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**Teacher and Student Attitudes Toward the Change From  
Departmentalization to a Self-Contained Instructional  
Organization at the Sandoz Elementary School in Millard,  
Nebraska**

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TEACHER AND STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CHANGE FROM  
DEPARTMENTALIZATION TO A SELF-CONTAINED INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION  
AT THE SANDOZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN MILLARD, NEBRASKA

Presented to the

Graduate Faculty

University of Nebraska

at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Richard Spangler

August, 1981

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the Graduate Faculty, University of Nebraska,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Specialist  
in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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7-2-81

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research study to my lovely wife, Sue, who was always there when I needed her and who provided me with constant inspiration and encouragement as I pursued my Education Specialist Degree. Her love, understanding, and support were of the most importance in completing this field project.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.	iii
LIST OF FIGURES .	iv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.	
THE PROBLEM .	
BASIC ASSUMPTIONS .	
DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.	
DEFINITION OF TERMS .	
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.	
III. DESIGN OF THE INVESTIGATION AND PROCEDURES.	13
IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA.	16
V. EVALUATION OF THE DATA.	29
VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .	39
SUMMARY .	39
CONCLUSIONS	40
RECOMMENDATIONS	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	44
APPENDIXES	
A. TEACHER ATTITUDE SURVEY .	47
B. SANDOZ STUDENT ATTITUDE SURVEY.	51

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Table	
I.	Teacher Attitudes Toward the Self-Contained Classroom by Grade Level.
II.	Teacher Attitude Toward the Self-Contained Classroom Based on Year of Experience in the Classroom . . . .
III.	Teacher Attitude Toward the Self-Contained Classroom According to Questions on the Teacher Attitude Survey . . . . .
IV.	Attitudes Toward the Self-Contained Classroom as Indicated by Students Based on Questions in the Student Attitude Survey. . . . .
	Attitudes of Students by Ability Group Toward the Self-Contained Classroom.
	Attitudes of Students by Grade Level Toward the Self-Contained Classroom.
VII.	Attitudes of Teachers Toward the Self-Contained Classroom in the Areas of Discipline, Consistency, Subject Matter and Student-Centered Curriculum
VIII.	Areas Seen by Students and Teachers as Strengths and Weaknesses in the Self-Contained Classroom

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. The Emotional Cycle of Change.	



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

How to organize for instruction is a decision that must be made when planning for the school year. When looking at organizational patterns, the building principal must be concerned not only with ability grouping but other ways a school may be organized. In some school districts the organizational pattern of the school is established by board policy, while in others the organizational pattern is established by individual teachers. In the Millard, Nebraska Public Schools the building principal is responsible for the final decision-making concerning organizational patterns in the building.

When making decisions about the organizational pattern in a school, two areas are prominent. First, what to do to organize for language arts and math instruction, and secondly, what to do to organize for the subjects of social studies, science, and health.

As a first step in making decisions about the organization of the social studies, science and health areas, grade level meetings were held. At these meetings the advantages and disadvantages of departmentalization and several other methods of organization were discussed such as Individually Guided Education, open classrooms, and the self-contained classroom. As an outcome of the grade level meetings and related literature, it was decided to list advantages and disadvantages of self-contained and departmentalized classrooms.

After listing disadvantages and advantages of the departmentalized and self-contained classrooms, the building principal then made the decision that social studies, science, and health would be taught in self-contained classrooms. This decision was implemented in the fall of the 1980-81 school year at Sandoz Elementary School.

#### THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to determine whether the change from a departmentalized classroom organization to a self-contained classroom organization would affect teacher and student attitudes in a positive or negative way as perceived by them.

#### BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The building principal at the Sandoz Elementary School in Millard, Nebraska, decided that the organizational pattern for instruction at that school was to be composed of self-contained classrooms. This decision was based on several assumptions. The first was that organizational patterns affect the attitude of teachers toward their work. Secondly, that the organizational pattern affects the structure of the teacher's day. Finally, that the "emotional phases that people experience as a result of voluntary change is different from that produced by imposed change."<sup>1</sup> Realizing that this was an

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<sup>1</sup>Don Kelley and Daryl R. Conner, "The Emotional Cycle of Change," The 1979 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators (La Jolla, California: University Associates, Inc., 1979), p. 118.

imposed change, the building principal decided questionnaires and method of study should take into account Kelley and Conner's Emotional Cycle of Change. (See Figure 1)

Kelley and Conner feel that any type of change project associated with an organization is more likely to succeed when those affected have a general understanding of what to expect. It is also equally important for the participants to be prepared for any emotional shifts that might occur in themselves or others.

Kelley and Conner have developed a sequence of emotional phases that they feel members of an organization will go through. The first phase is one of uninformed optimism or certainty. In this phase the project looks great on paper. This is good, for without this type of optimism people would be unwilling to start on any type of project. As the project develops, problems begin to surface and the result is increased doubt and pessimism. If the pessimism is confronted and negative feelings are turned into confident ones the stage of hopeful realism has been reached. In this phase, participants develop confidence in their ability to handle problems. As this optimism develops the stage of informed optimism is reached. Finally, from there the phase of rewarding completion is achieved. Each phase has an impact on the project, and the way in which those involved react to the perceptions, values and feelings of participants will be an influencing factor on the success of the project.

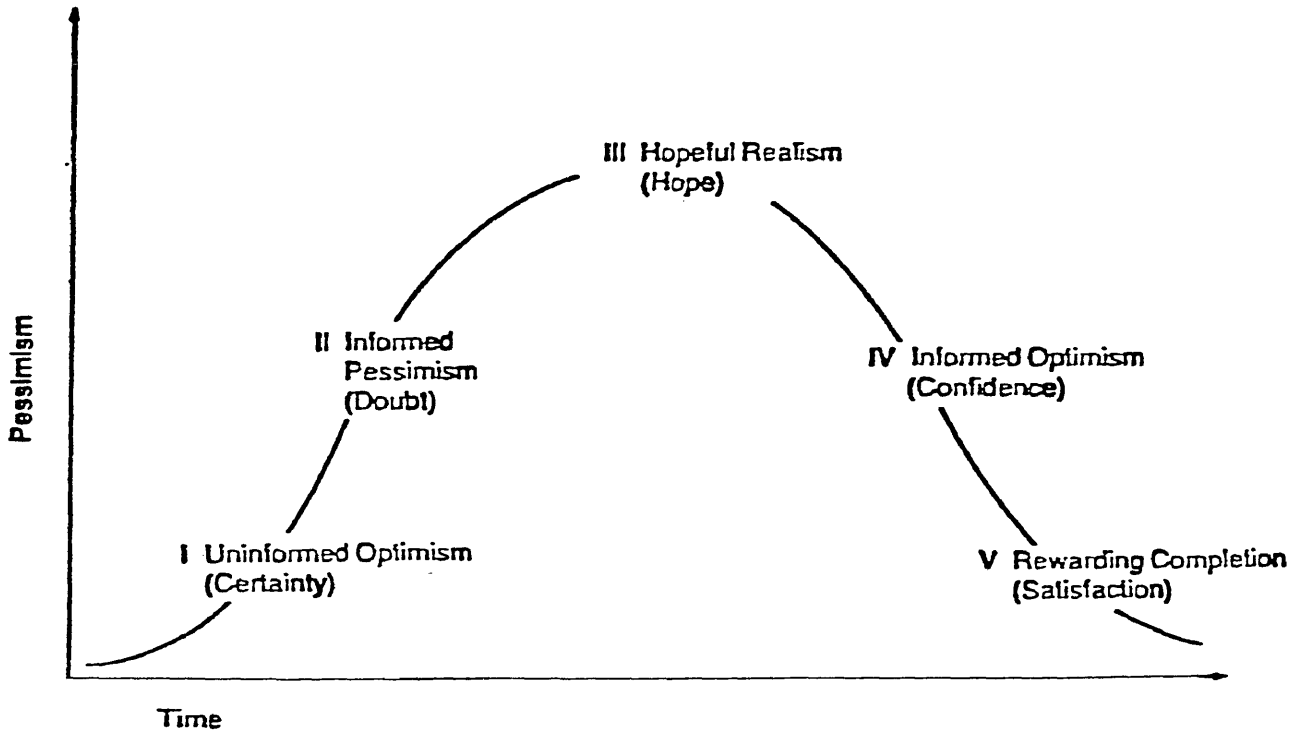


Figure 1. The Emotional Cycle of Change

## DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study included only the second through sixth graders at Sandoz Elementary School in Millard, Nebraska. Even though first graders were considered elementary students, as kindergarteners they were not exposed to a departmentalized situation with which they could make a comparison. Only second through sixth grade teachers and students who were at Sandoz during the second half of the 1979-80 school year were included in the study.

Another delimitation was the actual time in which teachers would be involved in a self-contained situation before they were surveyed. Teachers surveyed during the third quarter may not have had enough time to work out of the phase of informed pessimism. Responses might be more positive if the surveys were done in the second year after plans and curriculum had been covered completely for one school year.

There is also a concern that when answering the questions the primary students might have trouble dealing separately with the organizational pattern and their feelings for a particular teacher.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Self-contained classroom. The self-contained classroom is interpreted to be one in which the teacher is responsible for the planning and teaching of social studies, science, and health.

Departmentalization. Departmentalization refers to the practice of one teacher planning and teaching either social studies, science, or health to all classrooms at a particular grade level.

Primary Grades. In this study, the primary grades are considered to be first, second, and third grade.

Grade level meetings. Sessions between all teachers at a particular grade level and the building administrator to discuss mutual concerns.

IGE. This stands for Individually Guided Education. In this approach the students are multi-age and are served by a group of teachers. Individual instruction for the students is a major consideration.

Open classroom. The open classroom is both multi-age and multi-grade grouping where the teacher serves as a facilitator of learning for the students.

#### ORGANIZATION

Chapter I	Introduction of the Topic
Chapter II	Related Literature
Chapter III	Design of the Investigation and Procedures
Chapter IV	Analysis of the Data
Chapter V	Evaluation of the Data
Chapter VI	Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Harold G. Shane lists forty grouping plans in an article written for the book Change and Innovation. He states in his article that the listing is by no means comprehensive, but that it does serve to emphasize the many ideas that have been mentioned to personalize teaching and to recognize individual differences.<sup>1</sup> Many times, the biggest problem in an organization is understanding what different people mean with the terminology they use. Goodlad and Rehage feel that there are many terms used in education to which more than one meaning can be applied.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, ability grouping is on the upswing. According to Marian Pope Franklin, ability grouping was introduced as early as the 1920's and reached a peak in the thirties, declined in the forties and fifties and seems to be on the upswing again. In 1957-58 this upswing was noted by the NEA Research Division, when they found that 77.5 percent of school districts with 2,500 pupils or more were making some

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<sup>1</sup>Harold G. Shane, "An Annotated List of 40 Grouping Plans," Change and Innovation in Elementary and Secondary Organization (New York, N.Y.: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc., 1965), pp. 204-211.

<sup>2</sup>John I. Goodlad and Kenneth Rehage, "Unscrambling the Vocabulary of School Organization," Change and Innovation in Elementary School Organization (New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 10.

o

use of ability grouping in the elementary school.<sup>3</sup> This was seen as the beginning of the spread of the practice of ability grouping in the schools. The need to ability group in math and reading is now generally accepted and practiced by most educators.<sup>4</sup>

Another type of organizational pattern is Individually Guided Education. Individually Guided Education uses a multi-unit structure. Important in this type of organization is the practice of prescribing individual programs for students in multi-age groups. This responsibility is done through the use of teams of teachers.<sup>5</sup>

Jarolimek and Foster discuss several ways of organizing a school. They state that the open classroom concept is a means for providing creative learning opportunities for pupils.<sup>6</sup> They list multi-grade and cross-age grouping as characteristics of the open classroom. This along with the idea that the teacher is seen as a facilitator of learning. They also list in their book that the most common organizational patterns for the elementary school were

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<sup>3</sup>Marian Pope Franklin, School Organization: Theory and Practice (Chicago, Illinois: Rand McNally and Co., 1967), p. 423.

<sup>4</sup>Bruce Balow and James Curtin, "Ability Grouping of Bright Pupils," Research in Elementary School Curriculum (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 1970), p. 473.

<sup>5</sup>John Jarolimek and Clifford D. Foster, Teaching and Learning in the Elementary School (New York, N.Y.: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1976), p. 337.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 345.



departmentalization, self-contained classrooms, cooperative teaching, and team teaching.<sup>7</sup>

Goodlad and Rehage discuss the scrambled vocabulary<sup>8</sup> in their writing. They state that in reality terms like departmentalization, cooperative teaching and team teaching were descriptors of the same type of organizational pattern.

Reviewing the literature and discussing the self-contained classroom and the departmentalized classroom with teachers at the Sandoz Elementary School resulted in the following list of benefits of the self-contained classroom:

1. greater continuity in the program since the subjects science, health and social studies would be taught on a daily basis rather than rotating subjects on a two to three week basis as had been previously done in a departmentalized situation at Sandoz Elementary
2. increased flexibility for the teacher in taking advantage of the "teaching moment"
3. the teacher is in control of the time to be spent and can let the lesson being taught dictate the amount of time to be spent<sup>9</sup>
4. less movement of students (this can sometimes be disruptive)
5. more consistent and uniform behavior expectancies of students
6. more teacher control over incomplete assignments and make-up work  
teacher and students become closer and come to know one another better<sup>10</sup>
7. films and other audio-visual materials need only be ordered once and then shared by the teachers

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 338.

<sup>8</sup>Goodlad and Rehage, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>Jarolimek and Foster, op. cit., p. 339.

<sup>10</sup>Jarolimek and Foster, op. cit., p. 339.

9. greater team planning and communication will result
10. shorter blocks of time are used to keep interest level high
11. enables students to identify with small groups<sup>11</sup>

Carolyn Kleinfeldt writes that the self-contained classroom is dead, but its flexibility and spontaneity could be revitalized to offer a spirit of adventure in learning. Kleinfeldt feels that with the explosion in knowledge facing our children we can no longer separate subjects into unique disciplines.<sup>12</sup>

In a study conducted by Linda Lamme, teachers were found to exert more of an influence on their students reading habits in the self-contained situation than in a departmentalized classroom.<sup>13</sup>

Nancy Naumann found several advantages of the self-contained classroom. Among them were the ability to reinforce lessons in one subject area while study was taking place in another area. She saw the self-contained classroom as a place to use peer teaching, and a place for children to model roles that they see in their classroom. Naumann also believes that the self-contained classroom is a "microworld in which today's values are lived as well as learned. .a solid

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<sup>11</sup>Marian Pope Franklin and Frances Kennon Johnson, "The Self-Contained Classroom," School Organization: Theory and Practice (Chicago, Illinois: Rand McNally and Co., 1967), p. 189.

<sup>12</sup>Carolyn Kleinfeldt, "Eulogy for a Dead Classroom," Today's Education, January-February, 1975, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup>Linda Leonard Lamme, "Self-Contained to Departmentalized: How Reading Habits Changed," The Elementary School Journal, January, 1976, p. 217.

foundation in the basics, achieved through means as diverse as the children themselves."<sup>14</sup>

The overwhelming advantage of the departmentalized situation was seen as that of allowing the teacher greater time to prepare, and a chance to teach in his/her area of greatest expertise.<sup>15</sup>

The disadvantages of the self-contained classroom were then noted as not allowing enough time for the teacher to prepare for all subjects, and not allowing the students to see more than one teacher, especially if there was some sort of personality conflict between the two.

After reviewing the literature and discussing the disadvantages of departmentalized with teachers at the Sandoz Elementary School, the following list was compiled:

1. longer blocks of time for subjects made the class seem too long at times, as all subjects and lessons do not fit neatly into one standard time block  
at Sandoz Elementary gaps occurred in the curriculum where a child might go for six weeks and not have social studies, science or health, resulting in a loss of continuity  
some units are seasonal in nature and need to be taught to all students at a particular time rather than when they fit into the rotation of subjects at Sandoz Elementary

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<sup>14</sup>Nancy Naumann, "Three Cheers for the Self-Contained Classroom," Teacher, September 1977, pp. 87-89.

<sup>15</sup>Jarolimek and Foster, op. cit., p. 339.

educational television programs have little relevance to those students who have not yet covered the units (when the children are a part of the rotation schedule used at Sandoz Elementary)

- . less control over incomplete assignments and make-up work
- 6. less contact with a particular group of students who don't really get to know each other

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN OF THE INVESTIGATION AND PROCEDURES

Attitudes of teachers and students were determined through the use of questionnaires. Sample questionnaires are located in the appendices.

The first step was to select a random sample of students in the second through sixth grades. To determine the random sample of students, each teacher in grades two through six was asked to identify three boys and three girls from their reading group. This was done by having each teacher select the name of every third boy and girl as listed in their grade book until a total of three each was reached. Only students in grades two through six who attended the Sandoz Elementary School the second semester of the 1979-80 school year were identified for the sample. Therefore, an equal stratified sample was selected according to sex and ability of students in each room. Ability was considered to be high, average, and low as determined by placement in reading groups. Each grade level had three boys and three girls from each of the three ability groups making up the total number of eighteen in each grade level. With five different grade levels being assessed, the total number of students involved in the sampling was ninety.

The next step was to develop a survey instrument to assess the attitudes of students toward the present organizational structure and the benefits attributed to the self-contained classroom.

The student attitude surveys were administered to students individually in the principal's office during the three week period between March 2, 1981, and March 20, 1981. Students surveyed were asked to come to the principal's office during their music or physical education class. Extreme care was taken to make each student feel at ease and relaxed. Students were told that they had been randomly selected to participate in a study which would help with future planning at Sandoz Elementary School. During each interview, steps were taken to not bias certain answers over others. Students were told that they would be asked eight questions. They were to answer questions honestly based on how they felt. They were told that there were no right or wrong answers and that the principal did not care how they answered each question. After this introduction with each student, the principal read the questions aloud and marked the survey form as each student responded. Any comments or explanation offered by the students were recorded on the survey form. Each student interview took approximately eight minutes. Most of the students surveyed answered immediately and without hesitation or delay, which indicated their understanding of the question. Very few students asked for questions to be repeated or for further explanation.

A survey was also developed to assess the attitude of teachers toward the present organizational structure and the benefits attributed to the self-contained classroom. All teachers in the second through sixth grade who taught at Sandoz Elementary School during the 1979-80

school year were involved in the survey. The total number of teachers was thirteen. The number of teachers in the study by grade level was as follows: grade two - three teachers, grade three - two teachers, grade four - three teachers, grade five - three teachers, and grade six - two teachers.

The teacher attitude surveys were completed in much the same manner as the student surveys. Each teacher came individually to the principal's office at Sandoz Elementary School to receive instructions. Here they were told that a survey was being conducted to assist in future planning and to determine teacher attitudes toward the self-contained organization pattern. Each of the twelve questions were explained to the teacher and they were encouraged to write comments to further explain their responses. Teachers were asked to answer the questions independently based on their own feelings. The teacher surveys were conducted during the same period as the student surveys.

After the collection of the information from the sampling, tables were then developed to show the findings. The data were analyzed to see if sex or ability of the student had a positive or negative effect on feelings the child had about the self-contained classroom. Another area that was looked at closely was that of grade level placement and its effect on student's feelings about the self-contained classroom. Grade level placement of teachers, along with the number of years of teaching experience, was considered in order to determine if either of these two factors had an effect on teacher attitude toward the self-contained classroom.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the change from a departmentalized classroom organization to a self-contained organization would affect teacher and student attitudes in a positive or negative way. To determine the effect as to whether it was a positive or negative one, surveys were used. In this chapter the results of the surveys will be analyzed.

There will be four major areas of concern in presenting the materials from the surveys. One area will be how grade level and years of experience affect teacher's feelings towards the self-contained classroom. This chapter will also consider how teachers felt about individual questions on the survey. Another area that will be studied will be the data collected from surveying the students. Did grade level, or ability in reading, or sex of the student affect their feelings toward the self-contained classroom? The study will also look at four major areas and see how they were seen to be affected by the self-contained classroom. These areas are discipline, consistency in the classroom, subject matter and maintaining a student-centered classroom. Finally, the study will consider feelings expressed by students and teachers and see if there are any parallel feelings expressed in certain areas or questions.

Table I considers teacher attitude toward the self-contained classrooms and the effect that grade level of the teacher had on



Table I  
 Teacher Attitudes Toward the  
 Self-Contained Classroom by Grade Level

Grade Level	Attitude Level
2	2.0
	2.4
	1.8
	3.0
6	3.1

attitude. The Teacher Attitude Survey listed five feeling values for teachers to choose. These were Very Positively, Positively, No Change, Negatively, and Very Negatively. To determine a grade level feeling about attitude, the value choices were each assigned a number. Very Positively was given the number 1, Positively the number 2, No Change the number 3, Negatively the number 4 and Very Negatively the number 5. The totals were then added for the questions and an average was found.

The results are summarized in Table I, showing that grades two and three felt Positively towards the self-contained classroom, grade four between Positively and Very Positively, and grades five and six felt that there was No Change between the self-contained classroom and departmentalized classroom.

To see if teacher experience had an effect on how teachers felt about the self-contained classroom versus departmentalization, the

overall survey was considered by grouping teachers into three groups. These groups were selected according to the number of years of classroom teaching experience. These were one to five years of experience in one group, six to ten years in another, and over ten years of experience in the third group. In this grouping, the teachers with over ten years of experience felt more positive towards the self-contained classroom, followed by those with six to ten years, and the least positive were teachers with one to five years of experience. The results are summarized in Table II as follows:

Table II

Teacher Attitude Toward the Self-Contained Classroom  
Based on Years of Experience in the Classroom

Years of Experience	Attitude Value
1 - 5	2.7
6 - 10	2.6
over 10	2.1

The teachers felt the most positive about the self-contained classroom in three areas. These areas were: flexibility, behavior standards and follow through on students. The question where the self-contained room rated negatively was that of teacher preparation.

Program continuity, student movement, teacher-student relationships, and team planning rated only somewhat positively. The teachers saw very little change from the organizational pattern on media

utilization, student interest, and on how this year affected their willingness to try the self-contained situation again.

The results of teacher feelings by question are summarized in Table III.

Table III

Teacher Attitude Toward the Self-Contained Classroom  
According to Questions on the Teacher Attitude Survey

Question	Attitude Value
Program continuity	2.3
Flexibility	1.9
Student movement	2.2
Behavior standards	2.0
Follow through on students	2.0
Teacher-student relationships	2.3
Media utilization	2.9
Team planning	2.4
Teacher preparation	3.8
Student interest	2.9
Child-centered curriculum	2.5
Try this again	2.5

The questions in the table above are listed more explicitly below:

1. Program continuity - comparing daily instruction versus rotation of instruction for a 2-3 week period.

- . Teaching flexibility - allowing for the "teaching moment" and letting the lesson dictate the time spent rather than letting the time schedule dictate the length of the lesson.
- }. Movement of students from one classroom to another.
- . Setting and maintaining consistent behavior standards for students.
- . The ability to follow through on student problems and concerns (discipline, late or incomplete assignments, make-up work, peer problems).
- . Teacher - student relationships.
- . Media utilization (includes ITV programs, filmstrips, and tapes).
8. Team planning and communication.
9. Individual teacher preparation (preparing for three subjects instead of one).
10. Maintaining student interest in school subjects.
11. The ability to strive for a child-centered curriculum rather than a content-oriented one.
2. My wanting to try the same arrangement again next year before making a final decision on the present organizational pattern.

In the student survey the questions were asked of ninety students. They were to respond whether they preferred last year's departmentalized situation over this year's self-contained classroom. The student surveys contained eight questions that would guide the

student's thinking in determining their attitude towards the self-contained classroom. In five of the eight questions the majority of students preferred this year's self-contained classroom over last year's departmentalized classroom. In two of the questions the results were even, and in one question the students preferred last year's situation over this year's.

In Table IV the student's feelings toward the self-contained classroom are labeled as "this year". Their feelings toward the departmentalized situation are under the heading of "last year". The questions have been shorted and paraphrased for table display. The entire question can be found immediately following the table.

Table IV

Attitudes Toward the Self-Contained Classroom as Indicated by  
Students Based on Questions in the Student Attitude Survey

Question	This Year	Last Year
Two week rotation versus all subjects every day	66	24
Switching classrooms versus staying in the same room	67	23
Different teachers versus the same teacher	54	36
Best behavior	72	18
Most learning taking place	45	45
Feeling good about themselves	54	36
Most interesting classes	30	60
Which type of organization to try for next year	45	45

The answers to the questions used in Table IV, V, and VI are listed more explicitly below:

Last Year	This Year
I had social studies for 2 weeks, science for 2 weeks and then health for 2 weeks.	I have social studies, science and health every day.
. I switched classrooms for social studies, science and health.	I stay in the same classroom for social studies, science and health.
. I had different teachers for social studies, science and health.	I have the same teacher for social studies, science and health.
I behaved better in school with a different teacher for social studies, science and health.	I behave better in school with the same teacher for social studies, science and health.
I learned more with a different teacher for social studies, science and health.	I learned more with the same teacher for social studies, science and health.

Last Year

- . It makes me feel good to have three different teachers for social studies, science and health.
- . My classes were more interesting when I had three different teachers for social studies, science and health.
- . Next year I would like to have three different teachers for social studies, science and health.

This Year

- It makes me feel good to have the same teacher for social studies, science and health.
- My classes are more interesting with the same teacher for social studies, science and health.
- Next year I would like to have one teacher for social studies, science and health.

By looking at the question summaries found in Table IV, the students felt especially strong about the idea of their behavior being more positive in the self-contained classroom. To a somewhat lesser degree, but still by more than twice the amount, they felt more positive about having social studies, science and health every day, rather than on a two week rotating basis. They also preferred to be in the same classroom all day rather than switching for social studies, science and health.

The area that students rated lowest for the self-contained classroom was that of having interesting classes. According to

Table IV, only one-third of the students felt that their classes were more interesting when they were self-contained than the year before when they had been departmentalized.

The other four questions were really too close to see any great preference for one type of organizational pattern over another.

In looking closer at the questions asked of the students, no great difference was seen in the way girls answered questions in comparison to the way they were answered by the boys.

When looking at how ability group affected the way students answered the questions there was no real difference except in a few of the questions. In the questions dealing with the amount learned, and feeling good about themselves in the situation the students in the low group preferred the self-contained situation in which they were in this year. Also, a greater number of students in the low ability group felt that the self-contained classroom made school more interesting. These results are summarized in Table V.

When examining the results of Table VI by grade level, the primary students rated the self-contained classroom they experienced this year much higher than the departmentalized classroom of last year. However, in grades four, five, and six we see a different situation. The fourth grade students rated this year's self-contained classroom much higher than last year's, while the fifth and sixth graders rated last year's departmentalized classroom the higher of the two. The results by grade level are summarized in Table VI.



Table V

Attitudes of Students by Ability Group Toward  
the Self-Contained Classroom

Question	This Year	Last Year
Two week rotation versus all subjects every day	high 22	high 8
	middle 20	middle 10
	low 24	low 6
Switching classrooms versus staying in the same room	high 22	high 8
	middle 21	middle 9
	low 24	low 6
Different teachers versus the same teacher	high 17	high 13
	middle 14	middle 16
	low 23	low 7
Best behavior	high 28	high 2
	middle 20	middle 10
	low 24	low 6
Most learning taking place	high 13	high 17
	middle 11	middle 19
	low 21	low 9
Feeling good about themselves	high 18	high 12
	middle 12	middle 18
	low 24	low 6
Most interesting classes	high 11	high 19
	middle 4	middle 26
	low 15	low 15
Which type of organization to try for next year	high 17	high 13
	middle 10	middle 20
	low 18	low 12

Table VI  
Attitudes of Students by Grade Level Toward  
the Self-Contained Classroom

Grade Level	This Year	Last Year
2	99 students	45 students
	97 students	47 students
	104 students	40 students
	66 students	78 students
6	67 students	77 students

The questions in the survey can be grouped into four major areas for another look at how teachers felt about the self-contained classroom. The four major areas and the questions they would include are:

Discipline - behavior standards, follow through on students

Consistency - student movement, program continuity, flexibility

Subject matter - team planning, teacher preparation, media  
utilization

Student-centered - teacher-student relationships, child-  
centered curriculum, student interest

In these four areas the teachers rated discipline and consistency positively in the self-contained classroom. They felt that there was no change in the move to the self-contained classroom in the subject matter area and making the class student-centered. These

results are summarized in Table VII.

Table VII

Attitudes of Teachers Toward the Self-Contained Classroom in the  
Areas of Discipline, Consistency, Subject Matter and  
Student-Centered Curriculum

---

Four major areas	Feeling Value
Discipline	2.0
Consistency	2.1
Subject matter	3.0
Student-centered curriculum	2.6

---

The one area seen both by students and teachers as a positive aspect of the self-contained classroom was that of behavior standards. The one area that they both saw as a weakness of the self-contained classroom was that of student interest. Table VIII shows areas that the students and teachers picked out as weaknesses and strengths in the self-contained classroom.

All areas listed as strengths in Table VIII by both students and teachers were areas that were pointed out in the review of the literature. Media utilization was thought to be an advantage in the review of the literature, but it was seen as a weakness by teachers.

Teacher preparation was listed as a disadvantage of the self-contained classroom in the review of the literature and was also considered to be a weakness by the teachers. One area that

Table VIII  
 Areas Seen by Students and Teachers as Strengths and  
 Weaknesses in the Self-Contained Classroom

	Strengths	Weaknesses
students	behavior standards having class every day being in the same class every day	interesting classes
teachers	flexibility behavior standards follow through with students	media utilization student interest teacher preparation

surfaced as a weakness in the self-contained classroom as indicated by both teachers and students was that of maintaining student interest. In the review of the literature one advantage listed for the self-contained classroom was the ability to keep interest high because shorter blocks of time could be used.

## CHAPTER V

### EVALUATION OF THE DATA

When evaluating the data, several areas will be highlighted. One area will be the effect the self-contained classroom has on teacher attitude, and if there is any comparison or parallel between teacher attitude and the effect the self-contained classroom has on student attitude. Another area will be the effect that the self-contained classroom has on student attitude, discipline, and consistency in dealing with students. The study will also look at the ability to maintain a student-centered curriculum and whether or not the self-contained classroom has an effect on this. Suggestions will be offered to help principals when implementing such an organizational pattern as the self-contained classroom in their school, along with suggestions for further study.

When looking at teacher attitude toward the self-contained classroom, feelings seemed to fall into two categories. Second through fourth grade teachers felt that students need one teacher to identify with and that the self-contained classroom was actually best for kids. At these grade levels it is also easier for teachers to deal with the subject matter, which is not as complex as it becomes at the fifth and sixth grade levels. Fifth and sixth grade teachers have a much more complex curriculum to deal with and it seems very logical that the difficulty of the curriculum would have a negative effect on the willingness of teachers to work in a self-contained classroom. Fifth

and sixth grade teachers also felt that it was important to departmentalize in order to help their students get ready for junior high school.

An interesting comparison that surfaced in the surveys was that teachers with ten years of experience or more tended to look more positively upon the self-contained classroom. There are many possible explanations for this. Ten years ago much of the teaching in the Millard, Nebraska school district was done in a self-contained classroom. So this, in fact, may be a return to something with which these teachers are already familiar. These teachers in their ten or more years of experience probably have taught science, health, and social studies at one time or another. However, teachers with fewer years of experience, especially those under five, may have had a chance to teach only one of these subjects. So this becomes more of a learning experience for them. Not only is the organizational pattern a new one, but much of the curriculum becomes new, also. The less experienced teacher is still becoming better acquainted with the reading and math program, which is still a concern to them, whereas the more experienced teacher had had time to sort out their concerns with math and reading. The experienced teacher can devote more time and thought to all subjects they would find in a self-contained classroom.

The more experienced teachers may feel more secure in their teaching. The "new" experience in a self-contained classroom may not be seen as such a big change, or as such an enormous threat to them and the type of teaching they might be doing before the change. As a

teacher moves through his/her career there would appear to be a cycle one goes through. A new teacher is most concerned with routines and schedules, knowing the curriculum, and knowing what the principal expects of him/her and how well they are meeting those expectations. Until a teacher has dealt with these concerns in a manner that is satisfactory to him/her, the teacher cannot deal with the concerns of children and what is best for them. The very real possibility exists that a teacher may not be able to deal with what is best for children until they have established themselves in the areas mentioned previously. That might account for the ten year teachers reacting more positively to the self-contained classroom.

Teachers had many interesting comments to make concerning certain aspects of the self-contained classroom. These, in many cases serve as important information for a building principal to take into account when contemplating a change in the organizational pattern in his/her building. Teachers felt very strongly that the self-contained classroom allowed them to be much more flexible in their teaching. They were able to let the lesson dictate the amount of time spent rather than the pre-established time schedule. They also felt that there was much more sharing of teacher ideas and materials, when all three at a grade level were able to corroborate on each subject.

Teachers also felt very strongly that behavior standards were easier to set and maintain. This would be due to the fact that routines would be easier to set and follow and there would be less change in expectations held for children. The one area that could be a problem

in the self-contained classroom would be if a teacher and student develop a personality conflict. In this case they would be spending more time together, and as a result this could become a very serious problem. Here, the building administrator would have to be aware of the problem and be willing to deal with the problem in a positive manner.

Another strong point for the self-contained classroom in the area of behavior standards is that teachers do not have to establish themselves with each group of students as they change classes. If a teacher sees one group of students for social studies, health and science, they can establish their discipline one time and spend the rest of the time actually teaching and working with the students. When groups of students rotate with the teacher for the subjects of health, science and social studies, each time the teacher sees a new group he/she would have to re-establish discipline and behavior standards for that class period.

Another area that would be aided by the self-contained classroom would be that of the teacher's ability to follow through on make-up work or on discipline. It would be much easier for the teacher if he/she had those students for a whole day or at least a longer period of time. They would also have fewer students and they could become more familiar with their needs and how to best assist their children.

Teachers, also, saw team planning as a benefit derived from the self-contained classroom. They could profit from the strengths of their team members. They were able to integrate subject areas



easier, and even felt better about their ability to plan for the different ability levels of their students. However, teachers did find that planning time is a real problem.

Program continuity was also seen as a benefit of the self-contained classroom. Teachers remarked that they had to spend less time reviewing, as opposed to their rotation schedule where every subject was not taught every week. This would also allow a smoother transition to occur from unit to unit.

Another positive result of the self-contained classroom was the fact that teachers felt they knew the whole child better. This would enable them to conference with parents and provide information for parents on a much broader range. Teachers would, also, be able to notice a trend in the child's behavior, either in discipline or in the subject matter areas. This would probably be easier to detect when one teacher is with a child for a longer period of time.

As predicted from the review of the literature, teacher preparation was viewed as a negative part of this year's change to the self-contained classroom. This was most evident in the fifth and sixth grades. Teachers feel more insecure with the increasing difficulty of the curriculum in these grade levels. It becomes much harder to prepare for all three areas. Teachers also become more concerned about providing for gifted children who have an interest level much higher than fifth or sixth grade.

However, several teachers remarked that it would become much easier to do this with each added year of experience in the self-contained

classroom. They, also, remarked that it involved much more work, but it did give them a better understanding of the curriculum.

Scheduling also became a major problem in the self-contained classroom. Media use was a concern of teachers. Another concern was that of having enough textbooks for all the students to use, now that they were not changing for classes. One teacher was no longer the only one to use science books, or the only one to see the social studies film, or use the health materials. In this case the building principal and teachers must recognize the problems for what they really are. They must see that these are procedural problems rather than ones that deal with the organizational pattern or the curricular materials. The building principal must be a strong and positive influence in helping teachers to deal with these concerns. There must, also, be a willingness on the part of the building principal to provide more materials when this becomes necessary. One of the advantages of the departmentalized classroom is that it uses a lesser amount of textual materials. So when the change is made to a self-contained classroom, the principal must be willing to provide the materials so the organizational pattern is not seen by teachers only in reference to the teaching materials that they have available to them.

There was no great difference in the way boys or girls saw the change to the self-contained classroom. The only notable difference in the ability group to which the child belonged and its effect on the child's attitude was in one area. The children in the low ability group preferred the self-contained classroom. This type of classroom would be

less confusing due to only one teacher and no movement from class to class. The students in the low ability group remarked that they liked having the same teacher and being able to keep their belongings in one place.

Students in grades two through four felt more positive towards the self-contained classroom than did the children in grades five and six. This would quite probably be due to the need for younger students to identify with one teacher. Older students remarked that they liked having different teachers because they each knew more about one of the different subjects. They wanted their teachers to specialize more in the particular subject they were teaching. The fifth and sixth grade students probably felt more secure in moving from teacher to teacher, this probably was more what they expected junior high school to be like.

Students definitely felt that they behaved better when they were in a self-contained classroom. They remarked that having each subject every day made the classes easier to remember and provided more variety. One student even remarked that on the rotation basis of the year before he had to wait longer for his favorite subject to be taught.

It was very interesting to note that both teachers and students felt that the self-contained classroom had a positive effect on behavior. Over and over again in methods courses, teachers are told to set standards for students and then be consistent. In a self-contained classroom the teacher can set the standards and the students should know what is expected of them. The teacher would also be able to follow through on these standards and to follow up on any disciplinary action

that needed to be taken.

The area that was rated the weakest by students and seen in part to be this way by teachers, too, was that of student interest. It could very well be that teacher preparation could affect the time that teachers have to make lessons interesting for children. It would be much harder to prepare large and involved projects in three subjects. It is also quite possible that hearing three different teachers present the three different subjects would add to the interest level of the students.

In implementing a change, such as this, there are several things of which the building principal needs to be aware. The biggest help for the building principal would be for him/her to be aware of the cycle of change that teachers go through. When the project is first initiated, teachers will be anxious and frustrated. They will be tremendously concerned about the amount of work this will require. The principal must be aware of this frustration and provide help and support for teachers while they are first going through this change. Teachers will need at least a semester before they start to look at and see any advantages. As the year progressed, teacher attitudes toward the self-contained classroom become more positive.

The building principal needs to look at strengths and weaknesses of the teachers. There may need to be some grade level changes to make better use of strengths that teachers possess.

It is important that teachers be given help and guidance in working through problems that will arise. They will need to be shown the difference between procedural problems and ones that result from the

curriculum or the organizational pattern. Adequate planning time will have to be provided for teachers in the self-contained classroom. New ways to provide planning time will have to be explored. The principal will need to make adequate provision for textual and audio-visual materials. Teachers will need inservice help in subject areas where they feel weak.

The principal will have to assist teachers as they work within the time guidelines for each subject provided by the state. It will be important to help find ways to schedule subjects in a crowded day.

It would be interesting to follow up on these teachers at Sandoz Elementary School in Millard, Nebraska and see if their feelings become more positive in the second or third years, as some of them thought that they might. Another area that would merit further study would be to see if there is, in fact, a cycle that a teacher goes through in his/her career. If there is a cycle, how could this be used to help in inservicing teachers and preparing them to work with students? Is there a change in the attitude of teachers after ten or more years as was suggested in the data collected on teachers at Sandoz Elementary? Is there a certain type of teacher who prefers the self-contained classroom over the departmentalized classroom? If so, what qualities does the teacher preferring each type of organizational pattern possess? How would teachers who have tried the self-contained classroom in science, health, and social studies feel about a totally self-contained classroom, with no ability grouping for reading and math? Finally, does the teacher's attitude towards the self-contained classroom have an

effect on the attitude that students have with regard to the self-contained classroom?

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine if the organizational pattern of Sandoz Elementary School in Millard, Nebraska, would have an effect on the attitude of teachers and students, and if this effect would be a positive or negative one.

After researching the literature it was decided to list the advantages and disadvantages of two methods of organization. These two were identified as self-contained and departmentalized organization. The teachers at the Sandoz Elementary School had departmentalized classrooms during the 1979-80 school year for the subjects of science, health, and social studies. During the 1980-81 school year they taught these subjects in a self-contained classroom.

When looking at the self-contained classroom the following advantages were cited in the literature:

1. greater continuity in the program
2. increased flexibility
3. the teacher is in control of time spent on the lesson
4. less movement of students
5. more consistent behavior standards
6. more teacher control over incomplete assignments
7. teachers and students know each other better

8. sharing of audio visual materials
9. greater team planning
10. shorter blocks of time will keep interest higher
11. enables students to identify with smaller groups

To determine if there would be a change in attitude in teachers or students, surveys were used. Teachers and students were surveyed only if they had taught at or attended Sandoz Elementary School during the second half of the 1979-80 school year. The surveys were designed to assess attitude in the eleven areas listed as advantages of the self-contained classroom. Students and teachers were surveyed individually by the principal at Sandoz Elementary School. These surveys were completed during the period between March 2, 1981 and March 20, 1981.

#### CONCLUSIONS

1. Second through fourth grade teachers felt positively about the change to the self-contained classroom. Fifth and sixth grade teachers saw no real change between the self-contained classroom and departmentalized classroom.
2. Teachers felt very positive about the effect that the self-contained classroom had on flexibility, behavior standards and their ability to follow through on students.
3. Teachers felt that the self-contained classroom had a negative effect when looking at the amount of preparation required to teach the content of science, health, and social studies.



- . Media utilization and student interest had no positive or negative effect on teacher attitude towards the self-contained classroom.
  - i. Program continuity, student movement, teacher-student relationships, team planning, and maintaining a child-centered curriculum were seen to have been affected positively by the self-contained classroom.
  - . Teachers with ten or more years of teaching experience felt most positive towards the self-contained situation. Teachers with five or less years of teaching experience felt the least positive. Teacher preparation was the only area in which the self-contained classroom had a negative effect on teacher attitude. This agreed with material found when reviewing the literature, and was also seen as a concern by teachers when the change to the self-contained classroom was first discussed with teachers at Sandoz Elementary School.
8. Students felt positively towards the self-contained classroom in the following areas:
- having each subject every day
  - . staying in the same classroom
  - . having the same teacher
  - d. behavior standards
  - . feeling good about themselves in the classroom
9. Negative feeling was expressed only in the area of which classroom provided the most interesting classes. Students, overwhelmingly, felt that classes were more interesting in the departmentalized classroom.

10. Students and teachers agreed that the strongest area that appeared in the self-contained classroom was maintaining behavior standards. To some extent, they also agreed that classes were not as interesting in the self-contained classroom as compared to classes that were departmentalized.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Based on the findings it is strongly recommended to continue the use of the self-contained classroom as the organizational pattern for second through fourth grades. Before a decision is made in fifth and sixth grades, discussion should be held with individual teachers at these grade levels. The findings should be shared with these individuals and a decision based upon that discussion should be made.
2. Discussions should be held with all teachers to find ways to provide more planning time when all teachers at a grade level could work together.

The principal at the Sandoz Elementary School will need to examine, along with teachers, ways to eliminate some of the problems that were seen with the usage of media and an insufficient number of textbooks.

Ways will need to be provided to work around scheduling and time problems seen with health, and with matching time requirements with guidelines set by the state of Nebraska.

- . The teachers and the principal at the Sandoz Elementary School should look for ways to help teachers develop their expertise in subject areas where teachers feel a desire to become better prepared.
5. Ways must be found to manage the large amounts of information that is necessary when dealing with so many curriculum areas.  
Teachers should have a chance to share in the information provided by the surveys. They should be able to discuss solutions they found to problems, mutual concerns they might find that they share, and ways to improve their teaching in the self-contained classroom as they begin their second year of teaching.

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APPENDIX A

## TEACHER ATTITUDE SURVEY

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of Years Teaching \_\_\_\_\_

To aid in assessing teacher attitude towards the change in the organizational pattern at Sandoz Elementary and to assist in future planning, please rate the following statements based upon your personal feelings. Any comments will be appreciated.

To what extent has changing the organizational pattern from departmentalized to self-contained had an effect on:

Very Posi- tively	Posi- tively	No Change	Nega- tively	Very Nega- tively
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- Program Continuity - comparing daily instruction versus rotation of instruction for a 2-3 week period.

Comments:

- Teaching Flexibility - allowing for the "teaching moment" and letting the time spent rather than letting the time schedule dictate the length of the lesson.

Comments:



TEACHER ATTITUDE SURVEY (Continued)

Very Posi- tively	Posi- tively	No Change	Nega- tively	Very Nega- tively
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- . Movement of Students from one classroom to another

Comments:

- . Setting and Maintaining consistent behavior standards for students.

Comments:

- . The ability to follow through on student problems and concerns (disciplin , late or incomplete assignments, make-up work, peer problems).

Comments:

- . Teacher-student relationships

Comments:

Media utilization (includes ITV programs, filmstrips, and tapes).

Comments:

TEACHER ATTITUDE SURVEY (Continued)

Very Posi- tively	Posi- tively	No Change	Nega- tively	Very Nega- tively
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8. Team planning and communication

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Individual teacher preparation (preparing for 3 subjects instead of 1).

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Maintaining student interest in school subjects.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

11. The ability to strive for a child-centered curriculum rather than a content-oriented one.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

12. My wanting to try the same arrangement again next year before making a final decision on the present organizational pattern.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B







SANDOZ STUDENT ATTITUDE SURVEY

These sentences are to help you think about the way your Social Studies, Science, and Health classes were in \_\_\_\_\_ grade compared with the way they are in \_\_\_\_\_ grade.

Below are two columns which show how we taught Social Studies, Science, and Health last year and how we are teaching them this year. Put an X in the happy face in the column which you like best.

Last Year

This Year

<p>I had Social Studies for 2 weeks, Science for 2 weeks and then Health for 2 weeks</p> 	<p>I have Social Studies, Science, and Health every day.</p> 
<p>I switched classrooms for Social Studies, Science, and Health.</p> 	<p>I stay in the same classroom for Social Studies, Science, and Health.</p> 
<p>I had different teachers for Social Studies, Science, and Health.</p> 	<p>I have the same teacher for Social Studies, Science, and Health.</p> 

Last Year

This Year

I behaved better in school with a different teacher for Social Studies, Science, and Health.



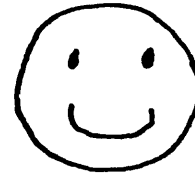
I behave better in school with the same teacher for Social Studies, Science, and Health.



I learned more with a different teacher for Social Studies, Science, and Health.



I learned more with the same teacher for Social Studies, Science, and Health.



It makes me feel good to have three different teachers for Social Studies, Science, and Health.



It makes me feel good to have the same teacher for Social Studies, Science, and Health.



My classes were more interesting when I had three different teachers for Social Studies, Science, and Health.



My classes are more interesting with the same teacher for Social Studies, Science, and Health.



Last Year

This Year

Next year I would like to have three different teachers for Social Studies, Science, and Health.



Next year I would like to have one teacher for Social Studies, Science, and Health.

