 60).

A key component of shared leadership is the inclusion of teachers in major decisions (Blase & Blase, 1999; Lindahl, 2008; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Because such a change would directly affect them, teachers in an elementary school practicing shared leadership would be included in the decision to shift to a

departmentalized format (Jenkins & Jenson, 2010; Spillane et al., 2004). If piloting this large-scale change was approved through a shared leadership construct, the principal's role during the transition would be interactive and involved. Principals effectively implementing shared leadership within their schools empower teachers and provide them with support to reach shared goals and implement instructional innovations (Mullen & Sullivan, 2002; Spillane et al., 2004). In sum, simply including teachers in the vote to pilot departmentalization would not suffice; shared leadership involvement throughout the entire implementation would be necessary to effectively monitor and analyze its direct and residual effects, as well as foster collective efficacy.

Problem Statement

High teacher turnover due to burnout can be reversed by decreasing teacher workload and increasing job satisfaction (Bridges & Searle, 2011; Timms, Graham, & Cottrell, 2007). In a typical elementary school with self-contained classrooms, these two monumental tasks could be tackled by implementing a system with significant direct and residual effects in those areas. Departmentalization is one option that would directly affect workload by decreasing the amount of subjects taught by each teacher and indirectly affect job satisfaction by increasing efficacy; ultimately improving student achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2002; Wilkins, 2010). Because departmentalizing is such a drastic change from the traditional elementary classroom setting, piloting the format before implementing school-wide would allow participants to provide feedback, assess the data collected during implementation, and, if proven successful, increase stakeholder support (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). As Blase and Blase (1999) revealed, when

teachers were included in the decision-making process through shared leadership, they displayed greater support for major changes.

Only minimal research on the direct effects of departmentalization exists, and synthesized from that research, is an even more scant amount of evidence of its residual effects. Multiple researchers call for further studies on this topic, as most administrators do not view departmentalization as a viable option without supporting evidence (Delviscio & Muffs, 2007; McGrath & Rust, 2002). In an attempt to counter the problem of this sparse research base, this study thoroughly examined multiple aspects of one elementary school's experience with departmentalized instruction. This shared leadership elementary school in rural Georgia implemented departmentalization through a pilot group of teachers and students for one year before deciding on school-wide implementation for future instruction.

In addition to contributing to the research base, this two-phase qualitative case study explored the problems associated with teacher burnout, which are causing teachers to leave the education field (Brown, 2012; Chang, 2009; Friedman, 2003). Teacher burnout, which negatively impacts teacher retention rates, can be attributed to various factors, including high workload and low self-efficacy (Bridges & Searle, 2011; McCormick & Ayres, 2009). The school in this study piloted departmentalization in an attempt to address these issues. Besides predicting its feasibility for school-wide implementation, the central goal for piloting the format was to determine its impact on a portion of students and teachers before committing completely to the change. The components explored in this study include the planning stages before piloting, pilot teachers' experiences related to departmentalization, a comparison of pilot and self-

contained teachers' work environment perceptions, and the extent to which shared leadership was implemented throughout the entire process. In sum, this comprehensive approach aimed to address problems related to teacher burnout, as well as contribute to the limited literature on departmentalized instruction in elementary schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the trial year of the implementation of departmentalized instruction in an elementary school in order to investigate the perceived effects of departmentalization on workload, stress, and other issues related to burnout. The first phase of this qualitative case study examined the trial year piloted by a group of 12 teachers. It included collecting departmentalized teachers' perspectives and experiences during that year, as well as comparing morale between these teachers and their non-departmentalized coworkers. The first phase revealed overwhelming support in favor of departmentalizing from both departmentalized and self-contained teachers at the end of the trial year. Despite this support, the departmentalized classroom structure was not adopted for the following year by decision-makers.

The data collected during the first phase of the study combined with administrators' decision to not implement departmentalization fueled the purpose for the second phase, which was to examine the impact of the removal of departmentalization on teacher morale and school culture as they related to shared leadership. The second phase of the study occurred during the school year following the year departmentalization was implemented. For comparison purposes, the second phase of the study utilized data gathered during its timeline as well as data gathered in the previous year. Overall, this

qualitative case study investigated and described the timeline of events involved in the implementation and removal of departmentalization within a primary school, the perspectives of teachers involved, and the residual effects of those events.

Significance of the Study

With heavy cuts in funding, school resources are becoming less accessible; yet teachers are expected to meet increasingly rigorous standards despite these cuts (Aud et al., 2011). To prevent teacher burnout, methods to improve various aspects of the profession should be explored and implemented. Because of the many components of this study, it will contribute to multiple areas in educational research. Overarching themes directly related to teachers, such as workload, self-efficacy, and shared leadership were explored in connection to departmentalization, making this study both unique and pertinent to a variety of future studies. The limited existence of research on elementary departmentalization feeds the hesitance of administrator support (Delviscio & Muffs, 2007). Providing insight through a qualitative study about departmentalization may pique their interest, make it seem more feasible, and allow them candid access to teachers' viewpoints on its implementation. This study creates pathways for a multitude of future studies in the area of departmentalization, from teacher partnering options to parent insight and participation. Further, because of the depth of the topics explored, studies outside of the realm of departmentalization can also stem from this research, such as specific impacts of workload and components of shared leadership.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers who have taught in both departmentalized and self-contained classrooms compare the characteristics of the two settings?

2. How do the personal and cultural perceptions and experiences of departmentalized teachers compare to those of self-contained classroom teachers within the same school?
3. In shared leadership school, what are the residual effects of removing a teacher-favored instructional format without involving teachers in the decision to do so?

Definitions

Various terms used in this study have multiple meanings, contexts, and synonyms in the related literature. For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined and contextualized as shown.

Collective Efficacy: Psychologist Albert Bandura (1997) defined collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (p. 477). Within schools, perceived collective efficacy is the performance capability of the social system as a whole, as determined by the faculty (p. 469).

Content Specialists: Within the related literature, content specialists are elementary teachers who teach, prepare, and plan for one to three subject areas. Participants in this study teach, prepare, and plan for one of two combinations of three subjects. Math, science, and social studies is one combination; reading, language arts, and writing is the other.

Departmentalization: Departmentalization is a teaching structure that allows teachers to specialize in one or more subject areas. In this setting, students move from one classroom to another during the day for instruction (Chan & Jarman, 2004, p. 70).

Self-contained: Self-contained teaching is a structure, typically in elementary schools, in which one teacher teaches all subject areas to one group of students during an instructional day.

Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is concerned with, as discussed by Bandura (2006), "people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce given attainments" (p. 307). For teachers, self-efficacy is defined as the extent to which a teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect academic performance of students regardless of student learning difficulties or lack of motivation (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977, p. 136).

Shared Leadership: Though specific models may vary from school to school, shared leadership is defined as the distribution of leadership responsibility amongst a team of school representatives and administration through a process of shared decision-making (Epp & McNeil, 1997; Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2009).

Limitations

For this case study, the limitations were kept at the forefront of data collection and analysis by the researcher. The researcher remained cognizant of the following while conducting the research:

Researcher Bias: As with most case studies, researcher bias was a limitation in this study. The data collected about the departmentalized structure was collected by a researcher who was teaching in a self-contained structure; which may have created researcher bias. Also, the researcher was employed at the school at which the research was conducted, so participant relationships had already been established and prior understanding of school culture existed.

Prior Rapport: Considering the researcher and participants were overseen by the same administrators, participants may have withheld some opinions, ideas, complaints, etc. Though the researcher had informed them of the confidentiality measures with which data would be handled, some participants showed hesitation at times when discussing administration issues.

Participant Changes: Twelve teachers piloted the departmentalized structure in the first year of the study. For the second phase of the study (the following school year), when all teachers at the school were to teach in the self-contained structure, only eight of them remained classroom teachers. The data gathered from the four participants who obtained other positions in the school were not analyzed with the same lens as the data gathered from the participants who reverted to the self-contained structure.

Administration Changes: The school underwent a sudden change of administration before the start of the year of departmentalization. Though this may have impacted participants' perceptions of work environment, multiple methods of data collection revealed their changes in attitudes were influenced more heavily by the implementation and removal of departmentalized instruction.

Delimitations

Board-level and Administrative Inquiry: In the interest of the researcher's job security and rapport, the school board and school administrators were not questioned about the decision to return to a fully self-contained classroom structure for the school. Because teachers openly discussed their preference for departmentalization, questioning authority about their decision might have been interpreted as disregard for administrative bodies.

Exclusion of Kindergarten: Though the school in this study serves kindergarten through third grade students, the kindergarten teachers were not given the morale survey given to all first, second, and third grade teachers. Because of the students' young age, administration did not include kindergarten in the piloting of departmentalization. Since they were not part of the departmentalization shift, they were not included in the data collection process.

Research Plan

The original plan for this research was to track the pilot year of departmentalized instruction, and if it was successful and implemented in the entire school the following year, retrospective interviews with pilot teachers and interviews with the new teachers beginning departmentalization would be conducted. Despite data collected during the pilot year that revealed departmentalized instruction was addressing the issues related to morale and workload that were concerns driving the pilot, administrators decided not to implement the format in the school the following year. This decision shifted the plan of the study to investigate the pilot teachers' responses to administrators' decision to remove departmentalization, despite their overwhelming preference for it over self-contained teaching.

This case study was conducted in two phases, and examined three distinct categories of data: (a) experiences and perceptions of teachers in departmentalized settings in comparison to their experiences and perceptions in self-contained settings, (b) comparison of teachers' perceptions in departmentalized settings to those of teachers in self-contained settings within the same school, and (c) residual effects of removing the teacher-preferred setting without teacher input. The first phase was conducted during the

year departmentalization was implemented on a pilot basis in the school, while the second phase was conducted after it was removed.

Chapter 2 presents the literature that guided the phases in this study while weaving together common themes related to the three categories of data it explored. This review of literature examines the studies conducted involving these categories and presents relevant findings within the scope of this study. In addition to presenting existing findings, the review of literature justifies the study, and aids in generating theory by layering various concepts gleaned from these sources (Maxwell, 2008, p. 227). Chapter 3 follows the review with a description of the methods used in this study, including the data collection and analysis procedures.

Due to the extensive data collected, an untraditional format was used to present the findings in this study. The data were organized into three major categories that were more manageable when analyzed and presented separately; publication-ready formatting was suitable for this purpose. Following Chapter 3, these three manuscripts will present the findings for each of the categories, and will be referred to as *first study*, *second study*, and *third study*. These three sub-studies align with and are presented in the same order as the research questions. Because the phases of the study were conducted in the same setting with the same participants, some segments of these three documents may be redundant, though not identical, (i.e. "Research Site"); however, the findings and discussions vary significantly. See Figure 1 for visual summary of the study's components.

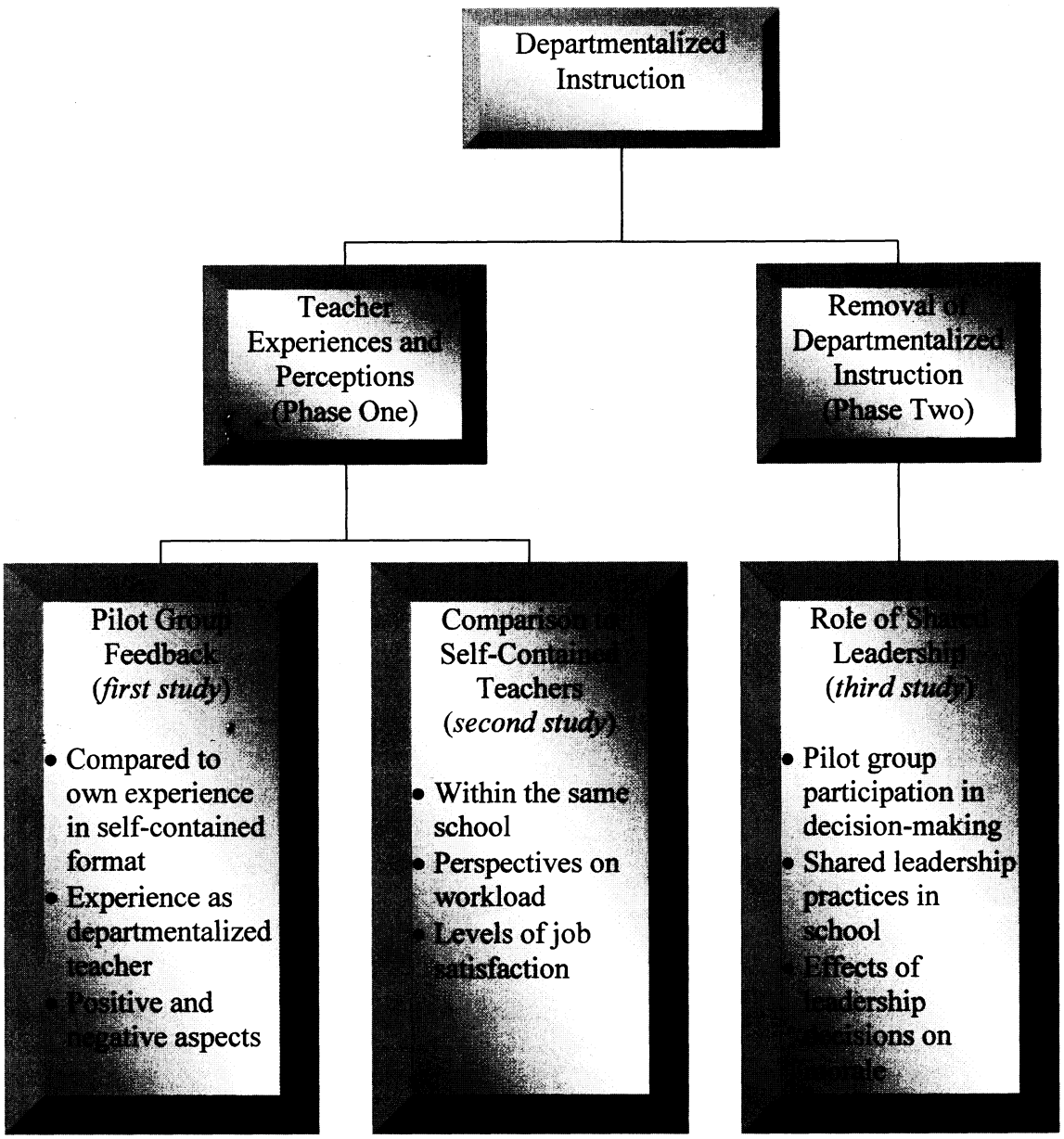

Figure 1. Topics covered in each phase, including overviews of each study.

Chapter II

LITERATURE

This literature review is two-fold. The first segment acts as a comprehensive overview of the departmentalization structure in elementary classrooms, and includes the effects of its components on both teachers and students. The existing research, though minimal, revealed some direct effects of this structure; however, a thorough examination of the literature in conjunction with the data collected in this study uncovered some residual effects as well. As qualitative studies are emergent in nature (Patton, 2002, p. 44), the literature review process was conducted throughout the entirety of the study. Prior to data collection, both quantitative and qualitative literature involving elementary departmentalization was explored, which aided in formulating initial focus group and interview questions. As the study progressed, emergent themes found in the data were used to guide further review of literature. Of these, the most significant theme found in the first phase of the study was the favoritism expressed by participants for departmentalization over self-contained classrooms as an organizational structure. The overall preference for the structure shapes the remainder of the literature review.

The second part of this two-fold review is an examination of literature associated with the themes of teacher morale and collective efficacy as they relate to shared leadership. Shared leadership was found to be the overarching emergent theme in relation to the removal of the departmentalization as discussed in this study. In contrast to the first major topic of the review, departmentalization in elementary schools, a search

for literature on the topic of shared leadership yielded a vast selection of published works. To tailor this broad idea of shared leadership to the themes found in this study more specifically, its relation to and impact on teacher morale and collective efficacy were used to guide the respective portion of the review of literature.

While literature relating to the latter part of the review is plentiful, literature involving departmentalization, specifically pertaining to the elementary level, is currently not as abundant. Though this supports the argument for the need for more research in the field, searches for evidence to support or debunk departmentalization on the elementary level yield limited results. Using an online database, searches using Boolean phrases and terms were conducted to locate peer-reviewed studies and articles related to departmentalization in elementary schools. These terms included, but were not limited to, *departmentalize, self-contained, organizational structures, content specialists, collaborative structures,* and *instructional settings.* These terms were paired with "elementary" and various forms of the terms were used as well, to reflect different parts of speech. For instance, departmentalize (*v.*) and departmentalized (*adj.*) were just two of the forms used to locate information regarding the root word, "department." While a variety of literature was presented through the database with each search, much of it was unrelated to the current study. Table 1 displays the outcome of the search results for the aforementioned Boolean terms.

Table 1

Research Database Results for Filtered Boolean Phrases

	Galileo Database		
	ERIC	Professional Development Collection (at Ebsco)	Proquest
	Database Filters		
Boolean Phrase	Keyword	Abstract	Abstract
Departmentalization and elementary	9	0	2
Self-contained and elementary	216	20	77
Organizational structures and elementary	56	1	14
Content specialists and elementary	7	0	1
Collaborative structures and elementary	15	3	5
Instructional settings and elementary	38	3	7

For the first phase of the study, themes were found through a thorough and thoughtful initial investigation of studies, reports, and peer-reviewed articles. Because of the lack of literature on specific impacts of departmentalization that were found, some dissertations were considered in the review; however, their results were not synthesized into the body of the review. For this review, dissertations were only used in an effort to demonstrate the inconclusive nature of studies on departmentalized instruction as a whole; therefore, only results of dissertation studies are presented later in Table 2. While specific themes, such as self-efficacy, were heavily represented in the literature, emergent themes, such as the use of creative teaching methods, were found during the data collection phase of the study. As themes were found during data analysis, more literature was explored to support, counter, or elaborate on them. After analyzing data and

reviewing related literature, major overarching themes were found for both the opposing and supporting standpoints regarding departmentalized instruction. The subthemes found during the initial review as well as through data analysis were categorized with the major themes in this presentation of literature for organizational purposes. Subthemes found in this review strengthened each major theme by linking factors in multiple studies, providing more specific evidence, and/or discussing similar concepts in different contexts.

Because of the specificity of the research topics, as well as the intertwining of multiple complex ideas (implementing a structure, effects of a structure, and effects of removing a structure), a contextual framework was necessary to organize the study. The ideologies and theories are presented in the related segments of the literature review, and more explicitly presented in a diagram showing connections between themes, shown later in Figure 2. The contextual framework that guided Phase One of this study incorporated theories and ideologies supporting arguments for and against the implementation of departmentalization in elementary schools. The majority of this study was conducted during Phase One, and as a result of the data collected, Phase Two emerged.

Themes of Phase Two were found during data analysis in Phase One, and emergent themes were also found during the course of the second phase. Focusing on residual effects of the removal of departmentalized instruction, the second phase was much smaller than the first in terms of data collection, participants, objectives, and duration. Literature reviewed for Phase Two focused on teacher morale and collective efficacy in relation to shared leadership. Fewer themes were explored in Phase Two than

in Phase One as a result of its smaller size and scope, but supporting theories were intertwined with the related themes within the review.

Phase One Themes

The first phase of this study was guided by two objectives. First, it explored the experiences of a group of elementary teachers who piloted departmentalized teaching for one year in a school with mostly self-contained classroom teachers. Phase One also compared perceptions of the pilot teachers with those of self-contained teachers who taught in the same school. These two objectives guided Phase One prior to data collection, while Phase Two stemmed from emergent themes discovered through data analysis in the first phase. To support these objectives and inform the researcher of existing studies on the topic, literature was reviewed prior to the study. The common themes found in this initial review guided the onset of the study, including the preliminary interview questions, survey objectives, and scope. As this phase progressed and data were analyzed, the emergent themes discovered added depth and connectedness to the existing themes.

Overarching themes found in the initial review of the literature (prior to Phase One data collection) included *teacher workload, teachers as specialists, and self-efficacy.* Because of the limited published literature reflecting the implementation of departmentalized teaching in elementary schools, a more thorough exploration of these themes was required to frame this study. Minor themes were found as well; however, they were more useful in extending the major themes than in representing new categories. These supporting minor themes were essential in connecting ideas within the literature to create a more comprehensive and substantial foundation from which to begin Phase One.

Overview of Departmentalization in Elementary Schools

The various factors shown to impact student achievement at the elementary level differ immensely across educational research. From student socioeconomic status to teacher preparation programs, evidence of impacts made by almost any component of students' education can be found. Some of these components carry less evidence than others because they follow status quo, leaving little room for innovative methods. One such component is the way in which school days are segmented and taught, or the organizational structure of a school. Options involving the organizational structure within elementary schools can range from the traditional self-contained format, to the more debated departmentalized format (Chan & Jarman, 2004; McGrath & Rust, 2002). While the self-contained classroom features one teacher providing instruction in all academic areas for one group of students, the departmentalized setting utilizes two or more teachers to teach the various subject areas to multiple groups of students on a rotation basis. Because this topic was debated as early as the beginning of the twentieth century (McGrath & Rust, 2002; Otto & Sanders, 1964), the research base for organizational structures should be solidified with more evidence or counterevidence to determine its impact on student achievement; however, it remains limited.

Most elementary schools follow the self-contained model of organizational structure and students are not introduced to departmentalization until they begin middle school (Chan & Jarman, 2004). For various reasons, some elementary schools have begun to implement the departmentalized structure for their students (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Hood, 2009). This diversion from the traditional structure is accompanied by opposing standpoints regarding the implementation of this practice. Advantages cited in

supporting literature include specialized instruction for students and reduced workload for teachers (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Gerretson, Bosnick, & Schofield, 2008). Some of those opposed to departmentalization argue it is more subject-centered than student-centered and instructional time is wasted during class transition (McGrath & Rust, 2002; Elkind, 1988). Literature providing support for either standpoint is sparse. Few studies have been conducted on the direct impacts of departmentalization on student achievement, and those findings vary according to subject area(s) and age group of students. Table 2 displays studies found in literature reflecting student achievement outcomes in departmentalized elementary settings. Studies are displayed by date in ascending order and include both peer-reviewed articles as well as dissertation studies.

Table 2

Student Achievement Studies in Departmentalized Elementary Schools

Title/Author/Date	Publication Type	Grade Level/ Subject	Sample Size/ Instrument	Results
"A Comparison of Pupil Adjustment in Team and Self-Contained Organizations" (Lambert, Goodwin, & Wiersma, 1965)	Article: Journal of Experimental Education	1, 2 Math	N = 135 California Achievement Test	No significant difference was found between scores of departmentalized and self-contained students.
"Team Teaching Compared with Traditional Instruction in Grades Kindergarten Through Six" (Rhodes, 1971)	Article: Journal of Educational Psychology	K-6 Math, reading, spelling	N = 318 Wide Range Achievement Test	Departmentalized student scores did not show significantly higher achievement when compared to self-contained student scores; average reading gain was significantly lower for self-contained students.

(table continues)

Title/Author/Date	Publication Type	Grade Level/ Subject	Sample Size/ Instrument	Results
"Academic Achievement and Between-Class Transition Time for Self-Contained and Departmental Upper-Elementary Classes" (McGrath & Rust. 2002)	Article: Journal of Instructional Psychology	5, 6 Language, math, reading, science, social studies	N = 197 Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program	Self-contained students scored significantly higher in total battery, science, and language compared to departmentalized students. No significant differences were found in math, reading, and social studies.
"The Effects of Scheduling on Fourth Grade Student Achievement in Selected Elementary Schools" (Hampton, 2007)	Doctoral dissertation: South Carolina State University	4 Language, math, science	N = 287 Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test	Departmentalized students scored significantly higher in language and math than self-contained students; no significant difference was found in science scores.
"Classroom Organizational Structures as Related to Student Achievement in Upper Elementary Grades in Northeast Tennessee Public Schools" (Moore, 2008)	Doctoral dissertation: East Tennessee State University	4, 5 Language science, social studies	N = not given Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program	For grades 4 and 5, no significant difference in scores in any subject was found in departmentalized or self-contained student scores.
"Elementary School Structures: The Effects of Self-Contained and Departmentalized Classrooms on Third and Fourth Grade Student Achievement" (Ponder, 2008)	Doctoral dissertation: Stephen F. Austin State University	4 Math	N = 2,053 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills	Departmentalized students significantly outperformed self-contained students in math.
"Comparison of Fifth-grade Students' Mathematics Achievement as Evidenced by Georgia's Criterion-Referenced Competency Test: Traditional and Departmentalized Settings" (Williams, 2009)	Doctoral dissertation: Liberty University	5 Math	N = 9,386 Criterion Referenced Competency Test	When compared to self-contained students, math scores were significantly higher for departmentalized students.

(table continues)

Title/Author/Date	Publication Type	Grade Level/ Subject	Sample Size/ Instrument	Results
"Effects of Departmentalized Versus Traditional Settings on Fifth Graders' Math and Reading Achievement" (Yearwood, 2011)	Doctoral dissertation: Liberty University	5 Math, reading	N = 5,371 Criterion Referenced Competency Test	Departmentalized students scored significantly higher than self-contained students in reading and math.
"An Examination of Scholastic Achievement of Fourth and Fifth Grade Students in Self-Contained and Departmentalized Classrooms" (Bowser, 1984)	Doctoral dissertation: Ball State University	4, 5 Social studies, science	N = 100 Iowa Test of Basic Skills	Grade 4 self-contained students scored significantly higher in social studies, but showed no sig. dif. In science when compared to scores of departmentalized students. Grade 5 showed no significant difference in either area.

Opposition to Departmentalization

With little evidence to support or negate direct effects of departmentalized instruction on student achievement, opposition to this format in elementary schools rests mostly on the concept of student-centered instruction, which goes beyond academic objectives to include social and emotional needs of students (Schiro, 2008). Another argument for self-contained instruction is its impact on students' feelings toward school. Students in self-contained structures were shown to have an increased feeling of connectedness to their school (Chang, Muñoz, & Koshewa, 2008), which also supports the idea of student-centered instruction. Also, some argue teachers experience a decline in the sense of ownership teachers have toward their students (Chang et al., 2008; Epstein & Dauber, 1991), which can be attributed to the increased number of teachers per child.

Conflicts related to time and scheduling were also found to be common themes in literature opposing departmentalized instruction (Elkind, 1988; McGrath & Rust, 2002).

Teaching the "Whole Child"

Since little research exists on direct effects of departmentalized teaching, some scholars lean on studies concerning elements of the more traditional self-contained classroom to propose or denounce departmentalized instruction in elementary schools. One such element is the quantity of instructors students encounter within the course of a school day. By nature of the self-contained classroom, students interact with fewer teachers than in a departmentalized model; allowing a single teacher to teach the "whole child" through observing and accommodating students' personalities, social needs, and emotional predispositions (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2011; Elkind, 1988). Because students rotate to different classrooms for instruction in departmentalized settings, a typical school day is divided amongst two or more teachers, decreasing the number of interactions between a student and a single teacher. Also, departmentalized teachers teach two or more classes each day, increasing their number of students and limiting the depth of knowledge about each child individually. This lack of focus on the whole child is the central argument made by those opposed to departmentalized instruction.

The idea of teaching the whole child aligns closely with the learner centered ideology in which the scope of instruction goes beyond academic curriculum and extends to address social and emotional needs of students (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2011; Schiro, 2008). Advocates of this ideology propose the role of the instructor is to individualize instruction for students based on their "strengths,

weaknesses, and personality traits" (Elkind, 1988, p. 13). Elkind (1988) stressed the importance of the student-teacher connection, especially for younger elementary students, by positing rotation (or departmentalized instruction) disrupts younger students' learning and increases their stress levels and learning problems (p. 13). Presented decades later, Chang et al.'s (2008) argument was similar to that of Elkind's. Chang et al. supported the idea of solid student-teacher relationships by arguing that generalists, or self-contained teachers, teach their students across all areas, allowing them to know the students' strengths and weaknesses across various settings, to meet their needs. One study conducted on the amount of student-teacher interaction at the elementary level further supported their argument. Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts, and Morrison (2008) examined the extent to which variation in the quality of emotional and instructional interactions predicted trajectories of achievement in reading and math from 54 months to fifth grade. The authors found positive correlations in both math and reading for quality of teaching and social/emotional interaction. This evidence may reveal a link between emotional needs of children and academic achievement. Culyer (1984) stressed the importance of the individualization of education based on the needs of each student, and noted the importance of the self-contained classroom structure in facilitating such instruction.

Connectedness to School

For elementary-age students, the social and emotional aspects of whole child instruction can be fostered through relationships with their teachers, as studied by Pianta and Stuhlman (2004). Through their study, they revealed the quality of the relationship between young students and their teachers significantly impacted their behavioral and

academic trajectories. Students' relationships with their teachers were shown to affect their sense of connection to their school (Chang et al., 2008). In their study, Chang et al. (2008) found that students in self-contained models rated their sense of *trust*, *respect for teachers*, and *classroom supportiveness* significantly higher than students in departmentalized models. They found departmentalized instruction had an even greater negative impact on younger students and students with three or more teachers.

Accountability

When elementary teachers departmentalize, they are responsible for more students than self-contained teachers. This distribution releases each teacher from complete accountability of any individual student, as they share this responsibility with students' other teachers. Another concern about departmentalization revealed in related literature is the potential for teachers to lose a sense of personal responsibility toward student success (Chang et al., 2008, p. 133). Teachers may lose a sense of ownership toward individual student success when they share teaching responsibility with other teachers for the same students (Chang et al., 2008). An additional diffused responsibility related to the departmentalized structure is parental contact, as studied by Epstein and Dauber (1991). They found that teachers of self-contained classrooms had significantly higher parental involvement than departmentalized teachers. Self-contained teachers were more familiar with students as a result of more daily student-teacher interactions and were more likely to make contact with parents (Epstein & Dauber, 1991).

Scheduling

Remaining with the same academic teacher throughout the course of the day, as advocated by Culyer (1984), poses other advantages, such as flexibility with scheduling

(McGrath & Rust, 2002). Teachers who maintain one group of students a day within the same room are given the option to adjust their instructional schedule according to student needs, whereas departmentalized schedules are more rigid because of the class rotation schedule. Worthy of mention, Elkind (1984) postulated that a significant amount of time was lost during students' class transition; however, McGrath and Rust (2002), who also opposed departmentalization, conducted a study revealing there were no significant differences between the teaching models regarding actual instructional time.

Advocacy for Departmentalization

While advocates of whole child instruction typically oppose departmentalization in elementary schools, advocates of a subject-centered approach promote this format. Most aligned with the Scholar Academic ideology (Schiro, 2008), departmentalization allows for the refinement of academic areas, potentially exposing students to higher quality instruction than in self-contained formats (Chan & Jarman, 2004). This ideology aligns with the use of specialists in academic fields so they may be "mini-scholars who devote themselves to interpreting and presenting a discipline to students" (Schiro, 2008, p. 4). Much like the opposition, little student achievement data are found to significantly support the case for departmentalized elementary schools. Of the limited number of peer-reviewed studies available, most are dated and/or limited in scope. To make the case for departmentalized instruction, residual effects of the format are cited in the related literature, including reduction in teacher work load (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Gerretson et al., 2008) and specialized instruction for students. For teachers, specializing in instructional areas was shown to promote self-efficacy (Li, 2008; Wilkins, 2010), a factor that revealed positive impacts on student achievement (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, &

Malone, 2006; Klassen, 2010). The following review of the residual effects explores their impact on student achievement. While some of these effects directly impact achievement, others are indirect, as they influence other important components of instruction.

Teacher Workload

Chan and Jarman (2004) pointed out several qualities of departmentalization, such as the ways in which it helps students assimilate to middle school formats, creates grade-level instructional teams, and promotes teacher retention. Teacher retention was shown to have significant positive impacts on student achievement (Barmby, 2006; Vanderhaar, Muñoz, & Rodosky, 2006). Other researchers supported these findings when they also discovered teachers' average years of teaching, along with student poverty level and previous testing achievement, were the best indicators of student achievement (Vanderhaar et al., 2006). To keep teachers in the field longer and increase their average years of experience, school officials should advocate practices that prevent teacher burnout.

Bridges and Searle (2011) investigated teacher perceptions of workload. Based on their study, the authors found teachers' workloads significantly increased over the last 20 years, as well as hours per week worked; only about half of the respondents at the time of the study believed the current workload was sustainable. Through their qualitative study, Bridges and Searle (2011) revealed how workload can affect teachers, which can potentially cause burnout or health issues. Departmentalized teachers plan for fewer subjects than self-contained teachers, decreasing the amount of time spent preparing and completing other non-teaching tasks, which was shown to decrease stress and increase

job satisfaction (Perrachione, Rosser, & Petersen, 2008; Timms et al., 2007). This idea was explored by Perrachione et al. (2008) when they sought to identify the variables that relate to teacher job satisfaction and retention. The authors discovered teachers who reported being more satisfied with their jobs were more likely to continue in their profession. Also, their results revealed that teachers did not find satisfaction with work-related duties, which suggested teachers' satisfaction was associated with the *teaching* aspect of their jobs. Perrachione et al. (2008) concluded their findings "suggest that a lack of obstacles to teaching increase teachers' job satisfaction, while amplification in obstacles and barriers would decrease teachers' satisfaction with their position" (p. 30). This reiterates that obstacles in teaching, such as paperwork requirements and the amount of planning and preparation required, can lead to job dissatisfaction, and potentially, teachers leaving the profession. Departmentalized teachers plan and prepare for fewer subjects, resulting in fewer obstacles and barriers and possibly increasing job satisfaction.

As discussed, increasing workload, or maintaining a large workload, are factors that have been shown to cause or increase stress in teachers. Timms et al. (2007) who investigated teachers' workload reported, "respondents found that workload constituted the major source of dissatisfaction with their work environment" (p. 577). In this study, the authors showed that workload continued to increase for teachers, which has been shown to amplify burnout factors like exhaustion and disengagement (Chang, 2009). These results showed how teachers' immense workload negatively affected their morale and stress levels, which can lead to burnout. Stress levels have been shown to affect teachers' ability to be effective, despite preparation. For instance, MacNeil, Prater, and Busch's (2009) study involving the impact of organizational health on student

achievement showed that high levels of stress negatively impacted teachers' ability to be responsive and effective. Further, their study revealed the most influential factor to impact organizational health was adaptation, which according to the instrument used, is the ability to tolerate stress and maintain stability while being responsive to the demands of the external environment. The structure of departmentalization alleviates a portion of teachers' workload, which may positively affect stress levels, allowing teachers to more effectively meet the needs of their students. Another study that considered teacher effectiveness in relation to stress was performed by Fantuzzo, et al. (2012). They studied teacher experiences and discovered that teachers with higher levels of stress spent less time teaching than those with less stress. To support their argument, they reported, "teachers experiencing higher levels of stress spent less time teaching literacy and numeracy and interacting with parents, whereas teachers experiencing higher levels of efficacy spent increased time teaching both cognitive skills and social-emotional skills and communicating with parents" (p. 194).

Other Stress Factors

Teacher workload can indirectly influence student achievement by triggering stress, ultimately affecting teacher impact (Klassen, 2010; MacNeil et al., 2009; Timms et al., 2007). Other factors have also been shown through various studies to negatively impact teachers by increasing stress levels; however, the format of departmentalized instruction alleviates many stressors experienced by most traditional self-contained teachers. For example, Sass, Seal, and Martin (2011) conducted a study to determine impacts of stress levels on teacher retention rates and found student behavior had a significant impact on teachers' stress levels. In most cases, teachers are not given choices

in regards to the types of students they will teach; leading to classrooms with hodgepodges of personalities, learning styles, and behavior-related issues (Klassen, 2010). Essentially, in departmentalized settings, teachers experience only a portion of each day with a single class, resulting in less stress caused by any problematic students. A class of students is with a teacher for only half of a school day or less, and then they transition to another classroom with another teacher. Because departmentalized elementary teachers do not stay with the same students like in the traditional self-contained organizational structure; they get to start fresh with a new group about halfway through the school day.

Another stressor endured by teachers is the expectation to communicate effectively with parents (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Two common parent-related issues teachers face is lack of involvement and lack of cooperation (Prakke & van Peet, 2007). Departmentalized settings are comprised of two or more teachers, allowing parental feedback from more than one teacher's perspective. This may be especially beneficial when dealing with defensive parents because each of the students' teachers can provide observations of student behavior from more than one setting. When dealing with uncooperative parents, this setting may also be beneficial for seeking increased parental involvement, as the same parents may be contacted by multiple teachers who teach their students, instead of a single teacher making multiple contacts.

Teachers as Specialists

One aforementioned argument against departmentalization is that of Chang et al. (2008), who found that departmentalized settings negatively affected students' feelings of connectedness to school. Those supporting departmentalization overlook issues of

connectedness and focus on student achievement through teacher quality. Gerretson et al. (2008) discussed the importance of the impact created by specialized teachers. They asked if, "a model where elementary teachers cover all core subjects with a high level of expertise should continue unchallenged, or would a model where teachers can specialize in one or two areas be a more viable option?" (p. 305). Some studies were conducted that attempted answer such questions. Podhajski, Mather, Nathan, and Sammons (2009) conducted one such study to determine the effectiveness of scientifically based professional development in reading instruction on both student achievement and teacher knowledge. Based on this study, the authors found that the scientifically based reading instruction significantly improved teachers' knowledge and student achievement. These results suggest that specific specialization in professional development can significantly improve student learning in content areas. Specializing professional development to improve math instruction had similar results in a study conducted by Bailey (2010). The purpose of this work was to investigate the impact of a standards-based professional development program on second and third grade math teachers' levels of pedagogical and content knowledge. These teachers taught at failing schools and showed significant gains in their math teaching abilities. Teachers specializing in specific content areas, like in the departmentalized format, could be positively impacted by participating in subject-specific professional development to improve and refine their expertise areas. Teachers of self-contained classes have more subject areas to refine; participating in an extensive program for each of the areas they teach, such as the one in Bailey's (2010) study, would be much more difficult than for departmentalized teachers.

Supporters of departmentalization on the elementary level cite various positive impacts of using content specialists. One study, conducted by Schwartz and Gess-Newsome (2008) unveiled the most common positive impacts that related to the use of science specialists included: increased teacher attitudes toward science, improved instructional style, better use of instructional time, and higher student achievement on state tests. Schwartz and Gess-Newsome's (2008) study showed a snapshot of potential benefits of implementing content specialists within schools. Each of these four positive impacts they found was studied individually by other researchers as well.

The first of these positive impacts revealed by Schwartz and Gess-Newsome (2008), teacher attitudes toward specific subject areas, was explored by Brashears (2006), as well as the implications of those attitudes. Brashears' (2006) study analyzed teachers' beliefs about reasons students may or may not achieve on a state writing test. Based on this study, the author found that teachers' justifications for test scores varied, and most teachers did not attribute their own teaching methods to the test scores. Brashear's study also highlighted instructional style, the second positive impact of using content specialists found in Schwartz and Gess-Newsome's (2008) study. The results in Brashears' study not only indicated how teacher attitudes varied greatly in regards to subject matter, it also revealed how scores impacted by teaching strategies, or instructional style, especially in the context of writing. Departmentalized teachers can focus improvement in their teaching strategies on best practices for particular content due to the concentration of teaching fewer subjects than to a self-contained teacher. When considered together, the aforementioned results indicate a strong likelihood that continuous improvement may result in better teaching strategies and student learning. Also, some teachers may enjoy

teaching writing, or any other specific subject, more than others, and have a more positive perspective on that subject, as discussed by Brashers (2006).

The third positive impact of implementing the use of content specialists found in Schwartz and Gess-Newsome's 2008 study involved the use of teachers' instructional time. Eidietis and Jewkes (2011) examined the impact of teacher preparedness in a particular topic on the instructional time allotted for that topic. They discovered the less prepared teachers reported they were to teach a topic, the less time they spent on teaching it. This particular study statistically showed that teachers taught subjects in which they were most knowledgeable and prepared. Departmentalized teachers experience repetition with fewer subject areas than self-contained teachers, potentially giving them more practice and opportunities for reflection through repeated lessons. Wilkins (2010) also conducted a study that revealed a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward specific subject areas and the time they spent teaching each area. She noted that teachers were more likely to spend the most time teaching the subjects they favored and also introduced literature regarding instructional quality for teacher-favored subjects. Wilkins' (2010) study can be used to show how teachers vary in levels of favoritism of subjects they teach.

Another time-related matter in the discussion regarding instructional areas is the concern of cutting back on some subjects because of the emphasis placed on others. Bailey, Shaw, and Hollifield (2006) explored the quality of teaching in social studies, an area in which most state tests do not place significant emphasis in the elementary grades. They found that instructional strategies used during social studies instruction were less interactive than in other subject areas and teachers spent significantly less time teaching it

as well. Further supporting these findings, in the report, "Perceived Effects of State-Mandated Testing Programs on Teaching and Learning: Findings from a National Survey of Teachers," results yielded data regarding time spent on tested and non-tested subject areas (Clarke, Shore, Rhoades, Abrams, Miao, & Li, 2003). Results showed more time spent on instruction in tested areas and less time spent on instruction in non-tested areas. Bailey et al. (2006) discussed results in their study aligning with this national report. Based on this study, the authors found overall, teachers spent significantly less time on social studies instruction than in other subject areas (Bailey et al., 2006). This particular study can be used to show that teachers may not be spending equitable time in all subject areas. The departmentalized structure could alleviate the imbalance because of the blocks of time teachers are allotted to concentrate on a few specific subject areas. With fewer subjects in a block of time to teach, less subject matter can overlap into the allotted time for social studies instruction, or any other subject area. Lastly, Schwartz and Gess-Newsome (2008) discussed an indicator of student achievement, state test scores, as a positive impact of utilizing content specialists. Palardy and Rumberger (2008) studied various influences on student achievement and concluded instructional practices had a higher impact than teacher background. Results from this particular study support the notion that teachers who have better instructional practices may have a greater positive impact on student achievement than teachers with more experience or education.

Self-efficacy

One of the major themes Chang (2009) found in his review of literature regarding teacher burnout was lack of self-efficacy, which he described as "an individual's beliefs in his or her own capabilities to pursue a course of action to meet given situational

demands" (p. 197). Aligned with Chang's (2009), definition of inefficacy, Friedman (2003) posited that in work environments, burnout is a manifestation of feelings of failure or inadequacy (p. 208). Self-efficacy can be fostered through a departmentalized format as teachers become more proficient in their content knowledge through focused professional development and refine their skills through the concentration of fewer subjects than self-contained teachers (Bailey, 2010; Podhajski et al., 2009). Self-efficacy was shown to have a positive impact on teachers' job performance in multiple studies. Brown (2012) compiled an extensive review of studies conducted on the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout and found that all the studies reviewed revealed a negative relationship between teacher self-efficacy and burnout. A study conducted on the relationship between various factors of teaching and teachers' job satisfaction revealed student achievement, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction were reciprocal in nature (Caprara et al., 2006).

Teachers' self-efficacy is lower in subject areas in which they are most unfamiliar or uncomfortable in teaching. One study supporting this notion, conducted by Eidietis and Jewkes (2011), revealed kindergarten through eighth grade teachers' feelings of preparedness to teach specific topics predicted the frequency of teaching those topics which was "consistent with studies within the broader contexts of the science curriculum and the entire K-8 curriculum" (p. 247). In a reciprocal study, Khurshid, Qasmi, and Ashraf (2012) showed self-efficacy positively affected job performance. Further, more creative teaching methods were used in the specific subject areas in which teachers reported greater self-efficacy (Wilkins, 2008). These studies mesh with the aforementioned study conducted by Palardy and Rumberger (2008) who tied together

teaching practices and attitudes by suggesting, "rather than the qualifications teachers bring into the classroom, it is aspects of their teaching-practices, attitudes, and beliefs-that are most relevant to their effectiveness" (p. 130). Linking these themes and studies together, evidence suggests that a reduction in workload through departmentalization may decrease teachers' feelings of inefficacy caused by burnout. Further, higher self-efficacy was shown to impact teacher instruction and ultimately impact student achievement.

Phase One Theoretical Framework

Both supporting and opposing arguments regarding elementary departmentalization include emphasis on curricular ideology. When considering the past century, trends of curriculum in schools can be categorized into one of four major curriculum ideologies: the Scholar Academic, Social Efficiency, Learner Centered, and Social Reconstruction (Schiro, 2008, p. 1). The Scholar Academic ideology most closely aligns with supporting arguments of departmentalization when considering delivery of instruction. Preserving the accumulated knowledge within an academic field drives the existence of this ideology. For this preservation to occur, "teachers should be mini-scholars who have a deep understanding of their discipline" and "clearly and accurately present it to children" (Schiro, 2008, p. 4). Because teachers specialize in fewer areas in the departmentalized structure, the opportunity to refine those areas is greater than in self-contained settings. Transmission of a discipline is just one facet of this ideology's premise; instilling in students specific ways of thinking within academic disciplines is also vital. Teachers accomplish this via subject-specific teaching methods. Schiro noted,

"instructional method [redacted] thus the manner in which the student learns) imbedded in a curriculum are to reflect the essence of a discipline" (Schiro, 2008, p. 46).

Oppositional arguments regarding delivery of curriculum in departmentalized instruction cite another ideology mentioned earlier in this review of literature, the Learner Centered ideology (Schiro, 2008). The learner-centered school is an environment in which "the needs and interests of learners, rather than those of teachers, principals, school subjects, parents, or politicians, determine the school program" (p. 93). While departmentalization may improve work environments for teachers by decreasing workloads, those who advocate learner-centered instruction believe young students' needs should be met before any other factor is considered. They believe these needs include whole-child instruction that can only be delivered in a single-teacher instructional format (Elkind, 1988).

As the scope of this study includes impacts on teachers' efficacy, Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination theory was used in the framework as well. This theory has been referenced in various fields of research, including education, psychology, and medicine. Deci and Ryan have also revisited and supported their long-standing motivational theory with more updated literature (2000). As discussed by the authors, competence, autonomy, and relatedness, are the three psychological needs necessary to instill motivation. They emphasized that "needs specify the necessary conditions for psychological growth, integrity, and well-being" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 227). When considering organizational structures used for elementary classrooms, teachers' roles within the setting are a major component, as they facilitate, manage, and determine instructional plans for students. According to the self-determination theory, each of the

three needs should be met to maintain desired behavior. Two of the needs, competence and autonomy, are viewed to be necessary in internalization and integration of behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Through the self-determination lens, autonomy is reached when individuals are able to place value on behaviors and "personally endorse their importance" (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 3). More specifically, Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 231) define autonomy as "the desire to self-organize experience and behavior and to have activity be concordant with one's integrated sense of self." Competence, another need necessary for internalization, is defined by Deci (1975) as "the need apply, test, and improve one's ability to perform." The third need for motivation, though not needed for internalization, is relatedness. Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 231) stated, "relatedness refers to the desire to feel connected to others–to love and care, and to be loved and cared for."

Autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fostered or hindered differently depending on individual people and situations. Autonomous teachers are able to express their preferences and are driven by integrating a "sense of self into their actions" (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 182). Autonomy can be fostered in teachers when they are able to teach preferred subject areas based on personal interests. Competence, like autonomy, is also subjective; described as "a felt sense of confidence and effectance in action" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 7). Studies showed the amount of time spent teaching a subject area in a self-contained classroom was influenced by teachers' confidence levels in that area (Bailey et al., 2006; Eidietis & Jewkes, 2011; Wilkins, 2010). Lastly, relatedness can be fostered in teachers when they strive for recognition from others through effective teaching (Schellenbach-Zell & Gräsel, 2010). With fewer subject areas for which to plan

and prepare, teachers can refine subject-area teaching methods, potentially making their teaching more effective while also fostering relatedness.

Phase One Literature Summary

With conflicting student achievement studies and a small pool of research from which to defend or oppose departmentalized instruction in elementary schools, individual components of the classroom structure are used to create arguments for either side. One of these components is the focus of instructional delivery; self-contained structures align with student-centered ideals while departmentalization aligns with a subject-centered approach. Oppositional arguments are based on the idea of teaching the whole child. Fostering an environment in which students' emotional and social needs are also monitored is important to advocates of the self-contained structure. Teachers in self-contained classrooms have the advantage of being exposed to students' abilities in all subject areas, and can adjust instruction accordingly within a day. Further, flexibility in schedules in a self-contained classroom may allow teachers to better meet their needs by providing differentiation and more time in specific subject areas when needed. Teachers may also have a greater sense of responsibility for each student, as they deliver all areas of instruction to each of their students each day.

Teacher attrition has been shown to increase student achievement, and departmentalized instruction affects areas that may decrease burnout caused by workload, which ultimately has an influence on teachers leaving the field. By decreasing the amount of subjects taught in a day, teachers' workloads are reduced, which may decrease levels of stress that can lead to burnout. With fewer subjects to teach, the focused planning, preparation, and professional development could potentially improve teachers'

instruction methods and content knowledge, which may lead to higher levels of confidence in their abilities (self-efficacy). Advocates of departmentalized instruction argue these residual effects have positive impacts on teachers, which has been shown to ultimately improve instructional quality for students.

Phase Two Themes

Reports revealed an increase in teachers leaving the education field due to burnout and exhaustion (Aud et al., 2011; Chang, 2009). As teacher attrition has been shown to positively affect student achievement, efforts should be made to prevent teacher burnout, which has been attributed to job dissatisfaction, low morale, and lack of collective efficacy amongst faculty (Brown, 2012; Perrachione et al., 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2002; Shechtman et al., 2005).

One administrative method that has been shown to increase collective efficacy and job satisfaction amongst faculty was the implementation of a shared leadership system in which faculty members were included in decisions affecting the school (Blase & Blase, 1999; Lindahl, 2008; Spillane et al., 2004). Brown (2012) reported, "a supportive school leadership which provides norms, goals, and values which are shared by all or most teachers at school may increase the teachers' beliefs of their own ability and those of others within the school" (p. 60). Consistency and inclusiveness are key components of implementing a successful shared leadership model (Mullen & Sullivan, 2002; Spillane et al., 2004); without these two factors, this model may have adverse effects on faculty members. Shared leadership and collective efficacy were the major themes explored in Phase Two of this study, and as shown through these and other

studies' results, these themes were often connected and had significant impacts on teacher morale (Brown, 2012; Harris, 2012; Perrachione et al., 2008).

Shared Leadership

Allowing teachers to participate in the decision-making process is an advantage to piloting substantial changes before implementing them school-wide. Shechtman et al. (2005) cited research regarding shared decision-making to support their findings in a study about self-efficacy. They noted it can be used to increase facets of teachers' work environment including commitment, satisfaction, and levels of morale (p. 145). The practice of shared leadership, the supposed model implemented in the school in this study, is one way teachers' self-efficacy may be improved, as well as the efficacy of the school as a whole, or the collective efficacy (Harris, 2012).

Though specific models may vary from school to school, shared leadership is defined as the distribution of leadership responsibility amongst a team of school representatives and administration through a process of shared decision-making (Epp & McNeil, 1997; Hulpia et al., 2009). In addition to having greater collective efficacy, when teachers were included in the decision-making process through shared leadership, they displayed greater support for major changes (Blase & Blase, 1999). Hulpia et al. (2009) found that shared leadership practices fostered teachers' organizational commitment, ultimately improving job satisfaction and collective efficacy.

One identifying characteristic of shared leadership is the authentic involvement of faculty members in decision making (Byrk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Louis et al., 2010). When implementing policy or structural changes through a shared leadership model, principals include teachers

throughout the process by encouraging and praising them while providing positive feedback (Hope, 2002). As major changes are typically ambiguous and challenging in schools, shared leadership models foster a more accepting environment for such changes (Byrk et al., 2010). This model can act as "an effective lubricant for the many new activities" and gives teachers a "sense of influence on decisions affecting their work," which readily establishes "buy-in for change" (p. 64). Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton (2010) also stated that "teachers are more likely to remain in such schools and commit increased effort to carry out the long-term work of change" (p. 64). Another way administrators can authentically involve faculty is by encouraging openness to risk and experimentation, as Blase and Blase (1999) stated, "teaching and learning are variable and nonroutine, they require innovation and experimentation rather than meaningless standardization" (p. 485).

Consistency is the second identifying characteristic of shared leadership as it relates to this study. Louis et al. (2012) suggested following through with actions involved in shared leadership rather than merely adopting the term. They stated, "simply invoking the term *distributed leadership* is meaningless," and an understanding of the distribution of leadership requires reviewing "evidence of actual behaviors and influences associated with core leadership practices and specific focal points of school-improvement activity" (p. 64). Further, principals should monitor and evaluate implementation of these changes as Hope (2002) stated, "effective evaluation depends on information as to whether or not, and to what degree, the treatment (policy) is relieving the problem. Evaluation entails gathering data to plan and to identify the extent of success" (p. 42). Finally, principals in the shared leadership model should document and analyze data

throughout implementation of a new policy or change to determine its alignment with objectives (Fowler, 2004). Reviewing evidence of shared leadership practices, monitoring and evaluating changes, and analyzing data throughout changes are all traits of consistency in shared leadership.

Collective Efficacy

Psychologist Albert Bandura (1997) defined collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (p. 477). Within schools, perceived collective efficacy is the performance capability of the social system as a whole, as determined by the faculty (p. 469). Student behavior, workload, policy changes, and lack of recognition are all included in the constant flow of teacher stressors; added to the pressures of administrators, colleagues, students, and parents, efficacy on both personal and collective levels may be difficult to attain (Greenglass & Burke, 2003). These stressors may be alleviated by the implementation of various school policies, collegial and administrative support, and a sense of collective efficacy (Klassen, 2010, p. 342).

Though few studies exist on the impacts of collective efficacy on job satisfaction, evidence has shown a positive relationship between these two themes (Caprara et al., 2006; Klassen, Usher, & Bong, 2003). Lack of support within schools was shown to have a negative impact on overall optimism (Smith & Hoy, 2007). More notably, the same study revealed collective efficacy had a positive impact on student achievement, even when common negative factors were considered. Smith and Hoy (2007) reported, "in sum, collective efficacy of schools, like academic emphasis, was related to student achievement even while controlling for socioeconomic status and other demographic

variables" (p. 558). They found collective efficacy was heavily based on faculty trust and academic optimism. With studies that have also shown positive relationships between job satisfaction and student achievement, efforts to improve collective efficacy should be a priority (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Smith & Hoy, 2007).

Job satisfaction has been shown to positively impact levels of performance as well as job commitment (Klassen, 2010). Caprara et al. (2006) also discussed the influence of job satisfaction on teachers' performance levels and attitudes, and added that collective efficacy had major impacts on job satisfaction. Hovering above the themes of job satisfaction and collective efficacy is the concept of leadership approach, which heavily influences attitudes of teachers (Bogler, 2001). Though multiple forms of leadership exist, not all approaches positively impact the collective efficacy of schools (Sušanj & Jakopec, 2012). The shared leadership model, in which major decisions of the school are shared among faculty, is one approach that has been shown to positively impact collective efficacy (Bogler, 2001; Cerit, 2009).

Phase Two Theoretical Framework

Much smaller in scope than Phase One, Phase Two of this case study explored the implementation of shared leadership pertaining to pilot teachers' involvement in departmentalized instruction. Focusing on teachers' perceptions and experiences in relation to leadership practices, the purpose of Phase Two was to examine the residual effects of removing the teacher-favored structure of departmentalization. Considering the impact on collective efficacy and teachers' perceptions of administrative actions, Phase Two was framed by a theory with significant underpinnings of social constructs and hierarchical relationships.

Hayward's theory of power, with its political roots, aligns with the hierarchy of power within a school system, from which the major theme of shared leadership in this study stems (2000). As opposed to the more common definition of power, domination of the free will of those without power, Hayward (2000) redefined the term as "a network of social boundaries that constrain and enable action for all actors." (p. 11). Aligned with the research goal in Phase Two, Hayward's theory of power involves people in positions of power and their subordinates. She argued that the way in which subordinates respond to those in power ultimately shapes "the conditions of their collective existence" (p. 39). Comprised of intertwined components, "power" is bounded by social constructs such as norms, identities, and institutions. These constructs are what Haywad attributed to the limitations of what could be "socially possible" (p. 3).

Within the context of this study, Hayward's theory was used as a lens to view the components of shared leadership in regards to major decision-making and collective efficacy. Examining the way in which teachers responded to and perceived administrators and other school system leaders revealed underlying themes related to power and shared leadership. Hayward criticized power structures that "severely restrict participants' social capacities to participate in their making and re-making" (p. 4), which in this study was the re-making of the school's organizational structure.

Phase Two Literature Summary

A key component of shared leadership is the inclusion of teachers in major decisions (Blase & Blase, 1999; Lindahl, 2008; Spillane et al., 2004), such as an instructional shift to departmentalized instruction. Because such a change would directly affect them, teachers in an elementary school practicing shared leadership should be

included in the decision to shift to a departmentalized format (Jenkins & Jenson, 2010; Spillane et al., 2004). As departmentalizing is such a drastic change from the traditional elementary classroom setting, piloting the format before implementing school-wide would potentially increase stakeholder support, allow participants to provide feedback, and assess the data collected during implementation (van Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley, & Graham, 2001).

If the piloting of this large-scale change was approved through a shared leadership construct, the principal's role during the transition should be interactive and involved. Principals effectively implementing shared leadership within their schools empower teachers and provide them with support to reach shared goals and implement instructional innovations (Mullen & Sullivan, 2002; Spillane et al., 2004). In sum, simply including teachers in the vote to pilot departmentalization would not suffice; shared leadership involvement throughout the entire implementation would be necessary to effectively monitor and analyze its direct and residual effects, as well as foster collective efficacy. See Figure 2 for the theoretical framework of the entire study as well as the themes of each individual sub-study.

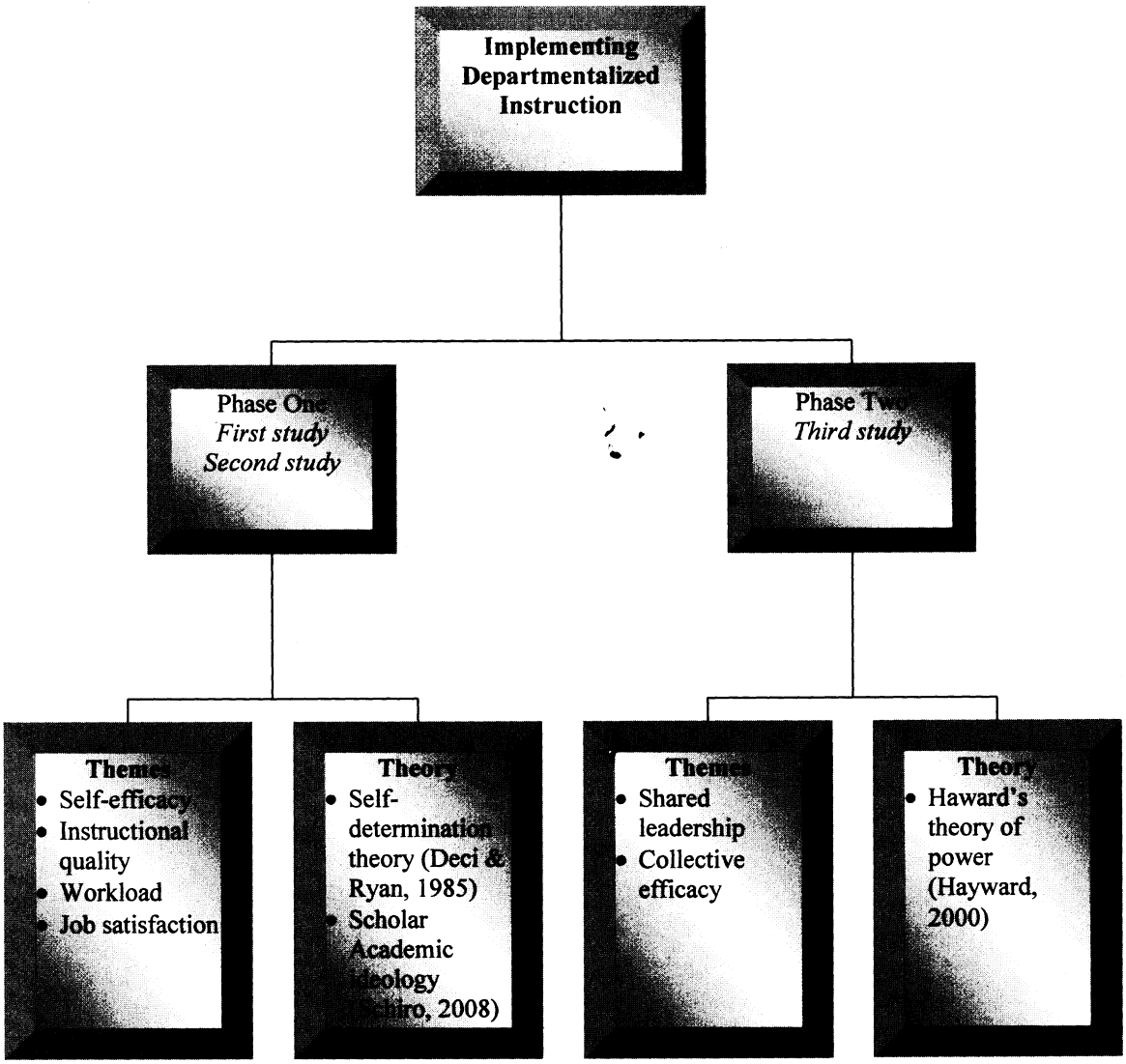

Figure 2. Theoretical framework and themes for each phase of the study.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Yielding a large quantity of data, this study was divided into three more manageable case studies to better analyze each component of the implementation of departmentalization in the school. The first two studies took place during Phase One, while departmentalized instruction was implemented for one year, and the third study took place during Phase Two, the year following the pilot of departmentalized instruction. For all three studies, qualitative methods were employed, though instruments and participants varied to meet the objectives of each study. Data were collected through a combination of interviews, focus groups, surveys, graphic organizers, and teacher journals. A qualitative approach allowed more freedom to analyze unforeseen occurrences during the study, and provided more in-depth data. According to Patton (2002), "Qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry" (p. 14).

Research Site

In this three-fold qualitative study, each segment was conducted in the same educational setting in which the participants were employed. The rural south Georgia public school, located in a town of slightly less than 16,000 residents, hosted kindergarten through third grade classes and was one of five primary schools in the district at the time of the study. All five primary schools were classified as Title I, and of them, this school

contained the most students, faculty members, and administrative personnel when this study took place. Of the 7,620 K-12 students that were enrolled in the system at that time, 815 attended the school at which the research took place. For further comparison, see Table 3 for school, system, and state program enrollment data, and Table 4 for demographic data.

Table 3

Program Enrollment Data for School, System, and State

	Student Enrollment	Special Education Enrollment	English to Speakers of Other Languages Enrollment	Early Intervention Program (K-5) Enrollment	Gifted Program Enrollment
School	815	10.1%	9.4%	22.7%	8.5%
System	7,620	10.7%	6.4%	26.5%	12.2%
State	1,633,596	10.4%	4.1%	17.7%	10.4%

Table 4

Demographic Data for School, System, and State

	Black Student Enrollment	White Student Enrollment	Hispanic Student Enrollment	Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility
School	35%	46%	15%	68%
System	34%	45%	17%	65%
State	37%	44%	12%	57%

In order to study the implementation of a new program, a site undergoing changes at the time of the study was necessary. This site was selected because a major change in

the organizational structure was scheduled for implementation that aligned with this study's timeline. At least two thirds of this study's data were collected during the trial year of departmentalized instruction at this school, informing the first two case studies of Phase One. Phase Two occurred during the following year, when departmentalization was removed from the school. The final portion of data, much smaller in scope, was collected for the third study during Phase Two. The researcher in the study was a faculty member at the research site with direct access to participants. The head administrator of the school was informed of both phases of the study and signed a written document granting permission for each one (Appendices A & B).

Participants

In order to compare perceptions of departmentalized teachers to those of self-contained teachers, the second study in Phase One included all first, second, and third grade teachers employed by the school at which the study was conducted. Of the 29 teachers in the second study, 17 were self-contained and 12 were departmentalized. Though multiple forms of data collection were used in the second study, the self-contained teachers were only asked to provide anonymous feedback by completing pre- and post-surveys. Participants for the other two studies included only the 12 teachers who were departmentalized in the school.

These 12 teachers were part of a pilot group appointed by school administrators to test the implementation of departmentalized instruction during the 2011-2012 school year. Though the school serves kindergarten through third grade, kindergarten teachers were not part of the pilot group, as administration believed kindergarten-aged students were too young to experience organizational transition. During the summer prior to

implementing departmentalization, teachers in the pilot group were informed of the study procedures and what the roles of the participants would entail. Every teacher willingly agreed to participate and meet for at least one hour-long interview and up to three focus group meetings during the course of that year. Participants were all first, second, or third grade female teachers between the ages of 28 and 50 with varying credentials and years of experience. Table 5 provides visual organization of the participants' data in regards to their teaching careers and their roles as departmentalized teachers.

Table 5

Departmentalized Teacher Credentials and Class Details

Teacher Code	Grade/Type of Class	Departmentalized Subjects	Teaching Experience (in years)	Highest Degree Earned
1A	1st/Regular ed.	Math/science/S.S.	10	Specialist
1B	1st/EIP	Reading/writing/lang.	14	Specialist
1C	1st/ Regular ed.	Math/science/S.S.	13	Specialist
1D	1st/EIP	Reading/writing/lang.	22	Master's
2A	2nd/ Regular ed.	Math/science/S.S.	8	Master's
2B	2nd/ Inclusion	Reading/writing/lang.	15	Master's
2C	2nd/Gifted	Math/science/S.S.	21	Specialist
2D	2nd/Gifted	Reading/writing/lang.	20	Master's
3A	3rd/EIP	Math/science/S.S.	9	Bachelor's
3B	3rd/EIP	Reading/writing/lang.	5	Master's
3C	3rd/Gifted	Math/science/S.S.	24	Specialist
3D	3rd/Gifted	Reading/writing/lang.	12	Specialist

Participants were informed pseudonyms would be used in all transcriptions, notes, and in the final report to protect their identities. Though confidentiality could not be guaranteed, participants were made aware of the safeguards in place to protect the data collected during the study.). All phases of this study were exempt from oversight by the researcher's affiliated Institutional Review Board (Appendix F).

Research Relationship

The researcher and participants had prior interactions with one another in the professional setting, as they were all employed by the school at which the research took place. A collegial relationship had already been established and everyone involved had developed good rapport with one another through positive work relations. Having established this relationship prior to the study, formal introductions were not necessary and the participants did not need to familiarize themselves with the researcher's disposition. Though a prior relationship was established, the researcher made participants aware of her role as the researcher and informed them of the safeguards that would be taken in regards to the candid viewpoints discussed during interviews and focus groups. Because of mutual relationships with other faculty members and administrators, gaining trust from the participants regarding confidentiality was imperative to ensure honesty and openness in the researcher/participant relationship.

Data Collection

This comprehensive study explored the entire process and effects of piloting a program in a school, including the aftermath of removing the program. To gather sufficient data for such a large scope, multiple forms of data collection were used, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, and other methods to be discussed in detail

in the following sections. Various combinations of data collection methods were used for each of the three sub-studies in this comprehensive case study and participants varied in levels of participation, as shown later in Table 6. Specific data collection techniques used in each study follow, and data analysis is discussed later.

First Study

Participants were asked to engage in multiple individual interviews as well as in focus groups with other participants. Questionnaires and journal notes provided by participants also provided rich data for analysis in this study. Participants in this study attended two to three focus group sessions, consisting of four to six participants, in which they discussed their experiences and perceptions of departmentalized instruction (Quible, 1998). To increase variety in data, participants did not meet with the same members each time. Prior to participants' initial focus group sessions, they were encouraged to record their thoughts in journals reflecting their perceptions, experiences, feelings, and attitudes related to their experiences involved with departmentalization (Hayman, Wilkes, & Jackson, 2012). Additionally, participants were periodically provided with graphic organizers on which to write their thoughts on various topics (i.e., pros/cons of a certain topic, or likes/dislikes of a component of a program). These blank graphic organizers were given to teachers as new themes were unveiled during the data analysis process (Appendix C). Also, out of respect for the participants' time and schedules, they were given in lieu of multiple interviews. To encourage candid responses, participants were asked to not provide identifiable information when responding.

Patterns found in initial focus group transcriptions, such as perceived improvements in teaching methods, provided guidance for other data collection

instruments created throughout the study, including questionnaires and graphic organizers provided for teachers to systematically record data (Saldaña, 2009). For each focus group meeting, participants were asked to stay for the duration of one hour, but were invited to stay longer if the discussion was of interest and/or if they wanted to contribute more. By analyzing data from individual interviews, common themes and viewpoints were discovered amongst participants. Based on these commonalities, the researcher selected specific combinations of participants for the focus groups, which allowed the gathering of more concentrated data on the common viewpoints of those participants. To avoid repetition of specific themes and viewpoints, participants were asked to not participate in more than three focus group meetings, but were encouraged to schedule additional individual interviews if they wished to provide more insight for the study. Each recorded and transcribed meeting was analyzed for categories, preponderance of responses, and notable comments about which to inquire during individual interviews. To present and analyze data, transcriptions were coded through a two-cycle method (Saldaña, 2009) to generate categories that were reviewed further for connecting threads and patterns to create themes (Seidman, 2006, p. 125). Fostering a deductive model of analysis (Patton 2002), overarching themes found in focus group data allowed for a more customized approach for each individual interview.

Each of the 12 teachers was asked to participate in at least one individual one-hour interview. As with the focus group meetings, participants had the option to continue the interview after one hour to further discuss any topics related to the study; see Table 6 for participant summary. Data collected through interviews and focus groups revealed perceptions and experiences of departmentalized classroom teachers. Seidman (2006)

discussed how interviewing, at its core, is "understanding the lived experience of other people and meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). These interviews provided insight into the experiences of teachers who taught in departmentalized settings, and to their perceptions related to those experiences. The purpose of the interviews was to increase the depth and narrow the scope of the data gathered from the initial focus group meetings to more individual levels. As Seidman discussed, understanding the individual experiences allowed for comparison between perceptions of the same experience. Interview questions were open-ended and biased or leading language was avoided to eliminate influence on responses. Analysis of interviews was much like that of focus groups, as they were coded for themes and patterns; each interview was then compared and contrasted with all other interviews (Saldaña, 2009).

In addition to focus group meetings and individual interviews, participants were periodically given graphic organizers on which they were asked to write their thoughts on various topics (i.e., pros/cons of a certain topic, or likes/dislikes of a component of a program). These graphic organizer templates were given to teachers as new themes emerged during the data analysis process and were another tool used to guide the creation of focus group and interview questions. To encourage richer, more candid responses, participants were asked not to provide identifiable information when responding. By asking teachers to complete the graphic organizers anonymously, they provided more detailed and opinionated responses than in the focus group and interview settings, allowing for a more rich description of their experiences and perceptions for the study.

A final data collection tool used in this study was an optional teacher journal. Because participants were already devoting time and effort to participate in focus groups

and interviews, as well as complete graphic organizers, they were presented with the option to record additional thoughts, perceptions, or experiences in a personal journal to further enrich the data collection for the study (Hayman et al., 2012). Four of the teachers provided journals, and though small in quantity, these data enriched the study by providing more real-time perceptions. In comparison to focus groups and interviews, which occurred days or weeks after the teachers' experiences, teachers who used journals recorded these notes closer to the time of the experience, giving a more accurate recall of what happened. Another benefit of the journals was their role in focus groups and interviews, as they were used to help those four teachers recall experiences or other items they wished to discuss. These journals were treated like transcriptions, as they were coded for themes in the same manner.

Second Study

The data gathered in the second study were taken partially from a survey administered both before and after the year departmentalized instruction was implemented to compare its impact on certain aspects of teacher morale and perceptions of work environment. Along with this survey completed by all 29 teachers, data were also gathered from focus groups comprised of various combinations of the 12 departmentalized teachers. A university survey research expert was consulted before administering the survey and revisions were made based on his advice. Prior to dispersing the survey, three teachers were asked to review its structure and report any misunderstandings, unclear instructions or statements, and estimate time necessary for completion. Based on their reviews, the survey items were clear and needed no further

revisions. They estimated the survey to take 15 to 30 minutes, depending on participants' depth of responses to open-ended items.

Data collection for the second study involved the use of surveys and focus groups. The two-part survey contained ten questions adapted from the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Bentley & Rempel, 1980), as well as open-ended questions, to gather data from all teachers prior to and following implementation of the departmentalized structure (Appendix D). The original version of the opinionaire, created to measure components related to teacher morale, consisted of ten factors that were found to impact morale (Bentley & Rempel, 1980). Of the ten factors analyzed on the opinionaire, the following five were used on a modified version for the purposes of this study: (a) teacher rapport with principal, (b) satisfaction with teaching, (c) rapport among teachers, (d) teacher load, and (e) curriculum issues. This opinionaire was chosen as it has been shown to be both valid and reliable as a data collection instrument. The validity and reliability of the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire, from which the ten Likert-scaled items were chosen, were tested by Bentley and Rempel (1980). For the five factors from which the ten items on the survey for this study were chosen, they reported the test-retest correlations were greater than .75.

The first part of the survey consisted of ten Likert-scaled items to provide an overview of perceptions regarding factors that have been shown to influence teacher morale. Teachers were asked to rate the ten statements using a four-point scale that measured the degree of agreement: (1) *Strongly Disagree,* (2) *Disagree,* (3) *Agree,* and (4) *Strongly Agree*. The results of these Likert-scaled item responses provided a general comparison between perceptions of departmentalized and self-contained teachers before

and after departmentalization was implemented (see Table 1, Manuscript 2). While the Likert-scaled items provided an overview of changes in perceptions, the open-ended items provided more detailed accounts of teachers' experiences.

Five open-ended questions and two sub-questions followed the Likert-scaled items on the survey. The purpose of the open-ended questions was to gather more candid data by allowing teachers to respond anonymously using their own words. Responses were coded similarly to the focus group transcriptions, discussed in more detail in the Data Analysis section of this chapter, which built a foundation for interpretation as meanings were extracted from data, comparisons were made, and conclusions were drawn (Patton, 2002, p. 465).

For comparison, the same survey was given at the end of the year before departmentalization began and again at the end of the year it was implemented. To encourage candid feedback, teachers were asked to exclude identifiable information in their responses, including their names and specific situations such as pregnancies or marriages. Teachers were also given the option to complete the survey electronically if they had concerns of penmanship recognition. A large envelope was placed in a designated area for teachers to return their surveys and they were asked to place checks beside their names on a list as they returned them to ensure all surveys were returned. To compare data, surveys completed by departmentalized teachers were marked on the first page of each.

Focus groups were also used in this study to collect data. Departmentalized teachers were asked to participate in two to three focus group sessions, consisting of four to six participants, to discuss their perceptions involving their work experiences. Focus

group participants were asked to stay for the duration of one hour, but were not interrupted if they wished to continue the discussion beyond the allotted time (see Table 6 for participation summaries). Focus groups were used to elaborate on categories found in coded departmentalized teacher surveys (Saldaña, 2009). Major categories found in the pre-surveys included workload, morale levels, and overall job satisfaction. The discussions of each meeting were recorded, transcribed, and strategically coded (see Data Analysis section). Data from the open-ended component of the departmentalized teachers' surveys were coded with data from the transcriptions. Respondent validation, a systematic process of checking with respondents to ensure their responses and views are relayed clearly by the researcher (Maxwell, 2008), was implemented in this study. Following each meeting, participants were given summaries highlighting major themes and viewpoints along with copies of transcriptions and were asked to clarify misconceptions of statements, and/or further elaborate on topics after reading the summaries.

Third Study

The third study used qualitative methods to examine the perceptions of 12 teachers who were part of a pilot program within a school, but not included in the decision to dismiss the program for the following year. Departmentalization, the piloted teaching structure, was overwhelmingly preferred by the teachers who taught in this format for one year (Strohl, 2013). This study took place the year following the removal of departmentalized instruction when participants returned to teaching in a self-contained format.

The 12 teachers who departmentalized the year prior to this study each completed an open-ended survey and participated in an individual interview. The surveys asked participants about personal perceptions regarding their professional superiors; therefore, precautions were taken to dispel conflict with job interests. Because the study involved collection of sensitive data, surveys were anonymously completed to protect identity and promote candid responses as participants were asked to respond with no identifiable information. Ong and Weiss (2000) found that perceptions of privacy protection was the most influential factor in participants' decisions to divulge sensitive or candid information on a survey; therefore, anonymity was discussed with participants and they were encouraged to provide detailed responses reflecting honest opinions. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using pseudonyms, and the interviewer obtained informed consent (Appendix E) from participants before beginning the study (Seidman, 2006, p. 67).

Open-ended surveys were given before the end of the first half of the year, and participants were encouraged to complete them at home over the semester break to allow more privacy and time for thoughtful responses. The survey items focused on their perceptions of leadership actions involving their participation in the departmentalization pilot. The questions were formulated in a manner reflective of Patton's (2002) notion that truly open-ended questions do not "presuppose which dimension of feeling or thought will be salient for the interviewee" (p. 354). The survey responses were analyzed and coded for categories, which guided interview questions (Saldaña, 2009). Responses for each survey item were compiled in random order by question and distributed to the participants for review. Participants were encouraged to anonymously submit any

clarifications to their responses or additional feedback based on others' responses. Two additional comments were submitted after distribution of compiled results and added to the results (Seidman, 2006, p. 66).

Originally in the third study, focus groups were scheduled to gather data through conversations amongst teachers who experienced the departmentalized format; however, several participants indicated hesitance to disclose candid opinions with their peers regarding administration. Participants preferred individual interviews, and they were informed of the measures taken to protect identity, such as the use of pseudonyms, removal of any identifiable information, and password-protected word processing of transcriptions. Interviews were transcribed and combined with data from surveys to determine recurring themes through content analysis, which Patton (2002) describes as identifying "core consistencies and meanings" in a volume of qualitative material (p. 453). Each participant met for one 30 minute interview, and though none of the teachers requested to do so, they were encouraged to schedule additional interviews for further input if desired.

Summary of Data Collection

During Phase One, data were collected for the first and second studies through multiple techniques including interviews, focus groups, graphic organizers, surveys, questionnaires, and teacher journals. Some components were encouraged but not requested, such as the teacher journals, but all 12 participants met minimal requests for interviews, focus groups, and survey completion. As a result of the researcher also serving as an employee at the school, opportunities to interact with the participants outside of scheduled interviews occasionally arose. To maintain a relationship as a

coworker, the researcher only engaged in unscheduled conversations about the study if initiated by the participants, and would take notes if a notebook was on-hand, or immediately after if not.

Since Phase Two involved sensitive data regarding opinions of superiors, conversations outside of the interviews did not occur. Because no other data besides interviews were gathered from participants in Phase Two, Table 6 summarizes participants' contributions from only Phase One.

Table 6

Participant Data Collection Summary

Teacher Code	Pre Survey/ Post Survey	Focus Group Sessions ≥ 1 hour	Interviews ≥ 1 hour	Teacher Journals Entries	Additional Participant Actions
1A	Yes/Yes	2	1	0	N/A
1B	Yes/Yes	2	1	0	N/A
1C	Yes/Yes	2	2	0	Additional 10 min. beyond hour interview 15 min. unscheduled conversation
1D	Yes/Yes	2	1	2	N/A
2A	Yes/Yes	2	1	0	Additional 10 min. beyond hour interview
2B	Yes/Yes	2	1	2	Four 10-15 min. unscheduled conversations
2C	Yes/Yes	3	2	0	Three 10-15 min. unscheduled conversations
2D	Yes/Yes	3	2	1	Five 10-15 min. unscheduled conversations
3A	Yes/Yes	2	1	1	Additional 10 min. beyond hour interview
3B	Yes/Yes	2	1	0	N/A
3C	Yes/Yes	2	1	0	N/A
3D	Yes/Yes	2	2	0	Two 10-15 min. unscheduled conversations

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves the preparation of data for analysis, conducting various analyses, unveiling multiple layers of meaning, representation and reduction of the data, and interpreting the overarching meaning (Creswell, 2009). Creswell described data analysis as an "ongoing process involving continual reflection about the data, asking analytical questions, and writing memos throughout the study" (p. 184). With 12 teachers to interview, ongoing focus group meetings throughout the year, and an abundance of surveys and notes to compile, this study yielded a steady stream of rich qualitative data that allowed for constant reevaluation of themes and patterns (Maxwell, 2005). As Creswell also suggested, data were concurrently gathered and analyzed to aid in the writing of reports, which allowed the researcher to develop themes from categories, which were then used to guide inquiries used in interviews and focus groups. To guide procedures used for data analysis in this study, the systematic approach suggested by Creswell (2009) was used, which included constant reevaluation of data and flexibility in identifying themes as new data were added (see Table 7).

In addition to Creswell's approach to data analysis, other approaches were incorporated to obtain a more in-depth analysis of data. For interviews, Seidman's (2009) approach to organizing participant data through the use of profiles was utilized. Profiles, as discussed by Seidman, are a way to "find and display coherence in the constitutive events of a participant's experience, to share the coherence a participant has expressed, and to link the individual's experience to the social or organizational context within which he or she operates" (p. 120). Seidman stated that profiles should have enough depth for a beginning, middle, and end; the comprehensive nature of this study

allowed for this depth. When coding data for themes and patterns, Saldaña's (2009) approach was implemented. As he suggested, various forms of patterns were examined, to broaden the scope of analysis (p. 6). Patterns in this study were characterized by similarity, difference, frequency, correspondence, and causation (Saldaña, 2009). See Table 7 for how Creswell's data analysis model was be used to fit this study.

The coding process was guided by Saldaña's (2009) dual-cycle system in which data coding is approached in *cycles,* which does not necessarily correlate to number of times the data is read. Cycles refer to the lens through which the researcher views the data; and allows researchers to analyze large amounts of data in steps, with one cycle laying the foundation for another (p. 72). First Cycle coding involves processes that occur during the initial coding of data and are divided into subcategories that include, among others, Grammatical, Elemental, Procedural, and Exploratory (p. 45). One Grammatical First Cycle coding method used in this study was Simultaneous Coding, in which two or more codes were used for a single qualitative datum (p. 62). For instance, *workload* and *lesson planning* were often used simultaneously when coding specific comments made by teachers in the study. These First Cycle methods provided the foundation from which to begin Second Cycle methods, in which such analytical skills as "classifying, prioritizing, integrating, synthesizing, abstracting, conceptualizing, and theory building" were used (p. 45).

Second Cycle methods, as described by Saldaña (2009), "are advanced ways of reorganizing and reanalyzing data coded through First Cycle methods." (p. 149). Saldaña also cited other researchers' coding methods in his coding handbook when he elaborated on cycles of analysis. For instance, he discussed Miles and Huberman's (1994) Pattern

Coding, which was a Second Cycle method used in this study. Pattern codes were used to assist in pulling together "a lot of material into a more meaningful and parsimonious unit of analysis.... Pattern Coding is a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of sets, themes, or constructs." (p. 69). This particular method was used to develop major themes in this study, including self-efficacy and collective efficacy. The transcriptions, questionnaire and survey compilations, teacher journals, and graphic organizers were all coded for patterns and entered into comparison tables in a word processor. This method allowed the researcher to more efficiently manipulate and locate portions of data for comparison.

Finally, in Second Cycle coding, Longitudinal Coding was implemented later in the study (Saldaña, 2009). Because this study covered the course of two school years and included multiple data collection instruments, the amount of data became cumbersome at some points during analysis. Longitudinal Coding allowed the researcher to compare observations and changes over time through the use of matrices (p. 173). These matrices streamlined the major concepts and allowed for "comparative analysis and interpretation to generate inferences of change" (p. 173). As suggested by Saldaña, Longitudinal Coding was used to analyze participants over time, from implementation of departmentalized instruction to the year following the removal of it.

Table 7

Researcher's Data Analysis Strategies Based on Creswell's Approach

Step	Creswell's Description	Researcher's Actions
1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis	Involves transcribing interviews, scanning material, typing field notes, sorting data by type	• Transcribed recorded interviews and focus group meetings • Typed and organized notes taken during interviews, focus groups, and any other notes taken after unplanned conversations with participants involving the study • Integrated organized data from Phase One into new data organizational scheme for Phase Two
2. Read through all the data	• Gain a general sense of the meaning of the data; find general ideas, tone, perspectives of participants • Determine credibility, use, and depth of gathered data	• Reviewed analysis of data, created categories representing overall perspectives • Reviewed participant profiles; noted vague areas or limited data for future inquiry during their individual interviews
3. Begin detailed analysis with a coding process	• Reflect on underlying meanings of individual documents • Cluster similar topics; form columns for comparison • Code the topics and label texts accordingly • Strategically group categories (Saldaña, 2009) • Assemble like data together and perform preliminary analysis	• Reviewed coding system of data • Added notes to participant profiles reflecting themes found in their transcriptions, surveys, and graphic organizers • Compared notes in participant profiles to find similar themes • Created systematic graphic organizers to show similarities and differences amongst participants as well as between archival and new data

(table continues)

Step	Creswell's Description	Researcher's Actions
4. Use a coding process to generate a description of the setting, participants, themes	• Produce detailed descriptions of setting, participants, and events • Coding for this can generate themes (about 5-7); may serve as headings or major findings in final report	• Reviewed each participant's profile and gleaned descriptive characteristics to create rich descriptions • Combined similar themes describing events to give a more collective view, instead of individual occurrences (found complex connections)
5. Determine manner in which descriptions and themes will be represented in narrative	• Determine way to convey the findings of the study • Decide if using visuals, tables, figures will enhance explanation of data	• Outlined points for the discussion combining notes, coded data, compiled survey and graphic organizer responses, and any other data • Reviewed analyses; decided on most clear methods to convey points; complex concepts presented through visuals
6. Interpreting the data	• Determine what lessons were learned during the study • Reflect on personal interpretation with personal/ cultural/historical/ experience filter • Compare literature to findings to confirm/diverge from others' findings; can also develop new questions	• Found overarching themes summarizing all components, as well as each component individually • Reviewed/revised initial thought experiments and concept maps (Maxwell, 2008). • Associated themes with existing literature with matrix

Validity

Maxwell (2008) described the vast array of validity threats involved in qualitative research, and proceeded to envelop them into two broad categories: researcher bias and reactivity. Bias, the threat Maxwell described as "impossible to deal with," can alter the way researchers analyze and/or collect data (p. 243). Combining values, beliefs, preconceptions, culture, and past experiences, bias can be compared to a lens through which a researcher views the world. Maxwell relayed the importance of maintaining

personal integrity by not attempting to standardize ones' perspective. To achieve this, he suggested researchers should recognize personal biases and acknowledge ways in which they affect each component of their studies.

Maxwell provides guidance for qualitative researchers in his book, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (2005), by addressing explicit issues specific to qualitative studies. He provided a series of writing exercises allowing his readers to refine their approaches through critical analysis of their work and ideas. These writing exercises were used by the researcher to address bias in the study; unveiling personal beliefs, ideas, goals, experiences, assumptions, and values. Maxwell's writing exercises were designed to allow for repetition and refinement, so exercises were revisited more than once as the researcher gained new insight about personal beliefs. Each of the exercises was completed during Phase One and Phase Two of the study and responses were compared to provide more awareness of overarching bias of the study as a whole.

Maxwell's second broad validity threat category is reactivity, or the way in which researchers affect the research setting or participants involved. Maxwell's writing exercises were also helpful in determining researcher impact on participants and aided in formulating interview and focus group questions. Maintaining awareness of influence allowed the researcher to consciously reflect on reactions, body language, and questioning strategies in the presence of participants.

Maxwell (2008) offered multiple suggestions to handle potential validity issues in various qualitative designs. He encouraged his readers to "think in terms of *specific* validity threats" in regards to their given studies, instead of possibly wasting time by exhausting every validity test on the list, including ones not fitting to their research

design (p. 244). Of the list he provided, the strategies most fitting to this specific research included intensive, long-term involvement; use of rich data; respondent validation; searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases; and triangulation.

Aside from the collegial aspect, Phase One of this study provided the researcher with advantages such as getting to know participants and gaining their trust. Phase One familiarized the 12 pilot teachers with the research purpose, data collection process, and type of data that contributed to the quality of the study. This intensive, long-term involvement with the participants allowed the researcher to begin Phase Two without devoting time to gaining participants' trust or trudging through the formalities of explanations and instructions. Maxwell (2008) explained this validity check provides more and different types of data and "the data are more direct and less dependent on inference" (p. 244).

"Rich" data provides enough detail and depth to clearly reveal the story behind the data (Maxwell, 2008). A byproduct of the researcher's long-term involvement and multiple forms of data collection was the collection of rich data. To ensure a more descriptive final product, interactions during focus groups and interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis, instead of solely relying on notes taken during interviews. Participants were asked to clarify vague statements and elaborate on potentially thought-provoking topics, which provided more rich descriptions to help paint the final picture.

Respondent validation is a systematic process of checking with respondents to ensure their responses and views are relayed clearly by the researcher (Maxwell, 2008). Because the participants were the researchers' colleagues, they were easily accessible and formal scheduling of specific meeting times was not always required to meet with them.

Participants were allowed to review transcriptions of their interviews and were provided summaries of each interview that included major themes and viewpoints as perceived by the researcher. They were encouraged to clarify misconceptions, or further elaborate on topics after reading the summaries. This process was utilized in both phases of the study and the participants were aware of their right to clarify their statements.

Searching for discrepant evidence, whether within one participant's profile or a point of view different from the majority, was part of the data analysis process and was also a validity check discussed by Maxwell (2008). As part of the data analysis process, each participant's statements in Phase One were compared to statements she made in Phase Two. Unexplained changes in viewpoints, contradicting statements, or unclear explanations, were noted and inquired about during individual interviews.

Finally, in an attempt to increase validity, triangulation was used in this study. Variety in sources of data collection as well as the analysis procedures provided comparable information to check for more discrepancies as well as solidify general understandings found throughout the data.

MANUSCRIPT I

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF DEPARTMENTALIZED INSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY

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This manuscript is prepared for submission to *Journal of Case Studies in Education* and is the first of three manuscripts prepared for this journal-ready doctoral dissertation. Style guidelines are provided immediately following the references of the manuscript.

Elementary teachers' experiences and perceptions of departmentalized instruction: A case study

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Abstract

This case study investigated elementary teachers' experiences and perceptions during a trial year of departmentalized instruction in a rural south Georgia elementary school. To inform their decision about whole-school departmentalization for the future, school administrators appointed twelve first through third grade teachers to pilot the instructional model for one school year. This case study utilized data collected from focus group interviews, individual interviews with departmentalized teachers, teacher journals, and questionnaires. The experiences and perceptions of the departmentalized teachers informed the study about perceived positive and negative attributes of departmentalized instruction, self-efficacy beliefs, and experiences of a shift in instructional models. Aligning with related literature, findings revealed teacher preference for the departmentalized instructional model over the self-contained model

due to lighter workload, more focused and higher quality instruction, and increased self-efficacy.

Keywords: content specialists, departmentalize, elementary, self-efficacy, teacher workload, case study

INTRODUCTION

To meet demands of state and federal standards, schools must explore methods that improve instructional quality and positively impact student achievement. At the elementary level, organizational structure of classroom instruction is one factor of student learning with little research to validate a significantly effective method; yet it has been debated in schools since the early twentieth century (McGrath & Rust, 2002; Otto & Sanders, 1964). Most commonly structured to deliver instruction through a self-contained classroom format, some elementary schools have begun implementing a departmentalized organizational structure (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Hood, 2009). Supporters of this structure argue students receive higher quality instruction from content specialists as opposed to the instruction received from generalists in the self-contained classroom (Chan & Jarman, 2004; DelViscio & Muffs, 2007; Hood, 2009). Further, workload, shown by studies to be a major cause of teacher burnout, is decreased in departmentalized instruction as teachers prepare for fewer subject areas (Bridges & Searle, 2011; Perrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008; Timms, Graham, & Cottrell, 2007).

Another factor shown to have positive impacts on student achievement is teachers' self-efficacy or, "an individual's beliefs in his or her own capabilities to pursue a course of action to meet given situational demands" (Chang, 2009, p. 197). Self-efficacy is fostered in departmentalized settings as teachers become content specialists, narrowing their scope of instruction from all subject areas to a few and becoming more proficient in teaching those areas (Bailey, 2010; Podhajski, Mather, Nathan, & Sammons, 2009; Schwartz & Gess –Newsome, 2008). Other positive effects of using teachers as content specialists include increased teacher attitudes toward subjects taught, improved

instructional style, better use of instructional time, and increased scores on state test achievement (Bailey, Shaw, & Hollifield, 2006; Brashears, 2006; Eidietis & Jewkes, 2011; Schwartz & Gess-Newsome, 2008; Wilkins, 2010). Elementary school administrators implementing, or considering implementing, departmentalization do not have a significant pool of directly-related research on which to base their decisions, so they must rely on findings on these residual effects to justify the transition.

Those opposed to the idea of departmentalized instruction in elementary schools ground their argument in the idea of student-centered instruction, focusing on the teaching of the whole child (Elkind, 1988; McGrath & Rust, 2002; Schiro, 2008). Fostering an environment in which students' emotional and social needs are also monitored is important to advocates of the self-contained structure. Teachers in self-contained classrooms have the advantage of knowing students' abilities in all subject areas and can adjust instruction accordingly within a day (Culyer, 1984; McGrath & Rust, 2002). Further, flexibility in schedules in a self-contained classroom allows teachers to better meet students' needs by providing differentiation and more time in specific subject areas when needed (Elkind, 1988). Decision makers in elementary schools unwilling to transition to departmentalized teaching from the traditional structure generally believe student-centered instruction is more beneficial than a more subject-centered model.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This case study explored a group of teachers' perceptions and experiences as they transitioned to departmentalized teaching from a self-contained model. For one year, twelve first through third grade teachers in one rural school in the southeast taught in a

departmentalized format. These teachers were paired by grade level, creating six teams of departmentalized teachers. For each team, one teacher planned for and taught science, social studies, and math, while the other team member was responsible for language arts, reading, and writing. Teachers taught their respective subject areas to their homeroom classes during the first half of the day and traded classes with their team members to teach those subjects to their second classes. The purpose of the trial year of implementation was to inform administrators on the decision to expand the departmentalized structure to include the remaining first, second, and third grade teachers in the following year. The school in this study housed kindergarten through third grade students; however, kindergarten teachers were not included in the trial year of departmentalization as administrators believed kindergarten students were too young to benefit from the change.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mathematics and science reports have consistently revealed low performance amongst U.S. students and proposed reforms to improve student achievement in these areas (National Science Board, 2006). Based on standardized test scores, around 70% of all students enter middle and high school with severe deficits in mathematics and science; often unable to achieve grade-level standards even with remediation (Nelson & Landel, 2007). To prevent these deficits, efforts should be made on the elementary school level to ensure all students receive quality instruction from effective teachers. One method of delivering effective instruction is through the use of content specialists (Li, 2008; Nelson & Landel, 2007).

The use of content specialists in elementary schools has potential positive effects on both the students and the teachers. Students in multiple studies received higher quality instruction through more focused teaching and performed better on achievement tests than students who received instruction in all subject areas from one teacher (Bailey et al., 2006; Brashers, 2006; Schwartz & Gess-Newsome, 2008). Gerretson, Bosnick, and Schofield (2008) discussed the importance of the impact created by specialized teachers. To argue for departmentalization, they asked whether, "a model where elementary teachers cover all core subjects with a high level of expertise should continue unchallenged, or would a model where teachers can specialize in one or two areas be a more viable option?" (p. 305). Podhajski et al. (2009) attempted to determine the effectiveness of scientifically-based professional development in reading instruction on both student achievement and teacher knowledge. Based on their study, the authors found that the scientifically-based reading instruction significantly improved teachers' knowledge and student achievement.

Teachers also benefit from teaching as content specialists. By narrowing the scope of teachers' instruction, their attitudes toward subject areas taught improved as their self-efficacy and quality of instructional methods increased (Brashears, 2006; Schwartz & Gess-Newsome, 2008). Teacher attitudes toward specific subject areas were explored by Brashears (2006), as well as the implications of those attitudes. Brashears' (2006) study analyzed teachers' beliefs about reasons students may or may not achieve on a state writing test. Based on this study, the author found that teachers' justifications for test scores varied, and most teachers did not attribute their own teaching methods to the test scores. Brashears' study also highlighted the quality of content specialists'

instructional styles. The results in Brashears' study not only indicated how teacher attitudes varied greatly in regards to subject matter, it also revealed how scores impacted by teaching strategies, or instructional styles, especially in the context of writing. Departmentalized teachers can focus improvement in their teaching strategies on best practices for particular content due to the concentration of teaching fewer subjects than to a self-contained teacher. When considered together, the aforementioned results indicate a strong likelihood that continuous improvement may result in better teaching strategies and student learning.

The scope of professional development is also more focused for content specialists than self-contained teachers, as they are trained more in-depth in their subject areas. In order to impact student achievement, professional development must be high-quality and focused to affect teachers' proficiency levels (Nelson & Landel, 2007). Specializing professional development to improve math instruction had similar results in a study conducted by Bailey (2010). The purpose of this work was to investigate the impact of a standards-based professional development program on second and third grade math teachers' levels of pedagogical and content knowledge. These teachers taught at failing schools and showed significant gains in their math teaching abilities. Teachers specializing in specific content areas, like in the departmentalized format, could be positively impacted by participating in subject-specific professional development to improve and refine their expertise areas. Teachers of self-contained classes have more subject areas to refine; participating in an extensive program, such as the one in this study, for each of the areas they teach would be much more difficult than for departmentalized teachers.

The use of instructional time is another residual effect of the implementation of content specialists through a departmentalized structure. Eidietis and Jewkes (2011) examined the impact of teacher preparedness in a particular topic on the instructional time allotted for that topic. They discovered the less prepared teachers reported they were to teach a topic, the less time they spent on teaching it. Eidietis and Jewkes used statistics to analyze teachers taught subjects in which they were most knowledgeable and prepared. Departmentalized teachers experience repetition with fewer subject areas than self-contained teachers, potentially giving them more practice and opportunities for reflection through repeated lessons. Wilkins (2010) also conducted a study that revealed a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward specific subject areas and the time they spent teaching each area. She noted that teachers were more likely to spend the most time teaching the subjects they favored and also introduced literature regarding instructional quality for teachers' more favored subjects. Wilkins' (2010) study can be used to show how teachers vary in levels of favoritism of subjects they teach, which further adds to the value of departmentalization when teachers are assigned their preferred subjects.

Another time-related matter regarding instructional areas found in the literature is the concern of cutting some subjects because of the emphasis placed on others. Bailey et al. (2006) explored the quality of teaching in social studies, an area on which most state tests do not place significant emphasis in the elementary grades. They found that instructional strategies used during social studies instruction were less interactive than in other subject areas and teachers spent significantly less time teaching it as well. Further supporting these findings, in the report, "Perceived Effects of State-Mandated Testing

Programs on Teaching and Learning: Findings from a National Survey of Teachers," results yielded data regarding time spent on tested and non-tested subject areas (Clarke, Shore, Rhoades, Abrams, Miao, & Li, 2003). The researchers reported more time spent on instruction in tested areas and less time spent on instruction in non-tested areas. Bailey et al.'s (2006) results aligned with this national report, as the authors found overall, teachers spent significantly less time on social studies instruction than in other subject areas. These studies showed teachers were not spending equitable time in all subject areas. The departmentalized structure could alleviate the imbalance because of the blocks of time teachers are allotted to concentrate on a few specific subject areas. With fewer subjects in a block of time to teach, less subject matter can overlap into the allotted time for social studies, or any other area of instruction.

Self-efficacy is another component affected by decreasing workload and increasing focus in subject areas. Self-efficacy can be fostered through a departmentalized format as teachers become more proficient in their content knowledge through focused professional development. Self-efficacy of departmentalized teachers is also fostered as their skills become more refined through the concentration of fewer subjects than self-contained teachers (Bailey, 2010; Podhajski et al., 2009). Self-efficacy was shown to have a positive impact on teachers' job performance in multiple studies. Brown (2012) compiled an extensive review of studies conducted on the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout and found that all the studies reviewed revealed a negative relationship between teacher self-efficacy and burnout. A study conducted on the relationship between various factors of teaching and teachers' job satisfaction

revealed student achievement, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction were reciprocal in nature (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006).

With the possible benefits of shifting to departmentalized instruction, most elementary schools continue to follow the traditional self-contained structure. By nature of the self-contained classroom, students interact with fewer teachers than in a departmentalized model; allowing a single teacher to teach the "whole child" through observing and accommodating students' personalities, social needs, and emotional predispositions (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2011; Elkind, 1988). Departmentalized teachers teach two or more classes each day, increasing their number of students and limiting the depth of knowledge about each child individually. This lack of focus on the whole child is the central argument made by those opposed to departmentalized instruction.

PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCH SITE

All participants in this study were teachers employed by the school at which the study was conducted. These 12 teachers were part of a pilot group appointed by school administrators to test the implementation of departmentalized instruction during the 2011-2012 school year. Though the school serves kindergarten through third grade, kindergarten teachers and students were not part of the pilot group, as administration believed kindergarten-aged students were too young to benefit from organizational transition. Every teacher in the pilot group willingly agreed to participate in this study and meet for at least one hour-long interview and three focus group meetings during the course of the year. The participants were all first, second, or third grade female teachers between the ages of 28 and 50, with varying credentials and years of experience. Table 1

provides visual organization of the participants' data in regards to teaching careers and roles as departmentalized teachers.

Table 1

Departmentalized Teacher Credentials and Class Details

Teacher Code	Grade/Type of Class	Departmentalized Subjects	Teaching Experience (in years)	Highest Degree Earned
1A	1st/Regular ed.	Math/science/S.S.	10	Specialist
1B	1st/EIP	Reading/writing/lang.	14	Specialist
1C	1st/ Regular ed.	Math/science/S.S.	13	Specialist
1D	1st/EIP	Reading/writing/lang.	22	Master's
2A	2nd/ Regular ed.	Math/science/S.S.	8	Master's
2B	2nd/ Inclusion	Reading/writing/lang.	15	Master's
2C	2nd/Gifted	Math/science/S.S.	21	Specialist
2D	2nd/Gifted	Reading/writing/lang.	20	Master's
3A	3rd/EIP	Math/science/S.S.	9	Bachelor's
3B	3rd/EIP	Reading/writing/lang.	5	Master's
3C	3rd/Gifted	Math/science/S.S.	24	Specialist
3D	3rd/Gifted	Reading/writing/lang.	12	Specialist

The research site, located in a town with a population around 17,000, was one of five public schools in a southeastern U.S. district. All five primary schools were classified as Title I, and of them, this school contained the most students, faculty members, and administrative personnel. Of the 7,620 K-12 students enrolled in the

system, 815 attended the school at which the research took place. Table 2 displays student demographics for the school, system, and state.

Table 2

Demographic Data for School, System, and State

	Black Student Enrollment	White Student Enrollment	Hispanic Student Enrollment	Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility
School	35%	46%	15%	68%
System	34%	45%	17%	65%
State	37%	44%	12%	57%

DATA COLLECTION

The investigation took the form of a single case study, allowing the researcher to explore an phenomenon within real-life context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003). Because this research examined the perceptions and experiences of participants, a qualitative approach allowed for more in-depth analysis and greater freedom to analyze unforeseen occurrences during the process. According to Patton (2002), "qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry" (p. 14).

Participants were asked to engage in individual interviews as well as in focus groups with other participants. Questionnaires and journal notes provided by participants also provided rich data for analysis in this study. Participants in this study attended two to three focus group sessions, consisting of four to six participants, in which they

discussed their experiences and perceptions of departmentalized instruction (Quible, 1998). To increase variety in data, participants did not meet with the same members each time. Prior to participants' initial focus group sessions, they were encouraged to record their thoughts in journals reflecting their perceptions, experiences, feelings, and attitudes related to their experiences involved with departmentalization (Hayman, Wilkes, & Jackson, 2012). Categorical analysis from transcriptions of initial focus group meetings provided guidance for other data collection instruments created throughout the study, including questionnaires and graphic organizers provided for teachers to systematically record data (Saldaña, 2009). For each focus group meeting, participants were asked to stay for the duration of one hour, but were invited to stay longer if the discussion was of interest and/or wanted to contribute more. Two focus group meetings lasted 15 minutes longer than planned, but all participants stayed to finish the discussions. By analyzing data from individual interviews, common themes and viewpoints were discovered amongst participants. Based on these commonalities, the researcher selected specific combinations of participants for the focus groups, which allowed the gathering of more concentrated data on the common viewpoints of those participants. To avoid repetition of specific themes and viewpoints, participants were asked to not participate in more than three focus group meetings, but were encouraged to schedule additional individual interviews if they wished to provide more insight for the study. Though no teacher scheduled additional interviews, five teachers initiated two or more unscheduled conversations with the researcher lasting ten to fifteen minutes each. Because the researcher was employed by the same school as the participants, occasional opportunities for unscheduled interaction occurred. Each recorded and transcribed meeting was

analyzed for categories, preponderance of responses, and notable comments about which to inquire during individual interviews. To present and analyze data, transcriptions were coded through a two-cycle method (Saldaña, 2009) to generate categories that were reviewed further for connecting threads and patterns to create themes (Seidman, 2006, p. 125). Fostering a deductive model of analysis by confirming patterns and themes found through inductive analysis of data (Patton, 2002, p. 454), overarching themes found in focus group data allowed for a more customized approach for each individual interview.

Each of the 12 teachers was asked to participate in at least one individual one-hour interview. As with the focus group meetings, participants had the option to continue interviews after one hour to further discuss any topics related to the study; two teachers each extended an interview by ten minutes. Data collected through interviews and focus groups revealed perceptions and experiences of departmentalized classroom teachers. Seidman (2006) discussed how interviewing, at its core, is "understanding the lived experience of other people and meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). These interviews provided insight to experiences of teachers who taught in departmentalized settings, as well as their perceptions related to those experiences. The purpose of the interviews was to narrow the scope of the data gathered from the initial focus group meetings to more individual levels. As Seidman discussed, understanding the individual experiences allowed for comparison between perceptions of the same experience. Interview questions were open-ended and to eliminate influence on responses, the use of biased or leading language was intentionally avoided. Analysis of interviews was much like that of focus groups, as they were coded for themes and patterns; they were also compared and contrasted with all other interviews (Saldaña, 2009).

In addition to focus group meetings and individual interviews, participants were periodically given graphic organizers on which they were asked to write their thoughts on various topics (i.e., pros/cons of a certain topic, or likes/dislikes of a component of a program). These graphic organizer templates were given to teachers as new themes emerged during the data analysis process. Out of respect for the participants' time and schedules, they were given in lieu of multiple individual interviews and were another tool used to guide the creation of focus group and interview questions. To encourage richer, more candid responses, participants were asked to not provide identifiable information when responding. Maxwell (2004) states rich data are "data that are detailed and varied enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on and the processes involved" (p. 254). It became apparent throughout the constant comparative data gathering an analysis process that (Creswell, 2009) asking teachers to complete the graphic organizers anonymously, they provided more detailed and opinionated responses than in the focus group and interview settings, allowing for a more rich description of their experiences and perceptions for the study.

A final data collection tool used in this study was an optional teacher journal. Because participants were already devoting time and effort to participate in focus groups and interviews, as well as complete graphic organizers, they were presented with the option to record additional thoughts, perceptions, or experiences in a personal journal to further enrich the data collection for the study (Hayman et al., 2012). Four of the teachers provided journals, and though small in quantity, these data enriched the study by providing more real-time perceptions. In comparison to focus groups and interviews, which occurred days or weeks after the teachers' experiences, teachers who used journals

recorded notes closer to the time of the experience, giving a more accurate recall of what happened. Another benefit of the journals was their role in focus groups and interviews, as they were used to help those four teachers recall experiences or other items they wished to discuss. These journals were treated like transcriptions, as they were coded for themes in the same manner.

RESULTS

Multiple themes were developed through analysis of data collected during the course of the school year in which the study took place. Overarching themes included: workload; teaching methods; interactions with parents; interactions with students; and lesson planning. These overarching themes were consistent across all sources of data, though the individual interviews and anonymous graphic organizers revealed more detailed and candid responses than did the focus group setting, in which participants were less able to provide details and less likely to be candid.

Workload and planning

Workload was by far the most present theme amongst all sources of data collected in this study. All 12 participants discussed workload and unanimously agreed the workload in the departmentalized setting was significantly lower than in the traditional self-contained format. One second grade teacher shared, "I almost feel guilty leaving work at a reasonable time; the parking lot is still at least half-full of other teachers' cars when I leave now." They attributed this decrease to the narrowed scope of subject areas for which they were preparing. All teachers discussed the use of their personal time for work-related activities before they departmentalized. When recalling her experience as a self-contained teacher, one teacher shared:

> My work life was overtaking my personal life. I came home stressed and upset most days; it took a toll on my marriage and personal time with my children. I was coming up here every Sunday to work an additional six hours and having to find extended childcare for my own children because I was staying at work so late every day.

Several teachers specifically noted the amount of time they spent planning, though much more productive, was cut by at least half from their prior year in the self-contained setting. Also during the course of the study, all teachers mentioned or discussed an increase in their productivity during their planning time. One teacher reflected on her outlook on planning when she taught in a self-contained structure, "I'm not staring at my cluttered desk in a daze because I don't know where to start like last year. Now I know I've got three subjects to plan for, and those lessons are going to be awesome!" Many teachers described being "spread too thin" when they taught all six subjects as self-contained teachers, but were more focused and creative when they were planning for fewer subject areas in the departmentalized setup. When discussing the planning process, one teacher noted:

> Planning last year took at least three days because we had ten teachers trying to share their ideas for one lesson in one subject. I did enjoy those conversations and the idea-sharing, but it left little time for us to prepare for those lessons by finding the materials and resources we needed. The amount of ideas became overwhelming. This year, I only meet with the departmentalized teachers for planning and we focus only on our three subjects.

Teachers noted other advantages to focusing their planning time by reducing the number of subjects for which they plan. Several elaborated on the advantage of using planning time to sift through the curriculum resources they otherwise would have overlooked. For instance, a first grade teacher shared her excitement about implementing experiments in her classroom:

> I'm able to do the things I thought I was going to get to do as a teacher when I was in college; the fun learning activities that make kids excited about coming to school. Science experiments were things I had to 'cram in' whenever I could, but with this new way of teaching I actually get to do them every week with my kids!

Teachers mentioned other ways they used their more focused planning time to enrich their lessons, including the integration of technology and art. "I have actually had time to look up resources to use on my Promethean board. I only wish I had known about the cool things I can do with my board when I was teaching all six subjects," shared a third grade teacher. They believed these additions to their lessons made the learning more memorable for students.

Stress as it related to the workload and planning demands was another factor upon which departmentalized teachers unanimously agreed. While some participants provided more details about impacts the previous years' stress brought upon on their health, social lives, and families, they all reported feeling less stressed, which many noted positively impacted their overall teaching abilities. The anxiety and pressure of creating quality lesson plans for all subject areas while they were in the self-contained setting was commonly addressed by participants. When compared to the departmentalized setting, all teachers reported experiencing less stress and lighter workloads than any other year

they taught. Departmentalized teachers taught each lesson twice a day, once for a morning class and once for an afternoon class. They generally administered the same assessments for both their morning and afternoon classes, resulting in twice the amount of a single assessment to grade than in a self-contained setting. Instead of having about 20 math assessments and 20 reading assessments to grade, they would have about 40 assessments in one subject area. When asked about grading 40 or more of one specific assessment, teachers showed preference for it over grading multiple assessments for half the students as they did in self-contained settings. A first grade teacher explained:

> The more I grade the same test, the more familiar I am with that test, which makes grading faster. When I had just one class of kids, I did not have as many of the same test, but I had tests in all subjects. When I had to stop and start again grading the different tests, it took longer. I grade 40 math tests quicker than I do 20 math and 20 reading tests.

Another residual benefit mentioned by several teachers in regards to grading assessments was the increase in amount of scores per individual test among which to compare student achievement. "Having more scores lets me compare more students and also helps me think about my own teaching based on their responses to test items," shared one second grade teacher.

Teaching impacts

An additional overarching theme found in this study was the positive impacts the departmentalized structure had on teaching methods and instructional time. With more focused planning, teachers reported incorporating more supplemental activities to extend or differentiate lessons to better meet their students' needs. The supplemental activities

reported most were interactive whiteboard slideshows, science experiments, and vocabulary games. Teachers reported these activities, in addition to a variety of others, allowed them to teach more in-depth, which most said resulted in better teaching overall. One third grade gifted teacher stated:

> Because my lessons go deeper, I know I can hold my kids more accountable because they are being asked to go deeper too. I've never had more kids grasp what I'm teaching so well. I feel like they are getting more from me as a result of my more focused teaching.

All participants reported positive attributes of departmentalized instruction in relation to time. Most teachers shared that they better adhered to instructional schedules for each class they taught. Almost every teacher admitted that when they taught in self-contained settings, they allowed the teaching of some subjects to exceed allotted time slots and take time away from other subject areas as a result. One teacher explained:

> Keeping a tight schedule keeps me from getting behind and helps me stay on top of my own teaching. When I had my own group of students, I would allow my literacy block to run into my math and science almost every day so I could finish those lessons. Now I know I have only three subjects to teach and I must teach them in that time, because I don't have the rest of the day to do it. I have another class coming midday that I'll have to teach.

They attributed their increase in time awareness to several factors, including the midday switching of classes and fewer subjects to teach to their classes. Knowing a second group of students would be coming midday resulted in a more rigid schedule, as some reported wanting to avoid delays in sending their first group to their second teacher.

This also helped them avoid taking time away from their second set of students. Breaking up their schedule into three distinct segments instead of six, like they did in their self-contained classrooms, made time management easier and reduced the likelihood they would allow one subject to take up the allotted time of the remaining two. One third grade teacher found she made better use of her instructional time in the departmentalized structure. She stated:

> We start right at 8:25 now, right on the dot. In the past I would have given my kids a little more time to finish their morning work and maybe start around 8:45 because I knew within the course of my day I could make adjustments to the academic schedule when I needed to. I don't have the luxury of those adjustments anymore, but I like that it keeps me on schedule and almost forces me to stick to my agenda, which are good things!

Another topic discussed several times was the repetition of lessons throughout the day. Teachers were essentially teaching the same lessons twice a day, once for each group of students. Several teachers predicted they would tire of the repetition of lessons each day, but on the contrary, they reported a preference for receiving a new group of students after lunch, with many calling the switch a midday "fresh start." Stemming from the repetition of lessons was the advantage of modifying instruction when necessary. A second grade teacher shared:

> I feel like I teach better lessons to my second group because I can make immediate adjustments based on what happened in the first round of lessons that morning. It also reassures you of your teaching; I may need to reevaluate the way I taught if it didn't work for both of my classes.

Another second grade teacher stated the repetition of "teaching the lesson again keeps me on my toes; I can see weak areas of lessons and adjust for my next class." Echoing this comment, every teacher in the pilot group discussed or at least mentioned the value of repeating lessons in the same day, as they were able to adjust based on feedback and observations of their first classes.

Interactions with students and parents

Interactions with parents and students were themes both heavily discussed throughout this study as well. Many teachers admitted feeling apprehensive about communication with parents, mostly stating they were intimidated by the amount of parents they would deal with compared to the years they taught self-contained classes. As the year progressed, teachers began to shift their thinking, and viewed the aspect of parental interactions as a positive trait of departmentalized instruction. Around the middle of the year, one teacher stated:

> I've started encouraging parents to come in more for conferences when issues come up with a student. Now instead of feeling like I have to defend myself and sugarcoat issues, I have a partner teacher who is also at the conference to support what I say with her observations. They hear that two people are seeing the same things, now it's not my word against their kid's word; there are two teachers talking about the same issues occurring in two different classrooms. It's not as easy for parents to say it's a 'teacher issue' anymore.

Also, a few teachers noted the number of student check-outs had decreased, resulting in less missed instruction time. These teachers attributed this drop to a more rigid schedule, as one mentioned, "When parents know they are missing a block of

something, they started scheduling appointments after school. I think the set schedule makes them realize they are specifically missing a math lesson or a reading lesson for that day."

Interactions with students are engrained in daily duties for both self-contained and departmentalized teachers; however, departmentalized settings created new types of interactions for participants. Most teachers reported an increase in the amount of time necessary to get to know all of their students; however, by the end of the second quarter, all teachers stated they had connected with their students as well as, if not better than, they had with students in the self-contained setting. Elaborating on this experience, one teacher noted:

> I understand more about my kids now because I am paying attention to them more as individuals. Before, I didn't feel as present with my kids as I do now; I felt like in the past while I was teaching, my mind was thinking about all the things I had left to teach that day, and if I had remembered to get everything ready for those upcoming lessons. Now I know I am well-planned and prepared for everything each day because my workload isn't spread all over, and that focus is now placed on my kids.

On the other hand a few teachers mentioned some aspects of connecting with their students they missed from the self-contained setting. One of them shared:

> I do miss their personal stories I used to hear during writing instruction, though. I don't get to hear all about their weekend events, or pets, or extracurricular activities like before. I will say that I do know more about their interests, though, and what gets them excited, because of the deeper level of science instruction I

am giving. It's definitely give and take; but I still wouldn't trade this teaching style for the old one!

Some teachers enjoyed knowing a greater number of students in their grade level, as they taught two classes instead of one. One advantage mentioned multiple times throughout the year was addressing students by name to correct behavior. One teacher elaborated with:

> If I see one of my afternoon students misbehaving in the hallway during the morning, I can call that student by name and correct the situation quickly. My partner teacher can do the same for me as well. These students know they have two teachers to answer to, so they seem to be more aware of their actions when they are not in the classroom.

The way in which students responded to having two teachers was also addressed by participants. The "double attention," as one teacher noted, was encouraging for them and they looked forward to "sharing exciting news with two teachers as opposed to one."

Collaboration

Collaboration was at the heart of the entire structure, as pairs of teachers shared students, schedules, and responsibility for parental communication. Throughout the study, almost every teacher mentioned the importance of being paired with a compatible partner. Overall, the six pairs of teachers in this study felt they worked well with their partners, with only mentioning minor issues, such as aligning discipline styles for their shared students at the beginning of the year. Teachers reported several positive factors of collaborating with their partners, such as understanding more about students by combining perspectives, sharing triumphs of students with someone who knows them as

well, and having another person to help analyze data. When discussing assessments, one teacher noted:

> Sometimes I get bogged down in grading writing assignments because I am with the students through the entire writing process and think about their progress instead of the end result. It's nice to go to my partner and show her the final product to get a more objective viewpoint.

Some teachers utilized the system to integrate across the curriculum. Several teachers noted specific topics in their subject areas with which students struggled, and how departmentalized instruction was used to help provide additional learning opportunities for those topics. Discussing collaboration with her partner, one teacher said:

> When I taught about certain historical figures in social studies, I would sometimes ask my partner to help reinforce that information through her teaching. She was always willing and had great ideas. She incorporated some of my topics through read-alouds, informational writing lessons, and interactive edit activities. I could do the same for whatever she happened to be teaching as well.

Overall, teachers felt as if they collaborated more in the departmentalized setting than they did in the self-contained setting. Many said they communicated with their partner teachers multiple times a day about their shared students.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

With heavy cuts in funding, school resources are becoming less accessible; yet teachers are expected to meet increasingly rigorous standards despite these cuts (Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frohlich, Kemp, & Tahan, 2011). To prevent teacher burnout,

methods to improve various aspects of the profession should be explored and implemented. For elementary schools, departmentalization is one structure that alleviates stress of workload by narrowing the scope of teachers' focus from teaching all subject areas to a few. This study revealed insights of 12 teachers who participated in departmentalized teaching for one year and overwhelmingly showed favoritism for this teaching structure. Aligning with the literature, this study revealed that focusing on fewer subjects alleviated workloads for teachers (Bridges & Searle, 2011; Perrachione et al., 2008; Timms et al., 2007). Further, when workloads decreased, teachers also reported lower stress levels, which ultimately improved their attitudes toward teaching (Perrachione et al., 2008; Timms et al., 2007).

Self-efficacy was found to be a positive effect of departmentalizing in this study as teachers reported feeling more confident and prepared in their teaching than they did when they taught self-contained classes. Studies showed self-efficacy was fostered when teachers taught the subject areas in which they were most confident, which departmentalization could make possible (Brown, 2012; Fantuzzo, Perlman, Sproul, Minney, Perry, and Li, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). These studies support the notion that residual effects of implementing a change such as departmentalization could potentially minimize the high teacher turnover rate by decreasing workload and exhaustion and increasing teacher self-efficacy.

Because this structure is a major change from the traditional self-contained structure, Chan and Jarman (2004) suggested piloting the change with a portion of the teachers before implementing on a school level, as was the case with the school in this study. Piloting major changes allows decision makers to determine how well a program

will work on a larger scale and gather data to support or discredit these changes (van Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley, & Graham, 2001). Pilot teachers in this study were able to determine problematic areas, such as the transporting of student materials from room to room, and use that information for future planning, should they departmentalize in upcoming years. One recommendation from this study is to pilot departmentalization before implementing it, allowing teachers to work through problematic areas and suggest approaches that may be helpful for other teachers if the school expands the program later.

Another recommendation for schools considering this structure is to strongly consider personality and teaching styles when pairing teachers for the year. Teachers in this study reported they collaborated with their partners multiple times a day and stated the frequency of collaboration greatly increased from their self-contained teaching experience. Collaboration occurred in multiple areas including planning, parent conferences, grading, monitoring student behavior, entering report card data, and integrating subjects across the curriculum. Administrators should allow and seek teacher input to determine optimal pairing options, as they may not know each teacher's personality traits, teaching styles, organizational habits, or any other factor that may affect this decision. A suggestion for future research is to investigate impacts on various types of learners. Within the same school using similar curriculum, student achievement could be compared across various subcategories.

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MANUSCRIPT II

COMPARISON OF SELF-CONTAINED AND DEPARTMENTALIZED ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM STRUCTURE AND JOB SATISFACTION

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Comparison of Self-Contained and Departmentalized Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Structure and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Most elementary schools adhere to a self-contained format to deliver student instruction. This case study explored the implementation of a nontraditional format typically used in middle and high schools known as departmentalized instruction. Twelve of 29 first through third grade teachers were asked by their administration to implement departmentalized instruction for a trial year. This study compares levels of perceived

stress and morale in relation to job satisfaction between the departmentalized teachers and self-contained teachers within the same school. This case study utilized data collected from focus group interviews as well as pre- and post-surveys comprised of Likert-scaled items and open-ended questions. The survey responses informed the study about various dimensions of teacher morale and job satisfaction and the focus groups informed the study about departmentalized teachers' own comparison between the two models of instruction. Consistent with related literature, findings revealed departmentalized teachers experienced higher morale, lighter workload, and increased overall job satisfaction in comparison to self-contained teachers in the same school. Further, in comparison to their prior self-contained teaching experiences, departmentalized teachers overwhelmingly preferred the new structure.

Keywords: Departmentalize, Teacher job satisfaction, Teacher morale, Elementary teachers, case study

1. Introduction

Over time, various factors have increased teachers' workloads, including policy changes, funding cuts, and increased levels of accountability. One major effect of increased workloads is burnout, or, "negative responses to the mismatch between job requirements and perceived abilities" (Brown, 2012, p. 48). Teacher burnout may ultimately lead to teachers leaving the field (Chang, 2009, p. 194), which can have a negative impact on student achievement (Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frolich, & Tahan, 2011). Major themes found in literature regarding teacher burnout were emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of inefficacy (Chang, 2009). Effectively minimizing the trend of highly qualified teachers leaving the field due to burnout could ultimately improve student achievement, as Aud et al.'s report (2011) cited teacher experience as a student achievement indicator. On the elementary level, veering from a traditional classroom format is one way schools may tackle this dilemma. Implementing departmentalization can decrease factors of burnout, such as workload and emotional exhaustion, as teachers prepare for and teach fewer subject areas (Chan & Jarman, 2004). Chan and Jarman (2004) highlighted the likelihood of retaining highly qualified teachers as a result of this transition in structure.

Departmentalization is a type of team teaching in which teachers teach as specialists in one or more content areas (Delviscio & Muffs, 2007). Typically in elementary school classrooms, classroom organizational structure follows a self-contained format, which operates under the assumption that "an elementary school teacher is a Jack (or Jill)-of-all-trades that is equally strong in all areas of the curriculum" (Chan & Jarman, 2004, p. 70). Because of the inherent format of the structure, teachers in departmentalized settings

prepare for fewer subject areas than self-contained teachers, giving them more time to invest in preparation in each subject they teach. Some school districts are beginning to departmentalize at the elementary school level to meet the demands of accountability measures by giving students this specialized form of instruction from teachers (Delviscio & Muffs, 2007).

The residual effects of specialized instruction were shown to result in improvement in student achievement rates (Bailey, 2010; Hood, 2009; Piechura-Couture et al., 2006; Wilkins, 2008). Though some compromise might be necessary within a school to accommodate each teacher's subject preferences, departmentalization does provide the opportunity for teachers to specialize in their favored subjects, and offers benefits for the teachers who may have to compromise. For instance, Lowery (2002) found specialized instruction built teachers' confidence and competence. Teaching fewer subjects improved subject-area attitudes by allowing teachers to focus on standards and teach strategies in depth rather than spreading their time and talents over a wide range of subject areas. Wilkins (2008) found that teachers with more positive attitudes toward specific subject areas used more effective instruction methods in those areas. While Lowery's (2002) study showed an improvement in attitudes and teaching abilities through specialized instruction, Wilkins (2008) showed teachers used more effective teaching methods in subject areas toward which they had more positive attitudes. Thus, these studies support the assertion that even if teachers are assigned to teach the subjects they least favor, research shows their attitudes toward those subjects could increase regardless.

If such a format could potentially increase teacher job satisfaction by reducing burnout

and more importantly, positively impact student achievement, why are the majority of elementary school classrooms still self-contained (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Chang, 2008; Hood, 2009)? Although self-contained classrooms are the status quo for elementary schools, little research is available on the effectiveness of the structure, making the acquisition of stakeholder support to be a difficult. Compared to changes in lunch schedules or time allotted for recess, a shift to departmentalization is a major change within an elementary school. Major changes require (a) sufficient time to be implemented, (b) commitment from stakeholders, (c) adequate resources, and (d) all involved to fully understand its purpose, implications, and implementation (Hope, 2002). With a constant stream of required policy from federal, state, and local levels, administrators may not welcome the idea of implementing another whole-school initiative like departmentalized teaching. One way to integrate such a change is by implementing through a pilot group of teachers before committing to a whole-school shift. Chan and Jarman (2004) suggested introducing departmentalization into the school by piloting the change with only the students whose parents request participation (p. 70). Piloting such a substantial change allows stakeholders to test its full-scale feasibility, identify potential problems, plan for logistical efficiency, and collect data to support the change (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

Only minimal research on the direct effects of departmentalization exists, and synthesized from that research, is an even more scant amount of evidence of its residual effects. Multiple researchers call for further studies on this topic, as most administrators do not view departmentalization as a viable option without supporting evidence (Delviscio & Muffs, 2007; McGrath, 2004). In an attempt to counter the problem of this sparse

research base, this study thoroughly examined multiple aspects of one elementary school's experience with departmentalized instruction. This elementary school in rural Georgia implemented departmentalization through a pilot group of teachers for one year to determine its effects on them and their students. Besides predicting its feasibility for school-wide implementation, the central goal for piloting the format was to determine its impact on a portion of students and teachers before committing completely to the change. This study aimed to compare levels of morale between the departmentalized teachers and their non-departmentalized coworkers. It also explored their perceptions of job satisfaction as it related to instructional models.

2. Literature Review

High teacher turnover due to burnout can be reversed by decreasing teacher workload and increasing job satisfaction (Bridges & Searle, 2011; Timms, Graham, & Cottrell, 2007). In a typical elementary school with self-contained classrooms, these two monumental tasks could be tackled by implementing a system with significant direct and residual effects in those areas. Departmentalization is one option that would directly affect workload by decreasing the number of subjects taught by each teacher and indirectly affect job satisfaction by increasing efficacy; ultimately improving student achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2002; Wilkins, 2010).

Chan and Jarman (2004) pointed out several qualities of departmentalization, such as the ways in which it helps students assimilate to middle school formats, creates grade-level instructional teams, and promotes teacher retention. Teacher retention was shown to have significant positive impacts on student achievement (Barmby, 2006; Vanderhaar, Mu, & Rodosky, 2006). Vanderhaar et al. (2006) found teachers' average years of teaching,

along with student poverty level and previous testing achievement, were the best indicators of student achievement. To keep teachers in the field longer and increase their average years of experience, school officials should advocate practices that prevent teacher burnout.

2.1 Teacher Workload

Bridges and Searle (2011) investigated teacher perceptions of workload. Based on their study, the authors found teachers' workloads significantly increased over the last 20 years, as well as hours per week worked; only about half of the respondents at the time of the study believed their current workload was sustainable. Through their qualitative study, Bridges and Searle (2011) revealed how workload affected teachers, potentially causing burnout or health issues. Departmentalized teachers plan for fewer subjects than self-contained teachers, decreasing the amount of time spent preparing and completing other non-teaching tasks, which was shown to decrease stress and increase job satisfaction (Perrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008; Timms et al., 2007). This idea was explored by Perrachione et al. (2008) when they sought to identify the variables relating to teacher job satisfaction and retention. The authors discovered teachers who reported being more satisfied with their jobs were more likely to continue in their profession. Also, they revealed that teachers did not find satisfaction with work-related duties, which suggested teachers' satisfaction was associated with the "teaching" aspect of their jobs. Perrachione et al. (2008) concluded their findings suggest that reducing the obstacles to teaching "would increase teachers' job satisfaction, while amplification in obstacles and barriers would decrease teachers' satisfaction with their position" (p. 30). This reiterates that obstacles in teaching, such as paperwork requirements and the amount of planning

and preparation required, can lead to job dissatisfaction, and potentially, teachers leaving the profession. Departmentalized teachers plan and prepare for fewer subjects, resulting in fewer obstacles and barriers and increasing job satisfaction.

As discussed, increasing workload, or maintaining a large workload are factors that have been shown to cause or increase stress in teachers. Timms et al. (2007) who investigated teachers' workload stated, "respondents found that workload constituted the major source of dissatisfaction with their work environment" (p. 577). Based on this study, the authors showed that teacher workload continued to increase for teachers, which amplified burnout factors like exhaustion and disengagement. These results highlight how teachers' immense workload can negatively affect their morale and stress levels, which can lead to burnout. Stress levels have been shown to affect teachers' ability to be affective, despite preparation. For instance, MacNeil, Prater, and Busch's (2009) study involving the impact of organizational health on student achievement revealed that high levels of stress were shown to negatively impact teachers' ability to be responsive and effective. Further, their study revealed the most influential factor found to impact organizational health was adaptation, which according to the instrument used, is the ability to tolerate stress and maintain stability while being responsive to the demands of the external environment. The structure of departmentalization alleviates a portion of teachers' workload, which may positively affect stress levels, allowing teachers to more effectively meet the needs of their students. Another study that considered teacher effectiveness in relation to stress was performed by Fantuzzo, Perlman, Sproul, Minney, Perry, and Li (2012). They studied teacher experiences and discovered that teachers with higher levels of stress spent less time teaching than those with less stress. To support their argument, they reported,

"teachers experiencing higher levels of stress spent less time teaching literacy and numeracy and interacting with parents, whereas teachers experiencing higher levels of efficacy spent increased time teaching both cognitive skills and social-emotional skills and communicating with parents" (p. 194).

2.2 Stress Levels

Teacher workload indirectly influences student achievement by triggering stress, which ultimately affects teacher impact (Klassen, 2010; MacNeil et al., 2009; Timms et al., 2007). Other factors have been shown through various studies to negatively impact teachers by increasing stress levels also; however, the format of departmentalized instruction alleviates many stressors experienced by most traditional self-contained teachers. For example, Sass, Seal, and Martin (2011) conducted a study to determine impacts of stress levels on teacher retention rates and found student behavior had a significant impact on teachers' stress levels. In most cases, teachers are not given choices in regards to the types of students they will teach; leading to classrooms with a hodgepodge of personalities, learning styles, and behavior-related issues (Klassen, 2010). Essentially, in departmentalized settings, teachers experience only a portion of each day with a class of students, resulting in less stress caused by any problematic students. A class of students is with a teacher for only half of a school day or less, and then they transition to another classroom with another teacher. Because departmentalized elementary teachers do not stay with the same students like in the traditional self-contained organizational structure; they get to start fresh with a new group about halfway through the school day.

Another stressor endured by teachers is the expectation to communicate effectively with

parents (Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2007). Two common parent-related issues teachers face is lack of involvement and lack of cooperation (Prakke & van Peet, 2007). Departmentalized settings are comprised of two or more teachers, allowing parental feedback from more than one teacher's perspective. This may be especially beneficial when dealing with defensive parents because each of the students' teachers can provide observations of student behavior from more than one setting. When dealing with uncooperative parents, this setting may also be beneficial for seeking increased parental involvement, as the same parents may be contacted by multiple teachers who teach their students, instead of a single teacher making multiple contacts.

2.3 Opposition

With conflicting student achievement studies and a small pool of research from which to defend or oppose departmentalized instruction in elementary schools, individual components of the classroom structure are used to create arguments for either side. One of these components is the focus of instructional delivery; self-contained structures align with student-centered ideals while departmentalization aligns with a subject-centered approach. Oppositional arguments are based on the idea of teaching the whole child.

The idea of teaching the whole child aligns closely with the learner-centered ideology in which the scope of instruction goes beyond academic curriculum and extends to address social and emotional needs of students (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2011; Schiro, 2008). Advocates of this ideology propose the role of the instructor is to individualize instruction for students based on their "strengths, weaknesses, and personality traits" (Elkind, 1988, p. 13). Elkind (1988) stressed the importance of the student-teacher connection, especially for younger elementary students,

by positing rotation (or departmentalizing) disrupts younger students' learning and increases their stress levels and learning problems (p. 13). Chang and Muñoz's (2008) argument presented decades later was similar to that of Elkind's. They supported the idea of solid student-teacher relationships by arguing that generalists, or self-contained teachers, teach their students across all areas, allowing them to know the students' strengths and weaknesses across various settings, to meet their needs. One study conducted by Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts, and Morrison (2008) examined the amount of student-teacher interaction at the elementary level and supported Elikind's (1988) and Chang and Muñoz's (2008) argument. They examined the extent to which variation in the quality of emotional and instructional interactions predicted trajectories of achievement in reading and math from 54 months to fifth grade. The authors found positive correlations in both math and reading for quality of teaching and social/emotional interaction. This evidence may reveal a link between emotional needs of children and academic achievement. Culyer (1984) stressed the importance of the individualization of education based on the needs of each student, noting the importance of the self-contained classroom structure in facilitating such instruction.

For elementary-age students, the social and emotional aspects of whole child instruction are fostered through relationships with their teachers, as studied by Pianta and Stuhlman (2004). Through their study, they revealed the quality of the relationship between young students and their teachers significantly impacted their behavioral and academic trajectories. Students' relationship with their teachers also affected their sense of connection to their school (Chang & Muñoz, 2008). In their study, Chang and Muñoz (2008) found that students in self-contained models rated trust and respect for teachers as

well as classroom supportiveness significantly higher than students in departmentalized models. They found departmentalized instruction had an even greater negative impact on younger students and students with three or more teachers.

When elementary teachers departmentalize, they are responsible for more students than self-contained teachers. This distribution releases each teacher from complete accountability of any individual student, as they share this responsibility with students' other teachers. Another concern about departmentalization revealed in the literature is the potential for teachers to lose a sense of personal responsibility toward student success (Chang & Muñoz, 2008, p. 133). Teachers may lose a sense of ownership toward individual student success when they share teaching responsibility with other teachers for the same students (Chang & Muñoz, 2008). An additional diffused responsibility related to the departmentalized structure is parental contact, as studied by Epstein and Dauber (1991). They found that teachers of self-contained classrooms had significantly higher parental involvement than departmentalized teachers. Self-contained teachers were more familiar with students as a result of more daily student-teacher interactions and were more likely to make contact with parents (Epstein & Dauber, 1991).

Remaining with the same academic teacher throughout the course of the day, as advocated by Culyer (1984), poses other advantages, such as flexibility with scheduling (McGrath & Rust, 2002). Teachers who maintain one group of students a day within the same room have the option to adjust their instructional schedule according to the needs of the students, whereas departmentalized schedules are more rigid because of the class rotation schedule. Worthy of mention, Elkind (1984) postulated that a significant amount of time was lost during students' class transition; however, McGrath and Rust, who also

opposed departmentalization, conducted a study that revealed no significant differences between the teaching models regarding actual instructional time (2002).

2.4 Summary

With little evidence to support or negate direct effects of departmentalized instruction on student achievement, opposition to departmentalized instruction in elementary schools rests mostly on the concept of student-centered instruction, which goes beyond academic objectives to include social and emotional needs of the students (Schiro, 2008). Another argument for self-contained instruction is its impact on students' feelings toward school. Students in self-contained structures were shown to have an increased feeling of connectedness to their school (Chang & Muñoz, 2008), which also supports the idea of student-centered instruction. Another negative point held by those opposed to departmentalized instruction is a decline in the sense of ownership teachers have toward their students (Chang & Muñoz, 2008; Epstein & Dauber, 1991), which can be attributed to the increased number of teachers per child. Conflicts related to time and scheduling were also found to be common themes in literature opposing departmentalized instruction (Elkind, 1988; McGrath & Rust, 2002).

Teacher attrition has been shown to increase student achievement, and departmentalized instruction affects areas that may decrease burnout caused by workload, which ultimately has an influence on teachers leaving the field. By decreasing the amount of subjects taught in a day, teachers' workloads are reduced, decreasing levels of stress which lead to burnout. With fewer subjects to teach, the focused planning, preparation, and professional development improves teachers' instruction methods and content knowledge, giving them higher levels of confidence in their abilities (self-efficacy). Advocates of

departmentalized instruction argue the residual effects of this structure have positive impacts on teachers, which ultimately improve instructional quality for students.

3. Methodology

According to Patton (2002), "Qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry" (p. 14). This qualitative case study explored differences in perceptions between a group of departmentalized and self-contained teachers within the same school.

3.1 Participants and Research Site

The 29 Participants in this study were first, second, and third grade teachers in a Title 1 elementary school in a rural Georgia area serving around 800 students. Twelve of the participants, four for each grade level, taught in the departmentalized structure for one year while the remaining 17 teachers taught in the traditional self-contained setting. All participants taught in the self-contained setting the year prior to the year-long implementation of departmentalized teaching.

3.2 Procedures

The data gathered in this study were taken partially from a survey administered both before and after the year departmentalized instruction was implemented to compare its impact on certain aspects of teacher morale and perceptions of work environment. Along with this survey completed by all 29 teachers, data were also gathered from focus groups comprised of combinations of the 12 departmentalized teachers. A university research expert was consulted before administering the survey and revisions were made based on

his advice. Prior to dispersing the survey, three teachers were asked to review its structure and report any misunderstandings, unclear instructions or statements, and estimate time necessary for completion. Based on their reviews, the survey items were clear and needed no further revisions. They estimated the survey to take 15 to 30 minutes, depending on participants' depth of responses to open-ended items.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection for this case study involved the use of surveys and focus groups. The two-part survey contained ten questions from the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Bentley & Rempel, 1980) to gather data from all teachers prior to and following implementation of the departmentalized structure. To encourage candid feedback, teachers were asked to exclude identifiable information in their responses, including their names and specific situations such as pregnancies or marriages. Teachers were also given the option to complete the survey electronically if they had concerns of penmanship recognition. A large envelope was placed in a designated area for teachers to return their surveys and they were asked to place checks beside their names on a list as they returned them to ensure all surveys were returned. To compare data, surveys completed by departmentalized teachers were marked on the first page of each.

The first part of the survey consisted of ten Likert-scaled items to provide an overview of perceptions regarding factors of teacher morale. These items mostly focused on the concepts of teacher rapport with the principal, satisfaction with teaching, and teacher workload (Bentley & Rempel, 1980). Teachers were asked to rate the ten statements using a four-point scale that measured the degree of agreement: (1) *Strongly Disagree,* (2) *Disagree,* (3) *Agree,* and (4) *Strongly Agree*. The results of this study were

largely based on the focus group and open-ended components of the survey, but the Likert-scaled items were able to provide a general numerical comparison of changes in perceptions of the two groups. The validity and reliability of the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire, from which the ten Likert-scaled items were chosen, were tested by Bentley and Rempel (1980). For the categories from which the ten items on the survey for this study were chosen, they reported the test-retest correlations were greater than .75. Open-ended questions followed the Likert-scaled components on the survey. The purpose of the open-ended questions was to gather more candid data by allowing teachers to respond anonymously using their own words. Responses were coded similarly to the focus group transcriptions, which built a foundation for interpretation as meanings were extracted from data, comparisons were made, and conclusions were drawn (Patton, 2002, p. 465). For comparison, the same survey was given at the end of the year before departmentalization began and again at the end of the year it was implemented.

Focus groups were also used in this study to collect data. Departmentalized teachers were asked to participate in two to three focus group sessions, consisting of four to six participants, to discuss their perceptions involving their work experiences. Focus group participants were asked to stay for the duration of one hour, but were not interrupted if they wished to continue the discussion beyond the allotted time. Focus groups were used to elaborate on themes found from coded departmentalized teacher surveys (Saldaña, 2009). Major themes found in the pre-surveys included workload, morale levels, and overall job satisfaction. The discussions of each meeting were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for additional themes. Data from the open-ended component of the departmentalized teachers' surveys were categorized with data from the transcriptions.

Respondent validation, a systematic process of checking with respondents to ensure their responses and views are relayed clearly by the researcher (Maxwell, 2006), was implemented in this study. Following each meeting, participants were given summaries highlighting major themes and viewpoints along with copies of transcriptions and were asked to clarify misconceptions of statements, and/or further elaborate on topics after reading the summaries.

4. Results

Consistent with related literature, findings in this study revealed departmentalized teachers experienced higher morale, lighter workload, and increased overall job satisfaction in comparison to self-contained teachers in the same school. Departmentalized teachers in this study also overwhelmingly preferred teaching in the new structure than to teaching in the traditional self-contained structure. Teachers in the self-contained setting in the same school indicated interest in participating in departmentalized teaching if given the opportunity. Through surveys containing both Likert-scaled items as well as open-ended items, data showed changes in departmentalized teachers' perceptions of the workplace that were explored further through focus groups.

4.1 Likert-scaled items

Table 1 shows results of Likert-scaled items for both departmentalized teachers and self-contained teachers. Results for the surveys given prior to and after the year departmentalized instruction was implemented are shown with changes in results between the two. Because the Likert-scaled items were used to provide a general overview of

opinion, *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* responses were combined and *Strongly Disagree* and *Disagree* answers were combined.

Table 1
Results for Likert-Scaled Items

	Pre-survey		Post-survey			
Likert-scaled Item	Dept. % Agree	Self-cont. % Agree	Dept. % Agree	Self-cont. % Agree	Dept. % Change	Self-cont. % Change
1. Required paperwork took up too much of my time.	100	100	75	100	-25	0
2. Teachers in this school are required to do an unreasonable amount of clerical work and record keeping.	92	88	83	100	-9	12
3. My teaching load restricts my nonprofessional activities and responsibilities outside of school.	92	94	33	94	-59	0
4. My teaching load and responsibilities are greater than most of the other teachers in the school.	42	35	8	35	-34	0
5. The number of hours a teacher is required to work is too high.	100	82	42	94	-58	6
6. My school supplies with me the materials I need to complete my duties.	67	50	58	24	-9	-26
7. There is a great deal of complaining about teaching responsibilities in our school.	92	88	75	94	-17	6
8. Teachers at our school cooperate with one another to reach common professional objectives.	92	88	100	94	8	6
9. I feel successful and competent in my present profession.	50	82	83	71	33	-11
10. The "stress and strain" resulting from teaching makes teaching undesirable to me.	75	76	50	88	-25	12

Likert-scaled items revealed departmentalized teachers felt their workloads decreased more than self-contained teachers over the year. When compared to the survey results of pre-departmentalized teaching, post-departmentalized results showed 59% fewer departmentalized teachers reported that their workload restricted outside activities while there was no change in how self-contained teachers reported. Additionally, compared to

their overall responses from the pre-survey, the post-survey revealed fewer departmentalized teachers agreed the amount of hours required were too high (58% decrease). The departmentalized format seemed to positively affect self-efficacy as well, as a higher percentage (33% increase) of departmentalized teachers felt successful and competent after teaching in this format as compared to before. Also the post-survey revealed that feelings of stress that made teaching undesirable increased for self-contained teachers by 12% while they decreased for the departmentalized teachers by 25%.

4.2 Open-ended items

Open-ended items on the surveys were coded for themes and used to form discussion topics for focus groups. The pre-survey responses revealed the following themes concerning work environment: *implementation of math requirements, overall workload, job dissatisfaction,* and *lack of morale.* These themes were discussed by the departmentalized teachers in the focus groups and they provided perspectives on the impacts of departmentalization on those specific topics. The emergence of math implementation as a theme was a result of a new math program teachers in the school were required to implement, in both departmentalized and self-contained classrooms. For the pre-survey, departmentalized teachers' and self-contained teachers' responses for the open-ended items revealed the same themes; however, the post-survey revealed vast differences between the two groups. The following are summaries of the open-ended items with sample responses representing the themes found for each item.

4.2.1. Stress level for previous year

Given at the end of two consecutive school years, teachers were asked to respond to all

survey items based on the year that was ending. For the first item, teachers were asked to describe their stress levels for that year, compare their levels of stress to their past three years of teaching, and to elaborate if they believed their stress had increased within the last three years. The post-survey revealed a vast difference in reported stress levels for departmentalized teachers and self-contained teachers. While almost all teachers reported having much higher stress levels for the year on the pre-survey, the post-survey results showed all departmentalized teachers had decreased levels of stress, and self-contained teachers' stress levels increased or remained as high as the previous year.

A departmentalized teacher reported, "My stress level for this past year was greatly reduced as I was part of team teaching this year. I still had 'normal' stress, but not as unbearable as in previous years." Another wrote, "My stress for this year was very low, and my stomach problems are gone and migraines have been completely manageable." Noting the initial stress of adjusting to the change, one teacher responded, "At the beginning of the year, my stress level was high, but throughout the year, it got so much better only having to teach three subject areas."

Contrary to departmentalized teachers, self-contained teachers in the same school reported increased or high levels of stress. One self-contained teacher reported, "I decided to retire. I really wanted to teach two or more years, but I felt totally overwhelmed and did not want to do this anymore." Another said, "At times, the stress level was very high. There were many times our days were taken up with meetings, so after school was the only time to get work done, and often, meetings filled that time also."

4.2.2 Factors contributing to stress

For the next two items on the survey, participants were asked to list items they believed contributed to their stress levels and then rank them from most stressful to least stressful. For both pre- and post-surveys, "unnecessary paperwork" was the most reported stressor and highest ranked overall for both self-contained and departmentalized teachers. Departmentalized teachers reported fewer curriculum factors contributing to their stress than self-contained teachers. Overarching curriculum factors, such as the pacing timeline set by system-level leaders and unrealistic expectations in regards to implementing curriculum were listed by departmentalized teachers, while content-specific factors were prevalent in self-contained teachers' responses. Over half of the self-contained stress factor responses included implementing specific components of math or language arts, such as "math fact fluency testing" and "collecting and grading multiple writing samples." For these responses, several departmentalized teachers noted having difficulty adding to the list because their stressed had decreased from the previous year.

4.2.3 Participant suggestions and additional comments

Teachers were also asked to provide suggestions for reducing stress factors in the work environment. Almost every departmentalized teacher advocated departmentalized teaching as a way to reduce stress. Additionally, many self-contained teachers also suggested implementing departmentalized teaching, though they had not experienced teaching in that way. Many additional comments were offered from departmentalized teachers encouraging decision-makers to seriously consider implementing the structure school wide. One departmentalized teacher said:

> I felt so much happier this year with team teaching. My friends and family could really see a difference. All the teachers I have talked to about team teaching want

> us to at least try it...This option may not be the right choice for [our] county, but if happier, less-stressed, and more efficient teaching is what our system wants, need to really consider team teaching.

Another shared, "Teachers who were departmentalized did not have to stay for hours after work and on weekends to prepare lessons and complete paperwork. They had a better morale overall as compared to their peers." Self-contained teachers' additional comments were related to unmanageable workload, high stress levels, and low morale. One self-contained teacher wrote, "I teach because I love it and the kids. The paperwork and expectations have caused me to dislike my job and consider other options."

4.3 Focus groups

Focus group sessions were used to gain departmentalized teachers' perspectives on the impact of departmentalization on major themes found in the pre-survey, including workload, levels of morale, and overall job satisfaction. Teachers in departmentalized settings unanimously reported a decrease in workload, as one stated:

> It's not necessarily less work; it's more focused, so we don't feel so 'spread out' over multiple things. We actually feel like we are doing a few things well and completely, instead of doing countless tasks halfway. Given the same amount of time as when I was self-contained, I am not as stressed because I go home feeling accomplished instead of dreading all the half-way completed tasks I have left to do the next day.

Other teachers added other benefits of the structure in decreasing workload, like grading double the amount of the same assessment (for two classes of students), versus grading

various assessments for one class of students. They discussed the efficiency of grading more of the same test, as one teacher said, "The answers become more familiar as you see more of the same document, and the grading becomes faster as the answers are memorized. Also I am not wasting time stopping and starting over again to grade a different test." Planning for three subjects instead of six was also attributed to the sense of a lighter workload. Though teachers still felt they worked hard, they felt more accomplished as they were able to supplement their three subjects with more teaching resources.

Morale was also a topic discussed frequently in focus groups. Many discussed feeling more positive and enthusiastic about their teaching because they were more prepared for their lessons. All departmentalized teachers noted they were more focused and involved with their students due to more concentrated workloads and planning. Overall job satisfaction was improved for the departmentalized teachers, as they all agreed they enjoyed their teaching experience more than the other years they taught in the self-contained structure. A few teachers explained their jobs were no longer affecting their personal lives as well. One stated:

> My job was interfering with my personal time, which includes time I spend with my family. Having so much on my plate before would stress me out and I would be in a bad mood when I got home. My family did not deserve the exhausted, grumpy teacher this job was turning me into. They have all noticed a difference this year, and I notice not having negative feelings toward work anymore because of that.

5. Conclusion

Since little research exists on departmentalized instruction, administrators do not readily accept the idea of departmentalized instruction on the elementary level (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Hood, 2009). Piloting such a structure, like the school in this study, gives administrators a preview of potential problems and successes (Chan & Jarman, 2004) and allows them to make educated decisions based on data and teacher feedback. This study adds to the limited scope of literature regarding elementary departmentalized teaching. An additional purpose for this study was to determine the impact of this structure on a school with overall low morale, as shown by the pre-survey. A survey with Likert-scaled items and open-ended questions, as well as focus groups provided data about perceptions of self-contained and departmentalized teachers for comparison. Reflecting findings in the literature, as workloads of departmentalized teachers decreased, stress levels also decreased, resulting in higher morale and job satisfaction.

As more pressure is placed on educational systems, teachers' workloads are steadily increasing (Bridges & Searle, 2011). To decrease burnout and job dissatisfaction, administrators should make efforts to alleviate stressful components of teacher responsibilities. Much like Perrachione, Rosser, Peterson (2008) found, this study revealed teachers can become overwhelmed with tasks, increasing their stress levels and leaving them with a sense of inadequacy. Departmentalized teachers in this study reported an increase in morale, as they felt more confident in their abilities because they were able to complete tasks with more focus on fewer subject areas. For some departmentalized teachers, relieving stress also improved their personal health, well-being, and family relationships. They reported an increase in job satisfaction as they were not attributing the negative effects of stress to their job and work environment.

The findings in this study show the advantage of piloting major changes in schools before implementing school-wide. Collecting data before and after implementation allows decision-makers to compare attributes of two or more formats and make educated decisions that are supported through analysis. Also, allowing participants of a pilot group to provide perspectives and experiences through an anonymous medium may also encourage more candid responses. Teachers in this study were more descriptive and bold in their anonymous open-ended questions than in focus group sessions with their peers. This study can be utilized by administrators and other decision makers to see the impact of departmentalized instruction on a large elementary school. Though the study utilized 29 participants, they worked in the same school under the same conditions, limiting other factors that may have influenced responses. Other teachers may also benefit from the results of this study as they can become more informed on a system they might suggest to their administrators.

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COMPARISON OF SELF-CONTAINED AND DEPARTMENTALIZED ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM STRUCTURE AND JOB SATISFACTION

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This manuscript is prepared for submission to *The Journal of Faculty Development* and is the third of three manuscripts prepared for this journal-ready doctoral dissertation. Style guidelines are provided immediately following the references of the manuscript.

Impacts of Shared Leadership Consistency and Inclusiveness on Teacher Morale

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Abstract: This case study investigated elementary teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding shared leadership within a school after participating in major structural changes. Participants were self-contained teachers appointed by administrators to implement departmentalized instruction for one year; however, were not involved in the decision to revert to self-contained instruction again the next year. This study took place during the year departmentalized teachers returned to self-contained instruction and is informed by their perceptions of levels of consistency and inclusiveness in their shared

leadership school. Aligning with the literature, findings revealed reduced consistency and inclusion in shared leadership negatively impacted teachers' commitment, satisfaction, levels of morale, and collective efficacy.

Keywords: Shared leadership, Collective Efficacy, Departmentalize, Elementary, Teacher morale

Introduction

The most recent published report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) revealed nearly 8% of teachers left the profession during the 2008-2009 school year (2011). As teacher attrition has been shown to positively affect student achievement, efforts should be made to prevent teacher burnout, which has been attributed to job dissatisfaction, low morale, and lack of collective efficacy amongst faculty (Brown, 2012; Perrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2002; Shechtman, Levy, & Leichtentritt, 2005). One administrative method that has been shown to increase collective efficacy and job satisfaction amongst faculty was the implementation of a shared leadership system in which faculty members were included in decisions affecting the school (Blase & Blasé, 1999; Lindahl, 2008; Spillane, 2004). Brown (2012) reported, "A supportive school leadership which provides norms, goals, and values which are shared by all or most teachers at school may increase the teachers' beliefs of their own ability and those of others within the school" (p. 60). Consistency and inclusiveness are key components of implementing a successful shared leadership model (Mullen & Sullivan, 2002; Spillane, 2004); without these two factors, this model may have adverse effects on faculty members.

Background and Purpose

The qualitative case study upon which this article is based emerged from the aftermath of the implementation and removal of departmentalized instruction in an elementary school. After participating in departmentalized instruction for one year, the group of teachers who piloted the structure unanimously preferred it over the self-contained format (Strohl, 2013). When administrators first began considering the idea of

piloting departmentalization within the school, they utilized effective shared leadership strategies that included the 12 teachers involved in piloting the method.

The year prior to the trial, administration began to investigate concerns of low teacher morale, high levels of workload, and collective efficacy. During shared leadership team meetings, members would often address specific concerns in these areas. Administrators began to consider moving to a departmentalized structure to alleviate workloads and ultimately increase teacher morale and collective efficacy. Serving kindergarten through third grade, this large school housed 40 self-contained classes, which administrators believed was too many to make a major transition at one time. To test the departmentalized structure, they selected four teachers from first, second, and third grades, totaling 12 teachers.

The year prior to piloting the structure, administrators met frequently with these teachers to discuss concerns, gather their input, and discuss pairing options for departmentalization. After thorough consideration and discussion with these teachers, administrators decided to implement the structure on a trial basis for one year to determine its effectiveness as well as the impacts on teacher morale, collective efficacy, and student achievement. Teachers in the pilot group were paired with one another to form two teams of two teachers per grade level. For each team, one teacher was responsible for teaching math, science, and social studies, while the other teacher taught language arts, reading, and writing. Each team would share two classes of students; teaching one group in the morning, and rotating students in the afternoon to teach the second group.

As reported in surveys, interviews, and focus groups, the departmentalized trial group unanimously preferred departmentalized over self-contained instruction; however, following the trial year, all teachers were required to teach in the self-contained format. This study explored the aftermath of removing the overwhelmingly preferred structure without utilizing the shared leadership practices in place at the onset of the decision. Taking place the year following the trial of departmentalized teaching, this study examined the 12 teachers' perceptions and experiences as they related to implementation of shared leadership throughout the transition. With an emphasis on workload, morale, and efficacy, it also compared participants' perceptions of both their trial year and the following year when they were required to revert back to self-contained teaching.

Related Literature

Allowing teachers to participate in the decision-making process is an advantage to piloting substantial changes before implementing them school-wide. Shechtman, Levy, and Leichtentritt (2005) cited research regarding shared decision-making to support their findings in a study about self-efficacy. They noted it can be used to increase facets of teachers' work environment, including commitment, satisfaction, and levels of morale (p. 145). The practice of shared leadership is one way to improve teachers' self-efficacy as well as the efficacy of the school as a whole, or the collective efficacy (Harris, 2012).

A key component of shared leadership is the inclusion of teachers in major decisions (Blase & Blase, 1999; Lindahl, 2008; Spillane, 2004), such as an instructional shift to departmentalized instruction. Because such a change would directly affect them, teachers in an elementary school practicing shared leadership should be included in the decision to shift to a departmentalized format (Jenkins & Jenson, 2010; Spillane, 2004).

As departmentalizing is such a drastic change from the traditional elementary classroom setting, piloting the format before implementing school-wide would increase stakeholder support, allow participants to provide feedback, and assess the data collected during implementation (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

If the piloting of this large-scale change was approved through a shared leadership construct, the principal's role during the transition would be interactive and involved. Principals effectively implementing shared leadership within their schools empower teachers and provide them with support to reach shared goals and implement instructional innovations (Mullen & Sullivan, 2002; Spillane, 2004). In sum, simply including teachers in the vote to pilot departmentalization would not suffice; shared leadership involvement throughout the entire implementation would be necessary to effectively monitor and analyze its direct and residual effects, as well as foster collective efficacy.

Shared leadership.

Allowing teachers to participate in the decision-making process is an advantage to piloting substantial changes before implementing them school-wide. Shechtman et al. (2005) noted shared decision-making can positively affect teachers' attitude toward their environments. They noted it can be used to increase facets of teachers' work environment, including commitment, satisfaction, and levels of morale (p. 145). The practice of shared leadership, the supposed model implemented in the school in this study, is one way to improve teachers' self-efficacy as well as the efficacy of the school as a whole, or the collective efficacy (Harris, 2012).

Though specific models may vary from school to school, shared leadership is defined as the distribution of leadership responsibility amongst a team of school

representatives and administration through a process of shared decision-making (Epp & McNeil, 1997; Hulpia et al., 2009). In addition to having greater collective efficacy, when teachers were included in the decision-making process through shared leadership, they displayed greater support for major changes (Blase & Blase, 1999). Hulpia et al. (2009) found that shared leadership practices fostered teachers' organizational commitment, ultimately improving job satisfaction and collective efficacy.

One identifying characteristic of shared leadership is the authentic involvement of faculty members in decision making (Byrk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Louis et al., 2010). When implementing policy or structural changes through a shared leadership model, principals include teachers throughout the process by encouraging and praising teachers while providing positive feedback (Hope, 2002). As major changes are typically ambiguous and challenging in schools, shared leadership models foster a more accepting environment for such changes (Byrk et al., 2010). This model can act as "an effective lubricant for the many new activities" and gives teachers a "sense of influence on decisions affecting their work," which readily establishes "buy-in for change" (p. 64).). Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton (2010) also stated that "teachers are more likely to remain in such schools and commit increased effort to carry out the long-term work of change" (p. 64). Another way to administrators can authentically involve faculty is by encouraging openness to risk and experimentation, as Blase and Blase (1999) stated, "teaching and learning are variable and nonroutine, they require innovation and experimentation rather than meaningless standardization" (p. 485).

Consistency is the second identifying characteristic of shared leadership as it relates to this study. Louis et al. (2012) suggested following through with actions involved in shared leadership rather than merely adopting the term. They stated, "simply invoking the term *distributed leadership* is meaningless," and an understanding of the distribution of leadership requires reviewing "evidence of actual behaviors and influences associated with core leadership practices and specific focal points of school-improvement activity" (p. 64). Further, principals should monitor and evaluate implementation of these changes as Hope (2002) stated, "effective evaluation depends on information as to whether or not, and to what degree, the treatment (policy) is relieving the problem. Evaluation entails gathering data to plan and to identify the extent of success" (p. 42). Finally, principals in the shared leadership model should document and analyze data throughout implementation of a new policy or change to determine its alignment with objectives (Fowler, 2004). Reviewing evidence of shared leadership practices, monitoring and evaluating changes, and analyzing data throughout changes are all traits of consistency in shared leadership.

Collective Efficacy.

Psychologist Albert Bandura (1997) defined collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (p. 477). Within schools, perceived collective efficacy is the performance capability of the social system as a whole, as determined by the faculty (p. 469). Student behavior, workload, policy changes, and lack of recognition are all included in the constant flow of teacher stressors; added to the pressures of administrators, colleagues, students, and parents, efficacy on both personal

and collective levels may be difficult to attain (Greenglass & Burke, 2003). These stressors may be alleviated by the implementation of various school policies, collegial and administrative support, and a sense of collective efficacy (Klassen, 2010, p.342).

Though few studies exist on the impacts of collective efficacy on job satisfaction, evidence has shown a positive relationship between these two themes (Caprara et al., 2006; Klassen, Usher, & Bong, 2003). Lack of support within schools was shown to have a negative impact on overall optimism (Smith & Hoy, 2007). More notably, the same study revealed collective efficacy had a positive impact on student achievement, even when common negative factors were considered. Smith and Hoy (2007) reported, "in sum, collective efficacy of schools, like academic emphasis, was related to student achievement even while controlling for socioeconomic status and other demographic variables" (p. 558). They found collective efficacy was heavily based on faculty trust and academic optimism. With studies that have also shown positive relationships between job satisfaction and student achievement, efforts to improve collective efficacy should be a priority (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Smith & Hoy, 2007).

Job satisfaction has been shown to positively impact levels of performance as well as job commitment (Klassen, 2010). Caprara et al. (2006) also discussed the influence of job satisfaction on teachers' performance levels and attitudes, and added that collective efficacy had major impacts on job satisfaction. Hovering above the themes of job satisfaction and collective efficacy is the concept of leadership approach, which heavily influences attitudes of teachers (Bogler, 2001). Though multiple forms of leadership exist, not all approaches positively impact the collective efficacy of schools (Sušanj & Jakopec, 2012). The shared leadership model, in which major decisions of the school are

shared among faculty, is one approach that has been shown to positively impact collective efficacy (Bogler, 2001; Cerit, 2009).

Methods

This case study used qualitative methods to examine the perceptions of 12 teachers who were part of a pilot program within a school, but not included in the decision to dismiss the program for the following year. Departmentalization, the piloted teaching structure, was overwhelmingly preferred by the teachers who taught in this format for one year (Strohl, 2013). This study took place the year following the removal of departmentalized instruction when participants returned to teaching in a self-contained format.

Data Collection.

The 12 teachers who departmentalized the year prior to this study each completed an open-ended survey and participated in an individual interview. The surveys asked participants about personal perceptions regarding their professional superiors; therefore, precautions were taken to dispel conflict with job interests. Because the study involved collection of sensitive data, surveys were anonymously completed to protect identity and promote candid responses as participants were asked to respond with no identifiable information. Ong and Weiss (2000) found that perceptions of privacy protection was the most influential factor in participants' decisions to divulge sensitive or candid information on a survey; therefore, anonymity was discussed with participants and they were encouraged to provide detailed responses reflecting honest opinions. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using pseudonyms, and the interviewer obtained informed consent from participants before beginning the study (Seidman, 2006, p. 67).

Open-ended surveys were given before the end of the first half of the year, and participants were encouraged to complete them at home over the semester break to allow more privacy and time for thoughtful responses. The survey items focused on their perceptions of leadership actions involving their participation in the departmentalization pilot. The questions were formulated in a manner reflective of Patton's (2002) notion that truly open-ended questions do not "presuppose which dimension of feeling or thought will be salient for the interviewee" (p. 354). The survey responses were analyzed and coded for themes, which guided interview questions (Saldaña, 2009). Responses for each question were compiled in random order for each question and distributed to the participants for review. Participants were encouraged to anonymously submit any clarifications to their responses or additional feedback based on others' responses. Two additional comments were submitted after distribution of compiled results and added to the results (Seidman, 2006, p. 66).

Originally, focus groups were scheduled to gather data through conversations amongst teachers who experienced the departmentalized format; however, several participants indicated hesitance to disclose candid opinions with their peers regarding administration. Participants preferred individual interviews, and they were informed of the measures taken to protect identity, such as the use of pseudonyms, removal of any identifiable information, and password-protected word processing of transcriptions. Interviews were transcribed and combined with data from surveys to determine recurring themes through content analysis, which Patton (2002) describes as identifying "core consistencies and meanings" in a volume of qualitative material (p. 453). Each

participant met for one 30 minute interview, and though none of the teachers requested to do so, they were encouraged to schedule additional interviews for further input if desired.

Results

Through content analysis, several minor themes were found in the data collected from the interviews and surveys; however, they were residual effects of one of two major themes and were categorized accordingly. The first major theme discovered was level of support from administration, and the second major theme was effects of shared leadership on collective efficacy. Participants in the study often referred to departmentalizing as "team teaching" in their responses, but the terms were treated synonymously in data analysis.

Levels of support.

Overall, participants reported feeling less supported by administration than before they departmentalized the year prior. Though teachers admitted the actual level of support was about the same, their perceptions of the level had changed because they were excluded from the final decision about a program of which they had been an integral part. One teacher shared,

> I felt less supported after the decision was made at the end of last year to just cut out team teaching. If they would have asked even one of the 12 teachers before deciding, they would have seen how much of a difference this teaching made in our lives. We all loved teaching again, we smiled more, and we didn't live at work anymore because our workload was lighter. The way the decision was handled made me feel like my voice didn't matter, and that's what made me feel so unsupported.

Subthemes found in this category included communication between faculty and administration and administration rapport. The lack of communication about the new teaching structure in the school was noted on every survey and discussed in every interview. Only a few teachers mentioned the lack of communication without providing much input, but most teachers expressed their views on the issues in great depth, as one teacher wrote,

> No one from administration asked me even once how things were going in my classroom in regards to departmentalization. Not even a simple 'How's it going this year?' was asked to better understand about the way we were teaching. Other than coming in for my mandatory evaluation or to 'check' something off their lists, administrators did not visit my room (or the other pilot teachers') to see how the kids were liking it, how much happier the teachers were, or the overall management of this type of teaching.

Participants reported feeling "thrown in" to departmentalized instruction without being offered any support. Though overall workloads were lighter and stress levels were lower for the participants (Strohl, 2013), many felt as though the idea of departmentalized instruction was not supported by administrators, which made them feel apprehensive about becoming optimistic about its continuation. Rapport with administrators was also a subtheme of levels of support. Many teachers discussed a lack of connectedness with administrators and that they did not seem to know or care about them individually. When asked about their efforts in communicating with administration, every teacher's response related to lack of rapport, as one teacher stated,

> I was always waiting for one of them to come and talk to me about how things were going with team teaching; I just did not feel close enough to any of the administrators to bring it up. I didn't want to seem pushy or make them think I believed they weren't doing their jobs.

Overall, teachers reported the lack of support from administrators for departmentalized instruction made them hesitant to become too attached to the structure. One teacher's response summed up the idea for most participants by saying "I just absolutely loved this way of teaching; it was just hard for me to truly enjoy it wholeheartedly because I felt it was not going to continue."

Shared leadership.

Another overarching theme of the data collected for this study was shared leadership and its impact on collective efficacy. Though no teachers in the study used the term "collective efficacy," their phrasing and descriptions were all related to the term. Collective efficacy, as discussed by Bandura (1997) involves perceptions of performance as a faculty, which was addressed multiple times throughout interviews. One teacher discussed her thoughts on the differences between her attitude during her departmentalized year and her current year,

> It was such a struggle going back to the other way [self-contained teaching] after having such a wonderful year last year. I felt different coming back this year; not just because I was going back to teaching one group of kids. When the decision came out of nowhere and was announced at a faculty meeting without warning, the 12 of us were put in an awkward position. They could have had the decency to talk to the pilot group before announcing it to everyone at the meeting. All

> eyes were on us, and we just smiled and went along with it like we were aware the whole time. That incident made me feel belittled.

Other teachers echoed these thoughts concerning changes in their attitudes, especially those who were part of the leadership team at the school. One said of departmentalized instruction, "I was part of the leadership team and the issue was never discussed; which I'm more upset about now. About a quarter of our classroom teachers were participating in it! How could it not have been up for discussion?" Another teacher discussed the impact of the decision on the faculty as a whole, which highlighted or summarized numerous responses from other participants by sharing,

> Last year, I loved coming to work! The way we were teaching changed my outlook and made me more positive all around. I talked to the other teachers in the pilot group often, and we were always so excited to share what was working in our classrooms.... We had a feeling we were going back [to departmentalization] this year, but the way it was handled is what really rubbed us all the wrong way. We felt so unimportant; it really put a cloud over us. Most of us have lower morale now than before we tried team teaching last year. Teachers talk amongst themselves; even the others [non-pilot] were not happy with how we were treated like we didn't matter. It's really affected the whole school.

Discussion

Results of this study revealed an overall feeling of disconnection from the administration during the time of the study as well as the prior year when they participated in the pilot group. In a shared leadership school, these teachers felt they were excluded in a decision in which they believed they should have had a major part.

Collectively, teachers felt less empowered to perform as they reported amplified perceptions of subordination and a lack of motivation from administration.

Piloting a program or structure in a school can have multiple purposes; for this school, the main purpose was to serve as a test for whole-school implementation. Teachers reported no communication from administrators in regards to their pilot experience and were not asked for feedback, one of the major benefits of piloting programs (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Further, in a shared leadership school, principals should provide support and remain involved by providing feedback to ensure any new implementations align with school objectives (Fowler, 2004). Because of the lack of support from administration and the exclusion from the decision-making process, teachers' collective efficacy was negatively impacted as leadership approach can heavily influence teacher attitudes (Bogler, 2001).

Findings for this study have implications for schools planning to pilot a program, implement shared leadership, or considering departmentalizing at the elementary level. Piloting programs in schools should be inclusive, despite leadership approach, as those involved can provide valuable information regarding the program's potential success. For schools considering a shared leadership approach, findings from this study indicate negative effects on overall efficacy when the approach is not implemented properly. Finally, though the scope of this research did not include the effects of departmentalized instruction, the participants discussed their preference for it over self-contained instruction throughout the surveys and during interviews. The results show the significance of the impact departmentalized instruction made on these teachers, and the aftermath of removing this structure they preferred.

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Researcher Closing

As a student-researcher, I had an opportunity to investigate any problem, phenomenon, group, or area of interest about which I was curious. The circumstances involving the implementation of departmentalized instruction fit my personal and academic timeline perfectly. With a research plan in place, I was prepared to begin data collection at the same time departmentalized instruction began. As a teacher who takes great interest in curriculum development and implementation, this study broadened my perspectives by introducing me to other teachers' ideas and viewpoints.

Because I was a teacher in the school prior to assuming the role of a researcher, I was aware of the declining morale and increased teacher workload in the school. This issue was discussed often, and the purpose for implementing departmentalization on a trial basis. Workload and morale affected me as a teacher in the school, so my interest in the study went beyond my curiosity about the experiences in a departmentalized classroom. As the study progressed, I realized the original purpose of comparing self-contained and departmentalized instruction should be expanded, resulting in three separate studies.

Originally, this study was planned as a mixed methods investigation, as it incorporated an explicit student achievement component. Students' math chapter test scores were going to be compared in self-contained and departmentalized classes, as the students in each grade received the same tests for every chapter. The student achievement component of this study was removed for two reasons. First, after the study began, I realized the overwhelming quality and quantity of the qualitative data I had gathered provided a comprehensive and detailed account of the case exceeding what I

originally envisioned. Secondly, the data collection of math scores became murky and I was concerned the validity of data would be compromised. The issues I encountered during quantitative data collection varied from missing test scores to inconsistent documenting by teachers. Teachers agreed to allow me to have access to their students' scores, but I found and discrepancies in teachers' grading systems, such as mistakes in grade recording. Also, many students transferred in and out of the school, which increased possibility of errors in data input.

Though the data for the study was not used in the decision to remove departmentalized instruction, the head administrator valued the work as she used it to inform herself and other administrators about morale issues from teachers' perspectives. Many teachers at my school have talked about, and still continue to discuss, a sense of dictatorship within our school system, as they contend their opinions are not encouraged and feedback is not welcomed. During the study, I personally noticed an enthusiasm not only regarding departmentalization, but also toward the opportunity to share their opinions and have discussions with other professionals who valued their perspectives. Unfortunately, as an employee in this system, I cannot offer solutions to the system-level administrative issues; but hopefully this data will encourage others to pilot this innovative method that greatly improved the lives of these participants.

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Appendix A

Supervisor Permission to Conduct Research (2011)

Phone: (229) 387-2410 Fax: (229) 386-1044

Richard Fisher
Assistant Principal

August 4, 2011

Valdosta State University
c/o Regional Center for Continuing Education
903 N. Patterson St.
Valdosta, GA
31698-0429

To whom it may concern:

Please note that Ms. Alecia Strohl, Valdosta State University Graduate Student, has the permission of Mrs. Stephanie Morrow, principal of Annie Belle Clark Primary School, to conduct research on our campus for her mixed methods study involving the implementation of departmentalized teaching.

Ms. Strohl will ask specific faculty members to volunteer to participate in her study by meeting and discussing the procedures with them. Her plan is to form a focus group and a group of participants who will be interviewed on an individual basis consisting of only teachers who are implementing departmentalized teaching in the 2011-2012 school year. Because she is an employee of the school, she has access to the facility and faculty members. She will be granted permission to view student math scores, as they will not be identifiable through the use of codes. She will also be granted permission to distribute survey questionnaires three times throughout the course of the school year, as the findings from the research can be used to benefit our school.

Ms. Strohl has agreed not to interfere with the instruction of students in any way. Employees will not be allowed time from their work duties to participate in focus groups or interviews. Mrs. Strohl has also agreed to provide to my office a copy of the Valdosta State University IRB-approved, stamped consent document before she recruits participants on campus, and will also provide a copy of any aggregate results.

If there are any questions, please contact my office.

Signed,

Stephanie Morrow

Stephanie Morrow, Principal

Appendix B

Appendix B: Supervisor Permission to Conduct Research (2013)

January 11, 2013

Valdosta State University
c/o Regional Center for Continuing Education
903 N. Patterson St.
Valdosta, GA
31698-0429

To whom it may concern:

Please note that Ms. Alecia Strohl, Valdosta State University Graduate Student, has the permission of Mrs. Stephanie Morrow, principal of Annie Belle Clark Primary School, to conduct research on our campus for her qulaitative study involving the implementation of departmentalized teaching.

Ms. Strohl will ask specific faculty members to volunteer to participate in her study by meeting and discussing the procedures with them. Her plan is to form a focus group and a group of participants who will be interviewed on an individual basis consisting of only teachers who implemented departmentalized teaching in the 2011-2012 school year. Because she is an employee of the school, she has access to the facility and faculty members. She will be granted permission to distribute surveys/questionnaires near the close of the school year, as the findings from the research can be used to benefit our school.

Ms. Strohl has agreed not to interfere with the instruction of students in any way. Employees will not be allowed time from their work duties to participate in focus groups or interviews. Mrs. Strohl has also agreed to provide to my office a copy of the Valdosta State University IRB-approved, stamped consent document before she recruits participants on campus, and will also provide a copy of any aggregate results.

If there are any questions, please contact my office.

Signed,

Mrs. Stephanie Morrow

Appendix C

Graphic Organizer Sample

Departmentalization: Positives and Negatives

Thank you once again for participating in this research. To further clarify key points please use the following form to record your thoughts on positive and negative aspects of teaching in the departmentalized format. More space is provided on the back of this form if needed. Addendums may be attached if necessary also.

Positive Points	Negative Points

Appendix D

Work Environment Survey

Anonymous Work Environment Survey

Directions: The purpose of this survey is to gather data about teacher morale and work environment during the 2010-2011 school year. The survey will be given following the current school year to compare morale between the two time periods. Your candid response greatly increases the value of the data gathered. Please **do not** write your name on this survey.

Please read and consider each statement carefully. Check the box in the column that most closely describes your standpoint for each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Required paperwork took up too much of my time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers in this school were required to do an unreasonable amount of clerical work and record keeping.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. My teaching load restricted my nonprofessional activities and responsibilities outside of school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. My teaching load and responsibilities were greater than most of the other teachers in the school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The number of hours a teacher had to work was unreasonable.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. My school supplied me with the materials I needed to complete my duties.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. There was a great deal of complaining about teaching responsibilities in our school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Teachers at our school cooperated with one another to reach common professional objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I felt successful and confident in my profession.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The "stress and strain" resulting from teaching made teaching undesirable to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Survey adapted from:

Bentley, R., & Rempel, A. (1968). *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire.* West Lafayette, IN: Purdue Research Foundation.

The following questions allow you to elaborate further and give specific examples. You may use the back of the survey if needed. Additional paper may be attached if needed. Please **do not** write your name on this survey.

1. a. How would you describe your stress level for the 2010-2011 school year?

b. How would you compare your stress level for the 2010-2011 school year to the last three years of your teaching career?

c. If you feel your stress level last year was higher than prior years, why do you think so?

2. Considering only last year, please list five to ten factors that contributed to your stress level.

3. Thinking about the amount of stressed caused by the factors you listed for question 2, please rank them in order from the most stressful to the least stressful based on your personal opinion. You may add notes and comments to explain your ranking if you wish.

4. What would you suggest be done to decrease stress levels for teachers (on the classroom level, grade level, school level, and/or system level)?

5. Any other comments or opinions regarding teacher morale or stress levels within the school?

Appendix E

Informed Consent Statement

CONSENT STATEMENT FOR ANONYMOUS SURVEY RESEARCH:

You are being asked to participate in a survey research project entitled "Mixed Methods Case Study of Implementation of Departmentalization in Primary Grades", which I am conducting as both a doctoral student of Valdosta State University as well as a teacher at Annie Belle Clark. This survey is anonymous. No one, including me, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer.

In the interest of abiding by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements, your completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to me, Alecia Strohl at 229-834-0223 or aastrohl@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from IRB review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-259-5045 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Appendix F

Institutional Review Board Exemption Form

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
or the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-02708-2011 **INVESTIGATOR:** Alecia Strohl

PROJECT TITLE: Mixed Methods Case Study of Implementation of Departmentalization in Primary Grades

DETERMINATION:

☑ This research protocol is exempt from Institutional Review Board oversight under Exemption Category(ies) 1 & 4. You may begin your study immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

☐ Exemption of this research protocol from Institutional Review Board oversight is pending. You may **not** begin your research until you have addressed the following concerns/questions and the IRB has formally notified you of exemption. You may send your responses to irb@valdosta.edu.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Although not a requirement for exemption, the following suggestions are offered by the IRB Administrator to enhance the protection of participants and/or strengthen the research proposal. If you make any of these suggested changes to your protocol, please submit revisions so that IRB has a complete protocol on file.

Barbara H. Gray Date: 12/18/13
Barbara H. Gray, IRB Administrator

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.
Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-259-5045.

cc: Dr. Julie Lee (Dean – COE
Dr. Richard Schmertzing (Advisor)

Form Revised: 09.02.2009