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Date August 2, 1972
AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDES TOWARD DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN THE BEECHER CITY, ILLINOIS GRADE SCHOOL

by

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One of the problems of elementary education is determining what kind of organization is best for the local school. Departmentalization of grades four, five, and six was chosen as the best method of organization for the Beecher City, Illinois Grade School at the beginning of the 1966-1967 school year, and it has been continued through the 1971-1972 school year. This investigation was an inquiry of the attitudes of the students and teachers directly involved concerning departmentalization at this level. The study was limited to the Beecher City Grade School.

Procedures of this study included a review of literature to find research on the strengths and weaknesses of departmentalization in the elementary school. Questionnaires were used to gather data from the students and teachers. Tables showing percentages were used to show the findings of the student questionnaire and the first half of the teacher questionnaire. The advantages and disadvantages were listed as the findings of the second part of the teacher questionnaire.

The conclusions drawn in this study were as follows: (1) the students favor departmentalization at the intermediate level; (2) there was dependence of the variables only in the question concerning the student getting help with his problems, a larger percentage of fourth and fifth grade students felt they were getting more help than did sixth graders; and (3) because the questionnaire results were 50 per cent in favor and 50 per cent against departmentalization, no conclusion can be drawn of whether or not the teachers favor departmentalization at the intermediate level. At the present time, the investigator would recommend no change from departmentalization to the self-contained classroom.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Departmentalization in grades four, five, and six was implemented at the Beecher City Grade School in Beecher City, Illinois, in the 1966-1967 school year. A discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of this form of organization has occurred annually by the school board and administration, but no changes have been made in the organization of the school. The investigator attempted to determine the attitudes of those directly involved in this horizontal organization; i.e., students and teachers in these grades of the Beecher City Grade School.

Departmentalization is not a new concept. Surveys taken between 1910-1950 indicate shifting enthusiasm for departmentalization. From 1910-1930, interest grew. Much debate took place during the 1930's concerning the virtues of departmentalization. The same virtues were being claimed by departmentalization and self-contained classrooms. During the 1940-1949 period, the change to departmentalization seemed to decrease because there was insufficient evidence to merit the change to departmentalization (Goodlad, 9:223). Even though departmentalization of subject matter declined, the specialists in music, art, and physical education remained. After the middle 1950's, the trend was toward increased departmentalization, especially in the upper elementary grades (Heathers, 13:561).
The junior high school was introduced about sixty years ago. This was an attempt to solve the problem of student dropouts. Educators found that students remained in school through fifth grade, but the dropout rate between grades six and nine was sixty to sixty-seven per cent. By offering a broader curriculum, educators hoped to interest the student, and thereby decrease the number of dropouts. Some of these junior high schools were organized for seventh and eighth grade and others were organized for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade (Gruhn, 11:635). Another reason junior high schools were introduced was to introduce the high school subjects earlier. Later, it became a bridge between the self-contained elementary classrooms and the subject field in the high school. The junior high provided exploratory experiences to help the student choose his high school program, and it furnished academic, vocational, and personal guidance (Compton, 6:24).

Educators presently think of the junior high school as an institution to provide an educational program which is well suited to the needs of the early adolescent. The purpose of the junior high is more important than the administration, housing, or grade arrangement (Gruhn, 11:636). Since the junior high school did not adequately provide for the needs of the early adolescent student, a new middle school has been established for these "in-between-agers" of grades five through eight or grades six through eight. Proponents claim
that the middle school provides an integrated approach to subject areas taught and that fifth and sixth grade students are not psychologically mature enough to benefit from a subject centered curriculum. The United States Office of Education reported over one thousand middle schools in existence in the 1967-1968 school year (Compton, 6:24).

According to Goodlad (10:53), there are two levels of organization of schools. Vertical organization is how the students move upward. This may be graded, nongraded, or multigraded. Horizontal organization is the assignment of students to teachers and instructional groups. Self-contained classrooms and departmentalization are examples of horizontal organization.

There are many types of vertical organization. Some examples are 6-3-3, 5-3-4, and 6-2-4. In the 6-3-3 type of organization, grades kindergarten through sixth are generally self-contained, grades seven through nine are considered the junior high school, and grades ten through twelve are the senior high school. In the 5-3-4 organization, grades kindergarten through five are self-contained, grades six through eight are the junior high school, and grades nine through twelve are the senior high school. Grades kindergarten through sixth are self-contained, grades seven and eight are the junior high school, and grades nine through twelve are the senior high school in the 6-2-4 organization.

Advantages and disadvantages of departmentalization in the
elementary school have been found. Dougherty, Gorman, and Phillips (7:31) make the following statements concerning these advantages and disadvantages:

Some of the advantages claimed for departmental organization are that it (1) provides for more efficient instruction; (2) offers an enriched curriculum; (3) more highly trained teachers; (4) allows for concentration of equipment; (5) pupils may be promoted by subjects rather than grades; (6) pupils have contact with more teaching personality; and (7) both teachers and children in schools with departmentalization favor it.

The arguments against departmentalization are that (1) it overemphasizes subject matter; (2) teachers are only narrow specialists; (3) behavior problems are more difficult to handle; (4) it destroys the unity of school life for the pupil; (5) it prevents integration of subject matter; and (6) the plan has been borrowed from secondary school practice.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of the students and teachers at the Beecher City, Illinois Grade School toward departmentalization in grades four, five, and six. During periods of brief communication between teachers such as lunch hour, recess, etc., the investigator had heard opinions expressed briefly and decided to collect data to find out what the attitudes of the teachers really were. Since the student's needs are of utmost importance in our educational system, the investigator decided that the attitudes of the students were important and that they should also be made a part of this investigation. The investigator wished to find out if the
attitudes of the students and teachers were similar. The investigator felt that if the attitudes of the students and teachers toward departmentalization in the intermediate grades were found to be very unfavorable, it would be the investigator's duty to attempt to persuade the administration and school board to make a change in the organizational plan of these grades.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

Questionnaires administered to students and teachers sought answers to the following specific questions in order to determine the attitudes of the students and teachers toward departmentalization in grades four, five, and six at the Beecher City Grade School: (1) Are students in favor of departmentalization at the intermediate level in Beecher City? (2) Are the teachers in favor of departmentalization at the intermediate level in Beecher City? (3) Is there any difference between the attitudes of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students toward departmentalization? (4) Do the teachers feel that they know and understand their students as well as in the self-contained classroom?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following definitions were used for these terms in this investigation:
Attitudes. Mental and emotional feelings specifically toward the intermediate grade organization of the Beecher City Grade School.

Core curriculum. The portion of a school program that is required of all students.

Departmentalization. The practice of separating classes according to subject field.

Dual progress plan. A form of semidepartmental organization where the student spends one-half day being taught subjects at grade level and the other half day in ungraded activities.

Horizontal Organization. How the students are assigned to teachers and instructional groups.

Integration. The practice of combining different school subjects and presenting them as one unifying project or activity.

Intermediate Grades. Grades four, five, and six.

Middle School. School organized to specifically meet the needs of the early adolescent student in grades five through eight or grades six through eight.

Monitorial. A system in which a person—generally a pupil assistant or one wishing to become a teacher—to whom is assigned the
responsibility of performing or overseeing the performance of routine
tasks, such as collecting papers, distributing books, etc.

**Multigraded.** Group for instruction containing students from
different grades.

**Platoon School.** School where the student body is divided into
two groups or platoons, one doing classroom work while the other engages
in activities using the auditorium, shop, playground, and others.

**Self-contained Classroom.** One teacher assigned to teach all
subject matter in the classroom.

**Semidepartmentalization.** Plan of school organization in which
work is partly departmentalized, each teacher instructing pupils in
more than one subject, but not in all subjects studied.

**Team Teaching.** Method or organization for teaching considering
children, curriculum, and teacher qualifications to establish class
groups.

**Vertical Organization.** How the students move upward through the
school.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature reviewed was organized to: (1) provide a history of departmental schools in the United States; (2) show research findings on departmentalization; and (3) list the advantages and disadvantages of departmentalization from the viewpoint of the teachers and educators. The literature reviewed was pertinent to this study in that it provided background material in departmental school organization, a review of studies done in the area, and enumerated the advantages and disadvantages of departmentalization.

HISTORY OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION

Dame schools of the early colonial period of the United States were examples of early departmentalization. There was one teacher for each subject, mainly reading and writing, and the students progressed through available books at their own speed. The class might consist of four to seven students with possibly some older girls attending, too. As attendance increased, a monitorial system was set up. The teacher of the subject was assisted by monitors and later assistant teachers were used (Otto, 15:22).

The Quincy Grammar School was set up in Boston in 1848 by J. D. Philbrick. This was the beginning of graded schools, and departmentalization was seldom used during the next fifty years. By 1860,
most town schools were operating on a graded basis; i.e., a certain amount of material to be covered in a certain amount of time. Some major difficulties arose after a few years of graded schools. Some of these were: (1) large numbers of pupils were eliminated in the upper grades, (2) there was overcrowding in the lower grades, (3) there was nonpromotion of bright pupils. St. Louis was one of the first to change to another plan when it was found that the graded school had certain weaknesses. After five years, they changed to a quarterly plan in 1862 (Otto, 15:23).

From 1890-1910, there was a movement to reorganize the upper elementary school curriculum that brought back departmentalization. The platoon school was introduced by William W. Wirt from Bluffton, Indiana, in 1900. He expanded this when he moved to Gary, Indiana, in 1929. In this type of organization, one-half of each morning and one-half of each afternoon are spent in the fundamental subjects. The other parts of the school day are spent in special areas such as science, music, art, physical education, home economics, or shop. This plan was considered to be more economical because classes rotated and some teachers, such as music or physical education, could take two groups at a time (Otto, 15:26).

Advocates of the platoon school were strong supporters of departmentalization, and interest continued to grow until 1930. Rapid urban growth and overcrowded schools were factors leading to experimental
programs of departmentalization by educators. At this time, intellectual growth took precedence over social, emotional, and physical growth (Dunn, 8:201).

The 1930's was a period of much debate over the virtues of departmentalization. Departmentalization and self-contained classroom organization often claimed the same advantages. This led educators to urge selection of the best from all plans and to apply the plan selected to individual needs and situations. It was a common sense approach rather than absolute adherence to standardized practices. There was widespread application of Dewey's philosophy of learning through experience during this decade (Dunn, 8:201).

From 1940-1949, emphasis on the continuous growth and total development of the child grew. This led to one teacher or self-contained classrooms. It was felt that individual instruction could be achieved best in the self-contained class. But cooperative group teaching was favored in the special subjects, such as art, music, and physical education (Dunn, 8:201-202).

In 1929, there were 1,068 platoon schools in 202 cities in forty-one states. By 1949, the platoon system was found in only 8 per cent, or about 128 schools, of the 1,598 city school systems sampled. In 1949, 51 per cent of the 1,598 city school systems had departmentalization. Thirty-five per cent of those reporting departmentalization reported that it was on the way out in their system (Otto, 15:26).
Other forms of departmentalization developed. There were two types of semidepartmental organizations. One type is when the home room teacher teaches some subjects in one-half day and the other subjects are taught by specialists. A dual progress program is where some of the subjects are taught for one-half day at a grade level and the other half day is spent in ungraded subjects (Heathers, 13:561). The core program is different in that at least two subjects are taught by the same teacher, such as math and science or English and history. It is thought that this type program increases correlation of subject matter and offers a more secure emotional-social setting for the student (Heathers, 13:562).

During the 1950's, there was a trend toward increased departmentalization in the upper elementary grades especially. This was usually to provide specialist teachers in major curriculum areas. It was found that not enough teachers were specialized in the needed subjects. Departmentalization continued into the 1960's with the practice of team teaching. This gives the students the advantage of having a teacher with special interest and, hopefully, special training in the subject or subjects he is teaching. There is now a trend toward a middle school to fulfill the needs of the "in-between-ager." This seems to be the age group where the greatest differences occur (Compton, 6:22). Colleges and universities are beginning to train teachers in the needs of these middle year students. Administrative control is
still a problem to be solved. The middle school movement seems to be growing faster than the carefully developed theory and research for the movement.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research findings concerning the effect departmentalization has on the student's academic achievement and personal-social adjustment are not consistent. An experiment was carried out in Clarksville, Arkansas, in 1929-1930, which found that some subjects are taught best under the departmental plan and others in a grade organization. There is little in the report on which to generalize the effectiveness of either plan (Otto, 15:302).

Cline (5:25) compared achievement of Austin, Minnesota, sixth grade students in departmentalized schools and schools with the self-contained classrooms in the areas of English, mathematics, and science. He found achievement of the students in the departmentalized schools significantly greater in the areas of English and mathematics.

Gibb and Matala studied the use of special teachers in fifth and sixth grades in science and math. Students taught by specialists achieved at a higher level in science than those in the self-contained classroom. However, achievement in math was about equal in either case. The children preferred departmental instruction (Compton, 6:23).

Hosley compared achievement of two hundred students in semi-
departmentalized and nondepartmentalized sixth grades. Those in the nondepartmental school made greater gains in achievement, but the grade placement scores did not differ significantly. Students in the semidepartmentalized sample were found to be superior in reading and had more varied activities and hobbies, although no significant difference was found in the behavior preference record (Shane, 17:426-427).

Rouse (16:42) investigated the following questions concerning departmental versus nondepartmental organization: (1) Is there any difference in the scope of the school program? (2) Is there any difference in the general pattern of organization of the curriculum? (3) Is there any difference in the way progress of school life is administered through curriculum practices: and (4) Is there any difference in the procedures used in classroom teaching? She used interviews, questionnaires, and observations. She visited twenty departmentalized and twenty nondepartmentalized schools in varying sized towns. When interviewing and observing, she spent the entire day in the school observing all situations, including lunch and recesses. She used checklists to find experiences included in school life and to find out about procedures in the classroom. The results of her investigation were analyzed in relation to the above questions. Of the differences between departmental and nondepartmental organization, music being taught as a separate subject was the only one favorable to elementary specialists.
Ackerlund (1:284) studied attitudes of teachers in an Eastern city of 25,000 and found that a majority of the teachers preferred departmentalization to self-contained classrooms. Those opposed to self-contained classrooms felt that they were not prepared to teach all subjects.

Anderson (2:254-255) studied 260 elementary teachers in East Brunswick, Illinois, to determine the confidence of these teachers in themselves as teachers of all subjects. He found only four teachers feeling really qualified to teach in all areas. Most felt qualified in one or two areas. He concluded that specialized teachers in the elementary school will improve the achievement of the students, because they will be receiving better training.

Broadhead (4:389) found that students in the upper grades in a semidepartmental program in Tulsa, Oklahoma, demonstrated better social adjustment than students in self-contained classrooms.

According to data available, adjustment of children in departmentalized schools is at least not inferior to those in self-contained classrooms (Anderson, 2:257).

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Much of the literature reviewed commented on the advantages and disadvantages of departmentalization. A comprehensive survey, which was done in the United States in the 1920's covers these very well. One
part of the survey was done by a questionnaire sent to representative educators. Of twenty-one replies received, eight favored limited departmentalization, seven opposed departmentalization, two favored experimentation, and one was noncommitted. Reasons given for opposing departmentalization were as follows: (1) isolation of subject matter is a result, (2) an activity curriculum is impossible, (3) teachers teach subjects rather than children, (4) the difficulties of administration are insurmountable, and (5) there is a lack of hominess for the child. Advantages of the plan expressed were the following: (1) teachers are more likely to be experts because they specialize; (2) the teacher is more enthusiastic because he is teaching the subject in which he is specialized; (3) professional education of the teacher is intensified; (4) teacher's daily preparation is limited; (5) there is greater economy of teacher's energy, pupil's time, and cost of instruction; (6) the atmosphere of special rooms is conducive to increased interest on the part of the students; (7) children welcome variety in content and in contacts which come from departmentalization; and (8) if a child has a poor teacher part of the day, he is likely to have a good teacher another part of the day (Becker and Gleason, 3: 62-63).

In this same survey, another questionnaire was sent to superintendents and supervisors in various sized cities to be given to classroom teachers. Response to the questionnaires showed 86 per cent
favoring departmentalization based on experience. Fourteen per cent opposed it. Eleven per cent had no experience, so based their answers on observation. The following advantages were reported by the teachers:

1. There is an opportunity to observe children and their needs over a longer period of time.
2. There is a selection of specialists rather than general teachers.
3. The teacher has more time to prepare for a few subjects.
4. Work is not duplicated because the teacher knows what has been taught.
5. There is greater opportunity to create interest because of greater knowledge of subject matter.
6. Professional improvement is encouraged.
7. The normal child is strengthened through thought, responsibility, and self-expression.
8. It is less monotonous for the teacher and the student.
9. There is physical relaxation with change of rooms.
10. Contact with different personalities and methods allows pupils to absorb more than when they are taught by one teacher.
11. Some teachers get more response from some children than others.
12. There is less time spent in pupil adjustment because the teacher knows the pupil's ability and the pupil knows the teacher's
standards.

13. Transition to junior high is less abrupt.

14. Each subject is given a fair amount of time.

15. There is economy in equipment because it is usually needed in only one room.

Disadvantages reported by the teachers were as follows:

1. There is lack of opportunity to know pupils and their abilities.

2. They teach too great a number of children in a week.

3. Slow groups are at a disadvantage because no one claims them.

4. The plan interferes with pupil's work on poorest subjects at a time when remedial work is being given to other children.

5. It is not suited to the best interests of young children.

6. There are varied standards of discipline and scholarship among teachers.

7. There is greater waste of time passing between classes.

8. The influence of one room is lost.

9. There is a possibility of overreaching the pupil's ability.

10. Too great an amount of specialization crowds out general culture.

11. Close correlation of subject matter is impossible and
effective project work is prevented (Becker and Gleason, 3:63-64).

More recently, Anderson (2:257-259) listed several advantages of departmentalization. He claims that specialization of the teacher is very important for the following reasons: (1) teaching assignments are more sharply focused and this makes lesson planning easier; (2) it is easier to keep up with developments in one or two subject areas than in many; and (3) the specialist will probably motivate the students more than the generalist who may not be particularly interested in what he is teaching. He also feels that exposure to more than one style of teaching per day is good because not all students respond to a particular technique or approach and a uniform environment is dull. No teacher gets along well with all his pupils and in departmentalization the teacher is not stuck with the student all day or vice versa.

Identification of students with adults is important, and there is a greater number available in a departmentalized school. There are frequently more men in departmentalized schools with which boys can identify. Anderson also claims that ethically speaking it is fairer for the student to be in contact with more than one adult personality, set of values, and way of thinking.

Lobell and Van Ness (14:214-215) cited several advantages stated by others with which they do not necessarily agree. Departmentalization gets students ready for junior high school. Children meet more people in departmentalization. Subjects are taught by specialists.
They doubt that most teachers in departmentalized schools are specialists in their area. Most are generalists assigned to teach a special subject area. They feel that good consultants can greatly aid the generalist.

Disadvantages listed by three writers were similar. Lobell and Van Ness (14:213-214) stated that integration of children's educational experiences into a meaningful whole is almost impossible and that bells disrupt the continuity of subject matter.

Hamalainen (12:273-274) listed the same disadvantages as Lobell and Van Ness. He felt that the more integration there is in departmentalization the harder it is for the student to pull the material apart to meet his needs in society. He added the disadvantage that the teacher does not know his students well in departmentalization because of the large number of students with whom he may work.

Anderson (2:254-256) felt that the teacher is not able to know each student as well as he should because of the number of students he comes in contact with during the day. He also felt that the student needs the security of one teacher all day because he will suffer socially and emotionally from being subjected to varying academic and behavioral standards of different teachers.

SUMMARY

The popularity of the departmental school has risen and fallen numerous times through its history. Many types of departmental
organization have been put into practice, such as the platoon school, semidepartmental school, dual progress plan, core curriculum, and team teaching. In recent years, most school districts have taken the best from the numerous plans and applied it to their individual needs and the situation in their district. This seems most practical when one considers that research findings on the effects of departmentalization are not consistent.

Through the years, advantages and disadvantages of departmentalization have been cited. It is difficult to evaluate these findings as reactions have been both negative and positive. Departmental organization results in economy in time, economy in materials, economy in preparation, and enriched curriculum, and rooms with child appeal. Objections to departmentalization include disintegration rather than integration of pupil experiences, subject centered curriculum rather than child centered, and the correlation of subject matter is impossible.
Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

Since the inception of departmentalization in the Beecher City Grade School, there has been much discussion of whether or not it is a good form of organization for the school. The investigator was concerned with determining some of the attitudes of students and teachers toward this organization plan.

The following areas are described in this chapter: (1) population description, (2) collection and organization of data, (3) questions answered, and (4) precautions taken for accuracy.

POPULATION DESCRIPTION

This investigation was concerned with the intermediate grades of the Beecher City Grade School in Beecher City, Illinois. Therefore, the entire population of those grades was used. This included sixty-seven boys and seventy-three girls for a total population of 140. Beecher City, Illinois, is located in south central Illinois approximately one hundred miles northeast of Saint Louis, Missouri. It is fifteen miles from Effingham, Illinois, which has several industries and many of the people of the school district work in these factories and also have a small family farm. Many others derive their income only from farming. There are few transfers of students during the school year.
Beecher City Community Unit No. 20 school district consists of approximately one hundred square miles, and it has an approximate school population of four hundred students. There are three buildings in the district. The kindergarten is located in the Beecher City Grade School building where grades four, five, and six are also located. The first three grades are located in a newer one story building at Shumway, Illinois, which is a smaller town eight miles east of Beecher City. Buses carry these lower grade students back and forth each morning and evening. Grades seven through twelve are located in the Beecher City High School building at the west edge of Beecher City. Separate schedules are used for the seventh and eighth grades and the high school.

The investigator solicited responses from the five teachers of the intermediate grades, excluding the investigator. Three of these teachers have Bachelor of Science degrees, and they have taken a few extra courses. One teacher has a Bachelor of Science degree and has taken several courses for the masters degree several years ago. One teacher has a Master of Education degree. The range of experience of these teachers was from eight to thirty-five years.

COLLECTION AND ORGANIZATION OF DATA

Questionnaires were used to gather data from the students and teachers. These were designed by the investigator, partially based
The student questionnaire consisted of five questions to be answered by yes or no. The fourth grade students did not answer question five, because it did not apply to their experiences. The student questionnaire was administered by the investigator near the end of each class period rather than another assignment on March 27, 1972, to the 130 students present. The ten absentees were administered the questionnaire during later class periods when supervised study was being done. The questionnaires were not administered until the end of the third quarter to enable the fourth graders and any new students or teachers to become familiar with this type of organization. Since the questionnaire was administered during class time, 100 per cent participation of the students resulted.

The teacher questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was eight objective questions to be answered by yes or no, and the second part asked the teachers to list what they thought were the advantages and disadvantages of departmentalization at the intermediate level. Space was left for the teachers to make any comments which they thought were pertinent to this investigation. This questionnaire was mailed to the teachers and was returned to the investigator by March 31, 1972. Since this was a local investigation, 100 per cent of the teacher questionnaires were returned to the investigator.

The information from the student questionnaires, which were coded by grade level, was tallied on a tally sheet. The calculator
was later used to check the totals. Since one of the questions which the investigator hoped to answer concerned differences of opinion of the fourth, fifth, and sixth graders toward departmentalization, the responses to each question were placed in a table at the end of the discussion of the student questionnaire. This table shows the numbers responding with yes and no and the percentage of the students this represented. The chi square test of independence was used to determine if the differences of opinion of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students were significant concerning each question. If there is significance, this means that the variables are dependent. This means that the grade level would influence the response of the student.

The variables are set up in table form with three columns representing grade levels and two rows representing the possible responses. First, one must determine the expected number of each kind of response for each grade level which is shown at the lower right of each box in the table. To determine the expected, multiply the total number in the grade times the total number for that response in all grades and divide by the total population of the study. The observed is the actual number of responses in each box at the upper left from the student questionnaire. The formula used to obtain the chi square is

\[ \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \]. If the chi square is no larger than that allowed for the chosen level of significance and the appropriate number of degrees
of freedom, then there is no dependence of the variables.

The first part of the teacher questionnaire was also reported by using a table showing the number of responses of yes and no and the percentages these represented. The second part is reported by listing the advantages and disadvantages which the teachers listed on the returned questionnaires.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The following general questions were answered in this investigation: (1) What are the attitudes of the students toward departmentalization at the intermediate level? (2) What are the attitudes of the teachers toward departmentalization at this level?

Answers to the following specific questions were sought:

(1) Are students in favor of departmentalization at the intermediate level in Beecher City, Illinois? (2) Are the teachers in favor of departmentalization at the intermediate level in Beecher City, Illinois? (3) Is there a significant difference in the attitudes of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students toward departmentalization? (4) Do the teachers feel that they know and understand their students as well as in the self-contained classroom?
PRECAUTIONS TAKEN FOR ACCURACY

Certain precautions were taken for accuracy in this investigation. All absentee students were administered the questionnaire at a later date so the entire school population was included. Coding of student questionnaires according to grade level increased accuracy in categorizing student responses. The investigator used the calculator to check hand calculations and to compute the chi square test of independence.

SUMMARY

A questionnaire was sent to the teachers and administered to the students to determine their attitudes toward departmentalization at the intermediate level in the Beecher City, Illinois Grade School. The information furnished by the teachers and students was assembled in table form. These tables indicate the attitudes of the students at the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade levels and the attitudes of the teachers.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

The investigator arranged the data collected into tables showing comparisons of responses of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students, responses of the teachers to the first part of their questionnaire, and the advantages and disadvantages listed by the teachers in the second part of their questionnaire. The investigator also compared his findings to those of the literature reviewed to find if there was a correlation. This comparison was done mainly with the second section of the teacher questionnaire.

STUDENT FINDINGS

Departmentalization was favored by 70 per cent of the students and opposed by nearly 30 per cent. This is consistent with a study cited by Compton (6:23) indicating little difference in achievement in science and math at the fifth and sixth grade levels with special teachers but a preference for departmentalization by those students. The chi square test of independence was used in this investigation to determine if there was a significant difference of opinion between the different grade levels. In Table 1, page 28, the calculated chi square of .88 was less than the 5.99 needed for significance; therefore, the students' responses to preference of six teachers rather than one were not dependent on their grade level.
Table 1

Chi Square Test of Student Response to Whether There Was A Preference for Six Teachers Rather Than One Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = .88^* \]

* Critical Value of \( X^2 \), \( \alpha = .05 \), df = 2 is 5.99

Seventy per cent of the students felt that they could get more help with their problems within a departmental organization. The chi square of 6.18 calculated for Table 2, page 29, was greater than the 5.99 needed for significance. This means that the variables of grade level and choice of response were dependent or that the grade level influenced the student's response to the question. A greater percentage of fourth and fifth grade students than sixth grade students felt that
they could get more special help with their problems within a departmental organization.

Table 2

Chi Square Test of Student Response to Receiving More Special Help with Problems in the Departmental Versus Self-Contained Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 6.18^* \]

* Critical Value of \( X^2 \), \( \alpha = .05 \), df = 2 is 5.99

No great difference of opinion was expressed by the student body concerning the difficulty of the work. Nearly 48 per cent responded that departmentalized work is more difficult, and 52 per cent responded that it is not more difficult. The chi square of 1.57 calculated in Table 3, page 30, indicates that the differences of opinion were not
significant; therefore, there was no dependence of the variables concerning the difficulty of work within a departmental organization.

### Table 3
Chi Square Test of Student Response to Whether Departmentalized Work is More Difficult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[X^2 = 1.57^*\]

* Critical Value of \(X^2\), \(\alpha = .05\), df = 2 is 5.99

Seventy per cent of the student body felt that they had more time for supervised study within a departmental organization than in the self-contained classroom. Table 4, page 31, indicates that the difference of opinions between grades was not found to be significant with a calculated chi square of .51 concerning the amount of supervised study time.
Table 4

Chi Square Test of Student Response to Whether There Is a Greater Amount of Time for Supervised Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = .51^* \]

* Critical Value of \( X^2, \alpha = .05, df = 2 \) is 5.99

The fourth grade was not allowed to respond to the fifth question because they have never had the same teacher for two years. Ninety percent of the responding students felt that having the same teacher more than one year is beneficial to them. According to the chi square test of independence in Table 5, page 32, the difference of opinion concerning having the same teacher more than one year was not significant at the .05 level with one degree of freedom. To be significant, a chi square
of over 3.84 was needed, but the calculated chi square was only .60.

Table 5

Chi Square Test of Student Response to Whether There Are Benefits of Having the Same Teacher More Than One Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = .60^* \]

* Critical Value of \( x^2 \), \( \alpha = .05 \), df = 1 is 3.84

Table 6, page 33, indicates the number and exact percentages answering yes and no on each question of the student questionnaire. Table 6 indicates a gradual decrease in percentage favoring departmentalization from fourth to sixth grade. A similar decrease in percentage from fourth to sixth grade is noted concerning whether the student has more supervised study time within a departmental organization. A greater percentage of fifth grade students felt that they could get more help with their problems with departmentalization than the other grades.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes %</td>
<td>No %</td>
<td>Yes %</td>
<td>No %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Would you rather have one teacher than six?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you feel that you get more special help with your problems than when you had only one teacher?</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you feel that the work required is more difficult when you have more than one teacher?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Under departmental organization, do you have more time for supervised study than when you had only one teacher?</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you feel that having the same teacher for a subject more than one year allows that teacher to help you more in that subject?</td>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APPLICABLE</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A complete copy of the student questionnaire is found in Appendix A, page 45.

TEACHER FINDINGS

The questionnaire which was mailed to the teachers consisted of two parts. The first part was specific questions to be answered with yes or no, and the second part asked the teacher to list the advantages and disadvantages which he felt that departmentalization has at the intermediate grade level. He was also to list any comments which he might have. A copy of the complete questionnaire is found in Appendix C, page 47.

Table 7, page 35, indicates the responses of the teachers to the first part of their questionnaire. Four out of five of the teachers felt that they are teaching in an area of special interest to them, and they have taken courses pertaining to the subjects which they teach. Four out of five also felt that departmentalization provides them with more preparation time than the self-contained classroom. Contact with different teacher personalities and teaching methods allows students to learn more according to four out of five of the teachers. Although the first five questions were answered yes by four teachers and no by one teacher, the no responses were not always from the same teacher. The teachers felt that giving special help to groups or individuals is harder to accomplish with departmentalization than in
Table 7
Findings of the Teacher Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you feel that you are teaching in an area of special interest to you?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have you taken courses in the area of the curriculum in which you teach? If so, how many quarter hours?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you feel that you have more time for preparation for teaching than in the self-contained classroom?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you feel that contact with different teacher personalities allows students to learn more than contact with only one teacher personality?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you feel that contact with different teaching methods used by different teachers allows students to learn more than contact with only one teacher's method?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you feel that you can give special help to groups or individuals when it is needed?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you feel that you can learn to know and understand your students as well as you could in a self-contained classroom?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do you prefer teaching in departmentally organized intermediate grades rather than the self-contained classroom?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One teacher did not respond to this question.
** The 24 q.h. represents the total credits of all teachers.
the self-contained classroom. The student questionnaire showed that a majority of the students felt that they could get more special help with their problems. This was especially true of the fourth and fifth grade students. All of the teachers felt that the self-contained classroom is better than departmentalization for knowing and understanding the students. One teacher commented that children of this age particularly need a close teacher-student relationship. Although 70 per cent of the students prefer departmentalization, only half of the four teachers responding to that question favor it at the intermediate level. The one teacher who did not respond to that question, according to given choices of yes or no, chose to write the word undecided to the right of the choices given.

The second part of the questionnaire mailed to the teachers asked them to list what they felt were the advantages and disadvantages of departmentalization in the intermediate grades. They listed the following advantages: (1) the child is not stuck with a teacher whom he dislikes all day; (2) the child comes in contact with different teacher personalities and teaching methods; (3) the teacher probably will not have as many lesson plans to make; and (4) the teacher has more time for the subject which he teaches, and he can utilize more up to date methods of teaching that subject.

The disadvantages listed by the intermediate grade teachers were as follows: (1) the teacher does not get to know the student well,
therefore, the teacher-student relationship is not very close; (2) teaching the same subject all day is boring; (3) there is difficulty moving materials because the teachers move from class to class instead of the students; (4) there is no correlation of subject matter; (5) the home room teacher is not sure of the assignments made by other teachers for the class; (6) not enough special help can be given to the students; (7) class projects are hard to do; (8) the child gets only one method of teaching and one outlook on the subject in three years; (9) the time schedule is structured instead of flexible; and (10) the teacher has only a partial knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual student.

The advantages and disadvantages listed by the Beecher City Grade School teachers were similar to those listed by the teachers surveyed in the comprehensive study done in the 1920's which were reported by Becker and Gleason (3:63-64). Teachers in the survey cited and in the Beecher City Grade School agreed on the following advantages of departmental organization: (1) the teacher has more time to prepare for a few subjects; (2) there is greater opportunity to create interest because of greater knowledge of subject matter; (3) it is less monotonous to the student and the teacher; and (4) contact with different personalities and methods allows pupils to absorb more than when they are taught by one teacher.

These advantages of departmentalization listed by the Beecher
City teachers are also consistent with the writings of Anderson (2:257-259). There is limited agreement with Lobell and Van Ness (14:214-215) concerning the greater knowledge of subject matter. These authors feel that too often teachers are not specialists, but they are assigned to teach a certain area of the curriculum. They also agree that the student comes in contact with more people in departmentalized schools.

Disadvantages agreed on by the Beecher City Grade School teachers and those involved in the survey from Becker and Gleason were as follows: (1) close correlation of subject matter is impossible and effective project work is prevented; (2) there is lack of opportunity to know pupils and their abilities; and (3) there is lack of hominess for the child. Hamalainen (12:273-274) and Anderson (2:254-256) also felt there is lack of opportunity to know the students and their abilities in departmentalization.

Several other disadvantages listed by the Beecher City Grade School teachers are due to the physical structure of the building; i.e., students cannot move from class to class because no lockers are available and material must be moved from class to class by the teacher. The structured schedule is a disadvantage of the local horizontal organization because the lesson must be stopped when the bell rings whether or not the objectives for the day have been grasped by the students. This is supported by the modern authors Lobell and Van Ness (14:214) and Hamalainen (12:273-274). The supervised study periods in the home room
sometimes bring problems if the assignments have not been stated clearly or are not written down on paper or on the blackboard. If the student is strong in the subject which the home room teacher teaches, he may find it hard to be patient with that student when he is having difficulty in one of his weaker subjects. The student cannot always get the special help he needs from the teacher of that specific subject when he needs it.

SUMMARY

The questionnaires administered to the students and teachers showed a greater percentage of students favoring departmentalization than teachers. The students felt that they were able to get adequate help with their problems although the teachers felt that it was not always convenient for them to give the special help when needed. Both teachers and students felt they have more preparation time for lesson plans and lessons, respectively. Advantages and disadvantages listed by the Beecher City teachers are found to be in agreement with the literature consulted in this investigation.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Departmentalization as a form of horizontal organization of our schools is not a new concept. It began with the early dame schools of New England and has had periods of enthusiasm and periods of decline. There has been increased interest in departmentalization since the middle 1950's. Much of this has been in the junior high grades, but various types of departmentalization, such as team teaching, core curriculum, and platoon schools, have been used in the lower grades.

Research findings, especially in academic achievement, are not consistent as to whether departmentalization or the self-contained classroom is better in the elementary school. Available research suggests that children in departmentalized classrooms are as well adjusted as those in self-contained classrooms.

Inquiry into the attitudes of the teachers and students toward departmentalization in the intermediate grades at the Beecher City, Illinois Grade School was the subject dealt with by the investigator. The investigator hoped to determine these attitudes in order to find out whether this type of organization is favored by the students and teachers or whether the school system should possibly change back to self-contained classrooms. This inquiry was carried out by the use of questionnaires for the students and teachers. The student questionnaire was objective and the teacher questionnaire contained both objective and
subjective questions. This was a local investigation of only grades four, five, and six and their teachers. Because the investigator administered the questionnaire to the students during his class period, 100 per cent participation resulted. The teachers also cooperated and returned 100 per cent of their questionnaires.

According to percentages, the findings of this investigation indicate that the students favor departmentalization more than the teachers. The students felt that they could get more special help with their problems than when they had one teacher and that they had more supervised study time. They strongly felt that having the same teacher more than one year allows the teacher to help them more with that subject. The teachers felt that they are teaching in an area of special interest to them and that they have more time for preparation for teaching. They felt that contact with different teacher personalities and teaching methods is beneficial to the student. They felt that they do not learn to know and understand the students as well as in the self-contained classroom and that giving special help when needed is often hard to accomplish.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions drawn by the investigator from this study are as follows:

1. The students favor departmentalization at the intermediate
grade level of the Beecher City, Illinois Grade School.

2. There was dependence of the variables only in the question concerning the student getting special help with his problems. This means that the grade level of the student influenced his response to that question. A larger percentage of the fourth and fifth grade students felt they were getting more help than did sixth graders.

3. Because the questionnaire results were 50 per cent in favor and 50 per cent against departmentalization, no conclusion can be drawn as to whether or not the teachers favor departmentalization at the intermediate grade level of the Beecher City Grade School.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made concerning the conclusions of this investigation:

1. At the present time, no change from departmentalization to the self-contained classroom should be made in the intermediate grades at the Beecher City Grade School.

2. A detailed study could be undertaken which would compare the achievement of intermediate grade students taught in the self-contained classrooms of a neighboring school with the achievement of the departmentalized Beecher City intermediate grades.

3. A method should be devised to allow the students to move from class to class in order for more effective project work to be
undertaken by the teachers.

4. A method should be devised to allow the student to go to the teacher of the subject with which he is having much difficulty at the time of that difficulty. Minor help should still be given by the home room teacher or a capable student.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STUDENTS

Please answer the following questions by marking yes or no after the question.

1. Would you rather have one teacher than six?
   Yes __
   No ___

2. Do you feel that you get more special help with your problems than when you had only one teacher?
   Yes __
   No ___

3. Do you feel that the work required is more difficult when you have more than one teacher?
   Yes __
   No ___

4. Under departmental organization, do you have more time for supervised study than when you had only one teacher?
   Yes __
   No ___

5. Do you feel that having the same teacher for a subject more than one year allows that teacher to help you more in that subject?
   Yes __
   No ___
Dear ____________:

A survey of the attitudes of the students and teachers toward departmentalization is being undertaken in our school. The enclosed instrument is intended to identify these attitudes. As you will note, it will require only a few minutes to answer.

Please return to me in the enclosed envelope by March 31, 1972. Your reply will be kept confidential. If you are interested in the results of this survey, please indicate this by placing an "X" in the blank at the end of the instrument.

Sincerely,

Mildred Daugherty
APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS

PART I. Please answer the following questions by marking "yes" or "no" after the question. Feel free to add any comments at the end of the instrument.

1. Do you feel that you are teaching in an area of special interest to you?
   Yes ___
   No ___

2. Have you taken additional courses in the area of the curriculum in which you teach? If so, how many quarter hours?
   Yes ___
   No ___
   _____ quarter hours

3. Do you feel that you have more time for preparation for teaching than in the self-contained classroom?
   Yes ___
   No ___

4. Do you feel that contact with different teacher personalities allows students to learn more than when they are in contact with only one teacher personality?
   Yes ___
   No ___

5. Do you feel that contact with different teaching methods used by different teachers allows students to learn more than contact with only one teacher's method?
   Yes ___
   No ___

6. Do you feel that you can give special help to groups or individuals when it is needed?
   Yes ___
   No ___
7. Do you feel that you can learn to know and understand your students as well as you could in a self-contained classroom?  
Yes ___  
No ___  

8. Do you prefer teaching in departmentally organized intermediate grades rather than the self-contained classroom?  
Yes ___  
No ___  

PART II. Please answer as completely as possible.  

1. What do you feel are the advantages of departmental organization for the intermediate grades?  

2. What do you feel are the disadvantages of departmental organization for the intermediate grades?  

Comments.  

I wish to receive a copy of the results of this study _____.
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