

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACTS OF COMBINED CLASSES ON
ELEMENTARY MUSIC EDUCATION

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC EDUCATION

By

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Norman, Oklahoma

2018

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACTS OF COMBINED CLASSES ON
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A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Casey Gerber for his guidance and encouragement throughout my master's studies. His calm presence and support throughout the process of completing this thesis are greatly appreciated. Thank you for challenging me to get outside of my comfort zone. Thanks to Dr. Christopher Baumgartner for his expertise on all things quantitative and for his coaching throughout this process. Thank you to Dr. Damin Spritzer for serving on my committee and for her positivity and encouragement.

Thank you to my previous professor, Dr. Charles Ciorba, for sharing his enthusiasm for research and for planting the seed. Thank you to my family and friends for their patience and support throughout the chaos and overwhelm of the past two years. I could not have accomplished this task without the support and unwavering love of my village.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impacts of combined classes on elementary general music education as well as to gather information about how music educators teaching combined classes in elementary general music were adapting instructional techniques and strategies to successfully deliver instruction and achieve curricular goals in combined classes. To this end, two Oklahoma elementary music teachers from different districts were purposefully selected by their responses to an initial survey to participate in interviews and classroom observations. Over the course of the study, data were gathered through interviews that provided insight into the challenges faced by music educators teaching combined classes and what techniques and strategies they used to be successful with large numbers of students. Classroom observations were conducted to gather additional data on instructional techniques and strategies as well as modifications made to activities to compensate for the effects of combined classes in the elementary general music classroom.

Considering the impacts of combined classes on elementary general music education, the challenges these impacts present in instruction, and the findings of previous studies in class size, single classes with smaller numbers of students are better for student achievement in the music classroom than combined classes with larger numbers of students and should be advocated for whenever possible. However, many factors, such as budget, school population growth, scheduling, and resources, necessitate the combining of homeroom classes for music and other special subject area instruction. Both teachers in this study felt confident in their ability to positively affect student growth and achievement in their combined class settings. Though different in

personality and instructional delivery, each teacher had effective classroom management and control in the classroom. Students in both cases were engaged throughout their lessons and showed evidence of conceptual mastery. Strategies compiled from the cases in this study have been presented for teachers to consider when faced with combined classes in elementary general music education to successfully deliver instruction and achieve curricular goals in combined class settings and settings in which circumstances present other non-traditional challenges.

Considering the challenges faced by music educators in combined classes and the modifications to instructional activities and strategies needed to achieve success in such settings, it is recommended that music teacher preparation programs should seek to intentionally provide pre-service teachers with field experiences in music programs with large, combined classes. Due to the frequent variations in circumstances such as (a) class size and composition, (b) frequency and duration of music instruction, (c) physical space constraints, and (d) materials and instruments available, it would benefit pre-service teachers to have field experiences in a wide variety of music programs to prepare them for whatever circumstances they may encounter in their future teaching positions.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

In recent years, budget cuts have become commonplace for public education. When tax revenues fail and economies falter, school administrators often face difficult decisions about how to allocate their limited funds. Cuts in teacher positions, even as enrollments increase, create growing class sizes for classroom teachers as well as music teachers. In addition, attempts by schools to absorb cuts in their funding have often resulted in calls for cuts in fine arts education. The costs from unfunded mandates of the now defunct No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 put music in an even more precarious position (Gerrity, 2009; Abril & Gault, 2008). To account for increasing costs and decreasing budgets, elementary schools often combine more than one classroom for special subject classes such as music and physical education (Hastie, Sanders, & Rowland, 1999). These large combined classes increase behavior issues and safety concerns while effectively decreasing instructional time and teacher interactions with individual students, resulting in a negative impact on instruction and achievement in the elementary music classroom. In addition, elementary music teachers often find themselves without adequate supplies when facing the reality of teaching combined classes, and they struggle to use effective teaching methods not necessarily suited to the unique challenges of combined classes.

Given these realities and the unlikelihood of a reversal in the suspected trend of combining classes for general music instruction, elementary music educators are in need of increased training and effective teaching and classroom management strategies devised specifically to meet the needs of large and combined class sizes. As a result,

they may better achieve curricular goals and support student learning in combined music classrooms. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to exploring background information and isolating issues pertinent to the study of combining classes and its effects on instruction in the elementary general music classroom.

Impactful Federal Legislation

No Child Left Behind Act (2002). In 1994, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act passed by the United States Congress included music and other arts as core subjects, equal in importance to mathematics, reading, science, and social studies. As a result, content standards were established for the arts disciplines and efforts were made to align curriculum and assessments with these standards (Gerrity, 2009). However, while the following Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), renamed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) and passed by Congress in 2001, continued to include music and other arts as core subjects in a well-rounded education, district assessment and accountability measures under this law were limited to reading, mathematics, and science. Concerned about sanctions for not meeting established standards in these “core” subjects, schools began diverting resources away from the arts and other subjects not included in accountability measures (Gerrity, 2009). These cuts in funding, instructional time, and staffing led many schools to eliminate parts of or entire arts programs, resulting in overloaded schedules for the remaining teachers (Music for All Foundation, 2004).

The high-stakes testing measures included in NCLB (2002) and the penalties levied against schools not meeting accountability requirements mandated by the law negatively impacted music programs in their instructional time, funding, curricular

offerings, and student participation in music (Heffner, 2007). Music and the arts were rarely included in mandated state accountability tests, and administrators were more likely to divert funds and other resources to subjects that play a role in school accountability before those that do not. As a result, music programs suffered budget cuts, loss of teaching positions, reduced music offerings, and loss of instructional time in favor of test preparation and remedial instruction (Heffner, 2007).

Members of the educational community in Oklahoma appeared to hold favorable views regarding the value of music as a core subject in education, however, when asked about its importance in relation to “core” subjects such as mathematics, reading, and science, music was consistently ranked as being of lesser importance by non-music teachers (Ciorba & Siebert, 2012). This inequality was also reflected in a survey of Ohio principals that revealed 93% ($n = 179$) of these administrators held a favorable view towards the value of music in their schools, while 71% ($n = 179$) responded that music was not as important as the other “core” subjects (Gerrity, 2009). This discrepancy suggests why, despite valuing music in the schools, many administrators choose to divert resources away from the arts in favor of boosting achievement in mathematics, reading, and science.

Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). In December of 2015, President Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and replacing NCLB (2002) as the primary federal law authorizing federal spending to support K–12 schools. ESSA (2015) reduces the emphasis on federally mandated high-stakes testing and shifts the authority for educational accountability measures from the federal to the state level.

States may now determine their own measures of progress and how much emphasis is placed on those measures. ESSA (2015) also provides greater discretion for state and local agencies in determining educational policy, accountability measures, and funding appropriations. It does not provide additional funding but allows for existing Title I financial assistance for schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to be used for an increasing number of educational purposes including, but not limited to, professional development, school improvement, and arts education (NAfME, 2016).

The changes to federal educational policy brought about by the passage of ESSA (2015) are positive for the future of music education. While NCLB (2002) effectively narrowed the curriculum to only the academic subjects included in accountability measures, such as math and reading, ESSA (2015) promotes a “well-rounded education” that, by definition, includes music and arts education. The inclusion of music in the definition of a well-rounded education elevates it to equal importance alongside math and reading in the classroom (Darrow, 2016). The law also designates time in the music classroom as protected and strongly discourages pull-outs for remediation or test preparation during music instruction. The designation of music as an integral part of a well-rounded education allows greater flexibility for the use of federal funds to be used for music programming as well as professional development for music educators (NAfME, 2016).

While the changes found in ESSA (2015) are promising for music education, the language of the law does not designate music as a required subject, nor does it provide accountability measures in music and the arts. Music educators still bear the

responsibility to advocate for the existence and quality of their programs, but they now can do so with increased support from the law. The guidelines and provisions set forth by ESSA (2015) were designated to be implemented in totality for the 2017-2018 school year. Music education is therefore still experiencing the effects of the NCLB (2002), and it will be some time before any tangible changes to music programs as a result of the passage of ESSA (2015) can be studied and identified.

Effects of Budget Cuts on Music

Deep budget cuts often elicit a call for the elimination or reduction of fine arts programs. As a result, fewer music teachers are often made responsible for larger numbers of students. According to the Oklahoma Policy Institute, public school enrollment grew by 51,989 students from 2008-2017, while state aid funding decreased by \$179 million over that same period of time (Oklahoma Policy Institute, 2017). State appropriations to the Oklahoma State Department of Education decreased by 4.1% between the fiscal years 2009-2017 (Oklahoma Policy Institute, 2016). In a survey study regarding the impact of NCLB (2002) on music education in Ohio schools, Gerrity (2009) reported that 11% of responding schools indicated a decrease in the number of music faculty. A study of the number of music teaching positions in the central plains area including Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri between the 2009-2010 and 2011-2012 school years also reported a significant downward trend in the number of music faculty (Burrack, Payne, Bazan, & Hellman, 2014). Over the four-year period, 638 total music teaching positions were eliminated across the three states, with the greatest loss in the area of elementary general music. This trend is particularly worrisome given that elementary general music is the area of music instruction

available to the largest number of students (Burrack, Payne, Bazan, & Hellman, 2014). A survey study of perceptions from the K–12 educational community in Oklahoma acknowledged that, while the state of music education in Oklahoma was generally positive at the time of the study, it was in a precarious position as Oklahoma was then ranked 49th in per pupil spending (Ciorba & Siebert, 2012). Another recent round of deep, across-the-board budget cuts to public education occurred in early 2016 and 2017, indicating the need for additional statewide studies on the state of music education in Oklahoma.

The trend of combining homeroom classes for music classes varies widely between school districts and even between individual schools in each district. While there are often guidelines or limitations in place regarding the size of general elementary school classrooms, they rarely apply to special subject areas, allowing for these classes to grow in a way that the general classroom sizes do not. The Oklahoma School Code (2015) provides for limitations on class size by grade level and makes provisions for the use of teacher aides when classes exceed stated limits. However, these limitations specifically do not apply to “physical education and chorus, band, orchestra and similar music classes” (Oklahoma School Code, 2015). This exception creates opportunity for the increased combining of homeroom classes for music and other special subject classes. As a result, music teachers are faced with teaching multiple homeroom classes of two or more, often totaling forty students or more at a time. Some teachers are even faced with the unusual social construct of teaching one and a half homeroom classes with classrooms being split and added to other classrooms for music and other special subject instruction. Another contributing factor to

combining classes for music and other special subject classes is the elimination of additional arts programs. Without additional arts programs, classrooms must rotate between fewer special subject classes and the teachers in remaining programs become overloaded (Major, 2013).

Due to these budget cuts and reductions in staff, music classes are often larger than academic classrooms and sometimes serve combined classes. Increased class sizes result in more frequent behavior issues and unique classroom management challenges (Gordon, 2001 & 2002; Allen, 2011; Caldarella, Williams, Jolstead, & Wills, 2016). Gordon (2002) surveyed 103 practicing music educators in the Iowa public school system to investigate elements contributing to job-related stress for music teachers and the resulting manifestations of that stress. Teachers reported that discipline problems cause a moderate amount of stress. In addition, the size of their workload and the insufficient preparation time for instruction exacerbated their overall stress levels. Three of the teachers interviewed in the study indicated that their pre-service training in classroom management techniques was insufficient in preparing them for managing larger class sizes and was not transferrable to the classroom. In a study investigating the perceptions of cooperating teachers regarding elementary student music teacher preparation (Hester, 2013), ten out of twelve supervising teachers agreed that their student teachers were most lacking in their classroom management techniques. The results of the studies by Gordon (2002) and Hester (2013) suggest that teacher training programs need to increase instruction on effective classroom management techniques that are practical for larger class sizes and also that effectively transfer to the classroom setting.

In response to the challenges music teachers face with classroom management in larger classes, Caldarella, Williams, Jolstead, and Wills (2016) conducted a single-subject reversal study investigating the implementation of the Class-Wide Function-Related Intervention Teams (CW-FIT) classroom management program in an elementary music classroom in Utah. The CW-FIT program protocol grouped students into six teams. When a timer sounded, the teacher would give praise and points to the teams demonstrating appropriate classroom behaviors. At the end of class, teams meeting their goal earned a group reward, such as videos from the internet, games, or treats. Results showed that on-task behavior increased significantly during the implementation of the program, decreased when the treatment was removed—though not as low as before the study—and increased again when the treatment was re-introduced. These results suggest that the CW-FIT program had a positive effect on keeping students engaged and reducing disruptive behaviors in the music classroom. While the results were promising, more research on the effect of CW-FIT and other classroom management prescriptions in the music classroom would benefit pre-service music teachers regarding more effective instruction and classroom management. Increased teacher training in effective classroom management techniques, especially in pre-service teacher programs, could help alleviate the increased burden placed on music teachers as a result of larger class sizes.

Need for the Study

Research on the effect of combined classes on music instruction and achievement is scant. In a time when an increasing number of music teachers are being tasked with teaching combined classes, it is important to determine what effects—if

any—this classroom dynamic has on music instruction. Small class size alone does not make the difference in student achievement. It is the ability to implement more effective, student-centered teaching strategies that helps students in small classes achieve more than their counterparts in larger classes. The current reality of larger class sizes for elementary school music teachers makes it important to research and devise methods with which to teach large, combined classes effectively. Teaching methods and training appropriate for implementation in combined classes could alleviate many of the challenges and detriments of increasing numbers of students in the classroom. If combined music classes are prevalent in current elementary school structures, it would be beneficial to devise methods of teaching music better-suited to such class sizes and to train new teachers accordingly. Proper training and appropriate instructional techniques could potentially preserve and improve teacher self-efficacy, therefore preventing attrition and burnout.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impacts combining homeroom classes for music instruction in elementary school music programs has on the quality of elementary general music education. A secondary purpose was to provide explanations of what challenges teachers of large, combined classes face, and what methods teachers use to adapt their instruction to meet those challenges, effectively deliver instruction, and successfully achieve their curricular goals.

Research Questions

1. What challenges do music teachers face in combined classes?
2. What techniques and teaching strategies do elementary music teachers use to effectively deliver instruction and meet curricular goals in combined classes?

Definitions

Attrition: The exit of teachers from the teaching profession (Maughan, 2013).

Burnout: A condition that can affect individuals in the helping professions and that is associated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, and overstimulation (Hamman, Daugherty, & Mills).

Combined class: More than one homeroom class being taught in the same room during a single class period by a single teacher, includes split classes.

Elementary general music school classes: General music classes in grades K-6. Fifth and/or sixth grade will be excluded from the definition of elementary school if said grade levels are taught at a separate school building together or in addition to seventh and/or eighth grade levels in a middle school setting.

Homeroom class: A class taught by one general grade level teacher.

Special subject class: Subjects not taught by the regular classroom teacher including, but not limited to, music, physical education, and art (Maughan, 2013).

Split class: One homeroom class plus a fraction of an additional homeroom class being taught in the same room during a single class period by a single teacher.

Limitations

The study is limited in its generalizability by the inclusion of elementary general teachers only in the state of Oklahoma. The respondents were contacted through emails obtained through district websites, thus unintentionally excluding teachers whose district websites are outdated or have sophisticated filters. The survey format relies on participant honesty and perception of his or her teaching situation (i.e. self-reported data), therefore leaving responses susceptible to bias and personal opinion rather than the objective observations of a third party.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a basic knowledge of existing literature regarding how a reduction of resources for music education as a result of federal education policies has impacted music instruction in elementary schools and what effect class size has on (a) student achievement, (b) student–teacher interactions, (c) classroom management issues, and (d) teaching methods.

The No Child Left Behind Act (2002)

The effects of high-stakes testing on music education. When the now defunct No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002) was passed by Congress in 2001, it included music and the other arts as core subjects in a well-rounded education. However, district assessment and accountability measures under this law were limited to reading, mathematics, and science. Schools not meeting established standards in these “core” subjects were faced with penalties and loss of funding. Music and arts coverage on mandated accountability testing was rare, negatively impacting funding for these subjects as administrators were more likely to divert funds toward subjects that play a role in school accountability measures (Heffner, 2007). As a result, the perception of music as an important element in a well-rounded education suffered (Abril & Gault, 2006, 2008; Ciorba & Seibert, 2012; Gerrity, 2009).

Ciorba and Seibert (2012) found that perceptions of music education in the K–12 educational community in Oklahoma were generally positive across those surveyed, including administrators, music teachers, non-music teachers, and support staff. Findings revealed that, while the educational community perceived music as an important part of education, non-music teachers, administrators, and support staff did

not consider it to be as important when compared to tested academic subjects such as math, science, and reading. In a study that sought to determine the impact of NCLB (2002) on music education in the state of Ohio, Gerrity (2009) discovered a similar contradiction between educational professionals' positive views toward the value of music education and the low ranking afforded to music and other arts when compared with the more testable "core" academic subjects. Results from a national survey of elementary school principals (Abril & Gault, 2006, 2008) revealed similar findings of the negative effect on music education produced by NCLB (2002). A large percentage of principals considered certain factors of the law to have had a negative impact on their music programs through budgetary and scheduling problems, as well as the challenges of meeting standardized testing requirements (Abril & Gault, 2006). Specific responses from secondary principals included: "No Child Left Behind has devastated our Industrial Art, Music, Business and Vocational programs. The only thing that counts anymore is what is tested" (Abril & Gault, 2008, p. 76).

A reduction of resources in music education. Concerned with meeting strict accountability measures, schools often diverted resources away from the arts and towards subjects included on mandated assessments, effectively narrowing the curriculum in the public schools (Gerrity, 2009). In addition to the loss of financial resources and reduction in music staff, instructional time for music suffered. Administrators pressed to increase time in test preparation and remediation for at-risk students frequently required music teachers to devote class time to other "core" subjects, such as reading and math and pulled students from music instruction (Gerrity,

2009; Heffner, 2007). The effects of such measures have therefore been detrimental to the quality of music education

Effects of budget cuts on music education. The combined effect of the recession that negatively impacted the United States economy in 2008 and the accountability mandates of NCLB (2002) resulted in widespread school funding cuts. In a study of staffing and district funding in three midwestern states (Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri), Burrack, Payne, Bazan, and Hellman (2014) sought to identify how economic conditions impacted music education programs. Loss of music positions and significant reductions in music funding were identified. Despite these reductions, student involvement and contact time remained consistent, suggesting that the remaining music teachers were tasked with a larger workload and increased responsibilities.

Class Size Effects

Special subject classes. While numerous studies exist that investigate the effect of class size on student performance in academic subjects (e.g., Mosteller, 1995; Boyd-Zaharias & Pate-Bain, 1998; Hanushek, 1999; Finn & Achilles, 1999; Gerber, Finn, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001; Peake, 2001; McInerney, 2013), few exist regarding the effect of class size in special subject classes such as music, art, and physical education. Hastie, Sanders, and Rowland (1999) studied the effects of large class sizes on physical education classes in Alabama and found that teachers experienced negative impacts to instruction as a result of teaching classes with numbers of students equivalent to multiple homeroom classes. The teachers expressed that limited resources, insufficient budget, and space constraints with larger classes did not allow them to teach

all of the mandated standards for their curriculum. They also reported having to prioritize safety over instructional tasks and having to alter their instructional methods to accommodate larger numbers of students, negatively impacting the quality of instruction for students.

While the effects of class size have not been studied in the elementary general music classroom, a study of class size effects on group piano classes revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in individual achievement within piano classes of two, four, six, eight, or twelve beginners at various ages 4.9–19 years (Jackson, 1980). All classes were taught by the same instructor in an electronic piano laboratory and students were evaluated on fifteen basic skills. Each skill was evaluated for a specific response that was either totally correct or incorrect. Jackson (1980) indicated that these findings did not support the results of similar class size studies in general education classes and that the study was limited by its design, suggesting further research with classes of different sizes and with students at various levels of advancement was needed to yield more conclusive results.

Student achievement. Although research regarding the effects of class size on many educational factors is plentiful (e.g., Almulla, 2015; Blatchford, Bassett, & Brown, 2011; Blatchford, Edmonds, & Martin, 2003; Çakmak, 2009; Folmer-Annevelink, Doolaard, Mascareño, & Bosker, 2010; Hastie, Sanders, & Rowland, 1999), the data on the effect of class size on test scores in reading and math are inconclusive. In a study of intermediate level elementary students in third-, fourth-, and fifth-grades, no significant differences were reported in the test scores for fourth- and fifth-graders while the third-grade test scores indicated a clear benefit to participation in

smaller reading classes (McInerney, 2013). Third-grade students in South Carolina also demonstrated no significant reductions in reading and language as measured by standardized testing when in smaller classes (Peake, 2001). However, the same study found that smaller classes did help struggling students not fall further behind.

Glass and Smith (1979) performed a meta-analysis of class size research in an attempt to summarize the diverse body of findings regarding class size and student achievement. The analysts found that there was an overall strong relationship between class size and achievement that was slightly stronger in secondary grades. They contended that the relationship between small class size and increased student achievement was most clearly defined in well-controlled experimental designs and was less apparent in studies in which researchers studied classes already in existence.

In 1985, the Tennessee state legislature funded the Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) Project (1985)—a large-scale, experimental study in the effects of class size reduction—for the purpose of evaluating possible benefits of class size reduction programs (Boyd-Zaharias & Pate-Bain, 1998; Finn & Achilles, 1999; Gerber, Finn, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001; Hanushek, 1999; Mosteller, 1995). This experiment gained much publicity because of its unique experimental design and randomization—as suggested by Glass and Smith (1979) in their meta-analysis of research on class size and achievement—as well as its Lasting Benefits Study used to track the cohort of students as they progressed beyond the experimental period. Students were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions including small classes (13–17 students), regular classes (22–26 students), and regular classes with a full-time teacher aide in each participating school. The STAR Project findings

identified an advantage in all subjects for randomly assigned students placed in small classes when compared to randomly assigned students placed in regular classes and regular classes with the assistance of a teacher aide. Students in smaller classes experienced improved student achievement on yearly state standardized achievement tests (Gerber, Finn, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001). The small-class advantage persisted even after students returned to regular size classes as smaller classes early on allow students to improve engagement behaviors necessary for optimal learning (Finn & Achilles, 1999). Students who experienced small class sizes for kindergarten through third grade continued to demonstrate an academic advantage once they returned to regular size classes in fourth grade and beyond. In addition, they showed superior performance with regard to engagement behaviors such as initiating interaction, effort, and participatory behavior. In their analysis, Finn and Achilles (1999) indicated that the presence of these superior engagements is key to identifying the mechanism by which small class sizes positively affect student achievement. By fostering such engagement behaviors that are essential to learning, small class sizes helped give students the tools with which to learn more effectively (Finn & Achilles, 1999). The results of Project STAR showed a substantially greater advantage for minority students and inner-city school students in smaller classes (Mosteller, 1995), making smaller class sizes even more important for achievement in areas with a high population of at-risk students.

The findings of the Tennessee Project STAR suggesting that students achieve more in smaller classes were supported by the Wisconsin Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) project, a similar legislative endeavor (Molnar et al., 1999). Results were consistent with the Tennessee STAR project in that students in

smaller classes performed significantly better on comprehensive basic skills exams than their counterparts in larger classes. It is not surprising that having fewer students in a classroom at one time allows a teacher to give more individualized attention to each student. However, in another analysis of the Tennessee STAR Project results, Mosteller (1995) indicated that information was still not available regarding how a wide variety of class sizes affects student achievement. For example, Mosteller (1995) stated that learning to work in groups is an important skill and requires the presence of others, suggesting that there may be a lower limit to how small a class can be before benefits to student achievement diminish. More research regarding the optimum class size for learning would be beneficial to the discussion regarding the value of class size reduction programs.

Teacher aides and team teaching. When faced with reduced resources, schools often employ teacher aides to keep student–teacher ratios low, believing that this will have a similar effect to reduced class sizes. Teacher aides offer lower financial commitment as opposed to forming additional classes because they are paid less than regular classroom teachers and the addition of an aide to existing classes eliminates the cost of additional classroom facilities and materials. Boyd-Zaharias and Pate-Bain (1998) offered an analysis of the teacher aide component of the Tennessee STAR Project to illustrate the effects of adding teacher aides to regular and large size classes as opposed to the effects of class size reduction. While the Tennessee STAR Project (1985) results revealed a significant difference in student achievement between small and regular class sizes, there was no significant difference in student achievement between regular classes and regular classes with a teacher aide present. These

conclusions suggested that an aide may be able to alleviate the clerical and organizational duties of the classroom teacher, but the presence of an aide does not necessarily produce the same effects on student achievement as does the reduction of the number of students in a classroom (Boyd-Zaharias & Pate-Bain, 1998). Thus, class size and student–teacher ratio must be discussed as two separate issues with distinctly different consequences. Boyd-Zaharias and Pate-Bain (1998) observed from teacher interview reports that each teacher used his or her aide in different ways and that aides had no uniform level of training.

Teacher aide training. While paraprofessionals in other fields (e.g., law, medicine) are subject to extensive training for their duties, have clearly defined responsibilities, and have paths to career advancement, teacher aides lack these important elements in their jobs (Gerber, Finn, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001). Teacher aide positions are often filled with parents of students and members of the community with no specialized training in child development and effective teaching methods and, therefore, may not be as effective instructors as those with who completed a teacher preparation program. However, these individuals often find themselves working in such important instructional roles. Gerber, Finn, Achilles, and Boyd-Zaharias (2001) suggested that students benefit most from the presence of a teacher aide in the classroom when the aide has less one-on-one contact with students and spends the majority of their time completing administrative tasks, allowing the regular classroom teachers to concentrate their efforts and expertise in planning and delivering effective instruction.

The differing levels of training that aides possessed presented limitations for their effectiveness in the classroom (Hastie, Sanders, & Rowland, 1999). The effectiveness of teacher aides could be improved by clearly defining roles and responsibilities and hiring individuals with the necessary qualifications for each job available, providing adequate training with ongoing evaluation, providing support, and developing opportunities for advancement through “career ladders” that allow paraprofessionals to advance to primary teachers (Gerber, Finn, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001). These improvements could help paraprofessionals to make more meaningful contributions to the classroom.

In an analysis of the Wisconsin SAGE project, Molnar et al. (1999) indicated that, although small classes with a student–teacher ratio of 15:1 performed better on comprehensive basic skills tests than regular size classes, they did not show a statistically significant difference in achievement than classes with a 30:2 student-teacher ratio where classes were team taught by two certified teachers in the same classroom. This finding suggested that similar class size reduction benefits could be achieved through the use of team teachers in a single classroom without the cost of building additional facilities to accommodate additional classes. While the presence of a teacher aide in the classroom may not mitigate the effects of large class sizes, the results of the Wisconsin SAGE project showed that having two certified teachers in a large size classroom could provide small class benefits for students without the expense of building additional classrooms. (Molnar et al., 1999).

Classroom interaction. Findings from studies on student achievement as demonstrated by standardized tests and academic gains have been mixed (e.g.,

Mosteller, 1995; Boyd-Zaharias & Pate-Bain, 1998; Hanushek, 1999; Finn & Achilles, 1999; Gerber, Finn, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001; Peake, 2001; McInerney, 2013), suggesting the magnitude of the benefits of small classes may not always outweigh the increased costs to schools for reduction program implementation. Studies on classroom interaction and student behaviors as well as teacher satisfaction and perception, however, yield far more consistent results. While test scores do not consistently show significant improvement from small classes, a study from Britain regarding the effect of smaller elementary school class sizes on student–teacher interactions showed a significant increase in the amount of student–teacher interactions in small classes (Blatchford, Basset, & Brown, 2011). The researchers noted that there was an increase in time spent dealing with negative behaviors from low-attaining students in large classes. In a comparable study in the Netherlands, Folmer-Annevelink, Doolaard, Mascareño, and Bosker (2010) found a similar correlation between smaller class sizes and increased student–teacher interactions, but no statistically significant differences in the benefits to students based on cognitive or behavioral characteristics. Teacher interviews in the Wisconsin SAGE project revealed that teachers of small classes reported having more time to interact with and become familiar with individual students, resulting in better individualized instruction and greater enrichment opportunities (Molnar et al., 1999). Teachers in this study also reported that they spent less time dealing with disciplinary issues because they had increased ability to circulate around the classroom to help with academic and behavioral issues before they were allowed to escalate.

In a study regarding class size, student attentiveness, and peer relations, Blatchford, Edmonds, and Martin (2003) found that 5-year-old students in large classes interacted with their peers more often for both off- and on-task behavior and had less individual interaction with the teacher than their counterparts in smaller classes. Researchers concluded that this peer-to-peer interaction could be positive or negative depending on the quality and content of interactions among peers. Students in large classes were also found to exhibit higher instances of non-interacting behavior, indicating that it was easier for students to disengage from instruction when part of a larger group. The researchers found that peer relations were slightly worse in smaller classes in terms of aggression, asocial, and excluding behaviors, suggesting that, while smaller classes may benefit student attentiveness and decrease disruptive behaviors, it may not be as socially beneficial for young students. In analysis of the Tennessee Project STAR results, Finn and Achilles (1999) found that students who had been grouped in small classes in the lower grades continued to demonstrate superior learning engagement behaviors even after returning to regular size classes, leading to the conclusion that improved student interaction in smaller classes may be a factor in the benefit of small class sizes.

Teaching methods. Almulla (2015) reported that larger class sizes influenced teachers to select methods more centered on teacher talk with fewer student-centered activities—methods that are at the forefront of the latest instructional strategies for meaningful learning experiences. In contrast, small classes were beneficial in part because of a teacher’s ability to implement more student-centered learning with less teacher talk and more constructive teaching strategies (Almulla, 2015; Blatchford,

Basset, & Brown, 2011; Çakmak, 2009; Molnar et al., 1999). Smaller classes allowed teachers to engage in more individualized teaching and differentiation of curriculum (Blatchford, Basset, & Brown, 2011).

Hanushek (1999) interpreted results from the Tennessee STAR Project (1985) to suggest that variations in teacher experience and instructional methods could have a significant impact on student achievement regardless of the number of students in the classroom. Hanushek (1999) indicated that several of the individual schools participating in the STAR Project showed decreased student performance in their smaller classes when compared to their regular-size classes and regular-size classes with the help of an aide. The discrepancy between individual and aggregate results was attributed to variations in teacher experience and quality of instruction, suggesting that instructional quality is more impactful than class size (Hanushek, 1999). This conclusion illustrated the importance of training teachers in methods that are effective for quality instruction in classrooms with an increased number of students. Teachers of smaller classes in the Wisconsin SAGE project reported changing their teaching style when working with smaller numbers of students (Molnar et al., 1999). Molnar et al. (1999) concluded:

The main thesis of the SAGE program is that reduced class size can increase student achievement. However, reduced class size cannot influence academic achievement directly. Reduced class size is mediated by classroom events. It must influence what teachers and students do in the classroom before it can possibly have an effect on student learning. (p. 173)

While current educational trends are moving in the direction of increased student-centered learning and less whole-class, teacher talk formats, the trend of increasing class sizes has the opposite effect on instructional styles. A survey of third-year student teachers in Turkey (Cakmak, 2009) showed that the majority (90.2%, $n = 41$) of participants believed class size influenced the type of teaching method they implemented in their classroom. Almulla (2015) conducted a survey investigating primary school teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding possible class size effects in four Saudi Arabian schools. Teachers in small classes reported having the ability to focus more on the needs of individual students. While no significant difference was reported in the time spent on introducing and practicing material, teachers in the study generally agreed that class size was a major factor influencing what teaching methods are used in a classroom. Teachers in larger classes reported using more "teacher talk" and asking more closed questions, while students were generally more passive. Smaller classes afforded teachers the opportunity to employ more student-centered approaches, including open questions, and to encourage more active student participation. These findings suggested that when it is not possible to implement changes toward smaller class sizes, training teachers in using more student-centered teaching strategies could alleviate the strain of an increased number of students and provide improved instruction. Almulla (2015) also recommended that benefits could be obtained through teacher collaboration and sharing best practices for what has been found to work in the classroom setting.

When asked about the quality of instructional skills that elementary school music student teachers possessed, the majority (83.3%, $n = 12$) of supervising teachers

in an urban public-school district in the southern United States responded that classroom management was the biggest weakness for student teachers and recommended that they should use less teacher-talk and more student-centered demonstration of skills (Hester, 2013). These results suggested that teacher training programs needed to be evaluated and improved regarding their ability to prepare pre-service teachers to utilize student-centered learning and effective classroom management techniques, even when faced with the large classes typical of general music in the elementary schools. If class size reduction in elementary general music is not possible and the occurrences of combined classes continue to increase, it is essential for teacher training programs to modify their methods and adequately prepare new teachers to be effective in the reality that exists in the music classroom.

Classroom management. It is no surprise that teachers spend more time with negative and disruptive behaviors in larger classes than they do in smaller classes (Blatchford, Basset, & Brown, 2011). Music teachers in particular experience different classroom management challenges as a result of large class sizes. In studies, larger class sizes provided greater risk for misbehavior and off-task peer to peer interactions (Blatchford, Basset, & Brown, 2011; Caldarella, Williams, Jolstead, & Wills, 2016). Teachers of small classes were able to engage with more students, spending less time on classroom management and more time on instruction (Finn & Achilles, 1999). Increased classroom management issues in larger classes can cause teacher frustration, leading teachers to consider alternative professions.

Teacher Self-Efficacy and Burnout

Several studies have sought to determine variables affecting teachers' decisions to leave the profession as well as what variables may contribute to greater teacher self-efficacy and commitment to teaching. Findings have consistently revealed that poor self-efficacy and lack of work engagement were common factors leading to teacher burnout and attrition, while teachers with positive self-efficacy who believe that they are capable of influencing student achievement were more likely to continue in their profession despite challenges (Coladarci, 1992; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982). These results have led many to investigate variables contributing to positive or negative self-efficacy and work engagement in order to identify how to keep quality educators engaged in their work and prevent attrition (Hamman, Daugherty, & Mills, 1987).

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy refers to the perception that an individual can successfully execute the behaviors required to produce a desired outcome. Teacher efficacy, therefore, refers to the extent to which teachers believe that they can affect student learning (Coladarci, 1992). Bandura (1977) suggested that repeated or perceived failures have a negative impact upon one's self-efficacy for a given task. Bandura (1997) found that teachers with high instructional efficacy are more likely to be motivated and to believe that all students can be reached through effort and determination on the part of educators. This high self-efficacy leads to more student-centered activities and innovative instruction in the classroom. Conversely, low self-efficacy may negatively affect instruction.

In addition to the quality of classroom instruction, low self-efficacy reduces teacher commitment (Coladarci 1992) and leads to greater levels of teacher burnout and

attrition (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982; Bandura, 1997). Coladarci (1992) surveyed a group of elementary level educators in Maine and found that commitment to teaching was higher in schools characterized by smaller classes, suggesting that large class sizes may contribute to teacher attrition. The same study indicated that personal and general efficacy were two of the strongest predictors for a strong commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992). Glickman and Tamashiro (1982) surveyed first-year, fifth-year, and former teachers (who had left the profession prior to their fifth year of teaching) to determine their sense of self-efficacy, ego development, and problem solving in the early years of their teaching careers. The researchers found that the former teachers tended not to believe that they could personally influence student achievement and improvement, and suggested that their reason for leaving may have been influenced by low self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy and work engagement. In a study of work engagement among elementary school music teachers, Maughan (2013) found a significant correlation between work engagement and self-efficacy, suggesting that teachers with strong efficacy beliefs in instruction are more engaged and have greater commitment to teaching. The negative effects of large combined classes on a teacher's self-efficacy could influence his or her level of burnout and ultimately lead to a decision to leave the profession. Maughan (2013) also found a significant correlation between work engagement and workload satisfaction. This correlation suggests that excessive workloads, such as those resulting from combined classes, may hinder work engagement levels. Workload satisfaction was found to be significantly influenced by availability of sufficient resources.

Maughan (2013) found that workload satisfaction was influenced by support and resources available. Therefore, providing teachers with support through effective methods and training may help alleviate the strain of higher workloads in large classes. In addition, lack of adequate resources for the number of students taught in combined classes may negatively impact a teacher's workload satisfaction and, consequently, their levels of work engagement and self-efficacy. Maughan (2013) concluded that workload satisfaction could significantly influence an educator's decision to leave a job or the teaching profession altogether and that further investigation into class size and its relationship to work engagement was needed to determine the effect that class size has on music teacher work engagement.

Burnout. "Some teachers find themselves beleaguered day in and day out by disruptive and non-achieving students. Eventually, their sense of inefficacy to fulfill academic demands takes a stressful toll. Burnout in academia is not all that uncommon" (Bandura, 1997, p. 242). The stress of teaching increasingly large numbers of students in combined music classes may negatively impact teacher work engagement and ultimately increase cases of burnout and attrition among elementary music teachers. This, in turn, may have a negative impact on both the individual educational classroom experience and the pool of educators available to instruct as the most dedicated and effective teachers are often the ones most affected by burnout (Hamman, Daugherty, & Mills, 1987). It is, therefore, of great concern that the music education community develops methods of addressing and preventing burnout.

The Need for the Study

While the benefits of small classes have been well documented in a number of studies, many of the most controlled, experimental designs investigated much larger class size reductions than are often discussed by policy makers or that are even possible due to fiscal constraints (Hanushek, 1999). It is questionable whether or not the benefits are worth the considerable expense that would be incurred by schools. The results of the Tennessee Project STAR showed considerable academic benefits to students in smaller classes overall, but the fact that several individual schools in the experiment showed decreased performance for students in smaller classes led Hanushek (1999) to suggest that variations in teacher quality are more impactful than class size. Analysis of the Wisconsin SAGE Project results indicated that class size itself did not directly affect achievement, but influenced what teachers and students did in the classroom in order for its benefits to be realized (Molnar et al., 1999). Such conclusions suggest that, with appropriate instructional strategies and classroom management techniques that are specifically designed for implementation in large classes, music teachers may be able to mitigate the challenges of teaching combined classes and achieve similar results to their counterparts in single classes. In order for music teachers to utilize effective strategies in large, combined classes, they must have access to professional development and preparation that helps them to develop strategies for adapting to the challenges of combined classes.

Chapter 3: Method

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current trend of combining general elementary classrooms for music instruction in elementary school general music programs in Oklahoma regarding the effect that it has on the quality of music instruction and what techniques and teaching methods elementary school music teachers use to effectively deliver instruction and meet curricular goals in combined classes. Data collection occurred in two phases: Phase 1 included an online survey of elementary general music teachers in Oklahoma. The survey instrument provided a quantitative description of combined class effects in elementary general music education, helped guide the construction of questions in the interview protocol, and served to identify the purposeful sample for interviews. The researcher-designed instrument was created using *Qualtrics* (Qualtrics, Provo, UT) through the University of Oklahoma. After receiving responses from the quantitative survey instrument, individuals were chosen to participate in Phase 2 of the study. Phase 2 included the interview and observation portion of the study for the purpose of describing what effects participants observe combined classes to have on their instruction and how they adapt their instruction to compensate for these effects. Interviews allowed participants to provide further details regarding (a) the specific challenges of teaching combined classes in elementary general music, (b) what effect these challenges have on music instruction, and (c) what specific techniques and teaching methods they use to effectively deliver instruction and meet curricular goals in combined classes.

Phase 1 Participants

Oklahoma elementary school music teachers were invited to participate in a web-based survey. Music teacher emails were obtained from school and district websites identified from the Oklahoma Public School District Directory available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education website. For schools without music teacher emails available on the website, principals, superintendents, or fine arts directors were contacted. Each teacher's name, email address, and school name were entered into an electronic database for organization and email invitation.

Recruitment

After receiving notification of approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Oklahoma on February 14, 2018 (see Appendix A), the initial invitation message (see Appendix B) was sent to prospective participants through the email distribution service provided in *Qualtrics* (Qualtrics, Provo, UT) online survey program on February 15, 2018. The researcher used an online survey for ease of collecting information from a large number of participants over an expansive area. The email message included information regarding the purpose of the study and a link to the online survey. A reminder message (see Appendix C) was sent one week later to recruit prospective participants who had not yet completed the survey. The two-week recruitment period remained open until February 28, 2018.

Survey Instrument

The first page of the survey included an electronic informed consent item (see Appendix D) to ensure participants were aware that their participation was voluntary

and their responses were kept confidential. Participation in the survey required approximately ten to fifteen minutes and participants did not receive compensation.

The survey was divided into three sections (see Appendix E). The first section was divided into three blocks that were descriptive in nature and included questions regarding (a) demographic information about the participant including experience and certifications, (b) the participant's current teaching situation, and (c) class composition at all grade levels taught. The second section included four-point Likert-type statements addressing (a) combined class effects on several factors contributing to the quality of instruction, (b) support, (c) resources, (d) teacher self-efficacy, and (e) work engagement. The third section included two open-ended questions regarding the impacts that the participant felt combined classes had on instruction in the classroom and what modifications the participant made to instruction to compensate for these impacts. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to indicate their willingness to be considered for participation in Phase 2 of the study. Survey items were developed from a variety of outside sources detailed in the following paragraphs as well as suggestions from professionals in the field and the researcher's personal experience in teaching music.

Section 1: Descriptive demographic information.

Current teaching position. The first block of the first section of the survey included six questions in which participants were asked to provide information regarding (a) grade levels taught, (b) number of classes taught per day, (c) school classification, and (d) other employment details. The researcher consulted the Elementary Music Educator Demographic Questionnaire (Maughan, 2013) for verbiage

on items regarding demographic information. Confidential participant demographic information was requested to determine how teacher experience and qualifications might affect a teacher's ability to effectively instruct larger class sizes and to provide context for purposeful sampling.

Teacher demographics. The second block of the first section of the survey included five items detailing (a) education, (b) experience, (c) specialties, and (d) certifications. The membership information page of the website for the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) provided the basis for categories of music teacher specialties and levels taught (www.nafme.org). The divisions for participants' level of education were based on the levels of compensation from the Oklahoma State Department of Education State Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule for the 2017-2018 school year available at the Oklahoma State Department of Education website (www.sde.ok.gov).

Class size and schedule. The last block of the first section included three items requesting information regarding (a) average class sizes at each grade level taught, (b) what portion of classes taught are combined classes, and (c) which grade levels taught are divided into combined classes. Class size and schedule details were included to collect descriptive information regarding combined classes at each grade level and to aid in purposeful sampling of the individuals to be interviewed.

Section 2: Instruction, self-efficacy, and work engagement. The second section of the survey included five 4-point Likert-type items asking the participant to rate their level of agreement with a total of twenty-four statements regarding the effect of combined classes on instruction, workload satisfaction, resources, support, teacher

self-efficacy, and work engagement. An additional item asked if the participant intended to teach until retirement age to investigate potential burnout. Wording for statements measuring work engagement were derived from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Items regarding self-efficacy were based on statements from the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE; Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001) and the Music Teacher Identity Scale (MTIS; Wagoner, 2015). The Maughan Elementary Music Educator Measure (MEMEM; Maughan, 2013) provided the basis for statements measuring teacher workload satisfaction, resources, and support. The Elementary Music Educator Demographic Questionnaire (Maughan, 2013) provided the question regarding the participant's intention to teach until retirement age.

Section 3: Open-ended questions. The third section of the survey included two open-ended questions. The open-ended questions addressed (a) what impacts the participant perceived combined classes to have on instruction and (b) what modifications the participant made to instruction to compensate for these impacts.

Section 4: Recruitment for Phase 2. The fourth section of the survey addressed the participant's willingness to be considered for Phase 2 observations and interviews. Participants willing to continue in the study were also asked to provide their name, school, district, city, and an email address at which they would prefer to be contacted regarding Phase 2 of the study.

Phase 2 Participants

A purposeful sample of two participants for the interview portion of the study was identified from the initial survey based upon the following factors: (a) number of

combined classes taught, (b) the number of years taught in their current position, (c) total number of years teaching experience, (d) level of education and certifications, (e) levels of self-efficacy and work engagement, (f) location, and (g) willingness to participate in interviews. For anonymity, Participant 1 will be referred to as Alice and Participant 2 will be referred to as Betsy.

Alice. At the time of the study, Alice was teaching elementary school general music for kindergarten through fifth grades at a rural elementary school in Oklahoma. She had earned a bachelor's degree in music education and held an Oklahoma Teaching Certificate in Vocal/General Music PK–12. She was certified in all levels of the Kodály Concept. Alice was in her tenth year of teaching overall and fifth year of teaching in her current position. All of her classes were combined classes consisting of at least two full general elementary classrooms. In survey responses, Alice expressed a strong sense of self-efficacy for teaching music and influencing student achievement in her classroom. She also expressed feeling well-supported by her administration, her fellow teachers, the parents of her students, and the community. This high level of support was confirmed in interview responses and classroom observations by the availability of instruments, resources, and space. Alice had taught single classes in previous teaching positions, and, as a result, was able to speak to the comparisons between teaching single and combined classes.

Betsy. At the time of the study, Betsy was teaching elementary school general music and art for kindergarten through fifth grades at a rural elementary school in Oklahoma. She had earned a master's degree in music education and held an Oklahoma Teaching Certificate in Vocal/General Music PK–12. She held certifications in

Conversational Solfege Levels I and II, World Music Drumming Level I, and Orff-Schulwerk Level I. Betsy was in her sixteenth year of teaching overall and sixth year of teaching in her current position. All her classes were combined classes consisting of a half each of three homeroom classes for a total of one and a half classes. In survey responses, Betsy expressed a strong sense of self-efficacy for teaching music and influencing student achievement in her classroom. She also expressed feeling supported by her administration, her colleagues, the parents of her students, and her community. Betsy had taught single classes in previous teaching positions in another state, and, as a result, was able to speak to the comparisons between teaching single and combined classes.

Interviews and Observations

Once Phase 2 participants were identified from survey responses, the researcher initially contacted them by email to invite them to participate in the interview and observation portion of the study (see Appendix F). Interviews and observations were conducted at the participants' schools and by telephone over a nine-day period from March 13–21, 2018 and were recorded using audio equipment for subsequent review and transcription. An informed consent document was presented and signed by each participant and the researcher prior to conducting each interview (see Appendix G).

An initial interview (approximately 40 minutes in length) was conducted with each participant in the participant's classroom and by telephone prior to the observation. The interview protocol (see Appendix H) consisted of open-ended questions requesting details about the effects participants observed that combined classes have on their instruction, how they adapted their instruction to compensate for these effects, how

resources were allocated among increased numbers of students, and how instruction for combined classes compared to instruction for single classes. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to offer their suggestions for how elementary music teacher preparation might be improved to promote success in combined classes. The researcher observed the participants instructing in combined class settings for between three and five class periods. The semi-structured observation protocol (see Appendix I) was determined by initial interview responses as well as questions that arose from observations. The observer focused on aspects of instruction detailed in interview and survey responses. A brief five-minute interview in the participants' classrooms followed the observations in which the observer addressed additional questions and clarifications regarding the observations.

Data Analysis

Phase 1: Survey. Demographic items from Section 1 of the survey addressing teacher experience, class size and composition, and specialty training were used to identify the percentage of respondents who taught combined classes as well as the percentage of those who taught all combined classes as opposed to those who taught some combined classes. Section 1 also served to identify the best candidates for Phase 2 of the study. Standard deviations for Likert-type statements in Section 2 addressing the effects of combined classes on classroom management and instruction, as well as statements regarding the number of students in combined classes, were calculated and the number of responses, means, and standard deviations were presented in table form to illustrate common effects of class size on instruction. Responses from the two open-ended questions in Section 3 of the survey were coded for patterns which were then

organized into categories (Saldaña, 2015). The researcher determined the frequency of responses belonging to each category. The response categories were presented to illustrate the most common impacts combined classes had on respondents' classroom instruction as well as what modifications were most commonly made to teaching strategies in order to compensate for these impacts.

Phase 2: Interviews and observations. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher (see Appendices J–M). The researcher manually coded on hard-copies of all transcriptions and observation summaries to identify emerging themes among the cases. Interview and observation data were pre-coded with highlighting and preliminary jottings in the margins. In first-cycle coding, the researcher used a combination of descriptive, “in vivo”, and process coding (Saldaña, 2015). Coded data were then submitted to second-cycle coding in which the researcher re-coded and streamlined existing codes. The revised codes were then organized into categories. The researcher used these categories to identify emergent themes and draw conclusions regarding combined class effects in elementary general music education as well as to make suggestions regarding appropriate teaching techniques and strategies as well as recommendations regarding music teacher preparation and opportunities for further research and action in the field of general music education.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impacts combining homeroom classes for music instruction in elementary school music programs has on the quality of music education. A secondary purpose was to provide explanations of what challenges teachers of large, combined classes face, and what methods teachers use to adapt their instruction to meet those challenges and to successfully achieve their curricular goals. Elementary school general music teachers ($N = 284$) from public schools in Oklahoma were contacted to participate in the study. Of the 43 (15.1%) individuals that responded to the survey, 36 were deemed to be useable (12.7%). Eighteen (50.0%) of the 36 participants indicated that they taught combined classes. Of those 18 participants, 11 (31.0%) expressed willingness to participate in Phase 2 of the study. Candidates for interviews and observations were chosen from those willing to participate in Phase 2 ($n = 11$, 31.0%) based upon (a) the number of combined classes taught, (b) the number of years taught in their current position as well as total number of years taught, (c) level of education and certifications, (d) levels of self-efficacy and work engagement, and (e) location. The researcher made initial contact through email addresses provided in the survey to obtain consent and schedule interviews and observations. Teachers in Phase 2 of the study participated in initial interviews prior to classroom observations, and additional interviews immediately following to clarify observations and answer any additional questions arising from classroom instruction. In this chapter, I will first outline the results of survey items addressing the impacts of combined classes on elementary general music education. I will then outline each of the two Phase 2

participant's cases and interview responses. Finally, a cross-case theme analysis of the similarities and differences between the two cases will be presented.

Survey Results

Of the 36 total respondents ($N = 36$), four (11.1%) responded that all the classes they teach are combined, while fourteen (38.9%) responded that some of the classes they teach are combined, for a total of half ($n = 18$, 50.0%) the participants responding that they teach combined classes at some frequency. Conversely, the remaining eighteen (50.0%) participants responded that they do not teach combined classes.

Of the participants responding that they teach combined classes ($N = 18$), seventeen (94.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that classroom management issues increase in large, combined classes ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.5$). Each of these respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they must change their instructional strategies to effectively teach large, combined classes ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.45$). See Table 1 for means and standard deviations of responses regarding combined classes.

Table 1

Survey Responses for Effects of Large/Combined Classes on Elementary General Music Instruction (N = 18)

Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Classroom management issues increase in large/combined classes.	3.83	0.5
I have to change my instructional strategies to effectively teach large/combined classes.	3.72	0.45

Note. Means are based on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

As shown in Table 2, survey participants responded to a second set of Likert-type statements including (a) my workload is manageable ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 0.93$), (b) the number of students I teach is manageable ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.89$), (c) I teach classes that have an ideal number of students in them ($M = 1.78$, $SD = 0.79$), (d) I have adequate space to teach effectively ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.16$), and (e) I have adequate musical instruments to teach effectively ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 1.05$). Responses in this set varied to a greater extent than the previous set due to the variables in each participant's teaching conditions. See Table 2 for means and standard deviations of responses regarding the number of students in combined classes.

Table 2

Survey Responses Regarding Number of Students (N = 18)

Statements	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
My workload is manageable.	2.72	0.93
The number of students I teach is manageable.	2.39	0.89
I teach classes that have an ideal number of students in them	1.78	0.79
I have adequate space to teach effectively.	2.44	1.16
I have adequate musical instruments to teach effectively.	2.10	1.05

Note. Means are based on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

Of the open-ended responses ($N = 17$) to the question, “What impacts do you feel combined classes have on instruction in your classroom?”, fourteen (82.4%) cited difficulties in classroom management including (a) an increase in disruptive behaviors and (b) an increase in off-task behaviors associated with the social implications of combining students from multiple homeroom classes. Seven respondents (41.1%) indicated having to change their instructional strategies in combined classes including (a) taking more time on certain activities and not doing as much as smaller classes, (b) avoiding certain activities due to the number of students, and (c) utilizing more whole-group instruction and fewer student-centered activities. Six respondents (35.3%) indicated having less time to give students individual attention. Difficulties with conducting individual assessments was cited as an impact of combined classes by six

(35.3%) respondents. Five respondents (29.4%) indicated that they had inadequate supplies for the number of students in their classrooms.

Of the open-ended responses ($N = 17$) to the question, “What modifications do you make to your instruction to compensate for these impacts?”, six (35.3%) said they do not do certain activities because of space and time constraints in combined classes. Five respondents (29.4%) indicated modifying activities for the number of students in their classes due to (a) space concerns and (b) needing more time to complete activities. Completing solo activities and assessments in groups instead of individually was reported as a modification by four (23.5%) respondents. Three (17.6%) indicated using whole-group instruction instead of student-centered activities and one (05.9%) cited making use of technology to keep students engaged.

Themes

I used direct interpretation of the data to identify emergent themes and draw meaning from those themes (Stake, 1995). The four main themes that emerged from study data include (a) resources, (b) classroom interaction, (c) instruction, and (d) music teacher preparation. I will expand upon these themes in each of the cases and the subsequent cross-case analysis.

Alice Case Study

Resources.

Number of students. Alice taught combined classes in elementary general music at every grade level. Combined music classes in kindergarten, second-, third-, fourth-, and fifth-grades consisted of two full homeroom classes, while combined music classes in first grade consisted of two-and-a-half homeroom classes. The number of students in

each music class at the time of the classroom observations were: kindergarten ($n = 42$), first grade ($n = 48$), third grade ($n = 36$), fourth grade ($n = 42$), and fifth grade ($n = 34$). One teacher aide was present in the music room for the first-grade classroom observation and two teacher aides were present during the kindergarten classroom observation.

Physical space. Alice's classroom was very large and included a small, separate office space with a window. She indicated that the building was only approximately three years old and was built with the needs of the larger class in mind. As a result, Alice felt that the space was adequate for classes of up to forty students but expressed concerns about increasing class sizes.

I do think it's good for forty, but anything above that...I mean, it just seems crowded. Like, those classes of fifty...it's crowded, and they are small people right now, but when they get up to third, fourth, fifth grade, they are going to get bigger. It's going to be huge. (initial interview, lines 633–636)

Six sets of flip forms risers were positioned in an arc facing a SMART board. Students were seated on these risers during class as well as on the floor in front on designated spots. The risers allowed students to see the board more easily in the larger groups. Alice indicated that these risers were easily folded and rolled out of the way on days when the class engaged in movement and dance activities to provide for additional floor space, but that making circles for games and engaging in movement without moving the risers was extremely difficult due to lack of space.

Materials and instruments. Alice said that she generally felt that she had enough resources to teach combined classes, but that she had to do a lot of

supplementing using her own resources and that some resources were still lacking. She stated, “I think I have enough resources, if I’m the one buying them and making them. Yes. But as far as textbooks and that kind of thing, no. There’d be no way” (initial interview, lines 614–619). Class sets of manipulatives required a lot of materials in order for students to each have a hands-on experience every class period. Alice adapted for the lack of textbook materials by projecting music on the SMART board to allow students a chance to work on music reading without the use of individual papers. The classroom was well-stocked with instruments, but still fell short of providing enough for the number of students in the combined classes. “That’s not enough still for every kid to have one or be on a drum, or you know, like... I think outside of the classroom, it is not always realized” (initial interview, lines 662–664).

Classroom Interaction.

Classroom management. When asked about how classroom management in the combined class setting compared to single class settings, Alice confirmed that classroom management issues increased with more students in a classroom. She regretted to say that more undesirable behaviors tended to slip through the cracks in large groups where she could not attend to everyone at once. She said she must “be more on top of it all the time” (initial interview, line 179) and cited consistency as one of the most important factors in keeping control of large numbers of students. It was clear during classroom observations that the students knew and had practiced the procedures in the classroom and understood expectations. They proceeded to their seats and followed cues for transitions with very little verbal instructions. Alice utilized a

variety of call and response techniques to get student attention and start class quickly with minimal “teacher talk.”

In addition to the large numbers of students, Alice cited the social implications of combining two homeroom classes for music instruction as factors in the increase of behavior issues. When students who were not usually in the same homeroom class came together for music class, it took longer for them to get settled and focused on the lesson. The students wanted to socialize with the friends they did not normally see all day long and increased talking became an issue.

Student to student is...it’s ridiculous how much they come in thinking...I mean, they’re with, they’re not with the kids they see every day, they’re not with the kids that are in their class...it’s like a whole new world. (initial interview, lines 266–269)

Alice used very short reminders when students began to talk in the middle of class or lose attention. An example of these reminders included using the music term, “fine” and eye contact with the student needing redirection. Alice had a small space in the area behind the risers designated as a place for students to go if they were being disruptive. During classroom observations, she offered one or two reminders about behavior to a student before asking him to sit in the quiet space and take a break before returning to the activities. Because of the number of students in the room, any amount of downtime resulted in a quick increase of off-task talking and loss of attention. During the first-grade classroom observation, another staff member entered the room with a question for the teacher. As soon as her attention was off of the game, students began talking and the noise level rose quickly (classroom observation, lines 218–225).

Student–student interactions. Alice indicated that the large numbers of students in her combined classes were often intimidating for less outgoing students. Many students did not feel comfortable singing in front of such large numbers and in front of students from other classrooms and did not often raise their hands or participate in singing games for solo assessment.

They know their little, you know, small class of twenty and they might feel comfortable doing that [singing], but when you have to do it in front of forty or fifty, it's so much, I mean, they have to...I have to trick them into it, I have to be honest....I've got to make a game out of it or something else to sing.....But you can always tell the kids who just never raise their hand. And will I ever get them to sing by themselves? That's the hardest part. (initial interview, lines 276–290)

Student–teacher interactions. When asked what impacts combined classes had on instruction in her classroom, Alice immediately expressed the difficulty in building relationships with students in a class of forty to fifty students. She indicated that she tried hard to make personal connections with students, but that there were always kids that slipped through the cracks in classes with large numbers of students. “The kinder and first [experience the worst combined class effects], that's where those foundations are laid and you can't always lay a lot of those foundations with so many” (initial interview, lines 435–437). In addition, giving kids individual one-on-one attention was cited as a difficulty during lessons due to fast-paced instruction to prevent behavior issues.

Impacts on instruction.

Curriculum. Alice indicated that completing activities and covering concepts in combined classes took more time than in single classes.

But with the doubles, every activity takes a little longer. Even if I split them, even if I go to smaller groups, it is still going to take a little bit longer because there are just that many more kids. (initial interview, lines 130–132)

She cited being able to accomplish more during a single-class setting at a previous school that met for a shorter amount of time than with the combined classes meeting for a longer period. When asked if she felt that she could effectively deliver instruction and achieve curricular goals, Alice responded, “Maye not always how I want to or as quickly as I want to, but overall, yes, we do get lots of things done. Just because of how I choose to pace, how I choose to pace it” (initial interview, lines 686–688). She described her adaptation to the pacing of curriculum as skipping certain elements and not covering others in as much detail as she would like to get through the prescribed concepts with the larger numbers of students.

Assessment. Because of the difficulty in giving students one-on-one attention in combined classes, assessment was commonly cited as challenging in large classes. Alice admitted that she does less assessment in her combined classes than she would like, and, when she does get students singing solos or performing on their own, it is still challenging to keep a record. To compensate for these challenges, she often has students perform games and activities with solo assessment opportunities in partners or trios instead. This form of assessment is not as authentic as solo assessment, but it allows at least some record of student achievement without continuing the assessment over

several class periods. In addition, classroom management becomes an issue when students must wait their turn or repeat an activity too many times over. During the fourth-grade classroom observation, students were performing their recorder playing tests for the teacher in small groups of five to seven students. When asked about this in the follow-up interview, Alice confirmed that this is the normal practice to get through the number of students necessary and keep control of the class.

Groups, the whole group, yes...and I can kind of follow their fingers and I can see which ones are looking at their neighbor or if there's a person who's squeaking, I mean, I try, just because this was the last day, I knew I would probably get groups of five to seven or eight, but I don't normally go higher than five. Just because I want them to be able to hear that sound and do those things, but for the most part, we have smaller groups. (follow-up interview, lines 107–116)

Lesson planning and delivery. In larger, combined classes, lesson planning must be thorough and well-designed. In classroom observations, Alice began each lesson with a series vocal exploration and call-and-response exercises that transitioned into echoed solfege patterns. The non-verbal, active beginning of class focused student attention right away. Alice delivered the lesson seamlessly with high-energy and a fast pace that left little time for off-task behavior. All technology was loaded and ready immediately to avoid downtime. Alice planned quick, non-verbal transitions from activity to activity and utilized student leaders when distributing materials. Procedures in the classroom were well-practiced and required very little verbal instruction from the teacher, keeping students engaged and active. She moved quickly when asking students

to raise hands to answer questions and used modeling as much as possible. As a result, her classroom was under control and students remained engaged for the duration of the lesson. Lessons were conducted largely in a whole-group setting with some breakdown into small groups. Even in small groups, activities were mostly teacher-led to keep large numbers of students focused and on-task. Alice indicated that the most challenging grade levels to work with in combined classes were the younger grades, such as kindergarten and first, where students were still learning how to be at school and where the relationships had yet to be formed.

Activities. Singing games and dances pose challenges for teachers in combined classes. Alice indicated that she continues to use dance and singing games in her instruction but has to modify how she implements them. Space is an issue, especially with the fifty first-grade students, when participating in larger circle games. During classroom observations, first-grade students played “Tinker, Tailor” in a large circle. Transition to the circle took nearly two to three minutes as students got situated in a circle large enough to fit them all. Once in a circle, they were up against the walls and risers. The game began with one ball, but when the students had demonstrated understanding, Alice added an additional ball to speed up the progress of the game. The presence of the teacher aide to help supervise the second ball aided in this process. During the kindergarten classroom observation, students passed a ball in a circle to the beat of the music and switched directions when the teacher played a tambourine. For this activity, students were separated into smaller circles to allow students to have more active, hand-on time with the materials. The two teacher aides assisted in supervising the extra groups. This activity would have been more challenging to control without the

extra supervision. Even with the additional adults, one group of students was continually off-task and talking to each other.

In addition to spatial challenges, singing games are difficult in combined classes due to time constraints. This means that not every student gets a turn every day. With the singing games, Alice indicated that she makes adaptations to keep students engaged in the music making process, even when they are not “it” or it is not their turn. One of these adaptations was observed during the first-grade music class. Students played the game “Lucy Locket” in which one student hid a bean bag and the class sang loudly or softly to assist the “seeker” in finding it. Alice gave the student hiding the pocket a count of 10 to hide it to minimize down time and prevent class disruptions. Before students began singing each time, the teacher rolled foam dice with indications on how to sing the song (i.e. sing the rhythm, tap the beat and sing the words, tap the rhythm and sing the words, etc.). This modification helped engage the students who were not having a turn by giving them a complicated part-work activity. All students were actively engaged in music activities and behavior issues were kept to a minimum.

During the third-grade classroom observations, Alice organized the students into groups by their seating locations. Each student was given their own music staff card and an egg full of animal head beads to use as note heads for a music writing activity. Using the SMART board, she projected short melodic patterns in stick notation for students to notate on their staves. Once every member of the group had their pattern notated, they would press their buzzer for a chance to get the point for that pattern. This example of group work provided motivation for students in the form of a timed competition. Students were kept on task by their desire to win a point for their group. In addition,

students were encouraged to help their teammates who were struggling. In this way, students received individual attention and help from their peers when the teacher was unable to be everywhere at once.

Music teacher preparation. Alice emphatically indicated that her pre-service teacher training had not prepared her for the challenges of teaching combined classes in elementary general music.

Absolutely not! I don't think that you even talked about how you could have these size classes. And if they did, it was just kind of touch on it and go.... I don't think there was any kind of preparedness for this necessarily, and a part of it is just being in the classroom and learning what works, what doesn't and getting that experience. (initial interview, lines 712–716)

She cited on-the-job experience and trial-and-error practices for her proficiency and success in teaching combined classes. Instructional strategies such as pacing, smooth transitions, and being able to move quickly with little to no downtime are good teaching strategies teachers in any size classroom employ. These become more important in classes with large numbers of students. Alice's ten years of teaching experience and proficiency in lesson delivery clearly contributed to her success in combined classes, ability to manage behavior, and influence student achievement.

Betsy Case Study

Resources.

Number of students. Betsy taught combined classes at all grade levels kindergarten through fifth grade. Her classes consisted of one half each of three separate elementary general classrooms. Grouping for classes was fluid and students were often

switched between rotations due to behavior or instructional needs. The result was one and a half classes worth of students in each music class period. The number of students in each class during classroom observations were as follows: kindergarten 1 ($n = 30$), kindergarten 2 ($n = 28$), and fifth grade ($n = 32$). One teacher aide was present in the room during the kindergarten 1 classroom observation.

Physical space. Betsy's classroom was no larger than an average classroom and felt small for the number of students. Five sets of carpeted, three-step risers were positioned against the back wall in an arc shape with a music rug in the center of the arc facing the white board. Instruments were stored in cabinets and around the perimeter of the room. There was a small amount of free floor space in front of the risers, but overall, the room was crowded.

Betsy cited the small size of the room as a hindrance to doing movement and dance activities as well as being a safety issue.

If we had twenty kids, we could do, you know, lots of movement things. We could focus on individual kids, you know, helping individual kids. We could do the instruments...But, with the amount of kids we have, they run into each other. They poke each other. You know, we've had kids that stepped on each other, you know. Kids that, I've had kids fall off the risers. So, you know, if I only had twenty kids, they could all be on that first riser. (initial interview, lines 467–475)

To compensate for the lack of space in the room, Betsy avoids chase and running games altogether or modifies them so that instead of running, students will do another type of movement such as hopping or jumping to slow them down. She also incorporates movement by splitting students into groups and having one group do the movement

activity at a time while giving other students an assignment or job to do until it is their turn. In addition, she uses more stationary movements and whole group activities moving to music in a non-locomotor fashion. To incorporate folk dancing into the curriculum, Betsy occasionally works with the physical education teacher to combine all classes at once in the gymnasium for a special folk-dancing time. While this allows for adequate space, it also results in additional behavior management issues with the large number of students together at the same time.

Materials and instruments. Betsy indicated that, when it comes to paper and books, she does not feel that she has adequate resources to teach the number of students in her classroom. When books are used, students must share with a partner. She rarely does paper and pencil activities because paper is in short supply and needed for art projects. Betsy supplies many curricular materials and teaching books from her own personal resources. She indicated that when she first arrived at her current school, her room was lacking in instruments and music supplies. She stated, “As far as materials, I think I’m doing better than I was before” (initial interview, line 398). In the past six years, she has acquired several sets of classroom instruments and was given a substantial budget this year providing for the purchase of several barred instruments, standing drums, ukuleles, temple blocks, and a variety of other classroom percussion instruments. Despite these classroom additions, students still must share the instruments. Betsy expressed the desire to procure additional barred instruments for more individual attention, but also mentioned that she was not sure where she would be able to store them in her room. Her lack of classroom space limits the amount of

resources that she can acquire to provide adequate supplies for her students in combined classes.

Classroom interaction.

Classroom management. Betsy shared that more students in the classroom results in more behavior issues.

When you have more kids, then of course you are going to have more issues, more behavior things, and you have more kids that don't get along or, you know, you have something going on over there and you deal with that, then something else is going on on this side, and you know, the more people you have in a small space, then just they're closer and they're, you know, you have more issues. (initial interview, lines 93–98)

Betsy said it is important to stay on top of things when it comes to off-task behavior but admitted she does not catch everything because of the large numbers in her room. She added that classroom management is a consideration in taking turns in singing games and on instruments. Students who are not actively taking a turn must be given a task to complete while they are waiting, or their attention is lost and behavior issues increase.

The combination of portions of three different general elementary classes in one room presents social consideration in that students from different classes come into the music room with students they do not normally see during the day. Betsy had the freedom to switch students between rotation groups with the PE teacher, allowing for regrouping of students that need to be separated or who perform better with another group.

Student–student interactions. Betsy stated that students in a large group tend to interact with each other more often than in smaller groups where it is easier to keep students focused and engaged. She cited difficulties in keeping students on track. This was observed during the fifth-grade class observation when two students sitting at the back of the risers were often off-task and talking to each other during the lesson because they were towards the back and out of Betsy’s immediate line of sight when she was working with the other side of the room.

Teacher–student interactions. While Betsy indicated that she did not feel like there was a difference in student–teacher interactions in larger classes as opposed to smaller classes, she indicated that having more students makes it more difficult to give each child one-on-one attention. She struggled to help every student who needed help within the time allotted for each activity.

You know, if someone’s having trouble and struggling, um, you’ve got larger groups and they kind of, I don’t want to say get pushed aside, but at the same time I can’t spend as much time helping them. (initial interview, lines 426–428)

Impacts on instruction.

Curriculum. Betsy indicated that she prefers seeing kindergarten through third-graders every day for twenty-five minutes because they seem to retain more information and progress more quickly than if she were to see them every other day for fifty minutes as she does with the fourth- and fifth-graders. When asked about curricular materials with which she has found success in combined classes, Betsy cited World Music Drumming as a successful tool in combined classes. She has enough drums to have two students per drum taking turns and switching quickly. “If we were just to sing, that

would be easy. If they were just all choir, sing, that's all we did, that would be easy, but we don't do that" (initial interview, lines 517–519). Despite the challenges, Betsy incorporates instruments and movement into her curriculum by adapting delivery for her unique challenges.

Assessment. Betsy cited difficulties with assessment in larger classes due to the amount of time it takes to hear students perform individually. "I'll make a mental note that so-and-so doesn't have it or whatever and I'll go on, but we have to move quickly, because otherwise you lose them" (initial interview, lines 108–110). Betsy conducts a lot of informal formative assessment and does less than she would ultimately like due to time constraints. Students are more often assessed in groups while taking turns on barred or percussion instruments or performing singing parts. It is difficult to do one-on-one activities, so any solo singing assessments must be brief and move quickly.

Lesson planning and delivery. Betsy began each class with non-verbal cues. Instead of echoing vocal exploration and melodic patterns, Betsy used body percussion patterns with the fifth graders in classroom observations. She repeatedly mentioned the need to move quickly, switch quickly, and keep students busy. The lessons were fast-paced with well thought out transitions and procedures. Betsy emphasized the importance of thinking through every aspect of the lesson and to have plans for how students will move around the room to keep things running smoothly and facilitate transitions.

What I've come to figure out is that you have to have, um, have how you're going to implement it, how you are going to...what way are they going to walk? Which direction are they going to go? How are they going to turn something in?

How are they going to...? And that's all procedures. Having your procedures figured out helps. (initial interview, lines 576–580)

Planning lessons for combined classes requires planning additional time to complete activities in class or planning to spread an activity out over multiple lessons. Giving everyone a turn in large classes takes a longer amount of time. In addition, breaking students into groups and repeating a song several times over so everyone gets a turn with instruments also takes extra time.

The use of instruments in combined elementary general music classrooms requires a different strategy than in a single class where everyone can have an instrument at the same time. Betsy uses a lot of partner and group-work when teaching with instruments. During the fifth-grade classroom observation, students worked together with one ukulele per pair of students. The first group performed a simple strumming pattern on quarter notes and then on eighth notes. While they played the instruments, their partners were instructed to watch and help their partner. In this way, the teacher kept the students busy and engaged when they were not playing instruments and provided peer help to those who were struggling. The students then switched places and repeated the activity before moving on and repeating the process with a new skill. The use of peer assistance helped reinforce the knowledge for the non-playing partner even without the instrument in their hands. This process helped the teacher who could not give one-on-one attention to every student without losing the attention of the class. She also said that she sometimes substitutes instruments such as rhythm sticks, of which she has an adequate supply for everyone to play, in place of those instruments in short supply.

Movement activities and singing games are limited by space when you have large numbers of students. In both the fifth-grade classroom observation and the kindergarten classroom observations, Betsy made use of stationary movement activities. Students moved in semi-structured motions while staying in one place in the room. The teacher called students by groups to come to the floor and find their own space. They then remained in that space while moving arms, marching in place, showing the beat, and moving with a variety of other motions. This stationary movement helps incorporate movement into the curriculum while mitigating safety issues related to the small space. With the students staying in place, the room was still quite crowded, especially with the older, larger students. Betsy indicated that she makes many modifications to traditional singing games to ensure safety and student engagement. She avoids the use of running and chase games unless she changes the movement to something that will slow the students down and prevent collisions (i.e. hopping, jumping, skipping). “I stay away from those games that one or two kids have a turn at a time. I stay away from that, so I do more whole-group things” (initial interview, lines 278–279). Betsy indicated that she often must teach the entire grade level at once on the occasion that the PE teacher is absent and a substitute teacher is not available. At those times, when she has fifty to sixty students at once, she indicated that she only does seated singing activities because there is just not enough space for instruments or any kind of movement.

Music teacher preparation. Regarding preparedness for teaching combined classes, Betsy said, “Training that I had in college did not prepare me for a lot of stuff.... I don’t think I’ve actually been in any class or training that’s dealt with this

issue” (initial interview, lines 566–567, 581–582). Betsy expressed that her pre-service teacher training did not address the challenges of working with large, combined classes. She credited working with the physical education teacher and observation of her classroom management and instructional styles for helping her to become more proficient in teaching large, combined classes. In addition, she expressed that trial-and-error as well as general on-the-job experience taught her how to handle large numbers of students.

Just being here on the job and looking at ok, this is our situation, how can I handle this? What can we do to fix something if it didn’t work? Um, and then, you know, alter and change and.... keep changing. Find out what works, but um, I think each situation, each school is different, and you know, ...what I’ve come to figure out is that you have to have, um, have how you’re going to implement it. (initial interview, lines 572–577)

Betsy stated that her instruction of combined classes is a work in progress and the longer she has taught, the more she has learned about what works and what does not in her unique situation. “I’m not perfect at it, you know, but I’m still working on it” (initial interview, lines 592–593).

Cross-Case Analysis

Both teachers in this study were highly effective in delivering instruction and influencing student achievement in their respective schools. Each had been teaching in their current positions for at least five years and had previously taught in schools where they instructed in single classrooms, giving them the ability to identify what impacts combined classes have on elementary general music education compared to smaller,

single classes. Both teachers were certified to teach music in the state of Oklahoma and had sought professional development and certifications in a variety of specialties. While there were several similarities between the teachers and music programs in both cases of this study, there were also several differences that impacted instruction in their classrooms in different ways.

Resources. Alice taught combined classes comprised of one-half to one-whole homeroom class more than Betsy during classroom observations. Despite these significantly larger class sizes, Alice had a very large classroom space to work with and was able to engage students in more folk dancing and movement activities. The mobility of her risers gave her a flexible class set-up, allowing for wider variety of movement activities and formations. Betsy's small space as well as the furniture and instruments in the room made the class feel crowded and prevented her from engaging in as many movement and dance activities as she would have liked.

Both Alice and Betsy received assistance from their schools in acquiring large numbers of new instruments. Despite the numbers of instruments available, both teachers expressed the need for additional instruments for full class participation in class activities. While Alice had ample space for storage of additional materials, Betsy indicated that, although more instruments were needed for the number of students in her classes, the space available was not adequate to store additional materials.

Classroom interactions. The half of a homeroom difference between Alice and Betsy's combined classes significantly impacted the student–teacher interactions and classroom management issues. While both teachers effectively managed their respective classrooms, Alice's instruction was fast-paced and high-energy to keep the attention of

the students in her room. Any lapse in activity resulted in an increase of off-task behavior. She moved quickly through activities and transitions, leaving little time to wait for student responses or to give individual, one-on-one attention to students in her classroom. With fewer students in the room, Betsy was able to maintain a more relaxed pace through the lesson and could allow students more time to answer questions than Alice. She was also able to walk around the room and check ukulele fingerings individually during the classroom observation without losing the attention of the entire room. While she still had to modify activities for space and number of students, as well as accommodate for a shortage of instruments during class activities, Betsy did not have to alter the delivery of the lesson to keep students' attention in combined classes as much as Alice did.

A unique factor in Betsy's combined classes was the composition of those classes. Three homerooms were split between two special subject area rotations. Betsy and the physical education teacher chose to split the classes so they would teach one-half of each of the three homeroom classes in each rotation group. This arrangement resulted in a group of students mixed together for music that did not have class together at any other time in the school day. While Alice's double classes also combined students from different homerooms, Betsy's arrangement created an entirely new mix of students with classes no longer intact. Betsy mentioned that she and the physical education teacher at her school would move students freely between the two rotations when they felt it was necessary. This arrangement gave Betsy the ability to group for skills, behavior, and other factors in a way that Alice could not. However, this

arrangement also caused confusion for students and teachers when the rotation groups were fluid and often changing.

Having a smaller number of students in Betsy's split classes as opposed to Alice's double classes made a significant difference in the amount of individual attention that Betsy was able to give to her students and the way in which she instructed. Alice spent very little time helping individual students during classroom observations, while Betsy was able to check ukulele fingerings and allow students a greater amount of time to respond to questions and speak during class. Alice expressed that she felt it was difficult to cultivate personal relationships with students in her room due to the large class sizes she experienced, while Betsy did not feel student-teacher interactions suffered as much in her classroom. She expressed that seeing her kindergarten through third-grade students every day for music instruction for a shorter period of time both helped students to retain information and for her to become familiar with students more quickly.

Impacts on instruction. Both teachers in the study indicated that they felt they were not able to accomplish as much or cover concepts as thoroughly in combined classes as in single classes. They also both expressed that activities took a longer period to complete with more students and that transitions between activities were more difficult in combined classes.

Both Alice and Betsy cited difficulties in assessment as one of the most challenging effects of teaching combined classes. They indicated that individual assessments were difficult to conduct due to the larger number of students and classroom management issues resulting from the time required to complete solo

assessment. Assessment strategies in both cases included conducting assessments in small groups and using informal assessments through teacher observation. Both Alice and Betsy said they do not conduct as much individual assessment as they feel like they should in combined classes.

Alice and Betsy both presented well-prepared lessons with smooth transitions and minimal downtime. They both utilized call and response techniques to start the lesson and to regain student attention. Betsy used more body percussion techniques in call and response patterns while Alice's call and response patterns focused on vocal patterns. Both teachers indicated the need to plan additional time for activities and transitions in combined classes and both classes had consistent procedures that were well-known and followed by students.

Alice utilized technology extensively in her classroom to provide visuals on the SMART board and to play musical examples during the listening part of the lessons. Every classroom observation included interactive visuals, videos, and sound from the SMART board. This gave students a visual focus that kept their attention at the front of the classroom. She had all her visuals and musical examples cued at the beginning of the lesson, avoiding downtime for loading technology. Betsy did not have a SMART board available in her classroom, but indicated that, even with a document camera and projector, she did not use a lot of projection in her room because it was difficult for students to see on the white board and became more of a distraction than a resource. Betsy employed the use of a compact disc player for musical examples and selections for movement activities. Getting selections ready and changing music resulted in a small amount of downtime for students as she had to change discs and find tracks.

While there was some off-task whispering and loss of attention, she was able to get them back quickly once the music started.

Due to the smaller amount of space in Betsy's classroom, she experienced greater difficulty in planning movement activities and games. Her movement and dance activities were somewhat limited to non-locomotor activities and modified games. Alice's large classroom and the mobility of her risers allowed her to continue playing singing games and dancing with her classes. However, she still experienced difficulties with the number of students in her larger classes, as illustrated in placing all forty-eight first-graders in the circle during classroom observations as well as issues with time and attention spans. Alice's large space allowed her to conduct activities with students split into smaller groups because they were able to spread out and make smaller circles during group instruction. This space allowed her to do more student-led, group activities than Betsy because the groups could have space to spread out and work.

Music teacher preparation. Responses to interview questions regarding music teacher preparation were consistent between the two cases. Both Alice and Betsy expressed a strong belief that their pre-service teacher training did not prepare them for the challenges of teaching combined classes. In addition, neither believed that any professional development opportunities outside of college training had addressed these challenges. Both teachers credited on-the-job experience and reflective practice for their current successes with combined classes. Betsy added that she felt working with and observing the physical education teacher at her school, who had several years of experience with combined classes, had helped her to adjust to the challenges and to

become successful. She cited the physical education teacher's mentorship as an invaluable part of her success in combined classes.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the impacts of combined classes on elementary general music education as well as to gather information about how music educators teaching combined classes in elementary general music were adapting instructional techniques and strategies to successfully deliver instruction and achieve curricular goals in combined classes. To this end, two elementary music teachers from different districts were purposefully selected by their survey responses to participate in interviews and classroom observations. Over the course of the study, data were gathered through interviews that provided insight into the challenges faced by music educators teaching combined classes and what techniques and strategies they use to be successful with large numbers of students. Classroom observations were conducted to gather additional data on instructional techniques and strategies as well as modifications made to activities to compensate for the effects of combined classes in the elementary general music classroom.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions reached through extensive analysis of the data. I will first outline the impacts that large numbers of students and the unique social implications of combined classes have on elementary music education and will then expand upon the emergent themes referenced in Chapter 4 and how these themes interact to impact music education in combined classes. Subsequently, I suggest modifications to teaching techniques and strategies derived from participant interviews, observations, and survey responses. I will conclude with recommendations for music teacher preparation to help music educators succeed in large, combined classes.

Impacts of Combined Classes

Classroom management. With teacher attention spread thin, more off-task behavior goes unnoticed and unaddressed leading to loss of class attention and growing management issues. Blatchford, Edmonds, and Martin (2003) found that students in large classes are more often distracted and off-task than students in smaller classes. Depending on the size of the classroom, combined classes can be crowded. Students seated in closer proximity to one another can cause additional conflict and make it difficult to separate students from problems. These difficulties are amplified by the fact that teachers in combined classes have less time to devote to individual students (Blatchford, Basset, & Brown, 2011; Finn & Achilles, 1999; Molnar et al., 1999).

The combination of students from two or more elementary homeroom classes introduces unique social implications into the music classroom. Students coming in to see friends with which they do not usually share a classroom can often result in increased socializing and off-task behavior. Combined classes may require additional time to settle in at the beginning of class and thought as to how to quell the negative effects of these social implications.

Physical space. While more students in a classroom at one time generally create a shortage of physical space for movement and dance activities, the size of music classrooms can vary widely from school to school. The two case studies presented in Chapter 4 are an example of the disparity in physical space available to music teachers. Alice enjoyed a large classroom with enough space for her classes of forty students, while Betsy's classroom was crowded and restrictive for her classes of thirty. The number of students in combined classes and the physical space available for instruction

have an impact on what activities can be done safely and effectively (Hastie, Sanders, & Rowlands, 1999). In the average-size classroom, combined classes cause a shortage of space and make dancing and movement activities difficult in the music classroom without some type of modification or taking turns.

Time. When asked about the impacts of combined classes on their instruction, respondents frequently indicated that activities take more time to complete the more students you have in a classroom. Consequently, teachers must spend more time and an increased number of lessons on a single concept for students to master that concept. Curricular pacing must be slower in combined classes to assure mastery of concepts before moving on in the conceptual sequence.

Materials. What are considered “class sets” of books and manipulatives become inadequate when instructing combined classes. Students in combined classes often must share textbooks and resources unless a teacher is able to procure supplemental materials. The teachers in both case studies indicated that they spent a great deal of their personal resources and time acquiring the necessary supplies for the number of students that they have in their classrooms at any given time. The acquisition of class manipulatives requires a greater financial commitment for each student to have a hands-on, active learning experience.

In both cases, the teachers expressed feeling supported by their administration and school communities. Both had been fortunate enough to have acquired several new instruments in recent years. However, despite the number of instruments at their disposal, both teachers expressed that it still was not enough for every student to be actively engaged at the same time. Students in combined classes often have to share

instruments and take turns in order for everyone to get a chance to participate in instrumental activities. As a result, the repetition of the activities to include several rotations of students takes a longer amount of time than in single classes. While one group of students is having a turn on the instruments, the other groups often lose interest and engage in off-task behaviors. Several teachers surveyed expressed that they did not use instruments as often as they would like in their music classrooms because of these challenges and the increased time requirement.

Individual attention. Difficulties in giving students individual, one-on-one attention in classes with larger numbers of students is a common theme in studies on class size impacts on education (Almulla, 2015; Blatchford, Basset, & Brown, 2011; Finn & Achilles, 1999; Molnar et al., 1999). One of the most frequent responses to the question about the impacts of combined classes on music education in this study was the lack of individual attention that teachers can give each student in large classes. As the number of students in a classroom grows larger, teachers have difficulty giving each student one-on-one attention. With their attention spread thin among many students, teachers struggle to build relationships with their students and get to know their individual personalities and instructional needs.

This decrease in the amount of individual attention teachers can give students results in more whole group instruction with fewer student-led, constructive activities. Students who are struggling often do not get the help and attention they need because the teacher does not have the time or ability to be everywhere at once. Lesson planning and delivery, as well as the types of activities chosen, are impacted by class size (Almulla, 2015) and therefore must be altered in combined classes with larger numbers

of students. Due to increased time requirements for completing activities in combined classes, curricular pacing or curricular elements must be altered to instruct successfully in the time allotted. Challenges in giving one-on-one attention to individual students in combined classes also leads to difficulties in conducting individual performance assessments in the music classroom as teachers in combined class settings often turn to small group assessment in order to save time and avoid straining student attention spans.

Themes

The four main themes that emerged during this study were (a) resources, (b) classroom interaction, (c) instruction, and (d) music teacher preparation. These themes and how they interact determine the type and degree of the impacts that combined classes may have on a music program given the unique circumstances of each. The relationships between these themes and the impacts that they have on the effectiveness and quality of elementary general music instruction are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Factors Impacting Elementary General Music Education in Combined Classes.

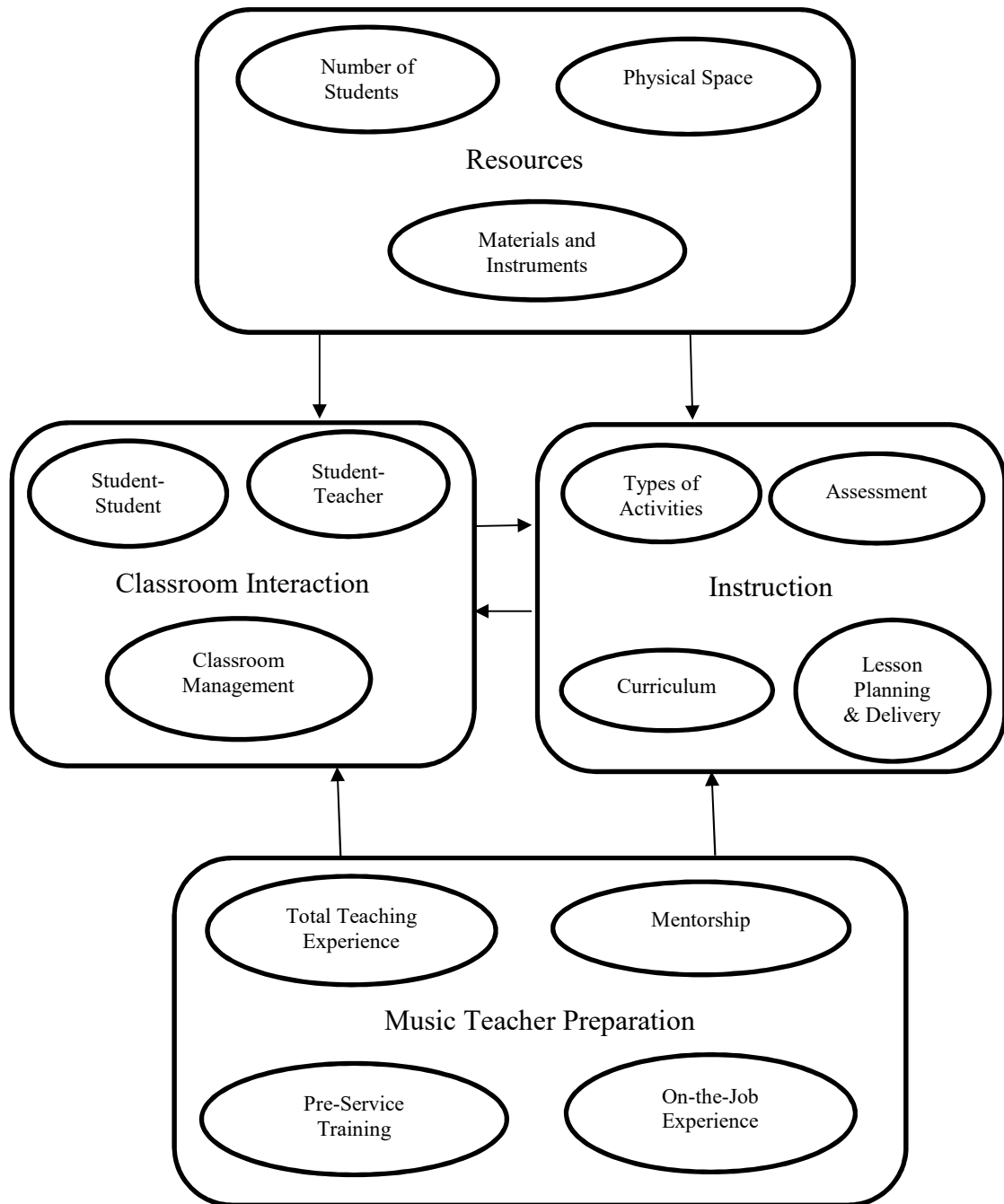


Figure 1. Emergent themes from survey responses and case studies regarding combined classes in elementary general music education. Arrows illustrate the relationships between these factors, how they influence each other, and the impact on the quality of elementary general music education in combined classes.

Resources and music teacher preparedness are located at the top and the bottom of the figure because these two themes are not impacted by variations in any of the other themes presented but do have an impact upon both classroom interaction and instruction. Classroom interaction and instruction are in the center of the figure because they are somewhat variable based upon the effects of the fixed themes as well as the effects from each other. I will now explain the relationship between the themes in greater detail.

The adequacy of resources in a combined class setting is dependent upon the (a) the number of students in the classroom, (b) the amount of materials and instruments available, and (c) the size and configuration of the physical space in the classroom. The combination of these factors determines what impact resources have upon classroom interaction and instruction. Inadequate space in a classroom can impact classroom interaction by causing increased off-task behavior between students in close proximity and can impact instruction by limiting the amount and design of dance and movement activities a teacher can safely do in the classroom. In addition, the number of instruments and materials available largely determines what types of activities a teacher can plan for combined classes and how these activities may be designed to compensate for any inadequacies. I will address how teachers may modify activities and strategies later in this chapter.

Music teacher preparedness is determined by several factors including (a) pre-service training, (b) total teaching experience, (c) on-the-job experience, and (d) mentorship. While music teacher preparedness changes over time with increased experience and professional development opportunities, it remains relatively fixed in

the short-term and is not generally impacted by variations in the other themes. A music teacher's experience and training do, however, impact how a teacher interacts with students and what strategies he or she employs for effective classroom management. In addition, a music teacher's cumulative preparation informs how he or she plans, modifies, and executes instruction in his or her classroom including (a) lesson planning and delivery, (b) activities, (c) assessment, and (d) curriculum.

Classroom interaction includes the subthemes of (a) student–student interactions, (b) student–teacher interactions, and (c) classroom management. Classroom interaction and instruction are closely related in that lesson planning and delivery can influence classroom management and student–student interactions through pacing, procedures, and transitions that are built into lessons. The types of activities chosen and how those activities are designed can positively or negatively impact classroom management by how well students are engaged in the activity. Classroom interaction impacts instruction by influencing how much time it takes to complete activities and master curricular concepts and by what kinds of assessment are possible given interactions within the classroom. Classroom interaction and instruction are the most fluid of the themes because they are sensitive to variations in each of the other themes presented and are the most able to change.

Strategies for Success in Combined Classes

Considering the impacts of combined classes on elementary general music education, the challenges these impacts present on instruction, and the findings of previous studies in class size, single classes with smaller numbers of students are better for student achievement than combined classes with larger numbers of students and

should be advocated for whenever possible. However, many factors, such as budget, school population growth, scheduling, and resources, necessitate the combining of homeroom classes for music and other special subject area instruction. Therefore, strategies are needed for teachers to successfully deliver instruction and achieve curricular goals in combined class settings to the maximum extent possible (Almulla, 2015). Both teachers in this study felt confident in their ability to positively affect student growth and achievement in their combined class settings. Though different in personality and instructional delivery, each teacher had effective classroom management and control in the classroom. Students in both cases were engaged throughout their lessons and showing evidence of conceptual mastery.

The following are suggestions for modifications to teaching strategies compiled by the researcher from interview responses and classroom observations. Every school, classroom, and teacher are different. Therefore, what works in one setting for one teacher, may not work for another. These are merely suggestions for possible modifications.

Classroom management. The classroom management strategies witnessed in classroom observations were not any different than those presented in any teacher training program. However, these best practices become even more critical with larger numbers of students where the noise level and behavior issues can get out of hand quickly if not well-managed. What made the teachers in these two cases successful with managing their classrooms was their effectiveness in implementing these techniques. With larger numbers of students, there is no room for downtime and teachers must work hard to keep students engaged and on-task. Having consistent and well-rehearsed

procedures in the music classroom is key to maintaining student attention and on-task behavior. If students know what is expected of them, minimal verbal instruction is needed between activities, reducing the amount of off-task behavior. The fast pace of lesson delivery and well-planned, seamless transitions from one activity to the next contribute greatly to a well-managed classroom. Teachers must think through every transition and movement in the classroom to anticipate any issues before they arise. Downtime must be avoided to prevent the loss of student attention. To this end, teachers should have all materials, including manipulatives, technology, and music examples, prepared before class begins. Call and response techniques and non-verbal instructions are most effective in keeping the lesson moving with as little “teacher talk” as possible.

Planning. The time required to complete activities, to give all students adequate hands-on opportunities, and to assess student achievement in combined classes must be considered in both short- and long-term planning. When planning individual lessons, teachers must allow adequate time for transitions and activities that require taking turns. If an activity will take more time than student attention spans will allow, especially in younger grades, the teacher may wish to extend that activity over multiple lessons to give everyone an individual opportunity. Transitions should be thoroughly planned and considered when choosing activities and sequence. Reducing movement from one formation to another should be considered when sequencing activities during a single lesson.

Due to the increased time required to complete activities and the reduced number of activities that can be completed in a single lesson, teachers in combined classes may need to spend a greater amount of time working on any given concept than

they would in single classes. As a result, the pacing of the curriculum may need to be adjusted to allow students adequate time for mastery. Students would be better served to master fewer concepts than to have only a cursory knowledge of the curriculum prescribed. When alternate pacing of the curriculum is not a possibility, time constraints may necessitate choosing fewer, more efficient activities for teaching certain concepts. Since numbers of students, schedules, frequency of lessons, and duration of class periods, as well as the students themselves, can influence how quickly a class can effectively move through concepts, it is always of utmost importance to continually evaluate the needs of individual classes and groups of students when planning long-term curricular goals.

Group work and student-led activities. In combined classes, teachers struggle to give individual attention to every student due to time constraints and the number of students in need. To alleviate the shortage of teacher attention, it can be helpful to utilize group work and student-led activities.

Student leaders can be extremely helpful in classroom procedures and assisting students who need extra help. Employing students to assist in the distribution of materials and having consistent procedures provides for smoother transitions and allows the teacher to keep the class engaged. In addition, identifying students with quick mastery of concepts and pairing them with those who are struggling can often substitute for one-on-one attention from the teacher when it is not available or in short supply.

Group work is an effective tool in giving students hands-on, active learning experiences while still instructing the whole class. Students may be given individual tasks to complete a while grouped into small teams. Instructing teammates to assist each

other in the completion of the task helps those who need it and reinforcement to students who are able to help their peers. Adding an element of minimal competition by creating a game adds motivation to the activity. Students who are competing to earn a point for their team stay on task because they know there is a time limit and they do not want to disappoint their peers. The requirement for an entire team to complete the task correctly encourages students to help each other and ensures that all students are actively engaged.

Instruments. Depending on individual classroom resources, incorporating instruments into the combined elementary general music classroom can be challenging. Ensuring students are actively engaged throughout the lesson, even when they are not having a turn on the instruments, is vital to classroom management and to allowing all students to have the maximum amount of hands-on, active learning time. Whatever strategy is used to keep students engaged, it is important that rotations on instruments are quick and wait-time is brief. Activities may be split into shorter segments with more frequent rotations to keep students engaged with the activity. In addition, substituting instruments that are readily available for instruments that are in short supply, or writing additional parts for different instruments can help involve more students in a single rotation.

One strategy for success with instruments is to employ peer assistance. This strategy can work well in situations where there are two or three students to an instrument. The students who are not actively engaged with the instrument become the “helpers”. They are instructed to watch and evaluate their partner’s performance on the instrument and offer assistance, if needed. The benefit of this strategy is that the

students without instruments remain engaged. They also reinforce their knowledge and continue learning and practicing concepts by analyzing their partner's performance for accuracy and offering suggestions for improvement.

When working with instruments that require four or more students per instrument, it is important to keep non-instrumentalists engaged. Those without instruments should be tasked with singing, "air playing", or given a body percussion part to keep them learning while they wait their turn. Part-work activities with individual students performing more than one part at a time are even more effective because students will be forced to think and will be less likely to let their attention and behavior wander off-task.

Movement and games. The modifications that a teacher makes to games and movement activities will vary largely with the number of students and size of the physical space available. It is important to consider the limitations of a given situation and to evaluate the effectiveness of different strategies when trying to modify activities for less-than-ideal circumstances.

There are several modifications that can be made when the number of students in combined classes is too large for the space available. First, students may take turns at movement activities. One group may be moving around while the other group freezes like statues. As an alternative, while one group is moving, the other group may be playing instruments, singing, patting the beat, or performing some other learning task. Movement accompaniment activities in which one group of students performs a movement and another group plays an accompanying instrumental melody or ostinato would be well-suited to alleviate the space constraints resulting from a large class in a

small physical space (Keetman, 1970). The important factor is to keep the non-moving students engaged to avoid behavior issues and to maximize active learning time for every student. Another modification for a crowded room is to substitute alternative movements in chase games that involve running. For example, students may be instructed to gallop, skip, hop, race-walk, or perform any other movement that slows them down to promote safety in small spaces. This strategy has the added benefit of helping students to develop a range of locomotor skills. One option for crowded classrooms is to seek out movement activities and games that utilize non-locomotor movement, or those with more structured motions that can be performed safely with large numbers of students in the classroom.

Combined classes in larger music classrooms may have more space to spread out and perform dances and movements. However, depending on the number of students, turn-taking activities and games where only one or two students are actively engaged at a time can prove challenging. Much like the modifications suggested for instrument activities, it is important to keep the students who are not taking a turn at the moment engaged in the activity. This can be accomplished by giving the students not involved in the action of the game an active learning task. Alice used foam dice with different prescriptions for how to sing the song during a game of “Lucy Locket”. Instead of simply singing the song over and over, the students who were not actively hiding or seeking the bean bag had to sing and tap the beat, sing the rhythm and tap the beat, walk the beat and tap the rhythm, or perform any combination of parts depending on what was rolled on the dice. This kept the entire class engaged as well as provided meaningful learning activities throughout the game, preventing management issues, and

promoting active learning for every student. When the large number of students becomes a challenge, even more than the amount of space, it is helpful to choose activities that involve movement and participation from the entire group rather than a few individuals at a time. In addition, adding extra balls or additional students as “it” can accelerate the progression of the game and alleviate stress to the short attention span of younger students. If there is enough space in the room, the teacher may also split the class into two separate groups for games and dances. This strategy, however, makes it more difficult to supervise and instruct two groups at once and, depending on the class and the activity, may result in additional behavior issues. This modification can be particularly useful if the teacher has the assistance of a teacher aide to assist and supervise additional groups.

Assessment. Many surveyed teachers cited assessment as one of the biggest challenges in combined classes. Less time for individual attention makes authentic assessment difficult. Solo assessments require more time in combined classes and test the attention spans of other students in the room. To compensate for these challenges, assessments usually done through solo singing parts and games may be done in duets or trios. This form of assessment is not as authentic for each individual but gives teachers a chance to hear students they might not otherwise and to hear them more often than if attempting individual solo assessments. Record keeping in combined classes can be challenging when assessment must be accomplished quickly and informally over the course of the lesson. To assist in recording informal assessments, teachers can easily make shorthand marks on a seating chart in a pocket protector with wet or dry erase

markers. This allows for the teacher to quickly record individual levels of proficiency without slowing the pace of the lesson or creating unnecessary down time.

Depending upon the resources available, technology can be useful to alleviate the challenges of time available to conduct solo performance assessments. Mobile devices with audio or video recording equipment may be used to allow students to record vocal or instrumental performance assessment for later viewing by the teacher. This would allow teachers to conduct authentic individual assessments without the classroom management or time related issues that can hinder assessment opportunities in the combined music classroom.

Recommendations for Music Teacher Preparation

The teachers in both cases emphatically expressed that nothing in their pre-service teacher training programs, or any training programs since, had prepared them for the challenges that they faced in combined classes. Collegiate training programs in education prepare students for the “ideal” music program. Unfortunately, few teachers find themselves teaching in the “ideal” program. Drastic variations in frequency and duration of music instruction time, amount and arrangement of physical space, number of students in the classroom, combination of classes during music instruction, and resources available create any number of unique challenges in elementary general music education. Because of these variables, it is important to address how a teacher might evaluate their unique circumstances and devise modifications to common teaching strategies to successfully influence student achievement. The previous section offered suggestions for modifications and strategies to alleviate the negative impacts that large class sizes may have on music instruction in combined classes. However, as noted with

the differences between the two teacher cases in the study, each school, teacher, student body, and community are different and will require different approaches for success. It is important for music educators, especially those new to the profession, to have the tools with which to make informed modifications and adapt quickly to the unique challenges they may face in any given program. The following recommendations will be presented by the researcher as a result of this study, but these approaches and suggestions may benefit teachers struggling with a variety of challenges as a result of the circumstances of their individual music program.

Reflective practice. Reflective practice, or trial-and-error, was reported by the teachers in both cases as how they devised strategies that worked best for them in each of their unique situations. First, it is important to reflect upon the specific variables of a music program and predict what possible problems may occur. By doing this, a teacher can then proactively modify existing activities or select different activities based on the needs of their program. When struggling with the challenges of a program, it is important to reflect upon each lesson as it is taught to identify issues and work to modify instruction to remedy those issues. In a study of the relationship between teachers' engagement in reflective practice and music teaching effectiveness, Raiber (2001) concluded that "more effective novice teachers possess greater aptitude for reflection" (p. 164). It is important for new teachers to engage in reflective practice in order to be most effective in meeting the needs of their specific program. Teachers should record their reflections regarding the effectiveness of certain activities to assist with future modifications and planning.

Mentoring. Betsy credited observing and working with the physical education teacher in her school with her ability to effectively instruct and manage the larger number of students in her combined classes. Many first-year teachers are enrolled in mandatory mentorship programs to assist in their first experiences as a teacher. The role of a mentor is often filled by a more experienced teacher in the building, much the way the physical education teacher mentored Betsy in an informal fashion while she adjusted to the challenges of teaching combined classes. Unfortunately, music teachers are often the only music specialists in a school building dealing with challenges that are unique to their subject area. As such, music teacher mentors can be difficult to identify.

As previously discussed, every music program in every school is different and the challenges of each are varied. Providing uniform solutions to issues experienced in the music classroom is ineffective. New music teachers, or any music teachers facing unique challenges, need music teacher mentors who are experiencing success in circumstances like their own (Conway, 2003). A music teacher instructing combined classes for the first time should seek to find another music teacher with combined classes, similar space, and material resources to her own in order to gain useful guidance and advice. Because new teachers may be unfamiliar with area teachers, it would benefit schools and school districts greatly to actively seek thoughtfully selected mentors to assist their new music teachers for success in their positions. However, the onus of securing productive mentoring relationships ultimately belongs to the teacher (Conway, 2015a).

Experience. Both teachers in this study cited on-the-job experience as a contributing factor in their current success with combined classes. In addition, their

proficiency in good teaching practices for classroom management, lesson pacing, transitions, and instructional delivery was essential in their effectiveness during classroom observations. It is not surprising that more experienced educators would more easily have success in combined classes. Therefore, schools with combined class settings in their music programs should do what they can to attract and retain experienced educators and avoid teacher turnover to improve the quality of their elementary general music programs. Making teachers feel supported by their school community and providing them with adequate resources and the space necessary to teach the large numbers of students in combined classes will improve retention of talented teachers.

Teacher preparation. Music teacher preparation for the challenges of combined classes influences the quality music instruction as well as the quality classroom interactions in combined classes. It is therefore important that teachers should be trained in effective strategies to minimize the challenges of combined classes and increase the quality of instruction (Almulla, 2015). Collegiate teacher training programs require pre-service teachers to spend a considerable amount of time in observations, field experience, and internship placements before becoming certified to teach. While there are often efforts made to diversify the types of programs pre-service teachers experience in their training, there is currently no intentional effort to provide field experiences in combined classes with large numbers of students. Because of the considerable variables in the challenges faced by music teachers regarding class size and composition, classroom space, length and frequency of music instruction, and resources available, it would be beneficial for teacher training institutions to be

intentional about providing field experiences in programs including a variety of these circumstances to give pre-service teachers the tools they need to be successful music educators and meet the challenges of whatever position they may accept after graduation (Conway, 2015b).

Limitations and Generalizability

My experience as an elementary music teacher affords me a unique lens with which to view the data in this investigation. Despite my training in music education research, coding procedures were not member-checked, nor were they analyzed by an independent researcher, to improve reliability of presented themes. Because this study only examined two cases of teaching combined classes in music education, it is not meant to be generalized to the entire population. Care should be taken when interpreting the findings and generalizing to similar situations.

Conclusion

In comparing the two cases presented in this study, it becomes clear that every school, every teacher, and every music program is different and requires individualized strategies for success in music instruction. When answering the first research question, “What challenges to music teachers face in combined classes?”, it is important to note that each teacher experienced similar impacts as a result of teaching combined classes. However, those impacts and the degree to which each was felt varied based upon the total number of students in the classroom, the size of the physical space in the classroom, and the resources available. Common impacts experienced to some extent by teachers of combined classes included increases in (a) classroom management and behavior issues, (b) increased time needed for instruction and completing activities, (c)

inadequacy of materials, (d) inadequacy of physical space, (e) difficulties in conducting individual assessment, and (f) less time for individual attention given to students.

The answer to the second research question, “What techniques and teaching strategies do elementary music teachers use to effectively deliver instruction and meet curricular goals in combined classes?”, addresses the modifications to common instructional strategies that teachers in this study made to compensate for the impacts of combined classes felt in their classrooms and to effectively influence student achievement. Common modifications among teachers in this study included (a) more whole-group instruction, (b) fast-paced lesson delivery, (c) modifications to dance and movement activities to fit space and time constraints, (d) modifications to instrument activities to facilitate sharing and part-work, (e) small group assessment as opposed to individual assessment procedures, and (f) utilizing peer assistance and student leaders.

Despite their different challenges, as well as their differences in teaching style and approach, both Alice and Betsy were clearly effective music educators and confident in their abilities to influence student achievement in their respective classrooms. This indicates that, while combined classes are not ideal for music instruction, quality music education is still possible with mindful planning and individualized strategies. Both Alice and Betsy were proficient in best teaching practices and credited their current success in combined classes to their total years of teaching experience as well as their years of on-the-job experience in combined classes. This finding illustrates the importance of (a) recruiting and retaining experienced teachers for music positions in combined class settings and (b) training pre-service

teachers and teachers new to combined class settings in strategies that will allow them to be effective in classes with large numbers of students.

Because elementary general music teachers are often faced with a variety of unique circumstances in any given music program, it is imperative that music teachers are trained in a variety of techniques and are prepared with the tools to modify their instructional strategies to fit the needs of any music position they may accept. Music teachers should not feel obligated to strictly adhere to the tenets of any one particular methodology but should rather be given the agency and knowledge with which to adapt to whatever unique challenges or limitations they may encounter in their classrooms.

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Appendix A: University of Oklahoma IRB Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Approval of Initial Submission – Expedited Review – AP01

Date: February 14, 2018

IRB#: 8984

Principal

Investigator: Sara Louise Romano Riester

Approval Date: 02/13/2018

Expiration Date: 01/31/2019

Study Title: An Investigation of the Impacts of Combined Classes on Elementary Music Education

Expedited Category: 6 & 7

Collection/Use of PHI: No

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Obtain informed consent and research privacy authorization using the currently approved, stamped forms and retain all original, signed forms, if applicable.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications.
- Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related per IRB policy.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Promptly submit continuing review documents to the IRB upon notification approximately 60 days prior to the expiration date indicated above.
- Submit a final closure report at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Fred Beard, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix B: Phase 1 Recruitment Email

Dear Music Teacher,

My name is Sara Riester and I am a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma. I am engaged in research for completion of my master's thesis. As an elementary general music teacher, I invite you to participate in a research project entitled *An Investigation of the Impacts of Combined Classes on Elementary Music Education*, which is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. My goal is to examine the impacts of combined classes in elementary general music education and make recommendations for how music educators may adapt and improve their instruction for large numbers of students encountered in combined classes.

This project is designed in two stages: Phase 1 includes an online survey (detailed below). In Phase 2, I hope to select two survey respondents for subsequent examination by (a) conducting a short 30-minute interview, (b) observing them actively teaching in a combined class setting, and (c) conducting a short, 15-minute follow up interview. These activities will provide more in-depth understanding of how music teachers successfully instruct combined classes in an elementary general music setting.

Below is a link to a short survey, which should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you may choose to remove yourself at any time. Survey responses are collected anonymously (so there will be no way for us to connect your identity to your responses) unless you wish to be considered for Phase 2 of the study. To do so, simply provide a preferred email address at the end of the survey.

Should you choose to participate in this research, we ask that you complete the survey by Wednesday, February 28th.

If you have any questions about the project, do not hesitate to contact me, 405-200-7877, sriester@ou.edu, or the OU Office of Compliance at 405-325-8110. The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.

Thank you,

Sara Riester
Graduate Student, Music Education
sriester@ou.edu

Appendix C: Phase 1 Reminder Email

Hello,

Please accept this reminder message regarding my survey investigating the impacts of combined classes on music education. If you have already responded to the original invitation, I thank you for your time. If you have not yet completed the survey but would still like to, just click the link below and complete the survey by Wednesday, February 28th.

Thank you again for your assistance with my research!

Sara Riester

Appendix D: Online Consent Form

Online Consent to Participate in Research

Would you like to be involved in research at the University of Oklahoma?

I am Sara Riester, a Graduate Student in Music Education, and I invite you to participate in a master's thesis research project entitled An Investigation of the Impacts of Combined Classes on Elementary Music Education. This research is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because you teach elementary general music in Oklahoma. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study.

Please read this document and contact me to ask any questions that you may have BEFORE agreeing to take part in my research.

What is the purpose of this research? The purpose of this research is to investigate the impacts of combining general elementary classrooms for music instruction in order to make recommendations for how music teachers may adapt their instruction for success in large, combined classes.

How many participants will be in this research? About 300 people will take part in this research.

What will I be asked to do? If you agree to be in this research, you will complete an online survey. Based on the survey responses, participants may be selected to complete an interview and observation. You will only be considered for interviews and observation if you elect to provide your contact information at the end of the survey.

How long will this take? Your participation will take approximately 5–10 minutes (survey). In addition, I anticipate an initial 30-minute interview, a single observation, and a 15-minute follow-up interview after the observation for those participants selected for Phase 2 of the study.

What are the risks and/or benefits if I participate? There are no risks and no benefits from being in this research.

Will I be compensated for participating? You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this research.

Who will see my information? In research reports, there will be no information that will make it possible to identify you unless you choose to include your email address for consideration of participation in Phase 2 of the project. Should you elect to include this information, it will only be used to link your responses to your identity for continued participation. No identifiable information will be presented in any publication of findings. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records.

Do I have to participate? No. If you do not participate, you will not be

penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If you decide to participate, you don't have to answer any question and can stop participating at any time.

Who do I contact with questions, concerns or complaints? If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research or have experienced a research-related injury, contact me at Sara Riester: 405-200-7877, sriester@ou.edu.

You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or if you cannot reach the researcher(s).

Please print this document for your records. By providing information to the researcher(s), I am agreeing to participate in this research.

This research has been approved by the University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus IRB.

IRB Number: 8984

Approval date: 2/13/2018

Appendix E: Online Survey

Online Consent to Participate in Research

Would you like to be involved in research at the University of Oklahoma?

I am Sara Riester, a Graduate Student in Music Education, and I invite you to participate in a master's thesis research project entitled An Investigation of the Impacts of Combined Classes on Elementary Music Education. This research is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because you teach elementary general music in Oklahoma. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study.

Please read this document and contact me to ask any questions that you may have BEFORE agreeing to take part in my research.

What is the purpose of this research? The purpose of this research is to investigate the impacts of combining general elementary classrooms for music instruction in order to make recommendations for how music teachers may adapt their instruction for success in large, combined classes.

How many participants will be in this research? About 300 people will take part in this research.

What will I be asked to do? If you agree to be in this research, you will complete an online survey. Based on the survey responses, participants may be selected to complete an interview and observation. You will only be considered for interviews and observation if you elect to provide your contact information at the end of the survey.

How long will this take? Your participation will take approximately 5–10 minutes (survey). In addition, I anticipate an initial 30-minute interview, a single observation, and a 15-minute follow-up interview after the observation for those participants selected for Phase 2 of the study.

What are the risks and/or benefits if I participate? There are no risks and no benefits from being in this research.

Will I be compensated for participating? You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this research.

Who will see my information? In research reports, there will be no information that will make it possible to identify you. Should you elect to include your contact information for consideration of participation in Phase 2 of the project, will only be used to link your responses to your identity for continued participation. No identifiable information will be presented in any publication of findings—pseudonyms will be used when referencing individual participants. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records.

Do I have to participate? No. If you do not participate, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If you decide to participate, you don't have to answer any question and can stop participating at any time.

Who do I contact with questions, concerns or complaints? If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research or have experienced a research-related injury, contact me at Sara Riester: 405-200-7877, sriester@ou.edu.

You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or if you cannot reach the researcher(s).

By clicking to enter the survey, I am agreeing to participate in this research.

**This research has been approved by the University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus IRB.
IRB Number: 8984 Approval date: 2/14/18**

- I agree to participate (enter survey).
- I do not wish to participate.

Section 1: Demographic Information

What levels are you currently teaching? (mark all that apply)

- Preschool/Elementary
- Junior High/Middle School
- High School
- Private/Studio

Skip To: End of survey if Preschool/Elementary is not selected.

What grade levels do you currently teach? (Select all that apply)

- Pre-Kindergarten
- Kindergarten
- 1st Grade
- 2nd Grade
- 3rd Grade
- 4th Grade
- 5th Grade
- 6th Grade

In your opinion, your school district is (choose one).

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban
- Not sure

How many years have you been in your current position? (include this year)

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30
- Over 30 years

What is your current employment status?

- Full-time teacher
- Part-time teacher
- Other

What is the number of schools at which you currently teach?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

Select your level of education.

- Bachelor's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree + National Board Certification
- Master's Degree
- Master's Degree + National Board Certification
- Doctoral Degree

Are you currently certified to teach elementary general music in the state of Oklahoma?

- Yes
- No

What are your specialties? (mark all that apply)

- General Music
- Band
- Orchestra
- Choral/Voice
- Guitar
- Keyboard
- Other

What certifications do you hold? (mark all that apply)

- Kodaly
- Orff
- Music Learning Theory
- Other

How many total years have you been teaching? (include this year)

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30
- Over 30 years

What is the average number of students in each of the grade levels you teach?

	Less than 20	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51+	Does not apply
Pre-Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1st Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2nd Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3rd Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you teach combined classes (defined as more than one classroom of students during the same period)?

- Yes, all classes I teach are combined.
- Yes, some classes I teach are combined.
- No

Skip to: End of survey if No is selected.

At which grade levels do you teach combined classes? (Select all that apply)

Pre-Kindergarten

Kindergarten

1st Grade

2nd Grade

3rd Grade

4th Grade

5th Grade

6th Grade

Section 2: Instruction, Self-Efficacy, and Work Engagement

Using the scale below, please rate your current level of agreement for each statement regarding the effects of combined classes/class size on instruction in your classroom.

	Strongly agree			Strongly disagree
Classroom management issues increase in large/combined classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have to change my instructional strategies to effectively teach large/combined classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Using the scale below, please rate your current level of agreement for each statement regarding the number of students you teach.

	Strongly agree		Strongly disagree	
My workload is manageable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of students I teach is manageable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach classes that have an ideal number of students in them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have adequate space to teach effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have adequate musical instruments to teach effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have adequate classroom space to teach effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Using the scale below, please rate your current level of agreement for each statement regarding the level of support you feel you receive in your current position.

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree
I feel supported by my administration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel supported by my fellow teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel supported by the parents of my students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel supported by my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Using the scale below, please respond to the following statements regarding self-efficacy (your perception of your ability to meet the demands of your position).

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree
I can effectively teach combined classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can influence student achievement in combined classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can be successful in keeping students engaged with music in my classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can help my students succeed, even when music activities seem difficult for some of my students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can influence my students to become musically literate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most days, I am secure in my music teaching abilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, I think that I can obtain certain outcomes that are important to me at my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compared to other people in my profession, I can do most tasks very well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Using the scale below, please rate your current level of agreement for each statement regarding your work engagement.

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree
I am proud of the work that I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am enthusiastic about my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At my job, I am resilient mentally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you intend to teach music until you reach retirement age?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Section 3: Open-Ended Questions

What impacts do you feel combined classes have on instruction in your classroom?

What modifications do you make to your instruction to compensate for these impacts?

Do you wish to be considered for Phase 2 of the study which will include a brief, initial interview, an observation of teaching, and a short, follow-up interview?

Yes

No

Display the following questions if Yes is selected:

What is your name?

Where do you teach? (school, district, city)

Please provide the email address at which you prefer to be contacted regarding Phase 2 of the study.

Appendix F: Phase 2 Recruitment Email

Dear _____,

Thank you for completing the survey for my research study titled *An Investigation of the Impact of Combined Classes on Elementary Music Education*, which is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. My goal is to examine the impacts that combined classes have on elementary general music instruction and how music teachers in combined class settings adapt their instruction for success with the large numbers of students in combined classes. I have compiled and analyzed all of the survey responses. Based on my analysis I invite you to serve as one of two participants for Phase 2 of this study. By (a) conducting a short 30-minute interview, (b) observing you actively teaching in a combined class setting, and (c) conducting a short, 15-minute follow-up interview, I hope to acquire a more in-depth understanding of how you carry out music instruction in combined classes.

With your permission, and the approval of your building principal, I would like to visit once during your regularly scheduled general music classes between March 5 and March 16. The interviews will take place before and after the observation, in the privacy of your school classroom or office.

Should you choose to participate in this research, I ask that you and your principal respond (to this message) with a message of approval by Friday, March 2.

If you have any questions about the project, do not hesitate to contact me, sriester@ou.edu, 405-200-7877, or the OU Office of Compliance at 405-325-8110. The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.

Thank you,

Sara Riester
Graduate Student, Music Education
sriester@ou.edu

Appendix G: Informed Consent Form

Signed Consent to Participate in Research

Would you like to be involved in research at the University of Oklahoma?

I am Sara Riester, a Graduate Student in Music Education, and I invite you to participate in a master's thesis research project entitled An Investigation of the Impacts of Combined Classes on Elementary Music Education. This research is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma and your school district. You were selected as a possible participant because you provided you completed my survey on the impact of combined classes on elementary music education and agreed to be considered for Phase 2 of the research. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study.

Please read this document and contact me to ask any questions that you may have BEFORE agreeing to take part in my research.

What is the purpose of this research? The purpose of this research is to investigate the impacts of combining general elementary classrooms for music instruction in order to make recommendations for how music teachers may adapt their instruction for success in large, combined classes.

How many participants will be in this research? About 2 people will take part in this phase of the research.

What will I be asked to do? If you agree to be in this research, you will complete a short initial interview, be observed in active teaching of one elementary general music class, and complete a brief follow-up interview at the conclusion of the observation.

How long will this take? Your participation will take the regular length of your elementary general music class and 45 minutes for the initial and follow-up interviews combined.

What are the risks and/or benefits if I participate? There are no risks and no benefits from being in this research.

Will I be compensated for participating? You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this research.

Who will see my information? In research reports, there will be no information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records. will have access to the research records.

You have the right to access the research data that has been collected about you as a part of this research. However, you may not have access to this information until the entire research has completely finished and you consent to this temporary restriction.

Do I have to participate? No. If you do not participate, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If you decide to participate, you don't have to answer any question and can stop participating at any time.

Will my identity be anonymous or confidential? Your name will not be retained or linked with your responses unless you specifically agree to be identified. The data you provide will be destroyed unless you specifically agree for data retention or retention of contact information at the end of the research. Please check all of the options that you agree to:

I agree to being quoted directly. Yes No

I agree to have my name reported with quoted material. Yes No

I agree for the researcher to use my data in future studies. Yes No

Audio Recording of Research Activities To assist with accurate recording of your responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty.

I consent to audio recording. Yes No

Who do I contact with questions, concerns or complaints? If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research or have experienced a research-related injury, contact me at Sara Riester: 405-200-7877 or sriester@ou.edu. You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or if you cannot reach the researcher(s).

You will be given a copy of this document for your records. By providing information to the researcher(s), I am agreeing to participate in this research.

Participant Signature	Print Name	Date
Signature of Researcher Obtaining Consent	Print Name	Date
Signature of Witness (if applicable)	Print Name	Date

Appendix H: Interview Protocol

Teacher Interview Protocol

Teacher Interview Protocol: The Effects of Combined Classes on Elementary Music Education – Riester Thesis

Time and Date of Interview:

Place:

Interviewee:

Demographic Information:

Name:

Age:

Certifications:

Courses Taught:

Years at the School:

Years Teaching Experience Total:

Questions:

1. Describe what impacts you feel combined classes have on instruction in your classroom.
2. If you teach or have taught both combined and single classes, how does your experience teaching combined classes compare to teaching single classes?
 - a. How would you describe differences in classroom management and behavior issues?
 - b. How would you describe differences in assessment techniques?

- c. How would you describe differences in student/teacher and student/student interactions?
 - d. How would you describe the differences in lesson planning and instruction in single and combined classes?
- 3. Describe what challenges or benefits you have experienced teaching combined classes in elementary general music.
 - a. Which grade levels experience the worst effects from combined classes?
How so?
- 4. Describe what modifications you make to your instruction to compensate for the impacts of combined classes in your classroom.
 - a. Describe what specific methods and techniques have been successful for combined elementary general music classes?
- 5. Do you believe that you have the resources that you need to teach the number of students in your combined classes? Why or why not?
 - a. Do you feel that your facility (space?) is adequate for the number of students in your combined classes? Why or why not?
 - b. Describe what resources are lacking and how you handle the allocation of limited resources.
 - c. What additional resources would you need in order to feel able to deliver instruction in combined classes as effectively as in single classes.

6. Do you feel like you are able to effectively deliver instruction and achieve curricular goals in combined elementary general music classes? Why or why not.
7. Do you feel like your preservice teacher training adequately prepared you for the challenges of teaching combined elementary general music classes? Why or why not?
8. How would you improve elementary music teacher training to promote success in combined elementary general music classes?

Appendix I: Observation Protocol

Observation Protocol

Time and Date of Observation:

Location:

Class or event being observed:

Participant:

Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g., weather):

Sketch of space:

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes

Descriptive Notes (continued)	Reflective Notes (continued)

Questions for follow-up interview:

1 **Appendix J: Alice Initial Interview**

2
3 TIME AND DATE OF INTERVIEW: 4:45pm 3/13/18

4
5 PLACE: Interview conducted by telephone

6
7 INTERVIEWEE: Alice

8
9 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

10
11 NAME: Alice

12
13 AGE:

14
15 CERTIFICATIONS: Oklahoma Teaching Certificate–Music
16 PK–12
17 Kodály Levels I–III

18
19 COURSES TAUGHT: General music K–5

20
21 YEARS AT THE SCHOOL: 5

22
23 YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE TOTAL: 10

24
25 (interview starts)

26
27 Author: Describe what impacts you feel combined classes have on instruction
28 in your classroom.

29
30 Alice: Well, I think it's hard to build relationships when there are fifty of them
31 instead of twenty or twenty-five. I think giving kids individual one-on-one
32 time makes it a little more difficult. I think making, um, those personal
33 connections, you make time for it when you can fit it in, but if not, there are
34 always kids who slip through the cracks because you are seeing fifty instead
35 kind of a normal classroom.

36
37 Author: Yeah.

38
39 Alice: Um, I would definitely say there are certain activities I cannot do. There
40 is...my kids get used to not getting a turn, and I don't think they need a turn
41 every single time anyway because you don't have a smaller class. But I think
42 that is definitely part of it, they don't get as many turns and taking assessments
43 is a whole lot harder, because you just don't get that one on one time as easily.

44
45 Author: Yes, definitely. I forgot to ask, what, um, at each grade level, what is
46 your average kids in each class.

47
48 Alice: Um, forty, might be average. Forty, forty-five.
49
50 Author: Ok.
51
52 Alice: I know the top one is fifty and the low one is probably thirty-eight.
53
54 Author: Ok, and what grade levels are those at.
55
56 Alice: The smallest class size is, oh, I'm going to say second grade right now,
57 they have the lower numbers and first grade has the biggest.
58
59 Author: Oh, wow.
60
61 Alice: Yes, they were the little kindergartners last year. First grade is better
62 than kinder.
63
64 Author: Oh, definitely. Sorry, my dog is howling at the sirens. I kicked my
65 family out, but the dog is still here.
66
67 Alice: Oh, you're fine.
68
69 Author: Let's see, if, you're, um, have you taught both combined and single
70 classes or is it all combined?
71
72 Alice: At this school, um, we've just grown a lot in these five years. At first, I
73 did have class and a half, there were three classes per grade level and so we
74 just split one of them because it gives teachers that common plan time. If
75 they're not with me, they are with the PE teacher. Since then, I think when I
76 first got here, every grade level had three classes, except one had four, which
77 again was that first-grade class. Since then, everything has grown, every grade
78 level has four and one grade has five.
79
80 Author: Oh, wow! So, you have two and a half classes?
81
82 Alice: We've blown up in about five years.
83
84 Author: Oh, wow.
85
86 Alice: Yes, I have two and a half classes in first grade.
87
88 Author: Oh, geez. That's a lot!
89
90 Alice: Yeah, it's not fabulous.
91

92 Author: And, so, well I guess I was going to ask how does your experience
93 teaching combined classes compare to single classes, but I guess I could say,
94 how does it compare....
95

96 Alice: Well, and when I, at my other schools they were all single classes. My
97 very first year of teaching was doubles and it was very small, rule setting, I
98 was PreK-12, did the whole choir thing, middle school, but then on my
99 younger grades, because they were so small, fifth and sixth grade was
100 combined, third and fourth grade was combined, and first and second grade
101 was combined.
102

103 Author: Oh, wow.
104

105 Alice: So, walking straight into my first year I had that going on. And so, I
106 mean, I had the doubles. But then, I spent four years in Enid Public Schools
107 and all of those were thirty-minute classes with one class at a time. Since being
108 at [my current position] everything has changed.
109

110 Author: Yeah. How does your experience compare, like, in the combined
111 classes to when you used to teach single?
112

113 Alice: I really feel like I was able to get more done. I saw them three times a
114 week for thirty minutes and I just felt like you could make those connections
115 and get more done within that time. I was seeing them more often, I guess I
116 was seeing them more often, and now I see them twice a week for forty-five
117 minutes, but... really, just, I mean, gah, I think that is the biggest thing.
118 Building those relationships with the smaller class sizes and just feeling like I
119 could get more accomplished.
120

121 Author: Mmmhmmm.
122

123 Alice: Because I do, I mean, that is just something I make sure I do. I over plan
124 for every lesson, and so if we have extra time at the end of the lesson, like, we
125 move on. And I feel like when I had smaller classes, you had a lot more time
126 for that. There wasn't a ton of transition.
127

128 Author: Yes.
129

130 Alice: But with the doubles, every activity takes a little longer. Even if I split
131 them, even if I go to smaller groups, it is still going to take a little bit longer
132 because there are just that many more kids.
133

134 Author: Yes.
135

136 Alice: And for the most part, I mean, my classroom is set up, I don't use
137 chairs. So, we do have, I mean, here we have those flip forms risers.

138
139 Author: Oh, sure.
140
141 Alice: So, the kids can sit kind of on those risers and they can flip down to
142 tables if we need them, but, um, we have a whole lot of floor space in each
143 classroom I've been at. Like, that was just something I learned from [another
144 teacher]. It's so much easier. You have your floor space and then the kids sit
145 on the risers.
146
147 Author: Mmhmm.
148
149 Alice: But, yeah, I can't imagine having fifty chairs in here. I think that would
150 be a nightmare.
151
152 Author: Yeah, definitely. And how would you describe, like, differences in
153 classroom management and behavior issues between the two?
154
155 Alice: I mean, I hate saying that, but I feel like more slips. More slips through
156 the cracks, and you have to be so much more on top of it when there are that
157 many more. I mean, I feel like what we are doing is so much more than a giant
158 play, we're not there to babysit, we're not there to give the teachers a plan time
159 and make sure that.... I mean, I feel like something is taught in my class.
160
161 Author: Mmhmm.
162
163 Alice: The kids, they listen. There is something going on every day. There is a
164 skill I still have to practice and I'm still making sure that they are
165 understanding. Um, yeah, just getting in there and....
166
167 Author: So, you mean they are....
168
169 Alice: I just got off track. Tell me the question again. I went off track.
170
171 Author: How would you describe the differences in classroom management
172 and behavior issues?
173
174 Alice: Oh, I knew it was something with management, but...I just feel like
175 more slips.
176
177 Author: Yes.
178
179 Alice: And I feel like you just have to be more on top of it all the time, every
180 day. Um, and being consistent is the biggest part of it. If that doesn't come
181 naturally necessarily to you, it is a hard habit to get in because they just want to
182 let go and then it works today and it doesn't work the next day. Just being gone
183 for one day....

184
185 Author: Yeah.
186
187 Alice: You have to get them back on track, I feel like, way more than what I've
188 done in previous schools. And it's not the kids, they're awesome kids. It's just
189 the setting of what we are dealing with.
190
191 Author: Mmhmm.
192
193 Alice: Cause really the kids, to me, that hasn't really been a big changing
194 factor.
195
196 Author: Sure. Um, and then in terms of assessment, like, how do you do
197 assessment differently with, um, the large classes?
198
199 Alice: Oh, gosh. I don't feel like I do as much and I don't keep a record as
200 much as I would like to.
201
202 Author: Mmhmm.
203
204 Alice: So that is kind of an ongoing thing. We still try to do a little bit of pen
205 and paper work, but if the kids have a question, if they don't understand it, I
206 can walk over there for a minute, but then all the special ed kids.... I can't be
207 everywhere at once. Some of them come with a one on one, others don't.
208
209 Author: Mmhmm.
210
211 Alice: So, that part has been hard. Anything that has solo assessment, when we
212 are playing Doggie, Doggie game or something with someone singing by
213 themselves, a lot of times we're in partners or trios.
214
215 Author: Mmhmm.
216
217 Alice: And I can at least get a feel for it, but I also can't get...um...I can't think
218 of it...I can't always get an authentic feel because are they singing to match
219 their neighbor, or are they just, you know, clapping what their neighbor is
220 clapping, or do they truly know it? So, that is the only hard thing with having
221 partners.
222
223 Author: Oh, sure, but there's no other way when you get to that point.
224
225 Alice: Yeah, and I hate that, but....
226
227 Author: I was trying to think...I don't know if this will be a question later, but
228 how do you do, like, I always struggle with even not having combined classes,

229 but having a little larger classes.... with instruments. Do you do a lot with
230 instruments, or how would you kind of....
231
232 Alice: Oh my gosh, oh, yeah. I don't do near as much as I usually did, like on
233 the Orff side of things. I do, like, Mallet Madness, where we get out one
234 instrument and I do, I just set out as many as I need for the bigger classes, so if
235 I have fifty instruments on the floor then we've got a few gaps if we need it.
236 But that has been, I mean, that has been kind of the biggest thing. Because,
237 again, they are playing one instrument then moving on and playing another
238 instrument then moving on, and so there is always a movement happening and
239 they don't get stuck on one instrument for any length of time. When I do some
240 instruments to accompany a children's book, most of the time everybody gets
241 one, most of the time everybody gets one. I definitely do some world music
242 drumming and there's not nearly enough drums. There's always two kids on a
243 drum and a few left over. Slowly I'm collecting more each time, but yeah,
244 there's always.... they're always having to double up on some of the bigger
245 instruments.
246
247 Author: And then how would you....
248
249 Alice: But its loud.
250
251 Author: Yes, I was going to say, wow!
252
253 Alice: It is loud. Recorders are incredibly loud!
254
255 Author: Yeah, I had to get used to that. I taught beginning band and even with
256 that, the twenty-eight recorders at a time was like, aaahhhhh...
257
258 Alice: Props to you. That's something I don't think I could ever do. Beginning
259 band...that takes a special person.
260
261 Author: Yes. It was interesting. Um, I guess you kind of talked to this before a
262 little bit, but how would you describe the differences with like student to
263 teacher interactions and also like, student to student interactions in the larger
264 classes?
265
266 Alice: Um.... student to student is.... it's ridiculous how much they come in
267 thinking, I mean, they're with, they're not with the kids they see every day,
268 they're not with the kids that are in their class. Yes, they may see them in
269 music and PE every day, but it's like a whole new world because it's "Oh,
270 yeah, my friend's in here" who is in another class. "My buddy is here!" and
271 they just want to shout, you know, across the room or just be a part of it.
272 They're always looking at each other to see, is he doing it? Yeah, he's doing it
273 too. There's a lot of, there's definitely a lot of that. Just, it's a new
274 environment, it's a new...and I guess I can be ok with that, but it's also you

275 have got to get them to the point where they can feel comfortable singing by
276 themselves and feel comfortable doing that. Because, yes, they know their
277 little, you know, small class of twenty and they might feel comfortable doing
278 that, but when you have to do it in front of forty or fifty, it's so much, I mean,
279 they have to.... I have to trick them into it, I have to be honest.

280

281 Author: Yeah.

282

283 Alice: I have to trick them into singing. I've got to make a game out of it or
284 something else to sing. Yeah, yesterday and today we were doing some sort of
285 puppet and we just sang it together as a class and then, "Ok, if you think you
286 can do it, awesome!" One kid did it by themselves and they got to put a piece
287 on the little monster puppet and just create a monster out of it. It was fabulous
288 because they were like, "Yay! I want to do it!" But you can always tell the kids
289 who just never raise their hand. And will I ever get them to sing by themselves
290 in front of the group? That's the hardest part.

291

292 Author: Oh, sure.

293

294 Alice: You can't always pick out, yeah.

295

296 Author: Yeah, that's like a whole new audience of people when you have that
297 many.

298

299 Alice: Oh my gosh! Yes! It is. It is like singing in front of an audience, not just
300 singing in front of the small group of peers you are with all day every day, I
301 mean, you, you add more to it. And they can get used to it, and I do think kids
302 can do it, but at this age, it's so much better for them if they don't have to.

303

304 Author: Mmhmm.

305

306 Alice: If they can find their singing voice and do that comfortably before they
307 get into some of that stuff.

308

309 Author: Mmhmm.

310

311 Alice: I do think that's helpful.

312

313 Author: Yeah. And then, um, can you describe differences in lesson planning,
314 uh, and instruction between single and combined?

315

316 Alice: Aw...man.... I'm trying to think what I did with the singles. I mean,
317 anytime we come down to the floor and read a book, it's a giant group and can
318 they see, can they not see? Um, but I know I could fit more songs, more
319 skills.... I could fit more in, or probably the same amount...I probably fit the

320 same amount in my thirty-minute lessons for single classes as I do for my
321 forty-five-minute double classes.
322
323 Author: Mmhmm.
324
325 Alice: And the more comfortable we get, like the more I'm here, the longer
326 I'm here in one building, you know, I'm able to build upon the things. You
327 know, when you first come into a building, you don't know what the teacher
328 before you did, you don't know what they know. Everybody kind of starts at
329 the bottom.
330
331 Author: Right, yeah. I'm experiencing that this year. I'm following someone
332 who was there for like, seventeen years, so it's a...it's a new thing.
333
334 Alice: Oh, for sure. Oh yes.
335
336 Author: And um, kind of going away from the comparing combined and
337 single, um, describe the challenges and/or, um, the benefits you've experienced
338 teaching combined classes in the general music.
339
340 Alice: Scheduling has been so much easier. Anytime there is a program or a
341 need, you know I need them or the PE teacher needs them, scheduling has been
342 a breeze because they're all either with her or I.
343
344 Author: Mmhmm.
345
346 Alice: So, scheduling is definitely a plus on all of that. Um, I guess with the
347 way our school is, if I saw them as a single class, I may only see them once a
348 week. And so, getting to see them more often than not, is always helpful.
349
350 Author: Oh, sure.
351
352 Alice: Because, yeah, we end up seeing them two to three times every week.
353 Some get that going, not always. Fridays are kind of weird. I don't know, I
354 really wish there was a way to get that what [name] and [name] had going on
355 at [school] where it was every fourth day, but every other day, they were
356 getting music, I mean, that's the way to do it.
357
358 Author: Oh, yeah.
359
360 Alice: Oh, that'd be great! I need another me.
361
362 Author: Yeah, if you could just clone yourself, then...
363
364 Alice: Because that was the other think, like, you're putting, like, just last year
365 in the Spring semester you're putting a full-time aide who was just in music

366 with me all the time. And she just finished student teaching, and so she needed
367 something just for the semester, so she just started. But she was at least skilled
368 in music, she kind of got my level. When I did weird things, she just went with
369 it, but that's still, that's just one more person in the room.
370
371 Author: Mmhmm.
372
373 Teacher: It's one more adult in the room, and then when you've got one adult
374 and two other paras, it's a lot of people.
375
376 Author: Mmhmm.
377
378 Alice: Because there were some that were doing that. Yeah, last year I had,
379 when they came with kindergarten and they came with classes of twenty-five
380 or twenty-six, each kindergarten teacher got a full-time aide all day, so those
381 aides came with them to music. So, any time they came to music, those two
382 aides were coming, and any one on one [aides], so I just got used to teaching in
383 front of probably, oh gosh, three or four people, adults, each time.
384
385 (long pause)
386
387 There can be some positives, but, I don't know that I, I don't know that they
388 outweigh what you can get done with singles.
389
390 Author: Yeah.
391
392 Alice: I do love this topic, though. Like, I'm real excited you're doing it.
393
394 Author: Yeah, it was something I...
395
396 Alice: Have you found a lot of teachers that have double classes?
397
398 Author: I have heard of a lot. One of my, um, Kodaly, classmates had really
399 large classes and she asked one day, she asked Bev, "How would you adapt
400 this for forty kindergarteners?" and we all just kind of looked at her like, "You
401 have forty kindergartners?!" and she said, "Oh, yeah". So, that got me thinking
402 about it and I know my own kids have talked about being in class with another
403 half a class. And, um, our only one is first grade has four homerooms and we
404 have three specials, so we have a class and a third, which is, um, only thirty-
405 one as compared to yours, but it's still just, yeah...
406
407 Alice: But that's a lot!
408
409 Author: Yeah, it's still a lot of first graders.
410

411 Alice: I mean that's a lot. There shouldn't have to be a class size of thirty-one.
412 They would not do it to a regular ed classroom in an elementary school. They
413 wouldn't put thirty-one kids into one single regular ed classroom.
414
415 Author: Yeah.
416
417 Alice: But we're expected to.
418
419 Author: Yeah. I started teaching when I started, I put the first and second
420 lessons, I did the same lessons with both levels because they are both kind of at
421 the same place and you could just do so much more with the second grade
422 which was only at classes of about twenty-two...
423
424 Alice: Oh, sure.
425
426 Author: And I didn't dread the instruments.
427
428 Alice: Oh, yeah. It just slows the classes down.
429
430 Author: Yeah, yeah. And what do you think, kind of along the lines of this
431 topic...what grade levels do you feel like experience, like, the worst effects
432 from combining classes and how so?
433
434 Alice: Um, I would say easily the little ones. But they are also the ones that are
435 brand new to school, they're brand new to me, to music. The kinder and first,
436 that's where those foundations are laid and you can't always lay a lot of those
437 foundations with so many. I mean, the things I do can teach them, but it's not
438 my very favorite. And then the middle schools start in band and maybe choir,
439 like my middle school growing up did. I know the band growing up had a ton
440 of kids in it usually enrolled, but...
441
442 Author: Yeah, I found it was a lot harder to learn names in first grade this year
443 because there's just so many.
444
445 Alice: Oh, it's horrible. And that's what I struggled with last year. My, because
446 I was gone for not quite nine weeks having a baby mid-year, so all those fifty
447 kindergartners I saw every other day, I barely knew them coming back.
448
449 Author: Yeah.
450
451 Alice: You just forget. And so like, I can do some of those name games, the
452 ones where you roll the ball and they say their name back, but do you go
453 around for all fifty kids, because what are the other for-, what are they doing
454 when their turn is done.
455
456 Author: Right.

457
458 Alice: They're going to cause problems, they're going to be a mess.
459
460 Author: Oh, sure.
461
462 Alice: So, like, I would do a row at a time, here, we'll do the top row today,
463 but still. In order to get it done enough times to get their names stuck in my
464 head, it has to be repetitive. When we only had to do twenty to twenty-five
465 students at a time, that wasn't terrible. We could get through that and I could
466 learn their names so fast. But when all those fifty kids came up to first grade,
467 like, I'm still...there's some that, I'm like, I can't even remember. It's like,
468 there's three teachers that belong to that one class of music and I don't know
469 which one you go to.
470
471 Author: Yeah.
472
473 Alice: I mean, basically it's the end of the third nine weeks and I pretty much
474 have an idea, but at Christmas I did not.
475
476 Author: Yeah, yeah. I can always tell when they are in my classroom, but then
477 when they are out of context, I'm like, I...
478
479 Alice: Right. Absolutely. Oh, absolutely.
480
481 Author: When they tell me, "Oh, that's my brother." I say, well, I'm close. I'm
482 in the same family.
483
484 Alice: Yeah, right!
485
486 Author: And then, um, can you describe in a little bit more detail what
487 modifications you make to instruction to, um, kind of compensate for those
488 impacts? I know you have talked a little bit about how you do that, but maybe
489 a little more detail.
490
491 Alice: Um... I mean a little bit, I mean, I do more group work, especially if I
492 have an adult in the room that can help. One that can stay with their student
493 and kind of monitor that group doing the game and I'll monitor another group
494 doing the game. So, there's gotta be a lot of groups. At least, like, you know
495 with some of the bigger games, Acka Backa, and you know, circle games and
496 things like that. It is hard to put fifty in a circle together and make it work.
497
498 Author: Mmhmm.
499
500 Alice: Um, and then, yeah, just not necessarily giving each student an
501 opportunity every time we come to music.
502

503 Author: Mmhmm.
504
505 Alice: I mean that's, I mean I hate that part of it, but not everybody's going to
506 be able to have that turn every time they come to music. So, there are some
507 kids, you know, who may not sing for three or four music lessons, I mean other
508 than what we are doing together.
509
510 Author: Sure.
511
512 Alice: And definitely instruments. I don't pull them out near as often as I
513 would if I only had twenty-five.
514
515 Author: Mmhmm. Do the kids kind of just get used to that they don't get a turn
516 each time, or...?
517
518 Alice: They do. And especially in kinder and even some in first, they, you
519 know, they vocalize that at the beginning of the year until I say, "You know
520 what, when we've got this many kids in here, we just can't do that." And I'm a
521 firm believer that, yeah, not every kid's going to get a cookie and they've got
522 to get things to earn it, but I just, I can't give every kid that opportunity every
523 class.
524
525 Author: Yeah. And then, um...
526
527 Alice: So, I guess that's the downside to it.
528
529 Author: Oh yeah, yeah. What, um, specific techniques have been really
530 successful for you, um, when you're doing the large classes?
531
532 Alice: Um, callbacks are huge. Just so I can get their attention, because when
533 you get that many loud and talking, and if they're all just talking a normal talk
534 to their neighbor, it gets loud. So definitely having some callbacks and having
535 pretty much, your transitions just have to flow one into the other.
536
537 Author: Mmhmm.
538
539 Alice: Those are the biggest things, because, yeah. I just, I can't plan for
540 downtime because if there's, you know, technology issues or something, like,
541 okay that was up and now we just had a power surge. So, everything just,
542 everything shuts off the computers, which usually happens. Usually in the
543 afternoon when it is windy with first grade or kindergarten and that's fantastic,
544 but....
545
546 Author: Yes.
547

548 Alice: But yeah, um, I think callbacks have been the biggest and then I do have
549 a small spot that they can go if they are kind of being disruptive before I send
550 them out of the room to the office or something. And truly, I think I've sent not
551 even five kids to the office so far this year.

552
553 Author: Mmhmm. I like that. We had a, um, like a safe area when I, um,
554 assisted with PreK and that seemed to be a good, a good, spot for them.

555
556 Alice: Yeah, just giving them that little bit of space, like ok, you're away from
557 the group and you can't be like, funny in front of the group, like you're just
558 going to go hang out for a little bit. And mine's like, in front of the sink. Ok,
559 you're just going to go sit over there.

560
561 Author: Yeah.

562
563 Alice: And then usually, I do let them back, especially if I see them start to
564 sing or participate. Ok, come on back, or they just sat out for that one activity
565 and then they're back in the game, you know. Back in the next game, or
566 whatever we're doing. So, it's not a long time, but just enough to get a break
567 and refocus on where, what their behavior needs to be like. But, that is the
568 other issue. I don't always have time to talk to them about it.

569
570 Author: Mmhmm.

571
572 Alice: Because, I mean, it's happened, and I've tried to more this year.
573 Someone I've sat out, I grab them at the end of class and say, "Do you know
574 why I sat you out today?" and they are like, "No." And I mean, I feel like I can
575 tell when they are telling me "No, I don't know" when they really do. But,
576 there were a couple that truly did not know. So, we talked about it a little bit,
577 and by the time we talked about it there are another forty kids lined up at my
578 door ready to come in.

579
580 Author: Yeah. And then, do you believe that you have the resources that you
581 need to teach the number of students that you have in combined classes and
582 why or why not?

583
584 Alice: Um, uh, resources. I buy most of my manipulatives, like clipboards,
585 pencils, if we need anything like that - markers. Um, our PTA would donate
586 some of that, but I bought a lot of that. Just to get it...just to get it, um, kind of
587 organized the way I that I do want it to be, but like, textbooks.... we didn't, I
588 mean, we didn't adopt this last time for music. We went with Quaver. Because
589 even putting a textbook, and passing out fifty textbooks to every child, that's
590 going to take forever. It takes such a long time. So, if I'm going to do anything
591 from the textbook series, I usually scan it in or put it under the document
592 camera. And so, they're not really getting a hands-on experience with it and

593 holding their own book, but it is funny because if there are certain days, like if
594 I need it for a sub, I pull out the textbooks and it's like a novelty.
595
596 Author: Yeah.
597
598 Alice: So, I think it's hilarious, but, um, if I didn't have a SMART board or a
599 way to project, I think I would have a huge problem.
600
601 Author: Mmhmm.
602
603 Alice: I think they would miss a lot of seeing actual music and seeing different
604 things. I think there would be no way. So, I at least have that, and I don't use
605 the textbooks a ton, but, yeah, even if I did, there is just no way to pass it out
606 and get that all done.
607
608 Author: Mmhmm.
609
610 Alice: But it does, any manipulatives I make or...it takes so many, and you
611 have to have so many packets. If each kid is going to do beat strips, or if each
612 kid's going to do, um, just their own, you know, set of a game if I did
613 Headbands or something, you have to have enough packets for every group of
614 partners. So, I think I have enough resources, if I'm the one buying them and
615 making them. Yes.
616
617 Author: Yeah.
618
619 Alice: But as far as textbooks and that kind of thing, no. There'd be no way.
620
621 Author: Yeah.
622
623 Alice: I can't imagine any school spending enough for fifty textbooks on
624 music.
625
626 Author: Yeah, and then storing them.
627
628 Alice: And with the budget, I don't see any of them.
629
630 Author: Yeah, yeah. And then, do you feel like, um, your space, your room is
631 adequate for the number of students that you see at a time?
632
633 Alice: Um, I think it's good, I do think it's good for forty, but anything above
634 that... I mean, it just seems crowded. Like, those classes of fifty, it's crowded.
635 And they are small people right now, but when they get up to third, fourth,
636 fifth grade, they are going to get bigger, it's going to be huge.
637
638 Author: Yeah.

639
640 Alice: And I think that's going to feel cramped.
641
642 Author: Yeah. So, can you do any, do you do any like, dance at all or those
643 kinds of games?
644
645 Alice: Uh, yes, we do lots of folk dancing. Those flip forms make it a little bit
646 easier because we can just fold them up and roll them out of the way. I mean,
647 we do have space for that, but like, if we don't have time to move all those flip
648 forms, because that does take a little bit, those do take a lot of muscle, they're
649 heavy.... just making a circle, I mean it is like wall to wall. They're sitting up
650 against the risers at the bottom. It's going to be pretty much one giant oval. Not
651 necessarily a full circle, but if I did move those all out of the way, yes, we have
652 some space.
653
654 Author: And then this is kind of along those same lines, but, um, describe what
655 resources, um, you feel are lacking and how you kind of handle, um, how you
656 allocate those.
657
658 Alice: Um.... I think I just do a lot of supplementing, I mean, with either some
659 of the Kodaly stuff or things I've worked out in my long-term plans. And there
660 are just some things I know I'm going to skip or teach a different way. Yeah, I
661 mean, as far as those kinds of resources. And asking for more instruments, it's
662 like "Oh, you already have so many.". Yeah, but that's not enough still for
663 every kid to have one or be on a drum, or you know, like.... I think outside of
664 the classroom, it is not always realized. But, I mean, I am at a very good school
665 that if there are things that I truly feel like I need to fight for, a lot of times
666 there's a way I can get it.
667
668 Author: Yeah. That's always helpful.
669
670 Alice: Yes, that's been extremely helpful.
671
672 Author: Well, I think this one's kind of it. What additional resources do you
673 feel like you need, but I feel like you have covered that with talking about
674 needing additional instruments for kids.
675
676 Alice: Yeah.... yeah.... other than needing another music teacher.
677
678 Author: Yes, second music teacher.
679
680 Alice: Yes, that would be fabulous!
681
682 Author: And then, um, do you feel overall like you are able to effectively
683 deliver instruction and achieve your curriculum in combined music classes and
684 why or why not?

685
686 Alice: Um, overall, yes. Maybe not always how I want to or as quickly as I
687 want to, but overall, yes, we do get lots of things done. Just because of how I
688 choose to pace, how I choose to pace it.
689
690 Author: And how would you describe, um, how you choose to pace it?
691
692 (doorbell, dog barking)
693
694 Alice: Man, that poor puppy!
695
696 Author: Yeah, I think it's my daughter's friend coming to the door. How would
697 you describe how you pace it differently? Um, that helps to be effective.
698
699 Alice: Um, well there's just, there's certain things I skip or don't spend as
700 much time on.
701
702 Author: Ok.
703
704 Alice: Sounds horrible. Yeah, just, I think the longer I'm in the building, the
705 more I'm able to build on their previous knowledge and what they've done
706 from year to year. I mean, that's not necessarily the question, but....
707
708 Author: Well, it is a little bit. And then, let's see, I'm almost done. Um, do you
709 feel like your preservice training adequately prepared you for the challenges of
710 the combined classes and why or why not?
711
712 Alice: Absolutely not! I don't think that you even talked about how you could
713 have these size classes. And if they did, it was just kind of a touch on it and go.
714 I think there was, yeah, I don't think there was any kind of preparedness for
715 this necessarily. And a part of it is just being in the classroom and learning
716 what works, what doesn't and getting that experience, but....
717
718 Author: And my last one is just a big, free, open question. How would you
719 improve, um, elementary music education?
720
721 Alice: Oh, for the love.....I think the only way that I would improve it is
722 having.... oh man, I don't even know how to start. I think you have got to have
723 enough teachers to cover the amount, the amount of students that you're
724 supposed to have. There have to be enough qualified music teachers, not just
725 somebody who plays the piano, and doesn't have a degree, but they can play
726 the piano, because I've seen that many times. There has to be enough. I think
727 being able to.... if you're going to improve it and you're going to make these
728 kids great learners and great musicians someday that will appreciate music,
729 you don't even have to be a professional musician, but to really appreciate it,
730 you've got to see them at least, if not every day, every other day, at least. They

731 should get the most amount of time that can in that classroom. And that's in an
732 ideal world, I know. I know that's not going to happen at least anytime soon,
733 but....in an ideal world you would be seeing, I feel like I would have my
734 students every day. I wouldn't necessarily have to spend weeks on a program.
735
736 Author: Mmhmm.
737
738 Alice: Because I think getting the kids on stage and performing is awesome
739 and it's a good skill they do need to have, but it shouldn't take away from your
740 curriculum. For me that's easier with the younger kids than it is with the older
741 ones. I'm able to write based on a children's book, put some songs they
742 already know together, that sort of thing, but....
743
744 Author: Alright, well, I think....
745
746 Alice: I hope I'm telling you something good.
747
748 Author: Oh yeah, definitely. Is there anything else you want to add that we
749 haven't covered?
750
751 Alice: Well, not off the top of my head. If I think of it later, I will let you
752 know.
753
754 Author: If you think of anything, you can tell me tomorrow.
755
756 Alice: Yeah, there you go.
757
758 (end of interview)
759

1 **Appendix K: Alice Follow-Up Interview**

2
3 TIME AND DATE OF INTERVIEW: 11:50am 3/14/18

4
5 PLACE: Alice's Classroom

6
7 INTERVIEWEE: Alice

8
9 (interview starts)

10
11 Author: How do you assign groups? Do you take time to assign them or do you
12 kind of...?

13
14 Alice: Kind of like what we did today a little bit? Um, no, I just, for the most
15 part I just put them in a seating chart, I just put them in five different groups
16 and my maestros are split down the middle. So, one class that belonged to one
17 teacher was all on this side, and the other class for the other teacher was on that
18 side. So, each nine weeks we sort of flip flop and some will be on the floor,
19 some will be on the risers, but, and they kind of change sides, just because I
20 name them after the orchestra families, it works a lot easier.

21
22 Author: I like that.

23
24 Alice: But these last nine weeks, I'm going to mix them up in their seating
25 charts a little bit. For the most part, we do everything with the brass or with the
26 strings that are sitting in the groups with them, but we've done that so much
27 and I'm about to change and mix them a little bit these last nine weeks so
28 they're all mixed together. So, I wanted to get a little bit of that, just so they
29 get used to working with other people, and I know there's some that always
30 have to work with the special ed kid or some that are always getting frustrated
31 because they can't move fast enough, so I just wanted to mix that part up a
32 little bit.

33
34 Author: Sure.

35
36 Alice: And I know some personalities by now that shouldn't work with other
37 personalities, so that was the biggest thing. I sort of winged it, but I knew
38 which kids were working with what at this point.

39
40 Author: That was kind of my other question was how often do you switch up
41 seating in groups?

42
43 Alice: Just at nine weeks, so fall break, Christmas break, spring break.

44
45 Author: Ok.

46

47 Alice: That's the only way I can learn their names. Except kindergarten.
48 Kindergarten is at the semester. I have to get their names. They're the babies I
49 don't know year to year yet, so...
50
51 Author: Oh, yeah. Definitely. And then, do you grade every research log when
52 you do them? How often do you do them?
53
54 Alice: Yes, I do look over those. I probably do, I mean, typically I do a
55 composer once a month. So, I'm not having to grade every week, I'm not
56 having to do all that. Um, like, I have an idea after this third-grade game, who
57 knows how to write the melodies and which, who kind of still needs some
58 practice with that, but like, last time we've written it do, mi, so were on lines.
59 So, switching it to spaces today, whew, that first round or two! This is going to
60 be rough, but um, so it's kind of participation, but I'm also trying to assess
61 there, but as far as writing actual things, they probably get it every other
62 week.... maybe.... maybe. Some don't do nearly that much. Like, after lunch,
63 they won't get nearly that much. They do lots less.
64
65 Author: Let's see. Oh....and were fifth and third, were they still two complete
66 classes or are they one and a half?
67
68 Alice: The are two. Everybody's two except first grade that is two and a half.
69
70 Author: Oh, fun.
71
72 Alice: Yes, fun. That's a good way to say it.
73
74 Author: And this time, I guess it was because it was the composer time it was a
75 lot of sitting and not a lot of moving....
76
77 Alice: Yes, it wasn't a ton of movement this time.
78
79 Author: Was that just kind of how it fell with the composer things
80
81 Alice: Yes.
82
83 Author: or would you do more moving with smaller groups?
84
85 Alice: Um, no, not necessarily. It's just kind of how it fell this time. I mean, we
86 still move around and play some of the games. We did, like on Friday, we did
87 some things. Like this Monday-Wednesday class, I've seen them twice and
88 then I only saw the other group once. This week, since Thursday's going to be
89 something else, so I wanted to make sure they got that composer in, so
90 Monday they did more of the games and folk dancing just because we'll do a
91 family folk dance at the end of the year in fifth grade. That way I'm not having

92 to teach everything, but they've got a few in their head and they can follow the
93 calls, they know what I mean.
94
95 Author: Yeah.
96
97 Alice: So, that works a lot better than trying to cram them all in at once.
98
99 Author: I think that is most of my follow-up questions. Let me double-check.
100
101 Alice: Oh, wow! You have pages and pages of notes there.
102
103 Author: I just keep writing and writing. Some of it's the same thing and some
104 of it is "Wow, that is cool. I want to use that in my classroom!" When you did
105 the recorder thing did you listen to them in.
106
107 Alice: Groups, the whole group, yes.
108
109 Author: Groups, ok.
110
111 Alice: And I can kind of follow their fingers and I can see which ones are
112 looking at their neighbor or if there's a person who's squeaking. I mean, I try,
113 just because this was the last day, I knew I would probably get groups of five
114 to seven or eight, but I don't normally go higher than five. Just because I want
115 them to be able to hear that sound and do those things, but for the most part,
116 we have smaller groups.
117
118 Author: Yeah.
119
120 Alice: Except today. It's the last day. You don't get it anymore. It's done.
121
122 Author: Yeah.
123
124 Alice: It's done! But it was awesome because they were so excited about the
125 alto recorders.
126
127 Author: Those were awesome.
128
129 Alice: They have been asking and asking and asking and I said when they get
130 past the black belt, when they come in they get to experiment, they get to try a
131 few. And so, they've never seen one, I mean, they've seen mine, but they've
132 never played one, they don't know the notes. They just know it sounds lower
133 and they got to play on it today, see what you think, but some are really excited
134 about it. We could have a recorder choir! That would be great, but we won't.
135 But we won't get that far.
136
137 Author: Well, I think that is all I have.

138
139 (end of interview)
140

1 **Appendix L: Betsy Initial Interview**

2
3 TIME AND DATE OF INTERVIEW: 8:00am 3/21/18

4
5 PLACE: Betsy’s Classroom

6
7 INTERVIEWEE: Betsy

8
9 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

10
11 NAME: Betsy

12
13 AGE:

14
15 CERTIFICATIONS: Oklahoma Teaching Certificate–Music
16 PK–12
17 Master’s Degree in Music Education
18 Conversational Solfege Levels I & II
19 World Music Drumming Level I
20 Orff Level I

21
22 COURSES TAUGHT: K–5 Music
23 K–5 Art

24
25 YEARS AT THE SCHOOL: 6

26
27 YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE TOTAL: 16

28
29 (interview starts)

30
31 Author: Describe what impacts you feel combined classes have on instruction
32 in your classroom.

33
34 Betsy: Larger class sizes. There’s discipline, you know, issues, that, um,
35 because there’s more kids. If we do the instruments, then, you know, we’ve got
36 so many more kids. Because I only have so many of the xylophones. If I set the
37 xylophones up, sometimes there’s four, sometimes five kids in each group, so
38 we have to do it that many times, you know, and we switch. We switch a lot.
39 So that it um, it takes more time. You know, it takes more time. It’s, it’s, you
40 know it’s harder to have, um, to keep their attention. We’ve got, um, like, I’m
41 going to do the ukuleles. We’ve got one ukulele for every two kids. I managed
42 to get that, so we’ll be switching off and we’re going to work on that today.
43 Uh, we have, let’s see, other space, movement space. Um, it’s kind of hard
44 because, you know, the more kids you have, the less space you have. Then you
45 have kids that, you know, end up getting hurt, running into each other. And
46 then you have the issue of so many that if you have a problem over here, you

47 tend to that, then you get a problem over here, you know. And, I think if
48 you've got less kids, you've got more space to deal with things. You know,
49 they can do more stuff. Like, in here, um, dancing, I do folk dancing and stuff,
50 and, um, it can get hard and sometimes we switch, sometimes they fall on the
51 risers, and sometimes I only have one group do it at a time. You know, because
52 it depends on what it is. Um, but, anyway.

53

54 Author: And have you taught, in your previous positions, have you taught
55 single classes as well?

56

57 Betsy: Yeah, when I was in Cleveland, I taught single classes. Um, but my
58 classroom was about half this size, like, smaller, you know. We only had, I
59 think there was only twenty in each class, eighteen to twenty. And it was my
60 first five years of teaching, though, so it was probably different.

61

62 Author: And how do you, um, how does your experience teaching combined
63 classes compare to teaching single classes?

64

65 Betsy: Um, I learned a lot coming here. Um, on how to deal with large classes
66 because there are times when the PE teacher has to be gone that I have them
67 all. I've got all sixty kids at once. And, or, you know, between fifty-five to
68 sixty-five, yeah, something like that. And we go in the gym and then I teach
69 PE for half the time and music for half the time. So, um, it was, you know, it's
70 easier with smaller groups when, you know, you have the instruments and
71 everybody can have an instrument and then you can do things with that. You
72 can go further with that. Um, but, with the larger groups, you've got to take
73 more time so that everybody has a turn, you know. You've got, um, I don't
74 know. It is easier in some ways that the more kids you have, the, um, more,
75 like you can split them up into different groups and stuff. Or if like, you're
76 doing performances and stuff, you have more people in the performances or to
77 do the different things. Uh, and, so when I was in Cleveland, we had only one
78 teacher for each grade, and so that was all the kids. If I did a performance, I
79 had those twenty kids and that was it. Although, they, you know, their sound,
80 you know, wasn't very loud. It was a small group. Um, but we could, you
81 know, we could, you know do things and I only had one or two kids to an
82 instrument. Here we've got fifty or sixty kids in the grade, so when I do
83 performances, I try, it's really important to me that everybody has something
84 special. So, um, we end up, you know, where I'll have well maybe ten kids
85 playing an instrument instead of two or three kids playing instruments. So, I
86 mean, it's just logistics are a little bit more tricky, I guess you could say.

87

88 Author: And, um, how would you describe differences in classroom
89 management and behavior issues between the two?

90

91 Betsy: Um, it's always hard, um, for classroom behavior. I mean you've gotta
92 try and see everything, catch everything. There are things, of course, that I

93 don't catch. But, when you have more kids, then of course you are going to
94 have more issues, more behavior things, and you have more kids that don't get
95 along or, you know, you have something going on over there and you deal with
96 that, then something else is going on on this side. And you know, the more
97 people you have in a small space, then just they're closer, and they're, you
98 know, you have more issues.

99

100 Author: And how would you describe differences in assessment techniques?

101

102 Betsy: That's been hard, because, you know, when you have twenty kids, you
103 can easily go through and you can assess whether they can do the beat and can
104 sing the song or whatever. When you've got more kids, then you have...it
105 takes more time to assess, and I do more of just, um, visual. You know if we're
106 doing the, I don't know, like a bourdon or something on the xylophones. Then,
107 I'll have, you know, everybody, if I have eight xylophones or eight
108 glockenspiels, I'll have those eight play and then I'll see and I'll make a mental
109 note that so-and-so doesn't have it or whatever and I'll go on, but we have to
110 move quickly, because otherwise you lose them. So, um, we, you know, I
111 check and then we move on, but it's harder to do one-on-one things, you know,
112 and to test to see. With kindergarten, we're doing the other day, um, you know,
113 solo singing and improvisation, you know, so singing, creating their own little
114 song. So, you know, I sing, "What'd you do for spring break?" and they had to
115 sing what they did. So that we can go pretty quickly because it's a very short
116 thing, but if I have them sing a solo, you know, like if we're doing "Down By
117 the Bay", and I want them to create their own little part, then not everybody
118 gets a turn. You know, um, sometimes, like when I, when I do their little, you
119 know, when I sing, "What'd you do on spring break?" and then they're
120 answering, um, I move quickly. But, still at the same time, kids, once they
121 have their turn, they're done and they're talking, whispering, but I need to get
122 through everybody. So, you know, it's just...it's harder. It is, you know, and,
123 um...I know with the Feierabend, with the First Steps things, he...he talked
124 about doing the assessment and have them play a drum on the beat so, and you
125 know, sure, sometimes I'll take group A and ok, you're going to go today,
126 group B you're going to go tomorrow, and, you know, just do it that way. Um,
127 because the...it is important, you know, to see and make sure they can do it
128 and see where they're at. Does that make sense?

129

130 Author: Oh, yeah.

131

132 Betsy: I don't know, I'm just going off and...

133

134 Author: Oh, no. It's good. Um, how would you describe differences in the
135 student to teacher and the student to student interactions between large and
136 smaller classes?

137

138 Betsy: Student...teacher...um...

139
140 Author: Well, like the student to teacher interactions, how much you get to
141 interact with them and what kind of interactions you see between students.
142
143 Betsy: Oh, I...I really...I don't think it makes a difference. Really. As far as
144 interactions, because, you know, you start class, you don't have a whole lot of
145 time whether you have a small group or a large group. Um, you know, before
146 class you talk to them and um, you know, you say, "Hi, how are you?" or
147 whatever, you know, how something's going on, you know, ask them stuff.
148 But, I mean, you don't have a lot of time either way, whether you have twenty
149 kids or you have forty kids. It's pretty much the same I would think. Does that
150 make sense for their interactions, I guess?
151
152 Author: Oh, sure.
153
154 Betsy: As far as interactions within themselves, a large group, they're going to
155 interact a whole lot more, you know. And keeping them on track is harder.
156 Um, I don't think it...I don't know. I think the more kids you have and like, if
157 you do small group things then you have more groups to try and keep an eye
158 on because, and that makes it harder because they are, you know, if someone
159 needs help and you're already helping one group then if you've got...there's a
160 difference if you have three groups versus six groups. You know, so that, that
161 makes it more difficult to try and keep everybody on task.
162
163 Author: Oh, yeah.
164
165 Betsy: Does that make sense?
166
167 Author: Yes.
168
169 Betsy: Is that what you were asking?
170
171 Author: Yes. And how would you describe the differences in, um, lesson
172 planning and instructing? Do you do anything differently for the large classes?
173
174 Betsy: Um, lesson planning...um...it is, I don't think I do anything differently
175 as far as what I do, but how I do it. I do things differently, because, like I kind
176 of talked about that where, you know, if we've got instruments or something,
177 you know one instrument per kid versus four instruments, or four or five kids
178 to an instrument, that takes more time and that takes a different strategy. I
179 mean, you're, we're constantly switching, um, and I do switch quickly to try
180 and keep their attention, you know. So, if we were to do um, the xylophones,
181 then we would, you know, do one small little part and switch to have
182 everybody go through that and add the next thing and switch. But, if everybody
183 had an instrument we could do it so much faster. You know, it would make a
184 difference. Um, the one thing with having more kids is that, you know, you got

185 to keep them busy. So, you know, what are they going to do? Are they going to
186 sit there and talk? Are they going to sing? Are they going to do a...um...body
187 percussion? You know, are they going to help each other? That, sometimes I
188 have to help them help each other. You know, watch, ok first group has the
189 ukuleles and I say ok...I did this on Monday where all right, watch your
190 partner. See if they've got it and if they don't have it, help them out, you know.
191 That type of thing. So....

192

193 Author: Mmhmm. Let's see. What challenges or benefits have you experienced
194 teaching combined classes?

195

196 Betsy: Well, challenges, it's more difficult with space and time. Um...behavior
197 is more difficult. Um...making sure everybody has a turn is more difficult. As
198 far as benefits, you've got a lot of, you've got more kids, more, you know,
199 they're different levels, so they can help each other. Um, you know, when
200 you've got more kids you have lots of kids on different levels and you
201 can...that can be a challenge. Um, but it can also be beneficial where, you
202 know, if you've got those leaders that can step up and help. You know, in
203 fourth grade we're doing recorders and I've got...we actually end up splitting
204 the groups to level because, you know, group 1 just those kids move faster
205 with recorders, and group 2, they're a lot slower. So, you know, the PE teacher
206 and I got together and said, ok that kid needs to move because, you know, they
207 don't have it and they're falling farther and farther behind, so we're able to
208 switch that. Um, and we have, um, you know, the benefit of having large
209 classes is that we split them, so we can do that. You know, if you have so and
210 so's class in here you can't say, ok you aren't getting this, you can go to this
211 class, you can't switch them out, you know, to a different class. So that's one
212 benefit, I think, is that you can, you can move them to whichever group that
213 you want or whichever group that they need. And then, um, the same thing
214 though is that if you have more kids, like you have two kids that need to move,
215 that works. If you have, like, ten kids that need to move, that's a problem. So, I
216 mean, I guess, does that make sense?

217

218 Author: And what grade levels do you think experience the...the most
219 challenges from combined classes?

220

221 Betsy: Kindergarten. Kindergarten, because they're so young and they, you
222 know, they all need to...to have that experience and like, we're going to, they
223 do a song and they use the drums so I am going to have group A do it then
224 group B do it, or whichever group I have first, but we'll do it three times. But,
225 you know, kindergarten's attention span is so much shorter that it makes it so
226 much harder to, to do that. And, you know, not everybody has to have a turn.
227 There are things when they don't where so and so doesn't have a turn, you
228 know, I'll have two or three kids have a turn. And then you have the
229 kindergarten "But I didn't get a turn! It's not fair!" You know, so you've got
230 that to deal with, and...you know, because they're so young. I'll tell you, this

231 kindergarten we have, there's about twenty of them that they want to hold back
232 because they are young. They are very young. And there's, you know, a lot of
233 them it's the first year they've been in school and they're not quite ready. So,
234 you know, you've got these kids that are crawling on the floor, falling off the
235 risers, spinning around, touching so and so, and then there's those ones that
236 just talk out and just don't stop, you know. So, when you've got that many kids
237 and all those things put together, it makes it hard. It is.
238
239 Author: Describe what modifications you make to your instruction to
240 compensate for those challenges. I know you've talked about it a little bit, but
241 maybe...
242
243 Betsy: To compensate for...challenges...like...I'm not sure...
244
245 Author: I know you've talked a little bit to it, like when you do singing games
246 and things, do you change them up at all differently than you would do with a
247 single class?
248
249 Betsy: Well, not everybody can have a turn, you know. And, it's...it's...it
250 makes it hard...um...you do it longer. We do it several days, but at the same
251 time, I tell them, because we have so many, I don't sit there with a clipboard
252 and say, "Ok, you had a turn, you had a turn, you had a turn" Um, I'll say,
253 "Ok, if you've already had a turn, let someone else have a turn." You know,
254 because we only have twenty to twenty-five minutes. And, we don't have a lot
255 of time. So, sometimes kids don't have a turn, because we are limited time and
256 we have so many kids to get through. Um, I'm trying to think. I don't know.
257 Does that work?
258
259 Author: Mmhmm. Describe what specific methods and techniques have been
260 successful for you in combined classes.
261
262 Betsy: Methods as in?
263
264 Author: Um, just any things you feel like have been really successful with the
265 large groups.
266
267 Betsy: Um...you mean, like, as far as what I teach?
268
269 Author: Yeah, sort of.
270
271 Betsy: Like...um...I think...successful...you mean, like, movement things or
272 singing games or instruments or...?
273
274 Author: Yeah, any types of, um, instrument activities or singing activities that
275 have been, or that you seem to use more because they're successful with a big
276 group.

277

278 Betsy: Um, I think I stay away from those games that one or two kids have a
279 turn at a time. I stay away from that, so I do more whole group things. Um,
280 where you know, like, we'll do movement where they can do their own thing
281 or I'll have one kid come up and be a leader and they'll do something and then
282 everybody's copying them. And we go through that, but as far as little games,
283 like "Charlie Over the Ocean" or something, running games, anything that's
284 running, I don't do. No running games, because there's too many of them and
285 there's not enough space, you know. So, I don't do that. Um, I've changed
286 some things, like, I'll do a song and instead of running we'll hop, you know,
287 jump on two feet, where if it's a chase game, you...you've gotta you know,
288 jump. Then, of course, you have the kids that run anyway and the kids that go
289 splat. That run into each other, so I try to avoid that. I do more of, um, whole
290 group things where everybody's doing the same thing, like if we're doing a
291 movement, I'll put the music on and we'll do a movement together where
292 we're all doing it at the same time. We do...successful...I think (inaudible) of
293 things. I like the First Steps. Have you looked at that at all? Have you seen it?
294

295 Author: The Feierabend? Yes.

296

297 Betsy: I really like that, and this is actually the first year I've implemented it. I
298 went to the workshop over the summer and then I went to Quartz Mountain,
299 was it two years ago? So, I've started, I'm learning how to implement that. So,
300 I like a lot of what he does in, you know, with the literature and things that
301 have the kids come and sit and listen. I do the instruments, the drum circle I
302 think has been successful with World Music Drumming. Especially with the
303 older kids, because you get the drums in a circle and you have two kids to a
304 drum and you switch. You have to do it pretty quickly. That, uh, um, I think
305 that's been successful. Folk dancing is harder, because of the space. I try to do
306 some, but there are some things that, you know, in here, I can't really do.
307 There are times that we'll go into the gym and have folk dancing time. You
308 know, we combine classes. But then I've got, you know, all of them. I've got
309 sixty to sixty-five kids depending on the grade level, and that makes it harder
310 because, you know, for everybody to do it. There's more space, but there's
311 more kids so you've got the discipline problems because they're not paying
312 attention or whatever. You've got that small group that's paying attention and
313 the other kids just do whatever.

314

315 Author: Yeah.

316

317 Betsy: So, you know, that's, we've accommodated it that way. I don't know, I
318 forgot the question. I'm sorry.

319

320 Author: Oh, it's about successful techniques....

321

322 Betsy: Right, successful techniques...

323
324 Author: I like about the drum circle is very helpful.
325
326 Author: Ok, um...
327
328 Author: I would love to do the Feierabend workshops. I've just kind of got the
329 book right now. Just looking through that and all the storybooks that my kids
330 love. Even the craziest kindergartners, if I sing that to them, they're just still
331 and quiet.
332
333 Betsy: Yes.
334
335 Author: They're magical.
336
337 Betsy: Yes, they can be.
338
339 Author: Do you feel you have the resources you need to teach the number of
340 students that you are responsible for?
341
342 Betsy: I'll tell you a story. When I first came here, um, I walked into this music
343 room and I said, "Where's the music stuff?" because I didn't know I had to
344 teach art, too. I didn't know, I wasn't told that until after I was hired and I said,
345 "Is there an art teacher I can take all this art stuff to?" and they said, "Oh,
346 didn't we tell you...by the way you're teaching music and art." So, but, as far
347 as the, um, that's a whole other issue as far as teaching art, because I don't
348 have the materials for that at all. But, um, the, uh, music stuff, I had the piano
349 and I had the small little instruments that are on the shelf, those red little bells.
350 I used those before I got all the xylophones.
351
352 Author: Mmhmm.
353
354 Betsy: The...behind the piano is a cart where I have some instruments. Since
355 I've been here, I've accumulated all the drums, I've accumulated the ukuleles.
356 The temple blocks, I just got those. All those little drums I got, well, I've had
357 those, but I got those. The, um, I've got a lot of small things, like, you know,
358 the, uh, things that are behind the piano. I got a lot of the chimes and stuff like
359 that. I had nothing here to begin with six years ago, and, since I've been here,
360 I've accumulated things. And just this year, they found a way, the
361 superintendent, I don't know if he had somebody donate money or what it was,
362 but they gave me five thousand dollars in the fall and they just gave me five
363 thousand dollars now, and um, just a couple of, you know, in January, just a
364 couple of months ago. So, I was able to get everything and I'm slowly getting
365 things. So, because when I first started, you know, I found those little black
366 and red, um, you know, the little bells. You know what I'm talking about?
367
368 Author: Yes.

369

370 Betsy: I had those, they were in the closet over here, and they were broken. So,
371 one of the school board members has a hardware store and he actually took
372 them all and drilled, uh, things to put them back together and I used those and
373 the sound was terrible. But, I used them and we were still able to do the skills,
374 it was just the sound wasn't very good. And when we got into, you know, the
375 performances, I think that they're seeing what I'm doing and they're seeing
376 that, oh, we do need to invest in this, so they ended up getting the things. So,
377 now, I do think that I've got, you know, I don't have enough for everybody.
378 I've got the two xylophones, or two glockenspiels and five xylophones, and
379 I've ordered more, we just haven't gotten them yet. But as far as space, I'm not
380 sure where I'm going to put them.

381

382 Author: Yes.

383

384 Betsy: So, I haven't figured that one out yet, but I do have some more coming.
385 Um, and, as far as like, I don't use the books very often. Well, I do use the
386 books, but we have to share because we don't have enough books. So, I do a
387 lot on this, and I'll shine this [document camera] up there where they can see,
388 but at the same time, it's hard to see because, you know, kids are farther away
389 and can't come up to the front, you know, and it makes it hard. Um, as far as, I
390 don't do anything with, um, like using paper and stuff like that. For, usually I
391 try to stay away from using paper for music stuff, because I want them to be
392 actively doing it and if we do any writing, it's on the boards. We have little
393 small white boards. I use that a lot. Um, because we don't have a lot of paper,
394 you know, and I've got to do the art also. For the art, we practice on the little
395 white boards and then we'll do it on paper, but I told them they can only have
396 one piece. If they make a mistake they've got to figure out how to incorporate
397 that into their artwork because they're not getting another piece. And, um, so,
398 as far as materials, I think I'm doing better than I was before.

399

400 Author: Yeah.

401

402 Betsy: I'm doing better than last year. Put it that way. So, yeah, um, like with
403 recorders, I have them buy their own. I've got some in a box here that, uh, they
404 can borrow. Like if a new kid comes and they don't have one, I'll let them
405 borrow one. I just send them to the sink and tell them to scrub it really good
406 with soap and water. Um, as, and as far as all these books and stuff, they're
407 mine. I bought them. I bought everything that's here is mine. All this stuff is
408 mine. I bought all that. All the stuff except for that on top of the filing cabinet.
409 Those books are mine. I've bought...these books are mine. I've bought all the
410 books, like the teacher materials, I bought myself. The First Steps, the
411 Conversational Solfege, I bought that all myself. Um, I think every book
412 except for, because, the ukulele books. They ordered, the school got that when
413 they got the ukuleles, so they actually, you know, got that. Um, the let's see,
414 the book series, you know, the school has that. And, honestly, I use that when,

415 if we are doing a performance and we need a patriotic song, then I'll look and
416 ok, here's a patriotic song. I'll look in the books and like, ok, we've got this
417 song. We're looking for a water song or something. I use it as a reference
418 rather than teaching out of it. Um, as far as other materials, um, I think we
419 need more xylophones. I think we still need more. When you've got four and
420 five kids to an instrument, you know, it's very, very hard. Um, smaller groups
421 would be nice for that. You know, smaller groups are nice when you can then,
422 you can then focus on, you know, helping one kid at a time. Because, you
423 know, when you have large groups, you can't help them. Like, if they need, if
424 there are kids that are struggling, it's harder to spend time, you know with the,
425 with the anything actually. With the recorders, with the xylophones, or drums
426 or whatever. You know, if someone's having trouble and struggling, um,
427 you've got larger groups and they kind of, I don't want to say get pushed aside,
428 but at the same time I can't spend as much time helping them. And I don't
429 know, that probably answered one of the other questions.

430
431 Author: Yeah, a little bit.

432
433 Betsy: I just thought of that. Um, as far as other supplies...I don't have
434 supplies for art as far as that goes. I do not have what I need for that. I need
435 tables, I need chairs. We do art in here and they sit on the risers with the little
436 whiteboards, and I just got brand new white boards because the other ones
437 were falling apart. Like, they're really old and the dark's coming through.
438 They're getting worn down, but I use the back side as a hard surface for them
439 to write on and then of course we use the dry erase markers. So, um, I don't
440 know.

441
442 Author: When do you do art?

443
444 Betsy: Fridays. We do art on Fridays.

445
446 Author: Ok.

447
448 Betsy: And if we don't have school Friday, then we do it on Thursday. We'll
449 back it up. And there are times they're doing performances for music, we don't
450 do art. And, cause, you know, art, usually art projects will take, it can take
451 anywhere...fifth graders...fourth graders, it can take several weeks because I
452 see them every other Friday. And so, um, it takes a long time to get there, in
453 fact the art projects are down there, because we're doing an art show, you
454 know, in April. At least, we're supposed to. We'll see.

455
456 Author: I know you've spoken to this a little bit too, but, um, to maybe expand
457 on it, do you feel like your space you have is adequate for the number of
458 students you have?
459

460 Betsy: Oh, no. No. No, if it, you know, I would love to, you know, to just
461 knock that wall out and add a whole other room there, or you know, knock this
462 wall out and use this room and that room, but that's not an option, so...
463
464 Author: That's not happening anytime soon.
465
466 Betsy: No, you know, a small class...if I had twenty kids in here...oh my
467 goodness, we could do, it would be just amazing. You know, if we had twenty
468 kids, we could do, you know, lots of movement things. We could focus on
469 individual kids, you know, helping individual kids. We could do the
470 instruments. They could put together, you know, all kinds of stuff. Um, they
471 could do all kinds of, you know, really cool performance-type things. But, with
472 the amount of kids we have, they run into each other. They poke each other.
473 You know, we've had kids that stepped on each other, you know. Kids that,
474 I've had kids fall off the risers. So, you know, if I only had twenty kids, they
475 could all be on that first riser.
476
477 Author: Yeah.
478
479 Betsy: You know, I've had kindergartners that are squirrely, not sitting, that
480 have fallen backwards and hit their head. Um, anyway, yeah, that would be
481 kind of cool to have twenty kids in a class.
482
483 Author: Yeah.
484
485 Betsy: That would be, that would be nice. I'd love to see that, but that's not an
486 option, so...
487
488 Author: I think these last two questions I think you have already kind of
489 answered about how you handle sharing resources with the instruments.
490
491 Betsy: They...they, yeah...they just switch. I'll say "switch" or I'll have one
492 group go and the next group and the next group. And then there are things that
493 I only have one instrument. Like we just have one cowbell, or, you know,
494 something like that, and we use, I substitute a lot of things. Like, if there is a
495 cowbell part or something, I'll have one kid do that if we do it for the
496 performance, but if we're in here, I'll say, "Ok, let's use sticks instead."
497 Because that is what I have. I have a lot of sticks, so we just use rhythm sticks.
498 You know, I've got enough sticks to have a pair for each person, I'm pretty
499 sure. You know, if I have one group. If I have all of them, there have been
500 times that I have had all sixty kids and they have been in here. When we have
501 that many kids, we don't...we just sing.
502
503 Author: Yeah.
504

505 Betsy: We just sing. We don't do instruments. We don't do movement. Like, if
506 we do movement, it's just like spider fingers, you know, it's just keeping the
507 beat. Um, or patterns, you know, but, you know, if I've got the whole grade in
508 here, then it's very limited...um, what we do. They sit, they don't even have
509 enough space to sit on the risers. We have to sit them on the risers and on the
510 floor, and you know, we just, we do very limited stuff when we have that.
511

512 Author: And then, do you feel like you are able to effectively deliver your
513 curriculum and your instruction in combined classes, and then why or why
514 not?
515

516 Betsy: Effectively deliver? I think I've learned a lot. It's a work in progress. I
517 think that, you know, I can deliver the stuff that, you know, if we're...if we
518 were just to sing, that would be easy. If they were just all choir, sing, that's all
519 we did, that would be easy, but we don't do that. Um, and, I don't want...
520 doing that. Um, the, I think the delivery is the same either way, but it depends
521 on what we do with it. Does that make sense?
522

523 Author: Yeah, I think so.
524

525 Betsy: Like, I do different things with, if I like, I'm so used to having large
526 groups, that if I had a small group, I think I would have to...it would be
527 another learning curve, you know. It's like, "Ok, well what can I do?" You can
528 do all kinds of stuff, you know, but what? How do we do that? Because I've
529 dealt with large classes since I've been here in Oklahoma. So...I don't know.
530 In Ohio, I didn't have these large classes.
531

532 Author: I'm finding that pretty common with having some kind of combined at
533 some grade level. Even if it's not at every grade level, like with mine being just
534 that one grade level is a little bigger so we have to split them up.
535

536 Betsy: Right, right.
537

538 Author: We just have this whole class, this whole class, this whole class, then
539 we take and sprinkle the other ones...
540

541 Betsy: Yes, ok.
542

543 Author: ...amongst the others. So, it makes it difficult sometimes to remember
544 who goes with what class.
545

546 Betsy: Yes, well, do you take one teacher and ok, your class is going to be
547 split?
548

549 Author: Yes, one class is split, the rest of them stay whole.
550

551 Betsy: Ok.
552
553 Author: Pretty much.
554
555 Betsy: Then you are only dealing with one teacher. That makes it easy.
556 Because every time we have a new kid come in, teachers come and say, “Ok,
557 which group are they in?” and well, let me look. So, then I have to pull up my
558 thing and look and see what kids we’ve got, are they in A, B, or C and look at
559 that group. And, you know, we’ve got to figure out where they go and I
560 somehow ended up getting that job. I think because the PE teacher doesn’t do
561 much computer, so I, I got delegated.
562
563 Author: I think the last one, how do you feel, not how do you feel, but do you
564 feel like your preservice training prepared you for teaching combined classes?
565
566 Betsy: No. No. No. Training that I had in college did not prepare me for a lot
567 of stuff. Um, what I think trained me for combined classes was working with
568 that PE teacher that’s in there.
569
570 Author: Oh, yeah.
571
572 Betsy: That’s what helps. Um, at, just being here on the job and looking at ok,
573 this is our situation, how can I handle this? What can we do to fix something if
574 it didn’t work? Um, and then, you know, alter and change and, and you know,
575 keep changing. Find out what works, but um, I think each situation, each
576 school is different and you know, and I think what’s, what I’ve come to figure
577 out is that you have to have, um, have how you’re going to implement it, how
578 you are going to, what way are they going to walk? Which direction are they
579 going to go? How are they going to turn something in? How are they going
580 to...? And that’s all procedures. Having your procedures figured out helps, but
581 I didn’t...I don’t think I’ve actually been in any class or training that’s dealt
582 with this issue. I mean, you know, I don’t know. Does that make sense?
583
584 Author: Yeah.
585
586 Betsy: And it’s all been trial and error and observation of the other teachers,
587 really. Observation, watching. Because you know, when we’re together, the PE
588 teacher that’s here...she’s been here for thirty-eight years...she, she’s had you
589 know combined and she’s really, really good as far as discipline and control of
590 the class. You know, it doesn’t matter if she has ten or if she’s got fifty or
591 sixty, she, you know, she’s really good. So, I’ve learned a lot from her on how
592 to handle, um, discipline and how to handle that many kids and um, I’m not
593 perfect at it, you know, but I’m still working at it.
594
595 (end of interview)

1 **Appendix M: Betsy Follow-Up Interview**

2
3 TIME AND DATE OF INTERVIEW: 3/21/18 at 10:40am

4
5 PLACE: Betsy's Classroom

6
7 INTERVIEWEE: Betsy

8
9 (interview starts)

10
11 Author: Um, do you like having the K-3, like, just a short time every day or
12 would you...?

13
14 Betsy: Yeah...yeah, I do. I do.

15
16 Author: Does that help a lot with the number of students?

17
18 Betsy: I think it does. I like it because, um, their attention span is so short that
19 you know, we're doing a lot of different things and just have little bit of
20 time...it, it's, it takes, like, it's not as long. Does that make sense?

21
22 Author: Yes.

23
24 Betsy: And it's less time that you have to fill.

25
26 Author: Yeah, definitely.

27
28 Betsy: I like doing every day, you know. I didn't think I would because this is
29 the first school I've ever gone every day because before it was alternating. Um,
30 and, I actually like that because they retain things from...a lot easier, I think
31 they would otherwise. Now, fourth and fifth graders go every other day, and
32 um, and it ends up Fridays get...it's every other Friday, so theirs is a little
33 different schedule, but....

34
35 Author: And then, are the risers a new thing?

36
37 Betsy: No, the risers have been here since...there were here since probably, I
38 don't know a hundred years. Um, but the risers, we just, this summer they put
39 new carpet in here and they put new carpet on the risers, so the carpet is new
40 and the rug is new. We just got it, just before spring break. So, that's why
41 everybody wanted to stand on the rug. It's like, spread out! I got in trouble.
42 Big, big trouble because I put tape on the floor. It was the old carpet, but it was
43 brown tape I put on the floor, and um, you could peel it off easily, but I was
44 teaching the staff and...this was when I first got hired here six years ago....and
45 um, they're like, "You can't put tape on the floor!" and I'm like, "It'll come
46 off." So, anyways, so I couldn't do it. But I've taught the staff different ways.

47 I've took them outside to use chalk on the ground, but that doesn't always
48 work, you know, so this year, um, you know, I asked the principal, I said all
49 right, brand new carpet, I know I'm not going to put any tape on the floor. But,
50 let's, how can I teach this, you know, I need something they can actually, you
51 know, walk on the staff and do. And uh, so we found this rug and they got me
52 the rug. Yeah, that's new. Just starting to use it. Haven't really used it very
53 much, but....

54

55 Author: I was going to say, it looks so nice in here with the new carpet.

56

57 Betsy: It's all new this summer. I had to take everything out and um, they put
58 the new carpet in. My room smelled really bad. Um, and, anytime it rains, still,
59 it still has that weird smell. But, there was, you know, water stains where the
60 leak, the roof leaked. There was somebody, one summer I left and there was, it
61 was fine, but I came back in the fall and there was a big water stain. Like, that
62 big. And we don't know how it got there, but it was right, like, right where that
63 piano is. Right in front of the piano, like right in there. And then the smell just
64 got worse and worse where it's just, so when they took out the carpet, it
65 smelled so much better.

66

67 (end of interview)

1 **Appendix N: Alice Classroom Observation**

2
3 TIME AND DATE OF OBSERVATION: 9:15am 3/14/18

4
5 LOCATION: Alice’s Classroom

6
7 CLASS OR EVENT BEING OBSERVED: K–5 general music class

8
9 PARTICIPANT: Alice

10
11 Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g. weather): second to last day
12 before spring break

13
14 (Start of Observation)

15
16 9:15 – Fourth Grade (42 students, 2 homeroom classes)

17
18 Teacher used voice amplification system

19
20 Students enter and go to assigned seats and prepare recorders

21
22 Students are seated by class, some on flip form risers and some on the floor on
23 sit spots

24
25 *Students obviously know procedures and are well-practiced in them

26
27 Teacher starts class with a call back (“yoo-hoo”) and transitions into echo
28 solfege patterns

29
30 *Very little “teacher talk”, pace is quick with little downtime

31
32 Students watch videos of the Star-Spangled banner by different artists and
33 discuss before voting to advance their favorite in “March Madness”

34
35 Teacher showed raised hand to indicate how students should respond

36
37 *More demonstration than talking

38
39 Quick redirection of off topic comments

40
41 Quick transition to recorders already in the student’s hands on recorder neck
42 straps

43
44 Use of Quaver on the SMART board for recorder instruction

45

46 *Technology to project music was loaded and ready to pull up immediately, no
47 downtime
48
49 “Fine” and eye contact when students talking out of turn
50
51 *Minimized amount of verbal instruction
52
53 Use of a laser pointer
54
55 *Allowed for teacher to move around room while instructing at the board
56
57 “Grab a partner, grab a packet and go to a space in the room” – students
58 practice recorder independently
59
60 *Students moved quickly, knew expectations well
61
62 *High volume while class practiced recorders independently
63
64 Teacher conducted recorder assessments (belt tests) in small groups in the
65 office while supervising the rest through the office window and leaving the
66 door cracked
67
68 *Group assessment, office allowed for concentration on student evaluation
69 apart from the sound of the entire class
70
71 “I need people ready for Twinkle, Twinkle.”
72
73 Spent 10-15 minutes on practice and belt tests
74
75 Dismissal instructions were given quickly and students made two separate
76 lines for each homeroom
77
78 *Short instructions with no follow-up talk.
79
80 10:05 Fifth Grade (34 students, 2 homeroom classes)
81
82 March Madness – Star-Spangled Banner, short introductions to listening
83 examples (just the highlights)
84
85 Teachers called on raised hands quickly with no downtime in between, did not
86 wait long if students did not get the question
87
88 *Quick pacing
89
90 “Impulses, controlling them please”
91

92 *Did not lecture on behavior, short and to the point
93
94 Talked about upcoming research project.
95
96 Discussed the composer of the month with visuals on the SMART board
97
98 *Used the SMART board for the majority of the lesson. Focused students
99 visually and supports interview responses about using projection in lieu of
100 limited books and resources for print.
101
102 Let talking go when it was not bad. Used call backs to get attention back when
103 starting to lose the class.
104
105 Transition to written “research log” for composer of the month, “Who’s in
106 charge of tubs?”, students help with distribution of materials
107
108 *Procedures well-known and followed, student leaders assist with materials to
109 facilitate transition, materials organized into tubs for easy access and quick
110 transitions with little downtime
111
112 Groups got materials to do research logs, class went over answers together
113 from the presentation
114
115 Listened to an example in the research log. Teacher previewed questions
116 before listening.
117 Students turned research logs into bins for the appropriate class on the
118 bookshelf.
119
120 “54321 Let’s go! (with clap back at the end)”
121
122 Group that was ready first with the best behavior lined up first. Groups named
123 for the families of musical instruments.
124
125 *Light competition to keep students on task and accountable to their group.
126
127 10:55 Third Grade (36 students, 2 homeroom classes)
128
129 Teacher got student attention with “yoo hoo” callback and transitioned into
130 echoing s-m patterns
131
132 *Quick, quick start to class with no excessive announcements or talking. Fast
133 pacing.
134
135 Quick, fill in the blank type questions with whole class response
136
137 *Whole class response reduces wait time for raising hands

138
139 March Madness Star-Spangled Banner activity as described above.
140
141 *Teacher was completely in control during listening activities. There was no
142 talking out of turn or goofing around.
143
144 “If I see it again, you owe me lunch.” Teacher gave two warnings before
145 mentioning lunch consequence.
146
147 Students played a staff-writing game in which the teacher put a pattern in stick
148 notation on the board and students transferred it to miniature staves using foam
149 animal head beads as note heads. Every student had their own set of
150 manipulatives and were placed in groups by their seating chart area. When
151 every person in the group had it correct, the group buzzed in on the Eggspert
152 buzzer. The group that was all correct first earned a point.
153
154 *This group activity allowed the teacher to utilize student leaders in assisting
155 struggling students. Teacher instructed students to help their teammates who
156 were not getting it. The competition in the game motivated students to stay on
157 task and to help their friends. All students were actively engaged.
158
159 “If there is someone struggling, help them out. Is yelling helping them out?”
160
161 “I said take them to your seat, follow directions.”
162
163 *Teacher used a calm voice and demeanor in redirections while using as little
164 verbal instruction as necessary.
165
166 1:15 First Grade (48 students, 2.5 homeroom classes)
167
168 One homeroom class was late to class, interfering with the ability of the
169 teacher to quickly engage students. Students already in the room began to lose
170 attention quickly.
171
172 *Teacher indicated tardiness with one class is a common occurrence and
173 causes difficulty in maintaining quick pacing and keeping students engaged.
174
175 Teacher began lesson without the extra class to keep students engaged. Once
176 tardy class arrived, lesson was interrupted while they were seated.
177
178 March Madness Star-Spangled Banner activity (as described above).
179
180 Paraprofessional assigned to music class for first grade entered the room to
181 assist.
182

183 *Later indicated the paraprofessional is assigned to music but is often pulled to
184 other places in the school when needed.
185
186 “Where should your eyes be?”
187
188 *Quick, positive redirection. Teacher was on top of off-task behavior quickly.
189
190 Students were limited to one comment at a time during discussion of the
191 listening activity. Teacher moved quickly to avoid losing attention.
192
193 Teacher called echo patterns starting in “yip yip yee ow” and transitioning into
194 s-m patterns. Teacher gave a quick review of so and mi Music Street story and
195 hand signs.
196
197 Teacher transitioned to the singing game “Tinker, Tailor”. Transition to
198 making a circle took 2-3 full minutes with a lot of instruction and help from the
199 paraprofessional. Students were crowded against walls and risers to make a
200 circle big enough.
201
202 “If you don’t hear me, you’ll sit out”
203
204 *Teacher was very no-nonsense about talking and lack of attention while
205 transitioning. She had to stay on top of it to keep from losing the fragile
206 attention of 6-7-year-old.
207
208 Teacher reviewed the beat of the music: “The beat is the pulse of the music.
209 Boom! Boom! Boom!”
210
211 Teacher added a second ball to speed up the game. The paraprofessional
212 helped supervise the second ball. Teacher then added a third ball to finish the
213 game quickly.
214
215 *The addition of extra balls helped to speed up a game that can take a long
216 time with 48 students at once. Speeding up the game helped avoid loss of
217 attention in the first graders.
218
219 The game was interrupted by a staff member entering the room with questions
220 for the teacher about the sound system. The teacher tried to answer the
221 question in the room but had to leave the class briefly with the paraprofessional
222 in charge.
223
224 *Student attention was lost very quickly during the interaction with the other
225 staff member. The interruption to the game immediately resulted in a rise in
226 talking and off-task behavior.
227
228 If students were talking during the game, they were out immediately.

229
230 *The teacher did not give many warnings and stayed on top of the talking to
231 keep control of the very large class. Students wanted to remain in the game, so
232 were motivated to check their voices.
233
234 “You chose the wrong time.” Teacher shut down the argument that other
235 people were also talking.
236
237 Students returned to seats to play “Lucy Locket”. Teacher tossed a foam dice
238 to determine how students would sing the song (i.e. sing the rhythm, sing
239 words and tap the rhythm, sing words and tap the beat, etc.) Students had 10
240 counts to hide the beanbag.
241
242 *Having students sing the song while performing additional parts (rhythm,
243 beat, rhythm syllables) kept students engaged while they were not “it”. Their
244 brains had to work hard, so they had little time to be off-task. Giving students a
245 time limit for hiding the beanbag avoided unnecessary downtime and loss of
246 attention.
247
248 “Stand and push back.” Students stood up and stepped back on to the risers to
249 stand in a singing formation.
250
251 *Students were well acquainted with riser procedures and completed the task
252 quickly without need for excessive instruction.
253
254 2:05 Kindergarten (42 students, 2 homeroom classes)
255
256 Two paraprofessionals were present in the room during Kindergarten
257 instruction.
258
259 Teacher used siren call backs to start class and do vocal exploration.
260
261 Students practiced songs for an upcoming performance.
262
263 *Teacher used technology to help students practice songs. The technology was
264 loaded and ready with no need for downtime. Pace between songs was quick
265 and students had plenty of movements to keep them engaged.
266
267 Students learned a new song. Teacher used immediate non-verbal cues to keep
268 bodies still.
269
270 *Non-verbal cues facilitated fast pacing. Students were constantly moving and
271 singing.
272
273 Students transitioned to small circles for a ball-passing game.
274 Paraprofessionals helped students to form circles in groups of six. Students

275 passed the ball to the beat and then changed directions when the tambourine
276 sounded.
277

278 Paraprofessionals helped supervise groups, but some groups located out of the
279 line of sight were still off-task quite a bit. One of the paraprofessionals noticed
280 and helped them refocus, but they were off-task and getting goofy as soon as
281 she walked away.
282

283 *The use of small groups helped to keep students engaged with a lot of time
284 actively participating vs. larger groups. However, it was more difficult
285 supervising many small groups as opposed to larger groups.
286

287 Returned to seats to watch a song book on the SMART board.
288

289 At the end of the book, the teacher immediately began a game of “Maestro
290 Says” at lightning speed. There was no arguing about who was out. Teacher
291 reminded students about telling the truth. “Maestro Says” ended in lining up at
292 the door in separate lines for each homeroom.
293

294 *Reminding students about telling the truth promoted self-regulation.
295

296 (End of Observation)
297

298 QUESTIONS FOR FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW:
299

300 How do you assign groups?
301

302 Do your groups change? How frequently?
303

304 Do you grade every research log?
305

306 Do you do a lot of sitting activities, or is that just the way the lesson fell this
307 time?
308

309 Do you listen to the recorder tests in groups or individually?
310

311 Was fifth grade two classes or one and a half? Third grade?

1 **Appendix O: Betsy Classroom Observation**

2
3 TIME AND DATE OF OBSERVATION: 8:50am 3/21/18

4
5 LOCATION: Betsy’s Classroom

6
7 CLASS OR EVENT BEING OBSERVED: K–5 general music class

8
9 PARTICIPANT: Betsy

10
11 Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g. weather): second class after
12 spring break, second ukulele class

13
14 (Start of Observation)

15
16 8:50am Fifth Grade (32 students, half each of three different homeroom classes
17 for 1.5 classes)

18
19 Students entered the room and took their seats on the five carpeted risers.

20
21 Teacher began class with clap backs and body percussion as well as vocal
22 exploration echo patterns.

23
24 *Teacher kept verbal instructions to a minimum and engaged student
25 immediately.

26
27 Teacher reviewed the parts of the ukulele by asking questions and eliciting
28 whole group responses.

29
30 *Whole group responses kept the pacing quick and avoided the downtime of
31 waiting for raised hands. It also kept all students engaged in the review
32 process.

33
34 After review, teacher asked students on the bottom row of the risers to come up
35 and get a ukulele for each set of partners. There were two students to one
36 ukulele.

37
38 *Resources of the number of instruments as well as space to store them
39 necessitated sharing ukuleles.

40
41 The front row played first. The teacher briefly walked around to check correct
42 fingerings.

43
44 *In this case, the teacher was able to give individual attention. There was some
45 chatter and loss of attention in the back row of students.

46

47 Students without instruments were instructed to come sit facing their partners
48 to watch and help the partner playing the ukulele.
49

50 *This group work employed student leadership to help the teacher reach more
51 students. This process helped reinforce concepts and keep students without
52 instruments engaged.
53

54 Students performed a quarter note strum pattern and an eighth note strum
55 pattern and then switched positions with their partner to do it again.
56

57 “If you’re playing while I’m talking, I will take it and give it to someone else.”
58

59 After the ukulele portion of the lesson, the students walked up to hand the
60 teacher the ukuleles to put on the rack behind the risers. Students were called
61 by group to come up and return instruments.
62

63 *There was some talking and milling around from students during this
64 transition, but space for the storage of ukuleles would not allow students to put
65 them away themselves.
66

67 Teacher continued the lesson by performing a body percussion patterns and
68 students imitated with no verbal instructions. The teacher then waited for quiet
69 before continuing.
70

71 The students were asked to perform the complicated body percussion pattern
72 while singing “Are You Sleeping?”.
73

74 *The combination of body percussion and singing kept students busy and
75 engaged.
76

77 Transitioning to a movement activity, the teacher asked students to find a spot
78 in the room one group at a time.
79

80 The teacher had students create movements in one place to represent ascending
81 and descending and high and low. Students were then asked to add a twist or
82 make it different.
83

84 *The small size of the classroom made it very crowded during the movement
85 activity with that many older students.
86

87 The teacher then put music on a CD for students to perform ascending and
88 descending with the phrasing of the music. The track took some time to get
89 started.
90

91 *The downtime waiting for the CD to play resulted in some goofing around
92 and poking each other in the back parts of the classroom.

93
94 Students were then asked to sit down to listen to the teacher sing a book. The
95 teacher sang/read *All the Pretty Little Horses*. She then asked what kind of
96 song it was and what kinds of instruments might be used with it.
97
98 The teacher closed the lesson by asking the students what they learned today
99 and calling on students with hands raised.
100
101 Students were called by group to line up at the door in one long line to return
102 to class.
103
104 9:45 Kindergarten 2 (28 students, half each of three homeroom classes for 1.5
105 classes)
106
107 Classes were late coming into class.
108
109 Began with echo clapping and performing beat motions to music. The teacher
110 started the beat motions and then called on leaders to come to the front and
111 demonstrate a motion.
112
113 *The beat motions at the beginning got students moving immediately and
114 quickly engaged. The desire to be the leader kept students motivated to
115 participate.
116
117 The teacher immediately began singing “A Sailor Went to Sea” and students
118 mimicked the 3 beat motions at the repeated words.
119
120 *Very little verbal instruction kept students from having time to talk out of
121 turn.
122
123 The teacher then explained that the 3-beat pattern would be played on hand
124 drums and had the students practice on pretend drums first.
125
126 One group at a time played the drums, while the other two groups were
127 instructed to be the singers. (“Can you be my singers?”) Groups switched
128 drums after each time through the song. Students with the drums walked over
129 to the next group to hand them the drums.
130
131 *Students had to take turns with instruments. Teacher engaged those without
132 instruments by charging them with the job of singing. Students still became
133 antsy after their turn had passed by the third time through the activity. Having
134 students walk up to the next group with the drums was an effective transition
135 that allowed the teacher to continue supervising.
136
137 Teacher walked around picking up the drums from students.
138

139 *Some downtime occurred with the picking up of instruments.
140
141 After drums were put away, the teacher called students by their group to come
142 to the rug and find a spot. She asked them to kiss their finger and put it on the
143 floor so that they would stay in that spot on the kiss.
144
145 *Effective image for students to remain in their space. Room was still crowded
146 with students on the floor instead of risers. Not a lot of room to move, so
147 stationary movement necessary.
148
149 Students moved in place to the music then put their hands in the air on the
150 sound of the triangle.
151
152 Time was spent finding the music on the CD.
153
154 Students sat down on the rug to transition into listening to a song tale. The
155 teacher used two puppets to sing a song tale to students.
156
157 *The use of puppets kept students focused and engaged in the song.
158
159 The teacher used positive reinforcement. “Zoe raised her hand. Way to go,
160 Zoe!”
161
162 In closing, the teacher asked the students to raise their hand to tell her what
163 they had learned that day.
164
165 10:10am Kindergarten 1 (30 students, half each of three homeroom classes)
166
167 Class did not arrive until 10:15 after switch with PE class.
168
169 There was one paraprofessional in the room assigned to a specific student.
170
171 Same lesson plan and procedures were followed for this Kindergarten group as
172 the last Kindergarten group.
173
174 (End of Observation)
175
176 QUESTIONS FOR FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW:
177
178 Do you like having K–3 classes every day for 25 minutes, or would you prefer
179 the same schedule as 4–5?
180
181 Are the risers a new addition?