

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND  
ELEMENTARY STUDENT AND TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
DEPARTMENTALIZING

by

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In loving memory of Holly.

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### Abstract

In response to the continued pressure placed on American public schools to increase academic achievement, some schools have begun to reorganize instructional environments in an effort to improve student outcomes. The current study examined one such elementary school that implemented a departmentalized model of instruction in fourth and fifth-grade classrooms in an effort to improve student learning. This longitudinal, cross-sectional study followed a sample of students and teachers over a two-year period in an attempt to ascertain how departmentalizing in the elementary school affected student and teacher perceptions and academic achievement among students in third, fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade. Student perceptions of their school, teachers, peers, and academic performance were measured using surveys and standardized achievement test scores were collected. Teacher attitudes toward departmentalization were also measured using surveys.

A factor analysis of student survey results with Varimax rotation resulted in ten factors that revealed a consistent pattern of change in student perceptions when correlated. A consistent relationship between students' academic achievement and perceptions at each grade level was not found. Results suggested that students who began switching classes in elementary school had positive perceptions of their teachers and of themselves as social beings in school. Perceptions of their academic abilities, however, separated from their perceptions of their teachers over time. In contrast, students with one teacher in self-contained classrooms had positive perceptions of their teachers. These students' perceptions of their academic abilities and perceptions of

themselves as social beings in school were connected to their perceived teacher-student relationships.

Elementary teachers expressed concern over meeting their students' emotional needs, but otherwise reported positive attitudes toward their abilities to teach and meet their students' academic needs in a departmentalized setting. Teachers at the elementary school and the middle school felt that students who switched classes in elementary school were more prepared when they got to middle school and adjusted more quickly than students who came from self-contained elementary classrooms.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### **Background and Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine how obtained academic achievement and student and teacher perceptions of academic achievement, the school environment, and relationships among students and between students and teachers are impacted by the use of departmentalization in elementary school. Departmentalizing at the elementary school level typically means that there is one teacher per grade level who is responsible for teaching one academic subject area. Like middle-and high-school students, the elementary students then rotate classrooms throughout the day, receiving instruction from various teachers in different subjects. This is a common practice in middle and high schools and is typically done as a result of the specialized academic content knowledge required of the teachers at this level of education (Dunn, 1952). Some elementary schools have adopted this practice in the intermediate grade levels allowing elementary teachers to focus on teaching one subject area instead of having to teach all areas of the curriculum as is traditionally done. The proposed advantages of using this model for instruction include (a) all students having access to the same instructor for each subject area, (b) making the learning experience more equitable and uniform for all elementary students, (c) teachers are able to focus on one aspect of the curriculum and become experts in that area, and (d) instructional planning is decreased for teachers as they have fewer subject areas to plan (Dunn, 1952). Disadvantages that may be somewhat unique to elementary students and teachers include (a) a lack of connection among peers and between teachers and students, and (b) an underdeveloped sense of safety and belonging

for students (Bowser, 1984; Culyer, 1984), which may lead to a decrease in academic performance. This study was designed to address many of the criticisms of both the self-contained and departmentalized models of instruction at the elementary school level from both the teacher and students' perspectives.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This longitudinal and cross-sectional study used student and teacher surveys to measure attitudes toward departmentalization in a school that used the departmentalized model in fourth and fifth-grades for two years. Those responses were compared with academic performance on district benchmark testing in reading and math in an effort to answer questions about student perceptions, teacher attitudes and student academic performance.

### **Student Perception Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The research questions related to student perceptions of departmentalization at the elementary school level were all designed to examine how the use of departmentalization in elementary school impacts various student perceptions related to the school, their teachers, their peers, and their own academic performance. The guiding questions related to student perceptions were how do students' attitudes toward departmentalization relate to their (a) perceptions of school, (b) perceptions of their teachers, (c) perceptions of their academic abilities, (d) relationships with their peers, and (e) performance on standardized benchmark achievement tests? With respect to academic achievement an additional research question related to student perceptions: how do students' perceptions and academic performance change over time?

It was hypothesized some students would view departmentalization as a positive change from earlier classroom experiences and they would likely show academic gains throughout the school year. These students were predicted to have a positive view of their school, their teachers, peers, and their academic abilities. Other students, however, may not have viewed departmentalization as a positive change. It was predicted that these students would not show the same gains in academics as their peers who liked departmentalization and would likely express less positive perceptions of their school, teachers, and academic abilities.

It was unclear how these attitudes might change over time or if there would be any differences in attitude and achievement between sixth graders who came to middle school from elementary schools that used the traditional, self-contained classroom structure and those students who came to middle school from the participating elementary school that used the departmentalization model in fourth and fifth grades.

### **Teacher Attitude and Perception Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The second set of research questions were related to teacher attitudes toward departmentalization at the elementary school level. The first question was how do teacher attitudes toward departmentalization impact their (a) attitudes toward their job and their school, (b) perceptions of the relationships they have with their students, and (c) perceptions of student opinions about them?

Based upon previous research related to teacher attitudes toward departmentalization, participating teacher attitudes were predicted to vary. It was hypothesized that teachers who had more input into what subject area they would teach

would express a greater sense of satisfaction with their job. Previous research suggests that some elementary school teachers feel as though they are less connected with their students when a departmentalized model for instruction is used (Bowser, 1984; Culyer, 1984). In contrast other, more recent, studies have found increasing support for departmentalization among elementary teachers (Williams, 2004). Other concerns noted in the literature include teachers feeling less able to meet their students' individual needs as they spend less time with each student every day when classes are organized departmentally (Bowser, 1984; Culyer, 1984). Teacher perceptions were also predicted to have an impact on student attitudes. Specifically, teachers who reported positive perceptions of departmentalization were predicted to teach students who positively viewed their teachers and departmentalization. These students were predicted to show academic gains in that teacher's subject area. Teachers who reported less positive or negative perceptions of departmentalization were predicted to teach students who negatively viewed their teachers and departmentalization. In turn, the students would show lower academic progress in that teacher's subject area.

### **Overview of Methodology**

An elementary school that was utilizing a departmentalized approach to instruction for the first time in grades four and five was identified and contacted. The school administration, as well as all third, fourth, and fifth-grade teachers, agreed to participate in the study. The sample for this study in the first year included all third, fourth, and fifth-grade students and teachers at the participating elementary school. In the second year the students had moved up a grade level and the same students were

recruited. A control group of sixth-graders who did not attend the participating elementary school were included in the sample in year two. All fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade teachers at the participating elementary and middle school were recruited to participate in the second year of the study. Student and teacher surveys were collected once each school year (2011-2012 and 2012-2013) and student achievement scores (Measures of Academic Progress testing scores) in mathematics and reading. In addition to the student and teacher surveys, a subsample of participating students and teachers agreed to be interviewed in order to further explore the perceived impact of departmentalization on the students' and teachers' overall experience in elementary school and in transitioning to middle school. The student and teacher survey questions provided a great deal of information. However, the interviews provided more detailed explanations and accounts of student and teacher attitudes and allowed for a more accurate interpretation of results within the context of the participating schools.

A factor analysis with Varimax rotation was used to organize all student survey responses into ten orthogonal factors. Scale scores for each factor were computed for each individual student. These scale scores were then examined by grade level to determine similarities and differences at each grade level. Pearson correlations between factor scale scores were then used to examine relationships within student survey responses and between student responses and academic achievement scores. Data were examined by grade level and as a whole in order to answer student perception research questions and identify changes in student attitudes over the two years of the study.

Descriptive results from teacher surveys were compiled to address the teacher attitude research questions.

### **Definition of Terms**

#### **Self-contained Classrooms**

For the purposes of this study self-contained classrooms are defined as grade-level elementary classrooms where the students receive instruction in one classroom and one teacher instructs students in all academic subject areas. Students are placed in grade-level classrooms based upon their age. Self-contained classrooms are common at the elementary level and proponents of the self-contained classroom site many benefits including more efficient use of time, a greater amount of flexibility, better quality of teacher-student relationships, more cohesive, cross-curricular instruction, and the ability of the teacher to educate the “whole child” (Culyer, 1984).

#### **Departmentalized Classrooms**

Departmentalized classrooms are those where students have different teachers for each different academic subject area in a given grade-level. When using a departmentalized approach to instruction students may travel as a whole group to each classroom for instruction in each subject area or students may have their own individual schedules resulting in different groups of students in each period. A report published by Educational Research Service (American Association of School Administrators, 1965) revealed that various approaches to departmentalization have been used by elementary schools for many years. Proponents of the departmentalized approach state that organizing classrooms, students, and instruction in such a manner provides students with

equal access to teachers who excel or specialize in a certain subject area. Supporters of the departmentalized approach to instruction also believe that teachers are better able to meet the individual instructional needs of students when they are placed in groups of similar ability (Dunn, 1952).

The participating school grouped students based upon their math achievement scores. Students traveled with the same group of students for instruction in math, writing, and whole group, grade-level reading. Students were then regrouped according to their instructional level for guided reading.

### **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)**

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is a computer adaptive, norm-referenced assessment used by the district of the participating school to measure student growth periodically throughout the school year and over time. The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) creates and aligns MAP assessments with state and national standards. In the participating school, students take the reading and mathematics MAP test three times each school year, once each fall, winter, and spring. Students receive a different number of points for each item they answer correctly based upon the statistical difficulty of the item resulting in their RIT score of equal interval Rasch Units. Nationally normed RIT scores are available for teachers to use in making norm-referenced interpretations of each students' MAP scores (<http://www.nwea.org/node/98>). Since student scores are interval level data and can be examined longitudinally to measure growth across grade levels, MAP scores provided the most appropriate measure of academic achievement for this longitudinal study.

### **Professional Significance of the Study**

As pressure mounts for students and schools to continue to make academic progress and meet curricular standards, the debate over which instructional model works best has once again been brought to the forefront of educational reform. A substantial body of literature dating back to the 1930s exists that examines the pros and cons of each model from a logistical and psychological perspective. More recently, researchers have begun to explore the impact of each of these models on standardized measures of achievement. This study was designed to address some of the concerns brought forth by the early literature related to the logistical and psychological impact of departmentalizing at the elementary school level. This study also brings a new perspective through student and teacher surveys to add to the literature that examines the impact of departmentalization on academic achievement. Specifically, this study addresses concerns about (a) the quality of teacher-student relationships and a feeling of stability for highly mobile students in high poverty areas, (b) ability of teachers to support the development of the whole child (Culyer, 1984), (c) logistical concerns such as increase or decrease in teacher planning, and (d) the ability of teachers to address and meet their students academic needs and preparation for middle school (Dunn, 1952). Additional goals of this project include studying the impact of departmentalization on student academic progress in math and reading and student perceptions of their performance in these areas. Student surveys and interviews also provided insight into how students viewed their relationships with teachers. The inclusion of additional students in sixth-grade who came from a self-contained environment in fourth and fifth-grade provided a

direct comparison of student perceptions and academic performance sixth-grade students with different preparation. The results of this study provide a more complete account of how students and teachers at the participating school viewed departmentalization, how these views developed and changed over a two-year period, and how departmentalization impacted teacher-student relationships, social development, and student achievement.

### **Organization of the Study**

A review of literature and previous research related to the various aspects of this study is presented in Chapter Two. Chapter Three details the methods of data collection and analysis employed and provides information about the elementary and middle school as well as participating students and teachers. Data analysis and results from the study and data analysis are presented in Chapter Four. Important findings are presented by similarities found across student responses in each of the participating grade levels. The relationships between academic achievement data and student perceptions from each grade level are then presented. A final summary of the findings, as well as a discussion of important implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research is included in Chapter Five.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Overview

How a school and its classrooms are organized varies greatly among American schools. The debate over which organizational model is best has been contested for as many years as these differing approaches have existed. Just as the role of the teacher has evolved, so too have the views and opinions about how best to meet students' instructional needs in order to provide them with the best possible education (McAulay, 1960; Porter-Magee, 2004). In the current era of high-stakes testing, student academic achievement is often the main focus of schools. Schools and districts may employ different organizational models for instruction in an attempt to improve or maximize student learning as manifested in test performance.

At the elementary school level, two of the most frequently debated formats for classroom instruction are the self-contained classrooms and the departmentalized model, most often introduced at the intermediate level. The degree to which schools use one or both of these organizational structures varies greatly across the country (American Association of School Administrators, 1965). Mary Dunn (1952) argues that allowing for flexibility in the organization of American schools may be the best way to ensure that individual students' educational needs are addressed appropriately. What makes this task difficult is the fact that student achievement is influenced by many other factors outside of instructional organization and practices. Student perceptions such as how students feel about their classroom and school environment, how they view themselves as learners (McCaslin, 2008; McCaslin & Burross, 2008), and their expectations for success in

school (Eccles et al., 1983; Wigfield, 1994) can affect students' motivation and in turn academic outcomes. Student-teacher relationships have been connected with both long-term academic achievement and social development of students in school (Culyer, 1984; Dunn, 1952; Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). The benefits of each organizational approach to teaching students, particularly in elementary schools, have been well documented in the existing body of literature, but few studies have attempted to link organizational structures with academic achievement as well as teacher and student perceptions.

### **Classroom Organization**

Grouping students in elementary school is often done on multiple levels. Students are primarily grouped into grade-levels, followed by grouping into classrooms, and then they may be grouped even further inside the classroom. How students are grouped for instructional purposes can generally be described in terms of homogeneity and heterogeneity. At the most basic level, students in schools are grouped homogeneously with others who are of a comparable age, achievement, and intelligence or ability. The most common practice in American schools is to group students into grade-levels by age. Once students are assigned a grade-level, they may be grouped further either homogeneously or heterogeneously. Between-class grouping continues the separation of students often into groups of similar levels of achievement. Elementary grade-levels that use between-class grouping assign students to a particular teacher based upon achievement scores so that students with the highest scores will all be assigned to Teacher A and students with the lowest scores will be assigned to Teacher B. This type

of grouping reduces the amount of within classroom variability in student ability and, ideally, between-class grouping of students allows teachers to tailor their instruction to the needs of the students in their class (Esposito, 1973; Good & Brophy, 2008).

Alternatively, students may be assigned randomly to a teacher once they have been placed in their grade-level group. Even though every student in a particular class is approximately the same age, the academic abilities, achievement levels and intelligence of the students in the class may vary greatly resulting in a heterogeneous classroom. When teachers have students with a wide variety of abilities in one classroom, he or she may opt to group the students in the classroom by similar ability levels, a practice known as within-class ability grouping. Like between-class grouping, the goal of within-class grouping is to eliminate some of the variability in student ability so that the teacher can individualize instruction in a more efficient manner (Good & Brophy, 2008). For the most part, between-class and within-class grouping at the elementary level are done in self-contained classrooms where the students have one teacher teaching all subjects to the same group of students all day.

In other instances students might not remain with the same group of students or even the same teacher throughout the day. Some elementary schools organize their grade-levels by subject area, a practice referred to as “departmentalization”. Departmentalization in the early grade levels dates back to the colonial era when half of the school day was spent in writing class and the other half was spent in reading class. Teachers were assigned to teach either reading or writing based upon their strengths

(Dunn, 1952; Otto, 1931a). Since then a variety of organizational structures have been implemented in elementary schools across the country.

Other organizational options that have been implemented include grouping students, regardless of age, by reading levels, known as the Joplin Plan (Culyer, 1984). Variations on the Joplin Plan have also been used where students may be grouped by ability within a grade level or students may be grouped by ability for reading and then again for math (Good & Brophy 2008). Another organizational model calls for grouping students into “combination classes” where two or more grade levels are combined into one classroom, often with one teacher (Culyer, 1984). Yet another organizational approach to teaching is the team teaching model where a “team” of several teachers, often with different areas of expertise, teaches a larger group of students. If the “team” is comprised of two teachers the number of students in the class would be equal to twice that of a regular self-contained classroom with one teacher (Parkay & Stanford, 2010).

The popularity of various organizational structures of elementary school classrooms has changed repeatedly and surveys have shown that there is not one consistent organizational plan used across elementary schools in the United States. The degree to which elementary schools employ various organizational structures also differs (American Association of School Administrators, 1965). The two classroom organizational structures most often studied at the elementary level are the self-contained model and the departmentalized approach. Numerous studies and reports have been generated in the past century discussing the advantages and disadvantages of self-contained classrooms versus departmentalized classrooms.

The majority of research conducted related to various organizational structures of elementary classrooms focuses on how the organizational structure used affects student achievement. Henry Otto (1947) identified a need for more research to be generated exploring how departmentalization may impact teaching methods, experiences of students in the classroom, and their social and emotional development. Since Otto's call for further research, studies examining administrative and curricular differences, including the scope of curriculum, and interactions between students and teachers have been carried out in an effort to determine which instructional model is most effective and best for students at the elementary school level (American Association of School Administrators, 1965; Anderson, 1962; Aubrey, 1968; Culyer, 1984; Dunn, 1952; Lobdell & van Ness, 1963; Otto, 1931a, 1931b, 1947; Rouse, 1946). Supporters of both organizational structures provide compelling arguments for why their model is ideal for elementary school children, but so far the findings related to student achievement, instructional effectiveness, and social and emotional development of students have been inconclusive.

Mary Dunn (1952) compiled records and survey responses from American schools and districts across decades ranging from 1920 to the late 1940s noting the extent to which several different organizational models were used including self-contained classrooms and departmentalization. Dunn's work provided an account of the constant change and wide variety with which schools organized their classrooms. Between the years of 1920 and 1949, popular views about which organizational structure was best and goals of education in general shifted regularly. Throughout this time period, Dunn

(1952) found that the views of those in favor of self-contained classrooms and those in favor of departmentalization often used the same arguments to support their preferred method of instructional delivery. She concluded that perhaps a variety in instructional formats is the ideal way to meet all of the different instructional needs of students and that it is likely good teachers can succeed and thrive under many organizational structures.

The following decade during the 1964-1965 school year the American Association of School Administrators (1965) surveyed approximately 400 elementary schools around the country to determine the extent of departmentalization at the elementary school level. At the time of the survey, departmentalization in elementary schools was still relatively rare and the majority of elementary schools were thought to be organized using self-contained classrooms. Just as Dunn (1952) found in reviewing records of previous decades, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) discovered a wide variety in school organizational systems among participating schools. Some general patterns were found among certain grade levels of participating schools. The primary grades were primarily organized in self-contained classrooms and the intermediate elementary classrooms were more likely to introduce some level of departmentalization. Out of the total number of participating elementary schools in each area, the percentage of schools using some type of departmentalization and the extent to which departmentalization was used in each school varied widely from 2% to 100%. Some of the participating schools indicated the use of departmentalization for all subject areas while others utilized departmentalization for only one or two subject areas.

Comments from the participating schools indicate the decision of how to organize classrooms was based on their assessment of the needs of their students. The comments reveal conflicting ideas about which type of classroom organization is best in terms of meeting student needs and providing the necessary flexibility for teachers to provide each of their students with the best instruction. More recently, with the introduction of the Common Core State Standards, schools across the country have begun utilizing departmentalization to various degrees with even their youngest students. It is argued that departmentalization is a way to ensure instructional time is reserved for each subject area and to allow teachers the opportunity to develop an expertise necessary to teach content with the breadth and depth required by the Common Core (Gewertz, 2014).

### **Self-Contained Classrooms**

According to Parkay and Stanford (2010), self-contained classrooms are those “in which one teacher instructs a group of students in a single classroom” (p. 480). Instruction in self-contained classrooms is described as “child-centered” as opposed to “subject-centered” (McGrath & Rust, 2002) and those in favor of the self-contained elementary classrooms claim that (a) teachers are better able to establish close relationships with students, (b) self-contained classrooms encourage learning of the “whole” student as opposed to compartmentalized learning, (c) self-contained classrooms offer more consistency and connection among the various areas of the curriculum, and (d) there is greater consistency and continuity for students remaining in one classroom all day (Culyer, 1984; Dunn, 1952). Other studies have found that instructional time is better used in the self-contained classroom. Cross-curricular connections can be made

since one teacher is responsible for planning and executing instruction in all curricular areas. Since students remain with the same teacher in self-contained classrooms and scheduling and changing of classrooms do not limit instructional time, teachers have a greater amount of flexibility in the amount of time they spend on a given lesson. He or she can extend the amount of time spent on a lesson if students appear to need more time. Additionally transition time between instructional periods is reduced since students do not have to move from one classroom to another (Lobdell & van Ness, 1984; Rouse, 1946).

In terms of curriculum and instruction, Margaret Rouse (1946) found many similarities between elementary classrooms organized by department and those that were self-contained classrooms. She also found several statistically significant differences between practices in self-contained and departmentalized elementary classrooms in a study of 40 schools (20 schools that departmentalized their elementary classrooms and 20 schools that utilized the self-contained model). After identifying 14 differences in the scope of curriculum taught, the organization of curriculum, classroom procedures and other practices in each type of classroom, Rouse had each of the 14 differences evaluated by elementary education specialists in order to determine which practice was most in line with best practices. Of the 14 differences, seven favored the departmentalized classrooms and seven favored the self-contained classrooms. However, of the seven differences found in the departmentalized classrooms only one was endorsed by the elementary education specialists. In contrast, the elementary education specialists supported all seven of the differences found in the self-contained classrooms.

While academic achievement is one goal of the elementary school teacher, it is not the only focus in the classroom. Elementary teachers are tasked with many other responsibilities related to the social and emotional development of their students. Psychologists have argued in favor of self-contained classrooms as the best way for students to form positive relationships with their teachers and for their teachers to educate the “whole child” (Aubrey, 1968; Heathers, 1961). Richard Culyer (1984) advocated for the use of self-contained classrooms, particularly for students who are hyperactive, insecure, or slow-learners. Culyer (1984) states that the constancy one teacher can provide in terms of instructional and organizational practices is beneficial for these types of students and allows teachers to support their individual needs and maximize academic gains. In his descriptions presented in *Life in Classrooms*, Philip Jackson (1968) discusses the importance of routine, predictability, and familiarity in the classroom as necessary conditions for students to be able to feel safe and ready to learn. Proponents of the self-contained classrooms feel that having one teacher in one classroom is the best way to establish consistent routines and provide predictability and familiarity for students (Culyer, 1984; Lobdell & van Ness, 1963; Rouse, 1946).

### **Departmentalized Classrooms**

Parkay and Stanford (2010) define departmentalized classrooms as those “in which students move from classroom to classroom for instruction in different subject areas” (p. 474). Most junior high or middle schools and high schools in the United States are organized by subject area or departmentalized due to the specialized nature of each subject area at this level. Teachers in junior high or middle schools and high schools

have a certain level of expertise in the subject area they teach and often specialize in that curricular area during their collegiate studies (Parkay & Stanford, 2010). In 1931 Henry Otto found the practice of departmentalization at some level in elementary schools in 31 states. He found that approximately 10% to 37% of 158 eight-year elementary schools and from 3% to 19% in 203 six-year elementary schools used some type of departmentalization. When elementary schools adopt a departmentalized organizational structure students may be grouped by achievement or ability level in “between-class grouping” as previously described for each subject area class. Students may be assigned to one group of students based on ability in one subject area and remain with that same group throughout the day as they rotate classrooms and teachers or the groupings of students may differ for each subject area of instruction based on ability in each subject (Chan & Jarman, 2004; Good & Brophy, 2008; Otto 1931a). Chan and Jarman (2004) noted that in recent years self-contained classrooms appeared to be most popular model for organization in elementary schools, however, a renewed sense of experimentation with various delivery methods for instruction in elementary classrooms has been observed. Catherine Gerwertz (2014) reported an increase in the use of departmentalization after the introduction of No Child Left Behind in 2002. Elementary students began switching classrooms for reading and math instruction in an effort to ensure adequate academic gains were made in these key areas of the curriculum.

Those who support the idea of departmentalization in the elementary grades state that (a) teacher retention rates increase due to decreased instructional loads, (b) students are more prepared for the departmentalized structure of middle school, (c) there is greater

ability to utilize cross grade-level instruction, (d) instruction is more consistent since all students are learning from the same teacher in each subject area, and (e) student education is not limited by the instructional strengths and weaknesses of one teacher (Anderson, 1962; Chan & Jarman, 2004; Lobdell & van Ness, 1963).

One argument made by those who favor a more departmentalized approach in the elementary schools is that it is unrealistic to expect an elementary school teacher to be an expert in every subject area that must be taught in the self-contained classroom and that departmentalization allows teachers to become specialists in a certain area of instruction (Anderson, 1962; Chan & Jarman, 2004; Otto, 1931a, 1931b). Anderson (1962) argues that departmentalizing elementary classrooms would not only benefit students academically, but would also benefit students' social and emotional development. He asserts that teachers who specialize in a particular subject area are better equipped to recognize students who are struggling and intervene appropriately. By providing students with the necessary academic support, Anderson believes "for many pupils, teacher specialization could mean greater achievement, more profound learning, greater interest in learning, and better social and emotional development" (p. 260). However, he is careful to warn that implementing departmentalization alone will not automatically yield these outcomes. Instead he feels that departmentalization when done well will lay the groundwork for these positive student outcomes.

### **Classroom Organization and Academic Achievement**

The links between classroom organizational structure and academic progress has been examined extensively over time. In recent decades researchers have begun to

explore the impact of each of these organizational structures on student achievement as measured by standardized test scores (Bowser, 1984; McGrath & Rust, 2002; Williams, 2009). Results from these studies are also inconclusive. Good & Brophy (2008) conducted a review of existing literature related to between-class ability grouping and student achievement. Results from the studies examined provide little if any support for the claim that reducing student ability differences through between-class grouping yields an increase in performance for all students.

Culyer (1984) cites the decline in student scores from the reading portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) as students move into grade-levels that tend to be departmentalized. A review of NAEP data shows that student reading scores are on the rise in fourth grade, but by the time students have reached the eighth and twelfth grades their reading scores have stabilized. Culyer argues that the leveling off of NAEP scores once students move to departmentalized schools shows that receiving instruction from a teacher who specializes in a specific content area such as reading does not guarantee continuous achievement gains.

Bowser (1984) examined the scholastic achievement of fourth- and fifth-grade students in science and social studies in self-contained and departmentalized classrooms. She also collected data from teachers regarding their attitudes toward departmentalization in the elementary grade levels using surveys. Bowser found no significant differences in achievement between students in the self-contained classrooms and students who came from departmentalized classrooms for science and social studies. She also found that the majority of the teachers surveyed felt that teacher/student relationships were more

important than the organizational structure with respect to student achievement and that departmentalization did not allow teachers to meet the emotional needs of their students.

McGrath and Rust (2002) examined the performance of approximately 200 fifth and sixth-grade students from both self-contained and departmentalized classrooms on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). Unlike Bowser's (1984) study, participating students from self-contained classrooms performed significantly better than their counterparts in the departmentalized classrooms in science, language, and total battery. No significant differences in performance between groups was found for math, social studies, or reading.

Williams (2004) conducted a similar study in an attempt to determine which organizational structure produced the greatest achievement gains in mathematics for fifth-grade students as measured by the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). Like Bowser (1984), she collected data concerning teacher opinions regarding departmentalization. Williams' study showed that mean scale scores from the mathematics Georgia CRCT were not significantly different between groups, but that a greater percentage of students from the departmentalized classrooms met or exceeded CRCT standards for one of the two years studied. The majority of the teachers surveyed in this study supported the use of departmentalization in grades three through six and expressed that they had some kind of input regarding the organizational structure used at their school.

In 2008 Darrell Moore examined standardized test scores of fourth and fifth-grade students from both self-contained and departmentalized classrooms in Northeast

Tennessee. Again, Moore found that the students in the fifth-grade departmentalized classrooms outscored their peers from self-contained classrooms in mathematics, but no significant differences were found among fifth-grade students in language arts, science, and social studies. Fourth-grade students from departmentalized and self-contained classrooms performed at a comparable level in each of the four subject areas. Moore also surveyed teachers from both organizational models to determine if any connections could be made between student performance and teacher attitude toward departmentalization at the elementary school level but no significant relationships were found between teachers' attitudes and student achievement.

None of the reviewed studies or reports examined student perceptions of departmentalization along with teacher attitudes. It is important to study how departmentalization may affect student perceptions of their school and their academic abilities. While some teachers report that they feel departmentalization does not allow them to meet their students' emotional needs (Bowser, 1984), others report a growing trend of support for departmentalization (Moore, 2008). However, the student perspective remains unexplored. It was also noted that none of the studies or reports examined the relationship between student and teacher attitudes and achievement. This study was designed to contribute to the existing body of literature related to classroom organizational structures and student achievement, while adding the student perspective and exploring potential relationships between student and teacher perceptions and achievement. This study followed the same group of students over two school years to

measure any change in attitude and achievement as they gain more experience with departmentalization.

### **Teacher-Student Relationships and Student Perceptions**

Teacher-student relationships are the foundation upon which social and emotional development and academic achievement are built in the elementary classrooms.

Elementary schools must provide an environment where children can continue to develop socially and emotionally as well as learn to become students. Teachers go to great lengths to establish classroom environments that are not only conducive to learning, but encourage respect among students and allow them to build positive, respectful relationships with each other and their teachers. Routines are established within the school and classrooms to provide a feeling of predictability and allow for the most efficient use of time in the classroom. These routines assign specific roles to the teacher or teachers and the students in the classroom. Much of the academic progress students are expected to make requires students to participate in instruction provided by the teachers (Kennedy, 2005). A certain level of safety and trust must be established between teachers and students in order to elicit active participation of students (Pianta, 2000). Elementary schools seek to provide students with a stable physical environment and familiar social context that together create a feeling of safety and security for their students (Jackson, 1968).

The importance of educating and aiding in the development of students beyond academic achievement is often brought up when discussing the best way to organize elementary school classrooms. Supporters of self-contained classrooms feel that positive

teacher-student relationships are best developed when students spend most of their day with one teacher. The self-contained classroom allows the teacher to associate with a fewer number of students during the day, which may encourage the development of close teacher-student relationships (Culyer, 1984). Conversely, those in support of departmentalization in elementary schools claim that teachers who work with a greater number of students each day, but have greater knowledge of the subject matter they teach, are better able to establish relationships with their students and meet their needs due to their curricular expertise (Anderson, 1962).

Research has shown that the relationships teachers and students form in the early years of schooling impact the social and academic progress of students over time (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). In two studies involving 399 kindergarten students, Ladd, Birch, and Buhs (1999), found that early classroom experiences impacted a range of outcomes associated with teacher and peer relationships and academic behaviors. Teacher-child relationships and relationships that these children formed with their peers were affected by the behavioral styles each child possessed upon entering kindergarten. These relationships in turn impacted participation of the children in the study. Children with behavioral dispositions that resulted in “stressful” relationships with teachers were less likely to participate in class. The results support the idea that there is a connection between positive teacher-child relationships and higher levels of participation and achievement. However, they also found that some children may also participate less even though they have positive relationships with their teacher. Even though the results of the two studies were somewhat mixed, it was made

clear that the relationships children form early on in school with their peers and teachers have a profound affect on their experiences as learners and social beings.

In another study of teacher-child relationships, Pianta and Stuhlman (2004) studied data from previous assessments of teacher-child relationships of 490 students once they were in first-grade. Ratings of closeness, conflict, observed and rated social competence, rated and tested vocabulary skills, as well as behavioral ratings were collected for all participants in order to (a) map out any connections between the various factors and (b) assess how teachers' perceived relationships with their students may change over time. The researchers found that mean levels of teachers' ratings of conflict and closeness with students changed only slightly from preschool to first grade. Hierarchical regression analyses revealed that the teachers' perceptions of their relationships with the children in first grade were predictive of social and academic outcomes for the students including rated achievement, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, rated social competence and observed social competence. Results from this study further support the importance of early teacher-child relationships in school as they are connected to several social, behavioral, and academic outcomes for students.

Hamre and Pianta (2008) followed a sample of students from kindergarten through eighth-grade to further track the stability of teacher-child relationships and explore how these relationships affected social, behavioral, and academic outcomes for students later in school. Ratings of students' cognitive development, classroom behavior, teacher-child relationships, academic performance, work habits, and records associated with standardized test results and disciplinary actions against the students were collected

over the period of the study. The results suggested that early teacher-child relationships were again connected to students' behavioral and academic outcomes later in school.

Hamre and Pianta also found that negative teacher-child relationships tended to be more powerful predictors of academic and behavioral difficulties than positive relationships.

This supports the idea that negative teacher-child relationships may carry more weight in terms of student outcomes as described in the findings of Ladd, Birch, and Buhs (1999).

Results from each of these studies outline the complexity of the teacher-student or teacher-child relationships that form over a student's career. While positive relationships with teachers appears to be necessary for desirable social and academic outcomes, the results from the above mentioned studies clearly show that a positive relationship is not the only condition necessary for success in school. Positive relationships are more of a prerequisite. For students who have negative teacher-student relationships, these relationships do appear to have a detrimental affect on academic, social, and behavioral outcomes. It is perhaps due to the lack of immediate payout in academic gains that the idea of building positive teacher-student relationships does not garner more attention from educational reformers as a means to increase student learning. It is clear that negative teacher-student relationships can have detrimental and long-lasting effects on student outcomes, so it seems reasonable to assume that positive teacher-student relationships would serve to promote desirable outcomes over time. Focusing on the construction of positive teacher-student relationships could potentially decrease negative outcomes for students who may struggle to form positive teacher-child relationships early on in school.

Much of the research on teacher-child or teacher-student relationships is examined from the teacher's perspective of these relationships rather than the students' perspective. Student perceptions of their school experience and their abilities also play a large role in social and academic outcomes. Students must perceive school as a place that is safe in order for them to feel confident enough to participate in classroom activities and trust in their teachers to help them through the learning process (Pianta, 2000). In addition to feeling safe enough to take risks in learning, students must also feel a certain level of competence or ability in their skills as a student. How a student views him or herself, as able or not able and the importance they place upon succeeding or failing has been shown to have a substantial impact on academic outcomes and student motivational dispositions in classrooms. Expectancy-value theory introduced early on by Atkinson (1957) states that the motivation to perform an achievement-related task is a direct result of individuals' assessment or expectancy for success and the value they place on succeeding. Perhaps the most relevant contribution of expectancy-value theory to this study is the idea that student perceptions are at the forefront of school experiences and academic success.

Jacquelyne Eccles (1983) and her colleagues have conducted a program of research, examining differences in math achievement among boys and girls in fifth through twelfth-grade. What they discovered was that students' perceptions of their abilities were influenced by their perceptions of the difficulty of the task at hand and how much work the task required. Students' self-concepts of their abilities were also related to their perceptions of the evaluation of their abilities by parents and teachers. A

combination of students' interpretation or perception of their expectations and values lead them to make different choices in an academic setting. Eccles et al.'s studies revealed just how important student perceptions are in student outcomes and experiences in school.

Taken together the theoretical constructs related to teacher-student relationships and student perceptions provide a more complete picture of the complex social interactions that take place in schools and classrooms. Both teacher-student relationships and student perceptions appear to have a significant impact on the social and academic experiences students have in school.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gain a more complete understanding of how the use of departmentalization at the elementary school level impacts students and teachers over time. Previous research has sought to examine relationships between various classroom organizational structures and academic achievement among elementary students but it has long been understood that elementary schools play a much larger role in students' development beyond academics. Given that research has shown the critical role of teacher-student relationships in the social and intellectual development of students, it made sense to design a study that would explore both the social and the academic impact of classroom organization. In order to capture the complexities of the relationships that exist in classrooms, both student and teacher perspectives were studied over a two-year period.

#### **Research Design**

This study was designed as a longitudinal, cross-sectional study that took place over the span of two school years. Inferential and descriptive statistical procedures were used for analysis of student and teacher survey and interview data as well as student achievement scores. Student and teacher data were collected once each year of the study. The cross-sectional sampling of students across grade-levels provided a maximal amount of information used to measure change over time among students who had differing levels of exposure and experience in a departmentalized classroom organizational structure.

## Setting

The study was conducted in a low-income public elementary and middle school located in an urban school district in the southwestern United States. The elementary school was selected because it was using the departmentalization model in the fourth and fifth-grade classrooms. The middle school was selected because most of the students from the participating elementary school continue on to this particular middle school. This allowed the researcher to (a) follow the participants into the next school year and (b) compare these students with their peers who attended traditionally structured elementary schools that predominately use self-contained classroom settings.

The participating elementary and middle schools are located in a low socioeconomic status area with a large proportion of the students on free or reduced lunch (approximately 52 % at the elementary school and 67% at the middle school in October 2012, the second year of the study). The participating middle school campus is adjacent to the participating elementary school and at the time of the study both schools shared the same principal. The student population of both the elementary and the middle school tends to be highly mobile and of various racial/ethnic backgrounds as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

### *Participating Elementary and Middle School Demographic Data 2011-2012*

School	Total Enrollment	Enrollment by Grade		Enrollment by Gender		Ethnic Breakdown	Free Lunch	English Language Learners
		Grade-level	Students Enrolled					
Elementary	613	Pre-K	18	Male	47.15%	3.43% Asian	52.37%	20.55%
		K	114	Female	52.85%	4.73% Native American		
		1	114			13.54% African American		
		2	98			59.54% Hispanic		
		3	98			15.66% White		

		4	84			2.94%	Multi Racial		
		5	87						
Middle	633	6	213	Male	54.34%	2.37%	Asian	67.46%	3.16%
		7	203	Female	45.66%	3.63%	Native American		
		8	217			9.32%	African American		
						66.52%	Hispanic		
						16.43%	White		

In the elementary school, departmentalizing the fourth and fifth-grades was expected to increase student achievement scores on state tests by providing more specialized instruction and greater flexibility in scheduling and grouping of students. Students were assigned a homeroom based upon their math achievement scores. Students with similar scores were placed in a homeroom together (between-class grouping) and stayed together for math, grade-level reading, and writing. Students also received reading instruction at their individual instructional levels during guided reading in the afternoons. Departmentalizing also allowed for greater flexibility in instructional levels for fourth and fifth-grade students as students could be moved to different classes within or outside of their grade-level classes based on their performance.

The first year of data collection was the first year that departmentalization was implemented in the fourth and fifth-grade classrooms. Third-grade classrooms at the participating elementary school were organized using the self-contained model. Fourth and fifth-grade students had separate teachers for guided reading, grade-level reading using a basal text, math, and writing. The second year of the study the participating elementary school was still departmentalizing the fourth and fifth-grade classrooms but the curriculum was modified slightly. In this year, the students had separate teachers for guided reading, grade-level reading using a basal text, math, and a “guided math” class that served as a remedial intervention class to help students master basic math skills.

## Subjects

As shown in Table 2, a total of 150 students across the four grade levels participated in the study during the two-year period. Students included in the final study sample returned a parental consent form as well as a minor assent form. The students were enrolled in the third, fourth, or fifth-grade at the participating elementary school (or sixth-grade at the participating middle school during the 2012-2013 school year). Third-grade students were included in the study during the first year to measure changes in student perceptions that occurred during the transition from self-contained classrooms to departmentalized classrooms the following year. Individual demographic data beyond gender were not gathered for each participant, however, demographic information for both of the participating schools can be found in Table 1.

Table 2  
*Number of Participating Students by Grade-Level*

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Time 1	30	46	45	-----
Time 2	-----	19	23	14
Time 2 Control Group	-----	-----	-----	29

Note: Students in the Time 2 Control Group came from self-contained elementary classrooms.

All third, fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade general education teachers at the participating elementary and middle schools were eligible to participate. A total of ten teachers, shown in Table 3, participated in one or both years of the study.

As a result of high mobility and turnover among the teachers only two of the participating teachers participated in both years of the study. Five teachers participated in the first year of the study only and another three teachers participated only during the second year. Teachers included in the final study sample were teachers who provided consent to participate in the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth-grade at the participating elementary and middle schools. Fourth and fifth-grade teachers primarily taught only one subject area in accordance with the departmentalization model being examined in the study.

Table 3

*Number of Participating Teachers by Grade-Level*

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Time 1	2	2	3	-----
Time 2	-----	1	3	1

## Instruments

### Student Survey

The student surveys, located in Appendix B, included 50 Likert-type scale items on the original survey for third, fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade students. An additional 10 items were added for the second administration of the surveys in fourth and fifth-grade to reflect changes in the classes the students were taking that year. The survey items were designed to gather information such as how students felt about each of their classes, their teachers, their school, the other students in their classes, switching classes, sitting in different desks, and so on. The student survey instrument was modeled after the

instruments “The Thing About my School”, “The Thing About my Learning”, and “The Thing About Me” developed by Mary McCaslin as part of their studies related to Comprehensive School Reform (McCaslin & Good, 2005). “The Thing About my School” was designed to measure student perceptions of school, including classroom learning experiences with their peers, classroom experiences with their teacher, math achievement, and reading achievement. “The Thing About my Learning” was designed to capture students’ task-difficulty orientation (approach or avoidance) and self-regulation of procedural knowledge and motivation. “The Thing About Me” was designed to assess five domains including physical, personal, resourcefulness, personal commitments, friendship, and overall agency (McCaslin & Good, 2005). These three instruments were designed specifically for students who, like those in the current study, attended schools that serve students of poverty.

The student surveys used in this study were designed to gather information about student perceptions of their teachers, themselves as learners in reading, writing, and math, and their perceptions of their school. Where appropriate items from McCaslin’s instruments were used as these items have been validated and used in various research studies. Additional items were written in the spirit of McCaslin’s original instruments and were included in response to areas of concern over departmentalizing elementary school classrooms discussed in the classroom organization literature.

The new items were written in a manner to address specific, potential problems students might encounter once departmentalization was introduced. Items such as “It’s OK that other kids sit at my desk” were included because at the participating school the

students rotated classrooms and therefore didn't really have a desk of their own. Students had to carry all of their personal belongings and class materials such as books with them from classroom to classroom. Materials inside the desks were viewed as shared property. Students had assigned seats in each of their classes, but they didn't have a central place to leave their personal things. While some students viewed their homeroom desks as "their desks", other students saw all desks as a shared space. Based on concerns raised by researchers such as Culyer (1984), Jackson (1968), and Kennedy (2005), who stated the importance of regularity and stability in establishing a tranquil and safe atmosphere in the classroom, this seemed important. All of these students would have had prior experience in a self-contained classroom, where they had a designated desk to store their personal materials and property. The disappearance of this personal space once the students began switching classes seemed as though it could be problematic for some students who enjoy the safety and predictability of having one desk and associate this with feelings of safety and consistency in the classroom.

### **Teacher Surveys**

The teacher surveys, located in Appendix C, include information such as how well teachers felt they knew their students' strengths and needs, if they felt they were more effective in their planning and teaching in one subject area as opposed to many, etc. The questions included in the teacher surveys were intended to address many of the pros and cons of departmentalization at the elementary school level presented in previous research literature. Teacher surveys used a four-level Likert-type scale of "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree". These surveys did not contain a neutral

response in an effort to eliminate any central tendency bias and increase clarity in the interpretation of teacher survey results. These surveys were designed to capture the changes in teachers' daily activities as well as get a sense of how they felt about their ability to connect with students, meet their individual needs, and overall satisfaction with their job. One open ended item, "is there anything else you'd like to mention/discuss that I didn't ask you about in this survey", was added to the end of the teacher surveys in the second year of the study. This item was added as a means to capture any other concerns or issues teachers had experienced related to departmentalization in fourth and fifth-grades that were not addressed by the other survey items.

The surveys for the third-grade teachers and the sixth-grade teachers were modified slightly to reflect the different experiences of teachers at those grade levels that were relevant to this study. Parallel forms of some survey items were written for the third-grade teacher surveys to reflect the use of self-contained classrooms but provide the same information as the teacher surveys for the other grade levels. Items from the original teacher survey such as, "planning for one subject area in my grade level is less time consuming than planning for all subject areas", was changed to "it would be less time consuming to plan for one subject area in my grade level than planning for all subject areas". Similarly, "teaching one subject area has allowed me to become more effective in teaching my subject area", was changed to "teaching all subject areas has allowed me to become more effective in teaching each individual subject area".

Other items were rewritten as the opposite form of the items that appeared on the original teacher survey. For example, "I am better able to assess student performance

when I teach one subject area”, was changed to “I am better able to assess student performance when I teach all subject areas than I would be if I taught only one subject”. Data from these items were analyzed separately when making comparisons across grade levels to ensure proper interpretation.

In addition to revising some of the items for the third-grade teacher surveys, two items were omitted as they were not relevant to the third-grade teachers’ experiences. The items omitted were “I had an influence on what subject area I was assigned to teach” and “I teach the subject area that I chose or expressed interest in”. Two items were added to the end of the teacher survey for the sixth-grade teachers to capture differences in teacher perception of readiness and organization between students coming from departmentalized elementary classrooms and students coming from self-contained classrooms in elementary school: “the students who switched classes in elementary school were more prepared to switch classes in middle school” and “the students who switched classes in elementary school are more organized than the students who did not switch classes in elementary school”.

### **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)**

Achievement data were collected using student scores from the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test from the 2010-2011 (before the departmentalization model was implemented), the 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years. Student surveys were matched with MAP data to examine any correlations between perceptions of various aspects of school, relationships with teachers and peers, and achievement, as defined by

MAP scores. Scores in reading and mathematics from the winter 2012 testing session and the winter 2013 testing session were used in final data analyses for the current study.

## **Procedures**

### **Data Collection**

Two rounds of data collection were done over the two-years of the study. Each round consisted of two types of data (student and teacher surveys and student academic achievement scores). In brief, the first round consisted of administering student perception surveys and teacher attitude surveys in the third, fourth, and fifth-grades in the participating departmental elementary school during the 2011-2012 school year and gathering MAP scores for participating students from the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. The second round of data collection was conducted during the first half of the 2012-2013 school year. Participants from the previous school year were given the student perception survey and participants' MAP scores were collected for the fall and winter of 2012. Each round of data collection is described more fully subsequently.

During the first year of the study student surveys were given to third, fourth, and fifth-grade students at the participating elementary school. The third-grade student surveys served as a baseline of student attitudes toward the school, perceptions of their teachers, their academic performance, and relationships with their peers in a more traditional self-contained setting, before departmentalization was introduced. The fourth and fifth-grade student surveys were used as a measure of how students viewed themselves, their peers, their teachers, and their school once departmentalization was introduced. Teacher surveys were also given this year to third, fourth, and fifth-grade

teachers as a measure of teacher perceptions and attitudes during the first year where departmentalization was used in the fourth and fifth-grades. Reading and math MAP scores were collected from the spring of 2011, fall of 2011, and the winter of 2012 at this time.

During the second year, 19 of the students who filled out student surveys as third-graders were given the survey again as fourth-graders to measure any change in perceptions now that they were receiving instruction in a departmentalized setting. Additionally, 23 students in the fifth-grade who had completed surveys the previous year in fourth-grade were again given surveys to measure any changes in students who had been receiving instruction in a departmentalized setting for two years (in fourth and fifth-grade). Students who had moved from the elementary school to the middle school on the same campus for sixth-grade ( $n=14$ ) were also given surveys for a second time. These student surveys were used as a measurement of any changes in how students viewed themselves, their peers, their teachers, and their school after making the transition from a departmentalized elementary school to a departmentalized middle school.

Additionally 29, in year two, sixth-grade students who had come from elementary schools that used the self-contained model were surveyed. The results from these students were used as a control/comparison group, allowing for a comparison between attitudes of sixth grade students who had come from self-contained classrooms and those who came from the departmentalized setting of the participating elementary school. Teacher surveys were given to fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade teachers to measure any

change in teacher perceptions. Student achievement data (reading and math MAP scores) was collected for spring 2012, fall 2012, and winter 2013.

Student surveys were given in small group settings (typically 3-5 students at a time) in the fourth and fifth-grade classrooms. The third-grade students who completed the surveys during the first year were given the instrument as a whole group. Directions and survey items were read aloud to the students in both the small group and whole group settings. During the second year the sixth-grade students were also given surveys in more of a whole group setting where directions and items were read aloud and surveys distributed to participating students at the beginning of each Social Studies period.

A small sample of teacher ( $n = 3$ ) and student ( $n = 15$ ) interviews were also conducted during the second year of the study in an effort to get a more complete account of student and teacher perceptions of the use of departmentalization in the fourth and fifth-grades. Sixth-grade students ( $n = 6$ ) were also interviewed regarding their transition from elementary to middle school.

### **Data Procedures**

Student and teacher survey responses were coded by assigning numerical values one through five to each of the possible responses, where a response of “NO” was coded as a 1 and “YES” was coded as a 5. The “???” responses were assigned the middle value of 3 as students were instructed that this response indicated “I don’t know” and it was reasoned that this response would fall in between the other four values at either end of the continuum. Survey responses that included more than one answer (double responses) were treated as missing data because it was not possible to determine the intended

response. In many cases these double responses were immediately followed by an item that was left blank indicating confusion in tracking and responding to each question. For the second round of data collection every other line was shaded on student surveys in order to reduce tracking difficulties. All items that were left blank by students or teachers were also treated as missing data and left out of the subsequent analysis since it was not clear if the respondent intended to answer or didn't know how to or want to respond to the item.

Student surveys for fourth and fifth-grade students were revised for data collection at Time 2 in order to reflect the changes in the curricular schedule that year. Writing was no longer a separate class; students now had a “guided math” class as well as their traditional grade-level mathematics class. In order to maintain a certain level of consistency and also distinguish clearly between the regular mathematics class and the guided math class, the survey items related to writing were still included in the surveys and ten additional items about guided math were added. As a result of this instructional and curricular change, the guided math items were not included in the data analysis as data were only available for one time point and the research questions guiding this study could not be answered using data from only one time point. Future data analyses of student perceptions related to guided math could be conducted as a means of exploring changes in student perceptions of math before and after the introduction of the guided math class. Another potential area of exploration would be examining relationships between student perceptions of guided math and math achievement as measured by MAP scores. These analyses could provide important information helpful in identifying which

students benefitted from the addition of the guided math class and in what ways did they benefit.

Digital audio recordings of student and teacher interviews were created using recording software on the interviewer's computer. Anecdotal notes were also taken at the conclusion of each student and teacher interview to notate any important interactions not captured by the audio recording. Student interviews were reviewed for commonalities and differences among responses. Two independent coders recorded frequency counts for all student responses to questions included in the final data analysis with a reliability of 100%.

Teacher surveys were coded using a similar numeric system as the student surveys, where a response of "Strongly Disagree" was assigned a value of 1, "Disagree" was assigned a value of 2, "Agree" was assigned a value of 3 and "Strongly Agree" was assigned a value of 4.

### **Statistical Procedures**

Data were analyzed using SPSS. An exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was performed in order to group student survey items into larger, overarching factors related to each of the research questions. The principal component method of analysis was selected, as the main goal of this part of the data analysis was to condense the number of variables from the student surveys into a more manageable number, not to identify latent variables. Varimax rotation was selected, as it is an orthogonal method of rotation, which was important to ensure that the factors retained would be uncorrelated (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The factor analysis

showed that there was little variation in student responses (the first indication that most of the students surveyed had very positive feelings toward their school, teachers, peers, and their academic abilities). After 18 rotations, ten factors were retained and represented approximately 56% of the variance in student reports. Table 4 shows the items and the factor loadings for the rotated factors. Loadings of less than 0.40 have been omitted to make interpretation of the factor loadings more clear.

Table 4

*Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation of Student Perception Survey Items*

Retained Factor	Teachers want me to do well	Teachers are fair	Teachers like me	Teachers know what I need help with	Teachers know what I am good at	Work with others	Me in math	I trust my teachers	Me with other kids	Me in reading
Survey Item										
My math teacher wants me to do well.	.864									
My writing teacher wants me to do well.	.805									
My reading teacher wants me to do well.	.804									
My homeroom teacher wants me to do well.	.785									
This school is a safe school.	.488									
My reading teacher is fair.		.880								
I like my reading teacher.		.753								
My homeroom teacher is fair.		.687								
My writing teacher is fair.		.644								
The rules at this school are fair.		.457								
My math teacher is fair.		.422								
I like my writing teacher.		.405						.405		

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My math teacher likes me.	.845		
My writing teacher likes me.	.806		
My reading teacher likes me.	.803		
My math teacher knows what I need help with.	.899		
My reading teacher knows what I need help with.	.822		
My writing teacher knows what I need help with.	.801		
My reading teacher knows what I'm good at.		.821	
My writing teacher knows what I'm good at.		.772	
My math teacher knows what I'm good at.		.702	
I prefer working with a partner.		.741	
Two heads are better than one.		.591	
I learn best in small groups.		.573	
This school is a good school.		.555	
I have friends in my class.		.414	
I like math.			.870
I'm good at math.			.840
I like my math teacher.			.433
I trust my writing teacher.			.722
I trust my math teacher.			.695
I trust my reading teacher.			.447
I like being with the other			.715

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kids in my class.	
I like the other kids in my class.	.672
I like sitting in different desks.	.644
It's OK that other kids sit at my desk.	.455
I'm a good reader.	.749
I like reading.	.73

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Note: Factor Loadings < .40 have been omitted for clarity.

The factor analysis revealed two categories of factors, “teacher” factors and “student” factors. The “teacher” factors included those related to student perceptions of their teachers. It was of particular interest that even though the number of teachers the students had varied by grade level (one teacher for third-grade students, three to four teachers for fourth and fifth-grade students, and more than four teachers for sixth-grade students), their perceptions of all of their teachers tended load on one factor. For example, the survey items “My math teacher wants me to do well”, “My writing teacher wants me to do well”, “My reading teacher wants me to do well”, and “My homeroom teacher wants me to do well” all loaded strongly on the first factor. The same pattern emerged for the items that addressed perceptions of teacher fairness, how well teachers liked the students, how well teachers knew what students were good at, and how well teachers knew what students needed help with. The only exception to this was that “ I like my writing teacher” cross-loaded equally on both the “Teachers are fair” and “I trust my teachers” factors. Given the subjective nature of writing instruction and evaluation it is reasonable to expect that how students feel about their writing teacher would load on the factor associated with teacher fairness and the factor associated with trusting teachers.

The loading of the other items on one factor across subject area supports the existence of a strong emphasis on unity and building community among the teachers and students.

The remaining five factors, the “student” factors, were more about the students’ feelings and perceptions about themselves and their academic performance. “I trust my teachers” was labeled as a “student” factor because it is a direct report of student feelings about their teachers as opposed to a perception of teachers as the “teacher” factors were. The factors related to academic performance “Me in math” and “Me in reading” were comprised of survey items that align with Expectancy-Value Theory as described by Eccles et al. (1983). For each of these factors the survey items “I’m a good reader” or “I am good at math” and “I like reading” or “I like math” loaded in a manner that illustrated how students’ feelings about their performance in math and reading are interwoven with their feelings toward the subject area in general. Interestingly, the survey item “I like my math teacher” also loaded on the “Me in math” factor. This was the first indicator that student perceptions of their academic performance may be influenced or related to their perceptions of their relationship with the subject area teacher.

The other “student” factors related to how students felt about being with the other students at their school and how they felt about working with others. The “Me and other kids” captured more of the social relationships among students (I like being with the other kids at my school, I like the other kids at my school, I’m OK sharing with the other kids). The “Working with others” factor included items that were also social in nature, but addressed how students felt about working together in pairs or small group formats.

Scale scores were computed for individual students for each of the ten factors selected. Pearson correlations were then used to examine the relationships among the factor scale scores at Time1 and Time 2 and then between the factor scale scores and student achievement data for reading and math. Descriptive statistics were used to interpret results from student and teacher interviews and teacher surveys.

### **Summary**

This study was designed to examine how the use of departmentalization at the elementary school level related to student perceptions, teacher attitudes, and student achievement. Students and teachers in grades 3, 4, and 5 of an elementary school that had just begun to use a departmentalized approach to classroom organization in the fourth and fifth-grades were surveyed regarding their perceptions and attitudes toward the school, students, teachers, and academic abilities. The same surveys were administered the following year to the same students and to teachers in grades 4, 5, and 6. Participating students were surveyed a total of two times, once each year of the study. A sample of sixth-grade students who had attended other elementary schools using self-contained classrooms was included in the second year of data collection to serve as a control/comparison group for comparative measures. In addition to teacher and student surveys, student academic achievement scores were collected so that comparisons could be made between student perceptions and academic gains.

An exploratory factor analysis of student survey responses was performed using SPSS software to pare student responses down to a total of ten “teacher” and “student” factors. Scale scores were computed for each of these factors for individual students.

The scale scores were then used to calculate Pearson correlations between factors as a means to explore the relationships between factors and ascertain how student perceptions of their school, teachers, peers, and academic abilities were related and changed over time.

Student achievement data (MAP scores) coinciding with the administration of the student surveys were gathered and Pearson correlations were calculated between the ten factors and achievement scores to determine the relationships between student perceptions of their school, teachers, peers, and academic abilities and their actual academic achievement.

Teacher surveys were also administered once each year of the study. Due to the relatively small sample size of participating teachers at each grade level basic descriptive statistics were used to measure trends and change among participating teachers.

A subsample of teachers ( $n = 3$ ) and students ( $n = 21$ ) agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews the second year of the study. These interviews provided additional information about their experiences and perceptions that aided in data analysis and interpretation.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

### **Student Perceptions**

Initially students at each grade level were expected to respond very differently to the survey items, but in fact student responses and the changes in those responses over time were more similar than different across grades. The correlations between the factors and the MAP student achievement data, however, were different for each grade level. I will begin by presenting the commonalities among the grade levels and then address data points that seemed to be unique to a certain grade level.

#### **Across Grade-Levels**

Scale scores were computed for the ten factors generated by the exploratory factor analysis. Pearson correlations were then used to examine the relationships between these factors to answer the research questions: how do student attitudes toward departmentalization impact their (a) perceptions of school, (b) perceptions of their teachers, (c) perceptions of their academic abilities, and (d) relationships with their peers. Correlations were calculated between each of the ten factors at Time 1 and each of the ten factors at Time 2 for each grade level. Correlations revealed a common pattern between how students responded before switching classes or in their first year of switching classes. Results from the correlations between the factors should be interpreted with some caution, however. Although a Varimax rotation was used to generate orthogonal factors, the limited variability in student responses may cause an increase in Type I error. Hence, results from this study should be used to guide future studies to validate the correlations with samples containing a wider range of student responses.

At Time1 the students in third-grade had not yet begun switching classes for each subject area and were in a more traditional, self-contained classroom setting for most of the day. The students who were in fourth and fifth-grade at Time 1 were in their first year of switching classes as part of the school departmental model.

At Time 1 significant correlations were found between many of the “teacher” factors and the “student” factors indicating that overall, students felt positively about their teachers, themselves as students, and themselves as social beings. Student perceptions of what their teachers thought of them were related to how students thought about themselves as students and as social beings among their peers. In other words, for students, “what I think my teachers feel about me” is related to “how I feel about myself in class and with the other students”. It appears then, that having one teacher or having recently come from a self-contained classroom setting at this school supported strong, positive teacher-student relationships. Further, the correlations between the “teacher” factors and the “student” achievement factors (me in reading and me in math) indicated that students were connecting their feelings about their academic performance and abilities to their thoughts and feelings about their teachers. As a group, students likely saw their teachers as playing a large role in their academic success. Teacher-student relationships appeared to be very important to how students felt about themselves in academic and social contexts. The overall perceptions of students at this point, the beginning of or prior to departmentalizing, were positive in terms of how they viewed their teachers and themselves.

### **Student Perceptions Over Time**

This was a longitudinal study and the same sample of students was contacted to participate at Time 2 as participated at Time 1. Thus, it was necessary to make sure that any changes in response patterns from Time 1 to Time 2 were due to differences in student responses and not student attrition before comparing data across the two years of the study.

Dependent samples t-tests were used to determine if any significant changes occurred between Time 1 and Time 2. Mean scale scores for each factor were compared between Time 1 and Time 2. Results from each grade level grouping showed no significant differences were found between the response patterns at Time 1 and those at Time 2, indicating that average student responses for each factor were consistent between Time 1 and Time 2. This provides support that factor scores were not the source of the difference between the correlations among factors at Time 1 and Time 2, but rather patterns of relationships between the factors.

In addition, independent sample t-tests were used to determine if any significant differences were present in response patterns among students who completed surveys at Time 1 only for third, fourth, and fifth-grades or those students in the sixth-grade who participated only at Time 2. No significant differences were found between the mean factor scale scores of students who completed both years of the study and those who completed only one year. Thus, giving no reason to believe those students who participated in only one round of data collection would have responded differently than those students who participated in both rounds of data collection.

Given the results of both dependent samples t-tests and the independent samples t-tests it is reasonable to assume that responses from those students who participated in both rounds of data collection are statistically comparable to those responses from students who completed only one survey. Therefore, data at each grade level were examined as a whole and comparisons could be made across data from Time 1 and Time 2.

Students who remained at the participating school and were in fourth-grade at Time 2 showed responses similar from Time 1, likely because they were now in their first year of switching classes. One noticeable difference, however, was in the reduction of correlations between the “teachers like me” factor and other factors. At Time 1 for students in third-grade, “teachers like me” was significantly correlated with three other factors; “teachers want me to do well”  $r(28) = .52, p < .05$ , “teachers are fair”  $r(28) = .48, p < .01$ , and “trust my teachers”  $r(28) = .60, p < .001$ . At Time 2, however, “teachers like me” was significantly correlated with only one other factor “teachers know what I’m good at”  $r(17) = .47, p < .05$ . A similar pattern of reduced relationships between the “teachers like me” factor and other factors at Time 2 was found for students in fourth and fifth-grade.

Table 5

*Correlations Between Factors for Students in Grade 3 at Time 1*

	Teachers want me to do well	Teachers are fair	Teachers like me	Teachers know what I need help with	Teachers know what I am good at	I trust my teachers
Teachers want me to do well						
Teachers are fair	.78***					
Teachers like me	.52**	.48**				
Teachers know what I need help with	.71***	.67***				

Teachers know what I am good at				.38*		
Trust my teachers	.59**	.73***	.60***	.56**	.47**	
Working with others	.78***	.63***		.59**		.39*
Me with others				.40*		
Me in math			.48**		.41*	.37*
Me in reading						

$n = 30$ , \* $p < .05$  two tailed, \*\* $p < .01$  two tailed, \*\*\* $p < .001$  two tailed

Table 6

*Correlations Between Factors for Students in Grade 4 at Time 2*

	Teachers want me to do well	Teachers are fair	Teachers like me	Teachers know what I need help with	Teachers know what I am good at	I trust my teachers
Teachers want me to do well						
Teachers are fair	.50*					
Teachers like me						
Teachers know what I need help with						
Teachers know what I am good at			.47*			
Trust my teachers	.70**	.66**				
Working with others						
Me with others		.54*			.61**	
Me in math	.69**				.55*	
Me in reading		.54*				.57*

$n = 19$ , \* $p < .05$  two tailed, \*\* $p < .01$  two tailed, \*\*\* $p < .001$  two tailed

As shown in Table 7 and Table 8, “teachers like me” was significantly correlated with seven other factors for fourth-graders at Time 1, and only one factor at Time 2. Table 9 shows that among students in fifth-grade at Time 1 “teachers like me” was significantly correlated with six other factors. As shown in Table 10, “teachers like me” was not correlated with any other factors at Time 2. For both groups of students the more exposure they had to departmentalized classrooms fewer relationships between the “teachers like me” factor and other factors were observed. This pattern appears to show a drastic shift in student perceptions away from their relationships with teachers as they continued to change classes. As more teachers were introduced, students perceived their relationships with teachers as more about teaching and learning and less about a socially

supportive relationship. In general, students seemed to be differentiating between teachers liking them and the teachers' role in the classroom as an instructor.

A similar disconnect was mirrored in students' perceptions of their teachers in relation to their performance in math and reading. The factors related to student perceptions of academic performance (me in math and me in reading) were correlated with many of the "teacher" factors (e.g. teachers are fair, teachers like me) at Time 1, when students were in their first year of switching classes or in self-contained classrooms in third-grade. At Time 2, some of these relationships remained in tact for students who were in fourth-grade and switching classes for the first time, however, there were far fewer correlations between the student academic factors and the teacher factors among students in fifth and sixth-grade at Time 2. As students continued to switch classes and interact with teachers the data suggest that they were also seeing their academic performance as less connected to their relationships with their teachers and more dependent upon their own abilities. Having more teachers seemed to result in the unilateralization of student perceptions of academic ability and performance.

In general terms, the perceptions of students in the third-grade during the first year of the study, are congruent. Perceptions of what their teachers thought of them and perceptions of their teachers in general were somewhat related to how they thought and felt about their abilities in math and as a social being with their peers. The following year, once these students were in fourth-grade and introduced to departmentalization and switching classes for the first time, student perceptions of what their teachers thought of them, and their perceptions of their teachers in general, were related to the students'

perceptions of their abilities in math, reading, and of themselves as social beings among their peers. Students seemed to view their teachers in both third and fourth-grades as the orchestrators of social and academic success.

In fourth-grade at the beginning of the study student perceptions of what their teachers thought of them and their perceptions of their teachers in general was related to how they thought and felt about themselves as students and as social beings with their peers. The following year, when these students were in fifth-grade, perceptions of what their teachers thought about them and perceptions of their teachers in general were still positive, but not as strongly related to how the students thought or felt about their academic abilities. Students still connected their perceptions of their abilities in reading with teacher fairness, perhaps due to the subjective nature of instruction and feedback in reading.

Table 7

*Correlations Between Factors for Students in Grade 4 at Time 1*

	Teachers want me to do well	Teachers are fair	Teachers like me	Teachers know what I need help with	Teachers know what I am good at	I trust my teachers	Working with others
Teachers want me to do well							
Teachers are fair	.54***						
Teachers like me	.38*	.56***					
Teachers know what I need help with							
Teachers know what I am good at	.32*	.41**	.39**	.47**			
Trust my teachers		.54***	.54***				
Working with others				.30*			
Me with others		.35*	.48**			.62***	.41**
Me in math	.41**	.46**	.40**	.46**	.54***	.51***	.38**
Me in reading			.34*			.31*	.40**

$n = 46$ , \* $p < .05$  two tailed, \*\* $p < .01$  two tailed, \*\*\* $p < .001$  two tailed

Table 8

*Correlations Between Factors for Students in Grade 5 at Time 2*

	Teachers want me to do well	Teachers are fair	Teachers like me	Teachers know what I need help with	Teachers know what I am good at
Teachers want me to do well					
Teachers are fair					
Teachers like me	.56**				
Teachers know what I need help with	.54**			.59**	
Teachers know what I am good at	.60**	.60**			
Trust my teachers	.53*				.52*
Working with others	.44*				
Me with others	.60**				
Me in math					
Me in reading		.82***			

$n = 23$ , \* $p < .05$  two tailed, \*\* $p < .01$  two tailed, \*\*\* $p < .001$  two tailed

The perceptions of students who were in fifth-grade at the onset of the study match those of the fourth-graders that same year. Both of these grade levels were in their first year of switching classes, it is not surprising that similar patterns of perceptions would be observed. The fifth-grade student perceptions of their teachers and how their teachers viewed them were related to how they viewed themselves as social beings with their peers. They also were moderately related to how these students viewed their abilities in reading and math. The following year, when these students were in sixth-grade and at the middle school, perceptions of their teachers and how their teachers thought and felt about them were no longer connected to how students viewed themselves with others. However, there was still a connection between students' perception of their teachers' abilities to help them, their teachers' knowledge of what they did well, and their abilities in reading. In more general terms sixth-grade students saw themselves as more

separate from their teachers, but they still liked their teachers and thought they could be helpful in reading achievement.

Table 9

*Correlations Between Factors for Students in Grade 5 at Time 1*

	Teachers want me to do well	Teachers are fair	Teachers like me	Teachers know what I need help with	Teachers know what I am good at	I trust my teachers	Working with others
Teachers want me to do well							
Teachers are fair	.57***						
Teachers like me	.38*	.33*					
Teachers know what I need help with	.55***	.38*					
Teachers know what I am good at		.30*		.44**			
Trust my teachers	.76***	.59***	.46**	.36*			
Working with others	.69***	.40**	.54***	.40**	.30*	.76***	
Me with others	.64***	.47**	.51***		.33*	.50**	.47**
Me in math		.35*	.32*				
Me in reading		.39**					

$n = 45$ , \* $p < .05$  two tailed, \*\* $p < .01$  two tailed, \*\*\* $p < .001$  two tailed

Table 10

*Correlations Between Factors for Students in Grade 6 at Time 2*

	Teachers want me to do well	Teachers are fair	Teachers like me	Teachers know what I need help with	Teachers know what I am good at	I trust my teachers	Working with others
Teachers want me to do well							
Teachers are fair	.66**						
Teachers like me							
Teachers know what I need help with							
Teachers know what I am good at				.80***			
Trust my teachers		.56*		.67**	.52*		
Working with others							
Me with others							.75**
Me in math							
Me in reading				.66**	.69**		

$n = 15$ , \* $p < .05$  two tailed, \*\* $p < .01$  two tailed, \*\*\* $p < .001$  two tailed

Students who attended other elementary schools with self-contained classrooms were surveyed as sixth-graders to serve as a comparative control/comparison group. These students' perceptions of their teachers and how their teachers viewed them were generally related to how they viewed themselves as students and their abilities in math and reading. However, perceptions of their teachers and teachers' views were not related to how these students viewed themselves as social beings. These students may have been struggling to adjust to the middle school environment and form good, working relationships among their peers. The organizational structure of the middle school with independent student schedules and switching classes multiple times each day could have made it more difficult for students who had not already established ways to form working relationships with their peers in a rapidly changing environment to now do so. Recall that students who had been switching classes since fifth-grade no longer tied their perceptions of themselves with others to their perceptions of their teachers, but they did have positive perceptions of their peers and their abilities to work with others.

Table 11

*Correlations Between Factors for Students in Control Group Grade 6 at Time 2*

	Teachers want me to do well	Teachers are fair	Teachers like me	Teachers know what I need help with
Teachers want me to do well				
Teachers are fair				
Teachers like me		.57**		
Teachers know what I need help with	.37*		.39*	
Teachers know what I am good at				
Trust my teachers		.42*	.49**	
Working with others				
Me with others				
Me in math			.58**	.39*
Me in reading		.72***		

$n = 29$ , \* $p < .05$  two tailed, \*\* $p < .01$  two tailed, \*\*\* $p < .001$  two tailed

### **Student Interviews**

A total of 21 students were interviewed in the second year of the study to gain further insight in interpreting student survey results. Eight students from the fourth-grade, seven students from the fifth-grade, and six students from the sixth-grade were interviewed. The sixth-grade students who were interviewed included three students from the original sample and three students from the control group in order to capture the perceptions and experiences from students in both groups. Frequency counts for student responses to the following questions were calculated: (1) What is your favorite subject in school? (2) What is your least favorite subject in school? (3) Do you like switching classes/classrooms? (4) Do you think the other boys and girls like switching classes? (5) Do you feel like all of your teachers know/understand you? In addition students in the fifth-grade were asked if they thought (6) switching classes the year before in the fourth-grade was helpful to them as fifth-graders and if (7) switching classes in the fourth and fifth-grades would be helpful to them when they went to sixth-grade the next year.

Seven of the students interviewed from the fourth-grade (87.5%) reported that they liked switching classes and one was unsure. Five of the students interviewed from the fifth-grade (71.4%) indicated that they liked switching classes and two (28.6%) responded that they did not like switching classes. All six of the students interviewed in the sixth-grade said that they liked switching classes. These results suggest that most students in these grade levels likely enjoy switching classes, but there are also likely to be a small percentage of students who prefer the one-teacher, self-contained classroom. Reasons that students gave for liking switching classes were that they got to “take more

subjects and learn more”, “because time goes faster”, as well as getting to see all of the teachers and other students. The students who said they did not like switching classes said things like, “I like staying in and seeing my teacher and staying with my friends” or suggested that the teachers could share classrooms so the students could stay in their homeroom.

When asked if the other students liked switching classes it was more difficult for students to answer definitively. Five of the fourth-grade students (62.5%) responded “yes” and three students (37.5%) said they didn’t know or couldn’t tell. Two of the fifth-grade students (28.6%) responded “yes” while one student (14.3%) said “no” and four students (57.1%) responded with “I don’t know”. In sixth-grade three students (50%) said “yes” they thought the other students liked switching classes one student (16.7%) said “I don’t know” and two of the students did not respond. The varied responses to this question illustrate that while the students clearly had an opinion as to whether or not they themselves liked switching classes, they had more difficulty speculating as to whether or not their peers liked switching classes. This may suggest that the concept of switching classes was not something that the students discussed with one another. If most of the students enjoyed switching classes as reported above, it makes sense that not much discussion between students would occur around the topic of switching classes.

When asked if they thought their teachers knew and understood them, 100% of the students in fourth and sixth-grade responded yes. In fifth-grade six students (85.7%) responded with “yes” and one student (14.3%) responded with “I don’t know”. The fact that the majority of the students in the participating elementary and middle schools

perceived their teachers as knowing and understanding them provides additional evidence of the close relationships the students perceived they had with all of their teachers.

Having multiple teachers seemed to provide more opportunities for students to make connections and form relationships with other teachers. Much of the student data from the surveys and the interviews suggested that students viewed having multiple teachers as having a sort of extended family at school. In comparison, when students were in a self-contained classroom they had one “parent”. Having multiple teachers meant that students had more than one adult providing them with support and help.

The students in the fifth-grade were asked if they felt having experienced switching classes the year before was helpful in their transition into the fifth-grade. Six of the students (87.5%) responded affirmatively and one student (14.3%) responded with “I don’t know”. The students who responded affirmatively said things like, “switching classes in fourth-grade made switching classes easier this year” and “they would teach us about what it’s going to be like in fifth-grade and how we’re going to switch classes”. When asked if they thought switching classes as fourth and fifth-graders would help them in middle school five students (71.4%) responded “yes”, one student (14.3%) responded “no”, and one student (14.3%) responded with “I don’t know”. The students who thought their previous experience switching classes would be helpful in middle school said things like, “it will be kind of easier”, “we can help the other kids who didn’t switch cases before”, and “we’re going to have to keep going across from place to place and it’s going to be hard but we’ll be used to it”. The student who responded “no” said, “middle school will be harder. You’ll have more classes and a lot of subjects”.

### **Student Achievement**

A similar pattern of student perceptions and change over time emerged through the correlations of the ten factors, however, there were distinct differences found in the academic achievement data. It was not possible to associate positive and negative student perceptions of their teachers, school, or academic ability with academic performance of high and low achievers as originally intended due to the lack of variance among student responses to the survey questions and student achievement scores. It was initially thought that students would likely respond to the questions about their teachers and switching classrooms in either a positive or a negative way. This would result in two groups of students based on perceptions related to departmentalizing. Since the majority of the students responded positively to questions about their teachers and switching classes, student survey data couldn't be differentiated and thus had to be analyzed either as a whole or by grade level. Student achievement scores were also less variable than initially anticipated, again making it difficult to split participants into comparable groups of high-and low-achievers. In an effort to answer the research questions related to the relationship between student perceptions and academic performance, Pearson correlations were calculated between the ten "teacher" and "student" factors and student MAP scores from the winter 2012 and the winter 2013 testing sessions. For each grade level, different factors were correlated with student achievement in varied ways. The resulting significant correlations are presented by grade level.

### **Third-Grade**

At Time 1, when participating students were in self-contained third-grade classrooms, significant correlations were found between “teachers know what I’m good at” and math MAP scores from winter 2012,  $r(27) = .41, p < .05$  and “me in math” and math MAP scores from winter 2012,  $r(27) = .43, p < .05$ . Students seemed to see both their teachers and their own abilities as important determinants in math achievement at this time, however these correlations were not retained over time. At Time 2, when these students were in fourth-grade and switching classes for the first time, a negative correlation was found between “me with others” and reading MAP scores from the prior year (winter 2012).  $r(16) = -.52, p < .05$ . This may be an indication that students who prefer to work with others may have more difficulty with reading achievement or that students who excel in reading may prefer to spend more time alone, which aligns with reading becoming more of an independent activity in the later elementary grades. No other significant correlations were found between the student survey factors and the achievement data for this group of participating students.

### **Fourth-Grade**

The correlations between the student survey factors and academic achievement data were very different for students in fourth-grade. These students were switching classes both years of the study. All of the correlations at both Time 1 and Time 2 between student survey factors and achievement data were negative. At Time 1, “me with others” was negatively correlated with math achievement,  $r(36) = -.34, p < .05$ ,

which may be an indication that the instructional format of math in fourth-grade was more beneficial for students in this group who preferred to work alone.

Reading MAP scores from the following year, winter 2013, were negatively correlated with “teachers want me to do well”  $r(19) = -.47, p < .05$  at Time 1, “teachers like me”  $r(19) = -.64, p < .01$ , “teachers know what I needs help with”  $r(19) = -.54, p < .05$  at Time 1, and “teachers know what I’m good at”  $r(19) = -.59, p < .001$  at Time 1. Additionally “teachers like me” was negatively correlated with math MAP scores from the following year  $r(20) = -.56, p < .01$ . These negative correlations indicate that in general these students were struggling academically once they got to fifth-grade and knew their teachers valued them nonetheless.

At Time 2 these students were in the fifth-grade and switching classes for the second year. More negative correlations were found between some of the “teacher” factors and achievement scores, as well as the “me with others” factor and achievement scores. At Time 2 “me with others” was negatively correlated with both reading MAP scores from the previous year  $r(21) = -.67, p = .001$  and math MAP scores from the previous year  $r(21) = -.64, p = .001$ . This suggests that the students who preferred to work in groups or with others were likely to be the same students who were struggling academically in math or reading the year before.

Additionally, at Time 2 “me with others” was negatively correlated with both reading ( $r(19) = -.61, p < .05$ ) and math achievement data ( $r(20) = -.74, p < .001$ ) from the corresponding year, winter 2013. These results indicate that students who were currently

struggling in math or reading preferred to work in groups or with others and that students who were performing well in math and reading likely preferred to work independently.

Reading achievement data from winter 2013 were negatively correlated with “teachers want me to do well”  $r(19) = -.49, p < .05$ , “teachers know what I need help with”  $r(19) = -.48, p < .05$ , and “teachers know what I’m good at”  $r(19) = -.49, p < .05$ . These students were struggling with reading achievement despite positive perceptions of their teachers’ abilities to help them learn. These results further support the pattern of separation between student perceptions of their relationships with teachers and their perceptions of their own academic abilities. These students appeared to believe that their teachers wanted them to do well and their teachers were helpful, but that academic achievement was independent from their teachers’ actions.

### **Fifth-Grade**

Data from these students were unique as they captured the transition from elementary school to middle school. Achievement data from participating students in both the initial sample and the control group were gathered for math and reading in the winter of 2012 and 2013. Independent samples t-tests were used to identify any significant differences in reading and math MAP scores among students in the original sample and those recruited and included as the control group. No significant differences were found between reading or math MAP scores of students from the initial sample or the control group for the winter 2012 testing session, when these students were in fifth-grade at different schools. Nor were there significant differences in winter 2013, when they were in sixth-grade at the same middle school. Since no significant differences were

found at either time point, student scores from both groups were compared. These results also show that the students who attended the participating elementary school and had received instruction in departmentalized classrooms in fifth-grade made similar academic progress in math and reading to those students who attended other elementary schools that used the traditional self-contained classroom set up in fifth-grade. One of the reasons often cited as the impetus for using a departmentalized approach in the elementary schools is to improve student academic performance. Previous studies have found varying results with respect to academic gains among students in self-contained versus departmentalized elementary school classrooms. Academic achievement results from the current study did not provide any reason to believe that students who received instruction in a departmentalized setting were any better prepared academically than their peers who received instruction in a self-contained setting.

The correlations between student survey factors and achievement data were again different from both the correlations found in third-grade and fourth-grade. All of the correlations at Time 1 and Time 2 were between the “me in reading” and “me in math” factors and MAP achievement scores. This was particularly interesting considering there were no significant correlations between these two factors and achievement data found among the students in fourth-grade. The emergence of the “me in math” and “me in reading” factors in relation to achievement scores could be an indication that by fifth-grade students have a more accurate conception of their academic abilities. At Time 1 “me in reading” was significantly correlated with reading MAP scores in winter 2012,  $r(39) = .36, p < .05$  as well as math MAP scores in winter 2012,  $r(39) = .44, p < .01$  and

math MAP scores from winter 2013,  $r(25) = .46, p < .05$ . At Time 2 “me in math” was significantly correlated with math achievement from the previous year,  $r(13) = .56, p < .05$ . One significant correlation was found between student survey factors and achievement data for students in the control group. For these students “me in reading” was correlated significantly with reading achievement from the prior year,  $r(19) = .57, p < .05$ .

### Teacher Attitudes and Perceptions

#### Teacher Surveys

Teacher surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics in order to identify patterns in teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of departmentalization in elementary school. Three teachers from the fourth grade completed surveys, two during the first year of the study and one during the second year of the study. Four different teachers from the fifth-grade completed surveys, two of these teachers completed surveys in the first and second years of the study, one teacher during the first year only, and another during the second year only. One sixth-grade teacher completed a survey during the second year of the study.

Table 12

#### *Mean and Standard Deviation for Teacher Survey Responses Grades 4, 5, and 6*

Survey Item	N	Mean	SD
How many hours do you spend planning each week?	6	11.83	7.14
Planning for one subject area in my grade level is less time consuming than planning for all subject areas.	10	3.3	.82
I am better able to plan for students who may need extension or intervention when I teach one subject area.	10	3.4	.70
I feel that I am more organized when I only have to plan for one subject area.	10	3.5	.71
I feel that I am better prepared to teach when I teach one subject area.	10	3.5	.71
I am better able to assess student performance when I teach one subject area.	10	3.4	.70
I am more aware of differences among my students when I teach one subject	10	3.5	.71

area.			
I enjoy teaching one subject area.	10	3.3	.48
Teaching one subject area allows me to better meet my students' academic needs.	9	3.56	.53
Teaching one subject area allows me to better meet my students' emotional needs.	10	1.9	.57
I have enough time to get to know all of my students individually.	10	2.3	.48
I feel connected to my students as individuals.	10	2.7	.68
I am invested in all of my students' individual growth and progress.	10	3.2	.42
Teaching one subject area has allowed me to become more knowledgeable about my subject area.	10	3.9	.32
Teaching one subject area has allowed me to become more effective in teaching my subject area.	10	3.7	.48
I feel like I am the most appropriate person on my team/the best fit to teach my subject area.	8	3.25	.46
I enjoy the subject area that I teach.	10	3.5	.53
I am good at the subject area that I teach.	10	3.2	.63
I am good at teaching this subject area.	10	3.3	.48
I am happy/relieved that I don't have to teach the other subject areas.	9	2.22	.67
I feel burned out when I only teach one subject.	9	2.0	.71
I had an influence on what subject area I was assigned to teach.	10	3.0	.94
I teach the subject area that I chose or expressed interest in.	10	3.1	.74
I like being able to teach most of the students in my grade level.	10	3.6	.52
I have a good rapport with my students.	10	3.5	.53
My students trust me.	10	3.3	.48
My students like my class.	10	3.0	0.0
The students like switching classes.	10	3.0	0.0
The students like being in different classrooms throughout the day.	10	3.0	0.0
The students like having more than one teacher.	10	3.0	0.0
The students are OK about sharing desks.	10	2.9	.32
There is a sense of community among students in my grade level.	9	3.0	.50

The mean results from the surveys of the fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade teachers show that for the most part, these teachers reflect positive attitudes toward departmentalization and have positive perceptions of their students' experiences switching classes. As shown in Table 12, the relatively low means in response to the question asking if teachers felt they were able to meet their students' emotional needs ( $M = 1.9$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) as well as having enough time with students to know ( $M = 2.3$ ,  $SD = .48$ ) and connect with their students on an individual level ( $M = 2.7$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) indicated that these were areas of concern for the participating teachers. There was also a relatively low

mean associated with teachers' perceptions of students' willingness to share desks throughout the day as they moved from class to class ( $M = 2.9$ ,  $SD = .32$ ). The rest of the teacher survey results show that the attitudes of the teachers were mostly positive in relation to how departmentalization had affected their daily teaching responsibilities, specifically their level of organization and feeling of preparedness to teach. In general, the teachers believed that teaching one subject area had a positive impact on their knowledge of the subject that they taught ( $M = 3.9$ ,  $SD = .32$ ) and their efficacy teaching that subject ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = .48$ ). The teacher survey results also showed that the teachers enjoyed being able to work with more students in their grade level ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = .52$ ).

### **Teacher Interviews**

A total of three teachers were interviewed during year two of the study. Two fifth-grade teachers and one sixth-grade teacher were interviewed. When asked about the benefits of departmentalizing, the fifth-grade teachers both talked about how changing classrooms allowed teachers and students to begin with a clean slate at the beginning of each period. If a particular student was having a rough day in one class changing classrooms allowed that student to have a fresh start once they moved to the next period. Both teachers also stated that they enjoyed being able to work with all or most of the students in fifth-grade. They did express concern over being able to get to know each of their students and one teacher said she felt it took a little longer for her to establish close relationships with all of the students.

One fifth-grade teacher brought up the fact that their team planning meetings had shifted focus since the implementation of departmentalization. She said that curriculum

was still discussed, but was no longer the focus of their team meetings. Instead, she said that the students had become the major focus of their discussions. Because the teachers no longer needed to discuss the details of lesson planning it freed up a considerable amount of time for them to discuss concerns about individual students. The description of team meetings the teacher gave resembled a brain storming session where all of the members of the fifth-grade team came together to generate solutions and interventions to help students who were struggling behaviorally or academically. The teacher also stated that even though they didn't each teach all of the subject areas, they had previous experience and an educational background geared toward teaching all subject areas. This translated into the ability to make valuable contributions when conversations revolved around academic difficulties of students. These team meetings may have been a major contributing cause of the feelings of community expressed by the students. Through the students' lens having multiple teachers who were all available and able to help made them feel more cared for and more connected with all of their teachers.

One of the fifth-grade teachers also spoke extensively about how departmentalizing had allowed her to become more of a content expert in the subject area she taught. She said that teaching this one subject took a lot of pressure off of her because she didn't always think she was the best at teaching all of the subjects required in a self-contained elementary classroom.

The sixth-grade teacher also stated that teaching one subject allowed him to develop a level of expertise in his subject area but that teaching more than one subject would challenge him to learn more about different subject areas. He said that teaching

one subject allowed him to spend his time planning appropriate and individualized lessons for each of his classes, but he noted that by not teaching other subject areas students were forced to seek help from certain teachers as not all teachers shared the same level of expertise in all subject areas. In relation to how the students were doing in middle school, he stated that the students coming from the departmentalized elementary school seemed better prepared to move about campus. He said these students seemed to adjust to the different teaching styles of each of their teachers more easily as compared to their peers who came to middle school from self-contained classrooms. The sixth-grade teacher also said that overall, most of the students at the middle school seemed to enjoy switching classes and having multiple teachers. He said that changing teachers and classmates kept conflicts confined to one class period. He did speculate that some of the students might not like changing classrooms and teachers constantly throughout the day because it may lead them to feel “lost” on campus and makes forming relationships with teacher more difficult for some students. The sixth-grade teacher worried that these students may go “unnoticed”.

### **Summary**

The results from the student and teacher surveys and interviews as well as the student achievement data reveal the complexity of the social and academic environments in both the participating elementary and middle schools. Student perceptions of their relationships with their teachers and peers and their own academic abilities were ever-evolving. There seems to be a major shift in the relationship between perceptions of teacher-student relationships and one’s academic abilities during the second year that

students are exposed to a departmentalized approach to instruction. Students seemed to perceive their relationships with their teachers as positive. They reported feeling as though having more teachers resulted in greater access to help and knowledge throughout the study. However, the intercorrelations between the ten student perception factors decreased as students acquired more experience in departmentalization. The relationship between academic achievement scores and the factors from the student surveys varied by grade level. This may be a result of the varying experiences each of the groups of participating students had in years prior to the study. Participating teachers had positive perceptions of their abilities to teach their designated subject area and felt as though they were able to meet their students' academic needs. As found in prior studies of departmentalized elementary classrooms, however, most teachers did express feeling as though they weren't able to meet their students' emotional needs in a departmentalized setting. The one participating sixth-grade teacher did indicate that students coming from the participating elementary school seemed to adapt to the middle school environment with more ease than students coming from other self-contained classroom elementary schools.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

### **Purpose of Study**

This study was designed to contribute to the existing literature related to classroom organizational structures at the elementary school level and explore how the use of departmentalization in elementary schools impacts students and teachers. Prior research has addressed questions related to the effect of classroom organization and academic gains and thus far has yielded mixed results. Some studies have included teacher interviews in addition to collecting data on student achievement under the self-contained and departmentalized classroom structures. However, I found no studies that examined how the different organizational models affect teacher-student relationships from the student and the teacher perspectives.

### **Review of Methodology**

A cross-sectional, longitudinal study was designed to measure trends in student perceptions of their school, teachers, peers, and their academic abilities as they were introduced to departmentalization in elementary school and transitioned into middle school. Student achievement and teacher attitudes were also measured over the two-year period of the study in an effort to get the most complete understanding of how students and teachers were impacted by the use of departmentalization in the fourth and fifth-grades.

### **Summary of Research Results**

The results from this study confirm the complexity of the various relationships present in classrooms and schools. Major findings are summarized below as they relate to the original research questions and hypotheses.

#### **Student Perceptions**

Initial hypotheses were formed based on the assumption that some students would respond positively to the survey questions about their school, teachers, peers, and academic abilities and others would respond more negatively. Actual results were much less variable and in general students responded more positively to all of the survey questions than anticipated. This made it impossible to test the original hypotheses that some students would have more positive perceptions and yield greater academic gains. The original research questions: how do students' attitudes toward departmentalization relate to their (a) perceptions of school, (b) perceptions of their teachers, (c) perceptions of their academic abilities, and (d) relationships with their peers, can still be addressed, however. Student responses provided a unique perspective of the many relationships students form in schools and in classrooms. Results from the student surveys and interviews revealed that the students perceived their school positively when they were in self-contained classrooms in third-grade and when they began switching classes as departmentalization was introduced in fourth and fifth-grades. They perceived having more than one teacher and switching classrooms as gaining increased access to knowledge and an exciting way to learn more.

The students perceived their teachers as helpful people who knew them as students and wanted them to do well in school. As students were introduced to departmentalization their perceptions of their teachers liking them seemed to disappear even though they generally had positive perceptions of their teachers.

Students' perceptions of their academic abilities also changed after they entered the second year of switching classes. In the second year of switching classes students no longer associated their perceptions of their teachers with their own abilities in math. A relationship between students' perceptions of their teachers and their perceptions of their own abilities in reading was still present during year two of switching classes.

Students in the departmentalized classrooms, in general, tended to have more positive perceptions of working with others, learning in groups, sharing resources, and their relationships with their peers in general than their peers in the self-contained classrooms. The student interviews revealed that many of the students felt like they had more friends since they began switching classes as they were with different groups of students throughout the day.

### **Student Achievement**

As mentioned previously, the initial hypotheses related to student perceptions and academic achievement were developed also with the assumption that student perceptions would vary widely and be connected to achievement. Further, students holding more positive perceptions were expected to show greater academic gains, students holding more negative perceptions were expected to show a lesser amount of achievement gain. Since these original hypotheses could not be tested using the data collected in this study,

an exploratory analysis of student achievement was conducted to determine if any relationships existed among student perceptions and academic achievement scores. Student achievement in relation to student perceptions varied greatly across grade levels. In the third-grade, students perceived their teachers as important in their math abilities and this was likely reinforced by their academic progress in math that year. The following year, as these students entered fourth-grade, a negative correlation was found between the “me with others” factor and math achievement scores. Achievement scores from the students in fourth-grade at the beginning of the study were correlated negatively with several of the “teacher” factors such as “my teachers want me to do well” and “my teachers know what I need help with”. These negative correlations persisted among this group of students the following year as they entered fifth-grade. The negative correlations suggest that even though students in this group may have struggled academically their perceptions of their teachers and their relationships with peers remained positive.

The achievement scores from the students who were in fifth-grade in the first year of the study were correlated with the students’ perceptions of their abilities in math and reading. The relationship between the students’ perception of their abilities in math and math achievement scores remained in tact the second year of the study as the students transitioned to sixth-grade at the middle school. The control group was included in the data collection at this time and their achievement data in reading from fifth-grade were correlated with their perceptions of their reading abilities in sixth-grade. These results suggest that this group of students assessed their abilities more accurately than the

younger students. Increased accuracy may be a result of social comparison and other developmental factors associated with school and social experiences among students of this grade.

### **Teacher Attitudes and Perceptions**

Much like the students who participated in this study, teachers overall expressed positive attitudes and perceptions of departmentalization in elementary school. In relationship to their attitudes toward their job after departmentalization was introduced, the teachers in the fourth and fifth-grade reported feeling better prepared, more knowledgeable, and more effective as a teacher in their given subject area. The teachers did share concerns over their abilities to know their students as individuals and meet their emotional needs in the departmentalized setting, but they still felt that their students enjoyed them and the classes taught by them. The teachers enjoyed being able to work with more students even if having more students meant it took longer to get to know them. The elementary teachers and middle school teacher all stated that they believed students' experiences with departmentalization in elementary school made the transition to middle school easier.

### **Discussion of the Results**

Although the results from this study were slightly different from those anticipated they provide a detailed account of how student perceptions of their teachers, their relationships with their peers, and their academic abilities change as they become more familiar with the departmentalized model of instruction. Results also suggest how teachers' attitudes and perceptions were impacted by the implementation of

departmentalization in the elementary school. The current study introduces several new perspectives to the existing literature related to departmentalizing in elementary schools. Further discussion of the results, implications, and limitations of the current study are presented next.

### **Relationship of the Current Study to Prior Research**

The current study adds to the literature related to the use of departmentalization in elementary school and academic achievement as well as the literature related to classroom organization in elementary schools. Previous studies of elementary schools using a departmentalized model for instruction have focused on student achievement scores with the goal of determining which classroom organizational structure is best for what students and what content areas. Achievement data from this study showed no difference in academic gains in math or reading among students who had attended self-contained classroom elementary schools and those who attended the departmentalized elementary school.

The perspective of the elementary teacher in departmentalized classrooms has been examined but the student perspective remained unexplored. The current study was rooted in findings from literature from classroom organization, departmentalization and academic achievement, student-teacher relationships, and student perceptions and was designed to study departmentalization in elementary classrooms in a more complete manner. The resulting study adds the student perspective through survey results and interviews and expands upon the teacher perspective through surveys and interviews. The current study was also designed to capture change in student and teacher

perspectives over time. Previous studies generally capture student performance and teacher feedback during a single data collection session. This study followed a cross-sectional sample of students for two years to determine how student perceptions changed from being in self-contained classrooms in third-grade, to beginning to change classes in fourth-grade, and finally transitioning into middle school in sixth-grade.

### **Unanticipated Findings**

The separation of student perceptions of their relationships with their teachers and their academic abilities in math among students who were in their second year of switching classes in grades five and six was surprising. For students who believe they are good at math this could potentially be reflective of an intrinsic motivation within these students to perform well and work hard in school. For students who don't believe they are good at math unilateralizing academic achievement could result in a great deal of frustration and feelings of helplessness or failure in math or school in general. Future research should be conducted to determine if this separation between perceived teacher-student relationships and academic performance persists over time.

It was also surprising that many of the teachers expressed concern over being able to meet their students' emotional needs in the departmentalized settings. It is perhaps in response to these concerns that the teachers changed the focus of their grade level meetings to a more "student" centered discussion. Even though the teachers felt less able to meet their students' emotional needs, the persistence of the students' positive perceptions of their teachers made it appear as though the students felt emotionally connected to their teachers and cared for.

## **Implications**

The results of this study provide support for the idea that strong and positive teacher-student relationships can exist and thrive in elementary schools that employ a departmentalized model for instruction. In the participating school, departmentalization in the fourth and fifth grades did not lead to an inability for students and teachers to feel connected with one another or to form meaningful relationships that are key in academic success (Culyer, 1984; Dunn, 1952; Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). Student surveys revealed cohesiveness in student perceptions of how well teachers of each subject area knew them, what they were good at, and how to help them. Student survey responses indicated that students perceived their teachers to have a more complete view of them as students and people beyond test scores. The negative correlations between the factors from the student surveys and the academic achievement scores reveal that even when students were struggling academically they still held on to positive perceptions of their teachers and their relationships with their teachers.

Student interviews also revealed that students perceived having multiple teachers as having increased support and access to more knowledge and help. The results of the student perception surveys show that students largely perceived their relationships with their teachers as positive. Perceived positive relationships appear to be only one condition necessary for academic success, as many of these factors failed to correlate significantly with academic gains. It may be the case that positive teacher-student relationships are necessary but not sufficient for increasing academic achievement, just as

teacher perceptions of positive teacher-child relationships weren't found to be as powerful when predicting student social, behavioral, and academic outcomes (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Ladd, Brich, & Buhs, 1999).

Teachers in the departmentalized grades indicated an overall satisfaction with their skills and ability to teach their designated subject area. They reported that they felt as though they were able to meet their students' academic needs but that they weren't able to meet all of their students' emotional needs. If it is the case that these students were facing greater emotional challenges that were outside the realm of what their teachers were able to address, these unmet emotional needs may be the missing piece of the puzzle connecting the positive relationships between the teachers and students and further academic success. Elliot Washor and Charles Mojkowski (2014) have begun exploring student expectations as a possible pathway to greater academic achievement for disengaged students. Washor and Mojkowski's work outlines a set of ten expectations commonly held among students that they feel are key in providing students with the most effective education for long-term success. Further research should be conducted to see if perhaps some of these student expectations overlap with areas teachers perceive as emotional needs that are difficult for them to meet. It is possible that students' expectations and teachers' concerns are more aligned than either realizes, which is why it is imperative to continue studying school experiences and outcomes from both the teacher and student perspective.

## **Limitations**

Limitations of the current study include the participation of only one elementary school that departmentalized in fourth and fifth-grades. Results from this study obviously cannot be generalized to the entire population of students who might be introduced to departmentalization in elementary school, but they do provide some useful insight into how teachers and students perceive the changes in relationships and learning when a departmentalized model is used.

In addition, the current study was limited in terms of sample size. The sample was restricted to teachers and students in intermediate grades at one elementary school, which resulted in relatively small samples for longitudinal data points. Two school years is also a short time span for longitudinal data but was the maximum time that data collection was feasible given the scope of this project.

As mentioned in the results section, results correlating the factors from the student surveys should be interpreted with some caution, as there is an increased chance for Type I error when correlating factors generated through a factor analysis. This study was exploratory by nature and further research should be conducted to solidify each of the factors retained and ensure that they are indeed independent of one another. A larger sample of student surveys with a wider range in responses would also be helpful in validating the results discussed in this study.

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

The student survey results revealed that students of all grade levels felt cared for and supported by their teachers regardless of their academic achievement levels. The

implied sense of trust and acceptance present in the teacher-student relationships measured in this study is encouraging and necessary for maximizing student learning (Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). The teachers at the participating elementary school clearly understood the importance of providing their students with a vast network of support. The next task for these teachers then becomes finding a way to leverage these relationships to help increase student achievement among struggling learners. Further research into specific teaching behaviors and academic interventions that build upon these relationships, and also lead to the desired academic outcomes should be conducted. Findings from such research may serve to help teachers like those in this study to capitalize on their ability to form such positive relationships with their students.

The disconnect between the student perceptions of how well their teachers knew them and teacher perceptions of meeting their students' emotional needs was somewhat surprising. Further research examining what specific teacher behaviors students associate with a teacher who knows them and wants them to do well may provide teachers with valuable insight as to how to continue to build positive relationships with their students. The reoccurring concern of not meeting students' emotional needs voiced by teachers in departmentalized settings in this study as well as others was surprising given the positive reports by their students. While many of the teacher concerns may be connected to circumstances outside the classroom, gathering more information from teachers about the emotional needs of their students is an important topic for future research.

APPENDIX A:  
HUMAN SUBJECTS CONSENT FORMS,  
PARENTAL CONSENT AND MINOR ASSENT

**CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS/FACULTY**  
**Measuring Student and Teacher Perceptions of School Climate**  
**and Achievement Impact Under the 'Middle School Model'**

I have been asked to participate in a research study for examining the impact of the middle school model on student and teacher perceptions of school climate and student achievement. I was selected to be a possible participant because I am in one of the fourth or fifth grade classrooms at L.M. Prince Elementary School, which currently uses a middle school model for these grade levels or I teach sixth grade at Amphi Middle School and some of my students attended fourth and/or fifth grade at Prince Elementary. The purpose of this study is to acquire some data that will define the degree of success of the instructional approach; the middle school model, where grade levels are departmentalized and students switch classes.

If I agree to be in this study, I will be asked to respond to surveys about the use of the middle school model at my school. I will be asked to respond to items related to planning, instruction, student relations, and other items related to school climate. The survey will be completed only once and will take approximately 30 minutes. I will also be asked to participate in a brief interview related to the survey. The interview should take approximately 20 minutes. An audio recording of the interview will be made.

There are no risks associated with this study to the teachers or students. The information is de-identified (not including class level). A teacher should not feel that this research forms a part of his/her performance evaluation. The benefits of participation include providing teachers with an opportunity to report positive aspects of this middle school model as well as identify areas that may be affecting perceptions and achievement in a negative way. This information will also provide school and district administrators with data to inform future decisions about using this middle school model. The resulting data from the study would potentially provide district and school administration with information that will allow them to make data driven decisions and modifications to the middle school model that would lead to more positive student and teacher perceptions and increased student achievement.

I will receive no payment for my participation in this study.

This study is confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking me to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the PI, Elizabeth J. Freiberg, or Dr. Mary McCaslin will have access to the records. My decision whether or not to participate will not affect my current or future relations with the faculty, administration or staff at the University of Arizona. If I decide to participate, I am free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make me uncomfortable. I can withdraw at any time without my relations with the university, job, benefits, etc., being affected. I can contact Elizabeth Freiberg ([freiberg@email.arizona.edu](mailto:freiberg@email.arizona.edu)) with any questions about this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Arizona. For research-related problems or questions regarding subject's rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board at 520-626-6721 or University of Arizona IRB, PO Box 210409, Tucson, AZ 85719.

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this consent document for my records. By signing this document, I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parental Permission For Child's Participation in Research

**Study Title: Student Feelings About Switching Classes**

**Researcher: Elizabeth Freiberg**

**This is a parental permission form for research participation.** It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you permit your child to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to discuss the study with your friends and family and to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to permit your child to participate.



**This study is being done to find out how students feel about switching classes.** All fourth, and fifth grade students at Prince Elementary School and sixth grade students at Amphi Middle School will be asked to participate. If your child takes part they will be given a one-time survey to fill out that will take approximately 20 minutes. This study may allow students an opportunity to voice their thoughts and opinions about how this instructional approach has worked for them. Results from the Measures for Academic Progress (MAP) test will also be collected for participating students.

**All efforts will be made to keep your child's study-related information confidential.** There are no costs associated with participating in this study and neither you nor your child will be paid to participate in the study.

**Your child's participation is voluntary.** You or your child may refuse participation in this study. If your child takes part in the study, you or your child may decide to leave the study at any time. No matter what decision you make, there will be no penalty to your child and neither you nor your child will lose any of your usual benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights your child may have as a participant in this study.

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact **Elizabeth Freiberg at freiberg@email.arizona.edu**. For questions about your child's rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721 or [orcr.vpr.arizona.edu/irb](http://orcr.vpr.arizona.edu/irb).

### **Signing the parental permission form**

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to provide permission for my child to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to permit my child to participate in this study. I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person authorized to provide permission for child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person authorized to provide

---

Relationship to the child

---

Date and time

**Investigator/Research Staff**

I have explained the research to the participant or the participant's representative before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or to the participant's representative.

---

Printed name of person obtaining consent

---

Signature of person obtaining consent

---

Date and time

## Parental Permission For Child's Participation in Research

**Study Title:**                    **Student Feelings About Switching Classes**  
**Researcher:**                    **Elizabeth Freiberg**

**This is a parental permission form for research participation.** It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you permit your child to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to discuss the study with your friends and family and to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to permit your child to participate.



**This study is being done to find out how students feel about switching classes.** All fourth, and fifth grade students at Prince Elementary School and sixth grade students at Amphi Middle School will be ask to participate. If your child takes part they will be given a one-time survey to fill out as well as a brief interview with the researcher. Each part of the study will take approximately 20 minutes. This study may allow students an opportunity to voice their thoughts and opinions about how this instructional approach has worked for them. Results from the Measures for Academic Progress (MAP) test will also be collected for participating students.

**All efforts will be made to keep your child's study-related information confidential.** There are no costs associated with participating in this study and neither you nor your child will be paid to participate in the study.

**Your child's participation is voluntary.** You or your child may refuse participation in this study. If your child takes part in the study, you or your child may decide to leave the study at any time. No matter what decision you make, there will be no penalty to your child and neither you nor your child will lose any of your usual benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights your child may have as a participant in this study.

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact **Elizabeth Freiberg at freiberg@email.arizona.edu**. For questions about your child's rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721 or [orcr.vpr.arizona.edu/irb](http://orcr.vpr.arizona.edu/irb).

### **Signing the parental permission form**

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to provide permission for my child to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to permit my child to participate in this study. I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

---

Name of child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person authorized to provide permission for child  
permission for child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person authorized to provide

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to the child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date and time

**Investigator/Research Staff**

I have explained the research to the participant or the participant's representative before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or to the participant's representative.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person obtaining consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person obtaining consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date and time

## Permiso de Padres Para la Participación de Sus Hijos en Proyecto de Investigación

**Título del Estudio:** Sentimientos de Estudiantes Sobre el Cambio de Clases

**Investigadora:** Elizabeth Freiberg

**Esta es una forma de permiso de padres para participar en una investigación.** Contiene información importante acerca de este estudio y que esperar si usted permite que su hijo participe. Por favor considere esta información cuidadosamente. Siéntase libre de comentar el estudio con sus familiares y amistades y de hacer todas las preguntas necesarias antes de tomar una decisión respecto a permitir o no la participación de su hijo.



**Este estudio será hecho para descubrir qué opinan los estudiantes sobre cambiarse de clases.** Todos los estudiantes de cuarto y quinto grado en Prince Elementary School y estudiantes de sexto grado en Amphi Middle School serán invitados a participar. Si su hijo/a participa, se le dará una encuesta de una sola vez que tardará aproximadamente 20 minutos. Este estudio les puede dar a los estudiantes la oportunidad de expresar sus pensamientos y opiniones acerca de cómo les ha funcionado este método de enseñanza. Resultados del examen de Medidas para el Progreso Académico (MPA) se recogerán para los estudiantes participantes.

**Se harán todos los esfuerzos para mantener la información de su hijo relacionada al estudio confidencial.** No hay costo asociado con la participación de este estudio y ni usted ni su hijo recibirán pago alguno por la participación en este estudio.

**La participación de su hijo es voluntaria.** Usted o su hijo pueden negarse a participar en el estudio. Si su hijo participa en el estudio, usted o su hijo pueden decidir dejarlo en cualquier momento. Sin importar la decisión que tome, no habrá penalización alguna a usted o a su hijo ni perderá ninguno de sus beneficios usuales. Al firmar esta forma usted no renuncia a ningún derecho legal que tenga su hijo al participar en este estudio.

Para preguntas, preocupaciones o quejas acerca de este estudio usted debe contactar a **Elizabeth Freiberg at freiberg@email.arizona.edu**. Para preguntas acerca de los derechos de su hijo como participante en este estudio o para discutir otras preocupaciones relacionadas al estudio o quejas con alguien que no sea parte del grupo de investigación, usted debe contactar al programa de protección de seres humanos (Human Subjects Protection Program) al 520-626-6721 o en el sitio de internet: [orcr.vpr.arizona.edu/irb](http://orcr.vpr.arizona.edu/irb).

### **Firmando la forma de permiso de padres.**

He leído (o alguien ha leído para mí) esta forma y estoy enterado de que estoy siendo solicitado de dar permiso para que mi hijo participe en un estudio de investigación. He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y he obtenido las respectivas respuestas a mi satisfacción. Yo voluntariamente acepto permitir que mi hijo participe en este estudio. No estoy renunciando a derecho alguno al firmar esta forma. Una copia de esta forma me será entregada.

---

Nombre del niño

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre de la persona autorizada para dar permiso para el niño  
permiso para el niño

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma de la persona autorizada para dar

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relación con el niño

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha y Hora

**Investigador/Personal de Investigación**

He explicado la investigación al (los) representante(s) del participante antes de solicitar su(s) firma(s) arriba. No hay espacios en blanco en este documento. Una copia de esta forma se ha entregado al participante o a su representante.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre impreso de la persona que obtiene el consentimiento  
consentimiento

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma de la persona que obtiene el

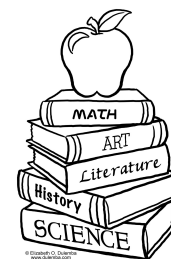
\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha y Hora

**Assent to Participate in Research**  
**Consentimiento para Participar en la Investigación**

**Study Title/Título del Estudio:** **Student Feelings About Switching Classes/Sentimientos de Estudiantes Sobre el Cambio de Clases**

**Researcher/ Investigadora:** **Elizabeth Freiberg**

We are asking you to be in a research study. Studies are done to find better ways to treat people or to understand things better. We want to find out how you feel about switching classes. If you decide you want to be in the study your teacher will give you a survey to fill out. The survey will take about 20 minutes and your answers to the questions will not be shared with anyone.



*Nosotros estamos pidiendo que participes en un estudio de investigación. Estos estudios son hechos para entender mejor las maneras de tratar personas o de entender mejor las cosas. Queremos saber que piensas sobre cambiarte de clases. Si decides participar en el estudio tu maestro/a te dará una encuesta que necesitas llenar. La encuesta va a durar cerca de 20 minutos y no vamos a compartir tus respuestas con nadie.*

You should ask any questions you have before making up your mind. You can talk to your friends and family before you decide. It is okay to say “No” if you don’t want to be in the study. If you say “Yes” you can change your mind and quit being in the study at any time without getting in trouble. If you decide you want to be in the study, an adult (usually a parent) will also need to give permission for you to be in the study.

*Tú puedes preguntar cualquier pregunta que tengas antes de tomar tu decisión. Tú puedes hablar con tu familia o amigos antes de tomar tu decisión. Está bien decir “No” si tú no quieres participar en el estudio. Si tú dices “Si” tú puedes cambiar de idea y salirte del estudio en cualquier momento sin incurrir en problemas. Si tú decides que quieres participar en el estudio, un adulto (generalmente uno de tus padres) necesitará darte permiso para que puedas participar en el estudio.*

**If you want to help us, please write your name on the line below.**  
***Si quieres ayudarnos, por favor escriba tu nombre en la línea de abajo.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature or printed name of subject  
*Firma o nombre escrito del sujeto/participante*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date and time / Fecha y Hora

**Investigator/Research Staff - Investigador/Personal de Investigación**

I have explained the research to the participant before requesting the signature above. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or to the participant's representative.

*He explicado la investigación al participante antes de solicitar la firma arriba. Una copia de esta forma se ha entregado al participante o a su representante.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person obtaining assent

*Nombre impreso de la persona que obtiene el consentimiento*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person obtaining assent

*Firma de la persona que obtiene el*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date and time / Fecha y Hora

APPENDIX B.1:  
STUDENT SURVEY, VERSION 1

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

My Grade \_\_\_\_\_ I am a (circle one)      BOY      GIRL

My Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

We are going to spend about 20 minutes answering questions. These questions are different from the usual school questions because they have no right or wrong answers. This is not a test and everyone will have different answers. Be sure that your answers show how you think and feel about being a student at this school. Please do not talk about your answers with anyone else until after everyone is finished. If you want to talk about your answers when everyone is finished, that is ok with us. We will keep your answers private and not show them to anyone else.

We will read each sentence together (you may read quietly to yourself as I read aloud). After each sentence, decide your answer. For the first three questions, you will check the boxes to show the nights of the week you usually do homework for each class. You can check more than one box. So if you usually have science homework on Monday and Wednesday, you would check the Monday and the Wednesday boxes. If you never have science homework, you wouldn't check any boxes. The rest of the sentences are about you and your school. There are five choices after each sentence so circle the word that best describes you. If you think the sentence is just like you or exactly what you think, you would circle **YES** in capital letters. If for sure the sentence is not like you at all, you would circle **NO** in capital letters, if it is like you most of the time, you would circle **yes** in the small letters, and if it is not like you most of the time, you would circle **no** in the small letters. Sometimes it's hard to decide what to circle, if that happens, then

circle the question marks, ??? . Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, this is just about what you think and feel. Circle only one answer for each sentence. Remember not to say your answer out loud, circle your answer.

Let's practice:

1. I have social studies homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
2. I like to watch TV.	NO	no	???	yes	YES		
3. I am always in a good mood.	NO	no	???	yes	YES		

Check the boxes to show the nights you do homework for each class.

1. I do reading homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
2. I do writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
3. I do math homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday

Circle the answer that shows how you think or feel about each sentence.

4. My teachers know how much homework I get in all of my classes.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
5. My teachers know how I am doing in my other classes.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
6. My teachers are ready for class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
7. My homeroom teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
8. My reading teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
9. My writing teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
10. My math teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
11. My homeroom teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
12. My reading teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
13. My writing teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
14. My math teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
15. I have friends in my class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
16. I like reading.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
17. I like writing.	NO	no	???	yes	YES

18. I like math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
19. I am a good reader.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
20. I am a good writer.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
21. I am good at math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
22. My reading teacher knows what I am good at in reading.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
23. My writing teacher knows what I am good at in writing.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
24. My math teacher knows what I am good at in math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
25. My reading teacher knows what I need help with in reading.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
26. My writing teacher knows what I need help with in writing.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
27. My math teacher knows what I need help with in math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
28. I like my reading teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
29. I like my writing teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
30. I like my math teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
31. My reading teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
32. My writing teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
33. My math teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
34. I trust my reading teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
35. I trust my writing teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
36. I trust my math teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
37. I like having a different teacher for reading, writing, and math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
38. I like changing classrooms.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
39. I like being with the other kids in my class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
40. I learn more when I work with a partner.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
41. I like sitting in different desks.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
42. It's ok with me that other kids sit in my homeroom desk.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
43. I never touch other people's stuff when I use their desk.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
44. Other people touch my things when they sit at my desk.	NO	no	???	yes	YES

45. I like the other kids in my class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
46. I mostly like learning in small groups.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
47. This school is a good school.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
48. I feel safe at school.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
49. The rules at my school are fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
50. Two heads are better than one.	NO	no	???	yes	YES

APPENDIX B.2:  
STUDENT SURVEY, VERSION 2

My Name \_\_\_\_\_  
My Grade \_\_\_\_\_ I am a (circle one)      BOY      GIRL  
My Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

We are going to spend about 20 minutes answering questions. These questions are different from the usual school questions because they have no right or wrong answers. This is not a test and everyone will have different answers. Be sure that your answers show how you think and feel about being a student at this school. Please do not talk about your answers with anyone else until after everyone is finished. If you want to talk about your answers when everyone is finished, that is ok with us. We will keep your answers private and not show them to anyone else.

We will read each sentence together (you may read quietly to yourself as I read aloud). After each sentence, decide your answer. For the first three questions, you will check the boxes to show the nights of the week you usually do homework for each class. You can check more than one box. So if you usually have science homework on Monday and Wednesday, you would check the Monday and the Wednesday boxes. If you never have science homework, you wouldn't check any boxes. The rest of the sentences are about you and your school. There are five choices after each sentence so circle the word that best describes you. If you think the sentence is just like you or exactly what you think, you would circle **YES** in capital letters and if it is like you most of the time, you would circle **yes** in the small letters. If for sure the sentence is not like you at all, you would circle **NO** in capital letters, and if it is not like you most of the time, you would circle **no** in the small letters. Sometimes it's hard to decide what to circle, if that happens, then

circle the question marks, ??? . Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, this is just about what you think and feel. Circle only one answer for each sentence. Remember not to say your answer out loud, circle your answer.

Let's practice:

1. I have social studies homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
2. I like to watch TV.	NO	no	???	yes	YES		
3. I am always in a good mood.	NO	no	???	yes	YES		

Check the boxes to show the nights you do homework for each class.

1. I do reading homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
2. I do writing homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
3. I do math homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
4. I do GUIDED math homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday

Circle the answer that shows how you think or feel about each sentence.

5. My teachers know how much homework I get in all of my classes.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
6. My teachers know how I am doing in my other classes.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
7. My teachers are ready for class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
8. My homeroom teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
9. My reading teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
10. My writing teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
11. My math teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
12. My guided math teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
13. My homeroom teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
14. My reading teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
15. My writing teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
16. My math teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES

17. My guided math teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
18. I have friends in my class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
19. I like reading.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
20. I like writing.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
21. I like math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
22. I like guided math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
23. I am a good reader.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
24. I am a good writer.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
25. I am good at math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
26. I am good at guided math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
27. My reading teacher knows what I am good at in reading.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
28. My writing teacher knows what I am good at in writing.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
29. My math teacher knows what I am good at in math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
30. My guided math teacher knows what I am good at in guided math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
31. My reading teacher knows what I need help with in reading.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
32. My writing teacher knows what I need help with in writing.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
33. My math teacher knows what I need help with in math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
34. My guided math teacher knows what I need help with in guided math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
35. I like my reading teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
36. I like my writing teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
37. I like my math teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
38. I like my guided math teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
39. My reading teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
40. My writing teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
41. My math teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
42. My guided math teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
43. I trust my reading teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES

44. I trust my writing teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
45. I trust my math teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
46. I trust my guided math teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
47. I like having a different teacher for reading, writing, math, and guided math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
48. I like changing classrooms.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
49. I like being with the other kids in my class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
50. I learn more when I work with a partner.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
51. I like sitting in different desks.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
52. It's ok with me that other kids sit in my homeroom desk.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
53. I never touch other people's stuff when I use their desk.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
54. Other people touch my things when they sit at my desk.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
55. I like the other kids in my class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
56. I mostly like learning in small groups.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
57. This school is a good school.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
58. I feel safe at school.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
59. The rules at my school are fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
60. Two heads are better than one.	NO	no	???	yes	YES

APPENDIX B.3:  
SIXTH-GRADE STUDENT SURVEY

My Name \_\_\_\_\_  
My Grade \_\_\_\_\_ I am a (circle one)      BOY      GIRL  
My Homeroom Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

We are going to spend about 20 minutes answering questions. These questions are different from the usual school questions because they have no right or wrong answers. This is not a test and everyone will have different answers. Be sure that your answers show how you think and feel about being a student at this school. Please do not talk about your answers with anyone else until after everyone is finished. If you want to talk about your answers when everyone is finished, that is ok with us. We will keep your answers private and not show them to anyone else.

We will read each sentence together (you may read quietly to yourself as I read aloud). After each sentence, decide your answer. For the first three questions, you will check the boxes to show the nights of the week you usually do homework for each class. You can check more than one box. So if you usually have science homework on Monday and Wednesday, you would check the Monday and the Wednesday boxes. If you never have science homework, you wouldn't check any boxes. The rest of the sentences are about you and your school. There are five choices after each sentence so circle the word that best describes you. If you think the sentence is just like you or exactly what you think, you would circle **YES** in capital letters and if it is like you most of the time, you would circle **yes** in the small letters. If for sure the sentence is not like you at all, you would circle **NO** in capital letters, and if it is not like you most of the time, you would circle **no** in the small letters. Sometimes it's hard to decide what to circle, if that happens, then

circle the question marks, ??? . Remember, there are no right or wrong answers; this is just about what you think and feel. Circle only one answer for each sentence. Remember not to say your answer out loud, circle your answer.

Let's practice:

1. I have social studies homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
2. I like to watch TV.	NO	no	???	yes	YES		
3. I am always in a good mood.	NO	no	???	yes	YES		

Check the boxes to show the nights you do homework for each class.

1. I do reading homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
2. I do writing homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday
3. I do math homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday

Circle the answer that shows how you think or feel about each sentence.

4. My teachers know how much homework I get in all of my classes.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
5. My teachers know how I am doing in my other classes.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
6. My teachers are ready for class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
7. My homeroom teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
8. My reading teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
9. My writing teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
10. My math teacher is fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
11. My homeroom teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
12. My reading teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
13. My writing teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
14. My math teacher wants me to do well.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
15. I have friends in my class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
16. I like reading.	NO	no	???	yes	YES

17. I like writing.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
18. I like math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
19. I am a good reader.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
20. I am a good writer.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
21. I am good at math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
22. My reading teacher knows what I am good at in reading.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
23. My writing teacher knows what I am good at in writing.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
24. My math teacher knows what I am good at in math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
25. My reading teacher knows what I need help with in reading.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
26. My writing teacher knows what I need help with in writing.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
27. My math teacher knows what I need help with in math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
28. I like my reading teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
29. I like my writing teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
30. I like my math teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
31. My reading teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
32. My writing teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
33. My math teacher likes me.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
34. I trust my reading teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
35. I trust my writing teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
36. I trust my math teacher.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
37. I like having a different teacher for reading, writing, and math.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
38. I like changing classrooms.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
39. I like being with the other kids in my class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
40. I learn more when I work with a partner.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
41. I like sitting in different desks.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
42. It's ok with me that other kids sit in my homeroom desk.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
43. I never touch other people's stuff	NO	no	???	yes	YES

when I use their desk.					
44. Other people touch my things when they sit at my desk.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
45. I like the other kids in my class.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
46. I mostly like learning in small groups.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
47. This school is a good school.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
48. I feel safe at school.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
49. The rules at my school are fair.	NO	no	???	yes	YES
50. Two heads are better than one.	NO	no	???	yes	YES

APPENDIX C.1:  
THIRD-GRADE TEACHER SURVEY

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Area \_\_\_\_\_

The following survey was designed to gather information about how you, as a teacher, feel about teaching all subject areas in third grade and departmentalizing at your school. The statements relate to how teaching all subject areas affects your planning and instruction, as well as how you feel it affects your students. For each statement circle the response that best represents your experience with departmentalization at your grade level. Please read each statement completely and respond honestly. All information collected in this survey will be kept completely confidential.

1. How many hours do you spend planning each week?				
2. It would be less time consuming to plan for one subject area in my grade level than planning for all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. I am better able to plan for students who may need extension or intervention when I teach all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. I feel that I am more organized when I plan for one subject area than I would feel if I had to plan for only one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. I feel that I am better prepared to teach when I teach all subject areas than I would be if I taught only one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I am better able to assess student performance when I teach all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. I am more aware of differences among my students when I teach all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. I enjoy teaching all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Teaching all subject areas allows me to better meet my students' academic needs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Teaching all subject areas allows me to better meet my students' emotional needs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. I have enough time to get to know all of my students individually.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. I feel connected to my students as individuals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. I am invested in all of my students' individual growth and progress.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. Teaching all subject areas has allowed me to become more knowledgeable about each individual subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Teaching all subject areas has allowed me to become more effective in teaching each individual subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. I feel like I am good at teaching all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. I enjoy teaching all (or most) subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18. I feel like I would be a more effective teacher if I only taught one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19. I am better at teaching some subject areas than others.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20. I am happy/relieved that I get to teach all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. I would feel burned out if I only taught one subject.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. I would like being able to teach most of the students in my grade level, not just the students in my class.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. I have a good rapport with my students.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
24. My students trust me.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
25. My students like my class.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. The students like being in one classroom all day.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

27. The students like being in different classrooms throughout the day.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
28. The students like having more than one teacher.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. The students like having their own desks.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
30. There is a sense of community among students in my grade level.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C.2:

FOURTH AND FIFTH-GRADE TEACHER SURVEY, VERSION 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Area \_\_\_\_\_

The following survey was designed to gather information about how you, as a teacher, feel about departmentalizing at your grade level. The statements relate to how departmentalization affects your planning and instruction, as well as how you feel it affects your students. For each statement circle the response that best represents your experience with departmentalization at your grade level. Please read each statement completely and respond honestly. All information collected in this survey will be kept completely confidential.

1. How many hours do you spend planning each week?				
2. Planning for one subject area in my grade level is less time consuming than planning for all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. I am better able to plan for students who may need extension or intervention when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. I feel that I am more organized when I only have to plan for one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. I feel that I am better prepared to teach when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I am better able to assess student performance when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. I am more aware of differences among my students when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. I enjoy teaching one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Teaching one subject area allows me to better meet my students' academic needs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. Teaching one subject area allows me to better meet my students' emotional needs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. I have enough time to get to know all of my students individually.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. I feel connected to my students as individuals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. I am invested in all of my students' individual growth and progress.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. Teaching one subject area has allowed me to become more knowledgeable about my subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Teaching one subject area has allowed me to become more effective in teaching my subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. I feel like I am the most appropriate person on my team/the best fit to teach my subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. I enjoy the subject area that I teach.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18. I am good at the subject area that I teach.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19. I am good at teaching this subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20. I am happy/relieved that I don't have to teach the other subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. I feel burned out when I only teach one subject.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. I had an influence on what subject area I was assigned to teach.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. I teach the subject area that I chose or expressed interest in.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
24. I like being able to teach most of the students in my grade level.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
25. I have a good rapport with my students.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. My students trust me.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
27. My students like my class.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

28. The students like switching classes.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. The students like being in different classrooms throughout the day.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
30. The students like having more than one teacher.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
31. The students are OK about sharing desks.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
32. There is a sense of community among students in my grade level.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C.3:

FOURTH AND FIFTH-GRADE TEACHER SURVEY, VERSION 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Area \_\_\_\_\_

The following survey was designed to gather information about how you, as a teacher, feel about departmentalizing at your grade level. The statements relate to how departmentalization affects your planning and instruction, as well as how you feel it affects your students. For each statement circle the response that best represents your experience with departmentalization at your grade level. Please read each statement completely and respond honestly. All information collected in this survey will be kept completely confidential.

1. How many hours do you spend planning each week?				
2. Planning for one subject area in my grade level is less time consuming than planning for all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. I am better able to plan for students who may need extension or intervention when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. I feel that I am more organized when I only have to plan for one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. I feel that I am better prepared to teach when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I am better able to assess student performance when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. I am more aware of differences among my students when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. I enjoy teaching one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Teaching one subject area allows me to better meet my students' academic needs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. Teaching one subject area allows me to better meet my students' emotional needs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. I have enough time to get to know all of my students individually.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. I feel connected to my students as individuals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. I am invested in all of my students' individual growth and progress.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. Teaching one subject area has allowed me to become more knowledgeable about my subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Teaching one subject area has allowed me to become more effective in teaching my subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. I feel like I am the most appropriate person on my team/the best fit to teach my subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. I enjoy the subject area that I teach.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18. I am good at the subject area that I teach.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19. I am good at teaching this subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20. I am happy/relieved that I don't have to teach the other subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. I feel burned out when I only teach one subject.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. I had an influence on what subject area I was assigned to teach.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. I teach the subject area that I chose or expressed interest in.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
24. I like being able to teach most of the students in my grade level.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
25. I have a good rapport with my students.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. My students trust me.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
27. My students like my class.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

28. The students like switching classes.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. The students like being in different classrooms throughout the day.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
30. The students like having more than one teacher.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
31. The students are OK about sharing desks.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
32. There is a sense of community among students in my grade level.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Is there anything else you'd like to mention/discuss that I didn't ask you about in the survey?

APPENDIX C.4:  
SIXTH GRADE TEACHER SURVEY

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Area \_\_\_\_\_

The following survey was designed to gather information about how you, as a teacher, feel about departmentalizing at your grade level. The statements relate to how departmentalization affects your planning and instruction, as well as how you feel it affects your students. For each statement circle the response that best represents your experience with departmentalization at your grade level. Please read each statement completely and respond honestly. All information collected in this survey will be kept completely confidential.

1. How many hours do you spend planning each week?				
2. Planning for one subject area in my grade level is less time consuming than planning for all subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. I am better able to plan for students who may need extension or intervention when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. I feel that I am more organized when I only have to plan for one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. I feel that I am better prepared to teach when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I am better able to assess student performance when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. I am more aware of differences among my students when I teach one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. I enjoy teaching one subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Teaching one subject area allows me to better meet my students' academic needs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. Teaching one subject area allows me to better meet my students' emotional needs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. I have enough time to get to know all of my students individually.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. I feel connected to my students as individuals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. I am invested in all of my students'	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

individual growth and progress.	Disagree			Agree
14. Teaching one subject area has allowed me to become more knowledgeable about my subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Teaching one subject area has allowed me to become more effective in teaching my subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. I feel like I am the most appropriate person on my team/the best fit to teach my subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. I enjoy the subject area that I teach.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18. I am good at the subject area that I teach.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19. I am good at teaching this subject area.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20. I am happy/relieved that I don't have to teach the other subject areas.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. I feel burned out when I only teach one subject.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. I had an influence on what subject area I was assigned to teach.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. I teach the subject area that I chose or expressed interest in.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
24. I like being able to teach most of the students in my grade level.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
25. I have a good rapport with my students.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. My students trust me.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
27. My students like my class.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
28. The students like switching classes.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. The students like being in different classrooms throughout the day.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
30. The students like having more than one teacher.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

31. The students are OK about sharing desks.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
32. There is a sense of community among students in my grade level.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
33. The students who switched classes in elementary school were more prepared to switch classes in middle school.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
34. The students who switched classes in elementary school are more organized than the students who did not switch classes in elementary school.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Is there anything else you'd like to mention/discuss that I didn't ask you about in the survey?

APPENDIX D.1:  
STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your favorite subject in school? Why?
2. What is your least favorite subject in school? Why?
3. Do you like switching classrooms during the day? Why or why not?
4. Do you think the others boys and girls like switching classrooms during the day?  
Why or why not?
5. Do you think that all of your teachers know/understand you?
6. What's the best thing about this school/about being a student at this school?
7. What's your least favorite thing about this school/being a student at this school?
8. Remember a time when you were glad you changed classes each day. What happened? Why did that make you feel glad? Were you thinking anything when that happened/Did you say anything to yourself? What happened next?
9. Remember a time when you did not want to change classes. What happened? How did you feel? Were you thinking anything when that happened/Did you say anything to yourself? What happened next?

APPENDIX D.2:  
TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade level \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you think that students are more prepared/more successful in middle school if they have been switching classrooms in fourth and fifth grade?
2. Do you think that students are learning more than they would if they had one teacher or stayed in one classroom all day?
3. What do you think the benefits are to teaching one subject (for students and teachers)?
4. What do you think the disadvantages are to teaching one subject (for students and teachers)?
5. How do you think the students feel about switching classrooms and teachers?
6. Is there anything else you would like to talk about that I haven't asked you?

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