ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF DEPARTMENTALIZED INSTRUCTION AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENT AFFECT

by

Robert Charles Minott

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WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE,

HAVE APPROVED THIS DISSERTATION

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OF WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation was to explore the lived experiences of departmentalized elementary teachers, Grades 1–3, and how they addressed their students' affective needs. The main research question of the study was how do elementary school teachers perceive departmentalized instruction and describe their experiences of this structure's impact on their students' affective needs. Data from interviews were initially open coded into 47 categories. Nonnotable responses appearing in less than 75% of the transcripts were eliminated. The remaining open-coded responses were then grouped into 5 axially coded themes. This dissertation employed a qualitative interview and data gathering process. Phenomenology was used as the research design. This mode of inquiry allowed me to capture the lived experiences of teachers' perceptions related to addressing their students' affective needs. All subjects reported positive experiences and successes in this endeavor. Recommendations include piloting departmentalization prior to implementation, consideration of teacher personality and teaching style prior to pairing teachers, and investigating the impact of departmentalization on various types of learners.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Terri, who surrendered countless hours, weeks and years, so I could pursue this long-held dream, and my children, Adam and Ross. A special thank you to my brother David, who is always there to resolve my computer-related issues. All of their encouragement and support have been unwavering throughout the past four years. I also dedicate this to my loyal goldendoodle Sadie, who sat by my side for countless hours on end, as I toiled away on the computer. This dedication recognizes all those teachers and administrators with whom I have worked, that tolerated my eccentricities, and respected my efforts. Finally, it is dedicated to all my former students and their parents, from whom I learned far more than I taught.

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Chapter 1: The Study

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the topic of effective instructional models for elementary schools has remained a much-debated issue among educational specialists and administrators (McGrath & Rust, 2002). One aspect of this debate deals with the model of classroom delivery. Through the years, elementary schools have adopted either the self-contained model or the departmentalization model of delivery. Regardless the level of instruction (elementary, secondary, or postsecondary), the success of any school is largely determined by its leadership and the instructional model adopted by that leadership, which is relevant to the debate about classroom delivery.

Instructional organization does not drive instruction or direct school programs; rather this form of organization is designed to support instruction and serve school programs. A seminal author on the topic of elementary school organization and administration, Otto (1954), described organization in the elementary school setting as a dynamic structure rather than a static structure. For example, numerous organizational plans designed to support instruction and serve school programs have focused on easing teacher load, making more efficient use of the physical plant, addressing poverty, and addressing poor teaching. Frequently, the curriculum has been considered secondarily and then only with the intent of making it fit the organizational plan. However, the primary function of instructional organization is to support the curriculum and empower teachers to instruct their students effectively and efficiently. Only when the curriculum has been explicitly developed and shared, can one implement an organizational structure that will best support the successful delivery and mastery of the curriculum. Effective curricula must be both child-centered and subject-specific, which is at the center of the

debate about the self-contained instructional model and the departmentalization model of instructional delivery (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2011; Koch, 2013; Strohl, Schmertzing, Schmertzing, & Hsiao, 2014).

Organizational structures are the types of structures used in schools that influence the instructional delivery of core content (Forbes, 2003; Phillips, 2011; Pressley et al., 2003). The nation's elementary schools currently use numerous different organizational structures (Koch, 2013; Phillips, 2011; Yearwood, 2011). However, the two types of organizational structures most frequently researched are (a) the self-contained classroom, wherein students have the same teacher for all academic areas, including language arts, math, science, and social studies; and (b), the departmentalized classroom, wherein students have more than one teacher for different academic areas and rotate between two or more teachers for a set period of time (Phillips, 2011). Related to the departmentalized approach to instructional organization, *platooning* is the term often used when a single teacher is responsible for paired academic subjects, although not all of them.

The self-contained classroom is at one end of the instructional organizational continuum, and any deviation from the self-contained classroom with special teachers represents a point on the continuum in the direction of departmentalization (ASCD, 2011; Hood, 2010). In the self-contained classroom, students remain in one classroom all day while receiving their academic subject area instruction (math, language arts, science, and social studies) from one teacher (Koch, 2013; Wilkins, 2009). However, students in the self-contained classroom often leave the classroom for art, music, library, and physical education instruction.

Conversely, in a fully departmentalized building, a multiteacher design is utilized wherein a different teacher is responsible for each of the major academic subject areas. The departmentalized design necessitates the movement of students by switching classrooms, which can occur four times during the school day (Hood, 2010). Yet in a platooning approach, students may spend three fourths of the school day with their homeroom teacher, who provides instruction in three of the major academic areas, and then switch classes to receive instruction in the remaining academic areas from a specialist who has earned a major or minor in that subject area (Ardzejewska, McMaugh, & Coutts, 2010; Reid, 2012). The advantages for students having specialists as teachers includes increased teacher content expertise and curricular knowledge, time dedicated to that subject area, and centralization of content materials. Another form of departmentalized platooning at the elementary school level involves a two-teacher team that shares the instructional responsibilities. In this approach, one teacher provides instruction in science and math while the other teacher provides language arts and social studies instruction (Hood, 2010).

When determining the instructional model to implement, the school principal must balance the emotional and social needs of the elementary-aged child (Brackett, Rivers, Reyes, & Salovey, 2012; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Liew & McTigue, 2010). The principal's considerations when determining appropriate instructional models should be shared with the district superintendent, who is responsible for final decisions. According to Chan, Terry, and Bessette (2009), preadolescents' psychological needs cover a wide range of emotions, including the most basic followed by higher level, increasingly complex needs. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy

of needs is often referenced by educators when discussing the social and emotional needs of students, specifically those related to physiological needs, safety and security, and the need for social belonging and self-esteem. In its whole-child initiative, the ASCD (2011) stressed the importance of meeting these needs. The whole-child initiative challenges the community, family, teacher, and student to work together to ensure that "each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged" (p. 1). The initiative focuses on five tenets that encompass the whole-child approach to education:

1. Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
2. Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.
3. Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
4. Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults.
5. Each graduate is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment. (p. 1)

The ACSD's (2011) second whole-child tenet is germane to this study since it addresses the importance of creating "an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for student" (p. 1). In order for schools to create an intellectually challenging environment that can contribute to student success, curriculum and teaching practices, as well as instructional organization, must address the development of the whole child (Liew & McTigue, 2010). Educators' (administrators and

teachers) perceptions of departmentalization and self-contained classrooms may well impact a school's success in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of the whole child (Martin, Fergus, & Noguera, 2010). This study is designed to focus specifically on elementary school teachers' perceptions about how departmentalized instruction impacts students' affective needs.

The overall purpose of this chapter is to present the contextual framework of the study. The chapter is divided into 11 major sections. First, a background section provides context for the study. Following the contextual background, the statement of the problem and purpose of the study are presented. Next, the theoretical framework undergirding the study is described and the research questions guiding the study are presented. The significance of the study is then discussed, followed by definitions of key terms. Next, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the study are discussed. The nature of the research is described, and a discussion of researcher reflexivity is presented. Last, an overview of the dissertation structure is presented along with a summary of Chapter 1.

Background of the Study

The first formal platoon (semidepartmentalized) school was established in 1900 in Bluffton, Indiana by William Albert Wirt. In 1907, he founded a second platoon school in Gary, Indiana. Several more platoon schools followed during the next six years. By 1913, Wirt's platoon schools could be found in New Castle, Pennsylvania; Kansas City, Missouri; Kalamazoo, Michigan; and Sewickley, Pennsylvania. The Golightly Education Center in Detroit, Michigan was originally named after George W. Balch. Balch was the first president of the Detroit School board (1873–1877) and a member of the Detroit Alderman. The Balch School (c. 1878) was the first city elementary school to use the

platoon teaching system, and the model attracted interested educators, both nationally and internationally. Platooning grew rapidly, and by 1929, 1,068 platoon schools were located in 202 cities throughout the nation. Despite that growth, the self-contained elementary classroom remained the common practice (Diemer, 1925; Mohl, 1977). The initial popularity and practice of departmentalization began to fade as early as the 1900s, although in some self-contained classrooms, teachers did continue to specialize and had two or more groups of pupils each day in their specialty (E. Becker & Gleason, 1927).

The concept of a platooned instructional model for the lower-elementary grades grew in favor alongside the development of departmental teaching in the upper-elementary grades. The platooned instructional model continues to be implemented in various configurations. In one configuration, the platooned school day was divided so that that the morning half of the day was dedicated to academic content instruction and the afternoon half was dedicated to special area instruction and activities, including art, music, physical education, and library. Frequently, the homeroom teacher who instructed the academic content was expected to be a specialist in an afternoon session. This rotation of classes, whereby some teachers were required to instruct the special areas in which classes could be combined, maximized both teacher and facility utilization (Hood, 2010). The evolution of instructional organization has been impacted by federal legislation.

Initially passed as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Title I Act has since been reauthorized seven times. Every successive iteration of the legislation added clarifications and expansions of covered students. However, the primary and foundational goal has remained: improving educational opportunities for children

from lower-income families. The Improving America's Schools Act reauthorization (1994) put in place key standards and accountability elements for states and local school districts that receive funding under the law, which were later further developed in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2003).

The NCLB (2001) set out to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child was left behind This act was designed to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency as measured on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). This act requires that each school, irrespective of the various student subpopulations within the school (e.g., African American, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English as a Second Language students), achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). Adequate yearly progress requires high academic achievement, defined as most or all students meeting or exceeding the state standards. If a school does not meet AYP, the federal government places the school on the needs improvement list, and the school may face subsequent sanctions. Most at risk of sanctions are Title I schools, and as a result, many are investigating alternate instructional organizations.

Title I is the federal program that provides funding to local school districts to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students, those who come from low-income families, are in foster homes, are neglected or delinquent, or who live in families receiving temporary assistance from state governments. Section A of Title I provides grants to states to distribute directly to school districts. These grants are by far the largest source of federal money allocated for local schools. School districts do not have to apply

for Title I funding as they would have to for a competitive grant. If a school district qualifies for Title I funding, it is entitled to the money. However, the district must submit to the state education agency a plan for how it will use the funds to improve academic achievement among disadvantaged students. Local school districts have wide discretion in determining how the money will be used. About 83% of Title I money is used for programs serving pre-K through eighth grade (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). These programs must specifically serve students who are failing to meet academic standards or are at risk of failing because they are disadvantaged. However, if more than 40% of the students in a school qualify as disadvantaged (determined by free and reduced meals [Federal Register, 2015], Aid for Dependent Children, census, or Medicaid), the school is allowed to run school-wide programs that serve all students, not just the disadvantaged. School-wide programs are for all the students within the school, irrespective of being individually identified as disadvantaged or targeted for assistance.

Advantages of school-wide programs include the school's latitude in determining how to organize its operations and how to allocate multiple government funding sources available to them (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). There is a solid research base on how to meet the needs of disadvantaged students. Repeated findings show that "for the lowest achieving students in the highest poverty schools to meet high standards of performance, their entire instructional program, not just a separate Title I program, must be substantially improved" (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., para. 3). Because a school-wide program school can use its Title I, Part A funds in conjunction with other federal education funds to upgrade the school's entire educational program, many of

these schools are examining instructional organization approaches since they are critical components of reaching educational goals.

Statement of the Problem

In an era of educational reform that emphasizes increased levels of accountability, some school districts are beginning to implement a departmentalized structure at the elementary school level (Del Viscio & Muffs, 2007) as a means of increasing student success. Unlike the traditional self-contained classroom structure with one generalist teacher, the departmentalized approach exposes children to instruction delivered by multiple content-specialty teachers. Unfortunately, evidence supporting or negating the impact of departmentalized instruction on elementary school student achievement is inconclusive and contradictory (ASCD, 2011; Glennon, Hinton, Callahan, Kurt, & Fischer, 2013; Liu, 2011; Ornstein, 2011; Strohl et al., 2014). A review of relevant literature failed to provide conclusive evidence of why one organizational structure may be more effective than the other, and little empirical research on the issue has been conducted (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Chang, Muñoz, & Koshewa, 2008; Goldhaber, Cowan, & Walch, 2012; Hood, 2010; Isenberg, Teh, & Walsh, 2013).

Opponents of departmentalized instruction at the elementary school level maintain that the affective needs of elementary school students are compromised in a departmentalized structure. Central to opponents' arguments is the idea of teaching the whole child, which aligns with learner-centered ideology (Strohl et al, 2014). Specifically, researchers cite the unique social and emotional needs of younger students that extend beyond the academic curriculum (ASCD, 2011; Schiro, 2008). Critics of elementary school departmentalized instruction maintain it disrupts learning and

increases stress levels and learning problems among younger students (Hood, 2010) and may hinder the development of solid student-teacher relationships that are pivotal to individualizing instruction to meet the unique needs of each child (Horton, 2013; McGrath & Rust, 2002).

However, research (Bailey, 2010; Jacob & Rockoff, 2011) suggests that residual effects of departmentalized structures positively impact elementary school student achievement rates. For example, the literature relating departmentalized instruction, teacher retention, and student achievement is building (Strohl et al., 2014). Teacher experience is an indicator of student achievement (Aud et al., 2011), and departmentalization has been found to decrease factors of teacher burnout (i.e., workload and emotional exhaustion), thereby increasing the likelihood of retaining experienced and highly qualified teachers (Chan & Jarman, 2004). Strohl et al. (2014) explained that steps to minimize the "trend of highly qualified teachers leaving the field due to burnout could ultimately improve student achievement" (p. 111). Whereas opponents to departmentalized instruction base their arguments on a student-centered ideology, proponents stress the importance of retaining highly qualified teachers to ensure instructional quality, which ultimately increases student achievement. However, a new mind-set in the departmentalization literature is shifting the polarized discussion. Rather than an either-or approach, some proponents of departmentalized instruction are approaching the debate with both-and mind-set, acknowledging the importance of student-centered learning and high-quality instruction at the elementary school level. These scholars are recommending that research be expanded to explore if and how younger students' affective needs are being met or could be met through a

departmentalized structure. Such an approach could make a significant contribution to the discussion about how departmentalized instruction may help elementary schools achieve accountability measures of educational reform initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards. The problem is that little is known about teachers' experiences of departmentalized instruction and their perceptions about how it impacts their students' affective needs. This critical gap in the literature is the focus of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to describe elementary school teachers' shared lived experiences of departmentalized instruction, specifically their perceptions about how it impacts their students' affective needs. This study adheres to Moustakas's (1994) psychological phenomenological research methods, which focus on searching for meanings and experience of the participants' shared experiences of a particular phenomenon. In the case of this study, the phenomenon of interest is departmentalized instruction as experienced by elementary school teachers. For this study, Parkay and Stanford's (1995, 2007) definition of departmentalized instruction is used. In a departmentalized instruction approach, "Students typically study four or five academic subjects taught by teachers who specialize in them. In this organizational arrangement, students move from classroom to classroom for their lessons" (Parkay & Stanford, 2007, p. 134). At the elementary level, the terms platooning and *platooned instruction* are used interchangeably with departmentalized instruction (Hood, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

The organizational structure of an elementary school can have both long-term and immediate effects on the curriculum ideologies of the teachers and administrators within

the school, directly impacting all children in the building (Parker, 2009). A central precept of this study is that instructional organization as an element of school design may exert a significant impact on student achievement. For the purpose of this study, Berrien's definition of an organization is used: "an integrated system of interdependent structures and functions" (as cited in Owens & Valesky, 2007, p. 124) in which "all observations of nature are embedded in complex, dynamically interactive systems" (p. 442). An overview of systems theory is helpful for understanding how instructional organization relates to the overall goal of student achievement.

Systems theory contends that individual parts of a system must be examined within the context of their relationships to each other and against other systems. Parts of a system cannot be properly understood as isolates. Only when the linkages and interactions between the component parts of the system are identified can the system as a whole be understood (Senge, 1990). These intertwined and inseparable components of the organization make it difficult to link student achievement, or any one particular variable, to any one isolated factor such as instructional organization. Systems theory, argued Owens and Valesky (2007), "puts us on guard against the strong tendency to ascribe phenomena to a single causative factor" (p. 126).

Systems theory and complexity has been applied in research aiming to understand the organizational culture of schools. For example, studies have sought to link organizational culture and structure to organizational effectiveness (Owens & Valesky, 2007). Owens and Valesky stressed the open-system nature of the school in that it interacts with and responds to its external environment. "Though organizational culture focuses on the internal arrangements of schools, those always reflect, to some degree, the

larger environment of the school's situation" (p. 207). Moreover, Owens and Valesky drew from the works of Brookover et al. (1978), Rutter (1979), Epstein and Sheldon (2006), and Moos (1979) to support their argument about "the mounting evidence in the literature that the learning and development of students are significantly influenced by characteristics of classroom organizational culture" (Owens & Valesky, 2007, p. 209). They condensed Moos' conclusions, stating "students' learning and development are strongly influenced by the nature and qualities of the person-environment interaction" (p. 209) in schools and that instructional organization is "influenced not only by the interaction-influence system of the group, but also by other factors in the environment such as room design, schedule of activities, and layout of the building" (p. 210). It is not only the instructional organization in schools that impacts student learning.

Owens and Valesky's (2007) application of systems theory to schools provides a framework for understanding how instructional organization, as a structural element, may impact student learning and development. Their research was based on the theoretical framework that structural elements such as grade-level configuration and instructional organization, as components of school climate, impact school effectiveness measures. Figure 1 shows how aspects of Owens and Valesky's framework form the theoretical framework for this study.

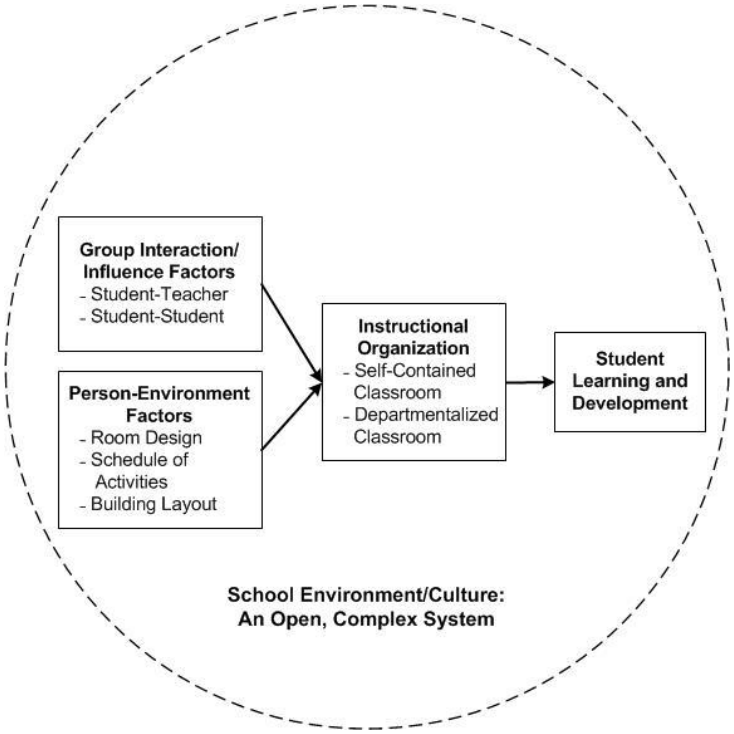

Figure 1. Owens and Valesky's Framework. Theoretical framework showing instructional organization as a structural element of the school environment-culture.

Instructional organization, as an element of school structure and climate, most generally falls into two broad categories, each with its own history, advocates, and detractors—the self-contained classroom structure and departmentalized classroom structure. The self-contained classroom structure involves one teacher with one group of students for an entire school year, with the goal of fulfilling the educational needs of the whole child, including academic needs and emotional stability (Bezeau, 2007; Brackett, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2011; Canady & Rettig, 2008; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Lobdell & van Ness, 1963; Russ et al., 2007).

The academic success of students within the self-contained classroom is contingent upon the presumption that the teacher is a specialist in the core academic subject areas of reading-language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The presumption is that the elementary, traditional, self-contained teacher is equally qualified

in all these academic areas as an expert or a generalist (R. C. Anderson, 1962; Bezeau, 2007; Chan & Jarman, 2004; Gerretson, Bosnick, & Schofield, 2008; Reid, 2012). Advocates for the self-contained classroom argue that it reinforces learning, individualizes instruction, promotes self-direction, and supports the psychological and social needs of the child (Allen et al., 2013; Berry & O'Connor, 2010; Bierman et al., 2010; Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey, 2012; Wentzel, 2010; Zins, Elias, Greenberg, & Weissberg, 2000). Additionally, instructional flexibility is often cited as a key advantage of the self-contained classroom because teachers can opt to extend instruction in a particular subject area if they deem it necessary (Friend & Cook, 2007; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). Advocates of the self-contained classroom argue that the major deficiency of the departmentalized classroom is a lack of a personal connection between the teacher and student (Bezeua, 2007; Chang et al., 2008; Schonert-Reichl, & Zakrzewski, 2014). Canady and Rettig (2008) support the traditional self-contained classroom, "given ideal circumstances, that is, teachers who have a strong content knowledge and pedagogical skills in all subject areas, deep understanding of child development, a caring soul, and an abiding belief that all children can learn" (p. 127). However, they conceded "that not all self-contained classrooms operated according to the textbook ideal" (p. 127). Moreover, Ackerlund (1959) argued, "There is no evidence that adjustment to several different teaching personalities simultaneously is harmful to children; it could even be valuable" (p. 285). The traditional self-contained elementary classroom is not without its detractors. Alternative, departmentalized classroom structures have both their advocates and supporting studies.

Numerous nontraditional departmentalized classroom configurations have been used for more than 50 years and many of these remain in use in elementary schools. The terminology used to describe the departmentalized classroom setting varies, including departmentalized, semidepartmentalized, teaming or team teaching, coteaching, and innovative scheduling. Proponents of departmentalized instruction argue that this structure has the effect of increasing teachers' eagerness to teach within their specialization and improving their professional preparedness (E. Becker & Gleason, 1927). Although he concluded that departmentalization weakens the student-teacher relationship, McPartland (1987) conceded that "The quality of instruction in specialized subject matter" (p. 1) improves in a departmentalized setting. A historical issue has been whether elementary school teachers are properly prepared or qualified to specialize in one or more of the core academic content areas (Ackerlund, 1959; Gough, 1982).

More recently, Chan and Jarman (2004) argued that most elementary-level teachers lack the multiple talents required to serve as a generalist, but still are required to teach "in some areas where they have no fundamental interest" (p. 70). Refuting the documented negative aspects of departmentalization (i.e., lack of personal connection between student and teacher, lack of collaboration, and failure to meet students' emotional needs), Chan and Jarman cited the advantages of departmentalization at the elementary level: (a) students receive specialized instruction, (b) students' social-emotional needs and academic growth grade-level are supported by grade-level instructional teams, (c) teacher satisfaction and engagement is increased, (d) students are better prepared to make the transitional adjustment to middle school, and (e) student

flexibility to move between grade levels according to ability as well as between ability groups within grade-level instruction.

Regardless of the form departmentalization may take in the classroom setting (i.e., departmentalized, semidepartmentalized, teaming or team teaching, coteaching, or innovative scheduling), recent research (Bezeau, 2007; Chan et al., 2009; Del Viscio & Muffs, 2007; Liew, McTigue, Barrois, & Hughes, 2008; Moore, 2008) indicates the need to examine the experiences of departmentalized elementary school teachers relative to how this instructional model impacts their students' affective needs in order to advance knowledge about this phenomenon.

Research Questions

In keeping with Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological research methods, one central research question is posed, followed by four procedural subquestions that provide further guidance for this study:

1. How do elementary school teachers perceive departmentalized instruction and describe their experiences of this structure's impact on their students' affective needs?
    a. What statements describe elementary school teachers' perceptions about and experiences of the impact of departmentalized instruction on their students' affective needs?
    b. What themes emerge from these perceptions and experiences?
    c. What are the contexts of and thoughts about these perceptions and experiences?
    d. What is the overall essence of these perceptions and experiences?

Significance of the Study

The NCLB Act (2001) mandates highly qualified status of all teachers in core content areas, but traditional elementary organizational structure requires teachers to serve as generalists instead of content specialists (Chang et al., 2008; Gerretson et al., 2008; Hampton, 2007; Hood, 2010; McGrath & Rust, 2002). A review of relevant literature fails to provide conclusive evidence that one organizational structure is more effective than the other, and little empirical research on the issue has been conducted (H. J. Becker, 1987; Chang et al., 2008; Hampton, 2007; M. B. Harris, 1996; Hood, 2010; Lamme, 1976). Researchers have called for further study of the relationship between student achievement and organizational structure (Alspaugh, 1998; H. J. Becker, 1987; Braddock, Wu, & McPartland., 1988; Chang et al., 2008; Hood, 2010; McGrath & Rust, 2002; Reed, 2002). "There is clearly a need for more empirical evidence for achievement outcomes related to organizational classroom structures, particularly the relationship between self-contained and departmentalized arrangement" (Moore, 2008, p. 48). This study is significant to education practices because teacher experience is an indicator of student achievement (Aud et al., 2011) and highly qualified teachers are central to educational reform. Departmentalized instruction has been found to decrease factors of teacher burnout, thereby increasing the likelihood of retaining experienced and highly qualified teachers (Chan & Jarman, 2004). Findings from this study may contribute to elementary school leaders' efforts to increase the retention of highly qualified teachers, which, in turn, may help them achieve accountability measures of educational reform initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are germane to the phenomenon of inquiry: elementary school teachers' shared lived experiences of departmentalized instruction, specifically their perceptions about how it impacts their students' affective needs. There are seven terms defined below:

Coteaching-team teaching: In a coteaching or team-teaching approach, two teachers work in tandem within the same room at the same time. This approach is frequently used to support students with Individualized Education Programs, and as a means of avoiding the need for students to leave the classroom for special assistance (California Department of Education, 2015).

Elementary school: The elementary school includes Grades 1 through 5 unless expressly stated to include Grades 6, 7, or 8 (Howley, 2002).

Departmental organization: Departmentalization is that method of school organization under which each teacher in an elementary school instructs one subject or a group of highly related subjects (Hood, 2010).

Intermediate school: The intermediate school includes Grades 3, 4, and 5, unless expressly stated to include other grades (Howley, 2002).

Nondepartmentalized organization: In the nondepartmentalized school, one teacher resides in a self-contained classroom. Students may move for specialized instruction in art, music, physical education, and library. Kilpatrick (1908) defined nondepartmentalized instruction as the system of school organization under which one teacher instructs the pupils of a certain class in all the academic studies within the grade curriculum.

Platooning: Platooning is an organizational departmentalized instructional configuration under which the elementary or intermediate teacher instructs two (or more) subjects (e.g., math and science, or social studies and English-reading). The administrator determines the selection of subjects taught by a single teacher (Hood, 2010).

Semidepartmentalized organization: Semidepartmentalized organization is a form of platooning. The most common practice found in the semidepartmentalized, platooned school is when children spend half a day with one teacher in a homeroom and the other half of the day with specialists according to scheduled periods of time. In some plans, the teachers specialize in a subject-matter area and have two or more groups of pupils each day in that area (Kilpatrick, 1908).

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

This section addresses the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the study. First, delimitations further narrow the scope of the study. Second, the limitations, or potential weaknesses of the study, are identified. Third, certain assumptions are made about the study participants that are not supported with confirmatory evidence.

Delimitations. While the purpose statement describes what the researcher intended to do, it is also important to know what the researcher does not intend to do, which is described as the delimitations of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). This study's topic of inquiry emerges out of the broader context of classroom instructional models. The researcher's interests are delimited to elementary school teachers' perceptions about departmentalized instruction and their experiences of this instructional model's impact on their students' affective needs. The researcher does not pursue participants' perceptions about and experiences with the self-contained classroom

instructional model. The study is further delimited to elementary school teachers actively participating in the online community within Leadership 2.0. Only those teachers who have been teaching for three or more years and are instructing in a departmentalized classroom setting will be included in the study.

Limitations. Limitations are potential weaknesses of a study, such as those related to the sample, data-collection environment, measurement techniques, and personal biases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Patton (2002) explained, "By their nature, qualitative findings are highly context and case dependent" (p. 563). As such, three types of sampling limitations are typical in qualitative research: (a) limitations in situations, (b) limitations from the time period, and (c) limitations based on participant selectivity. One situation-specific limitation is that this study's data source is limited to interviews of elementary school teachers about their perceptions of departmentalized instruction and their experiences of this instructional model's impact on their students' affective needs. Aspects of the departmentalized instructional model are not isolated to a single classroom or individual teachers. This instructional model impacts multiple stakeholders, including students, parents, school administrators, and district policy makers. However, it is not possible to observe all situations related to this phenomenon of inquiry, so this study is limited to classroom teachers' perceptions and experiences. A second limitation is related to Internet availability. The participant interviews were conducted throughout a period of weeks, thereby limiting the findings to a time-specific period. Last, this research has no geographic limitations in that participants are teaching in schools across the nation. Therefore, the participant selection criteria and lack of geographic boundaries limit the generalizability of findings to other, more specific populations.

Assumptions. An assumption is "a premise that is taken for granted without confirmatory evidence" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015, p. 367). While designing this study, several assumptions are identified. First, it is assumed that the study participants are competent elementary school teachers. Second, it is assumed that these teachers are successfully teaching in the departmentalized instructional setting, although they might lack a full understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of this instructional model. Third, it is assumed that the participants' teaching background and knowledge-experiences of departmentalized instruction will enable them to discuss meaningfully the research topic and respond to interview questions. Last, it is assumed that the study participants will respond truthfully and candidly to the interview questions.

Nature of the Research

A qualitative methodology is selected for this study because qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of individuals and their experiences (Merriam, 2009) and is, therefore, best suited for answering this study's central research question and the four procedural subquestions. Moustakas (1994) discussed the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods. He explained how quantitative data analysis does not take into consideration the wholeness of a phenomenon of inquiry; neither do quantitative methods provide a depth of understanding of study participants' experiences of the phenomenon. Unlike quantitative methods that involve the random selection of participants and control of the study environment, a particular strength of qualitative methods is the ability to collect data in study participants' existing natural environments (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014).

The qualitative research design that is used in this study is phenomenology. A phenomenological study specifically examines the lived experiences of study participants in order to understand the essence of their shared experiences of the phenomenon of inquiry (Simon & Goes, 2013). The phenomenon that is investigated in this study is departmentalized instruction as experienced by elementary school teachers, specifically the teachers' perceptions about its impact on students' affective needs. Moustakas's (1994) transcendental phenomenological approach is used in this study, which is composed of the four steps of epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. The four procedural steps will be fully described in Chapter 3. However, for the purpose of introducing this study, it is important to discuss briefly the first step of epoché.

In a transcendental phenomenological study, the researcher follows a disciplined and systematic process of setting aside prejudgments about the phenomenon of inquiry before collecting data through participant interviews (Moustakas, 1994). The aim is to advance the study as free as possible of the researcher's preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experiences. This process is known as the epoché. The researcher's objective while engaging in the epoché process is "to be completely open, receptive, and naïve in listening to and hearing research participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being investigated" (p. 22).

Some qualitative researchers refer to the initial step of providing a written account of the researcher's preconceptions, beliefs, knowledge, and prior experiences as the researcher reflexivity section of a research report or doctoral dissertation (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Specifically,

Creswell and Miller (2000) described researcher reflexivity as a validity procedure in qualitative inquiry. These qualitative methodologists stressed the importance of researchers both acknowledging and describing their "beliefs and biases early in the research process to allow readers to understand their positions, and then to bracket or suspend those researcher biases as the study proceeds" (p. 127). Written from a first-person perspective, the following section describes the researcher's prejudgments about this study's phenomenon of inquiry.

Researcher Reflexivity

The practice of bracketing potential researcher biases is a method used in phenomenological studies (Moustakas, 1994) to establish researcher reflexivity in qualitative research. Helpful for establishing credibility and quality in qualitative studies (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), researcher reflexivity entails the scrutiny of one's "research experience, decisions, and interpretations in ways that bring the researcher into the process and allow the reader to assess how and to what extent the researcher's interests, positions, and assumptions influenced inquiry" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 188). Clarke (2005) recommended that qualitative researchers ask themselves "How can we be present and hold ourselves accountable in our research?" (p. 13). In qualitative research, researcher presence by way of experience is considered a valuable analytic device rather than a hindrance to analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

With phenomenological studies, research questions develop from the researcher's intense interest in a particular problem, topic, or situation. The researcher first became interested in the topic of the departmentalized instructional model and its impact on students' affective needs as an elementary Grade 5 school teacher. The researcher was

concerned with teachers' content preparation and competence within the self-contained classroom setting. Having been a teacher for more than 25 years, the researcher possess experiential knowledge about how important teachers are in the formative lives of children. Although the vast majority of my teaching experience was within elementary school self-contained classrooms, the researcher has also taught in middle schools content-specific classrooms. These content-specific classrooms are examples of the departmentalized instructional model. The researcher firmly believes that content-competent teachers are essential for all instructional levels, but they are especially important within the elementary grades, wherein the foundation for all future content is established.

As a self-contained elementary classroom teacher, the researcher derived the greatest satisfaction and motivation from the close social-emotional connection the researcher established with the students and their parents. However, within the self-contained model of instruction, the researcher observed colleagues with weak backgrounds, particularly in math and science, who were not prepared to address adequately the content they were teaching. In other cases, teachers with a keen interest in history and historical events, spent an inordinate amount of time on this content, at the expense of other content areas. The researcher came to believe that some form of departmentalization could meet students' needs for teacher competency in all content areas. However, having never taught using the departmentalized instructional model in the elementary school classroom, the researcher had no idea how departmentalized elementary teachers could, or did, address the socioemotional needs of their students, creating the bonds the researcher so valued.

The epoché phase of this phenomenological study requires that the researcher bracket his own feelings relating to what he found most rewarding in his teaching experiences. Additionally, the researcher must set aside my beliefs in the unique value of the self-contained elementary classroom. While conducting interviews during the data-collection phase of this study, the researcher must acknowledge and respect that all the teacher-participants' attitudes, values, lived experiences, and beliefs are their own. Bracketing (epoché) is an essential step aimed at setting aside my preconceived notions and biases from the teacher-participants' interview responses. From a phenomenological perspective, bracketing can be understood as the process of placing of the researcher's views, experiences, and biases in a lockbox so they are not accessible during the research. A further discussion of bracketing is included in the epoché phase section of Chapter 3. For ethical reasons, a researcher must reveal any association with organizations or participants involved in the study to indicate possible sources of bias (Creswell, 2007). In this study, no such relationships exist.

Dissertation Structure

This study's dissertation is designed to follow Moustakas's (1994) five-chapter structure for a phenomenological study. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study, including contextual background; the problem prompting the study; the purpose of the study; the theoretical framework; guiding research questions; delimitations, limitations, and assumptions; description of the nature of the study, and researcher autobiographical information (researcher reflexivity). Chapter 2 is composed of a review of the relevant literature. The goal of this chapter is to position this study within the broader scheme of research on instructional models used in the elementary school classroom relative to the

self-contained model and versions of the departmentalized model. The third chapter details the study's qualitative research design. Procedures for conducting a transcendental phenomenological inquiry according to Moustakas's approach are presented, including data collection and analysis techniques used in this study. The fourth chapter details the study findings. Specifically, data are presented according to the phases of phenomenological inquiry, including "horizonalization, horizons or meaning units, clustering of horizons into themes, individual textural descriptions, individual structural descriptions, the composite textural description, the composite structural description, and the synthesis of meanings and essences of the experience" (p. 184). Last, the fifth chapter includes conclusions, discussion of implications, and recommendations for further research.

Summary

This chapter provides an introduction to the study's topic of inquiry: departmentalized instruction in the elementary school classroom. A contextual background delineates the historical evolution of the self-contained and departmentalized instructional models in the United States. The problem is described as a critical gap in the literature relative to elementary school teachers' experiences of departmentalized instruction and their perceptions about how it impacts their students' affective needs. This phenomenological study's purpose statement addresses this problem, which is to describe elementary school teachers' shared lived experiences of departmentalized instruction, specifically their perceptions about how it impacts their students' affective needs. Aspects of Owens and Valesky's framework for understanding instructional organization, according to systems theory, form the theoretical framework for this study

(see Figure 1, Owens and Valesky's Framework). This study is significant to educational practices, as teacher experience is an indicator of student achievement and highly qualified teachers are central to educational reform. This introductory chapter also includes definitions of key terms; a discussion of delimitations, limitations, and assumptions; an overview of the nature of this phenomenological study; and researcher autobiographical information (researcher reflexivity) that is critical for bracketing the researcher's possible influence during the analysis phase of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This review of the relevant literature is divided into five major sections. First, confounding definitions related to elementary school instructional organization are presented. Second, institutional stakeholders in public education are identified and their interests, ideologies, and access to information are described. Third, instructional organization is discussed as an institutional factor in terms of rules, structures, and social and professional norms. Fourth, the impact of departmentalization on students is discussed in terms of elementary teachers and content competency, departmentalization and student affect, and impact on students. Last, a concluding summary of the chapter is presented. It is significant to note, that the scant research on the affective needs of elementary students was done in the years between 1970 and 1990, hence several of the references cited are older than the researcher would have liked.

Elementary School Instructional Organization: Confounding Definitions

A review of the literature related to elementary instructional organization is confounded by multiple definitions of the term. A self-contained classroom in its pure form entails students receiving all instruction from the same single teacher every day. Any other instructional organization model should be categorized as a form of departmentalization (Strohl et al., 2014). However, schools adhering to the self-contained classroom model also use specialists for art, physical education, and music (Chen, 2015). The confusion and misinterpretations of terminology resulting from various definitions have forced many districts to publish their own lists of terms as they apply to their own schools, such as the following:

- *Self-contained*. Students are assigned to one teacher for the majority of the day. They may receive art, music, and physical education from specialized teachers.
- *Semidepartmentalized*. Students are assigned to one teacher for the majority of the day and receive instruction from one additional teacher. They may also receive art, music, and physical education from specialized teachers. This is frequently termed platooning.
- *Departmentalized*. Students receive instruction from three or more teachers during the day. They may also receive art, music, and physical education from specialized teachers. (Butzin, Carroll, & Lutz, 2006).

R. H. Anderson (1966) described trends within the elementary school setting related to the self-contained model:

> Actual changes in the personnel structure of the elementary school have made the term self-contained-classroom teacher somewhat less accurate than it once was. There has been a growing tendency to add trained librarians and other materials specialists to the school staff. And, depending in part on the wealth of the school district, there may also be a number of other full-time or part-time specialists: teachers of music, both vocal and instrumental; teachers of arts and crafts; physical-education instructors; teachers of special education; specialists in remedial services of various types; guidance and testing personnel; and others. (p. 31)

The failure to agree upon a static definition of terms complicates the debate surrounding the choice of self-contained or departmentalized structures (Gerretson et al.,

2008). Advocates of the self-contained instructional structure cite the advantage of flexibility with lesson duration and schedule (McGrath & Rust, 2002). This flexibility is attributed to students' remaining with the same academic teacher throughout the instructional day and academic year. Teachers who remain with one group of students throughout the day have the option to adjust their instructional schedule according to the needs of students; departmentalized schedules deny that option. Departmentalized scheduling builds in class transition time, which some argue reduces instructional time. However, results from McGrath and Rust's research showed that no significant differences existed between the self-contained model and the departmentalized model relevant to instructional time. Additional arguments for the benefits of the self-contained classroom include optimized individualization, increased time flexibility, better coordination and correlation across subjects, and greater opportunities for student support (AS CD, 2011; Chang et al., 2008; Schiro, 2008).

Conversely, advocates of the departmentalized instructional model focus on the need for specialized knowledge rather than instructional time. Reyes and Fennell, for example, noted that it is unrealistic for "elementary teachers to have the specialized knowledge to facilitate mathematics instruction, as well as knowledge for every other subject they teach" (as cited in Gerretson et al., 2008, p. 303). Moreover, Varma and Hanusein (2008) maintained that elementary teachers "often lack a deep understanding of science. Unlike secondary teachers, elementary teachers typically do not major in science, and 40% have taken four or fewer semesters of science coursework" (p. 594).

Chan and Jarman (2004) isolated several qualities of departmentalization: helping students transition to middle-school formats, creating grade-level instructional teams, and

promoting teacher retention. Moreover, teacher retention associated with a departmentalized approach was shown to have significant positive impacts on student achievement (Barmby, 2006; Vanderhaar, Muñoz, & Rodosky, 2006). Vanderhaar et al. (2006) found teachers' average years of teaching experience, combined with student poverty levels and previous testing results, were the best indicators of student achievement.

Institutional Stakeholders

Institutional stakeholders are often unfamiliar with education law, instructional pedagogy, and budgetary limitations. For those reasons, a diagram-model that presents key features of the program being evaluated, in terms of those considerations, is invaluable. According to Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2011), the logic model diagram is helpful for program planning, evaluation, and research because the logic model diagram can help stakeholders understand the reasoning behind curriculum and program goals, which can differ from initial perceptions. While this approach may be used in any type of program evaluation, it is especially helpful in supporting stakeholders' understandings of objectives-oriented and theory-based evaluations. The basic design of a logic model includes information about program input (teachers, consultants, research, stakeholders), activities that may be required, outcomes, and how outcomes will be measured. Program inputs should also include information such as annual budgets, staffing facilities, equipment, and materials needed to run the program.

Identification of stakeholders. Two disparate groups categorize the majority of stakeholders: those who are directly impacted but have little or no influence (students), and those who are indirectly impacted but have varying degrees of influence (parents,

teachers, administrators). In response to growing demands for school improvement and change, school administrators are reexamining their schools' instructional models and considering alternatives that could raise student performance. Additionally, administrators are increasingly involving of teachers, parents, and other community stakeholders in decision making and leadership choices (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013).

Currently, in the majority of cases, a single school administrator does not make the ultimate decision regarding the school's instructional organization model; rather this decision is made by the district superintendent. However, by engaging teachers in discussions about the school's instructional organization model, school administrators gain valuable insights and anecdotal information that enhances decision making. Moreover, such collaboration improves teachers' ownership, commitment, and motivation for a smooth and successful implementation (Smylie, 1992). Despite broad and varied input, school superintendents make the final decisions about the instructional organization of a district's schools.

Parental involvement in schools increases student achievement and motivation while improving the parent-school relationship (Epstein, 1992). Encouraging group participation in the decision-making process increases overall productivity, widens access to information, provides unique viewpoints, and provides teachers and parents a voice in the operation of their schools (Kowalski, Lasley, & Mahoney, 2008). This inclusionary process is not without its disadvantages, including inefficiency as a result of lengthy negotiations and discussions, manipulation from special interest groups, individual's biases, and insecure confidentiality protections.

Ideology of stakeholders. Personal values, perceptions, experiences, and beliefs shape the decisions of individuals (Kowalski et al., 2008). When discussing a departmentalization decision, the values and beliefs regarding teaching and learning, often based on prior experiences or misinformation, create two opposing ideological frameworks. The student-orientation framework is the ideology that supports the traditional, self-contained elementary classroom model. In this model, teachers are fully responsible for understanding the needs and abilities of each student assigned to their classrooms (Gardner, 1995; Harrison & Killion, 2007; Kostelnik, Whiren, Soderman, & Gregory, 2009; McAfee & Leong, 2010). In this model, the teacher focuses on one small group of students rather than a larger group of students across multiple classes. With a smaller group of students, it is argued, the teacher can more effectively address individual student's needs by focusing on his or her personal development and emotional needs while delivering academic content (Harrison & Killion, 2007).

Conversely, the content-subject-matter ideological orientation encourages departmentalization. In this organizational model, each teacher focuses on students' understanding and mastery of the curriculum. Teachers design skill development to strengthen content acquisition in their specific subject area (Harrison & Killion, 2007). Departmentalized teachers are the content-area experts and are better able to prepare higher quality lessons because they have fewer lesson preparations (McPartland, 1990). Ideally, schools attempt to establish a balance between both ideological frameworks, but increased emphasis on subject orientation in the higher-grade levels is inevitable (Harrison & Killion, 2007). The ideologies, values, perceptions, and beliefs of the stakeholders influence the overall instructional organization of the elementary school.

Interests of stakeholders. The school and district must operate within budgetary limitations. The available resources influence all cost-related decisions (Kowalski et al., 2008). Administrators have the responsibility and accountability for district, school, and student success. Teachers' primary concern is student success, which ultimately builds school success. Teachers also have diverse beliefs, self-interests, and perceptions that influence the decision-making process. When changes in an instructional model impact teachers' working conditions (i.e., preparation time, responsibilities, and compensation decisions), their performance is oftentimes influenced by these changes.

The interests of parents are predominantly their children. They are concerned with their children's academic achievement and social-emotional health. Leadership based on moral consciousness and self-knowledge is the goal, rather than catering to self-interests. Branson (2007) wrote:

> Given that all moral judgments involve the making of choices, which are directly influenced by personal motives, values, and beliefs; this means that the moral judgment process is inextricably influenced by personal motives, values, and beliefs. Through the gaining of self-knowledge about one's personal motives, values, and beliefs, it is possible to ensure that these are commensurate with achieving desired moral outcomes. This is to say, through the knowing of personal motives, values, and beliefs; a person is more able to judge their own standards. The knowing of personal motives, values, and beliefs nurtures moral consciousness, which then enhances one's moral judgment capacity. (p. 475)

Richmond (2015) expanded Branson's (2007) focus on moral consciousness and self-knowledge by adding self-reflection and open-mindedness. Richmond maintained

that this addition will lead to sound decisions that are in the best interests of the students. Since students are the ultimate stakeholders, Richmond, as well as Branson, argued that decision making should be primarily focused on the needs and interests of students, and not on the needs and interests of other stakeholders.

Stakeholders' access to information. Information that is available or provided to stakeholders is an important element influencing their decisions. "Decision making is affected by a person's knowledge and skills, both in terms of process (i.e., knowing how to make good decisions) and substance (i.e., the nature of a specific decision)" (Kowalski et al., 2008, p. 40). Stakeholders use a variety of information sources when making decisions. Although school administrators have no control over stakeholder ideologies, biases, or past experiences, they are responsible for providing research, reports, and data that help clarify issues relating to instructional organization approaches. Stakeholders may have limited craft knowledge, only basic education, and little or no related educational experience. Time and patience are required to bring all stakeholders to the table with the information they need to make informed decisions. Stakeholders' experiences with departmentalization, for example, may be limited to their own secondary-school experiences. Such limited experiences will influence their decision-making process.

Relevant evidence, school visitations, and consultations with outside experts can reduce temptations to embrace unproven educational practices or fads (Stanovich & Stanovich, 2003). The NCLB emphasizes the use of scientifically based research when making educational decisions. However, such information is often technical, statistical, or theoretically based knowledge and may be difficult for practitioners to use. Contradictory

research, poor quality, and limited skills in interpreting and using scientifically based information is another hurdle in decision making (Kowalski et al., 2008).

The research on change implementation disconnect is documented and contains problems with credibility, dissemination, utility, and the applicability of research to practice (Hemsley-Brown, 2009). Educators must be cognizant of the need for multiple sources for evidence and only use relevant data created and systematically collected at the local level in conjunction with related scientific evidence (Kowalski & Lasley, 2009).

Prior to, and after making the decision to departmentalize, for example, locally relevant data should be collected in relation to the decision in order to confirm the instructional organization practice or to reconsider the decision (Kowalski et al., 2008). In sum, **s**takeholders' ideologies, interests, and access to information must be considered as they relate to decisions about instructional organization.

Institutional Organization

Buffenbarger (2011) maintained that teachers' and principals' reactions to shared decision making involving key stakeholders can have a discommoding impact on school instructional organization and, as such, examined the institutional factors that influence instructional organization. Institutional factors impacting instructional organization are divided into three categories: rules, structures, and social-professional norms. Decisions to change from a self-contained classroom instructional model to a departmentalized structure, for example, are driven by policy. Policy decisions are constrained and regulated by rules and procedures. Policy is also often entrenched in the comfort of accepted behaviors or norms of a group.

Rules. The two key, but unwritten rules that contribute to school districts being leery of changing to a departmentalized instructional model are the NCLB Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2003) and the confusing mosaic of teacher certification requirements that vary from state to state. At the elementary level, most teacher licenses are issued as common branch, with little or no requirements for any significant content specialization. However, the reauthorization of the NCLB Act of 2001 established requirements for states to establish an accountability system based on academic standards and assessments that include rewards for demonstration of AYP. The resulting demands for content standards and the establishment of accountability systems placed unprecedented pressure on teachers (L. W. Anderson, 2009), which has led to widespread cheating on tests that measure AYP. For example, in Atlanta, Georgia, several teachers and administrators were convicted of cheating in violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (1970). These educators' convictions led to substantial fines and incarceration (Sillars, 2015).

Chan and Jarman (2004) suggested that departmentalization is a way to reduce the pressure on teachers relevant to measures of AYP. They posited that departmentalization can provide the following benefits: (a) placing elementary educators in classrooms to instruct in content areas in which they are most proficient, (b) reducing multiple content-area lesson preparation time, (c) increasing teacher job satisfaction, and (d) acclimating students for later transition into middle schools. Although these benefits seem to support the departmentalized instructional mode, empirical evidence is lacking.

The NCLB legislation demands highly qualified instructors. These highly qualified teachers must possess bachelor's degrees and valid state teaching certificates

and must demonstrate competency in their areas of certification (United States Department of Education, 2006). In Grades K-6, many legally state certified elementary teachers meet the NCLB requirements. Unlike teachers in Grades 7–12 who are certified in their core content areas of English, sciences, foreign languages, reading-language arts, mathematics, art, history, economics, geography, music, and physical education, elementary teachers hold certificates that qualify them to teach all subjects, often with no content expertise. These qualifications meet the regulations of NCLB in that elementary teachers are considered highly qualified if they have a bachelor's degree, have full-continuing state certification, and have demonstrated subject-matter competence in the areas taught (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2010; New York State Education Department, 2006; NCLB, 2001); San Diego Unified School District, 2015).

Structures. The traditions and structure of the school create the institutional environment that impacts stakeholders' ideologies, perceptions, interests, and access to information (Goodman, 2012; D. N. Harris & Herrington, 2006; Ravitch, 2010). These forces weigh upon school leaders' decisions regarding whether to move from a self-contained classroom to a departmentalized structure. For example, there is often a dearth of institutional knowledge of or experience with the options relating to instructional organization. In addition, physical and staff constraints, the size of the school, staff expertise, school population, budgetary constraints, teacher contracts, student poverty level, and stakeholders' preferences may also place limits on the decision-making process (Shallcross, 2013).

The decision to departmentalize in an elementary school is complex and often contentious. It is generally not economically sound for specialized academic instructors

to be employed in small schools with a few classes on each grade level. The ease and practicability of changing to departmentalization are far greater in larger schools (Shallcross, 2013). The smaller school with fewer classrooms per grade level will have little flexibility in grouping or assigning staff (MacIver & Epstein, 1993). Many large schools form smaller schools, or teams within or across grade levels to create a more intimate, supportive, and responsive school environment (R. H. Anderson, 1966; MacIver & Epstein, 1993).

Team teaching can help to create smaller learning units (R. H. Anderson, 1966). The cost factor of team teaching is another consideration. Researchers have maintained that team teaching could add to a school's payroll (Chauhan, 2009; Henderson, Beach, & Famiano, 2006; Shallcross, 2013). Shallcross (2013) suggested that per student cost of team teaching is sometimes higher than the per student cost of traditional single teacher instruction. However, Henderson et al. (2006) contended that team teaching,

> …appears to be able to provide a much larger change for much less money than common workshop models of dissemination since the only cost is cost of a replacement (adjunct) to teach one course so two instructors can team up without increasing their workload. (p. 21)

This myriad of factors, among others, forms the framework for achieving the school's academic and social goals (Otto & Sanders, 1964).

When considering moving to a departmentalized organizational structure, administrators must give thought to both the horizontal and vertical movement of students. The vertical movement of students occurs by way of the systematic progression through grade levels. The horizontal movement is the effective distribution of qualified

instructors among the student population. This movement has particular relevance to this study, which examines elementary school teachers' experiences of departmentalized instruction and, therefore, is further discussed.

Lobdell and van Ness (1963) explained, "Actually, the self-contained classroom and departmentalization may be thought of as being at the opposite ends of a continuum; any deviation from the pure self-contained classroom represents a point on the continuum in the direction of departmentalization" (p. 191). The self-contained model dominates in elementary classrooms when examining elementary school horizontal structures based solely upon teacher utilization (Yecke, 2006). The typical elementary practice is a modified self-contained approach. Specialists, with specific certifications, teach music, physical education, and art (Lobdell & van Ness, 1963). In a purely departmentalized structure, each teacher specializes in a subject area(s) and does not instruct as a generalist (Otto & Sanders, 1964).

Team teaching is an iteration of a horizontal structure. It combines both the self-contained and the departmentalized approach while considering children and curriculum contemporaneously with teacher utilization (Little & Hoel, 2011; Otto & Sanders, 1964; Yecke, 2006). "Co-teaching is a model that emphasizes collaboration and communication among all members of a team to meet the needs of all students. However, what constitutes a team often varies from teacher to teacher and even from school to school" (Dieker, n.d., para. 1). Moreover, team teachers share the responsibilities within the same moment of time for directing the learning of the group (Otto & Sanders, 1964). "Collaboration pools the talents of numerous educators to meet the needs of all students in the general education classroom" (Patterson, Syverud, & Seabrooks-Blackmore, 2008,

p. 17). Collaboration between teaming teachers decreases the amount of individual planning time for which each teacher is responsible. Teachers reflect on lessons, students, and other aspects of teaching and learning in a way only collaboration between teammates can offer (Abdallah, 2009; Stewart & Perry, 2005).

Social and professional norms. A factor in the implementation of an instructional organization structure is the comfort and confidence gained from accepted practices, past experiences, and present successes. These social and professional norms have a strong influence on how the administrator interprets new information, defines personal interests, and accepts new ideologies (Schiro, 2008). In many cases, past practices can serve as a prologue to future policies.

The debate surrounding instructional organization is not new; issues related to how best to structure elementary schools and classrooms has continued for more than a century. However, because little research exists on the measurable effects of departmentalization, scholars are calling for further studies on this topic. Most administrators do not consider departmentalization a viable option, even though substantial supporting evidence for this position is lacking (Del Viscio & Muffs, 2007; McGrath & Rust, 2002).

Departmentalization, as an instructional model, first appeared in 1789 and was implemented by the first reading and writing schools in Boston, Massachusetts. The students in those early schools received instruction from one instructor for the morning half of the day and a second instructor for the afternoon half of the day (Otto & Sanders, 1964). The original educational structure in early American education was the one-room school. Normally, one teacher taught all subjects to all students, regardless of age. The

concept of grade levels did not yet exist (Franklin, 1967). J. D. Philbrick, principal of the Quincy Grammar School of Boston at the close of the 19th century, initiated a graded school plan. In his organizational plan, graded content of academic study was created and correlated to students who were grouped into grade levels. Each grade level had a single teacher who taught all subjects to the students within that grade (Franklin, 1967; Otto & Sanders, 1964). This graded school plan initiated a 50-year movement toward self-contained instruction.

Departmentalization continued to gain popularity from 1900 to 1930 (Otto & Sanders, 1964). Concurrently, William A. Wirt, Gary, Indiana Superintendent, began a new instructional model of platoon schools. The entire student population was divided into two groups called platoons. While one platoon of students attended their academic classes, the other group attended their specialized instruction, including art, music, dance, and physical education. At the conclusion of an allotted time period, the platoons reversed. In the 1920s, Alice Barrows, in her position at the U. S. Office of Education, moved to the forefront as an aggressive national publicist for the platoon school plan. The plan was widely accepted as a result of its focus on efficiency, humanities, and democracy in education (Mohl, 1975).

From Alice Barrows's advocacy in the 1920s, departmentalized instruction has remained the overwhelming organizational structure for secondary schools. This acceptance has not been the case for elementary schools. Platooning and departmentalization has enjoyed only sporadic favor and continues to be the subject of ongoing debate (R. H. Anderson, 1966; Franklin & Johnson, 1967). This debate peaked in the 1930s, but by the 1940s, elementary departmentalization began to decline. What

remained were specialists for art, music, and physical education (Goodlad, 1960, 1966; Lobdell & van Ness, 1963).

The increased demands to meet core curriculum standards and Race to the Top goals have encouraged many elementary schools to integrate elementary school departmentalized instruction. Superintendent of Schools Catherine Latham (2012) explained how departmentalized instruction is implemented in Lynn, Massachusetts:

> Elementary principals continue to implement and evaluate departmentalized instruction in grades 3, 4, and 5. Some schools have determined that departmentalized instruction works best in grade 5 only, some in grades 4 and 5 and some in grades 3, 4, and 5. These determinations are based on student population, number of teachers per grade, and staffing strengths and weaknesses. (p. 2)

Despite increased interest in departmentalization, the self-contained classroom continued to be the prevailing model for elementary school organization, particularly in the primary grades (Hall, Quinn, & Gollnick, 2013). In the years 1993–1994, two thirds of our nation's elementary teachers held general elementary assignments and the remaining one third taught specific-subject classes or special education. "Most secondary schools teachers' main assignments were to teach specific subjects" (Henke, Choy, Geis, & Broughman, 1996, p. 67). This situation remains the case today.

Departmentalization Impact on Students

Clear and decisive research may make the choice to departmentalize less contentious. Relevant data and observable implementations of departmentalization structures in elementary schools are invaluable. However, the current research on the

effectiveness of elementary departmentalization remains inconclusive (Hood, 2010; Lobdell & van Ness, 1963; Strohl et al, 2014). That notwithstanding, studies do exist that suggest both advantages and disadvantages of the departmentalized model. Additionally, modified approaches combining self-contained and departmentalized instruction aim to integrate the benefits of both models (McPartland, Coldiron, & Braddock, 1987). Before discussing the benefits of both models, it is helpful to examine the research literature relevant to elementary teachers and content competency and student affect in the departmentalized structure.

Elementary teachers and content competency. Elementary teachers' curriculum content knowledge is critically important to the improvement of instruction and student learning. However, attention to its foundational development has been largely underexamined. Most research has focused on the various aspects of teaching, but little attention has been given to teachers' content mastery of the subjects they teach (Akerson, 2005; Akerson & Flanigan, 2000).

The American Educational Research Association began exploring the importance of teacher content knowledge by way of the seminal work of Shulman (1986). Shulman identified a domain of teacher knowledge, which he classified as *pedagogical content knowledge*. He made the distinction between content studied and the special amalgam of content and pedagogy required for teaching the subject's content. Shulman's work focused new attention on the foundational importance of content knowledge in teaching. A pivotal contribution of this seminal work was the reframing of teachers' knowledge in a way that made the role of content in teaching as important as instructional methodology (Shulman, 1987). More recent research indicates that content knowledge for teaching is

multidimensional and that it positively affects student learning (Hill, Rowan, & Ball, 2005). For example, several studies suggest a teacher's completion of an undergraduate or graduate major in mathematics is directly associated with higher student achievement (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sanders, 2007; Frome, Lasater, & Cooney, 2005; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Monk, 1994; Wenglinsky, 2000, 2002). Monk (1994) and Wenglinsky (2000) identified a similar trend in science.

The importance of content knowledge among elementary teachers is reflected in the licensure requirements of many states. For example, Illinois tests prospective elementary teachers in the content areas of language arts and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and health and physical education (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.). Similarly, New York (Pearson Education, 2015) and Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2011) test these same content areas. This trend in competency testing of prospective elementary teachers is being widely adopted throughout the nation. Standards for establishing passing grades vary from state to state and are constantly being evaluated. For example, the Indiana Department of Education (2015) recently lowered the passing grade for select teacher licensure tests, increasing the pass rate from 24% to 80%–85% (Cavazos, 2015). The research literature and recent state-initiated requirements for teacher licensure suggest that teacher content knowledge should be a focus of educational administrators and policy makers. In many cases (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.; Indiana Department of Education, 2015; Pearson Education, 2015; Texas Education Agency, 2011), teacher content knowledge is on the agendas of administrators and policymakers. Attention to teacher content mastery may well be an

advisable consideration in hiring policies; placement of elementary teachers, especially within departmentalized instructional models; and teacher training practices.

Departmentalization and student affect. Roger Garlock Barker, a seminal social scientist, was the founder of environmental psychology. He is best known for his development of the concept of affect in behavioral settings, which later became known as ecological psychology. The book *One Boy's Day* (Barker & Wright, 1951) follows the life of a boy during a 13-hour day in 1949. The text was one of the first documentations of affect and behavior in a natural setting. The study's method of psychological ecology and its application to affect were documented in the text's introductory chapter. At the time of publication, critics dismissed the study as little more than a detailed accounting of a boy's activities, lacking research hypotheses: "it contained only raw data, and therefore it cannot really be evaluated and it is unfortunate that the authors did not enlarge the volume to include their formulation of the meaning and task of psychological ecology" (Stendler, 1952, p. 92). However, in the early 1960s, Barker received the American Psychological Association's Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award (other recipients of this award included Jean Piaget and Noam Chomsky), and the National Institute of Mental Health presented Barker with its career research award.

An examination of how students' emotions and feelings impact their learning is helpful. Emotions and feelings originate in the brain based on past experiences and reactions to current experiences. These emotions and feelings impact students' motivation to learn, ability to work with others, and self-concept as learners (Gregory & Parry, 2006). Affect is integral to, rather than apart from, curriculum. When students have a positive affect about learning, they are available to academic growth. When students'

negative affect about learning is in force, this availability for academic growth is diminished or extinguished. Expert teachers observe student behavior and work to understand the affect that drives behaviors, which helps them guide students in a positive direction toward content mastery. Gregory and Parry explained why affect relates directly on student learning:

> As far as the brain is concerned, actions speak louder than words. Everything that happens in the classroom is monitored by three parts of the brain, two of which have no spoken language but are very adept at reading body language and tone of voice. Every gesture, every inflection, and every invasion of personal space is monitored by the limbic system and evaluated in terms of its threat potential. These skills allowed our ancestors to survive and they are still alive and well in all of us. (p. 13)

Proponents of affective education believe it is inextricably linked to traditional instruction in all content areas (Gregory & Parry, 2006). Affective education focuses on developing students' belief systems, emotions, and attitudes. Foundational to affective education is the belief that in order to learn a subject's content, students must have developed necessary affective aspects within their personality. Affective-sensitive educational environments improve students' abilities to work effectively with other people and help them to develop learning strategies. Integrating affective education into the departmentalized classroom can present a challenge for teachers, who are often time and schedule pressured to spend the designated instructional period teaching the curriculum-mandated content.

There are three main domains of learning: cognitive (L. W. Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, 1956), affective (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1973), and psychomotor (Harrow, 1972). Affective objectives can be divided into a hierarchy that deals with feelings or emotions relative to five areas: (a) receiving, (b) responding, (c) valuing, (d) organization, and (e) characterization (Krathwohl et al., 1964). Topics presented within an affective framework have a real-world application and are, therefore, relevant in students' lives (Rompelman, 2002).

Scholars claim that departmentalized elementary school instruction reduces a teacher's ability to address students' social-emotional, affective needs, and this belief has been key to the sustained popularity of the self-contained, single-teacher classroom (ASCD, 2011; Chang et al., 2008; Schiro, 2008). Proponents of elementary departmentalization assert that, with training, content specialists can meet these needs (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Wilkins, 2008; Wink, 2005). Unfortunately, there is scant research that resolves this conundrum (Del Viscio & Muffs, 2007; McGrath & Rust, 2002).

Impact on students. The strongest argument supporting departmentalization in the upper-elementary level is that specialists provide expert classroom instruction that fosters deeper learning (Hood, 2010). Professional development is more effective and efficient when districts are able to target each instructor's specialized subject area, and the cognitive preparedness of this specific age group. The departmentalized structure facilitates content-based student collaboration and shared learning experiences. This structure centralizes curriculum adjustments and helps to identify curriculum weaknesses that may be age or maturity based. Changing classes gives students the opportunity for

increased interpersonal skill development through increased peer interaction and the experience of a variety of teaching styles and teacher personalities. Establishing a preset time exposure for each content area guarantees students that no content area will be postponed or shortchanged. Age-appropriate and effective lesson planning becomes less onerous and more focused with fewer subjects that the teacher must concentrate (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Van Solen, 2014).

Conversely, the strongest argument against upper-elementary level departmentalization is the purported difficulty teachers experience in developing a close, supportive relationship with individual students who are at an age when these relationships are developmentally important (L. W. Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm, & Splittgerber, 2000; Chang et al., 2008). Gallagher, Kainz, Vernon-Feagans, and White (2013) stressed the importance of the individualization of education based on the age and needs of each student, noting the importance of the self-contained classroom structure in facilitating such instruction. However, the weakest students may academically falter from the lack of a close relationship with a single instructor who has a deeper knowledge of their individual needs (H. J. Becker, 1987). Individualized instruction is more difficult to accomplish when students change classes on a fixed timetable, regardless of their needs. A fixed and rigid schedule adds time pressure on the already struggling learner (Chang et al., 2008; Lobdell & van Ness, 1963; Strohl et al., 2014). Little formal opportunity exists for teachers to extend learning activity in a departmentalized structure when students demonstrate the need for such, unlike in a self-contained classroom where schedules can be modified (Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts, & Morrison, 2008).

Departmentalized elementary curriculum continues to be criticized as being isolated and lacking meaningful opportunities for subject-matter integration (Liu, 2011; Lobdell & van Ness, 1963). The self-contained model, with a generalist as the instructor, facilitates cross-curricular integration, which is more difficult in a departmentalized model (Hood, 2010). Yet, generalist elementary teachers lack the preparation and expertise to serve as subject-area specialists (Lobdell & van Ness, 1963). The disconnection between materials and resources and the lack of common access causes frustration in students and teachers within a departmentalized structure (Liu, 2011), and the movement between classes causes a loss of valuable instructional time (McGrath & Rust, 2002).

The research literature on the impact of elementary departmentalization on the preadolescent student is divisive, contradictory and incomplete, and is not likely to be resolved in the near future. The search continues for designs that embrace the virtues of the self-contained and departmentalized classroom structures (Goodlad, 1966). Semidepartmentalization and team teaching are two iterations that combine the benefits of pure self-containment and departmentalization (McPartland, 1987). A team-teaching model with modified departmentalization can support a pupil-oriented learning environment with specialized instruction. Team teachers share responsibility for approximately 40 to 75 students and provide instruction in combined curricular areas such as math-science or language arts-social studies (Cushman, 2013; Gately, 2005; Gately & Gately, 2001). Such interdisciplinary teacher teams minimize student isolation and help build student relationships while fostering collaboration among staff members. This approach opens opportunities for cross-curricular connections between subjects

(MacIver, 1990). An alternate model maintains multiple specialists for each subject area but provides the younger students with opportunities to develop bonds with a single teacher through a formalized advisory relationship (Cushman, 2013; Gately, 2005; Gately & Gately, 2001). Knowledge about children's emotional and cognitive development (Piaget, 1954, 1970, 1977; Vytgotsky, 1935) can be helpful when examining teachers' perceptions about how a departmentalized structure impacts students' affective needs.

Summary

The literature shows that confounding definitions related to elementary school instructional organization, limited research, and contradictory and inconclusive findings contribute to the difficulty in determining the impact of departmentalization on elementary school students. Also problematic are stakeholders' influences on instructional organization decisions and how they view them, in terms of institutional factors such as rules, structures, and social and professional norms.

Confounding definitions and misrepresentations make choices difficult, and force many school districts to create their own definitions of terms. The failure to establish static definitions continues to complicate the debate. Those who support the benefits of the self-contained classroom cite optimized individualization, time flexibility, and coordination across content areas. The advocates of departmentalization focus on the need for the teachers' specialized knowledge, for increased student engagement, and for content mastery. They indicate that it is unrealistic to expect elementary teachers to have the specialized knowledge required to facilitate instruction in all content areas.

The literature indicates that departmentalized instruction helps students transition to the middle-school format, and that grade-level instructional teams promote teacher

retention. The association of teacher retention with departmentalization results in a positive impact on student achievement. The years of a teacher's experience matters in student achievement.

Institutional stakeholders often influence decision making. This complicates the process, as they are often unfamiliar with educational law, instructional pedagogy, and budgetary and contractual constraints. Various models will facilitate positive stakeholder engagement. A popular model is the Logic Model. Any model employed must include annual budgets, staffing, facilities, equipment available or needed, and materials required for running a new program.

The empowerment of all stakeholders is not universal. Students are directly impacted, but have little or no influence. Indirectly impacted are the parents, teachers, and administrators, and they are far more empowered. All stakeholders claim to have the same goals: increased teacher and student productivity, preservation of local schools, significant test score improvement, and all at the lowest cost possible. Key school district administrators are increasingly involving teachers, parents, and a broad range of stakeholders in decision making and leadership choices.

The literature shows that parental involvement increases both student achievement and motivation, and improves parent-school relationships. This involvement increases overall productivity, widens access to information, provides unique viewpoints, and gives teachers and parents a voice in operating their schools. The disadvantages of broad and diverse involvement are inefficiency as a result of lengthy discussions and negotiations, manipulation from special interest groups, individual's biases, and insecure confidentiality protections.

The focal points of the debate between self-contained and departmentalized elementary classrooms are the need for deeper content mastery by teachers (departmentalized), and the need for the social-emotional support of the student (self-contained). The question remains: Can the departmentalized teacher effectively provide the student with the student's personal developmental needs, while delivering the specified academic content? Each side of the debate cites overarching issues: student contact time, teacher lesson preparation time, and small versus large student rosters.

The economic reality is that schools can only provide the programs they can afford. Changes in the physical plant, added teacher training, teacher contracts, the need for additional teachers, and added supplies and materials all become critical factors in program adoptions. The school and the district must operate within budgetary limitations. This often impedes changes in instructional models.

Stakeholders' limited experiences with alternate instructional models often create biases based on past experiences. They may have limited craft knowledge, only a basic education, struggle with interpreting and applying research, or are motivated by unrelated issues. These factors influence their decision-making process. Using school visitations, consultations with outside experts, and simply presented evidence, can all help to inform stakeholders in ways that facilitate effective and efficient decision making.

Stakeholders fall into three groups, and are guided by their groups' key theme. One group is rules oriented, and hesitates when established rules abridged. A second group seeks to maintain the already established structures, and has difficulty replacing them with new and unfamiliar structures. The final group compares all changes to the current social-professional norms. Significant model change requires policy changes, and

new rules and procedures. To the degree that these changes disrupt entrenched and accepted behaviors, so will the degree of their resistance.

The issue of elementary classroom teachers' content competency is addressed by the NCLB requirement for all teachers to be highly qualified. Notwithstanding that requirement, the vast majority of elementary teachers qualify as highly qualified to teach all subjects, based on having earned a bachelor's degree, and met their state's requirements for licensure. This is often with little or no content expertise. Many states are addressing this issue by requiring all teacher candidates, as well as current teachers and administrators, to pass a battery of content tests. These tests vary from state to state, with different acceptable levels of proficiency.

The decision to departmentalize an elementary school is often complex and contentious. Small schools are the most economically impacted, as they have fewer teachers and fewer classes at each grade level. This would require adding several more teachers. Larger schools have more flexibility, based on many more classrooms on each grade level and a correspondingly higher number of teachers. Team teaching, platooning, and the blending of models are used in schools both large and small, and these compromises are often what communities are more amenable to accept.

Both self-contained and departmentalized elementary schools have long histories, dating back to 1789. Each has shown promise as an effective model. Unfortunately, despite a century's long debate, little research exists on the measurable effect of departmentalization. The popularity of platooned and departmentalized elementary schools peaked between 1900 and 1930. In the 1920s, departmentalization became the standard for secondary schools, while elementary schools slowly returned to the self-

contained instructional model. The remainders of the departmentalized elementary schools of the 1930s, are today's elementary specialists in art, music, and physical education.

Beyond these aforementioned specialties, the self-contained classroom teacher is expected to be content competent in all other subject areas, often with little or no in-depth expertise, creating a potential instructional weakness that has been largely underexamined. Most research has focused on the various aspects of teaching, with little attention to the content mastery of the subjects they teach. The literature defines this as pedagogical knowledge. This is the amalgam of content and pedagogy required for teaching the subject's content. Content in teaching is as important as instructional methodology. The literature and recent content requirements for states' licensure suggest that there is a new focus on teachers' content knowledge, and will become a consideration for educational administrators and policy makers.

A renewed interest in the importance of how students' emotions and feelings impact their learning is the impetus for phenomenological studies. Affect is integral to, rather than apart from, curriculum. Expert teachers observe behavior, and adjust to create a more positive affect, relating to the process of learning. Proponents of affective education believe that it is inextricably linked to traditional instruction in all content areas. Foundational to this school of thought is the belief that in order to learn a subject's content, students must have developed the necessary affective aspects within their personality.

When the social-emotional support of the self-contained teacher becomes the paramount obstacle to departmentalization, the team-teaching model with modified

departmentalization can support a pupil-oriented learning environment with specialized instruction. This approach creates an interdisciplinary teacher team, minimizes student isolation, and helps to build student relationships. Team teaching fosters collaboration among staff members and creates the opportunity for cross-curricular connections.

The decision to departmentalize, at the elementary school level, is complicated and often contentious, addressing issues of teacher content competency, costs, personal biases, and influence on student affect. The potential for a positive impact on student success, from the perspectives of teachers experiencing departmentalized instruction, is missing from the ongoing debate. This study addresses that gap in the literature and current research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology chapter is composed of seven major sections. First, the study's methodology and research design are described. The research questions are then restated. Third, issues relevant to population and study sample for a phenomenological inquiry are discussed. The study's data collection instruments are described and issues of validity, credibility, and quality are discussed. Fifth, the study's procedures are described, and data analysis steps for this phenomenological study are detailed. Last, a summary of the chapter is presented.

Methodology and Research Design

A qualitative methodology is selected for this study because qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of individuals and their experiences (Merriam, 2009) and is, therefore, best suited for answering this study's central research question and four procedural subquestions. Moustakas (1994) discussed the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods. He explained how quantitative data analysis does not take into consideration the wholeness of a phenomenon of inquiry; neither do quantitative methods provide a depth of understanding of study participants' experiences of the phenomenon. Unlike quantitative methods that involve the random selection of participants and control of the study environment, a particular strength of qualitative methods is the ability to collect data in study participants' existing natural environments (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). A qualitative phenomenological study specifically examines the lived experiences of study participants in order to understand the essence of their shared experiences of the phenomenon of inquiry (Simon & Goes, 2013), which in the case of this study is departmentalized instruction as experienced by elementary school

teachers, specifically the teachers' perceptions about its impact on students' affective needs. Individual interviews were used to gather the data. Through interviews, the researcher gains insight into participants' behavior and the reasoning behind their actions (Seidman, 2006).

Restatement of Research Questions

In keeping with Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological research methods, one central research question is posed, followed by four procedural subquestions that provide further guidance for this study:

1. How do elementary school teachers perceive departmentalized instruction and describe their experiences of this structure's impact on their students' affective needs?
    a. What statements describe elementary school teachers' perceptions about and experiences of the impact of departmentalized instruction on their students' affective needs?
    b. What themes emerge from these perceptions and experiences?
    c. What are the contexts of and thoughts about these perceptions and experiences?
    d. What is the overall essence of these perceptions and experiences?

Population, Sample, and Site

Unlike a target population, to which a researcher would ideally like to generalize study findings, this study's population is referred to as an accessible (or available) population from which the researcher can realistically select participants (Gay & Airasian, 2003). The population from which the study sample was selected included

teachers subscribed to, and participating within, the online community of Leadership 2.0. The full title is School Leadership 2.0. The parent company is Keany Associates, Inc. The current membership is 12,400 educators. Its e-mail bulletin goes to a mailing list of 95,000+ four times a week. There are 161 special interest subgroups. The membership of each group is listed on its Web site. The largest subgroup membership is 224 members.

All participants in this study are teachers employed by elementary public schools at which the departmentalized model was employed. These 12 teachers were purposively selected from 47 teachers who responded to an invitation (see APPENDIX A) to participate in the study. This sample size conforms to sample size recommendations ranges from six (Morse, 2000) to 10 (Creswell, 2007). They were selected to represent grade levels, teacher gender, years of experience, educational background, and content area taught. All participants are currently teaching within departmentalized elementary schools. Every teacher in the group participated in a Skype interview that ranged from 56 minutes to 92 minutes. The participants were all first-, second-, or third-grade teachers between the ages of 24 and 53, with varying credentials and years of experience.

The research sites were 12 different schools, located in 10 different states (IA, OH, PA, OK, TX, WY, NY, FL, CO, VT). Five primary schools were classified as Title I, 1-B, 1-D, 2-B, 3-A, 3-B. A total of 793 students attend the schools at which the participant subjects teach.

This study used a purposeful sampling method referred to as convenience sampling. This qualitative approach was used in order to select a sample based on accessibility-availability of research sites and participants, time, money, and location (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Convenience sampling is not as credible as other

sampling techniques, but it is appropriate when the intent of the qualitative research is to elucidate a particular phenomenon as opposed to generalizing information to a larger population (Creswell, 2007). The aim of this study was to explore the phenomenon of departmentalized instruction and its impact on students' affective needs and how it is experienced and perceived by elementary school teachers. Therefore, the goal was to use convenience sampling techniques to target a sample of 10 to 12 elementary school teachers within the Leadership 2.0 membership, who were instructing in a departmentalized classroom setting. Participant selection criteria included Grades1–3 teachers who had been teaching for three or more years. As this study used a small purposeful convenience sample, generalizing to specific populations will not be possible.

Data Collection Instruments

Two data collection instruments are utilized in this qualitative phenomenological study. A semistructured interview guide (see APPENDIX B) is used to gather data relevant to the teacher participants' experiences and perceptions. The researcher also maintains a field journal to document personal biases and observations during the teacher interviews. The purpose of writing these reflections is to become "aware of one's own biases and assumptions in order to bracket them" (Laverty, 2003, p. 17).

Interview guide. A semistructured open-ended interview guide (see APPENDIX B) was used to collect data from elementary school teachers relating to their experiences of departmentalized instruction and their perceptions about how it impacts their students' affective needs. Prior to its use, the interview guide had been reviewed by five nonparticipating teachers to detect and eliminate any leading or biased questions.

Characteristics of the semistructured interview. The interviewer and respondents engaged in a semiformal interview. The interviewer was guided by the predetermined and sequential interview questions. This is the list of questions covering topics that needed to be discussed during the conversation, always in a particular order. The interviewer followed the guide, but also followed topical diversions that may have strayed from the guide, when this was appropriate. Semistructured interviewing, according to H. R. Bernard (1988), is best used when there is only a single opportunity to interview a sample subject. The semistructured interview guide provided a clear set of instructions for the interviewer and provided reliable and comparable qualitative data. Semistructured interviews were preceded by environmental observations that were recorded in the researcher's field journal. The first several questions in the interview guide gathered participant demographic information such as age, experience, and education level. Thereafter, questions were posed specific to the phenomenon of departmentalized instruction and concepts related to elementary school students' affective needs, which are documented in the research literature.

Researcher field journal. In addition to the interview guide, the researcher used a field journal to document observations about participants' behavioral cues during the interviews along with researcher reflections about the participants' experiences of and perceptions about the departmentalized classroom's impact on students' affective needs. This field journal also served as an instrument for the researcher to bracket his biases, as a retired elementary school teacher.

Validity, Credibility, and Quality

The practice of bracketing potential researcher biases is a method used in phenomenological studies (Moustakas, 1994) to establish researcher reflexivity in qualitative research. Helpful for establishing credibility and quality in qualitative studies (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), researcher reflexivity entails the scrutiny of one's "research experience, decisions, and interpretations in ways that bring the researcher into the process and allows the reader to assess how and to what extent the researcher's interests, positions, and assumptions influenced inquiry" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 188). Clarke (2005) recommended that qualitative researchers ask themselves "How can we be present and hold ourselves accountable in our research?" (p. 13). In this study, the researcher practiced researcher reflexivity by reflecting on his biases in his field journal prior to and immediately following each participant interview. In this manner, the researcher bracketed his biases while maximizing his experience and knowledge, which are considered valuable, rather than hindrances to the analysis process (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This journaling process incorporated procedures of researcher reflectivity as a method of ensuring validity (Moustakas, 1994). Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to review the interview transcripts. This additional step is a form of member checking for validity of statements and the essence of the interviewees' experiences.

Procedures

This section provides a sequential description of the study procedures. These procedures are preceded and based upon the literature review. The literature review conducted prior to this section identifies attitudes, prior studies, common beliefs, and

pedagogical content regarding the efficacy of both self-contained and departmentalized elementary instruction. The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes and perceptions of departmentalized elementary teachers, as they relate to meeting the affective needs of their students. Those needs, as much of the literature indicates, appear to be the most contentious issue in this discussion.

The procedures are divided into two sections. First are the 17 structural procedures, followed by the 33 probing questions (APPENDIX B). The sequence of procedures is designed first to review the current literature, trace the history of both self-contained and departmentalized elementary classroom instruction, review the ongoing and conflicting debate, establish the problem, detail the method of data collection, and summarize the results of the data analysis. These procedures are designed to answer each of the research questions posed in the first chapter. In keeping with Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological research methods, one central research question is posed, followed by four procedural subquestions that provide further guidance for this study.

Second, a semistructured interview was constructed and piloted to eliminate questions that may have signaled a preferred response. The **five** pilot subjects were teachers currently teaching in departmentalized elementary schools. The pilot study participants are not included in the final study.

Third, upon approval from the target organization to recruit teacher participants from their membership, the researcher sought approval from the University Internal Review Board.

Fourth, teachers within the approved organization were invited, via e-mail, to participate in the study (see APPENDIX C). Fifth, all teachers agreeing to participate

were sent a thank you letter and a preliminary questionnaire (see APPENDIX D). That questionnaire provided information that was used to assemble a purposefully selected study population. The final selection balanced gender, experience, and content taught.

Sixth, all teachers responding to the questionnaire received a thank you letter (see APPENDIX D). Letters indicated if they were, or were not, selected for the study. Those who were selected were contacted to determine a convenient time and place for the interview.

Seventh, Skype interview dates and times were confirmed. If Skype interviews were conducted within participants' schools, building principals were advised of these appointments and locations to comply with building and district security procedures and regulations.

Eighth, at the designated time, when Skype interviews began, field notes were recorded and environmental conditions that might impact the interview were noted. These field notes also recorded the demeanor, attitude, and body language of the interviewee.

Ninth, The Adult Consent Form (see APPENDIX E) was reviewed and agreed upon. The semistructured interview then commenced. Field notes were taken during the interview. The interview, in its entirety, was recorded on a digital thumb drive.

Tenth, at the conclusion of the interview, and not during the Skype session, any additional field notes that may be of value were recorded. These notes may indicate the comfort or discomfort observed during any particular question, general attitudes during the interview, or closing comments that were relevant to the study.

Eleventh, all recorded interviews were transcribed on a computer, using the Microsoft Word processing program. The associated field notes were appended to each

transcription. Any additional investigator's interview reflections were added and so noted.

Twelfth, all transcripts were reviewed. Central themes in responses were identified and coded as such. Central themes reduced the dialog to recognizable sentences conveying a discrete expression of experience. Similar or identical responses were identified and coded. Respondents' extensions and/or additions to interview questions were noted and coded into Thematic Descriptions. This index highlighted major themes that had emerged. This procedure required reading data, repeatedly if necessary, to achieve a holistic and intuitive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. All preconceptions and judgments were bracketed.

Thirteenth, all coded items were parsed to stratify items by gender, experience**,** and content area. This procedure summarized the raw data from each participant.

Fourteenth, referents were extracted. Referents are specific words that highlight the meaning of the experience being researched. Transcripts were searched for referents, which were then extracted and listed separately.

Fifteenth, summarizing of the themes to produce an in-depth picture of participants' experience of the phenomena under investigation was performed (Holroyd (2001).

Sixteenth, general and unique themes for all the interviews were identified, and a composite summary was created. After the procedures listed above had been completed for all the interviews, the investigator isolated "the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations" (Hycner, 1999, p. 154). Common themes were not clustered if significant differences existed. When unique or minority expressions

are present, they are identified as important counterpoints, regarding the phenomenon researched.

Seventeenth, after all of the interviews were transcribed, the researcher analyzed the data using the modified Van Kaam method for phenomenological research, as described by Moustakas (1994).

All interviewees were given coded identifications to maintain their anonymity. The research question focused on the participants' experiences, as departmentalized elementary teachers, and in meeting the affective needs of their students. The primary interview questions lead to probing questions that add greater understanding to their primary responses. Themes that emerged during the coding process were grouped into similar chunks of data.

The tone and discourse were supported by naming the themes using the language of the participants. Follow-up, probing questions also yielded themes.

Data Collection

The study's data collection phase was guided by the central research question: How do elementary school teachers perceive departmentalized instruction and describe their experiences of this structure's impact on their students' affective needs? Using a semistructured interview guide (see APPENDIX B), each participant was interviewed using the same open-ended questions. The length of the interviews range from 45 to 60+ minutes. With the permission of the participants, the one-on-one interviews were recorded using a thumb drive digital audio recorder and a lap-top computer, and finally transcribed into written form using Microsoft Word for analysis purposes.

Interviews were conducted at a time and location selected by the participants. When possible, the interviews were conducted with both the researcher and participant sitting in a neutral position. Prior to the start of each interview, the researcher wrote in his field journal a brief description of activities and thoughts that could introduce bias as a result of any previous experiences as an elementary school teacher. During the interview, the researcher recorded observations and nonverbal cues (i.e., body language, nervous laughs, and facial expressions). Directly after each interview, the researcher recorded, in the field journal, all perceptions and views of the interview and impressions of the interviewee. This journaling process incorporated procedures of researcher reflectivity as a method of ensuring validity (Moustakas, 1994).

At the conclusion of the interview, the participants were asked if they would like a copy of the interview's written transcript to check if the researcher has captured the full essence of what they described as their experiences and perceptions. This additional step is a form of member checking for validity of statements and the essence of the interviewees' experiences.

Data preparation. The semistructured interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder. In preparation for the qualitative analysis, each of the recorded interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word for analysis purposes, facilitated by the Audacity recording computer program. Each interview transcript was dated and assigned a participant code to protect their identities. To protect further the participants' identity, the interview data were securely stored on the researcher's password-protected computer.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered the instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009). Although researchers' interests in a particular problem, topic, or situation inspire the research, their personal values, opinions, and experiences must be put aside or bracketed (Moustakas, 1994). Despite all attempts to create an unbiased researcher, they proved to have mixed results. Van Manen (1990) contended that a certain level of intimacy and connection is required by the researcher and participants in order to create an authentic conversation that will be examined, clarified, and revised between the researcher and participant. Findlay (as cited in Friesen, Henriksson, & Saevi, 2012) described phenomenological research writing as a process of shifting back and forth between the researcher's personal experiences and the participants' textual descriptions. The researcher creates the phenomenological interview as a conversation, gathering ideas and reflections reciprocally (van Manen, 1990,).

The data analysis phase was guided by the study's four procedural subquestions, which adhere to Moustakas's (1994) approach to phenomenological research:

a. What statements describe elementary school teachers' perceptions about and experiences of the impact of departmentalized instruction on their students' affective needs?
b. What themes emerge from these perceptions and experiences?
c. What are the contexts of and thoughts about these perceptions and experiences?
d. What is the overall essence of these perceptions and experiences?

The modified Van Kaam method described by Moustakas (1994) was used to analyze the data.

Epoché. In the first step of epoché, the researcher bracketed any personal experiences as an elementary school teacher. This is a process of the researcher setting aside any preconceived notions, as recorded in the field journal. The ultimate goal of this step is to arrive at as unbiased of a description of the phenomena as possible. While it is impossible to remove all biases, the purpose of this step is for the researcher to produce a written account of experiences, memories, perceptions, feelings, and judgments that may influence data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2013) posited that bracketing mitigates against the researcher's inclination to use a personal lens when interpreting participants' responses. Other qualitative researchers refer to this written account in terms of the researcher reflexivity section of the research report or doctoral dissertation (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Phenomenological reduction. The second step in data analysis is the process of phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological reduction involves the following steps: horizonalizing, clustering horizons into themes, and organizing the horizons and themes into a coherent textural description of the phenomenon. Horizonalizing entails analyzing the interview transcripts for specific statements that describe the teachers' experiences of and perceptions of the impact of departmentalized instruction on their students' affective needs (research subquestion a). In this process, initially every statement is treated as having equal value. Later, irrelevant, repetitive or overlapping statements are deleted, leaving only the "Horizons (the textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon)" (p. 97). Whereas, horizonalizing is

similar to using qualitative open-coding techniques to identify categories of information, the next step of clustering the horizons into themes is akin to thematic analysis as described by Boyatzis (1998). The process of clustering the horizons into themes is done to answer research subquestion b: What themes emerge from these perceptions and experiences? To perform these first two steps, a manual parsing and disambiguation will be used. In the third and final step of phenomenological reduction, the horizons and themes were organized into a coherent textural description of the phenomenon, which is based on the teachers' experiences and perceptions as communicated in the interviews. The epoché and phenomenological reduction analysis steps are included in Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

Imaginative variation and synthesis. The third and fourth steps of data analysis, imaginative variation and synthesis, will comprise the content of Chapter 5. The aim of imaginative variation is to produce a structural description of a phenomenon, "the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98). This step is designed to answer the third research subquestion: What are the contexts of and thoughts about these perceptions and experiences? The overall question answered during imaginative variation is "How did the experience of the phenomenon come to be what it is?" (p. 98). During this step, the relevant literature was consulted to answer this question. The final synthesis of meanings and essences make up the concluding section of Chapter 5 for the purpose of answering subquestion d research subquestion: What is the overall essence of these perceptions and experiences? This final step in the phenomenological research process is "the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences

of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole" (p. 100), specifically elementary school teachers' shared lived experiences of departmentalized instruction and their perceptions about how it impacts their students' affective needs.

Summary

A qualitative phenomenological methodology was selected for this study because it allows for an in-depth understanding of individuals and their experiences, and is therefore, best suited for answering this study's central research question and four procedural subquestions. Unlike quantitative methods that involve the random selection of participants and control of the study environment, a particular strength of qualitative methods is the ability to collect data in study participants' existing natural environments. Specifically, a qualitative phenomenological research design was selected because of its appropriateness for examining the lived experiences of study participants, departmentalized elementary school teachers, in order to understand the essence of their shared experiences of the phenomenon of departmentalized instruction and their perceptions about its impact on students' affective needs.

Two data collection instruments were utilized in this qualitative phenomenological study: a semistructured interview guide (see APPENDIX C) to collect data from the teacher participants and a researcher field journal to document the researcher's observations during the teacher interviews. The semistructured interview provides the participant-teacher the opportunity to expand and explain responses that might otherwise be constrained in a highly structured interview. "When the interviewer controls the content too rigidly, when the subject cannot tell his or her own story

personally in his or her own words, the interview falls out of the qualitative range" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 96).

The modified van Kaam method described by Moustakas was used to analyze the data according to the four steps of epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. The qualitative data were manually parsed and disambiguated to analyze them during the phenomenological reduction process. The epoché and phenomenological reduction analysis steps comprise Chapter 4 of the dissertation, while the third and fourth steps of imaginative variation and synthesis comprise the content for Chapter 5 of the dissertation.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this phenomenological, qualitative research study was to examine the lived experiences of 12 elementary teachers who teach within a content departmentalized structure, in order to explore their experiences in meeting the affective needs of their students.

In conducting this study, a qualitative methodology was used. The following research questions were answered:

How do elementary school teachers perceive departmentalized instruction and describe their experiences of this structure's impact on their students' affective needs?

a. What statements describe elementary school teachers' perceptions about and experiences of the impact of departmentalized instruction on their students' affective needs?
b. What themes emerge from these perceptions and experiences?
c. What are the contexts of and thoughts about these perceptions and experiences?
d. What is the overall essence of these perceptions and experiences?

The participant-teachers were asked to sign a consent form and to participate in a one-on-one Skype interview. They were also asked to review the transcripts of their interviews, and to make any corrections, deletions, or additions they believed would best reflect their interview responses.

Research Questions

The interviews were analyzed for data relevant to the research questions:

How do elementary school teachers perceive departmentalized instruction and describe their experiences of this structure's impact on their students' affective needs?"

a. What statements describe elementary school teachers' perceptions about and experiences of the impact of departmentalized instruction on their students' affective needs?
b. What themes emerge from these perceptions and experiences?
c. What are the contexts of and thoughts about these perceptions and experiences?
d. What is the overall essence of these perceptions and experiences?

Horizonalization

Moustakas (1994) states that in horizonalization, "each phenomenon has equal value as we seek to disclose its nature and essence" (p. 95). To reveal the themes from the many pages of data, horizonalization was used to reveal major themes. Though there are many computer programs available, for me, the most practical way to execute this research was to highlight like or closely related categories and group them together as themes. The interviews were printed out, cut into chunks of like data, and sorted into themes or groups of like information that captured the general ideas and consistencies the participants' expressed throughout the interviews. The data were grouped multiple times until major themes were clear. Bracketing the ideas allowed the themes to present themselves with the least amount of bias from the researcher. Chapter 4 contains profiles

of the participants involved in the study, and relevant transcript excerpts as well the identification of the emergent themes, and a summary of information presented.

In order to address best the research questions for this study, the researcher used the qualitative methodology. In Chapter 4, the researcher explains the processes by which the data were generated, gathered, and recorded; describe the systems for keeping track of the data and the developing understandings; and provide a detailed description of the findings and the emergent themes, patterns, and relationships.

Participant Demographics

This study was conducted via Skype in states throughout the nation. A purposeful sampling of teachers was utilized. Departmentalized elementary teachers with a range of years of experience and content areas taught were interviewed. The researcher selected 12 teachers for the study. Five of the participants were male, and seven were female. An even split of gender was sought; however, the number of possible male participants was far outweighed by possible female participants in the population of Grade 1–3 teachers. The researcher sorted the demographic data via the use of a simple table.

Data Collection

As explained in Chapter 3, the researcher followed the interview guide during each of the 12 individual Skype interviews. The interview guide can be found in APPENDIX D. After the researcher asked the primary interview questions, they were followed by probing question that encouraged teacher-participant to expand upon their initial responses. The researcher utilized a digital voice recorder to record the interviews. In addition to the audio recording of the interviews, the researcher kept notes of nonverbal indicators that were not discernible on audio the recordings. The researcher

then downloaded and saved the digital recordings on to my computer. The researcher transcribed of each the interviews later that evening. The digital voice recorder was a backup to the Audacity recording on my computer, which helped me during the transcription process. The researcher limited the interviews' frequency to no more than one per day, allowing time to transcribe each interview, without danger of overlapping recall. The researcher deleted off-topic responses after all interviews were transcribed.

The sheer volume of transcribed data required an organizational process for me to sort key words or phrases for later coding. The researcher used a systematic method to analyze the research data in order to understand fully the individual and collective thoughts of the teacher-participants. Themes were identified by following the established protocols of horizontalization, clustering, and convergence. Horizontalization was accomplished by identifying and highlighting, in various colors, comments and attitudes about specific aspects of their affective interactions with students. The researcher clustered and color coded identical words and phrases, and similar comments for further axial coding. From these clusters of meaning, the following themes emerged in Table 1.

Table 1

Theme Descriptions

Theme	Description
a.	Discipline-Behavior related affective interactions
b.	Sharing of students' social emotional needs
c.	Supporting students' social emotional growth
d.	Building affective relationships
e.	Coordinating affective student support

The axial coded themes isolated from the open-coded transcripts are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Axial Coded Themes

Participant	Theme a	Theme b	Theme c	Theme d	Theme e
Grade 1-a	X		X	X	X
Grade 1-b	X	X		X	X
Grade 1-c	X	X	X	X	X
Grade 1-d	X	X	X	X	X
Grade 2-a		X			X
Grade 2-b	X		X	X	X
Grade 2-c	X	X	X		X
Grade 2-d		X	X	X	X
Grade 3-a	X	X	X	X	
Grade 3-b	X		X	X	X
Grade 3-c	X	X	X	X	X
Grade 3-d	X	X	X	X	

Exemplar Transcript Excerpts

Below are exemplar transcript excerpts reflecting the five themes:

Theme a: Discipline-behavior related affective interactions. Ten of the 12 teacher-participants in the study indicated that they had significant opportunities to address the affective needs of their students during behavior- and discipline-related interactions with their students. The inherent nature of this theme is exemplified by the specific comments, words, phrases, sentiments, and situations that are present within the

interview transcripts. These participants stressed the importance of consistently applied behavior modification strategies across all involved teachers within the departmentalized setting. This enabled teachers to focus identical interventions to address the social emotional needs of each student.

Q 12: Can you share a story when one of your students, in the departmentalized setting, exhibited emotional distress during instructional time? PROBES: Why do you think they were emotionally distressed? What type of interaction did you take? What was the outcome?

A (1-c):

Michael was antsy from the moment he entered my room. This soon escalated to name calling and minor altercations with those sitting near him. When I gave him a 5-minute time-out, he appeared calm. However, after returning to his seat, the same behaviors returned. When I discussed this with his other teachers, it was discovered that these same behaviors occurred in his math class, but not in his English language class. Further discussion revealed that in the two classes where the behaviors appeared, he was sitting next to the same boy, but that boy was not seated near him in the English language class. Subsequent observations made apparent that this boy was taunting Michael. Without a coordinated team effort, the root of Michael's social-emotional conflicts may have gone on far longer, or may have been assumed to be solely Michael's irrational emotional acting out.

A (2-d), a second grade teacher related her experience with Susan:

Near the end of first period math class, Susan became upset and frequently cried. I was constantly comforting her and reassuring her that everything was fine, and

that she had been excellent during my class. Unfortunately, that had little effect on her crying. I mentioned this to her other coteachers. Her second-period teacher recounted a series of strong reprimands she had directed to Susan, relating to the quality of her work. This teacher had also called Susan's parents to report careless and sloppy assignments. After some discussion with all of Susan's coteachers, it was determined that Susan had become afraid of her second-period teacher and/or whatever her parents' reaction to the phone might have been. As a result of this teacher discussion, it was agreed that the second-period teacher would change her tone and perceived attitude, and make a complimentary home call. This slowly began to relieve Susan's emotional distress, and within a week she did not exhibit the behavior. All the teachers involved realized that Susan was emotionally fragile when she felt inadequate or received strong disapproval. This helped all the teachers to consider this when providing prescriptive corrections.

Theme b: Sharing of students' social emotional needs. Nine teachers remarked that departmentalized coteachers allowed them to share social and emotional student issues, and plan for coordinated support and intervention. This supported the acquisition of new social skills and aided in resolving a variety of related student problems.

Q 13: Can you share a story when one of your students, in the departmentalized setting, did not experience social-emotional success? PROBES: Why do you think they were not successful? What were barriers to their social-emotional success? Was there anything you feel could have been done to support the student that was not done at that time? What were the important contextual variables-factors? To what extent would you

say this story is typical-similar to, or different from the social-emotional experiences of your other included students?

A (3-d):

Science experiments were always partner activities. Billy displayed nervous anxiety in these situations. He tried to work with various partners, but always withdrew, and sat quietly. My conference with him reflected he believed he was incompetent and would mess things up. Further probing revealed that his parents (according to him) constantly made remarks about the inadequacies of his efforts in any new thing he attempted. This was most evident in his constant fear of failure. As my earlier partnering efforts had failed, I made Billy my partner in the next experiment, supporting his participation, and guiding him to success. Following that experiment, I added a classmate to Billy and myself in the next experiment, again supporting his participation, and guiding him to success. I then gradually withdrew, and Billy and his partner proceeded on successfully. It is not uncommon for a child's confidence or insecurity to be a reflection of their home environment. I have seen this countless times. When team teachers share anecdotal information, these social-emotional issues usually become quite obvious. Now I'm able create experiment-based lessons that build my student's social skills without compromising their emotional weaknesses. Now I do science experiments every week, and Billy's social skills have grown. Additionally, he appears more self-confident and demonstrates increased self-esteem.

A (1-b):

> It was virtually impossible for me to determine why one of my struggling students rejected attempts to support her. It was as if she didn't want to hear anything I said. She actually hummed to herself whenever I tried to talk to her. She self-isolated emotionally, as hard as I tried to empathize with what she might be feeling. Meeting with her coteachers revealed the same behaviors with all teachers, in every environment. We surmised that this may be the result of the negative impacts of stress brought about by something that was unknown to any of us. We referred her to the school psychologist. Our coteacher conferencing accomplished several things: the gravity of the behavior, the recognition that this was not teacher induced or related, and the immediate need for referral. I believe we did everything possible to support this student, despite the failure of our efforts. This is not a common situation, and the psychologist has confirmed that this was beyond our control. I still feel quite badly about this.

Theme c: Supporting students' social emotional growth. Ten teachers reported various situations where they supported a student's emotional growth. They reported that this reduced stress and anxiety, and strengthened their students' ability to be more successful in their social and emotional struggles. In most cases, teachers reported using similar approaches to support this in their students. Two teacher-participants (1-d, 3-c) specifically stated that they conferenced with individual students and in these conferences kept charts, with the student, to validate successes.

Q 14: Can you share a story when one of your students, in the departmentalized setting, experienced social-emotional success? PROBES: Why do you think they were successful? What were facilitators to their social-emotional success? What were the

important contextual variables-factors? To what extent would you say this story is typical-similar to, or different from the social-emotional experiences of your other students?

A (1-d):

Carlos was embarrassed to go to the SMART board to pick out and place various animals in the correct categories. The categories were birds, insects, mammals, fish, and reptiles. The choices were robins, honey bees, garter snakes, kittens, puppies, whales, blue jays, box turtles, and flies. So, during recess we made some charts with clues to help him. Then I quizzed him, and we made a chart of how many he correctly placed; One star, two stars, etc. We did only one quiz each recess, every day for a week. As his chart grew in the number of stars, he was eager to try again. After eight practices, he had placed them all correctly, and then pleaded with me to call on him to go to the SMART board. I did. He placed them faster than any of his classmates had, beamed with pride, and even took a bow. Another benefit of this strategy, in regards to his self-confidence, was his fear of embarrassment almost vanished. His ability to reflect on this, and how he could prepare to be successful, supported how he approached new academic challenges. Lessons that accommodate the emotional needs of my students have dramatically improved their academic performance, in class work and on tests. This supports reflection on my own teaching, based on the need to support their social-emotional growth. I have used this strategy many times with many students, as have other teachers on my team. It invariably succeeds.

A (3-c):

Our class does a daily weather report. They go online (yes we have the Internet) and read what it says about our daily local weather. Then one student becomes the weatherperson, and places various pictures (rain, snow, sunshine, cloudy, and the temperature) on the weather board. This requires them to use the correct URL to find the weather, take notes, then use their notes to correctly place the pictures on the weatherboard. Shondra was usually confused with the entire process, particularly taking accurate notes. As a result, she almost always had forgotten one item, usually the temperature, but often others. Her notes, upon inspection, also lacked what she needed. Unfortunately, the class came to expect this and helped her in a less than constructive way. Eventually she refused to participate. I conferenced with her coteachers, and all reported that she was forgetful. We brainstormed to determine exactly what kinds of things she did well. Eventually we remembered how she delighted in repeating short silly poems she had memorized. It was a EUREAKA moment for us. From that point on, each of us made up a short silly poem containing the content she had difficulty remembering. Shonda became an overnight success. Unfortunately, some of those ridiculous poems are forever embedded in MY head! I believe all the teachers involved were successful in supporting Shonda's social-emotional and academic success was the result of conferencing with each other, uncovering her strengths, and strategizing how to use them to support her weaknesses. This was a unique solution, but the process that got us there was not. The process is invaluable when teams of teachers work to support students' social emotional growth. The concern was the importance of the positive impact of addressing a particular student's

need and how teachers shared their observations of the student within the classroom environment. The teachers' ability to address the affective needs of their students was greatly increased when anecdotal information was shared. All the coteachers agreed that sharing these anecdotes fostered the unified understanding of the social-emotional growth of this student, and provided a supportive and successful solution.

Theme d: Building affective relationships. This theme was referenced by 10 participants. These participants reported positive teacher-student and student-student relationships, within departmentalized instruction, as critical in strengthening their students' affective well-being. All 10 reported success in establishing these relationships. These relationships were key to meeting students' social-emotional needs. Most teachers shared that they better understood the social-emotional status of a student once a strong and trusting relationship was formed. Several teachers mentioned that they had used strong teacher-student relationships to bridge voids in student-student relationships. They did report (four participants) that forming these relationships took a bit longer than they had in the self-contained classroom, but only minimally. None thought they had not fully compensated for the abbreviated contact time.

Ten teachers reported instances when they had built or strengthened affective relationships with their students. They reported that this reduced student stress and anxiety, and increased their students' likelihood of sharing their social and emotional struggles. In most cases, teachers reported using this to support the authenticity and relevance of student-teacher communications. Two teacher-participants (1-c, 3-d)

specifically stated that their conferences and conversations then became valuable tools to help students navigate potentially troublesome situations with their student peers.

Q 11: Can you share a story when one of your students was excluded from a class social activity? PROBES: Why do you think they were excluded? What type of interaction did you take? What was the outcome? To what extent is this story typical-similar to, or different from other interactions you have taken?

A (1-a): One first-grade teacher explained:

> I never realized just how important school social relationships and connections were until I met with my coteachers. I thought after nine years of teaching, I was a real professional and had it all down pat. Boy was I ever wrong! My students were always well behaved, perhaps too well behaved for first graders. Yet I always felt that there was a lack of warmth, connection, or friendliness. Other coteachers recounted stories that indicated the exact opposite. After some discussion, I realized I wasn't forming social relationships with my students, nor was I providing an atmosphere that encouraged them to connect with each other. I vowed to change that. I began asking about their weekend activities, their pets, and favorite TV shows. Wow! Did I learn from that. I wanted them to have that kind of connection with each other, so we played People Bingo. Bingo cards encouraged them to find classmates with commonalities. They had to find a classmate who had a dog, had a cat, was born in another state or country, spoke a language other than English, flew on an airplane, etc. The class was abuzz with laughter and conversations. They now had permission to chat, and they loved it. Teasing subsided, then almost completely stopped. I realized that Sydney, an

awkward girl with few friends, and most usually excluded from social groups during breaks and recess, was now included, had many friends, and appeared much happier. I even got a short note from her mother, saying: "I don't know what has happened in your class, but Sydney is happier to go to school than she has ever been. She talks about all her new friends, and has been invited to several parties. Whatever you are doing, please keep doing it! Mrs. XXXX." Without the support and ideas of my coteachers, I would have not realized I had created a social and emotional vacuum, that led to Sydney's exclusion from class social connections, and how many others? Her exclusion was the result of her social awkwardness and my lack of addressing her needs. My simple interaction paved the way for her inclusion and her ability to make friends. The immediate outcome was not only positive; it totally changed the dynamics of my classroom for many months. This series of incidents has given me better ways to support the social emotional needs of my students in other interactions I have taken.

A (2-c):

I remember one of my students being removed from physical education class because of their behavior (not sharing the ball with their physical education partner). I passed by the gym and noticed my student sitting out and asked them about it. We brainstormed next steps to not repeating this and other choices that can be made to still participate in Physical Education. I usually take this approach to understand their story, and have my students realize that every adult-child in the building work together for making sure everyone is learning, happy, and feels safe. Although this was not really a social activity, it was certainly a social

interaction. He was excluded due to his inappropriate reactions to the need to share. My conversation-interaction with this student was authentic and effective because of our prior strong social-emotional connection. After our conversation, I asked the Physical Education teacher if he could rejoin the class? He did, without any further sharing incidents. This is actually my common method of interacting in these type of incidents.

Theme e: Coordinating affective student support. This theme was directly or indirectly referenced by 10 teacher-participants. It often occurred during the more formal scheduled coteacher meetings, but frequently took place as the result of spontaneous, unscheduled, and casual conversations. This theme was discussed several times, and with great emphasis. Several (seven) teachers predicted they would not have recognized and addressed their students affective needs as quickly or effectively, had they not been able to coordinate the needed support with the coteachers.

Q16: Do you have anything else you'd like to share about the academic and social-emotional experiences of your students, and how you, and other teachers can support this part of a students' development?

A (3-a):

I feel that teachers can best support students' academic and social-emotional experiences by getting to know their students' families, and then sharing what they learn with the student's coteachers. Having a coordinated, strong, and ongoing relationship with families will give our teacher-team insights and help the child know they are important and everyone is working together to help them. I also feel that when the teacher-team shares common concerns, specific and

> coordinated interventions can be taken. Whether it be student teacher conferences, changes in classroom arrangements, or teacher teams sharing strategies to better situations. When all the student's teachers reinforce an agreed upon strategy, it is almost always more effective.

A (2-d): Knowing a second group of students would be coming soon resulted in a more a more immediate, and consistent response to a perceived student need. Many (nine) reported confidence in sending their first group to their second teacher, knowing that both teachers had preplanned the strategies they would use. This also helped them to avoid using mismatched strategies that might prove to be counterproductive.

One third grade teacher (3-b) found she made better use of her instructional time in the departmentalized structure.

She stated:

> I am more attuned to time constraints, and as a result, and with input from my coteachers, I can provide my students with a highly effective and coordinated behavioral structure. Classroom rules and routines are uniform within all my student's classes. In my self-contained classroom, the reinforcement of rules and routines often lacked this type of multiteacher consistency.

Through the collaborative review of student work, departmentalized teachers quickly discovered that modifying instruction would be necessary to support the emotional issues that were not immediately apparent without collaboration. A third grade teacher (3-a) shared:

> I wouldn't have recognized and addressed my students' affective needs if I had not seen test results from the coteachers. With that information I made immediate

> adjustments based on what we shared. I needed to reevaluate the way I taught: why it was not as effective as it could be. Without that collaboration, I might never have had an understanding of what the problem was.

A second grade teacher (2-b) stated: "Experience, failure, and my colleagues were my trainers and saviors. Coteacher collaboration is effective and efficient. Now I recognize weak areas of my lessons and adjust for my students' social and emotional needs."

This comment was tangentially mentioned by every teacher-participant; however, only 10 directly addressed it. Most commented that this sharing added significant information that is needed to understand and react to the social-emotional needs of their students.

Qualitative Analysis

The investigation took the form of a phenomenological study, allowing the researcher to explore a phenomenon within a real-life context. This research examines the perceptions and experiences of the participants, in a qualitative approach that allows for an in-depth analysis and the freedom to analyze spontaneous and unprompted responses during the interview 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 responded to semistructured individual interviews. Probing questions provided rich data for analysis in this study. Participants in this study reviewed transcripts of their interviews and had the opportunity to expand, delete, or explain their responses.

Categorical analysis from transcriptions of interviews provided the substance for analysis within the study. For each interview, participants were asked to stay for a minimum of one hour, but were encouraged to stay longer if the questions were of interest, or they had additional reflections they wanted to share and contribute. Through the analyzing of data from individual interviews, common themes and viewpoints were discovered. Based on these commonalities, the researcher coded specific themes presented by the participants. Verbatim responses were then grouped according to these themes. No teacher requested an additional interview, and no significant modifications in their transcripts resulted from their reviews.

The researcher is not employed by any of the site-schools, and no unscheduled conversations occurred. Each recorded and transcribed interview was analyzed for categories, themes of responses, and the added comments made in response to the probing questions.

Participant-teachers were advised not to provide identifiable information when responding. This was already clearly stated in the initial instructions, but did require reminders. Maxwell (2004) states that 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 interviews that the probing questions provided more detailed and opinionated responses than the primary questions. This provided rich descriptions of their experiences and perceptions directly relating to meeting the affective needs of their students.

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). This inductive model of analysis conforms to the procedures detailed in both Seidman (2006) and Saldana (2009), as well as Patton (2002). Inclusive themes found throughout the data allowed for a more focused approach, when rereading each individual interview.

Data collected through interviews revealed the perceptions and experiences of departmentalized classroom teachers. Seidman (2006) discusses that interviewing, at its core, is "understanding the lived experience of other people and meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). Each of these interviews provides insight into the lived experiences of teachers who teach in departmentalized settings, and their perceptions relating to meeting the social-emotional needs of their students. Interview probing questions were open-ended, to eliminate influence on responses. Any biased or leading language was intentionally avoided, as a response to the pilot group review. Analyses of interviews were coded for themes and patterns. This included comparisons with all other interviews to identify invariants (Saldaña, 2009).

Participants needed to be reminded to omit identifiable information when responding, but were often so engrossed in recollection, they forgot. It became apparent throughout the interviews, that the probing questions provided more detailed and opinionated responses than the primary questions.

The final data collection tool used was the researcher's journal, also known as memoing. The added benefit of this journal is that the environmental data it recorded. This included observable body language, attitude, inflection, and extraneous events. This journal was coded in the same manner as were the interview transcriptions.

Data analysis. The process of data analysis began with the open, inductive coding of each individual participant's interview transcript. Transcript texts were then parsed to isolate individual categories that directly addressed the research questions. The presentation and analysis of data parsed from transcriptions were, first, open coded. Open coding required the researcher to begin to segment or divide the data into similar groupings and form preliminary categories of information about the phenomenon being examined. A two-cycle method (Saldaña, 2009) to generate categories that were subsequentially examined for connecting threads and patterns to create themes (Seidman, 2006). This constituted the axial coding. Axial coding follows intensive open coding, and the researcher brought together the categories that had been identified into groupings. These groupings became the themes, and are the qualitative way of seeing and understanding the phenomenon under study.

This model of analysis conforms to the standards for inductive analysis of data (Patton, 2002). Overarching themes found throughout the data allowed for a more customized approach when rereading each individual interview. As each interview was coded, the method of Constant Comparison (Strauss, & Corbin, 1994) was employed. This comparative process continued until the researcher reached saturation: the point at which there are no new ideas and insights emerging from the data reached (Morse, 1995).

Qualitative Research Issues

Qualitative research does not use the terms validity and reliability in the same manner as quantitative research. Instead the focus is on the trustworthiness of the research, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

- Establishing Trustworthiness in qualitative research data must be auditable through checking that the interpretations are credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable.
- Credibility improved through long engagement with the respondents, probing questions, and transcription reviews by participants (internal validity).
- Transferability achieved through a detailed description of the research process to allow a reader to determine if the results can be transferred to different settings (external validity).
- Dependability examined through the audit trail (reliability; e.g., member checking).
- Confirmability audits trail categories used, for example, raw data, data analysis and reduction processes, data reconstruction and synthesis, including structuring of categories and themes.

This process isolated and identified strong repetitions in the themes already observed and articulated as coded categories. Data collected through interviews revealed the perceptions and experiences of departmentalized classroom teachers. Seidman (2006) discusses that interviewing, at its core, is "understanding the lived experience of other people and meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). Each of these interviews provided insights into the lived experiences of teachers teaching in departmentalized settings, and their perceptions relating to those experiences. Interview probing questions were open-ended, to eliminate influence on responses. Any biased or leading language was intentionally avoided, as a response to the pilot group review. Analysis of interviews were first coded to identify categories, and then for theme grouping. This included

comparisons with all other interviews to identify invariants (Saldaña, 2009), and to reach data saturation (Strauss, & Corbin, 1994). Tables are used to illustrate participant demographics, numerical counts of categories isolated, and constructed themes.

Open Coding

Multiple category codes were developed through analysis of data collected during the course of the interviews (see Table 3).

Table 3

Category Open Coding

Code	Number Indicating Code
1	(10) Form close, secure relationships
2	(9) Responsive and affectionate care and interaction from teachers
3	(9) A nurturing relationship
4	(9) Positive and Consistent Relationships
5	*(3) Attending to signs of personal trauma and providing additional support to children who are experiencing unusual stress in their lives
6	*(1) Recognizing that frequent expressions of negative emotion toward children
7	(11) Establish a teacher support network
8	*(5) Build small, real-life connections
9	(9) Responding to student's emotional needs during times of crisis
10	(10) Supports age-appropriate social skills and ability to make friends
11	(10) Improve social-emotional issues caused by transitions

(*continued*)

Code	Number Indicating Code
12	(11) Establish and sustain relationships with several teachers
13	*(5) Learning how to read a variety of adults' emotions
14	(10) Opportunities to form emotional and bonds to different teachers
15	*(7) Building new friendships and helping them join into play with different social groups
16	*(6) Development of Interpersonal Intelligence: communication and social skills, and understanding the feelings, behaviors, moods, and motives of others
17	(9) Supports the student's ability to manage behavior in changing environments
18	*(5) More flexible in dealing with changing challenges
19	(10) Increased opportunities for learning and emotional support
20	(12) Daily experiences entering different groups successfully
21	(12) Using a team approach in addressing challenging social behaviors and emotional needs
22	(9) Building teams of teachers to effectively support the child's behavior across settings
23	(10) Identifying steps for collaborative planning of content and instructional modifications that supports the students' social emotional development

(*continued*)

Code	Number Indicating Code
24	(11) Presenting and sharing a student's opinions, needs, and concerns to and with coteachers
25	*(6) Curriculum and assessments must focus on social and emotional growth as well as grades
26	(11) Shared responsibility for appropriate behavioral interventions
27	*(8) Helping children learn social and emotional skills and manage their own behavior
28	*(4) Participating in professional development on social and emotional development
29	(10) Shared advocacy for the social and emotional needs of a student
30	(11) Fostering and maintaining students' social and emotional relationships with peers and teachers
31	(12) Support from colleagues in identifying students' social-emotional needs
32	(10) Increased opportunities to identify and achieve better outcomes for students, with respect to their emotional well-being
33	(12) Providing coordinated support and strategies to emotionally vulnerable students to help them succeed
34	(11) Multiple opportunities to build a social and emotional relationship with the child and their parents

(*continued*)

Code	Number Indicating Code
35	(10) Ensure that a limited and specified number of teachers interact with the student to manage emotional or social incidents
36	*(6) Student-centered classrooms adjusts for social needs
37	*(4) Student-focused presentation adapts for emotional needs
38	*(6) Performance based assessments support emotional
39	*(8) Students encouraged-excited in safe social environment
40	*(7) Make content applicable to students' life situations
41	(10) Frees up planning time for student conferencing
42	(12) Increased shared-teacher student support
43	(9) Efficiency receiving feedback from colleagues
44	(9) Improved sharing, calendaring, and scheduling to accommodate students' social and emotional situations
45	*(6) Assessments are more content related and student specific
46	(10) Data gathering is shared to better understand each student
47	(12) Colleagues input increases knowing each student

Note: * Indicates an eliminated code

For this study, only codes indicated by nine or more teachers (75%) are deemed as notable. As a result, 15 open-coded categories were eliminated. These codes are marked with an asterisk. From the original 47 categories, the remaining 32 open-coded categories are then subsumed into the five axial coded affective response themes that emerged (see Table 2).

These inclusive themes are consistent and notable across all sources of data, though the probing questions revealed more detailed and candid responses than did the primary questions in which participants appeared to be less able to provide details. Subtle differences among these themes appear to overlap, but the participant teachers indicated that they were distinct when describing their perceptions. The transcript excerpts below are participant identified by codes (see Table 4).

Table 4

School Coding and Subject Profiles

Teacher Code (State)	Grade-Type of Class	Subjects	Experience (in Years)	Highest Degree Earned
1-a (VT)	1st-Regular Ed.	Reading-Writing-Lang.	9	Specialist
1-b (CO)*	1st-Individual Education Plans(Spell out throughout table.)	Math-Science-S.S.	16	Master's
1-c (FL)	1st-Regular Ed.	Reading-Writing-Lang.	11	Specialist
1-d (NY)*	1st-Individual Education Plans	Math-Science-S.S	24	Master's
2-a (WY)	2nd-Regular Ed.	Math-Science-S.S.	8	Specialist
2-b (VT)*	2nd-Inclusion	Reading-Writing-Lang.	17	Master's
2-c (TX)	2nd-Gifted	Math-Science-S.S.	21	Master's

(*continued*)

Teacher Code (State)	Grade-Type of Class	Subjects	Experience (in Years)	Highest Degree Earned
2-d (OK)	2nd-Gifted	Reading-Writing-Lang.	18	Master's
3-a (FL)*	3rd-Individual Education Plans	Math-Science-S.S.	4	Bachelor's
3-b (PA)*	3rd-Individual Education Plans	Reading-Writing-Lang.	5	Specialist
3-c (OH)	3rd-Gifted	Reading-Writing-Lang.	24	Master's
3-d (IA)	3rd-Gifted	Math-Science-S.S.	12	Specialist

Note: * Indicates a Title I school

Themes

Themes provide insights into how individuals make sense of the events and situations in their lives and are one way of assigning meaning to those experiences. Themes emerged from the data in the transcripts of interviews with departmentalized elementary teachers, and described their perceptions of lived experiences providing affective support to their students. This world of lived experience is the subject and source of phenomenological human science research (van Manen, 1990). In this research, themes are derived from the transcribed data. Themes are used as the means to arrive at the "fuller description of the structure of a lived experience" (p. 92). This phenomenological study provided a deeper understanding of these departmentalized teachers' perceptions of their ability to provide support to the affective needs of their students.

The themes found in this study are:

- Discipline-Behavior related affective interactions
- Sharing of students' social emotional needs
- Supporting students' social emotional growth
- Building affective relationships
- Coordinating affective student support

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of elementary teachers, Grades1–3, who currently teach within a departmentalized instructional model, and their perceptions of their ability to meet the affective needs of their students. Initially, 47 codes (see Table 4) emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts. Of the 47 initially identified categories, 15 were eliminated as not being notable (less than 75%). The remaining 35 are subsumed into the five axial coded invariant themes.

Research Question Results

Results from the first overarching research question:

The results pertaining to the first research question—How do elementary school teachers perceive departmentalized instruction and describe their experiences of this structure's impact on their students' affective needs?—were as follows:

The majority of the 12 departmentalized teachers interviewed reported positive involvement in departmentalized instruction, and that it in no way negatively impacted meeting their students' affective needs. A significant number of coded responses

indicated their beliefs that departmentalization increased the available information that supported meeting their students affective needs.

Results from the first research subquestion. The results pertaining to the first research subquestion—What statements describe elementary school teachers' perceptions about and experiences of the impact of departmentalized instruction on their students' affective needs?—were:

Teachers indicated, through a variety of statements, how departmentalization positively impacted and supported their students' affective needs. Examples are: "My coteachers shared anecdotal information, making me aware of issues I did not know. As a result, I changed my relationship with Mason"; "Some parents find it easier to share information with certain teachers. With departmentalization, parents have a greater opportunity to do this"; "Some of my students have shared complaints about other teachers on my team. More often than not, these teachers were unaware of these issues that were based on unmet affective needs. When this information was shared, the issues were addressed and quickly resolved."

Results from the second research subquestion. The results pertaining to the second research subquestion—What themes emerge from these perceptions and experiences?— were the identification of the five themes; Discipline-Behavior-related affective interactions, Sharing of students' social emotional needs, Supporting students' social emotional growth, Building affective relationships, and Coordinating affective student support. These five themes encompass the predominance of responses within the open-coded data. They represent the most significant teacher-participant metacognitive reflections relating to their students affective needs and their ability to meet them.

Results from the third research subquestion. The results pertaining to the third research subquestion—What are the contexts of and thoughts about these perceptions and experiences?—were far more subtle than the preceding results. These results included stories and recollections relating to interactions with other teachers, parents, students, and administrators. In one form or other, teachers focused on departmentalization as a model that dramatically increased the flow, amount, and quality of information shared. When teams used their shared knowledge of student affective needs with parents and administrators, their approaches and goals carried more weight and were far more likely to be supported.

Results from the fourth research subquestion. The result pertaining to the fourth research subquestion—What is the overall essence of these perceptions and experiences?—was the intrinsic nature and quality of their perceptions, especially their engagement with both departmentalization, their positive attitudes regarding recognizing their students affective needs, and their ability to support those needs.

Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the five identified invariant themes.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Chapter 5 has three purposes: Interpret and explain results that answer the research questions, justify the methodology, critically evaluate limitations, suggest applications, and make recommendations for future research. Findings are reviewed in the context of the literature and the existing knowledge about the subject. This discussion is based upon the five identified themes of the lived experiences of a sample of 12 elementary teachers involved in departmentalized instruction. Overall, the discussion reveals that the perceptions of these teachers indicate their belief that they both recognize and support the affective needs of their students. This contradicts much of the early literature, positing that elementary departmentalization denies the students the affective support they require (Blackburn & Erikson, 1986; Mehrens & Lehman, 1987).

Newer research indicates the vital importance of supporting the social-emotional needs of young children. S. Bernard (2010) noted, “If students do not feel comfortable in a classroom setting, they will not learn. Physiologically speaking, stressed brains are not able to form the necessary neural connections” (p. 1). The importance of this support is addressed in the growing field of interpersonal neurobiology. Interpersonal neurobiology provides a map of human neural development and the potential for transformation created in the supportive classroom. The appropriate environment can shape the processing of emotions, thoughts and behaviors (Siegel, 2001, 2006, 2007). These processes are interrelated with interpersonal neurobiology and the development of mindful awareness. Early educators can use strategies for achieving the healthy integration of emotional and social functioning, along with content mastery (Davis & Hayes, 2011; Siegel, 2001, 2007).

The participant-teachers' perceptions were most embedded in responses to probing interview questions, where they expanded on their initial response to the primary question These responses offered insight into how they integrate affective support into their daily instructional tasks. Additionally, this discussion explores the common themes within the interview transcripts, lived by teachers, and their efforts to address the social-emotional needs of their students.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. How do elementary school teachers perceive departmentalized instruction and describe their experiences of this structure's impact on their students' affective needs?
    a. What statements describe elementary school teachers' perceptions about and experiences of the impact of departmentalized instruction on their students' affective needs?
    b. What themes emerge from these perceptions and experiences?
    c. What are the contexts of and thoughts about these perceptions and experiences?
    d. What is the overall essence of these perceptions and experiences?

This study investigated the overarching question, How do elementary school teachers perceive departmentalized instruction and describe their experiences of this structure's impact on their students' affective needs? Four probing questions allowed subjects to expand on, and explore their initial responses. These responses contributed to understanding the essence of their perceptions and experiences.

Statements that described elementary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of the impact of departmentalized instruction on their students' affective needs indicated that all participant-teachers were confident that departmentalized instruction recognized, addressed, and supported their students' affective needs. Representative transcript excerpts include:

First grade teacher-participant (1-a) stated, "I believe I am sensitive to, and aware of my students' social and emotional requirements, with the coordinated efforts of my coteachers, we continue to see student growth in these areas."

Teach (1-d) indicated, "Departmentalized instruction has provided me the opportunity to brainstorm with other teachers on my team to strategize our approaches in meeting our students' emotional hurdles. I am now far more successful doing this that I had been in my self-contained classroom."

Emergent Themes

The five themes that emerged from these perceptions and experiences were:

- Discipline-Behavior-related affective interactions.
- Sharing of students' social emotional needs.
- Supporting students' social emotional growth.
- Building affective relationships.
- Coordinating affective student support.

Each of these five themes was present in 75% or more of the teacher-participants' reflections. Three teacher-participants (1-c, 1-b, 1-d, 3-c) indicated positive reflections on all five themes. Eight teacher-participants (1-a, 1-b, 2-b, 2-c, 2-d, 3-a, 3-b, 3-d) included

four comments related to four of the themes. No teacher-participants responded to three of the themes, and one teacher-participant (2-a) reflected on two of the themes.

Confirmations and Refutations in the Literature

The literature reflects a long-standing and traditional lack of concern in education for the affective domain (Tannenbaum, 1983) in early childhood. That lack of concern, though currently somewhat diminished, remains (Hyland, 2011). Foundational to this belief is that healthy emotional development among students is automatic (Blackburn & Erikson, 1986). This belief, and the focus on other issues relating to elementary departmentalization, has created a void in the research on affect within this instructional model.

One of the few studies, completed in 1993, indicates that elementary departmentalization compromised the formation of high-quality teacher-student relationships (McPartland & Braddock, 1993). Their claim was that a generalist is more likely to form a whole-child perspective, as teachers in a self-contained model are working with the same children across multiple areas; they are able to assess student needs across a variety of content areas, domains, and settings. They further asserted that ability to individualize instruction is supported by the teacher's awareness of each student's strengths, weaknesses, and individual learning styles. Although the self-contained classroom may support these actions, this study indicates they are not exclusive to that model. Establishing individual goals for students is best accomplished when consideration is given to students' affective needs (Marzano, 2003).

Supporting the contention that self-contained classrooms provide the environment for the formation of stronger student-teacher relationships, Epstein and Dauber (1991)

held that teachers of self-contained classrooms are more likely to form stronger relationships with parents than teachers in departmentalized programs. That study presented no comparative data to confirm that holding. Epstein and Dauber contend that the self-contained structure increases teachers' familiarity with students, and, as a result, teachers are more likely to make contacts with parents. Once again, the supposition relating to parent contact is not supported by evidence, and is tempered with "more likely" (p. ??). Their study indicated an increase in parental contact, as more teachers were participating and providing input to parents, as is indicated by the departmentalized teacher-participants in this study.

Elementary departmentalization increases the opportunity for students to develop affective supporting relationships with more teachers, thus improving interpersonal social skills through adapting to different teaching styles and teacher personalities. These relationships with teachers significantly correlate with students' learning, achievement, and behavior Cohan, 2001). The departmentalized model, with coordinated teacher input, enables early elementary educators to support children's relationship-building skills, using systematically planned procedures within this instructional model with sufficient consistency to ensure that children learn these skills and use them when needed (Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2005).

The at-risk or highly home-mobile student has unique affective needs. Their high mobility and likely affective fragility can cause them to experience frustration, isolation, and lack of motivation to succeed (Walls, 2003). A teacher-team approach may provide these students with a family-like structure that could help to reduce these social-emotional impediments to their motivation and ability to succeed.

Meeting the affective needs of these students must include fostering a sense of belonging and attending to their social-emotional issues. This may be best accomplished through a coordinated team effort, provided within the departmentalized instructional model. None of the participant-teachers reported high student mobility in their classes or building. This should be a consideration in any future studies.

Numerous rationales were cited in relation to why schools choose not to include the affective domain within their curricula:

- The traditional lack of concern in education for the affective domain (Tannenbaum, 1983).
- Attitudes on the part of adults that emotions are to be dealt with at home rather than in the school (Elgersma, 1981).
- Fear of indoctrination (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971).
- The position that if the school meets the child's cognitive needs, affective development will automatically follow (Mehrens & Lehman, 1987).
- Lack of reliable and valid tools for assessing affective functioning (Levey & Dolan, 1988).
- Lack of clarity as to the optimal level of affective functioning to be attained (Levey & Dolan, 1988).
- The belief that healthy emotional development among students is automatic (Blackburn & Erikson, 1986).

However, when affective issues are addressed and social emotional needs met, students face their challenges with emotional balance and appropriate coping mechanisms that promote success in reaching personal potential (Roeper, 1995). This study reflects

the belief of departmentalized elementary teachers that this support of students' affective needs is important to student success and is what is happening in their classrooms.

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). These pressures can force the recognition of student affective needs to the periphery of a teacher's and administrators' focus. To prevent this diminished focus, methods to improve various aspects of the instructional model should be explored and tested. In elementary schools, departmentalization is one structure that reduces teachers' content workload, by narrowing the scope of teachers' focus from teaching all subjects, creating the time needed for increased affective student interactions. This study reveals insights and perceptions of 12 teachers who participated in departmentalized elementary teaching for one year or more, and their perceptions overwhelmingly support the belief that the students' affective needs are addressed in this teaching structure. Focusing on fewer subjects alleviated workloads for teachers and aligns with the literature (Bridges & Searle, 2011; Perrachione, Rosser, & Petersen, 2008; Timms, Graham, & Cottrell, 2007). Further, when workloads decreased, teachers also reported lower stress levels, which ultimately improved their attitudes toward teaching and their interactions with students (Perrachione et al., 2008; Timms et al., 2007). All participant teachers related that decreased workloads reduced their stress and increased sensitivity to their students' social-emotional needs.

Self-efficacy is found to be a positive effect of departmentalizing, as teachers report feeling more confident and prepared to recognize and address their students' social-emotional requirements than they did when they taught in self-contained classes.

Self-efficacy affects every area of human endeavor. This can be seen as the teachers' ability to persist and the ability to succeed in forming strong and affective relationships with their students. Studies show self-efficacy is fostered when teachers teach the subject areas in which they are most confident, which departmentalization makes possible (Brown, 2012; Fantuzzo et al., 2012; ; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). These studies support the notion that the residual effects of implementing a change, such as departmentalization, could potentially minimize the high teacher turnover rate by decreasing workload and increasing teacher self-efficacy. The net result is the retention of experienced teachers skilled in recognizing and supporting the affective needs of their students.

This structure is a significant change from the traditional self-contained structure. Chan and Jarman (2004) suggest piloting the change with a single grade or section prior to implementing it on a school level. Piloting allows decision makers and participants the opportunity to determine how well a program may work on a larger scale and gather data to support or discredit the changes' effect on addressing the affective needs of the younger student (van Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley, & Graham, 2001).

Methodology

The methodology followed in this study closely follows the research methods described by Moustakas (1994). The gathering of data employs a phenomenological interview appropriate for this type of research (Giorgi, 1985; Heidegger, 1962; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Shutz, 1972; van Kaam, 1966). Transcripts are categorically and axially coded following the procedures delineated by Strauss and Corbin (1994, 1998).

Limitations

The findings in this study are limited by the sample interviewed, the interview design and methodology of analysis, and the demographics of the student population within each of the participant-teachers' schools. As a result, it would be inappropriate to assume similar studies in other locations would yield similar results. Ideally, the results of this study provide adequate information to encourage future studies.

Recommendations

One recommendation, based on this study, is to pilot departmentalization before wider implementation: allow teachers to work through problematic areas and suggest solutions, engage parents to discuss and resolve concerns, and implement the necessary administrative and clerical changes that will be required. This prepares other teachers, administrators, and staff should the school expand the program at a later time.

A second recommendation for schools or districts considering this structure is to consider strongly teacher personality and teaching style when pairing teachers. Teachers in this study report that they collaborate with their partners multiple times a day and state the frequency of collaboration is greatly increased compared to their self-contained teaching experience. This collaboration provides the information needed to address better the social-emotional issues faced by their shared students. Mismatched teachers are less likely to provide the consistency of instruction and coordinated student interactions that support the affective requirements of their students. Collaboration occurs in multiple areas including planning, parent conferences, grading, monitoring student behavior, integrating subjects-content across the curriculum, and participating in coordinated

referral to school social workers and psychologists. Coordinated referrals are able to provide support professionals with rich and diverse anecdotal information.

A third recommendation for future research is to investigate the impacts of departmentalization on the various types of learners, both in their academic performance and their social-emotional adjustments to the school environment. Ideally, a mixed-methods research study would add a statistical element to the findings, which would provide valuable information as to the efficacy of departmentalized instruction.

Summary

In consideration of the findings of this study linked to departmentalized elementary education, the affective domain should be given a priority in instructional design. A paucity of relevant research persists. This study attempts to fill that void and indicates the ability and practice of supporting the affective needs of elementary students within a departmentalized instructional model. It would be far more useful to consider this subject in actionable terms: working with educators to consider constructive change. Elementary departmentalization may not be a perfect instructional model, but it clearly can address the affective needs of our younger students. Leadership must be a collaborative effort, identifying important problems and working together to find solutions. Current emphasis is placed upon standardized testing and content mastery accountability. With that, the need to incorporate strategies aimed at the affective needs of students seems greater than ever.

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APPENDIX A

Confirmation of Participation E-mail

Dear (name):

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important study. Your participation will help add to the knowledge and insights relating to departmentalized instruction at the elementary level. The lived experiences of teachers provide a unique and authentic reflection of the relationship between teachers and their students. This study gives you the opportunity to reflect on your teaching practices, as well as to add to the body of knowledge that administrators use, when selecting the instructional model for their elementary schools.

I will be contacting you, via email, to inform you if you have been selected to participate. Selection is guided by the broadest array of backgrounds. Kindly complete the brief background questionnaire, at the conclusion of this email, and return it to my email address. Those selected teachers will be contacted by email, to determine the most convenient time and place for our Skype interview. Should you have any questions regarding this study, or the interview, please contact me at the email address indicated. Your participation is valuable and most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Minott, Principle Investigator

[redacted]

Background

1. What is your current position in your public elementary school?

2. What grade level(s) do you currently teach?

3. What other grades or subjects have you taught in the past?

4. What content area(s) do you currently teach?

5. Have you taught other areas in the past?

6. How many years have you been a departmentalized teacher?

7. How many years, if any, have you taught as a non-departmentalized teacher?

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide and Protocol

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF DEPARTMENTALIZED INSTRUCTION AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENT AFFECT

Thank you for your willingness to share your thoughts and experiences. If you choose to participate in this interview please read and sign the consent form. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators, Leadership 2.0, your school, or school district. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. (Turn on digital audio recorder) Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project. I am hopeful that the information you and the other faculty share with me will provide information that gives insight into the lived experiences of faculty who are currently engaged in departmentalized instruction. This study will help administrators to understand the attitudes and perceptions of teachers engaged in this instructional model. In order to understand your experiences as a departmentalized elementary teacher, I will ask about your lived experiences with your students, your teaching strategies, and how this has affected the way you teach your course(s). I have a set of questions to guide our conversation. I want to understand your experiences, and thoughts about your teaching experiences, and factors that may have affected your choices. You will have the opportunity to add to, or explain any response. Do you have any questions about what I've said or about the purpose of the interview?

This interview consists of 2 sections – the first is a set of questions about your background and current position, and the second section is about your perspectives

relating to your role in meeting the social-emotional needs of your students, within the departmentalized structure. You have already completed the first section, when you agreed to participate. We will now review those responses.

Let me tell you about my experience as an educator. I have been an active educator for over 30 years. Twenty two of those years were as a 5th grade teacher in a non-departmentalized school. I was also a building administrator, a pre-school teacher, and a middle school substitute. I currently teach online graduate courses for teachers.

SECTION I: Background

1. What is your current position in your public elementary school?
2. What grade level(s) do you currently teach?
3. What other grades or subjects have you taught in the past?
4. What content area(s) do you currently teach?
5. Have you taught other areas in the past?
6. How many years have you been a departmentalized teacher?
7. How many years, if any, have you taught as a non-departmentalized teacher?

SECTION II: Perspectives on your teaching experiences.

These questions relate to the topic of the research. In this section of the interview you will be sharing your perspectives and reflections related to your experiences in identifying and addressing the social-emotional needs of your students. Please remember not to use any identifying information (i.e., names) when referring to a specific person/student. You may call the student girl/boy A, B, or state that you are using a pseudonym and refer to that as the student's name. Do not be concerned if you inadvertently do use an actual name, as all names and identifying content will be

changed. I will be asking two types of questions: those that involve the social experiences of your students and those that involve your responses to the emotional experiences of your students.

8. When was the most recent time you received any in-service training, either in your content area, or in general? Please describe it.
9. What kind of district training (if any) did you receive for departmentalized teaching? Please describe.
10. What was your first experience in departmentalized teaching?
11. Can you share a story when one of your students was excluded from a class social activity? PROBES: Why do you think they were excluded? What type of interaction did you take? What was the outcome? To what extent is this story typical/similar to, or different from other interactions you have taken?
12. Can you share a story when one of your students, in the departmentalized setting, exhibited emotional distress during instructional time? PROBES: Why do you think they were emotionally distressed? What type of interaction did you take? What was the outcome? To what extent is this story typical/similar to, or different from other interactions you have taken? Was there anything else you feel could have been done to support the student at that time? What were the important contextual variables/factors?
13. Can you share a story when one of your students, in the departmentalized setting, experienced social-emotional success? PROBES: Why do you think they were successful? What were facilitators to their social- emotional success? What were the important contextual variables/factors? To what

extent would you say this story is typical/similar to, or different from the social-emotional experiences of your other students?

14. Can you share a story when one of your students, in the departmentalized setting, did not experience social-emotional success? PROBES: Why do you think they were not successful? What were barriers to their social-emotional success? Was there anything you feel could have been done to support the student, that was not done at that time? What were the important contextual variables/factors? To what extent would you say this story is typical/similar to, or different from the social-emotional experiences of your other included students?
15. If you were to be held accountable for your students' social-emotional well-being, what effect would that have on you, personally? PROBE: How might that affect your own evaluation of yourself as a teacher? Might it change how you teach? For example?
16. Do you have anything else you'd like to share about the academic and social-emotional experiences of your students, and how you, and other teachers can support this part of a students' development?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me today! They are greatly appreciated by me, and I am certain that your students benefit from your efforts. If you would like a transcript of this interview, I will provide it at the conclusion of this research. Again, thank you for participating in this study. Have a safe, secure, and successful school year.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Minott, Principle Investigator.

[redacted]

APPENDIX C

Invitation to Participate E-mail

Dear colleague, I am conducting a research project about the lived experiences of elementary faculty who are currently teaching in a departmentalized structure. The purpose of this email to ask for your participation in this research project. This study has been approved by both Taft University, and Leadership 2.0. If you agree to participate, and are selected, we will arrange a convenient location for a Skype interview that will take not more than 60 minutes of your time. Ideally, this would take place in your classroom, after school, and in total privacy, or another location of your convenience. I am interested in discussing your experiences with the social emotional needs of your students. Specifically, I am interested in how you perceive those needs, and how you have adapted your teaching processes and methods to meet those needs. The interview will be digitally recorded, and the recordings will be erased after they are transcribed. No identifying information will be used in any materials created from these interviews. The information obtained in this study will be published in my dissertation, and may appear in journal articles. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting our relationship or your relationship with Leadership 2.0, your principal, school, or school district. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There may be no direct benefit to you if you participate in this research, however you will be contributing to the improvement of educational techniques that may influence future decisions relating to the adoption of elementary departmentalization. There is no compensation provided for your participation. Please indicate whether you are interested in participating in this research

by contacting me by email at the contact information listed below. I look forward to hearing from you and to the opportunity to learn from you.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Minott, Principle Investigator. [redacted]

William Howard Taft University.

Dissertation Chairperson: Dr. Eduardo Jesus Arismendi-Pardo

APPENDIX D

Selection Confirmation

Dear (Name),

Thank you for returning the background survey. All surveys were reviewed to select participants with varied backgrounds, content specialties, and years of experience. Many respondents had quite similar backgrounds and specialties. As a result, several teachers could not be included in the study. For those reasons, you were/were not selected to participate. However, all teachers completing the background surveys can receive the final study report, if they so request. Those teachers accepted for the study will be contacted to determine the most convenient time and place for the Skype interview.

Thank you for your interest in this study. Have a safe, secure, and successful school year.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Minott, Principle Investigator. [redacted]

William Howard Taft University.

Dissertation Chairperson: Dr. Eduardo Jesus Arismendi-Pardo

APPENDIX E

Adult Consent Form

ADULT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF DEPARTMENTALIZED INSTRUCTION AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENT AFFECT

A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experience of Departmentalized Elementary Teachers.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to learn about the lived experience of departmentalized elementary teachers.

NUMBER OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS: If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of 10-12 teachers in this research study.

DURATION OF THE STUDY: Your participation will require at least 1, but no more than 2 hours of your time.

PROCEDURES: If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1. You will be interviewed by yourself. The interviews will be conducted via Skype, and digitally recorded. You will be asked questions about your experiences as a classroom teacher. The transcript of the recorded interview will be available to you, if requested, for your review as to accuracy and clarity of content.

RISKS AND/OR DISCOMFORTS: The following risks may be associated with your participation in this study: There are no known risks associated with this study.

BENEFITS: The following benefits may be associated with your participation in this study: The opportunity to reflect on your teaching practices.

ALTERNATIVES: There are no known alternatives available to you other than not participating in this study. However, any significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to your willingness to continue participation will be provided to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The records of this study will be kept private and will be protected to the fullest extent provided by law. In any sort of report that may be published, no information that would make it possible to identify a subject, school, or district will be included. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. However, your records may be reviewed for audit purposes by authorized University or other agents who will be bound by the same provisions of confidentiality.

COMPENSATION & COSTS: There is no compensation provided for participation in this study.

RIGHT TO DECLINE OR WITHDRAW: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to participate in the study or withdraw your consent at any time during the study. Your withdrawal or lack of participation will not affect any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The investigator reserves the right to remove you without your consent at such time that they feel it is in the study's best interest.

RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions about the purpose, procedures, or any other issues relating to this research study you may contact the principle investigator, Robert Minott, at 678-349-2678, or RMinott@aol.com.

PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT: I have read the information in this consent form and agree to participate in this study. I have had a chance to ask any questions I have about this study, and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am entitled to a copy of this form after it has been read and signed.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent _____ Date _____