A Dissertation

Entitled

The Educational Effect of Forced Separation on Twins

by

Jamison J. Grime

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration and Supervision

________________________
Advisor: Dr. Caroline Roettger
________________________
Dr. Lloyd Roettger
________________________
Dr. Barbara Bleyaert
________________________
Dr. John Mascazine
________________________
Judith Herb College of Education
________________________
College of Graduate Studies

The University of Toledo

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An Abstract of
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Current research studies have concluded that separating twins in school before
they are ready can lead to internalizing issues and behavior problems (Tully et al., 2004
& van Leeuwen et al., 2005). Despite the current research, there are schools in the United
States that practice an arbitrary policy of separating twins into separate classrooms
against their wishes. Research has shown that these schools cite developing individuals as
their main reason for separating twins (Preedy, 1999). There is minimal evidence from
empirical studies that suggests classroom separation of twins aids them in their
intellectual or emotional development (Hay & Preedy, 2005).

This qualitative research study is designed to examine the educational effects
forced separation has on twins. This study used a purposive sample of three sets of twins
between the ages of six and nine who were forced into separate classrooms from their co-
twin and the mothers of these twins. A series of structured interviews and drawings from
the twins depicting their emotions concerning the separation was used to collect the data.
Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy of the data. Analysis of the transcriptions provided the basis for major themes and codes to emerge.

Interview data collected from the twins showed that forced separation produced feelings of sadness, anger, fright, and loneliness that impeded the twin’s ability to succeed in school. Twins reported their grades were lower due to a problem with focusing in class. Focusing was perceived by the twins as being difficult due to the urge they possessed of having to know where their co-twin was and what they were doing. Data showed the negative feelings displayed by the twins at school impeded their ability to make friends and socially interact with peers. Data from the mothers concluded that completing separate homework packets, unequal educations due to teacher differences, and helping the twins cope emotionally with the initial separation was taxing on the family structure and mental health of the family.

Further research in this area should focus on the value school principals place on current educational research and initiatives schools can undertake to promote individuality amongst twins without separating them.
Dedication Page

This dissertation is dedicated to Jan Schnupp-Lee who believed that I was going to be a great educator before I even knew what a great educator was. It is also dedicated to my grandparents Olen and Jean Merillat. I know they would be proud of this accomplishment.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Background

The last two decades have seen a sharp rise in the twin birth rate. In 1980, approximately one in every 55 births was a twin birth (National Vital Statistics Report, 2005). In 2003, one in every 33 births was a twin birth (National Vital Statistics Report). Two trends have caused this increase in the number of twin births. The first trend is the age of mothers who are giving birth. Older mothers have a greater chance of conceiving twins than younger mothers (National Vital Statistics Report). The second trend is the use of fertility drugs. In 2000, a study reported that thirty-three percent of the twins born that year were conceived with the use of fertility drugs and therapies (National Vital Statistics Report).

Multiple-birth children may cause stress and undo hardship on families. It has been shown that multiple-birth children are at greater risk for child abuse and neglect (Dhanani, Nield, & Ogershok, 2006). Mothers of multiple-birth children exhibit higher rates of maternal depression than mothers of singletons (Thorpe, Golding, MacGillvray, & Greenwood, 1991). Parents of multiple-birth children experience financial strains and exhaustion to a higher degree than parents of singletons (Dhanani et al., 2006). The abuse and depression rates are heightened by the fact that families with multiple-birth children tend to be large families with children who are inadequately spaced (Thorpe et al., 1991).
The increase in the number of twins being conceived has an effect on the schools these twins attend. In 1980, an average kindergarten class of 200 students would have contained approximately two sets of twins. In 2003, that number rose to approximately three sets of twins. Understanding the current research on the placement of twins in schools will lead parents and school administrators in the right direction to make more informed decisions on whether to separate twins in school. Making a decision whether to place twins together in the same class or a separate class carries many implications. There is a need to further the research on the perceptions and patterns that twins and their parents report concerning their experiences in elementary classrooms.

The first research study to explore the classroom placement of twins was conducted by Koch in 1966. Koch used questionnaires completed by twins to identify trends associated with the placement of twins. She concluded that opposite-sex twins were separated 50 percent of the time and that identical twin girls had a greater chance of sharing the same classroom than other twin subgroups. Twins who displayed a large IQ range, twins who were aggressive, and hyperactive twins were likely to be separated. Koch also reported that separated twins were more advanced in speech and IQ than twins placed in a common classroom. This claim was refuted by Leeper and Skipper (1970) who stated, “It appears that the placement of twins in the same or separate classroom seems to have little effect on their achievement, social adjustment and acceptance” (p. 15). Leeper and Skipper used behavior scales, achievement tests, and IQ tests within a sample of twins to draw this conclusion.

The initial researchers to study school policies concerning the placement of multiples were Gleeson, Hay, Johnston, and Theobald in 1990. Gleeson et al. used
questionnaire data obtained by parents of twins and teachers of twins to draw their conclusions. Gleeson et al. reported that 25% of parents surveyed were consulted by school administrators about the placement of their twins. Preedy (1999) surveyed schools in England about their twin placement practices. Preedy’s research uncovered that 25% of the schools reported involving parents in twin placement decisions. Both Gleeson et al. and Preedy advocate the use of a flexible policy to ensure the best classroom placement decisions are made for multiples.

Tully, Moffitt, Caspi, Taylor, Kiernan, and Andreou (2004) used teacher questionnaires to identify trends associated with twins in the same or separate classrooms. These authors concluded that twins separated in the first year of school exhibited more internalizing and academic problems. This research also reported that no differences emerged between separated and not-separated twins in relation to externalizing problems, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and pro-social behaviors. Finally, Tully and colleagues found that dizygotic twins separated after their initial year were rated as being harder workers than non-separated dizygotic twins.

In 2005, van Leeuwen, van den Berg, van Beijsterveldt, and Boomsma replicated the Tully et al. (2004) study. These authors used teacher and maternal ratings to generalize the behavior problems that twins were displaying in school. van Leeuwen et al. claimed that “when pre-existing differences in externalizing problems at age three were taken into account, separation of the twins had no significant effect on externalizing problems as rated by the mother at age seven” (p. 389). van Leeuwen et al. concluded that the decision either to place twins in the same classroom or to separate them has no effect on their behavior problems at school.
The existing research on the classroom placement of children of multiple births covers many different topics. The samples in these research studies have not been teased apart into twins and their families who requested separation and those who did not request separation. Gleeson et al. (1990) and Preedy (1999) report on the school policies that mandate the separation of twins, but they do not draw conclusions about the effect of these policies. The research to date has included questionnaire data from parents and teachers of twins that requested separation and common classroom placements. Koch (1966) was the last researcher to use data gathered from the actual twins in school. This has led to research studies that draw inconclusive results and suggest that placement decisions about multiples have little effect on their education. There is a need to conduct research on the educational effects of schools that force separation of twins. A qualitative research study that focuses on twins forced to separate before they are ready will provide insight into the educational implications of such placement policies.

Statement of the Research Problem

This study was conducted to examine how forced separation of twins affects their educational experience. Many administrators practice an informal policy of separating twins regardless of parent viewpoints (Beauchamp & Brooks, 2003). However, with the passage of Minnesota legislation in 2005 that gives parents the right to decide whether their twins should be separated or placed together, it appears the question is receiving more serious consideration (Segal, 2005). This research explored the implications of informal policies many principals have used by examining cases of twins who were forced to separate. There is a body of current research on twins in school, but a gap exists in the research. There is a need for research that studies the perceptions of the actual
twins who are experiencing these separations. Examining the separations of twins, from the twins’ perspective, will address this gap. The study provides insight into the best practices for placing twins in classrooms (Hay & Preedy, 2006).

**Research Question**

What negative effects do school policies that force separations of twins have on the perceptions of the educational experiences of those twins and their mothers?

**Definition of Terms**

**Singleton.** A child not associated with a multiple birth set (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000).

**Monozygotic twins.** Results when one fertilized ovum splits and shares a placenta. Monozygotic twins are also known as identical twins (Katz, 1998).

**Dizygotic twins.** Results when separate ova are fertilized. These ova do not share

**Flexible Policy.** Policy concerning twin placement that takes into account the needs that a set of twins might have before making the decision (Hay & Preedy, 2006).

**Policy.** The term policy used by principals in this study was actually an administrative practice.

**Multiple-Birth Children.** A set of two or more children conceived at the same time and share biological and genetic makeup (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000).

**Limitations of the Study**

1. The attention span of elementary-aged children necessitated the need for follow-up interviews.
2. Twins in the study could have taken the same stance as their parents regarding the topic of classroom placement.

3. Results of this study were not generalized. The results were used to provide insight and prompt future studies.

4. Responses from twins may have been inaccurate due to the fact that their mothers were in the room and could hear their responses.

5. Although this dissertation addresses twins that had negative experiences when they were forced to be in separate classrooms, other twins that were forced to separate may have had positive experiences.

6. Negative educational effects of forced classroom separation may have been caused by outside factors that altered the perceptions of the research participants.

   Delimitations of the Study

1. This study was conducted between December 2007 and June 2008.

2. The twins who participated in the study were chosen from schools throughout the United States.

3. Twins were interviewed separately.

4. The age range of the twins was between six and nine.

   Significance of the Study

   Many researchers have addressed the need for school policies that are flexible concerning the placement of twins (Hay & Preedy, 2006). Gleeson et al. (1990) and Preedy (1999) report that only 25% of parents surveyed had a voice in the placement decision of their twins. This study narrowly examined the implications of these separation policies through the eyes of twins who are being separated by providing a
narrative of the experiences of these twins. Parental viewpoints were also studied to
provide added insight into the experiences of the twins. This research study can provide
administrators with the basis to understand how to work with families to make informed
decisions concerning the placement of twins.

This research study has added to the current body of research because it will be
the first qualitative research study conducted that will approach the issue of twin
placement from the viewpoint of the actual school-aged twins. The major twin placement
research studies conducted by Gleeson et al. (1990), Preedy (1999), Tully et al. (2004),
and van Leeuwen et al. (2005) use parent and teacher ratings as the research tools.
Mascazine (2004) does report on the educational experiences of twins once they are out
of school but does not deal specifically with the forced separation of twins.

*Researcher’s Perspective*

Being the father of dizygotic boy/girl twins provides me with the opportunity to
witness the unique relationship that twins share on a daily basis. It is my belief that twins
should be placed in the same classrooms until the twins request to be separated. The
argument made by principals to separate twins is not grounded in research and therefore
not a viable policy. Also, my experience as an elementary school administrator and
teacher has provided the opportunity to work with many sets of twins. The parents of
these twins were consulted concerning placement issues. However, an understanding of
researcher bias served as a guide during the construction of interview questions.
Questions were formed with the express purpose of avoiding leading the twins to answer
questions that support the researchers viewpoint.

*Scope of the Study*
This research study collected qualitative data from three sets of twins and their mothers. The twin pairs consisted of three sets of opposite-sex twins. The twins were selected from elementary schools throughout the United States that force twins to be placed in separate classrooms. Structured interviews of the twins and their mothers were conducted. These interviews were indexed, transcribed, coded and interpreted. The twins were asked to draw pictures that depicted their perceptions of the classroom separation they experienced.

Organization of the Study

This study will be divided into five chapters. Chapter Two reviews the literature surrounding the policies and practices of educating twins. The methodology and research plan is presented in Chapter Three. The data was reported and analyzed in Chapter Four. Chapter Five contains the conclusions, implications for action and recommendations for further research.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

The twin phenomenon has been a topic of research for many reasons. Researchers who are interested in the nature vs. nurture debate have used twins to examine the influence of genetics and environment on personality (Katz, 1998). Since 1980, the rise in the birth rate of twins is worth noting. In 1980, one in every 55 births was a twin birth (National Vital Statistics Report, 2005). In 2003, one in every 33 births was a twin birth (National Vital Statistics Report). This increase in the number of twins has many school administrators pondering how they should educate twins. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2004) maintains the stance that the research regarding twin placement in schools is ambivalent and that most principals take into account parent requests and standard practices. Some school districts have a standard practice of separating twins in school, which has led to legislation being passed to negate the practice of separating twins against parent wishes (Martin, 2006).

Theoretical Traditions

“Phenomenologists study the social meaning of knowledge and what possessing various kinds of knowledge signifies” (deMarrais & LeCompete, 1999, p. 21). A phenomenological approach to research the topic of forced twin separation in school was needed to fully understand this phenomenon. The current research on the topic of
classroom placement of twins is primarily quantitative and uses data collected from parents and teachers to analyze the emerging themes. Beauchamp and Brooks (2003) write, “Unfortunately all of the studies available have examined parents’ and teachers’ perceptions of issues they face in school, while neglecting to directly assess or report twins’ perceptions of issues they face in school” (p. 430). Hay and Preedy (2006) note the need for research that leads to an understanding of unsuccessful separations.

Children have historically not been participants in research studies, and adult perceptions of children’s experiences have been the norm (Scott, 2000). The United Nations states, “Children have a right to express themselves and participate in decisions that affect them, while receiving care and protection from adults” (1989, p. 582). Children’s abilities to communicate in a mature fashion the experiences that they have lived should not be underestimated (Miller, 2000). The Australian Government has set forth four conditions that must be met to conduct research with children. The first condition is that “the research must be important to the health and well-being of the children” (Birbeck & Drummond, 2007, p. 579). The second condition is that “participation of children is indispensable because information available from research on other individuals is not appropriate” (p. 579). The third condition is that “the study method is appropriate for children” (p. 580). The final condition is that “the study will be conducted to provide for the physical, emotional and psychological safety of the child” (p. 580). This research study, utilizing an interpretive framework with a phenomenological approach, will meet all four of these conditions.

This phenomenological research study provided the research participants the opportunity to present their own interpretations of the reality they experienced within
their own social interactions (deMarrais & LeCompete, 1999). Rudduck and Flutter (2000) state, “We need to tune in to what pupils can tell us about their experiences and what they think will make a difference to their commitment to learning and, in turn, to their progress and achievement” (p. 75.). The voice of school-aged twins has been ignored in the current research. This research study addresses this research gap and will bridge the existing data of parent and teacher perceptions with the missing data of twins’ perceptions.

**Legal Implications of Twin Classroom Placement**

The right for parents to decide the proper placement of their twins is protected by the Constitution (Dean, 1999). Dean provided a framework for parents who disagree with arbitrary policies created by schools that mandate the separation of multiples. The rights parents possess are referred to as liberty interests (Dean, 2002). The three liberty interests that apply are “the right to direct the education of children, the right to direct the upbringing of children, and the right to intimate association” (Dean, p. 6). The two court cases that have paved the way for parents to control their children’s education are Meyer v. Nebraska in 1923 and Pierce v. Society of Sisters in 1925 (Dean, 1999). Meyer v. Nebraska dealt with a teacher who taught reading in German to a student (Dean, 1999). Nebraska state law prohibited teaching any subject in a language other than English (Dean). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that parents have a right to have their children taught in any language that they wish (Dean). Pierce v. Society of Sisters dealt with a state law that mandated all children attend a public school (Dean). A private school questioned the constitutionality of the law, and the U.S. Supreme Court agreed that parents had the right to send their children to private schools (Dean).
These two cases used the rights of best interest and intimate association to justify the parental right to decide where twins should be placed. Dean (2002) claims that a standard that takes into account the best interest of the child is used often by courts to determine cases involving custody, medical needs, visitation, and termination of parental rights (Dean, 2002). The cases that cited the best interest of the child often mention the right of parents to determine how children are raised (Dean, 2002). Intimate association protects relationships from being interfered with (Dean, 2002). Dean (2002) stated that schools violate a family’s right to intimate association when they separate multiples without parental consent.

The issue of twin placement in schools being addressed by state legislators began in Oklahoma in 1994 (Segal, 2005). The Oklahoma House of Representatives at that time passed Resolution 1055, known as the Education-Separation of Multiple Siblings-Development of Policy. The Oklahoma resolution stated that research data shows that separation has no benefits to student achievement and can also be detrimental to the well being of the multiples (Rhoads, 1994). The resolution addressed the issue of individualization by saying that each multiple-birth child is already an individual and that separation is not necessary in the development of such individuality. The final points made in the resolution is that such policies that mandate the separation of twins cause undo hardship on the parents of multiples and that each placement shall be made on a case-by-case basis with parental request being given priority. This resolution was instrumental and served as a backdrop for parents in other states to start petitions to call for the passage of similar bills (Segal, 2005).
On May 5, 2005, Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty signed into the law bill S.F. No. 180. This bill affords parents the right to make requests to have their multiples placed in the same classroom (Segal, 2005). Representative Marty Seifert and Senator Dennis Fredrickson are the Minnesota legislators who sponsored this bill. Representative Seifert was compelled to sponsor this bill upon hearing stories from parents who were dealing with schools that would not consult them concerning the placement of their multiples (Minnesota House of Representatives, 2005). Senator Fredrickson is the father of twins and knows the challenges parents of multiples face (Sanders, 2005). Fredrickson states that his twins were never separated in school. He claims that his twins still have a unique bond that has carried over into their adulthood.

Senator Fredrickson’s inspiration for authoring this bill came from the experience of his legislative assistant, Wendy Haavisto. She is the mother of first-grade opposite-sex twins. Ms. Haavisto and her family had moved to a new town weeks before school started (Martin, 2006). Ms. Haavisto had visited the new school and requested verbally and in writing that the twins be placed in the same classroom and the school assured her that they would comply with her request. However, the school principal separated the twins. Ms. Haavisto felt that the twins needed each other to help ease the transition to a new home, a new town, and a new school. The principal at the school the twins attended became enraged when Ms. Haavisto challenged the separation (Sanders, 2005). Ms. Haavisto was able to convince the principal to place her twins together in kindergarten, but the twins were separated by the principal the following year in first grade against their wishes.
There are currently 22 states with active campaigns attempting to enact similar legislation (Dolan, 2007). Senator Jacalyn Cilley of New Hampshire, who signed Senate Bill 78 into law in July of 2007, claimed, “The main thrust of this bill is to simply say, ‘Let’s not make an arbitrary decision based on no other information than the fact that these children are multiples’” (Legislators sponsoring, 2007, p. 1). Senator Fredrickson also states, “I want the final decision-maker to be the parents. I don’t want the school to make the decision against the wishes of the parents. Parents are in the best position to know what’s best for their children” (Martin, 2006, p. 27).

An editorial debated the need for such a bill (St. Paul Pioneer Press, 2005). The editorial stated that the Minnesota state legislature is overstepping its bounds by passing bills that attempt to solve problems that should be solved by local school district officials and parents. The editorial made the claim that common sense should drive decisions made by school districts and parents to provide solutions for the best possible placement of twins. Parents in Minnesota are offered school choice and always have the option of sending their children to different schools if they are not happy with the twin placement policies that a particular school may have. The editorial also made the point that this bill is a form of micromanagement that ultimately undermines the ability of local school boards to successfully implement and enforce adopted policies.

Since the passage of the groundbreaking Minnesota twin law, three other states have passed similar resolutions or laws. Illinois passed a resolution on February 23, 2006. Texas passed House Bill 314 and Senate Bill 403 on April 26, 2007. Georgia passed Senate Bill 123, which went into effect on July 1, 2007 (Dolan, 2007).

School Policies Concerning Twin Classroom Placement
The need for this legislation came about due to the formal and informal policies that schools hold concerning the placement of twins. Segal and Russell (1992) surveyed American mothers of twins about the policies that they have faced regarding placement of their twins. They discovered that approximately 50% of these mothers had encountered a firm policy that called for the placement of their twins (Segal & Russell, 1992). To the contrary, Preedy’s (1999) report of British schools uncovered that only 1% of the schools surveyed had a policy regarding the placement of multiples. Twenty-six percent of the schools that did not have a policy consulted parents to make placement decisions (Preedy, 1999). Of the remaining schools, 20% used a flexible policy, 21% always placed twins together, and 8% of the schools always separated the twins. This survey concludes that only one in every four schools surveyed discussed placement options with parents (Preedy, 1999). Amoroso (2002) surveyed 58 families from across the United States about their educational experiences. The results of the survey report that only 5% of the families faced a rigid school placement policy. A survey of 1,423 educators and building administrators conducted in 1989 reported that 50% of those surveyed felt strongly that a separation policy should be in place for the placement of multiples (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000). This same survey was given in 1999, and the number of educators who favored a separation policy declined to 43% percent.

Many families have combatted schools that have strict placement policies. Amoroso (2002) reported that many families have contested the policy in front of school boards and used their pediatrician’s advice to challenge such placement policies. One study has shown that policies that call for the separation of multiples “have the potential
to lead to adjustment problems for at least some children and that a more family-focused approach that takes into account the views of parents may be required” (Tully et al., 2004, p.121).

Hay and Preedy (2005) have introduced a model policy for schools that stresses flexibility and collaboration between parents and schools. She has grouped schools into three general categories based on their methods for educating multiples. The first school type is the extreme individualizing school. These schools hold the philosophy that multiple-birth children should always be separated so that they can develop into distinct individuals. These schools dismiss the relationship between the multiples and their need to be near each other. These schools may not “support the children personally, socially, and emotionally in order to develop as individuals” (Hay & Preedy, 2005, p. 1).

The second type of school is the flexible school. These schools are sensitive to the distinct needs of multiple-birth children and their families. These schools take the views of parents and multiple-birth children into account when making placement decisions. Assessments are conducted with the multiple-birth children to determine if separation is a viable option. Flexible schools allow the multiple-birth children to grow as individuals and also celebrate their special relationship. The children in these schools are recognized and called by their individual names. Flexible schools recognize the individual achievements and successes of the multiple-birth children. The final quality of a flexible school is that they make the children feel comfortable to select the same subjects and activities in which to participate (Hay & Preedy, 2005). Segal and Russell (1992) support the notion of flexible school placement by stating that, “school placement decisions should fit the special circumstances of individual twin pairs” (p.78). The more common
policy of separating twins upon school entry is inappropriate in all cases because it fails to accommodate the individual needs of each pair.

The third type of school is the *closely coupling school*. The teachers in these schools believe that twins are a natural unit and should not be separated. The teachers in these schools also tend not to recognize the multiple-birth children as individuals and may not call them by their individual names. Closely coupling schools may not assess skills or report progress of the multiple-birth children individually. These schools couple the problems that one multiple-birth child may have with the other. The final characteristic of the closely coupling school is that children of multiple births with extreme needs may not receive the proper accommodations due to the fact that the school will not separate them. An example of this would occur if a multiple-birth child with a cognitive disability needed to receive instruction in a resource room while the other child received regular education instruction in a regular classroom (Hay & Preedy, 2005).

*Parental Views and Justification of Twin Classroom Placement*

The decision to separate twins or place them in the same classrooms carries many implications for the success of the twins in school. Amoroso’s (2002) research study found that 25% of the parents requested that their twins be separated at the start of their education and that 56% had requested separation after the first year. Twenty-five percent of the parents surveyed wanted their children kept together, and 27% had requested common placement after the first year. This study also reports that 88% of the children were completely satisfied with their placement in school. It is to be noted that child satisfaction was assessed by the parents and not the actual multiple-birth children.
Segal and Russell (1992) collaborated on research to explain twin placement concerns in schools. Ten of the mothers surveyed had twins in the same classroom, and all ten of them were satisfied with their decision. The mothers of these twins offered several reasons for their decision to place their twins in the same classroom. One reason was the “assurance of equality of educational opportunity and experience” (Segal & Russell, p. 75). Another reason given was a sense of security that the twins would be placed in the same classroom. The final reason given by one of the mothers was that her male monozygotic twins who had a specific learning disability would benefit from being in the same classroom.

Amoroso’s survey (2002) brought to light other reasons for keeping twins together in the same classroom. Family convenience is one reason that some parents gave for having twins in the same classroom. Amaroso stated:

If one is sick, the other brings home the schoolwork; if one is short on snacks, the other can share; if one forgot a book, the other can borrow from his or her sibling. Parents could attend field trips, help in class and coordinate conferences with greater ease than if the twins were separated (p. 15).

Problems for families

The Oklahoma resolution makes it clear that twin placement policies are not to cause undue hardship on parents (Rhoads, 1994). This point defends the research conducted concerning abuse and neglect of multiple-birth children and depression in mothers of multiple-birth children. It has been shown that multiple-birth children have a higher incidence of abuse and neglect than singletons (Dhanani, Nield, & Ogershok, 2006). Child abuse is more common in large families and families that exhibit inadequate
spacing of children (Groothuis, Altemeier, Robarge, O’Connor, Sandler, Vietze, & Lustig, 1982). Hansen (1994) illustrated the point that when one twin is abused, there is a 60% chance of the other twin being abused. Parents of multiple-birth children are also more likely to experience financial strains and exhaustion than parents of singletons (Dhanani et al., 2006). These factors all contribute to higher stress levels for parents of multiple-birth children and lead to higher child abuse and neglect rates for multiple-birth children. Research has also shown that mothers of twins are at a greater risk for depression and poor mental health than mothers of singletons (Thorpe et al., 1991). The factors of large families and inadequate spacing that lead to increased rates of child abuse among multiple-birth children also lead to greater rates of maternal depression in mothers of multiple-birth children. Therefore, the Oklahoma resolution addresses the stress that parents of multiple-birth children are under and calls on school districts to alleviate the stress that comes from placement decisions that these parents disagree with.

**Empirical Research Studies Addressing Twin Classroom Placement**

Six research studies have reported the effects of classroom separation on multiple-birth children. Each of these studies explores various research questions related to separation of multiple-birth children. Koch’s (1966) study focused on two research goals, which were to analyze the twins’ desire to be or not be in the same classroom and to analyze the twins’ agreement of their actual placements. Leeper and Skipper (1970) investigated “the effect of the placement of twins in the same or separate classrooms on their achievement, acceptance, and adjustment” (p.13). As part of The Twins in School project, a survey was developed to uncover what methods have been successful and unsuccessful regarding the education of twins (Gleeson et al., 1990). This study also
examined the perceptions of parents and teachers of twins to examine differences in their attitudes. Preedy’s study (1999) surveyed schools in England to document demographic data of multiples in school, such as number of twins, percentage of identical and fraternal twins, policies mandating multiple-birth child placement, common practices utilized by schools to place multiples, specific reasons for common placement and separation of multiples.

The two research studies with the most current data are similar in scope. Tully et al. (2004) reported three research questions that guided their study. The first research question examined whether separating twins prior to their initial year of school could cause difficulties. The second research question examined the probability of long-term effects of twin separation prior to the initial year of schooling. The final research question examined separation of twins later in their schooling and whether that led to difficulties.

The van Leeuwen et al. (2005) study replicated the Tully et al. (2004) study. The van Leeuwen study contains seven research questions. The first research question investigated whether the twins carried preexisting differences with them when they entered primary school. The second and third research questions investigated short-term effects of twin separation at age seven by using maternal and teacher ratings. The fourth research question looked for preexisting differences exhibited by twins who shared a classroom and those who were in separate classrooms for their whole academic career. Research questions five and six investigated maternal and teacher ratings that examined effects of twin classroom separation at the age of twelve. The final research question examined twins at age twelve to determine whether separation affected their academic success.
The samples varied among these six studies. Koch (1966) surveyed 36 identical twin boys, 34 identical twin girls, 36 fraternal twin boys, 34 fraternal twin girls, and 38 opposite-sex fraternal twins. Leeper and Skipper (1970) used scores on achievement and intelligence tests taken by the twins to measure achievement. This study used sections three and four of the Haggerty-Wickham-Olson Behavior Rating Scale to measure social acceptance and adjustment. The sample groups were comprised of students from grades 1-6. Leeper and Skipper student 64 identical boy twins, 92 identical girl twins, 44 fraternal boy twins, 54 fraternal girl twins, and 88 opposite-sex fraternal twins. Gleeson et al. (1990) reported data taken from 784 parent surveys and 1,264 teacher surveys. Preedy’s study (1999) recorded data from 3,000 schools. Preedy’s study included schools that contained a total of 619, 633 students. Among these students were 11,873 twins and 117 sets of higher order multiples. The Tully et al. (2004) study contained 552 pairs of twins who were not separated. Forty-six percent of the not separated pairs were male, and 54 percent were female. The not separated pairs also consisted of 55% identical twins and 45% fraternal twins. The study contained 162 pairs of separated early twins. Fifty-three percent of the pairs were male, and 47% were female. Identical twins comprised 49% of this group, and fraternal twins made up 51% of the group. The last group was the separated later group that contained 164 total pairs of twins. Fifty percent of the pairs were male and 50% were female. Sixty-two percent of the twins in this group were identical, and 38% were fraternal. The Tully et al. study used twins who participated in the Twins Early Development Study (TEDS) out of England and Wales.

The van Leeuwen et al. (2005) study used twins who were registered in the NTR in Amsterdam. The study consisted of 1,060 mothers of fraternal twins at 3 years of age.
and 636 mothers of identical twins at 3 years of age who were in separate classrooms. The study also contained 2,125 mothers of fraternal twins at 3 years of age and 1,192 mothers of identical twins at 3 years of age who were in the same classroom. The mothers of 7 year-old twins in separate classes numbered 1,211 with fraternal twins and 740 with identical twins. The mothers of 7 year-old twins in common classrooms numbered 2,453 with fraternal twins and 1,382 with identical twins. The teachers completing the survey numbered 719 who educated separated twins and 1,076 who educated twins in the same classroom. Table one illustrates the quantitative research studies conducted regarding classroom placement of multiples. This table includes the researchers, the year the research was conducted and a description of the sample.

Table 1

Quantitative Research Studies Addressing Classroom Placement of Multiple-Birth Children: Sample Size and Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sample Size and Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koch</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>36 Identical Twin Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34 Identical Twin Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36 Fraternal Twin Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34 Fraternal Twin Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38 Opposite Sex Fraternal Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeper and</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Twins in Grades One Through Six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipper</td>
<td></td>
<td>64 Identical Twin Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>92 Identical Twin Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44 Fraternal Twin Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>54 Fraternal Twin Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Sample Descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gleeson et al.</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>88 Opposite Sex Fraternal Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>784 Parents of Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,264 Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preedy</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3,000 English Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tully et al.</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Twins Participated in TEDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>552 Not Separated Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>162 Separated Early Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>164 Separated Late Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>van Leeuwen et al.</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Twins registered with NTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Separate Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,060 Mothers of Age Three Fraternal Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>636 Mothers of Age Three Identical Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,211 Mothers of Age Seven Fraternal Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>740 Mothers of Age Seven Identical Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>719 Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Same Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,125 Mothers of Age Three Fraternal Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,192 Mothers of Age Three Identical Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,453 Mothers of Age Seven Fraternal Twins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1,382 Mothers of Age Seven Identical Twins
1,076 Teachers

Table two provides a brief description of the data collection tools used in these research studies.

Table 2
Quantitative Research Studies Addressing Classroom Placement of Multiple-Birth Children: Data Collection Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Data Collection Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koch</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Twin Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeper and Haggerty-Olson-Wickman</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Haggerty-Olson-Wickman Behavior Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipper</td>
<td></td>
<td>Metropolitan Achievement Test</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>California Achievement Test</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stanford Achievement Test</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>California Test of Mental Maturity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kuhlman Anderson Intelligence Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pintner Intelligence Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gleeson et al.</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Parent Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preedy</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>School Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tully et al.</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Teacher Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
van Leeuwen et al. 2005

Child Behavior Checklist Completed by Parents
Teacher Report Form Completed by Teachers

The results from these studies provide valuable insight regarding the classroom placement of multiple-birth children. Koch’s study (1966) asserts that two thirds of the twins surveyed were in the same classroom, and one third of the twins were separated. There was a difference between opposite-sex twins as they were separated 50% of the time, and boys had a greater likelihood of being separated than girls. Identical girl twins shared a common classroom more than all of the other twin groups with only one out of eight pairs being separated. Separation of twins cut across all socioeconomic groups with the same ratios. Males expressed a desire to be separated in school from their twin more than females did. Twins who displayed the characteristics of aggression and hyperactivity were separated more than twins who conformed to classroom rules. Twins with a large difference in IQ were more likely to be separated than twins with similar IQ’s. The final conclusion was that twins in a common classroom were rated as being more popular than twins in separate classrooms.

Leeper and Skipper’s (1970) research findings concluded that classroom separation of twins is not necessary. They stated, “It appears that the placement of twins in the same or separate classroom seems to have little effect on their achievement, social adjustment and acceptance” (p. 15). They also noted that placement decisions should be
made by parents and teachers, taking the circumstances of each individual situation into consideration.

Gleeson et al. (1990) stressed the need for cooperation between parents and schools when making classroom placement decisions. This study reports that only 25% of the parents surveyed believed they had an opportunity to discuss placement decisions with school administrators. This corresponds with Preedy’s (1999) data that shows 25% of schools reported involving parents in twin placement decisions. Ten percent of the teachers that completed the survey in the Gleeson et al. study believed that their schools had an official policy to separate twins. Preedy reiterates this data with 80% of the schools claiming they always separate multiple-birth children.

Gleeson et al. (1990) discuss the need for schools to understand that placement decisions do not have to be permanent. School personnel need to be flexible and willing to make placement changes when warranted, whether at the end of the school year or during the school year. In Preedy’s study, 22% of the schools adopted policies that calculated a flexible approach to the classroom placement of twins.

Gleeson et al. (1990) commented that teachers reasoned that twins need individual development in their rationale to separate twins in school. Preedy’s (1999) research data showed 19% of the school administrators believed that developing individuality was the main reason to separate multiple-birth children. This data suggests that many schools are separating twins to promote individuality when there is no evidence that classroom separation will sustain this individuality (Gleeson et al., 1990).

The results of the Tully et al. (2004) study and the van Leeuwen et al. (2005) study are similar. The first finding of the Tully et al. study was that twins separated in the
first year of school exhibited more internalizing problems than twins sharing the same classroom. Van Leeuwen et al. also reported that twins separated at age seven were more inclined to demonstrate internalizing behaviors than non-separated twins. Five year olds were shown to possess higher rates of internalizing and externalizing problems based on maternal ratings. Tully et al.’s second finding illustrated that separated twins exhibited more academic struggles than twins sharing a classroom. This notion was supported by the data that showed later-separated twins having inferior literacy skills to non-separated twins. The third finding was that no differences emerged between separated and not-separated twins in relation to externalizing problems, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and pro-social behaviors. The last finding stated that dizygotic twins separated after their initial year of schooling were rated as being harder workers than non-separated dizygotic twins.

The van Leeuwen et al. (2005) study expands upon the research conducted by Tully et al. (2004) by researching pre-existing conditions that some of the twins may have experienced before starting school. The Tully et al. study used only teacher ratings to observe behavior at school. The van Leeuwen et al. study used teacher ratings and maternal ratings to generalize the behavior problems of the twins. Van Leeuwen et al. (2005) state, “When pre-existing differences in externalizing problems at age three were taken into account, separation of the twins had no significant effect on externalizing problems as rated by the mother at age seven (p. 389). On the contrary, internalizing problems in separated twins at age five and seven could not be explained by pre-existing problems. The study also notes that by the age of 12, separation had no effect on
internalizing problems either. The final conclusion drawn by the van Leeuwen et al. study is that “it seems that it makes no difference whether twins are separated or not” (p. 390).

**Expert Opinions Concerning Common Classroom Placement of Twins**

The research seems to indicate that there are many reasons to keep multiples in the same classroom in elementary school. Mascazine (2004) reported that 80% of multiple-birth children should not be separated upon entry into school. One reason to keep multiple-birth children in the same classroom is that they may be shy and immature (Vander Sluis, 2005). This shyness and immaturity in twins could lead to adjustment issues, resulting in the need for a common classroom placement (Meyer, 2006).

Another reason to keep multiple-birth children in the same classroom is the convenience of having one teacher and one set of expectations. Many parents need to have one schedule, one curriculum, and one set of expectations to follow (Vander Sluis, 2005). Murray (2006) believed that parents should not be ashamed of the overwhelming feeling of dealing with the unique academic demands of twins separated in different classrooms.

An unequal education based on teacher strengths and weaknesses is another reason to keep multiples in the same classroom (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000). Many separated multiple-birth children feel cheated and left out when their co-twin has experiences in school that they do not get (McCreery, 2006). McCreery (2006) states that her twins were taught by two teachers that exhibited different styles and personalities. The twin with the more vibrant, energetic teacher thrived in school while his co-twin was not enthusiastic about school and began to lose interest in school. This comparison of teachers can cause problems between the teachers.
and could be detrimental to the relationships between the teachers, the twins, and the parents (Preedy, 2005).

**Expert Opinions Concerning Separate Classroom Placement of Twins**

Research suggests many reasons to separate multiple-birth children in school. One reason is to help multiple-birth children develop their own sense of individuality (Mascazine, 2004). Individuality of multiple-birth children can be promoted in the same classroom by providing individual praise and recognition, not comparing the multiple-birth children to one another, and calling on each of them by their own name (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000). Mascazine reports that many twins are given recognition based on their twin affiliation and not their individual accomplishments. Twin dependency often impedes the twins’ ability to relate with different children and may hinder the twins’ ability to become individuals (Hay & Preedy, 2005). There is minimal evidence from empirical studies that would suggest classroom separation of twins would aide in their intellectual or emotional development.

Another reason to separate multiple-birth children is when their behavior becomes disruptive to the educational environment (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000). When multiple-birth children exhibit behavior problems and need to be disciplined by school officials, separation may be necessary (The Twins Foundation, 1992). School officials will know they have reached this point when “standard procedures for classroom management can not eliminate the problem” (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, p. 15).

Competition between multiple-birth children is also a reason for schools to justify separation. Many twins reported that competition was hard because they did not want to
 perform better than their co-twin and risk hurting their co-twins feelings (Mascazine, 2004). Teachers often feel compelled to give multiple-birth children the same grades because they are concerned that the competition will be too overwhelming for the multiple-birth children (The Twins Foundation, 1992). Mascazine (2004) reports that competition among twins can actually be motivational and that it allows the twins the opportunity to promote accountability between one another. Hay and Preedy (2005) state that when the primary goal of the twins is to compete with their co-twin, separation is needed.

Many twins exhibit different ability levels in school, which can lead to self-esteem issues for the twins (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000). Renzulli and McGreevy’s (1986) study echoes this sentiment. Their research study considered the impact of one twin being selected for placement in a gifted program while the other twin was not. One of the recommendations of this study was that the gifted twin should be placed in the gifted program, even if the other twin is not. Renzulli and McGreevy (1986) stated, “There may be significant differences in ability and motivation, and therefore each child should be considered on an individual basis” (p. 126). This problem is often compounded by teachers who find it necessary to compare the twins academically and fail to focus on the problems of the less successful twin (Hooper, 2006).

Separation may be warranted for twins if they learn to divide their schoolwork and cheat in school (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000). Meyer (2006) believes that this can lead to academic difficulties for the twins due to the fact that the twins may not be practicing their skills sufficiently.
The final reason to separate or to keep twins together is the preference of the twins. Forced separation can “damage self-esteem, inhibit language development, and delay learning” (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000, p. 16). Mascazine (2004) notes that the opinions of multiple-birth children should be taken into account when making classroom placement decisions. Twins need to be given the opportunity to grow academically, and they will request to be separated in school when they are emotionally ready (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000).

Conclusion

In December 2003, the U.S. Department of Education released Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported By Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide. This guide included a three-step evaluation tool used to determine if an intervention is supported by rigorous evidence. Intervention is defined in this guide as “an educational practice, strategy, curriculum, or program” (U.S. Department of Education, p. 1). The first step in the evaluation process is to determine if the intervention is “backed by strong evidence of effectiveness” (U.S. Department of Education, p. v). If step one is not satisfactorily addressed, then step two is then used. Step two states, “If the intervention is not backed by strong evidence, is it backed by possible evidence of effectiveness?” (U.S. Department of Education, p. v). Step three of the evaluation states, “If the answers to both questions above are no, one may conclude that the intervention is not supported by meaningful evidence” (U.S. Department of Education, p. v). The research conducted to date concerning classroom placement of twins has not supported the notion that separating twins is the best educational option for all twins and arbitrary
policies mandating twin classroom separation would not be considered evidence-based interventions.

There is a gap in the research that has been ignored on the separation of twins in school. Research that focuses on the twins themselves and their view of being separated is needed. This gap is addressed using the methodology described in Chapter Three.
Chapter Three
Methodology

*Rationale for Qualitative Research*

Much has been written about the separation of twins in the school setting. However, a void in the research is the perception of the separation from the twin’s perspective. The best vehicle to allow the twins’ voice to be heard is qualitative research. The research question for this study was “What negative effects do school policies that force separation of twins have on the perceptions of the educational experiences of those twins?” Glesne (2006) states that qualitative research methods are appropriate to use when the “variables are complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure” (p.5). The phenomenon of separation of twins in school fits this description. The emotions of the research participants are difficult to describe with quantification. A survey would not allow for the subtle nuances an interview can uncover. Twin data from schools that separate twins and schools who do not separate twins might provide some information, but not the perception or heart of the twins.

Qualitative researchers use an inductive approach to conduct research (Patten, 2005). In qualitative research, the researcher has an intimate involvement with the research participants (Glesne, 2006). The use of interviews will allow for the formation of personal relationships with the subjects and the opportunity to evaluate the responses through both verbal and nonverbal feedback.
This research study used a phenomenological approach. Smith (2003) defined this approach as follows:

Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions.

This research study constructed theories about the phenomena of twin separations through the use of data collected through the interviews.

Participants

This qualitative research study used a purposive sample of three twin pairs and their mothers. Originally, the twins were to be selected from three separate schools in Northwest Ohio that have a history of forced separation of twins. However, after a story was run in the January/February issue of Twins Magazine (Alt, 2008) it was determined the participants for this study would be selected from across the United States. The article detailed the study and provided parents an avenue to explain their experiences with forced separation. A link on www.twinslaw.com was provided to parents interested in the study to email the researcher. Emails were received from 157 parents eager to share their experiences. Broadening the boundaries of research participants made it possible to gather the rich data needed for this research study. The twins initially were to be one set of male twins, one set of female twins, and one set of opposite-sex twins. Upon reviewing the emails sent from parents that have faced forced separation, the study changed to
include three sets of opposite sex twins. The experiences presented by the opposite-sex twin pairs fit the criteria set by the researcher better than the same-sex twin pairs. Zygosity was not factored into the selection of the subjects. The twins ranged in age between six and nine years. All of the research participants were Caucasian. One of the twin pairs had an older brother, one had a younger brother, and one had no siblings. Two of the twin pairs lived in rural areas and one lived in a suburban area. The rural areas where the research participants lived were in the states of Missouri and New Hampshire and the research participants that lived in an suburban area was in the state of Texas. These twins provided insight into the research question by expressing their perspective of their individual experiences of being placed in a different classroom than their co-twin against their own will. Each of the research participants was given a unique pseudonym to ensure anonymity. The children that participated in the research study signed assent forms. The adult research participants signed consent forms to be interviewed and informed consent forms to allow their children to be interviewed.

The interview protocol established for this research was to first interview the mother of the twins and then interview the twins separately with the mother in the room. The interviews with the mothers were not observed by the twins. A final interview with the twins was conducted on the following day. All interviews were held in the home of the participant with the first meeting on a Friday night and the following interview on Saturday morning. The mothers of the twins were interviewed first to gain an understanding of their perceptions of their twins’ separation. The structured interviews allowed the mothers to express their views of the separation of their twins. They were
interviewed before the twins to avoid interview bias since the mother’s were present during the twins’ interviews.

When dealing with students in primary and intermediate grades, it is important that the interviews be administered in a setting where they are comfortable. For this reason, the interviews were held in the participants’ homes. This was done in an effort to accommodate the parents and their schedules. The twins were interviewed separately with their mothers in the room for security. The mothers were asked not to help the twins with their responses while the twins were being interviewed.

The twins were interviewd on two separate occasions, once on a Friday evening and again the following morning. They were asked to draw a picture that depicted how they felt when they were forced to separate from their co-twin at the end of the final interview. The twins were provided a standard sheet of drawing paper and colored pencils to do their drawing. The twins were asked to explain the emotions depicted in the drawings.

*Researcher’s Role*

The initial step in recruiting research participants was to discuss the scope of the study with the mothers selected from the emails and soliciting their consent to participate in the study. The mothers were provided with the twin’s interview questions two weeks prior to the interview. The mothers were instructed to prepare the twins for the interview by summarizing the interviews with the twins. The mothers were also instructed not to share the actual questions with the twins prior to the interview.

Upon arrival at the research participant’s homes, each of the twins was given a new University of Toledo sweatshirt to attempt to build rapport with the subjects.
Cushman (1998) states, “Activist research shows how knowledge can be made with those we hope our critical theory serves” (p. 37). Therefore, another intention of the gift was to show the research participants that their knowledge provides data needed to help other twins that are facing similar situations and that their input is valued.

A bias I bring to the research is my personal experience as a father of twins. This experience has caused me to become an advocate for the parental rights of twins. My seven years of experience as a school administrator have led me to believe that parents and the twins should have the a voice in regarding their classroom placement. I strongly believe that no administrator should practice a policy that arbitrarily places twins in separate classrooms. The purpose of this research study is not to settle the debate about placement of twins in school. Rather, the purpose of this research is to report the negative experiences of twins who were forced to separate in school. This research study was not meant to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. In order to present as unbiased reporting of the data as possible an accurate description of the experiences of the twins and their mothers was necessary (Maxwell, 2005). Careful coding of data was necessary and the triangulation of the data of the twin’s interviews, their drawings and descriptions, and their mothers interviews was used to support the themes that developed from the research.

Data Collection Methods

The data for this research study was collected using structured interviews with flexibility for open-ended questions that were determined as the interviews proceeded. The mothers were provided their interview questions a minimum of two weeks before the actual interviews. Three sets of twins were interviewed two times. A modified version of
Seidman’s (1998) three interview series was utilized. The first interview session allowed the twins and to share their life history and working to build a rapport with the twins. The first interview session concluded with a formal interview detailing the experiences of their forced separation. The second interview consisted of a “reflection on the meaning” (Seidman, p. 12). This interview discussed how the forced separation affected their lives in the past and how the experience has shaped their present lives. The twin pairs consisted of three sets of opposite sex twins. The twins ranged in age from six to nine. The twins were selected from across the United States. The twins who were interviewed experienced a classroom separation from their co-twin without the consent of both the twins and their mother. Each of the twins and their mothers were interviewed individually. A phenomenological approach was used to record the perceptions of the subjects. The mothers of the twins were asked to be in the rooms during the interviews for support, but they were asked to refrain from helping the twins with their answers. This was done to ensure the comfort and safety of the twins because there was a chance that a university researcher might intimidate the twins. The mothers of the twins were each interviewed one time. Each of the interviews was digitally recorded with two different devices. The two devices used were an IPod with a MicroMemo recorder attached and an Apple laptop with a microphone attached using GarageBand software. Immediately after the interviews, the researcher recorded written notes about what was seen during the interviews.

The interview protocol was piloted at York Elementary with a set of 10 year-old male twins. The pilot study was used to test the age appropriateness of the questions and
the length of the interview. The twins interviewed in the pilot study were asked to provide feedback concerning the questions used during the pilot interview.

Documents were collected to illustrate data processed during the interviews. The twins were asked to draw pictures that illustrated the emotions and feelings they possessed while they were separated from their co-twin in school. It was necessary to go back and verify the contents of the pictures with the twins by having them give a detailed description of the drawing.

Data Management

The research binder contains four distinct sections. The first section consists of the research plan and the signed letters of consent. The second section consists of the notes taken during interviews. The notes consist of nonverbal indicators or cues exhibited by the research participants that further the understanding of the interviews. The third section contains indexed interviews. The interviews were transcribed and put into the fourth section. The transcribed interviews were used during the open coding phase of the research.

Data Analysis

A phenomenological approach consisting of an inductive method was used to analyze the data collected. The interviews were first indexed and then transcribed to obtain verbatim transcriptions of the interviews within a week of the interview. The researcher completed the transcriptions because knowledge of the interview and the research participants lead to a more accurate transcription (Ives, 1995). The interviews were transcribed verbatim to avoid the incorrect translation by the interviewer (Spradley, 1980). Maykut and Morehouse’s (1994) constant comparative method was used as a
model to analyze data collected in the interviews. The first step was inductive coding, which consisted of scanning the interview transcripts for major themes emerging from the data (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The second step of Maykut and Morehouse’s method was to refine the categories. In this step, all major data was examined and propositional statements that detail rules of inclusion were written to categorize data. Exploration of relationships and patterns across categories were the basis for the third step. The objective of this step was to analyze the propositional statements to determine if any of them relate or connect to each other. The final step was to integrate the data analyzed into a cohesive piece of scholarly writing.

The data was coded using the TAMS Analyzer software package. This software allowed the researcher to attach codes to the data and digitally organize all data as it was categorized into themes. The TAMS Analyzer allowed the researcher to view all data in codes, which allows for a thorough interpretation of the data.

Trustworthiness/Research Validity

Data triangulation was used to establish the validity of the data provided by the twins. Structured interviews of the mothers of the twins were used to triangulate this data. Using multiple data sources, such as interviews with the twins and their mothers and drawings depicted from their experience were a verification procedure that will provide this research study with validity (Glesne, 2006). The mothers of the twins were asked to member check the transcriptions of the interviews to ensure accuracy of the transcriptions.

Beach (2003) stated, “Because of the inequalities of capitalism, education research should be concerned with trying to improve equity and democracy both within
and through education” (p. 861). This research study is valid because it ensures that, “Oppressed or marginalized groups are heard and responded to and where there is a potential to initiate and structurally support necessary processes of democratic change” (Beach, 2003, p. 861).

**Timeline**

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

The research question guiding this study was what effect do school policies that force separations of twins have on the perceptions of the educational experiences of those twins and their mothers? Many researchers have addressed the need for school policies that are flexible concerning the placement of twins (Hay & Preedy, 2006). Gleeson et al. (1990) and Preedy (1999) reported that only 25% of parents surveyed had a voice in the placement decision of their twins. This chapter will provide data that illustrates the implications of not consulting parents and arbitrarily separating twins before they are ready. The chapter is organized into the two main headings of Research Participants, Themes and Interpretation of the Data and Findings related to the literature. The section on themes presents the data in a narrative form that allows the voice of the research participants to tell the story. The major themes extrapolated from the data are (a) twin relationship, (b) educational effects, (c) family perceptions of classroom placement, and (d) perceptions of school policy separating twins. The section on data interpretation discusses the correlation of the data discovered in this research study with past research studies on this topic as it relates to each theme.

Research Participants
After a thorough review of the emails sent in from parents around the United States, it was found that the majority of the emails were from opposite-sex twins. While all of the respondents shared interesting stories the three most compelling cases were from mothers who had opposite-sex twins. It was determined that this would not change the focus of the research. If strong evidence of emotional stress exists among opposite-sex twins then there is greater likelihood of similar emotional existing amongst identical twins. Therefore, the research protocol was changed to interviews of opposite-sex twins only.

Emails provided a cross-section of the twins who were in separate classes across the United States. The three sets of twins chosen for the research live in Texas, New Hampshire and Missouri. Each of the twins was interviewed on two separate occasions while the mothers were interviewed only once.

The first twin pair interviewed was from New Hampshire and they are currently in the third grade. They shared a classroom in kindergarten and have been separated the past three school years. Their mother stated that the kindergarten teacher did explain to her that the twins did talk a lot during class. She also believed that the teacher was blowing the problems out of proportion. The kindergarten teacher’s evaluation of their behavior caused the principal to separate them in first grade. The male twin was shy and conservative. His hobbies included sports. His father had taken him to a New England Patriots game and he caught a pair of gloves that were worn that game by Lawrence Mulroney. When he found out that I was a football coach, he had to run up to his room and show me how big the gloves were and see if they would fit my hands. The female twin was outgoing and boisterous. Her mother had to remind her several times that this
was a serious interview and that she was not to be silly when answering the questions. She asked many questions during the interview and was very interested in the technology used to record the interviews. She was curious about the research project and wanted to know all of the details. The twins have a 7 year-old brother that both of them believe is spoiled by their parents because he is the youngest.

The second pair interviewed was from Texas and they are currently in the third grade. They shared a classroom in kindergarten and first grade, were separated in second grade, and are back together in third grade. Their mother expresssed that the twin’s teachers never once stated that the twins were a behavior problem or a disruption in their classes. Their mother showed me a calendar that the female twin had made in second grade and a different calendar made in third grade. The mother explained that the picture used in the second grade calendar showed a girl that had given up on school and had lost her enthusiasm for school. The male twin was protective and charismatic and his favorite hobby is playing the game Rock Band. When asked what part of Rock Band he likes best, he explained that he likes to play the drums, his brother plays the guitar, and his dad is the singer. The female twin was caring and nurturing. She spoke very highly of her brother and it was evident that she cares for him immensely. Her hobbies included playing computer games and drawing. Her artistic abilities were demonstrated with the picture she drew to describe her feelings concerning being separated from her brother. They have an older brother and their mother stated that the three of them have a very caring relationship. When asked how the twins get along with their older brother, the mother stated:
They worship him. He's a rock star. Anything he does is golden. Like any older sibling, he likes his space, and sometimes he wants them out of his room, understandably. But I am proud to say that all of our kids are close. They really love each other and love to spend time together. They watch each other carefully to make sure that everyone is having a good time and doesn't need anything.

The final pair interviewed was from Missouri and they are currently in kindergarten. Even though they are younger than the other research participants, their story embodied the phenomenon being studied by this research. Their mother explained that the twins were articulate and could answer the questions in depth. They were separated during the three-month summer school offered for students going into Kindergarten. They were in preschool together for two years and their mother claims that their teacher praised them consistently and never stated that there were problems with them being in the same class. Both of the twins explained that they do like to have time away from each other. They spend the night at their grandparent’s house on different nights and their parents take them to different events. The male twin expressed that only him and his dad go to Kansas Jayhawk basketball games. The male twin was confident and his hobbies include sports. The female twin was fun loving and easygoing and her hobbies include drawing and playing with dolls. They are the only children in this family. Table 3 provides the demographic data of the twins that participated in the research study.

The mothers ranged in age from 29-36. All of the mothers are married and co-habitat the same household as the father of the twins. The mothers were very open during the interviews. At times, emotions could be seen when they were discussing their
experience with their twins being separated. One mother cried during the interview and had to stop for a short moment. One of the mothers had spoken in front of the Texas state legislature about the impact of this policy on her twins. One mother had written a letter that was read on the floor of the Missouri state legislature while this bill was being discussed. The third mother did not report any political involvement but did say that she was excited about New Hampshire’s new law that will be implemented at the start of the 2008-2009 school year. She stated that she took a copy of it to the principal to make sure that he knew what her rights were. She believed that the new law was needed to take the power away from principals and give the power back to the parents.

Table 3

Demographic Data of Twin Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psuedonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nature of Separation</th>
<th>Geographical Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Separated in Second Grade</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Separated in Second Grade</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Separated in Grades 1-3</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Separated in Grades 1-3</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Separated in Grade Pre-K</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Separated in Grade Pre-K</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes

Theme 1: Twin Relationship
The unique relationship that twins develop at conception make the issue of classroom placement one of great importance. This relationship and bond that twins carry as a birthright plays a role in the schooling of twins. The data fell into three sub-categories of (a) competition, (b) cooperation, and (c) friendship.

Subtheme 1: Competition

The data in this category varied slightly between the mother’s responses and the twin’s responses. The mothers all reported that the twins did compete with one another. All three of the mothers believed that the competition between the twins was healthy. The mothers were asked, “Do you feel that your twins compete with one another at school?” Jessica provided:

No, not at all. Like I said, they are so different and they both have their strengths. I mean, we play games at home, and they definitely want to win, Nathan especially. He is like my husband. He is really a competitive person. His competitiveness does not get out of hand though. He is competitive in sports and that type of thing. Her strength is letters and alphabet and writing and his is without a doubt numbers and that type of thing. Like I said, we compete in board games, but they don't make fun of each other and they don't argue. We really don't have any of that type of behavior. We'll sit out and do a flash card game and he will get frustrated with himself because he doesn't know letters and she will. So he'll be like, okay, when it's his turn to pick a game, he wants to play the letter game, because he wants to get better at it and vice versa. She will say, why don't I know numbers as well as Nathan and I said, well, you know letters a little better, he knows numbers a little better. When it was her turn to pick, she will pick the
numbers. I found that very interesting because in my mind, common sense, you pick what you're better at, and I found that it was very interesting that they would each pick what they needed to get better at so that they could compete with dad and mom and brother or sister. So I don't think the competition is unhealthy.

Karen stated:

Yes, I think they do. Honestly, they are friends in the same class and the same grade doing the same projects. It's natural to look over and say what did you get. We try very hard in this family to make it healthy. It's not okay to say ha ha or any of that stuff. They are also still young, so we don't put a lot of emphasis on grades and we know that they are smart kids. If they don't make straight A's, that's okay. We try really hard to foster an atmosphere of everyone is their own person and if you make a B that's great and if you make an A that's great. It's all good. For the most part that works. With them, I think that the competition is healthy. We are human and it's a natural feeling to want to perform and perform adequately. If I honestly thought there was a large gap between them academically, that wouldn't be a good thing for them to be in the same class. I would watch that very closely. I wouldn't let competition impede their education.

Carrie recounted:

No, no they don’t compete. They don’t make fun of each other. I know. My twins have way too much respect for each other. I believe that they have pushed themselves to become better students at school, but it is collective. They want to make each other better but not at the expense of the other.
The twins all had slightly different viewpoints of the role that competition played in their relationships. The twins had varying opinions when asked, “How do you feel when your twins gets a better grade than you?” Linda stated:

Well, I feel jealous that he got a better grade, I don’t know why can't I do that. I want to do that. I want to be as smart and get good grades like he does. He does like to rub it in when he gets better grades than me. I guess that I do the same to him when I get better grades than him though.

Gary reported:

I’d feel proud of my sister and I would feel sad, because I didn’t make a good grade on it. So, proud of my sister and a little sad for myself. I know that if she gets good grades, mom and dad will be proud of her so I will be proud of her also. If I do better on a test though, I don't like to tease her and say I made a 100 and you just made like a 70 or something or a C and so I don’t do that much and I don't think I have ever done that to her ever in my life.

Tim expressed his feelings on competition:

I want Mary to do well in school. She is smart and I want her to get good grades in school. I am proud of her and I think that she is proud of me when I get good grades. I like it when she does good in school. I will be happy for her for getting an A and upset that if I get a C. But if I do my best I can live with a C. Mary and I would need to study harder so that we can both get an A on the test.

Mary expressed:
Well, it sometimes can make me a little bit jealous, but sometimes I know that I can get smarter because Tim and me aren’t the same. I know that I have a better ability in me to get better grades than him.

Nathan recounted:

There are things that she does well in school and things that I do well. I do not get jealous of her when she gets a better grade. I know that getting good grades makes her happy. My mom and dad don’t make a big deal about grades so I don’t worry about them. I don’t like it when my teacher makes a big deal about us getting different grades though.

Molly shared the following account:

I feel proud of my brother for getting good grades. I am not always happy with myself though. I know that if he can get good grades, I can get good grades too. I especially don’t get good grades like him in math. He helps me so that I can get better grades in math. I usually get better grades than him in reading and he doesn’t get mad at me either.

Subtheme 2: Cooperation

The mothers and twins all stated that cooperation has been a positive influence in the twin’s relationships. The mothers reported that they witnessed the twins cooperating with one another at an early age. The mothers were presented the question, “Do you feel that your twins cooperate with one another? Please give me an example?” Karen described one of her experiences:

One that I think about when I really want to feel happy, we used pacifiers for a while and there would be a time when Linda would be crying when they just
learned to crawl, and she would be crying and crying and Gary would crawl all the way across the floor and take the pacifier out of his mouth and put it in hers. I don't know if he was trying to shut her up, or just to soothe her, but he would offer his to her and I think that is sweet.

Jessica remembered:

Well, in 2005, they would have been four, about three months or so before they started preschool, my husband was burnt in a fire in our backyard. And the kids actually witnessed it, and when that happened we spent a week down at our hospital’s burn unit and I was away from the kids and I had never ever been away from the kids. Even though they were still so little, they were so understanding of what was going on and it just amazed me, what they would talk about and what they would pick up from that, from us even. But what they witnessed, what they were just seeing in their day-to-day life with dad being home and me trying to care for him. That was really amazing to see how this situation really transformed them. I think from little, little biddy kids to where you could tell they were getting big. They were so understanding with things that were very serious. It was a major point in all of our lives. So that really sticks out in my mind, just how quickly they changed within like a two-month period because they had to. And they just adapted and I mean I have lots of memories of different things and even in the last six months, well the last three, four months, it has amazed me, the information that they have absorbed and have gone from not reading at all to reading. I mean there was things like that, but I mean, I think the most dramatic was, because of it being so traumatic, with my husband being burnt and going
through all that to see the kids interact with him and talk about it with other people and then went to preschool and talked about how you don't play with fire and you don't do this, just the things that they picked up from that, it was absolutely amazing.

Jessica continued:

But when you have someone else shares you're life, you have that other person you’ve always had to get along with, had to work with, had to share with and then you found, hey it works out little better to have a second person instead of just me. It is my general experience that they tend to bring in other children and be like to okay if we do this way we can get a lot more done in a lot faster rate. And like I said, my kids do not have the dominating, bossy type personality. Like I said, you have kids that become friends and they run the classroom. You always have somebody in there that is kind of head of the class. You don't have to go and say we got to go separate these two friends or these twins because they are dominating the class. The schools should teach the kids better social skills and ensure that they are not exhibiting this type of behavior.

Carrie recalled:

I have a lot of favorite memories. I guess the favorite one I had was when they were very, very little and they just came home from the hospital and they were in the same basinet and they were sucking on the same pacifier. One was on the nipple and the other one was on the other end of it. And it was cute.

The mothers also described that the twins cooperate well with one another in the educational setting also. Karen stated:
There are a couple of things that they had to do in Kindergarten and first grade where they had chores in the classroom like gathering the pencils and put them in the buckets and put away notebooks and what not. At lunchtime they would have to sweep and one would have to hold the dustpan. Quite often in the lunchroom, they would be the sweepers because they didn't argue about who got to hold the dustpan. They would just grab it and take care of business. I can't say that I've witnessed it at school much because I am not there everyday.

Jessica shared:

If my son play a video game that has to do with memorizing, she is a lot better at memory than he is, and she'll sit there with him and work with him and say, no, it was this, and Oh, yeah, you're right. I've had so many people comment how well they played together with other kids even because they've always been forced to share. They've always been forced to work together. I've also found that when we have kids over and we've been other places, I see lots of kids that won't share and they try to boss the children around and my kids are just not like that. I've people comment about how well they work together and how well they play with other kids.

Carrie expressed:

I would say, Mary, I don’t understand this homework. What does the teacher want? And she will come down and she will help Tim and I. I have done this a lot. Mary will say “let me come over and help you and she may tell him some of the answers, I am not sure, but she also knows him and knows how he learns and she can help him better than anyone. He needed to know the states and often times he
forgets things at school. He has a tendency to be forgetful and Mary will always have her school materials. So I find myself saying a lot, Mary can I have your cards because Tim has a test tomorrow and he would borrow her homework.

Subtheme 3: Friendship

The mothers and twins expressed varying opinions on the role that classroom separation played in the ability to make friends. When asked, “How did the twins make friends in their classes while they were separated?” the mothers stated different perceptions of this process. Karen described the experience:

Gary already had a ready-made peer group already there that he was used to and he played with all of those kids. Linda did not and also to make it worse, her class was real heavy with boys. I think there were 3 other girls and her and the rest were all boys. So it was just difficult. She usually makes friends really easily even though she says she doesn't. I think Gary is much more laid back and will play with a box. Linda only wants to play with certain kids and she does make friends easily but that year she didn't have friends because of the situation with the classroom placement.

Jessica reported:

Well, Nathan actually cried the worst. I mean we got there and he would sob, according to the teacher the first couple of hours. He was kind of to himself and quiet, and then finally around late morning, he would kind of go on and try to play and try to interact. He was the one who was very dramatic at the beginning. Molly would cry but not near as bad as Nathan. She is more shy and she's the one that would just go and sit in a corner all day until she saw Nathan at recess. When I
spoke to the teachers, they both said that they play the entire time together. In fact, they will only play with each other. I knew immediately that this was because they've been forced apart. When they are at home, they play with their separate friends out in the yard. I knew that this problem had occurred at school because of the separation. So, even as they do, there are other twins that do cling a little more in kindergarten, but I don't see what the problem is. I mean, they will make friends and they will go on their own and do their own thing.

Christine expressed:

They have different personalities. I think Mary had an easier time making friends. I think Mary is very outgoing so I think she had an easy time. She can just walk up to somebody and say hey, hi you doing and this stuff and I think Tim was kind of laid back, kind of sat there and looked at everything first. So, I think he didn’t have as many friends initially than Mary did.

The twin’s responses to friend making in class varied. The responses illustrated that making friends was more difficult for some and not as difficult for others. The twins were asked, “How did you make friends in your class the year that you were separated from your twin?” Linda reported:

It was kind of difficult because I don't know how to make friends. I don't know how to keep them comfortable. On the other side, Gary can keep them so comfortable and usually I joined them, but it ends up awkward. I had to sit by the tree all day long and play by myself.

Gary stated:
It was not really that hard, a little difficult but I just walked up to them and said hi. I didn’t really have anyone to play with so I talked to some people that were in my class, boys, and we just hanged out before and we became friends. I had a lot of kids in my class that I knew from the year before so it wasn’t that hard because I already had some friends.

Mary expressed:

Sort of middle, because sometimes it’s hard, because I don’t know who to hang out with. That’s because some people don’t look very friendly. Tim is a lot of fun also but the kids at school like to only play with the kids in their own class. So sometimes I have to choose if I want to play with the girls in my class or with Tim. It’s so unfair.

Tim reported, “I’ve got lots of friends. I have Greg, Mac, Jack and other boys in class. I didn’t want to play with Mary during school. I want to have friends who are boys”.

Nathan stated, “I was too sad to make friends at school. All I could think about was going to recess so that I could play with Molly”. Molly echoed this sentiment, “Well, I couldn’t make any friends because all I could think about was Nathan and what he was doing”.

**Theme 2: Educational Effects**

There were seven questions that the twins answered dealing with the educational effect of separating twins in school. The responses to these questions presented a general sense of negative experiences caused by the separation. Many negative educational effects surfaced during the interviews. These effects were seen as having a negative impact on the educational process for the twins. The data included in the theme of
educational issues fell into the five different sub-categories of (a) focusing/daydreaming, (b) academic underachievement, (c) academic dishonesty, and (d) homework.

**Subtheme 1: Focusing/Daydreaming**

Many of the twins reported that focusing in class was difficult while they were separated from their co-twin. Some reported that the need to know where their co-twin was and what their co-twin was doing was affecting their ability to focus on their academic studies. The twins were asked, “Please describe the role that focusing in class played while you were separated from your twin?” Linda expressed:

It was difficult to focus. I kept wondering about where Gary was and what he was doing. Yeah, it was very difficult. I wanted to focus on my schoolwork, but then I would wonder what Gary was doing and I would lose focus on my schoolwork and it was difficult to get focused again.

Gary reported, “I wasn't really paying attention in class. I was mostly worried about Linda. I was worried that she wasn’t okay and I wouldn’t be there to help her”. Nathan described his experience:

Molly and I were put in classrooms way far apart from each other. It was hard to listen to the teacher, because I wanted to know what Molly was doing and I couldn’t keep my mind off of going to recess so that I could be with her.

Molly echoed this by stating, “I was sad at school. Going into my classroom and having to leave Nathan was sad. Being sad and crying made it hard to listen to my teacher”. Tim stated:

My teacher is always telling me to get back on track. I sometimes think she is mad at me for not keeping up with the class. I am doing my best but it is difficult
focusing without my sister in class with me. I don't focus well and now I have to take medicine to help me focus.

The mothers reported that the teachers had made statements concerning the twin’s inability to focus in class. Carrie recalled:

Tim always did poor, but he also was unfocused and that was a constant complaint by his teacher. He is not focusing, he is not listening, he is daydreaming, he is not doing what he is supposed to be doing. She never gave it a second thought that these problems were a direct result of him being separated from his sister. I think he wanted to know where she was, what was going on. He really wasn’t daydreaming, he was anxious about what his sister was doing.

Subtheme 2: Academic Underachievement

The data concerning academic underachievement varied. One of the mothers reported that being separated had an adverse affect on the academic success of their twins and one of the mothers reported seeing no change in academic success. Jessica reported:

In the mornings just trying to get them up and get going. They hated it so much. They would absolutely sob please don't make me go, please don't make me go. They just didn't want to be there. I mean you don't want to be some place that makes you sad. Learning and listening to their teacher was not on their list of priorities.

Karen stated:

Honestly, as I listened to them, their testing and their scores were the exact same as they are now. I don't ever recall either one of them saying that it's difficult to
concentrate in class. I just don't recall that. Linda had such trouble at the beginning of the year that she actually started seeing the school counselor that agreed with us that this was a bad mistake. We shouldn't have done this. As did our pediatrician. Even in that timeframe, in the first month of school, Linda was really strong academically, and it never faltered once. I expected it to, but it didn't. Gary is a good strong B, sometimes he's in the 60's and 40's and sometimes we're in the 100's. You just never know with him. Which is great. It's perfect for him. I don’t think that the separation affected that at all.

The twins were consistent that being in the same class helped them do better in school. When asked if he is doing better in school now that they are together, Tim reported:

We now study at home together and would have the same assignments. School comes easier for Mary than it does for me but she didn’t like to help me with things that she was not working on in class. When I study with Mary, my test scores are better because I feel like I can do better on the tests. Sometimes Mary explains things better to me than my teachers do.

Mary expressed:

I think that I pretty much do a little bit better. It is nice that Tim and I can study together. Mom doesn’t have the patience to help us study and I think we do better now that we can study together.

Linda stated, “My grades were good, but my tests started getting lower like I got 60s and 70s. It was difficult to concentrate on the tests because I was sad when I was at school”.

Gary recalled:
I usually will get 90 or 100, but when I was separated with Linda, I usually got like a 70 or an 80. It was really difficult to focus. My mom doesn’t get mad at us about bad grades and I’m lucky because I would have been in a lot of trouble if she did.

Subtheme 3: Academic Dishonesty

Some research has shown that separate classroom placements for twins may be necessary if the twins are dividing their schoolwork and cheating off of one another (National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, 2000). The data gathered from the interviews did not support this research. The twins believed that sharing a classroom did not lead to cheating and academic dishonesty. The twins were questioned, “Many teachers have said that twins in the same class will cheat on their schoolwork. What is your response to this claim?” Linda stated:

Cheating on the test because one person knows all the answers is wrong. Well, they should just put twins at a different table so they won’t cheat. Why can’t they do that? They have to do that with other kids, so they should do that with twins also.

Gary echoed this statement as follows:

I think that’s wrong, because I don’t cheat and Linda doesn’t cheat off me and we usually don’t sit by each other. We don't cheat if there is a test but we do work together if we are partners. I wouldn’t cheat because that is a felony and I don’t want to be in that much trouble.

Tim expressed:
If I cheated off of Mary, she would tell mom on me. Mary wouldn’t let me get away with cheating. She wants me to be a good student but I know that she wouldn’t give me the answers. There are a lot of kids in my class that cheat but Mary and I do not.

Mary reported:

Well, maybe just a little. Probably not though. Right now if we were in the same class, I would not let him cheat off of me. I would help him if he needed help but I wouldn’t cheat. Mom says that she can look at us and tell when we are lying so we would get caught for sure.

The mothers also reported that cheating has not been an issue with the twins while they are in the same classroom. They were asked, “Many teachers have said that twins in the same class will cheat on their schoolwork. What is your response to this claim?”

Karen stated:

I can see where that might happen. We haven't had that problem personally with our kids. We all do homework at night. We all sit down together at the same table and help each other. They each have their own individual packets that they work on with worksheets. We haven't had an issue where one of them just totally didn't get something and was like you have to do this for me. They are still very young. We don't expect them to be in the same classes in junior high and high school. I don't know for sure, but I'm guessing we won't. Perhaps those will be the times where one of them will be like you have to help me with this test because I didn't study or whatever, but I haven't seen that at all.

Carrie expressed:
I would not put them next to each other in class. I don’t see how they can cheat if they are not sitting together. Can they cheat on their homework? Yes, but I mean you can have friends that cheat in a study group and copy each other’s homework. To me, this is just another reason used to justify their stance on separating twins.

Subtheme 4: Homework

The data gathered from the mothers overwhelmingly expressed that homework was a negative issue that they had to deal with while their twins were in separate classrooms. The mothers were asked, “How would you describe the homework situation when your twins were in separate classrooms?” Karen explained:

It's like people having three children that are different ages. I'm sure that it's the same situation. We have three different packets of information to get through after dinner and before bath and bedtime rituals. There's just not enough time. The minute that dishes were cleared off the table we were all here and it took at least two hours or more to get everyone done. That put us right at bath and bed. There was no family time. Ben had just gotten home at that time so there was no daddy time at all, except for homework daddy. Then, halfway through the year, Gary’s teacher did away with homework all together, so then it was just Linda doing homework. Talk about injustice, I was really hoping that this would be a school wide policy and that all the teachers could try it out. This is definitely one of the drawbacks with having separated twins. If a dramatic classroom shift like this happens, the other one is left saying what about me, why am I being tortured and punished.

Carrie reported:
I had to do three different homeworks and it's tough. I mean I have the littler one whose homework is easy. It doesn't take very long. But then I had Tim who had completely different homework than Mary. His teacher was really into reading and researching things on the web and Mary’s teacher was into social studies and didn’t really give her a lot of homework so it's completely different. It was difficult trying to do three different homeworks at once. They all get frustrated with me because they can’t have my full attention. Getting it done on time was very stressful. The twins took their homework back when we finished it but it was not always finished on time. Their teachers would get frustrated waiting on me. I had to tell both of their teachers that it is impossible for us to meet their deadlines and we will finish the homework on our own terms. I had gone and I went and told the teacher that he did two hours of homework and that's enough. That's it. That's all I did. I told them that I am sorry but you have to accept it. They’ve were pretty good about it because I talked to the principal and said this is ridiculous and so he kept tabs on the amount of homework they were getting. I noticed that Noah wasn't getting hardly any homework after that. So maybe I am won the fight.

Theme 3: Family Perceptions of Classroom Placement

This theme outlines the reasons expressed by the twins and mothers why they felt a common classroom placement would be beneficial for the twins. The theme is broken into the subcategories of (a) twin’s rational for wanting a common classroom, (b) mother’s rationale for wanting a common classroom, and (c) coping with initial separation.

Subtheme 1: Twin’s Rationale for Wanting a Common Classroom
The data supported that all of the twins interviewed expressed that they wanted to share a classroom with their co-twin. The twins were asked, “Why did you want to be in the same class as your co-twin?”

Gary stated:

Because when you are the brother, I'm not trying to be offensive just a brother is like one of the helpful persons in a group of twins. I want to protect her because if people try to hurt her, I'm afraid that she will get hurt really bad she may have to go to hospital or something. I’m trying to protect her and sort of a brother that will protect her.

Mary reported, “We were in the kindergarten together, but they have split us up ever since. I do want to be in the same class as Tim. He needs my help and it makes me sad that I am not there for him”. Tim explained:

Because we don't have the same homework and we can play with each other at PE and we can do fun activities. Mary and I have always been together and we still share everything. I think that we should share a classroom together also.

Nathan replied, “I was lonely in class by myself. I didn't have any friends. I cried when I got to school, but I didn’t want to be sad at school”. Molly expressed,

I have been with Nathan for everything, so I just thought we would go to school together. I knew that I would miss him and I knew that he would miss me. I didn’t want him to be sad at school, but I knew that he would be if we had different teachers.

Linda exclaimed:

We share everything right now. We have the same room, the same toys, and the same friends. Gary understands me and doesn’t get mad at me. I wanted to
be in the same class so that he could help me learn. I was scared to be in a class
without him.

When asked why they thought the school was separating them, the twins
described their opinions differently. The question proposed to the twins was, “Why do
you believe you were placed in separate classrooms?” Gary recalled, “We were just
told that it was better for twins to be separated so that we didn’t rely on each other so
much”. Mary stated, “Because sometimes twins fight when they’re together and me
and Tim do fight a little, so that’s probably why”. Tim recounted, “Because the school
doesn’t think we should be together because they think we would fight or talk too
much. I think that they believe twins are troublemakers”. Linda reported:

Well, there must have been something in the first grade that we were playing a
lot or had bad results on our tests because we were talking too much. Well, I
do recall talking a lot, but I don’t recall having bad reports so I’m not really
sure about that.

Each of the twins were asked, “Please draw a picture that shows how you felt
the day you were notified that you were being separated from your twin?” The twins
were given a regular sheet of copy paper and a package of colored pencils. The twins
were given ten minutes to draw their picture in the room while the researcher watched
them draw. Five of the six twins participated. Tim declined to draw a picture stating
that he did not feel comfortable drawing a picture about this situation. The full size
drawings are included in Appendix F. Linda expressed her feelings concerning her
initial separation from her co-twin as shown in Figure 1 as follows:
I kind of got sad, because we weren't in the same class, I was really excited about going to second-grade, but I thought Gary would be in the same class as me. The picture shows Gary complaining about it and I look kind of sad.

*Figure 1.* Picture drawn by Linda depicting her feelings concerning her separation from her co-twin.

Gary reported his feelings as exhibited in figure 2:

I am not a good artist. But as you can see this is me. This is me and I am afraid that I am going to fail and I am sad and I am scared. I am confused why Linda is going to one classroom and I am going to a different classroom. I am sad because this is not a good way to start a new school year.

*Figure 2.* Picture drawn by Gary depicting his feelings concerning his separation from his co-twin.
Mary described her picture as shown in figure 3 in the following manner, “I am half sad, half like very, very mad. I was sad at first but then I became very mad”.

*Figure 3*: Picture drawn by Mary depicting her feelings concerning her separation from her co-twin.

Nathan explained his picture as shown in figure 4, “My picture shows me with a sad face and my hands I am throwing my hands down because I am angry that I can’t go to class with Molly”.

*Figure 4*: Picture drawn by Nathan depicting his feelings concerning his separation from his co-twin.

Molly’s explanation of her picture as shown in figure 5 details:
The bottom picture shows my hands are in the air because I am yelling at my mom for making me be in a different class from Nathan. The top picture shows a picture of my face and I am yelling.

*Figure 5.* Picture drawn by Molly depicting her feelings concerning her separation from her co-twin.

*Subtheme 2: Mother’s Rationale for Wanting a Common Classroom*

The mothers offered varying viewpoints on why they wanted their twins to share a common classroom. They were asked, “Why do you believe that your twins wanted to be in the same class together?” Karen replied:

I think that they didn't want it. It was an expectation that was given to them at birth that they learned to walk together, they learned to talk together, they learned to eat together. It makes sense in their minds that they should be learning together because that's what they do. That's what they've done since they were born. They have learned together. It's a comforting type of relationship. It's familiar. They can look across the room and it's familiar to them like it has been their whole life. So I think those are the things. I wouldn't say that they wanted to, because they just
always thought that they would be. They didn't understand it until they got the separate letters that said you are not going to be, that's when they wanted to be.

Jessica commented:

Well, I've always stayed home with them and have always been together. I just assumed that they would naturally go to preschool together. I never had any problems. The teachers never said a word about it. I went and observed them in preschool a few times and it was just a natural process. She made friends with little girls and he made friends with little boys and they did their own thing. And it was even a tiny preschool, like 10 kids or something and honestly I had never even thought about it. I never even gave it a second thought that there would be an issue with them being together and they've never had any problems being together. They've never had any problems interacting with other kids and doing their own thing and they were about as independent, and they're really as individual as they come. He is the sports fanatic and all boy and she is the artistic one and they don't really like to overlap those at all and I never even gave it a second thought that there would be an issue until we went to enroll for the summer school and do the kindergarten screening. And that's when I was informed that it was a definite issue.

Carrie reported:

Well, when they were younger they were best friends and I think being put in to different classes was like losing your best friend. They felt and acted like they were never going to see each other again. Mary is very outgoing and Tim was
very laid back. So I thought that she would help him gain some confidence in friends and such.

**Subtheme 3: Coping with Initial Separation**

The mothers all detailed that it was difficult to help their twins initially cope with their separation. They were asked, “How did you help your twins cope during their separation?” Jessica reported:

I'd call my husband everyday, saying I can't believe I just did this to them. I can't believe I did this, but we promised the principal that we would be willing to try it, and see how it worked. We did it for the week and I noticed they would come home from school and they were happy when I picked them up, but they would fight horribly when we got home from school. And I think it was just the added stress in their lives of going to summer school, doing that's something different, being gone all day and not getting to see each other. I felt that their anger was vented at home because they did not want to get in trouble at school so they vented at home. We basically coped by doing the research, talking about it and saying, this will happen or I'll home-school you until this happens. I just felt it was so wrong, what the school was doing was wrong. I have a friend who home schools her children, and we went and visited them for a day to kind of see how their day went. She is a former educator and been a teacher for like 15 years and that was her belief, that they all remain together. That's what we decided at the very beginning, that being together was best for our children, and that was going to happen, even if it meant that we would have to home school them until that happened. I honestly cannot say that I believe in homeschooling. I do think it has
advantageous educational purposes, but there are huge social limitations to home schooling. The reason I would home school is to avoid putting my children through huge amounts of emotional distress. Both of the twins were just like, oh my God, this is the end of the world and I couldn’t live with them feeling like this. And to say, you'll be fine, go on without your right arm, because we think it’s better for you. I mean that what it is like. No one can stand outside and observe their interactions and truly understand them. Unless you are a twin, you cannot understand.

Karen expressed:

It was so hard. I don't know that we did a very good job, honestly. I don't know how you do that. How do you tell a child, I'm sorry that you are miserable and I can't do anything to make it better? There is nothing worse. So what we did after we knew for sure that they weren't going to be in the same class and they had already gotten their letters from their teachers and what not, my husband and I started saying, it will be a good thing, you will make new friends, it will be good, it will be good. Trying to pave that road, and then when it wasn't good, and it was horrible, especially for Linda, I believe that she internalized that everyone is telling me this is a good thing, so in my heart I want to be where Gary is so that must be a bad thing. That just breaks my heart that she has to feel that. Almost like they weren't good feelings for her to want to be with her brother was a wrong thing. That was just a tragedy.

Karen continued:
I saw my daughter, who was enthusiastic, academically strong, lots of friends, excited about school, happy to get up in the morning and get dressed, completely fall apart and cry every single morning from the moment she opened her eyes until her dad dropped her off at school and then into the class day. That is such an unusual behavior for her and it has completely gone away. That was the first solid three weeks of school last year. After that time, I think that she just gave up and said this is my lot and I can't fix it, mom can't fix it, so I'm just going to have to do my work and go home and I'll be happy there. It's interesting, because they are back together this year, you are seeing different kids now. If they were still separated we would still see much more of that I believe manifested.

Carrie stated:

Initially I said this is the way it has to be. You have to do this. You are going to get used to it. Then I said look at all the different things that you're going to do in your class. You can have all these different things that you're going to do and all those different things that Mary is not going to get to do, and when you guys get home you can talk to each other and tell each other about their day, your day is not the same. It's different for both of you. Nothing mattered and nothing comforted him. I mean he was an emotional wreck and nothing I did made him feel any better.

*Theme 4: Perceptions of School Policy Separating Twins*

This theme details the rationale provided to the families concerning the placement of the twins into separate classrooms. The theme is broken into the sub-categories of (a) policy, (b) research, and (c) personality development.
Subtheme 1: Policy

The mothers all reported that the principals stated that separating twins was a policy but no written policy was ever shown to any of the mothers. The mothers were questioned, “Were you ever given an explanation or presented a policy for their separation by the principal or teacher at the school?” Karen described:

Let me tell you something. My mother is a twin. We have twins all over in our family. Her twin is a female, not identical, and they have very different personalities. My mother is very passive and her twin is very aggressive and very assertive. When they were in school, it was the best thing for them to be split because her sister overshadowed her so much that it was interfering with her schoolwork. I told the principal in the beginning, I know what to look for, trust me as a parent and a mother I want the best for them just like anybody would. If I saw that he or she was overshadowing the other academically and that it was detrimental and they weren't learning, I would take steps to make that happen. I would understand. That wasn't even in place. In the end, the principal just stated that it was policy because this was past practice and no other parents had ever challenged it.

Jessica explained:

The main thing was this is how it's always been done. The second was we tend to know a little better what the children need than the parents. And that was the final straw with me. This man who doesn't even have children, is telling me that he has met my children for a 2 minute period during screening and that he knows better than I do what they need, and then just the fact that it was a blanket policy for all
kids. I knew right then and there that it was an issue, but that is the only reasoning they had given me, and when I asked for a written policy there was none, there was nothing to justify that. The principal even took time and contacted different Missouri school districts and tried to find anything that he could, that said yes or no. I told him here is what the research says and here is what I believe. I even told him that if they acquaint with each other, why is that a big deal? Friends acquaint. If you have two friends that have been raised together for 5 years, and now they are going to school together, they are going to acquaint with one another. I even went so far as contacting the superintendent, and the superintendent said that the principal can do whatever he wants concerning the placement of twins.

Carrie expressed:

It wasn’t written. I don’t know, may be it was written but I had never been shown it. It was just this is the way it is going to be. I thought, okay well, they must know better. The kindergarten teachers said that it would be better if they were separated because Noah relied too much on his sister and they got into lot of trouble.

Subtheme 2: Research

Two of the mothers stated that they presented the principal with current research concerning the classroom placement of twins. The accounts provided illustrate two different reactions from the principals. Karen explained:

Her reaction was, to her credit, she listened and understood and she offered to help us. We had a very interesting situation with the split of our twins in that, they were together in Kindergarten and first and it was the same class, same kids, so
they were like a little family, these 17 kids. When they went into second grade and Linda was put into a separate class, Gary was put into a classroom in second grade with five of his former classmates, two of them being his best friends. It was an easier transition for him, understandably. She was put into a class with no one that she knew. So, Gary had less of a struggle with it, honestly he did. She said I hear you, I understand these are your feelings, I see the research that you have done, and I want to help you, so what we can do is move one of them into the other’s class. Great. There was no space in Gary’s class. The teacher that he had was the special education inclusion teacher so they had to leave space in case there was a kid coming in and Linda’s class had space. We were faced with that really hard decision. Do we yank him out away from his two best friends and his five similar classmates in a class that he’s enjoying and put him into a classroom where the teacher was actually more strict and hard. It wouldn't have been a good fit for him. It was a really difficult choice, so we said let us think about it and if a space opens up in Gary’s class to move Linda in we'll do that immediately and it never opened up.

Jessica stated:

When I asked for his general thoughts on it, he just kept spitting out the same individual type stuff, and when it came down to the end and I had provided him with an overwhelming amount of research on why they should stay together, he actually told me in an e-mail that he was not able to find any research that said separating twins is the right thing to do. And then he went on to say, I do not
personally agree with this. I don't think they should remain together. But I'm going to allow it because he was not able to find any research to back it up.

Subtheme 3: Personality Development

One of the reasons for separating twins provided to two of the mothers was that this will help aid them in their ability to develop individual personalities. The mothers were asked, “Many researchers believe that placing twins in separate classrooms will help them develop their own individual personality. What is your response to this claim?”

Karen commented:

I honestly would question that we have the ability as adults to build a personality. I think that is something that is out of our control. We have been very fortunate to have teachers who want to encourage them to build their personalities. So they did separate them within the classroom. This is the first year that they have been together at the same table. Our school uses stations. One table will be doing a station in science and the other table will be doing math and the next day they will switch so they were never really functioning in the same cluster for a couple of years. They were just in the same room. They went to lunch together and recess together. They brought the same homework packets home, but in the classroom setting they were never working together and it wasn't a detrimental thing for them. It worked fine, and if that was something they would want to incorporate into their class to make sure they were working independently they could do that easily.

Jessica expressed:
The principal said that we want them to go ahead and develop their individual personalities, be on their own and again they could find zero research that said they won't develop personalities if they are or aren’t together. I mean, they were able to give me no reason other than this is what we tell every year to every parent of twins. My kids are about as individuals as they come. What I say is the only thing that's same about them is they have the same birthday. Other than that and it may help that one is a boy and one is a girl. I have no experience with two girls or two boys. I think a lot of has to do with parents. I mean, I think a lot of parents that have kids that are one and two years apart. If they constantly group everybody together, I think, they force everyone to have similar personalities. Allowing children to explore their own interests is what develops personalities. Sharing a physical space will not limit this natural process. I think it's lot to do with the parents and that early learning that takes place at home. Once they show interest in something, you guide them towards that and help them develop their own individual interests. And I don't think that has anything to do with twins. Like I said, if you have siblings that you have a parent that loves basketball, well, that's what they are going to do. We are a basketball family and that is it. Like I said, I don't think it necessarily has anything to do with twins. I think it is up to the parents to facilitate that and show that it is okay to go your own way and do your own thing and develop your own interests. I’ve seen that an issue in other families where the kids don't necessarily like it and I'm not good at it but Mom and Dad don't see it or they don't want to see it and they continue to push the
whole family towards that one thing. Personality development is a natural process. They're going to do it on their own anyhow.

*Interpretation of the Data and Findings Related to the Literature*

The objective of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to garner an understanding of the research question guiding this study: What effect do school policies that force separation on twins have on the educational perceptions on those twins and their mothers? This interpretation was guided by a summarization of the data and an analysis of the data in the context of the current literature according to the themes and sub-categories extracted. DeMarrais and LeCompte (1999) stated, “Interpretive researchers believe that the best way to understand human behavior is to examine real-world situations using qualitative or descriptive rather than experimental methods of inquiry” (p.21). This research study reports the voice of twins who were actually forced to separate by the school they attended and the mothers who had to make sense of this phenomenon. As stated in the limitations, this is an interpretation made from the data collected through the research participants and the data should not be generalized to the greater population.

*Theme 1: Twin Relationship*

All six of the twins interviewed stated that they enjoyed being a twin. They all felt that they had a great relationship with their co-twin. The mothers also agreed that their twins had a positive relationship and that their relationships were healthy and nurturing of one another. This theme broke into the sub-categories of (a) competition, (b) cooperation, and (c) friendship.

*Subtheme 1: Competition*
Four of the twins expressed that they do not compete with their co-twin for grades. These twins said that they do not get jealous when their co-twin outperforms them in school. Two of these twins also referred to the fact that even though they were not jealous, they were upset that they did not do better and did compare scores with their co-twin. Two of the mothers also reported that competition did not have a negative impact on the educational process of the twins.

Two of the twins openly admitted that they were jealous of their co-twin when they received a lower grade. Mascazine (2004) reported that competition can promote accountability between co-twins in school. One of the twins discussed that seeing her co-twin get better grades pushed her to get better grades. The other twin exhibited clear intentions of competing with her co-twin for grades and was intent on outperforming him. Hay and Preedy (2005) believe that separation is needed when the primary goal of the twins is competition with their co-twin. One of the mothers reported that her twins do compete in class but she felt that it was a natural process. She also went on to say that her twins usually perform comparably on their schoolwork, which minimized the competition between the two of them.

Subtheme 2: Cooperation

The mothers were all in agreement that their twins cooperated well with one another at home and at school. All of the mothers reported that their twins helped each other with schoolwork and studying on a regular basis. One of the mothers expressed that their twins learn better from each other than they do from their teachers. Segal and Russell (1992) reported a reason given by parents for their twins to share a classroom was that one twin had a specific learning disability and would benefit from being in the same
classroom as their co-twin. The mothers and twins in this research study all believed that cooperation was a positive force and increased the academic success of the twins.

**Subtheme 3: Friendship**

The three mothers explained that one of the twins had more difficulty making friends than their co-twin while they were separated. Each of the mothers expressed that their twins had different personalities and that making friends was easier for one of the twins.

Four of the twins reported having difficulty making friends while they were separated from their co-twin. Segal and Russell (1992) illustrated that parents wanted their twins to share a classroom as a sense of security. Hay and Preedy (2005) reported that twin dependency may impede the twins’ ability to relate to different children. The twins that reported having difficulty making friends while separated reported that their feelings of sadness made it challenging to make friends at school. The manifestation of negative feelings at schools impeded the ability to make friends for these twins.

Two of the twins addressed that they had no problems making friends while they were separated from their co-twin. These twins reported that although they wanted to be in the same class as their co-twin, they also wanted to have friends other than their co-twin. These twins also expressed that they had many friends in their classroom from the year before. Even though they were separated from their co-twin, they were afforded the familiarity of friends that they had from previous years when they shared a classroom with their co-twin.

**Theme 2: Educational Effects**
The sub-category of educational effects outlines the impact that forced separation had on the educational process of the twins. The sub-categories are (a) focusing/daydreaming, (b) academic underachievement, (c) academic dishonesty, and (d) homework.

Subtheme 1: Focusing/Daydreaming

All of the twins reported that focusing was an issue for them while they were separated from their co-twin. Each of them reported a need to know where their co-twin was and a need to know that their co-twin was safe. One twin reported that he had to take medicine on a daily basis to help him focus in class. Another twin reported that he perceived his teacher as being angry with him because he had difficulty paying attention in class. Tully et al. (2004) and van Leeuwen et al. (2005) both concluded that twins separated at age seven exhibited more internalizing behaviors than non-separated twins. All of the twins interviewed showed signs of internalizing behaviors as a result of their separation. Such internalizing behaviors described by the twins in this study were loneliness, sadness, anger, and fright.

One of the mothers recalled that her son’s teacher made many comments about his inability to focus. The mother presented her perception that his focusing problems were a direct result of his separation from his sister.

Subtheme 2: Academic Underachievement

The mothers were split concerning the academic success of their twins while they were separated. One of the mothers reported that her twins never struggled academically while they were separated and their academic success did not suffer. Another mother reported that the separation had an adverse effect on their education. She claimed that
their negative perception of school and their unwillingness to go to school compromised their ability and motivation to do well in school.

Four of the twins believed that sharing a classroom led to better academic outcomes and two of the twins were undecided. The twins that reported better academic success stated reasons such as being able to study together and that their co-twin knows how to explain academic concepts that leads to a deeper understanding of those concepts. Leeper and Skipper (1970) stated that classroom placement has “little effect on their achievement, social adjustment and acceptance” (p.15). One of the mothers believed that even though her twins stated that their grades and learning were affected, they performed comparably during both the years that they were together and separated.

Subtheme 3: Academic Dishonesty

Meyer (2006) claimed that common classroom placements of multiples can lead to academic difficulties for the twins because they may not practice their skills sufficiently. All of the twins interviewed agreed that cheating was not an issue for them while sharing a classroom with their co-twin. Many of the twins reported that they did not want to sit right next to their co-twin in class. Only two of the twins expressed that they had sat right next to their co-twin in class. Four of the twins reported that they did not want to get in trouble as a result of cheating off of their co-twin.

Two of the mothers stated that they understand the concern that teachers might have concerning twins cheating. They also expressed that cheating occurs between other students who are not twins. The mothers offered suggestions to combat this issue such as having them sit at different tables so that they are not provided with opportunities to be academically dishonest at school.
Subtheme 4: Homework

Two of the three mothers reported that homework carried with it negative implications on the family environment at home. Both of these mothers expressed that the twins had varying amounts of homework, which led to feelings of resentment. One of the mothers believed that the discrepancies in the amount of homework put undo stress on one of the twins. Both of the mothers admitted that they feel homework has compromised the family time needed to raise a healthy family. Both mothers also agreed that they have complained to the teachers about the amount of homework and have gone as far as not doing homework if it conflicted with other family obligations. Comparison of teachers can lead to negative relationships between the teachers, the twins, and the parents (Preedy, 2005). Both of these mothers illustrated that homework issue has led them to compare the teachers due to the fact that the twins were receiving an unequal education.

Theme 3: Family Perceptions of Classroom Placement

The mothers and twins themselves all had different reasons why they believed that sharing a classroom was needed for a successful academic experience. The twins and mothers also noted that the initial separation was the most difficult part of the separation. This theme was broken down into the three sub-categories of (a) twin’s rationale for wanting a common classroom, (b) mother’s rationale for wanting a common classroom, and (c) coping with initial separation.

Subtheme 1: Twin’s Rationale for Wanting a Common Classroom

A reoccurring reason for wanting to share a common classroom was the need for protection. Three of the twins felt a need to protect their co-twin from physical and emotional harm. One twin reported that she was scared to be in a classroom without her
co-twin. Vander Sluis (2005) reported that multiples may need to be in the same classroom because they may be shy and immature. These twins reported that they felt scared and did not want to interact with other students without their co-twin with them.

The feelings of loneliness and sadness were reported by three of the twins. Crying at school was noted as being a regular occurrence for two of the twins. The feelings of loneliness and sadness are addressed by the findings of the Tully et al. (2004) and van Leeuwen et al. (2005) studies. Both of these studies suggest that internalizing behaviors are higher among separated twins than non-separated twins. All six of the twins possessed one or more internalizing behaviors such as loneliness, sadness, anger or fright. Figures 1-5 also illustrate the internalized emotions that the twins discussed when they initially found out that they were going to be separated. All five of the twins that provided illustrations described these internalized emotions vividly while discussing their drawings.

**Subtheme 2: Mother’s Rationale for Wanting a Common Classroom**

All three of the mothers reported that having their twins share a classroom was an expectation they had before the separation experience. They all struggled with trying to rationalize why the school would want to separate the twins. The mothers reported that the emotional bond that their twins shared was too strong and that placing them in separate classrooms would compromise that bond. Segal and Russell (1992) noted that some mothers surveyed wanted their twins to share a classroom so the twins would have a sense of security. The mothers interviewed did not believe that their twins would have that sense of security without their co-twin sharing a classroom with them.

**Subtheme 3: Coping with Initial Separation**
The mothers all found it difficult to deal with the initial separation. All three reported that they initially tried to make the best of the separation. They all reported attempting to reassure their twins that being separated would be fine and that they would eventually get used to it.

The mothers all expressed feelings of guilt and anger because they couldn’t control the separation. One of the mothers reported that she cried daily and was overcome by the guilt of having to lie to her twins that they would be alright when she knew that they wouldn’t be. Another reported that she was angry during the initial separation. She researched home-schooling options and was willing to do whatever needed to be done to put an end to her twin’s classroom separation. Another mother recalled feeling desperate that nothing she said or did would comfort her twins.

Theme 4: Perceptions of School Policy Separating Twins

This perception that mothers and twins have concerning classroom placement decisions is another theme extrapolated from the data. During the interviews the participants voiced how they attempted to make sense of schools that forced separation of the twins. Three sub-categories were identified. These sub-categories were (a) policy, (b) research, and (c) personality development.

Subtheme 1: Policy

Segal and Russell (1992) reported that 50% of surveyed mothers had encountered a firm policy concerning the placement of twins. Preedy (1999) reported that only 1% of the schools surveyed had a policy that mandated placement of twins. All three of the mothers in this research stated that they did question the policy with the principal. Two of the mothers expressed that the principal became defensive when they questioned the
policy. One of the mothers claimed that the principal listened and attempted to help. Two of the mothers claimed that the principal informed them that they knew better how to educate the twins than the parents did. None of the mothers were ever shown a written policy that mandated the separation of twins. The mothers all asked for a copy of the policy and were informed that a written policy did not exist but it was a policy because it was past practice and the way that it was always done. One of the mothers expressed that the principal had informed her that the policy had never been challenged before and he didn’t know why she was making a big deal about this.

Subtheme 2: Research

Two of the mothers presented the principals with the current research concerning classroom placement of twins. One of the mothers expressed that the principal changed her stance on the policy and was willing to work with her. She also reported that there were logistical issues that prevented moving one of the twins into the other class so she left the separation stand for that school year. The other mother stated that the principal became irate with her when presented the current research. She claimed that he attempted to find research to the contrary with no avail. The principal ended up placing the twins together in the same class but made it known to the mother that he did not agree with the decision.

Subtheme 3: Personality Development

Preedy’s (1999) research data showed that 19% of schools believed that separating multiple-birth children would help them develop into individuals. Gleeson et al. (1990) stated that there is no evidence that classroom separation will promote the development of individual personalities for twins. Two of the mothers expressed that they
were given this reason for the separation of their twins. The mothers both asked the principal how they planned on developing the twins as individuals in separate classrooms. Both mothers claimed that the principals could provide no concrete examples of how they planned to accomplish this. Both of the mothers expressed their opinions on personality development. They both stated that they believed personality development was a natural process that could not be promoted in a school.

Two of the mothers provided the school with other avenues to promote individual personalities and yet allow the twins to share a common classroom. Some suggestions included having the students sit at different tables, have the students interact with different children, and make sure that they treated them as individuals and not a cohesive unit. Mascazine (2004) stated that many twins are recognized as a twin unit instead of being recognized for their individual accomplishments.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the research findings through both the direct words of the research participants and the summarized narrative of the researcher. The major theme of twin relationship illustrated the unique relationship that twins have with one another and how this relationship relates to their education. The theme educational effects expressed the negative outcomes and consequences of forcing twins into separate classrooms before they are ready. The final theme detailed the twin’s and their mother’s perceptions of classroom placement. This theme outlined the reasons that the research participants perceived that sharing a common classroom was the right educational decision. This theme also explained how the families coped with the initial separation when they first found that the twins were going to be separated. This theme contains pictures drawn by
the twins (Figures 1-5) that detail their emotions concerning their separation from their co-twin. Chapter Five will report the implications of the research study and present researchers with new research directions.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four different sections, conclusions, implications for action, recommendations for further research and closing remarks. Implications for action relates the research findings to the significance of the study presented in Chapter One. Recommendations for further research outlines possible research studies that can produce new data and add to the current body of research concerning the placement of twins in schools. Finally, conclusions are presented that apply to this specific research.

Conclusions

The research done in this study illustrated the perceptions of a small population of twins that were forced to be in separate classrooms before they were ready and these twins and their mother perceived the separation as having profound effects on their education and emotional stability. The voices of the twin research participants echoed that being separated made it difficult to be successful in an educational setting.

Twin Relationship

The twin relationship as identified by the research participants was caring, loving, and healthy. I believe that the competition between the twins was not unhealthy. The twins expressed that they pushed each other to do better in school. The competition that they may have felt was based on outside pressures, not the twins themselves. One of the
twins said that the competition was no big deal because their mom did not stress grades at home. This leads me to believe that an outdated educational system that forces competition among students coupled with an antiquated system of grading and class ranking has not only made competition for twins an issue, it has made competition for all students an issue.

The data collected from the twins showed that they are an example of how to successfully cooperate and co-exist with other students in an educational setting. Sharing and division of responsibilities was commonly discussed during the interviews. Many children come to school without having these skill sets and can learn from the modeling of this behavior from a set of twins in the same class. I find it contradictory for schools to stress the importance of cooperative learning and then separate twins who know how to learn cooperatively with one another.

The twins did not state that they had problems making friends. They all expressed the importance of having friends other than their co-twin. They made it clear that social and peer-interactions outside of their twinship were healthy and necessary. The twins expressed that it was hard to make friends because of the negative emotions and feelings they had at school. None of the twins used the reason that their co-twin was their only friend to justify a common classroom placement.

*Educational Effects*

Many of the twins noted that focusing was a problem at school when they were separated from their twins. Focusing at school is a problem for all students when their emotional needs are not met. Children that are victims of abuse also have issues focusing issues in school (Choice, D’Andrade, Gunther, Downes, Schaldach, Csiszar, & Austin,
The twins’ anxiety about being separated and needing to know that their co-twin was safe took precedence over learning and academic success.

It makes sense to connect the twins’ inability to focus with academic underachievement. If a child cannot be attentive in class, that child will struggle to learn the concepts being presented. This inattentiveness may have been preventable by allowing the twins to share a classroom. Many of the twins expressed that their grades were better when they were together in the same classroom. The twins believed that the separation was a major roadblock in their academic success and the schools would not budge to remove the roadblock.

The interviews with the research participants illustrated that they perceived twins will not cheat if they are in the same classroom. The twins never expressed an interest in sitting next to each other, nor did they need to be in the same groups with one another. They need to share the same classroom to ease their separation anxiety from their co-twin. The twins stated that the academic success of both of them was important and they knew that cheating would prevent this. The twins were very conscious of the parental expectations that their mothers held for them and they knew that cheating would carry consequences. Being a twin does not cause a child to hold no moral values and the argument that twins will cheat if they are in the same classroom has no research to support it.

The homework issue caused undo stress on the family structure and needs to be addressed. The comparison of teachers in the same grade level can cause problems for both the families and the teachers. Two of the twin pairs reported that the amount of homework and type of homework varied immensely. The feelings of anger felt by one
twin when she has to sit and do two hours of homework while her co-twin is playing and having fun tainted her view of school and education. Dealing with these discrepancies was also difficult for the mothers. They found it hard to justify this to their children and the hardship that homework caused on the families was daunting. One mother eventually confronted the school about the homework issue and decided that she was no longer going to allow this issue to dominate the family time needed each night to raise a healthy family.

Perceptions of School Policy Separating Twins

The principals enforcing these policies all had common attributes. The first attribute they possessed is that although each of them had a policy, none of them had it in writing. The policies of the principals, as stated to the mothers of the twins, were formed from misconceived stereotypes that twins need to be separated in order to form an individual personality. All of the mothers stated that their twins already had individual personalities upon entering school and that separation was not going to aid in this development.

NEOLA (2007) defines policy as:

A general, written statement by the governing board, which defines its expectations or position on a particular matter and authorizes appropriate action that must or may be taken to establish and/or maintain those expectations.

When the principals of the schools that the research participants attended claimed that separating twins is their policy, they were incorrect. The school boards that these principals work for had no such policy in their manual, which makes separating twins a practice and not a policy.
When presented with research concerning the negative implications of forced separations, none of the principals were able to counter with research to the contrary. That is because there is no research that exists that supports the notion that separating twins against their will is a positive thing. Some of the principals, even though they could not back it up with research, still believed that their experiences educating twins trumped current empirical research.

**Educational Neglect**

The data in this research study leads me to believe that separating twins before they are ready neglects the basic needs that are required to successfully learn at school. The needs of the twins were clearly illustrated to the school personnel. The twins needed to be in the same classroom because they were not emotionally ready to be separated from their co-twin. When schools neglect these needs, they are essentially neglecting the twin’s right to a free and appropriate education. The fact that states have had to pass resolutions and bills that provide parents with the legal backing needed to keep their twins in the same classroom speaks volumes about the magnitude of this problem.

**Implications for Action**

In Chapter One, the significance of the study was presented. Preedy’s (1999) reported that only 25% of parents surveyed were consulted concerning the classroom placement of their twins. The lack of parent consideration was also found in this research. None of the parents were consulted concerning the classroom placement of their twins. All of the research participants expressed that they were active and accountable parents. One of the mothers stated that when the school told her that the twins would be separated, she decided that they must know better than she did and accepted their decision. Another
mother had to threaten the principal with home schooling in order to achieve the desired result of having her twins share a classroom. The third mother informed the school that if placing them together was a distraction and they needed to be separated, she would support such a move at any time. Such arbitrary policies “have the potential to lead to adjustment problems for at least some children and that a more family-focused approach that takes into account the views of parents may be required” (Tully et al., 2004, p.121). The data in this research study clearly illustrate that a family-focused approach was not used in the decision to separate the twins.

Hay and Preedy (2005) outlined the characteristics exhibited by a flexible school that works closely with parents of twins. They stated that these schools should take into account the views and perceptions of parents. These schools promote individuality by calling on the twins as individuals and recognizing them separate of one another.

The results of this research study provided evidence that forcing twins into separate classrooms has negative effects on their education. Research participants reported that their success in school suffered because of their separation. Their lack of success was attributed to not being able to focus in class. The twins in this study reported that the overwhelming need to know where their co-twin was and what they were doing made it difficult to pay attention in class. The twins reported having the feelings of anger, sadness, and loneliness at school during their separation. Data was not reported by the twins or their mothers that the school personnel attempted to help them cope with these feelings. The twins reported that making friends was difficult while they were separated from their co-twin. These feelings left the twins with a negative mental image of school and subsequently impacted their ability to perform at school. The data provided clearly
shows that these basic needs must be met for the twins to maximize their educational effectiveness. The surfacing of these negative emotions at school also affected the twins’ ability to make friends and interact with peers. In summary, twins that are separated in school against their own will suffer distress and emotional trauma that can only be fixed by returning them to a common classroom.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research study illustrated the perceptions of the educational effects of forced classroom separation from the narrow lens of a purposive sample of twins and their mothers that experienced this phenomenon. The data collected has unearthed new research questions that need to be answered by further research.

Role of School Personnel in Classroom Placement Decisions

The school principal was a prominent roadblock in the forced separations of the research participants. The school principal was perceived by the research participants as being the one person in the educational realm that claimed an informal policy was in place and that also enforced the policy. A research study that examined the perceptions school principals concerning stereotypes of twins in school would provide a greater understanding as to why these separation policies exist.

When presented with research concerning the placement of twins, one of the principals was hesitant to allow the twins to share a classroom even though he openly admitted that he could find no research to substantiate his policy. This failure to acknowledge the relevance of current research can lead future researchers to study the impact of current empirical educational research is on the decision making process of school principals. This research could attempt to determine if school administrators are
ignoring only research concerning the placement of twins or if there is a general disregard for research by building administrators in all educational areas.

The mothers that participated in this research study did not comment on the teacher’s role in the separation. The teachers were not viewed by the research participants as being a cause for the separation. Quantitative and qualitative studies focusing on teachers’ perceptions of twin placement could add value information.

Two of the principals expressed that personality development was the main reason for separating the twins, even though the principals themselves could not describe in depth how the school planned to do this. A new research direction could study how schools aid twins in their personality development while they are separated. A case study with field observations where classroom teachers are observed building the personalities of twins would add validity to the research concerning classroom placements of twins.

*Negative Educational Effects of Forced Separation*

The data showed many negative consequences associated with the forced separation of twins. One of the limitations of this research study is interpreting whether the educational effects were directly correlated to the forced separation or were other outside factors leading to these negative effects also. The perception of the twins was that being separated from their co-twin carried with it negative effects that adversely impacted their education.

All of the twins reported that focusing was an issue for them at school and they attributed this to the separation. One of the twins shared that he was on medicine to help him with his lack of focus. All of the twins felt a need to know where their co-twin was and what their co-twin was doing during the school day. The lack of ability to focus,
which consequently led to the prescription of medication for one twin in the study, indicates another potential area for further research. The question of whether separated twins have a higher percentage rate of attention disability disorder than singletons or twins placed in the same classroom seems important for future study.

The responses concerning academic underachievement and academic dishonesty could be perceived as inaccurate. When asked if sharing a common classroom led to cheating and academic dishonesty, all of the twins emphatically stated that they would never cheat at school. It is highly unlikely that any of the twins would have openly admitted to cheating while sitting in front of their parents. Although it cannot be implied that the twins were telling the truth about cheating in school, every attempt was made to ensure the research participants that there would be no negative consequences from their answers. There was no way to ensure that admission of cheating by the twins would not carry consequences though. One way that further research could help support this claim would be to include the teachers of the twins in the research and either qualitatively interview them or quantitatively survey them to collect data concerning the twins and their academic honesty.

The twins all perceived that they would perform better in school if they shared a classroom with their co-twin. If it difficult to know if the twins constructed their perceptions concerning academic underachievement as a result of forced separation or if this was a belief they held because of their mother’s opinions on the topic. This research study did not attempt to review grade cards and work samples that would illustrate academic underachievement based on a forced separation. A quantitative research study
would be needed to quantify the academic underachievement of twins due to a forced separation.

Homework was perceived by the mothers in the research study as having a negative impact on the family structure and schedule. The mothers noted that an unequal assignment of homework for the separated twins led to feelings of resentment between the twins. One direction for further research arising from this theme would study the impact that homework has on family life in American public schools. Two of the mothers had children in other grades and expressed displeasure in having to accommodate multiple homework assignments. What is unknown is if homework was a perceived negative effect of forced separation or a perceived negative effect of the overall educational institution.

*Twin Relationship*

Competition was not perceived as having a negative effect on the educational process by the twins’ mothers in the research study. However, two of the twins did express that competition was not always healthy between them. The age range of the twins may have impacted their perception of competition in school. This research study used three opposite-sex twin pairs as research participants. A future research study with the same research participants may produce contrasting data. Competition for grades may not be as important for third graders as it is for middle school and high school students. Further research could analyze the perceptions of competition on twins that share classrooms in middle school and high school. Using the same research study to collect data on same sex twins would also be beneficial to examine their perceptions concerning the role competition plays on the educational process.
All of the research participants viewed cooperation as a positive quality that helped the twins succeed in the educational setting. One of the twins expressed that their co-twin had the ability to explain complex education concepts in a manner that made it easier to learn. One of the mothers in the research study stated that one of the reasons she wanted her twins to share a classroom is that they learn better from each other. She went on to say that when her twins are confused by the way a teacher presents information, they can work together to understand the concept better because they know how one another learns. One of the mothers expressed that her twins know how to involve other children in their activities and that they know how to divide up responsibilities to make these activities successful. Fully understanding the unique ability of twins to cooperate with one another could lead to new educational reforms in the area of cooperative learning.

Making friends at school was reported as being difficult for four of the twins. An interpretation of the data concerning their ability to make friends illustrated that the negative emotions displayed by the twins while separated may have played a role in their ability to make friends at school. Further researchers may study the effects that emotions have on the ability to make friends.

Closing Remarks

This research study examined the educational effects of three sets of twins that did not attend schools with a flexible policy. The data reported that all of the twins that participated in this research study perceived that their education was compromised as a result of being forced to separate. The data supports that a flexible policy that consults the twins and the parents is the best practice to maximize the educational success of all twins.
The small sample size and the qualitative nature of this research does not allow for generalizablity. However, other current research on this topic supports these conclusions. Gleeson (1990), Preedy (1999), Tully et al. (2004), and van Leeuwen et al. (2005) all provide a roadmap for school principals to use when faced with placement decisions for twins. One of the research participants expressed that the principal did not agree that placing the twins in the same classroom was the correct decisions even when he was presented with the current research. It is imperative that school principals around the country be provided with the current research concerning classroom placement of twins so that informed decisions can be made. It is also important that administrators understand the importance of data driven decision-making when they make these life-altering decisions.

This research allowed the voices of six separate children to be heard and a personal account of their experience to be shared. One of the most important aspects of this research is the importance of listening to the children who are affected by arbitrary set policies. Even though the children in this study were in primary school they were able to clearly express what occurred when they were separated from their twin in school. This is the first study that considered the twins view of the separation policy. It is imperative that research that studies the effect of policy gathers input from all affected by the decisions. This includes the children the policies affect.
References


The Twins Foundation. (1992). *Should twins be separated in school?* Providence, RI.


Appendix A

Interview Protocol for Twin Research Participants
Introduction:
I am interested in gaining a better understanding of your separation with your co-twin. I particularly want to better understand the emotions you felt during your separation and the effect the separation had on your educational experience. I am hoping our conversation will help school leaders improve what they do with twins in the future. What do you think? Do you have any questions?

I will now turn on the audio recorder and I want to record what tape this is:

This is Jamison Grime talking with (interviewee’s name) about the classroom separation they experienced on (date, time).

Interview #1:

1. What are your favorite hobbies outside of school?
2. What do you like to do on weekends?
3. What is your favorite subject at school?
4. Please tell me about your relationship with your co-twin?
5. Why did you want to be in the same class as your co-twin?
6. Why do you believe you were placed in separate classrooms?
7. Were you ever given an explanation for your separation by the principal or teacher at your school?
8. How did your parents help you during the time you were separated from your co-twin?

Interview #2:

9. Did the separation have an effect on your assignments and tests in school?
10. Please explain any problems you may have experienced at school as a result of your separation?
11. Did your separation have an effect on your life outside of school?
12. Please describe the role that focusing in class played while you were separated from your twin?

13. How did you make friends in your class the year that you were separated from your twin?

14. How do you feel when your twin gets a better grade on a test than you?

15. Many teachers have said that twins in the same class will cheat on their schoolwork. What is your response to this claim?

16. Many researchers believe that placing twins in separate classrooms will help them develop their own individual personality. Can you think of some other ways schools can help twins develop their own individual personalities without separating them?

17. If you could meet face to face with the principal that separated you from your co-twin and could say anything you wanted to him without being punished, what would you say?

18. I would like you to draw a picture that shows how you felt the day you were notified that you were being separated from your twin.

19. Please explain your picture in terms of the emotions you were feeling at the time you learned about the separation.

Interview Guidelines:
1. My goal is to learn more from the twins. This often isn’t the usual role of an adult researcher, so as interviewees, I need to continually remind the interviewees of this by saying things like, “Your experience is important,” or “No one knows about this better than you,” or “Thank you, that’s really interesting,” etc.

2. I need to remember that the goal is to encourage the student to expand, to tell as full a story as he/she can about his/her experiences. To help them do this I will:
   a. Actively listen: nods, “uh huhs”, and other small signals of interest.
   b. Allow pauses. If a twin stops talking, I will try waiting instead of jumping in. Often allowing a longer pause than usual will encourage the interviewee to expand, and will also give them time to collect their thoughts.
   c. Use probing and prompting questions as necessary.
   d. Explicitly approve and appreciate their responses by saying things like “that’s really interesting,” etc.

3. I don’t have to do the questions in this order. If he/she has already addressed a question, I don’t need to repeat it.

4. The questions are basically just a way to start the structured interview. What the twins choose to share as relevant information is more important than the specific answers to the
questions I’ve created. The questions are about what I believe or assume is important. If the twins have a lot to say, don’t cut them off. If there’s time once they’ve finished, I will return to the interview questions.
Appendix B

Interview Protocol for Twin Mother Research Participants
The Educational Effect of Forced Separation on Twins
Principal Investigator: Dr. Caroline Roettger
Student Investigator: Jamison J. Grime
Parent Interview

Introduction
I am interested in gaining a better understanding of the classroom separation that your twins experienced. I particularly want to better understand the emotions you felt during the separation and how you helped the twins cope with the separation. I am hoping our conversation will help school leaders improve what they do with twins in the future. What do you think? Do you have any questions?

I will now turn on the audio recorder and I want to record what tape this is:

This is Jamison Grime talking with (interviewee’s name) about the classroom separation her twins experienced on (date, time).

Interview:

1. What is it like being the mother of twins?

2. What is your favorite memory that you have of your twins?

3. How would you describe your twins’ relationship?

4. Why do you believe your twins wanted to be in the same class together?

5. Why do you think they were placed in separate classrooms?

6. Were you ever given an explanation or presented a policy for their separation by the principal or teacher at the school?

7. How did you help your twins cope during their separation?

8. Did the separation have an effect on the twins’ assignments and tests taken at school?

9. Please explain any problems you perceive that the twins have as a result of the separation?

10. How did the twins make friends in their classes while they were separated?

11. Do you feel that your twins compete with one another at school? Please give me an example?

12. Do you feel that your twins cooperate with one another? Please give me an example?
13. Many teachers have said that twins in the same class will cheat on their schoolwork. What is your response to this claim?

14. Many researchers believe that placing twins in separate classrooms will help them develop their own individual personality. What is your response to this claim?

15. How would you describe the homework situation when your twins were in separate classrooms?

Interview Guidelines:
1. My goal is to learn more from the twins’ mothers. This often isn’t the usual role of an adult researcher, so as interviewees, I need to continually remind the interviewees of this by saying things like, “Your experience is important,” or “No one knows about this better than you,” or “Thank you, that’s really interesting,” etc.

2. I need to remember that the goal is to encourage the mothers to expand, to tell as full a story about her experiences as she can. To help them do this I will:
   a. Actively listen: nods, “uh huhs”, and other small signals of interest.
   b. Allow pauses. If a mother stops talking, I will try waiting instead of jumping in. Often allowing a longer pause than usual will encourage the interviewee to expand, and will also give them time to collect their thoughts.
   c. Use probing and prompting questions as necessary.
   d. Explicitly approve and appreciate their responses by saying things like “that’s really interesting,” etc.

3. I don’t have to do the questions in this order. If he/she has already addressed a question, I don’t need to repeat it.

4. The questions are basically just a way to start the structured interview. What the mothers choose to share as relevant information is more important than the specific answers to the questions I’ve created. The questions are about what I believe or assume is important. If the mothers have a lot to say, don’t cut them off. If there’s time once they’ve finished, I will return to the interview questions.
Appendix C

Article in Twins Magazine Recruiting Research Participants
New study to document effects of school separation on twins

Jamison J. Grime last month received approval of his plan for a research study that documents the negative effects of placing twins in separate classrooms for early years of elementary school when they are unprepared emotionally to be apart from each other.

Grime will study three families in-depth for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Toledo (Ohio). He will select three families in early 2008, and carry out extensive interviews with the parents and children before late February. His results are expected to be available in June, 2008, as he told TWINS™ in an exclusive interview.

Grime's findings will add significantly to the body of information on the effects of mandatory separation on twins entering kindergarten and 1st grade. All the more important is Grime's professional credibility: he is an elementary school principal in Delta, Ohio, near Toledo. Grime is also the father of 3-year-old twins, who wants his twins to share a classroom when they begin school.

Grime's preliminary research into this topic revealed a fair amount of important statistical data, but statistics by themselves seemed to tell only part of the story, Grime concluded. "School administrators are creatures of habit. They believe they know more about education than the general public, and they don't want to be questioned in their judgment or challenged on their policies."

This is why Grime is doing a so-called qualitative study, which may contain some statistics but will largely focus on the in-depth case studies about "twins who were unsuccessfully separated." Grime will use a lengthy survey and in-person interviews to learn from the three sets of twins and from their parents "the specifics about the effects that separation has on their education."

Grime intends to distill his lengthy dissertation down into "a five-page article that will contain such compelling detail... that school administrators can't ignore it."

If your "separated twins" suffered in school, contact Jamison Grime

Were your twins placed in separate classrooms when they began school because of a teacher's, school's or district policy that required separation of twins? Did this occur either in kindergarten or 1st grade when your twins weren't ready to be apart? Did they suffer adverse emotional consequences as a result of being forcibly separated into different classrooms in early elementary school?

If you answered "Yes" to these questions, Jamison J. Grime needs to hear from you. He wants as many families as possible (U.S. residents only) whose twins experienced any type of emotional trauma related to school classroom placement in his "universe." Some aspects of trauma would include learning difficulties, anxiety and fear of school, acting-out, clingingness to a co-twin, withdrawal, regression, language anomalies, or bedwetting. There may be other behaviors as well that parents thought were related to school separation.

Families must have their twins currently attending a public school, grades 5 through 7. Grimes will select three families with twins for in-depth research, traveling to each family to complete interviews during February. Submissions must be received by Jan. 15, 2008. Provide name, address, phone number, daytime email/contact info, names/ages of twins and other children in family. Provide a brief description (300 words max) of your twins' school separation experiences. Contact Grime at psy_hs.jsp@twins.org
Appendix D

Human Subjects Approval and Written Consent Forms
TO: Dr. Caroline Boettger & Janison Grime
   Educational Leadership

FROM: Dr. Barbara K. Chesney, Chair
       Social, Behavioral and Educational Institutional Review Board

DATE: December 6, 2007

SUBJECT: IRB #105840 The Educational Effect of Forced Separations on Twins

PROTOCOL APPROVAL DATE: 12/06/2007  EXPIRATION DATE: 12/05/2008
NUMBER OF SUBJECTS APPROVED: 20

The above research protocol was reviewed and approved by the University of Toledo Social, Behavioral & Educational IRB. Approval of this protocol is in effect until the expiration date listed below, unless the IRB notifies you otherwise.

Two months prior to your expiration date, if your project is not complete, you must submit a request for a continuing review and a progress report in order to continue the project beyond that date. When your project has been completed, please fill out and send me the enclosed Social, Behavioral & Educational Final Report Form. As the Primary Investigator, once this project is completed, you will not be able to receive additional protocol approvals until this report is received.

This approval for the use of human subjects is contingent upon your following the research plans presented in your submitted proposal. You are not permitted to undertake any actions involving human subjects that are not a specific part of that proposal. If it becomes necessary to amend your protocol, you must submit an amendment application for review and inclusion in your project file. Without such review, this authorization is void and you are not permitted to use human subjects in your research.

If any adverse events occur in the course of your research on human subjects, you must suspend the project temporarily and notify me immediately.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Jeff Busch 419-530-2416.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara K. Chesney, Chair
Social, Behavioral & Educational Institutional Review Board

cc: Office of Research SBE IRB File
ADULT RESEARCH SUBJECT - INFORMED CONSENT FORM
The Educational Effect of Forced Separations on Twins

Principal Investigator: Dr. Caroline Roettger, University of Toledo Faculty, 419-530-2461
Student Investigator: Jamison Grime, University of Toledo, 419-445-0730
Purpose: You are invited to participate in the research project entitled, 'The Educational Effect of Forced Separations on Twins', which is being conducted at the University of Toledo under the direction of Dr. Caroline Roettger, Dr. Lloyd Roettger, Dr. Barbara Bleyaert, and Dr. John Mascagone. The purpose of this study is to examine how forced separation of twins affects their educational experience. Many administrators practice an informal policy of separating twins regardless of parent viewpoints (Beauchamp & Brooks, 2003). However, with the passage of Minnesota legislation in 2005 that gives parents the right to decide whether their twins should be separated or placed together, it appears the question is receiving more serious consideration (Segal, 2005). This research study will help to shed light on the implications of these informal policies many principals have used through the lens of twins who were forced to separate. There is a body of current research on twins in school, but a gap exists in the research. There is a need for research that studies the perceptions of the actual twins who are experiencing these separations. Examining the unsuccessful separations of twins, from the twins’ perspective, will address this gap. The study will provide insight into the best practices for placing twins in classrooms (Hay & Preedy, 2005).

Description of Procedures: This research interview will take place in your home beginning in November, 2007 and ending in March, 2007. You will be asked questions about the educational experiences your twins faced because of their forced separation. Your participation will take approximately one hour. The interview will be digitally recorded to ensure accurate transcription of the interview at a later time.

Permission to record: Will you permit the researcher to digitally audio record during this research procedure?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Initial Here

After you have completed your participation, the research team will debrief you about the data, theory and research area under study and answer any questions you may have about the research.

Potential Risks: There are more than minimal risks to participation in this study, including loss of confidentiality. It is likely that you as the research participant may experience some emotional discomfort while discussing this sensitive topic with the student investigator.

Potential Benefits: One direct benefit to you if you participate in this research may be that you will learn about how semi-structured interviews are conducted and you may learn more about the effects of forced separations on twins. Others may benefit by learning about the results of this research. Parents in 23 states have current petition campaigns to introduce bills that will give parents the right to determine the proper placement of their twins. This research study will provide advocates with the research needed to successfully have these bills in their respective states.

Confidentiality: The researchers will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you provided this information, or what that information is. The consent forms with signatures will be kept separate from responses, which will not include names and which will be
presented to others only when combined with other responses. Although we will make every effort to protect your confidentiality, there is a low risk that this might be breached. 

Voluntary Participation: Your refusal to participate in this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled and will not affect your relationship with The University of Toledo. In addition, you may discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits.

Contact Information: Before you decide to accept this invitation to take part in this study, you may ask any questions that you might have. If you have any questions at any time before, during or after your participation, you should contact Dr. Caroline Roettger at (419) 530-2461 or Jamison Grime at (419) 819-8417. If you have questions beyond those answered by the research team or your rights as a research subject or research-related injuries, please feel free to contact Dr. Jeffrey Busch, research compliance coordinator at (419) 530-2844, or the Chairperson of the SBE Institutional Review Board, Dr. Barbara Chesney, in the Office of Research on the main campus at (419) 530-2844.

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

SIGNATURE SECTION – Please read carefully

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above, you have had all your questions answered, and you have decided to take part in this research.

The date you sign this document to enroll in this study, that is, today’s date must fall between the dates indicated at the bottom of the page.

Name of Subject (please print) 
Signature 
Date

Name of Person Obtaining Consent 
Signature 
Date

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO
SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL & EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

The research project described in this consent form and the form itself have been reviewed and approved by the University of Toledo Social, Behavioral & Educational Review Board (SBE IRB) for the period of time specified below.

SBE IRB #: 105840 
Approved Number of Human Subjects: 20 
Project Start Date: 12/06/07 
Project Expiration Date: 12/05/08 
B.K. Chesney, Ph.D., Chair 
Date: 12/6/07 
UT Social Behavioral & Educational IRB

Adult Informed Consent 
Page 2 of 2 
12-27-2006
CHILD/YOUTH RESEARCH SUBJECT
INFORMED CONSENT FROM PARENT/GUARDIAN FORM
The Educational Effect of Forced Separations on Twins

Principal Investigator: Dr. Caroline Roettger, University of Toledo Faculty, 419-530-2461
Student Investigator: Jamison Grime, University of Toledo, 419-445-0730

Purpose: Your child has expressed interest in participating in the research project entitled, "The Educational Effect of Forced Separations on Twins," which is being conducted by student investigator Jamison Grime under the direction of principal investigator Dr. Caroline Roettger of The University of Toledo. It is particularly important to get children's views of this important issue. In doing the research, your child will develop some research skills. The purpose of this research study is to examine unsuccessful twin classroom separations from the twins' perspective.

Description of Procedures: This research interview will take place in your home during starting in November, 2007 and ending in March, 2007. Your child will be asked questions about the educational experiences they have faced because of their forced separation. Your child's participation will take approximately one hour. If at any time your child decides that he/she does not want to participate, he/she is free to quit the research. The interview will be digitally recorded to ensure accurate transcription of the interview at a later time.

"Permission to record: Will you permit the researcher to digitally audio record your child during this research procedure?"

YES   NO

 Initial Here

Permission to collect and use drawings from twins: Will you permit the researcher to use drawings your twins provided that detail their feelings and emotions concerning their separation.

YES   NO

 Initial Here

After you have completed your participation, the research team will debrief you about the data, theory and research area under study and answer any questions you may have about the research.

Potential Risks: There are more than minimal risks to participation in this study, including loss of confidentiality. It is likely that your child, as the research participant, may experience some emotional discomfort while discussing this sensitive topic with the student investigator.

Potential Benefits: One direct benefit to your child if you consent to their participation in this research may be that they will learn about how semi-structured interviews are conducted and they may also learn more about the effects of forced separations on twins. Others may benefit by learning about the results of this research. Parents in 23 states have current petition campaigns to introduce bills that will give parents the right to determine the proper placement of their twins. This research study will provide advocates with the research needed to successfully have these bills in their respective states.

Confidentiality: The researchers will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that your child provided particular information. The consent forms with signatures will be kept separate from responses, which will not include names and which will be presented to
others only when combined with other responses. Although we will make every effort to protect your child's confidentiality, there is a low risk that this might be breached.

Voluntary Participation: Your refusal to allow your child to participate in this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled and will not affect your relationship with The University of Toledo. In addition, your child may discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits.

Contact Information: Before you decide to accept this invitation for your child to take part in this study, you may ask any questions that you might have. If you have any questions at any time before, during or after your participation, you should contact Dr. Caroline Roettger at (419) 530-2461 or Jamison Grime at (419) 819-8417. If you have questions beyond those answered by the research team or your rights as a research subject or research-related injuries, please feel free to contact Dr. Jeffrey Busch, research compliance coordinator at (419) 530-2844, or the Chairperson of the SBE Institutional Review Board, Dr. Barbara Chesney, in the Office of Research on the main campus at (419) 530-2844.

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

SIGNATURE SECTION – Please read carefully
You are making a decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this research study. --
Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above, you have had all your questions answered, and you have decided to take part in this research.
The date you sign this document to enroll in this study, that is, today's date must fall between the dates indicated at the bottom of the page.

Name of Child Participant (please print)

Name of Parent/Guardian Giving Consent for Child Participant (please print)

Name of Person Obtaining Consent (please print)

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDOSOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL & EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

The research project described in this consent form and the form itself have been reviewed and approved by the University of Toledo Social, Behavioral & Educational Review Board (SBE IRB) for the period of time specified below.

SBE IRB #: 105840 Approved Number of Human Subjects: 20
Project Start Date: 12/06/07 Project Expiration Date: 12/05/08

Barbara Chesney, Ph.D., Chair

UT Social Behavioral & Educational IRB

Adult Informed Consent Page 2 of 3 12-27-2006
CHILD RESEARCH SUBJECT ASSENT FORM
The Educational Effect of Forced Separation on Twins

Principal Investigator: Dr. Caroline Roettger, University of Toledo Faculty, 419-530-2461
Student Investigator: Jamison Grime, University of Toledo, 419-445-0730

- You are being asked to be in a study to help understand people better.
- You should ask any questions you have before making up your mind. You can think about it and discuss it with your family or friends before you decide.
- It is okay to say "No" if you don't want to be in the study. If you say "Yes" you can change your mind and then quit the study at any time without getting in trouble.

We are doing a research study about how twins feel when they are forced to separate from their co-twin in school. A research study is a way to learn more about people. If you decide that you want to be part of this study, you will be asked to participate in two interviews. Each of these interviews will last approximately one hour. During these interviews you will be asked questions about how you felt when you were not allowed to be in the same class as your co-twin. There is a chance that you as a research participant may experience some emotional discomfort while discussing your feelings and experiences with the student investigator. Not everyone who takes part in this study will benefit. A benefit means that something good happens to you. We think these benefits might be giving school administrators research that will assist them in making informed decisions about the placement of twins in school.

When we are finished with this study we will write a report about what was learned. This report will not include your name or say that you were in the study.

If you have any questions about the study, you can ask Dr. Caroline Roettger or Jamison Grime. You can call the investigator(s) listed at the top of this page if you have a question later.

If you decide to be in this study, please print and sign your name below.

I, __________________________, want to be in this research study.

(Print your name here)

Sign your Name: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Version Date 00/00/00

Page 1 of 1
Appendix E

Research Participant Letter to the Texas State Legislature
Respected Senators:

My eight-year-old twins were forcibly split into separate classrooms this year, against our written requests to keep them together. They had shared a classroom for kindergarten and first grade, with not one complaint, concern or negative comment about them being together from their teachers or principal. On the contrary, each of our required parent/teacher conferences over the last two years were filled with praise and acknowledgment for their individual interests, eagerness to participate, cooperation skills and pleasant nature. Their grades never faltered, they developed independent and joint peer groups, they sometimes sat together at lunch, but not always, they were assigned to different tables and work groups in class -- all without negative behavioral, emotional or developmental issues, for two solid years.

But this year, one week before school was to start, we found out that they had been split against our request. We were given no evidence or solid explanation to support or justify this decision. Given the time frame and the obvious resistance to our choice, we did what most parents do: we tried to make the best of it. We feigned enthusiasm about the separation; we told our children how exciting and fun it will be to have two whole sets of classmates, two new teachers. We went against our gut feeling and told them this was a good thing.

By the second week of school the devastation of the split was abundantly clear. Our daughter, a child who for the last two years had greeted almost every school day with a smile and confidence, had cried every single morning since the beginning of school. She said she hated school and didn’t want to go. Dropping her off each morning, soaked in tears and begging for us to stay was unbearable. It felt like some kind of academic tough-love program.

I scheduled a meeting with the principal and began researching the issue of classroom placement for multiples, and that’s when I read, among other studies, the Tully Report. I read solid evidence of the emotional damage a split like this can cause if done too early, I read that the vast majority of multiples do in fact build healthy individual selves despite sharing a classroom. Most importantly, I read that giving twins who are not yet ready for separation the message, over and over again, that being separated is a “good thing” as we had done, might lead to one or both of the twins internalizing that wanting to be together with their twin must be a “bad thing.” I truly believe this is what has happened to my daughter. I believe she did not have the emotional tools available at this young age to deal with the absence of a large part of her security, confidence and familiarity. Our pediatrician concurs that this forced separation appears to have caused emotional damage to , and recommended they be reunited. Our school counselor saw evidence of the same.

If we’d had a Bill like SB 403 in place, I believe all of this unnecessary pain and damage could have been avoided. Every case is different, and in some instances, multiples need to be separated for the betterment of each. Do I think my twins will need to be in the same classroom in high school? No, of course not. I believe sibling separation is an organic process with complex connections to confidence and security, and it runs on its own clock. Please ensure that that process is respected and protected on a case-by-case basis by giving parents a voice in classroom placement. Please vote this bill through. Thank you.
Appendix F

Pictures Drawn by Twins Depicting their Feelings Concerning their Separation from their Co-Twin.