

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

Plan B Papers

Student Theses & Publications

7-3-1962

A Study to Determine the Best Organizational Plan for the Seventh Grade

James M. Sprengel

Follow this and additional works at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/plan_b

Recommended Citation

Sprengel, James M., "A Study to Determine the Best Organizational Plan for the Seventh Grade" (1962). *Plan B Papers*. 205.

https://thekeep.eiu.edu/plan_b/205

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Plan B Papers by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE BEST ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN
FOR THE SEVENTH GRADE

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Eastern Illinois University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree, Master of Science in Education

by

James M. Sprengel

July 3, 1962

Plan B

Education 481

Committee

(Advisor)

PREFACE

In this paper the writer will attempt to investigate the types of educational organization used in junior high schools and to come to some conclusions as to the usefulness of the different types and their applicability to the situation in which he is now teaching. He is primarily interested in comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the self-contained classroom as opposed to the departmentalized system. There is a great deal of emphasis on public education at the present time. All facets of its activity are being studied and criticized. There is a wealth of material on this problem written by both experts and laymen. The attempt to collect, evaluate and collate this information has proved to be an educational experience in itself.

The purpose of this paper will be to determine whether the present organization is properly suited to the situation to be described. The writer expects the work to be applicable to his present position and to serve as a basis for the solution of other future problems of organization in the public schools. He does not regard his research as exhaustive, but it has broadened his understanding of educational organization.

Some may question whether teaching is an art or a science or some cross-breed of the two. At one time teaching was regarded mainly as an art. A person was believed to have a knack for

teaching. With the present rate of research in education, it is being gradually defined as a science. In defining it as a science, the worth of the individual student may be neglected. It is the feeling of the writer that the human being is too complex an organism to become a part of an equation which can always be counted upon to provide the perfect or exact results. This paper is an attempt to combine science and art in coming to a usable conclusion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
PREFACE	11
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Situation	
Characteristics of Seventh Grade Students	
The Procedure	
II. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS	5
Self-contained	
Departmentalized	
Block-of-time	
Platoon System	
Little School Design	
Individualized Instruction	
Team Teaching	
III. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	14
Self-contained	
Departmentalized	
IV. PERTINENT RESEARCH AND STUDIES	20
V. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	30
BIBLIOGRAPHY	35

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Situation

The school system in which the writer is now employed is the Gibson City Community Unit District #1. The junior high school is organized along semi-departmentalized lines with a gradual increase in the departmentalization from the sixth through the eighth grades. The sixth grade has special teachers for music, health, and physical education only. The seventh grade has special teachers for music, science, health, and physical education. The eighth grade is completely departmentalized. One teacher is responsible for seventh and eighth grade science. Arithmetic and handwriting are taught by a second teacher. A third teacher presents the area of language arts, and history and civics are taught by a fourth teacher. There is a special music teacher for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. The boy's physical education teacher and the girls' physical education teacher are responsible for both the health and physical education classes for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. An unusual arrangement occurs when the seventh graders have their science classes. The seventh grade teachers teach an eighth grade spelling class during that period.

Characteristics of the Seventh Grade Student

This study will deal particularly with the seventh grade students. So that the characteristics of this age group

may be kept in mind, the following selections have been included here.

General Characteristics of Twelve-Year Olds

1. Uneven period of growth
2. Awkwardness and self-consciousness
3. A big appetite
4. A changing voice
5. Considerable increase in weight
6. Increasing interest in opposite sex
7. Increased desire for recognition of others
8. Curiosity about self
9. Strong loyalties to group or gang
10. Tendency to reject adult guidance
11. Wider interests in the world about him
12. Fears being unpopular
13. Inclined to be boisterous at times
14. Has a critical attitude
15. He usually has a strong desire for highly organized competitive activities and for hobbies which require technical skills and specialized knowledge.

Reasonable Expectations

The seventh grader should show:

1. Greater development in his personality
2. More active participation in group activities
3. A deeper appreciation of contributions made by others for his well-being
4. A deeper appreciation of man's endeavors to improve his way of life
5. Greater ability to express original ideas
6. Increased ability to think for himself in solving some of his own problems
7. Greater mastery of tool subjects
8. Cooperative working with groups and acceptance of decisions cheerfully
9. Increasing ability to select and organize information
10. Keen interest in world affairs
11. Discrimination between fact and propaganda at his age level
12. Possession of a keen interest in his environment
13. A greater love and better understanding of opportunities in the United States.¹

William Gruhn describes the nature of early adolescents quite well. He emphasizes that at no other age are children so

¹M. L. Brooks, Course of Study for Grade Seven, Arizona, State Department of Public Instruction, (Phoenix, Arizona: 1955), pp. 1-2.

different from each other. They have different levels of maturity--physical, psychological, physiological, social, and intellectual. They are different in educational attainment; avocational and recreational interests; and intellectual interests and achievements.

He goes on to say that although the children are quite different from one another, they have many things in common. This is a period of change in the social relationships among children. The boy-girl relationships begin to take form. The sphere of the child's social group extends itself considerably. The children begin to break away from close control by parents and teachers. This is a period of rapid physical change.

He summarizes his article with the following statements:

In summary, then, these are some of the concerns of educators as they plan an educational program to meet the needs of boys and girls during early adolescence:

1. They need to provide a school organization and an educational program which make provision for the great differences one finds among individual children at this age.
2. They need to help children prepare for the changing social relationships between boys and girls and for participation in social activities that become increasingly sophisticated.
3. They need to get pupils ready to participate in social groups that are larger and that extend increasingly beyond the immediate neighborhood into the community.
4. They need to prepare children for greater independence and for self-responsibility for their conduct and actions.
5. They need to help children meet the physical changes that take place during early adolescence.²

Procedure

This paper is an attempt to investigate the types of educational organization used in junior high schools and to arrive

¹William T. Gruhn, "Reaffirming the Role of the Junior High School in the American School System," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XLIV, No. 259 (1960), p. 9.

at some conclusions as to the usefulness of the different types and their relative applicability to a particular situation.

Consideration was given in the preceding section to a description of that situation as well as a discussion of the general characteristics of seventh grade students. In the remainder of this study, the writer will list the different types of educational organizations, analyze the advantages and disadvantages of each, and discuss pertinent research and studies that have been made on this subject. Using the above criteria, a summary and recommendations to the problem will be made.

CHAPTER II

TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS

In investigating the advisability of changing or retaining the existing plan in his school, the writer felt that he should study as many forms of classroom organization as possible. This was done to give him a broader understanding of the different plans. Material from his survey will be contained in this chapter.

Self-Contained Classroom

This plan of organization permits a group of students to receive the attention of one teacher for most of the time during the school day. Chiara¹ suggests that this is not a form of isolation. She sees the teacher as supplementing her personal resources with specialists in particular areas of learning. Community specialists and community facilities would also be used whenever necessary to aid the learning activities. In this type of situation, the learning experiences would be guided by the one teacher so that both common and special interests, needs, and goals are satisfied to the educational benefit of all of the children.

Critics of this plan base their attacks on the assumption that specialized instruction is needed if academic achievement is to be improved. They feel that such specialized instruction

¹Clara R. Chiara, "Effective Education in the Self-Contained Classroom," The Self-Contained Classroom, ed. Edith Snyder, (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, 1960), p. 1.

can't be given in a school based on self-contained classrooms. Foshay¹ wants us to measure organizational plans by a comparison of the potentialities of each. The matter of value is reduced to the ability and quality of the teaching which is carried on. If this is good, then the plan has qualifications which should cause it to have value as a possible base for school instruction.

Departmentalized Classroom

Departmentalization is a system in which the teacher specializes in only one or two subjects. Then, either the students or the teachers move from room to room for the different periods during the school day. The first example we had of this was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' reading and writing schools of the New England states.

. . . each had its own master, its own room and set of studies, and a corps of assistants. The pupils attended each department alternately, changing from one school to the other at the end of each day or half day session, depending upon whether both schools were in the same building or in different parts of the town.²

Then departmentalization faded out for a time from 1850 to 1900.

In the period from 1890 to 1910 there was a movement for some changes in the curriculum of the upper elementary grades. New York City began using a system of departmental teaching in the upper elementary grades in 1900. Other school systems began to pick it up.

By 1913, 461 of the replies from 813 superintendents in cities with populations of 5000 and over indicated the

¹Arthur W. Foshay, The Self-Contained Classroom, ed. Edith Snyder, (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, 1960), p. v.

²Henry J. Otto, Elementary School Organization and Administration, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954), p. 25.

existence of departmental teaching. No doubt the same ideas which led to the introduction of departmental teaching in the upper elementary grades were also important factors in bringing about the first separately organized junior high schools in 1909 and 1911.¹

Some insight to the reasons for using this form of organization can be gained from the following statement concerning the schools of North Reading, Massachusetts. The same reasoning might be applied by anyone wanting to use departmentalization for any grade level.

By the time a child enters the fourth, fifth and sixth grades, he is ready to learn material and ask questions that are far beyond the knowledge of the ordinary general teacher.

The teacher who cannot explain the action of rockets, the principles of skin diving or the splitting of the atom cannot properly teach science to the average fourth grader.

The student is ready for--and he needs--a specialist.

This can be demonstrated most dramatically in the field of science, but it is just as true in every subject.²

By the very fact that junior high schools were organized for purposes that led to the copying of senior high schools, we had a tradition developed for departmentalization.

Block-of-Time

This system of arranging courses seems to be widely used in Illinois. In a survey made in 1960 which involved the Junior High School Principals' Association of Illinois and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, it was found that sixty-one percent of the schools reporting had a block-of-time period. The most common block arrangement found was one in which the language arts and social studies were combined in two

¹Ibid.

²G. C. Coffin, "Are Your Elementary Grades Properly Organized?", School Management, V (December, 1961), 61-62.

or more consecutive periods under the responsibility of a single teacher.

These subjects lend themselves to this type of arrangement because the social studies provide the content by which the skills of the language arts may be used. The need to read a wide variety of materials and to speak and write effectively in the social studies is obvious. This does not mean that the skills of the language arts are not studied apart from their use in the content area. Some schools emphasize the correlation and fusion of subjects while others teach the separate subjects within the "block". Still other schools have advanced the program in the block-of-time to the stage of a problem-centered approach.¹

The block-of-time arrangement gives the student a home-base to help him focus his attention. The teachers have fewer students per day than they would in a departmentalized setup. Other positive values of the system are the better utilization of an effective guidance program and the possibility for greater understanding and retention of the learnings through an integration and enrichment of the materials. Some possible negative values of the arrangement are:

The block-of-time plan makes scheduling more difficult and is complicated by the fact that teachers must often be employed who are not prepared for such a program. There is also a lack of desire by administrators to develop an in-service program of education to assist teachers with the block-of-time period.²

One method of arranging the curriculum within a block-of-time has been called the "core". This system views education as a broad area of interconnected experiences from the fields of social, biological, and physical sciences as well as mathematics, the humanities, and the arts.

¹Illinois, The Illinois Curriculum Program, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, The Junior High School Program in Illinois, Bulletin A-1, 1961, p. 57.

²Ibid.

The significance of reorganizing instruction into more meaningful units and the necessity for blocking instructional time for effective use of direct, firsthand experience have been the concerns of thoughtful educators for many years. Early in this century, the introduction of half-day programs for vocational education, double periods for laboratory courses, and unlimited time after classes for extracurricular activities reflected the necessity for flexible scheduling to make learning more meaningful. On the contemporary scene fresh approaches in the form of educational television, the Trump proposals, independent study, and others have challenged time-honored concepts of the orderly 50-minute schedule and the neatly packaged bodies of subject matter apportioned to the school day.¹

In 1958 the United States Office of Education² found that approximately one-third of the separately organized junior high schools then provided an extended block-of-time for a core type arrangement of learning experiences.

Platoon System

This system has value where school plant facilities are limited. It was first introduced in Bluffton, Indiana around 1900. Its central feature is the division of the school into two groups, or platoons of pupils; and of the curriculum into two major parts--one involving the academic subjects and the other the special subjects. The academic subjects are the responsibility of the homeroom teacher for one half of the day. Special subjects are taught by special teachers during the other half of the day. In practice, one platoon of students would be in its homerooms studying the academic subjects while the other is occupied with the teachers of special subjects. The platoons would switch teachers at the halfway point in each day.

¹Victor B. Lawhead, "A Block of Time--For General Education," Educational Leadership, (December, 1960), p. 148.

²Ibid.

The platoon plan is supported not only by the argument that it makes specialists available, as in the case of the departmental plan, but also on the ground that the curriculum is enriched through the provision of special services and facilities, such as the auditorium, the gymnasium, science and social science room, and the like. The platoons make it possible to utilize such services and facilities 100 per cent of the time, which is not the case in other plans of school organization. As a result, the services of specialists are provided without increasing the number of teachers required and with an actual decrease in the size of the school plant needed.¹

Little School Design

Such an organization tries to give both a feeling of unity and some individuality within a large school. A system of adjoining classrooms with connecting doors is used. These rooms serve as the area for the "basic" subjects. A team of teachers is responsible for the subject matter. Each member of the team would have special training in the area of his or her responsibility. The areas of responsibility are language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science. It is expected that the team will work to correlate the various learnings when possible and share equally in the responsibilities of any group activities. Pupils receive instruction and guidance from the same team of teachers for a period of three years. This design provides a gradual change for the pupils from the self-contained classroom to the departmentalized program of the high school.

The disadvantages of this plan are: (1) It is sometimes difficult to find teachers who work together successfully. (2) Some of the buildings have inadequate facilities for team teaching or the little school plan of instruction.

¹Hollis L. Caswell and A. Wellesley Foshay, Education in the Elementary School, (New York: American Book Company, 1950), p. 310.

(3) The little school design tends to place more emphasis upon a single area of the curriculum instead of the integrative aspect. (4) This organizational design also complicates scheduling of classes.¹

Plans of Individualized Instruction

These plans arrange the courses of the curriculum into a system of detailed graded steps. Each step is arranged for individual study and work through a system of work sheets or contracts. Each pupil proceeds through the courses at his own speed --based on his ability and interest. The pupil need not feel that he or she is competing with other pupils. Individualized instruction can be worked out in a variety of ways and for a variety of courses. It may be restricted to the so-called skill subjects of language arts and arithmetic. The contracts can be adjusted to various levels of work or ability. Minimum contracts would lead to a minimum recognition of achievement. Second and third level contracts would lead to higher recognition, or ratings, of achievement. The most famous plans are the Winnetka and the Dalton.

There are two arguments against this plan. First, the course is set up in advance as a system of details to be learned. Such a system does not adjust to individual differences because it only emphasizes rate of learning and ignores the quality and nature of the experience provided. Second, such plans divide the curriculum into very individualized fields of learning.

The result, it is believed by many, is an undesirable segmentation and division of the curriculum, defeating that close interplay of all areas with one another which is so marked in a superior elementary school. Steps have been

¹Illinois, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, op. cit., p. 57.

taken in some schools to attempt to obviate these difficulties. In Winnetka, in particular, emphasis has been placed on socialized, self-expression, and creative activities as the foundation of a major phase of the program which is not individualized. The extent to which one accepts these adjustments as satisfactory depends on the view held (1) of the possibility of organizing any subject satisfactorily in advance in detail, (2) of the importance of the time factor as an adjustment to individual differences, and (3) of the extent to which the complete interpenetration of all aspects of the curriculum is held essential.¹

Team Teaching

This plan bears some resemblance to the "little school" system. Woodring² sees the individual teacher eventually being replaced by personnel with different characteristics, preparation, interests and skills who will work as a team.

The team would be a group of several teachers--perhaps between three and six--cooperatively responsible for preparing, presenting, and evaluating a complete educational program for a group of children.

One of the teachers is likely to be a specialist in science and arithmetic, another in languages, a third in social studies, and a fourth in the creative arts. Each specialist might plan and undertake to do the major share of teaching in his special subject, but all four teachers would work in close cooperation to develop the total teaching program. One of the four, on the strength of special qualifications and training, would be designated as a team leader with responsibility for over-all program coordination.³

¹Caswell and Foshay, op. cit., p. 316.

²U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Educational Briefs No. 37, OE-23005, (January, 1960), p. 7, citing Paul Woodring, "Education 1970 - Our Schools Will be What We Make Them," Address given at 47th Annual Meeting of Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Washington, D.C., April, 1959.

³Beatrice M. Gudridge, "New Trends in Today's Teaching," Parents' Magazine, XXXVII, No. 2 (1962), p. 78.

Such a plan could be concentrated on a single grade level. This would be a horizontal organization. It might be arranged vertically also. For example, in a small junior high school, a three-teacher team would handle the language arts instruction for all of the pupils in grades seven, eight, and nine.

When considering any change in educational method, it is wise to keep in mind certain values. Is this a fad that may be oversold? It may be good, bad, or indifferent. Is there experimental evidence to show that the organization or plan makes a difference in the achievement of pupils? Any educational organization has to have good teaching to make it effective.

CHAPTER III

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

After describing the different types of classroom organizations, a comparative analysis of them should be made. This section of the paper will be a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the two main forms of organization--the self-contained classroom and the departmentalized plan. The scope of the rest of this paper is limited to these two types inasmuch as they are the only feasible ones for Gibson City Junior High School at this time.

Self-Contained Classroom

Some opponents of the self-contained classroom object to the literalness with which the concept has been applied in some schools. For example, one experienced elementary school teacher writes:

The self-contained classroom in my estimation is a misnomer, if one is to adhere to a literal interpretation. I feel that a so-called self-contained classroom contains no more than a possibility of better unifying and learning pursuits. It is home base for the exploring and discovering children and teacher. When there is a continuous reaching out, as there must be, for resources, ideas and people, it is the collecting place. How deadly would be the classroom which would contain all that the children were supposed to work with! . . .¹

One group of educators objects to practices which would isolate children from other teachers and specialists, other

¹Alice Miel, "The Self-Contained Classroom: An Assessment," Teacher's College Record, LIX, No. 5 (1958), 282, quoting Kathryn A. Smith, formerly on the staff of University School, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio (Unpublished Manuscript).

children, and school or community facilities outside the classroom. They see this as a real hindrance to the child.

A second group objects to the self-contained classroom because they feel that the best education can only be provided by specialists in the various subjects. Their plans are usually formed around some type of departmentalization. These plans have great appeal for the citizens who believe that all school facilities and space should be in use 100 per cent of the time for purposes of economy. The need for a home base or coordinating center for the child is so great in integrating the learnings, that any changes in a system should be tested to see if they will enhance or destroy this value of the educational experience.

Points in favor of the self-contained classroom are: It provides for greater teacher acquaintance with each child. There is an opportunity for more flexibility in time allotment, better integration and correlation of subject matter. The child doesn't have to adjust to more than one teacher.

Critics of this system of teaching say that it requires teachers to be with children all day on a sustained basis which can be very fatiguing. They feel that the knowledge of subject matter and the skill needed in methods of teaching all subjects is greater than can be expected of every teacher. It is unrealistic to expect all teachers to like to teach all subjects. This ignores the possibility of aptitude and interest and the fact that people do better work when they are doing something they like and enjoy.

A survey was conducted in a large school system to discover what elementary school teachers themselves think of

the self-contained classroom as an instrument for learning.

The questionnaire asked,

"Do you believe the self-contained classroom, in which one teacher is required to teach all subjects, is the best type of organization for elementary education?" . . . Of those who responded to the question, "Do you favor the self-contained classroom as an organization for the elementary school?", 109 said "yes," 122 said "no," 13 stated they were doubtful, and others gave no answer. The accompanying table shows the respondents' attitudes toward various subjects they teach.¹

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD TEACHING THE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL SUBJECTS²

Subject	Number of Responses	Like To Teach	Neither Like nor Dislike	Dislike to Teach	Less Than Well Prep. (Content) %	Less Than Well Prep. (Method) %
Reading	256	223	27	6	61	65
Handwriting	254	208	44	2	48	50
English	254	208	44	2	26	30
Spelling	245	210	43	2	18	21
History	245	144	78	23	51	58
Geography	242	163	62	17	47	55
Arithmetic	253	222	21	10	18	24
Science	248	136	75	37	69	73
Art	257	158	65	34	61	64
Music	245	128	58	69	59	63
Health and Phys. Educ.	256	126	70	60

It is dangerous to generalize on the basis of a survey made in one school system. There may be factors bearing on the responses of the teachers which can't be easily discovered by an outsider. However, the writer of this survey felt that he could confidently make some statements based on his results.

1. Even though some teachers are well prepared to teach certain subjects, it is clear that they often dislike to do so. This suggests that it may not be wise to expect elementary teachers to be both competent in and like to teach all subjects in the elementary school program.

¹George Ackerlund, "Some Teacher Views on the Self-Contained Classroom," Phi Delta Kappan, XL, (April, 1959), 283-84.

²Ibid., p. 284.

2. It seems clear that a higher degree of knowledge of content is required, especially in the upper elementary grades, than many realize.

3. The self-contained classroom does not give the teacher an opportunity to choose areas in which she likes to teach, as is the case in high school.

4. The self-contained classroom provides teachers with opportunities to emphasize or de-emphasize certain subjects, depending upon their likes and dislikes.

5. There is strong support for the self-contained classroom in grades K-1-2, but opposition to it begins in grade three and becomes increasingly greater in grades 4-5-6.¹

The self-contained classroom has advantages which should be retained, and it has weaknesses which should be overcome. The methods for doing this will vary from school to school.

Departmentalization

In a recent speech given by Olin Hileman, Consultant Junior High Schools, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Illinois, the following advantages and disadvantages of departmentalized teaching were given:

Advantages

1. Administrators have fewer scheduling problems. Pupils can be placed in "packages", moving together all day in the assigned time period for each class.
2. Through achievement tests, administrators can, at least, evaluate the teachers' abilities to teach facts in the one major area to which each teacher is assigned.
3. For teachers, they may teach in areas in which special training has been received, implying that pupils will learn more subject matter.
4. For students, there is an advantage of having time between classes for a "change of pace."
5. Students also are likely to find, at least, one teacher out of several with whom their personalities do not clash.
6. The teacher who teaches one subject has less planning and preparation to do, for she can teach the same lesson five or six times per day.

Disadvantages

Some major disadvantages of departmentalized teaching are these: (these disadvantages probably vary in intensity from

¹Ibid.

- grades seven through nine which suggests that the degree of departmentalization might vary at these three grade levels.)*
1. The problem of adjusting to schools is made more difficult for the pupils leaving self-contained classroom situations and entering into a completely departmentalized plan.
 2. Pupils of the early adolescent age lack the needed security in situations that do not have, at least, one teacher who knows them well.
 3. Through complete departmentalization, there is much teaching time lost in changing classes six to eight times per day for 175 days of the school year.
 4. Changing classes also create corridor problems.
 5. The relatedness of subject matter is also lost or, at least, is made less obvious.
 6. I personally feel that overspecialization contradicts all that we know about the early adolescent and violates the major philosophy of the junior high school.
 7. Teaching in groups, especially the better academic groups, as well as teaching a special subject in a departmentalized plan of teaching, usually causes the teachers to feel justified in doing the thing that they enjoy most--that is in lecturing and telling the students what every good seventh or eighth grader should know about the subject. On the other hand, this age group has all of the characteristics for learning. They are curious, loving to inquire, to explore, to experiment, to share, to imagine, and to create--all of which add up to learning. This age group learns best by experiencing, doing, handling, and seeing.¹

The U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare summarizes the strengths and limitations of a departmentalized program as follows:

Claims for Departmentalization:

Strengths: Claims advanced in favor of departmentalization are that it provides a broader offering for the children; that specialization by teachers results in higher pupil achievement;** that it provides definiteness to the periods of the school day, thus apparently making better use of time; that it facilitates coordination between elementary and secondary schools; that it utilizes staff specialties; and that it equalizes teacher load.

*Departmentalization does vary in intensity from grades six through eight in the Gibson City Junior High School.

¹Letter from Olin Hileman, Consultant Junior High Schools, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Springfield, Illinois, April 19, 1962.

**This claim has not been substantiated by studies which have been made.

Limitations: Among the criticisms of departmentalization are that when teachers meet 150 to 200 children daily, it cannot be expected that they will have opportunity to provide individual guidance for each child; that teachers are encouraged to think in terms of subject matter to be covered, rather than in terms of total development; that lack of direct knowledge about individual pupils and lack of thorough attention to their problems often leads to lowered educational standards; that adjustment to several teachers instead of one imposes a difficulty on many children; that scheduling of time allotments places needless restriction on teaching and learning; that compartmentalized education obstructs continuity in learning; that unity in learning and inter-relatedness of knowledge are left to chance.¹

Scoggin sees departmentalization in the junior high school as characterized by "the teachers work harder, less is accomplished, and the children are worn to a frazzle." To support this statement, she summarizes the situation thusly:

In the junior-high setup, no teacher really knows the child well and the child is psychologically disturbed by the adjustments which are necessitated by a change of teachers every hour all day long. Every teacher has his or her own personality and ideas of discipline and behavior. The teacher finds the task much more difficult since she, too, must make adjustments to every new group she handles at every different hour all day--no two groups being identical, even though they may be covering the work of the same grade. She, too, feels the emotional equilibrium disturbed before the day ends, and by the hourly need for readjustment of her goals, procedures, and disciplinary measures.²

¹U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Educational Briefs No. 37, OE-23005, (January, 1960), p. 11.

²Blanche Scoggin, "The Great School Scramble," Clearing House, XXX, No. 7 (1957), pp. 407-409.

CHAPTER IV

PERTINENT RESEARCH AND STUDIES

This section will deal with some of the surveys and studies completed on the question of departmentalization versus the self-contained classroom. Several of the studies found, although quite applicable to the problem, did not come within the scope of this paper as they referred only to the elementary grades through the sixth grade. The interest here is primarily in the effects of departmentalization and the self-contained classroom on the seventh grade student.

However, it is interesting to note that three of these extensive studies came to different conclusions. One advocated the self-contained classroom, one favored the semi-departmental setup, and the third recommended complete departmentalization.

The first study involved some nine hundred children from kindergarten through the sixth grade in the Webster School in Pontiac, Michigan. A portion of the general evaluation of this study is quoted below:

This evaluative study of a developmental elementary program has presented evidence that there are many educational experiences, qualities of human relations, and factors in the environment of a school-community that promote the optimum growth of children. Participants in the study believe that the self-contained

classroom is the best organization under which these factors can be brought into being.¹

Referring to a semi-departmental system, the results of research in the Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, Oklahoma are as follows:

On the basis of the findings of this study as outlined here and on the basis of test results as measured by the inventory, it may be stated that:

1. The Tulsa semi-departmental fifth-graders showed better adjustment as measured by the problems identified than the self-contained classroom fifth-graders of the norm group as evidenced by the uniformity of the sign of difference in all comparisons made.

.....

3. Since no evidence of adjustment inferior to that of the self-contained classroom norm group was found, the semi-departmental type of elementary-school organization must not in itself promote poor adjustment in school children.²

A follow-up study to the one above in the Tulsa public schools resulted in the following statement:

The results of this study and the one by Broadhead, while not conclusive, indicate that the semi-departmental organization does not hinder the pupil's personal and social development. It is not reasonable to conclude at this point that semi-departmental organization leads to better adjustment on the part of elementary-school-pupils. Still, the evidence reported here does indicate that the longer a pupil was exposed to this organization, the more satisfactory his adjustment as measured by this inventory.

.....

Additional research is needed to determine the effect of departmental organization on other facets of children's

¹Edith Roach Snyder, "The Self-Contained Unit in Action in the Elementary School," The Self-Contained Classroom, (Washington, D.C., Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, 1960), p. 64; -citing Edith Roach Snyder, "An Evaluative Study of a Developmental Elementary School Program" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University, 1957).

²Fred C. Broadhead, "Pupil Adjustment in the Semi-Departmental Elementary School," Elementary School Journal, LX, No. 7 (1960), p. 390.

development. It is particularly difficult to evaluate the benefits children may derive from teachers with special training in such fields as art and music.¹

The description by Broadhead of the semi-departmental set-up in the Tulsa schools is very much like that of the junior high school in Gibson City.

The third study recommends complete departmentalization for the elementary school.

During the 1960-61 school year, a trial of the departmental organization in two schools showed results so encouraging that this year, all four of North Reading's elementary schools are organized in this manner. According to Gregory C. Coffin, formerly superintendent in North Reading and now in Darien, Conn., the method has one tremendous advantage from which many other benefits accrue. As he puts it, "There used to be a time when pupils in elementary science pressed leaves between sheets of waxed paper. They don't do that anymore. They watch Cape Canaveral on television, and they want to know why rockets have to be so big, and what makes them go. In a departmentalized setup, with each teacher a subject specialist, the science teacher knows the answer when such questions are posed. In fact, since she is teaching four or five science classes daily, she not only knows the answers; she is prepared to lecture on the subject."²

A study by Monroe L. Spivak is quite pertinent to this problem. He attempts to determine the effectiveness of departmental and self-contained seventh and eighth grade classrooms. The excerpts from his research will indicate his results. (The writer found this study summarized or referred to in three other articles.)

In this study of a junior high school in an underprivileged area in Newark, New Jersey, children who had been in a departmental setup in the seventh and eighth grades did not do better, academically and with regard to school adjustment, when they reached the ninth grade than did their matches who had been in a self-contained classroom in the seventh

¹A. Hugh Livingston, "Does Departmental Organization Affect Children's Adjustment?", The Elementary School Journal, LXI, No. 4 (1961), pp. 217-22.

²Coffin, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

and eighth-grades. There was evidence that the children from the self-contained seventh and eighth-grade classrooms did better by statistically significant amounts in some areas: they did better academically; they made more friends by the end of the first term; and they were referred for advice and correction less frequently than their matchees.

These findings raise questions about the desirability of continuing to operate junior high schools with completely departmentalized seventh and eighth-grade classrooms, particularly in underprivileged areas similar to the one in which this school is located. Doubt is thrown on the readiness of seventh-grade children for full departmentalization in terms of what happens to them in the ninth grade. It is recommended that the study be repeated in schools representing various socioeconomic areas.¹

Zimmerman made a study based on children in two separate cities in New York. He wanted to compare the scholastic achievement and the personal adjustment of pupils in a unified seventh-grade program with the scholastic achievement and the personal adjustment of pupils in a departmental program.

Seventh-grade students in the unified program achieve as well in English and citizenship education and are as well adjusted as students in the departmental program.

Seventh-grade students, whether in the departmental or unified program, scored significantly higher on tests of English achievement, citizenship education achievement, and personality adjustment than they did at the completion of their sixth-grade programs.*

The variability of achievement test scores in English and citizenship education did not increase for departmental program students; the variability did increase by a significant amount for unified program students.²

Woods made a study of two schools in West Virginia of very similar environmental backgrounds. He was attempting to

¹Monroe L. Spivak, "Effectiveness of Departmental and Self-Contained Seventh and Eighth-Grade Classrooms," The School Review, LXIV, No. 9 (1956), pp. 391-96.

*This may be due partly to better teaching and more maturity.

²William A. Zimmerman, "Departmental and Unified Seventh-Grade Programs in English and Social Studies: A Study in Changes in Achievement and Personal Adjustment," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, XLVI, No. 271 (1962), p. 420.

investigate the results of departmentalized and self-contained classrooms. School A was organized on a departmentalized system and School B was organized along the lines of a self-contained classroom system. Table II shows very clearly that the two schools were not equated on mental ability. This needs to be kept in mind when reviewing the results.

TABLE II¹

Mental Ability Status

Status	Departmental Class Medians School A	Non-Departmental Class Medians School B
Chronological Age (Years and Months)	14-1	14-9
Intelligence Quotient	92	78
Mental Age (Years and Months)	13-0	11-6

To check on learning achievement, two tests were given. The first one was given in October, 1949. In Table III it will appear as Test Number I. It was the Stanford Achievement Test, Advanced Battery--Complete, Form G. A second achievement test was given in May of the following year. It was the Stanford Achievement Test, Advanced Battery--Complete, Form D. It will appear as Test Number II in Table III. The tests were administered to both schools at the same time by trained and experienced personnel.

¹Roy C. Woods, "Relative Merits of Departmental and Non-departmental Elementary Schools," Peabody Journal of Education, XXXVII (November, 1959), p. 166.

TABLE III¹

Medians and Equivalents on the Achievement Tests

Test Number	School A			School B		
	Equated Score	Age Equivalent	Grade Equivalent	Equated Score	Age Equivalent	Grade Equivalent
I	58.5	11-5	6.4	54.9	10-10	5.8
II	63.6	12-5	7.4	68.0	13-6	8.5
Apparent Gain	5.1	1-0	1.0	13.1	2-8	2.7

A questionnaire was used to survey the social, cultural, economic, and health status of all of the members of the two classes studied. The findings proved that the two classes were very similar. Woods arrived at the following conclusions:

From these data the following conclusions seem reasonable. It must be understood however that this can only be said of conditions similar to those found in these two schools. No doubt variations in communities would affect the results.

1. Non-departmentalization in teaching seems to favor the poorer students since School B which had the lowest mental ability ratings made the greatest gain between October when the first test was given and May when the second achievement test was administered.

2. This may be due to the fact that the total learning process was better coordinated and integrated in the traditional and unitary type of school organization.

3. The unfortunate variation in mental abilities made an accurate estimate of this advantage impossible.²

Joseph Jackson performed two separate experiments which were devised and carried on concurrently with somewhat different approaches, both yielding a common comparison. He wanted to test the hypothesis which states; that if pupil contact with one teacher is increased or decreased, student maladjustment will be directly or inversely commensurate with such contact.

¹Ibid., p. 169

²Ibid., p. 169

The results of the experiments places the responsibility for pupil adjustment on the teacher rather than the classroom organization.

1. A summary of classroom practices reveals that the primary responsibility of the teachers is concerned with the provision of academic growth for the students which, on the basis of comparative achievement, seems to be equally well established and independent of any classroom organizational plan.

2. An increase in pupil-teacher contact through an organizational plan such as the homeroom or the block-of-time does not necessarily provide better sociometric or personality integration within a classroom unless the teacher influence provides attention to such pupil needs.

4. Conventional classroom procedure, no matter what its organizational plan, will contribute very little to the emotional wants of the students unless an effort is made to delve into the individual and group dynamics of the situation. As a matter of fact, group sociometric and personality characteristics may continue to deteriorate.¹

In 1961 the NEA Research Division surveyed 721 elementary school principals representing school districts of all sizes. They received a 98 per cent response to their questionnaire. The following is a summarization of their opinions.

To learn how principals across the nation view the problem of organization for instruction, the following question was asked:

Considering all of the pros and cons of self-contained classrooms versus departmentalization, which, in your opinion, is the best plan for organizing elementary-school instruction?

From their answers, there can be no doubt that the majority of principals preferred self-contained classrooms; 70 percent either "strongly" or "tended" to prefer it. Only 30 percent "tended to prefer" or "strongly preferred" departmentalization. There was little difference between the opinions of principals in small districts and the opinions of principals in large districts.

¹Joseph Jackson, "The Effect of Classroom Organization and Guidance Practice Upon the Personality Adjustment and Academic Growth of Students," The Journal of Genetic Psychology, LXXXIII (1953), 159-170.

Responses to the question were distributed as follows:

Preference	Percent of principals by district size ¹			
	Large	Medium	Small	All
Strongly prefer self-contained classrooms	28.9%	34.2%	27.3%	30.2%
Tend to prefer self-contained classrooms	39.6	34.6	44.7	40.1
Tend to prefer departmentalization	25.6	25.3	22.0	23.7
Strongly prefer departmentalization	5.9	5.9	6.0	6.0

Those principals who preferred or tended to prefer departmentalization were asked which grades they would departmentalize. They answered as follows:

Begin departmentalization at	Percent of those recommending departmentalization ²
First	1.5%
Second	1.8
Third	3.9
Fourth	31.9
Fifth	18.0
Sixth	19.1
Seventh	23.3
Eighth	0.5

Only 7 percent of those preferring departmentalization recommended that the procedure begin below grade 4.

The survey found that there was a higher percentage of departmentalization of special subjects in the small school systems. The writers suggested that a possible explanation was the fact that small systems tend to have itinerant teachers for subjects such as music and art whereas the larger systems

¹Glen Robinson, "Principals' Opinions about School Organization," The National Elementary Principal, XLI, No. 2 (1961), p. 40.

²Ibid., p. 40.

tend to have supervisors in these areas with the classroom teachers responsible for instructing the pupils.

The principals who favored departmentalization were also asked to indicate the subjects they felt should be departmentalized. The results were:

Subject or area	Percent of principals recommending departmentalization ¹
Science	61.2%
Mathematics	60.7
English	54.1
Social Studies	39.7
Music and Art	27.8
Physical Education	19.8
All subjects	13.1
(Subjects specified by less than 10 percent of the principals favoring departmentalization not included.)	

A questionnaire distributed in May, 1959 by the NEA Research Division explored the extent to which elementary schools have been completely departmentalized. This was a survey of superintendents in urban school districts. They received a 59 percent response to the questionnaire. (It might be interesting for the NEA to find out why it receives a better percentage of response from principals than it does from superintendents.) Results of the survey are here summarized:

In slightly more than 70 percent of the districts, there is no departmentalization at the elementary-school level. In addition, 4 percent with no departmentalization are considering inaugurating such an organization.

In only 6.7 percent of the districts is there system-wide departmentalization of one or more grades. In 18.7 percent of the districts, departmentalization is the practice in some schools only.

Where departmentalization does exist, it is chiefly in grades 6, 7 and 8; very little was reported below the fifth grade. It would seem from the replies to this question that most districts are satisfied with their present type of organization, and that there is no appreciable

¹Ibid., p. 40.

trend toward widespread departmentalization within the elementary school.¹

The above survey also indicated that only 14.5 percent of the school districts the size of Gibson City (2,500-4,999 population) had the seventh grade departmentalized.

¹"Departmentalization in Elementary Grades," NEA Research Memo 1960 - 38, (November, 1960), pp. 1-4.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

1. As a result of the research done for this paper, it seems to be apparent that there are many varying opinions bearing on the solution to the question of which system of classroom organization is most applicable to the seventh grade.
2. The research material, although extensive, is somewhat inconclusive as to the exact solution to the problem. Several of the research studies are completed with exactly opposite conclusions. Some advocate departmentalization, some favor the self-contained classroom, and some end up neutral. Other studies had so many variables, premises and restrictions that the results could be applied only to very limited situations.
3. The variability between the different surveys may be due in part to the differing abilities of the teachers involved. A teacher in a departmentalized system may be countered by a teacher of a self-contained system who possesses much better qualities of teaching abilities. Many of the studies ignored the relative abilities of the teachers. On the other hand, several of the studies indicated that the quality of the teacher was a more important factor than the classroom organizational plan for pupil achievement and adjustment.

4. Departmentalization of the junior high school is not as extensive as the writer had thought. He had the erroneous opinion, before starting this study, that it was practically the only system used. However, one reference said it was widespread, another indicated it was on the decline, while another felt that the trend was toward departmentalization.
5. The majority opinion seems to be that the seventh grade student is generally too immature emotionally for a complete system of departmentalization. The writer feels that when, and if, a new system of departmentalization is to be instituted in a seventh grade, it would be good to measure the students' emotional maturity by testing. This should not be the only basis of judgement. Among other considerations, former teachers should be consulted, and a study and assessment of the home environments should be made as well. As a result of the testing and surveys, a decision could be reached as to the advisability of the use of a system of departmentalization.
6. The self-contained classroom appears to provide greater benefits for the weaker students and also for students from under-privileged areas. Many of the students in Gibson City have come from under-privileged families.
7. Several studies seem to conclude that there were academic benefits to the use of special teachers in science, arithmetic, music, art, and physical education.
8. Most of the surveys concluded that more research was needed on this subject.

9. In the survey of principals' opinions on departmentalization no mention was made of whether or not the principals who "strongly preferred" or "tended to prefer" self-contained classrooms actually had a system of self-contained classrooms in their schools. Also, apparently, there was no attempt to discover the motivations of the principals who favored self-contained classrooms. Perhaps the principals were considering benefits for the child, the teachers, the system as a whole, or the work involved for the administrator. These, of course, are all qualities to be considered in evaluating a program.
10. As the research results seemed to be so different and inconclusive, and the qualities to consider so great, the writer feels that the decision to departmentalize or not, and to what extent, is definitely a local and individual matter.

Recommendations

Any solution of organizational problems should not be based on a mechanical method which only solves the apparent and observable troubles. Fundamental social and philosophical considerations need to be studied also. At the present time it would seem to be necessary, with all of the experts--both honest and self-ordained--prescribing solutions to the dilemma of getting the best education for the least amount of money, to consider all facets of a possible solution.

Today the challenge is particularly strong to:

1. Develop procedures whereby the school is an integral part of the community it serves, tied to its various services and agencies through numerous types of co-operative action.

2. Develop procedures whereby the creative abilities of teachers, parents, and pupils are released in the co-operative development of a program adapted to the needs of the community and the pupils served, and consistent with guiding principles developed and accepted by the school system as a whole.

3. Develop a school organization in which individual personality and achievement are always respected and sought, and in which the child finds that security and stimulation needed for his optimum development.¹

1. It is recommended that the organization for the seventh grade in the situation described in this study should involve a self-contained system for one-half of the day during which social studies and language arts would form the basis for instruction. The other half of the day should be a system of departmentalization with special teachers for art, science, arithmetic, music, physical education and health. This is actually a block-of-time setup, but a core program would not be incorporated.
2. This changes the present system of organization very little. After this study, the writer feels that the semi-departmentalized setup now used is good for this particular grade and community. However, there would be an extension of specialization to include arithmetic and art. Arithmetic could be taught very well with science. Also, a special art teacher would be beneficial. It has been difficult to incorporate a good art program in with regular classroom subjects.
3. To facilitate the above changes, one period a week could be allotted to allow the seventh grade teachers and the special subject teachers to co-ordinate their efforts to:

¹Caswell and Foshay, op. cit., p. 29.

- a. Avoid unequal or overburdening amounts of assignments requiring homework.
- b. Compare opinions and ideas on pupil progress and difficulties.
- c. Attempt to aid each other in the solution of both mutual and individual problems.

The seventh grade teachers have already demonstrated an ability and a desire to work together on mutual problems.

4. It is suggested that a test of emotional maturity be instituted for beginning seventh graders to determine if they could cope with the system as it is in fact organized. If not, adjustments should be made.
5. The system recommended, and which is just an extension of the present one, would probably take advantage of the benefits of both the self-contained classroom and specialization. The writer feels that with proper cooperation and planning between administrators, teachers, pupils, and parents this classroom organization should prove to be the most satisfactory.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ackerlund, George. "Some Teacher Views on the Self-Contained Classroom," Phi Delta Kappan, XL (April, 1959), 283-84.
- Broadhead, Fred C. "Pupil Adjustment in the Semi-Departmental Elementary School," Elementary School Journal, LX, No. 7 (1960), 385-90.
- Brooks, M. L. Arizona State Department of Public Instruction. Course of Study for Grade Seven. Phoenix, Arizona: 1955.
- Caswell, Hollis L., and Foshay, A. Wellesley. Education in the Elementary School. New York: American Book Co., 1950.
- Chiara, Calra R. The Self-Contained Classroom. "Effective Education in the Self-Contained Classroom." Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, 1960.
- Coffin, G. C. "Are Your Elementary Grades Properly Organized?", School Management, V (December, 1961), 61-62.
- "Departmentalization in Elementary Grades." NEA Research Memo 1960-38, (November, 1960), 1-4.
- Gruhn, William T. "Reaffirming the Role of the Junior High School in the American School System," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XLIV, No. 259 (1960), 7-12.
- Hileman, Olin. Consultant Junior High Schools, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Springfield, Ill. Letter. April 19, 1962.
- Illinois. The Illinois Curriculum Program, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Junior High School Program in Illinois. Bulletin A-1, 1961.
- Jackson, Joseph. "The Effect of Classroom Organization and Guidance Practice Upon the Personality Adjustment and Academic Growth of Students," The Journal of Genetic Psychology, LXXXIII (1953), 159-70.
- Lawhead, Victor B. "A Block of Time--For General Education," Educational Leadership, (December, 1960), p. 148.

- Livingston, A. Hugh. "Does Departmental Organization Affect Children's Adjustment?", The Elementary School Journal, LXI, No. 4 (1961), 217-22.
- Miel, Alice. "The Self-Contained Classroom: An Assessment," Teacher's College Record, LIX, No. 5 (1958), 282.
- Otto, Henry J. Elementary School Organization and Administration. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954.
- Robinson, Glen. "Principals' Opinions about School Organization," The National Elementary Principal, XLI, No. 2 (1961), 39-41.
- Scoggin, Blanche. "The Great School Scramble," Clearing House, XXX, No. 7 (1957), 407-409.
- Snyder, Edith. (ed). The Self-Contained Classroom. Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, 1960.
- Spivak, Monroe L. "Effectiveness of Departmental and Self-Contained Seventh and Eighth-Grade Classrooms," The School Review, LXIV, No. 9 (1956), 391-96.
- U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Educational Briefs No. 37. OE-23005. January, 1960.
- Woodring, Paul. "Education 1970 - Our Schools Will be What We Make Them." Address given at 47th Annual Meeting of Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Washington, D.C., April, 1959.
- Woods, Roy C. "Relative Merits of Departmental and Non-Departmental Elementary Schools," Peabody Journal of Education, XXXVII (November, 1959), 164-69.
- Zimmerman, William A. "Departmental and Unified Seventh-Grade Programs in English and Social Studies," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XLVI, No. 271 (1962), 420.