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# Perceptions of Block Scheduling: an Indepth Study of Teachers' Perceptions of Block Scheduling at a District Factor D/E High School in Central New Jersey

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PERCEPTIONS OF BLOCK SCHEDULING:  
AN INDEPTH STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF BLOCK SCHEDULING  
AT A DISTRICT FACTOR D/E HIGH SCHOOL IN CENTRAL NEW JERSEY,

BY

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

From the dawn of the Industrial Revolution educators have sought to create schools that made it possible to educate students in an efficient manner. It is not surprising therefore, that American educators turned to the models of efficiency expert Frederick Taylor as they devised master school schedules. Starting with a belief that schools could and should operate in the same manner that businesses operate, schools began instituting the Taylor Model school schedule -- a schedule that shared elements of the production line of a capitalist factory.

Notwithstanding some changes, schools have continued to use the Taylor Model schedule. Students attend seven or eight classes of approximately forty to forty-five minutes each day. Classrooms are set up in rows with the teacher in the front of the class. Teaching is based on preset curricula with standardized evaluation tools to measure learning. When a student deviates from expected norms, discipline and remediation are provided in predictable ways. In theory and in practice, the master schedule determines the manner in which educators teach children.

When schools first implemented the Taylor model schedule, it is doubtful that they understood the effect this schedule would have on all aspects of education. Today, school districts are unable to make changes in curricula, evaluation, staffing, or administration, without giving significant consideration to the daily schedule and to the

yearly schedule. A major and unresolved problem occasioned by this situation is that school districts frequently do not change schedules to fit new innovations in education; rather, innovations in education are modified to adapt to the traditional schedule, even at the risk of diminishing or negating the innovation's desired effect.

The National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1994) reported that no aspect of the school day escapes the demands of the schedule. The study concluded that:

1. With few exceptions, schools open and close their doors at fixed times in the morning and early afternoon. A school in one district might open at 7:30 a.m. and close at 2:15 p.m.; in another, the school day might run from 8:00 in the morning until 3:00 in the afternoon.
2. With few exceptions, the school year lasts nine months, beginning in late summer and ending in late spring.
3. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, schools typically offer a six-period day, with about 5.6 hours of classroom time a day.
4. No matter how complex or simple the school subject--literature, shop, physics, gym, or algebra--the schedule assigns each an impartial national average of 51 minutes per class period, no matter how well or poorly students comprehend the material.
5. The norm for required school attendance, according to the Council of Chief State School Officers, is 180 days. Eleven states permit school terms of 175 days or less; only one state requires more than 180.

6. Secondary school graduation requirements are universally based on seat time "Carnegie units," a standard of measurement representing one credit for completion of a one-year course meeting daily.
7. Staff salary increases are typically tied to time, to seniority, and to the number of hours of graduate work completed.
8. Despite the obsession with time, little attention is paid to how it is used: in 42 states examined by the Commission, only 41 percent of secondary school time must be spent on core academic subjects.

There are a growing number of theorists and educators who believe that the traditional school schedule has significant limitations. Freeman and Scheidecker (1999) report, "Having inherited the traditional eight-period day, schools have allowed the delivery system to dictate their policies, instructional strategies, and curriculum. Schools even base their graduation requirements on the Carnegie unit" (p.23). Mistretta and Polansky (1997) call students and teachers of traditional schedules "Prisoners of Time." They go on to say that in most schools "the creativity of teachers is held prisoner by the traditional schedule of 40 to 45-minute periods" (p.25).

In comparing schools with businesses of today, Tewel and Holzman (1991) write, "No successful company would create a schedule and then decide how to meet its goals, while rigidly sticking to that schedule" (p.36). He believes that successful companies set their goals and then create the schedule that will best serve as a vehicle to help meet those goals. Schools, say Tewel and Holzman, follow an outdated preset schedule and force all aspects of learning into that schedule. Tewel and Holzman argue that schools must



completely do away with the present models of scheduling and create new schedules without any preconceived notions about what a schedule should be.

In *A Nation at Risk* The National Commission of Excellence in Education (1984) clearly points out that schools are falling far behind in meeting the needs of today's students. Despite the need for significant educational reform, many school districts refuse to even question the validity of the traditional schedule. The report also states that many administrators continue to make only slight modifications with the hope of regaining lost public confidence.

According to Richard Dempsey (1988) School districts spend inordinate amounts of money on motivational speakers, new reading programs, new mathematics programs, and other innovations, while failing to recognize a basic flaw in the structure of the public school system. Dempsey believes that the master schedule of the school becomes "gospel to the students and staff members who live by it every day" (p.42). He says that in most districts, the master schedule becomes "so unchangeable and rigid that administrators begin to hand out class assignments according to the dictates of the clock rather than according to instructional needs" (p.42).

Today, there is a significant body of research to suggest that the traditional schedule has become stagnant and fragmented and does not meet the needs of the students.

Canady and Rettig (1995) report that the traditional schedule:

1. *Contributes to the impersonal nature of high schools*
2. *Exacerbates discipline problems*
3. *Limits instructional possibilities for teachers*
4. *Does not permit flexible timing for teachers*

### 5. *Inhibits friendly workplaces*

Rettig and Canady (1996) add to this troubling list by saying that the traditional schedule “fragments instruction for students who attend as many as eight short classes in different subjects every day and creates an assembly-line mentality” (p.30).

Rettig and Canady (1996) believe that when a new program is suggested to a school district, the concerns rarely revolve around how it will help the students. Administrators are compelled to consider other questions: Can the program be implemented in a one hundred eighty-day school year? Will the teachers’ union agree to the changes? How can the program be implemented without going into the summer months? In almost all cases, the major concerns and disputes revolve around the schedule.

Many educators and theorists are now questioning the wisdom of continuing to follow the traditional schedule and are looking for alternatives. Among the alternatives is block scheduling -- a plan that increases the time spent in each class period, while reducing the number of times the class meets.

After reviewing many studies on block scheduling, Meg Sommerfeld (1996, May) came to the conclusion that traditional scheduling is counterproductive in terms of student progress. “Teachers would pass out if someone asked them to prepare eight different classes every day. Why is it we think students have the time to do that,” says Sommerfeld (p.1). She points out that many students have after school lives that are just as busy as the lives of teachers and that block scheduling reduces some of the stress felt. Sommerfeld continues by suggesting that more homework is not necessarily better than less homework. Under the block schedule, students may or may not have less homework than under a traditional schedule, but at least the homework focuses on four or fewer

subjects. The students are able to put their energies into those few classes without scattering their efforts across eight different subjects.

Edward Miller (1992) says that the problem with traditional schedules is that the student is forced to adapt to the schedule rather than the schedule adapting to the needs of the student. He believes that under a block schedule, the teacher has more of an opportunity to meet the needs of each student. Within the confines of a traditional schedule, however, the teacher has only enough time to teach the subject matter to the entire class. If a student or a small group of students does not grasp the material, writes Miller, the teacher does not have the time to reinforce the subject matter. Those students are left behind.

In a block scheduled class, says Miller (1992), the teacher can employ several different teaching techniques to meet the different learning styles of the students. The increased class time gives the teacher the opportunity to choose the appropriate teaching method for each student. Moreover, the longer class period affords the teacher the time required to complete the diligent evaluations necessary to monitor the progress of each student. The result, adds Miller, is that the teacher can design her/his curricula in a manner that challenges the students who are ready to move ahead while assisting the students who require reinforcement.

Ron Fitzgerald (1996) writes that block scheduling does not by itself change a school for the better. Fitzgerald, Superintendent of Minuteman Science-Technology High School in Lexington, Massachusetts, says that under a block schedule, “students face one of two realities—longer periods of more effective, brain-compatible teaching or longer periods of less effective, brain-antagonistic instruction” (p.20). His premise is that

if done poorly, block scheduling will merely add longer periods of ineffective teaching methods. Under these circumstances, the extended period will only have negative effects.

According to Fitzgerald (1996), if block scheduling is going to be effective, lessons should be different from standard lectures. Fitzgerald says that the following components are examples of useful sections of any lesson, but specifically a block scheduled lesson: (1) establish relevance; (2) hook the students; (3) use novel beginnings and novel lessons; (4) implement cooperative learning; (5) realize that students have different learning styles; and (6) use a variety of teaching strategies.

Mistretta and Polansky (1997) suggest that block scheduling has many benefits over traditional scheduling. These benefits include:

1. Reduce the number of class changes and transitions during any one school day
2. Reduce duplication and inefficiency
3. Reduce the number of students seen by each teacher daily
4. Reduce the number of course for which a teacher must prepare daily
5. Reduce fragmentation
6. Provide flexible instructional environments
7. Allow for variation of time based on content area (Canady & Rettig, 1995)
8. Provide teachers with increased time to improve their ability to become more creative in the classroom (Canady & Rettig, 1995)
9. Provide teachers with increased planning time (Canady & Rettig, 1995)
10. Provide students with increased instructional time (Canady & Rettig, 1995)
11. Encourage more in-depth instruction, which would result in fewer disruptions

12. Significantly increase the number of hours of additional instructional time yearly
13. Create more opportunities for cooperative group projects and individualized instruction
14. Create more choice for students
15. Provide time for clubs and activities to meet during lunch rather than after school or at night.
16. Provide a calmer atmosphere for students and teachers
17. Promote increased communication among teachers
18. Increase parental contact for teachers
19. Reduce schedule conflicts
20. Encourage students to earn more credits and take more courses
21. Create opportunities to integrate subject matter
22. Create opportunities for varied teaching methods
23. Create acceptance of different learning styles.

#### The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify and to compare teachers' perceptions regarding block scheduling. More specifically the study focused on teachers in a district factor F high school that implemented block scheduling last year.

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of block scheduling?
2. What similarities and differences exist among teachers regarding their perceptions of block scheduling?

The questions that this study addressed specifically included:

1. Do the teachers of the high school under study believe that block scheduling has been a success or failure?
2. What are the reasons for their answers to the previous question?
3. Do the teachers believe that block scheduling was implemented with the intent of improving the overall educational process or were there other reasons for the implementation?
4. Based on their perceptions, have objective measures of student academic success improved since implementing block scheduling?
5. Based on teachers' perceptions, has block scheduling been productive for all students and teachers, or has it produced benefits for some students at the expense of others?
6. Were the teachers given the appropriate training for the new schedule?
7. Has the administration addressed the concerns of the students and teachers?
8. Is the new schedule sympathetic to the needs of the teachers and the needs of the students?
9. Based on teachers' perceptions, has student morale increased, decreased or remained the same?
10. Has teacher morale increased, decreased or remained the same?
11. Based on teachers' perceptions, has block scheduling produced greater unity among teachers and students?
12. Do teachers employ different teaching techniques under block scheduling?

### Significance of the Study

Many theorists believe that a person's perceptions form the basis of reality for that person. For example, if a teacher believes that block scheduling provides more time in class for a variety of activities, then for that teacher it does provide more class time for variety of activities. That teacher will create many different activities that will allow the students to become active and engaged learners. But if the teacher believes that block scheduling merely extends the class period and makes it more likely that a student's mind will wander, then his/her class will reflect that belief. That teacher will most likely continue to lecture and to use drill and practice; no other methods of teaching will be utilized.

Krug (1992) presents the argument in writing:

Instructional climate and learning are strongly connected.

The relationships that teachers have with students and vice versa have a direct impact on the student learning. If the instructional climate of a building is not congenial, students will not learn. Improving school climate will improve student outcomes. (p.430)

Clearly if Krug (1992) is correct, then it is important to study the climate of schools that implemented block scheduling.

In his landmark study *Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education*, Ray Rist (1970) suggests that a teacher's expectations and perceptions of a student will often be important factors in how well the child performs. If the teacher expects that the student will be successful and perceives

that the child has the tools to be successful, that child will very often be successful -- at least in that classroom. If, however, the teacher does not believe that the child will be successful or that the child does not have the skills required for success, that child will likely not perform as well as other students.

Rist (1970) points out that many studies have been conducted to “determine what affects on children a teacher’s values, beliefs, attitudes, and, most crucial to this [Rist’s] analysis, a teacher’s expectations might have” (p.268). Rist summarized many theorists in saying that a teacher’s expectations and perceptions may have a significant influence on the academic success of a student. Rist points out that these studies “validate a self-fulfilling prophesy: if the teacher expects high performance, she receives it, and vice versa” (p.268).

It is likely, therefore, that a teacher’s perception with regard to block scheduling and a student’s perception of the same phenomenon will influence the success that the teacher and student will have with block scheduling. However, before the impact of those perceptions have can be measured, scholars must attempt to identify the perceptions that teachers have of block scheduling.

There are theorists who offer evidence that individual perceptions are so strong that people will hold on to their perceptions even in the face of empirical data. Robinson and Brandon (1992) report that many commonly held perceptions regarding education are not upheld by the complete facts of the matter, but result from the public jumping to conclusions without weighing all the relevant factors. They point to the public’s perception that the fact that students are not performing as well on the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* as students of previous generations did indicates that schools are no longer providing



a quality education. Current research, however, suggests a different interpretation of the facts: recent drops in the scores are more likely due to many factors including the fact the more students today are taking the SAT than took it in the past. Furthermore, it is not legitimate to make generalizations about the state of education in the United States from the fact that students of this generation are not doing as well in the SAT, since, as Robinson and Brandon write, “The SAT is designed to help colleges predict the probability of success for specific individual in colleges, and is not meant as a measure of general quality of education” (p.7).

Slate and Jones (2000) believe that there is little to be gained from general studies that compare the objective results of block scheduling with the objective results of traditional scheduling. Up to the present these comparisons have shown mixed results and are unlikely to produce useful information. They believe it will be more useful to study individual factors that lead to the success or failure of block scheduling. Specifically, there should be a greater focus on the social validity of block scheduling. “Social validity refers to the extent to which participants in a program perceive the program is accomplishing worthwhile outcomes through acceptable means” (p.57). Slate and Jones go on to say that if the participants do not believe that block scheduling is producing positive effects, it will fail.

Given the opportunities that many theorists believe block scheduling can afford students and teachers, and given the importance of perceptions in education, this study attempted to identify and compare those perceptions that shape the reality of block scheduling for teachers.

### Limitations of the study

Within the framework of this study there were anticipated limitations. The primary limitation of this study was the necessity of ensuring participant anonymity. This researcher took every reasonable precaution to protect each teacher's anonymity in accordance to the standards of the sample school, of the university to which the dissertation was presented, and of federal and state law, as well as the demands of professional ethics and his own ethical standard.

In using interviews as one of the sources of data collection, the researcher risked being subjective in his data analysis. Nevertheless, this researcher believes that interviews presented him with rich, in-depth data. To guard against subjective analysis, all interviews were recorded on audiotape, and all audiotapes were transcribed.

Another limitation of this study was the possibility that part of the sample population would be unwilling to participate in the study. It was conceivable that some teachers would not wish to take part in the study for any number of reasons. Teachers might not have wanted to take time from their busy schedules to take part in an interview. They might not have trusted that their anonymity would be protected. The researcher discussed these possible problems with the school administrators in advance of the study.

### Definitions of Terms

**Alternate Day Schedule (A/B schedule)**- For the purpose of this study (and notwithstanding the many variations of this plan), a plan in which the school day is divided into four equal blocks of approximately ninety minute that meet every other day for the length of the school year.

At Risk Students- For the purpose of this study, students who because of one or several disadvantages are at risk of failing or dropping out of school.

Block Scheduling- For the purpose of this study, a readjustment of the traditional eight-period school day in order to create longer class periods, while reducing the number of times the class meets.

Carnegie Unit- For the purpose of this study, a standard of measurement representing one credit for completion of a one-year course that meets every school day.

District Factor Group (DFG)-For the purpose of this study,

an indicator of the socioeconomic status of citizens in each New Jersey school district. The DFG designations are assigned by the New Jersey Department of Education and are based on the following demographic variables: (a) percent of adult residents who failed to complete high school; (b) percent of adult residents who attended college; (c) occupational status of adult household members; (d) population density: persons per square mile; (e) income: median family income; (f) unemployment: percent of those in the work force who received some unemployment compensation; (g) poverty: percent of residents below the poverty level. (New Jersey Department of Education District Factor Groups For School Districts)

Four by Four Model (4x4 Model)- For the purpose of this study, a schedule in which the school day is divided into four equal periods of approximately ninety minutes. The classes meet every day for one half of the school year.

Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA)- For the purpose of this study, a standardized test administered by the state of New Jersey that seeks to measure eighth grade students' proficiency in language and mathematics.

High School Proficiency Test-Grade 11- For the purpose of this study, a standardized test administered by the state of New Jersey that seeks to measure grade eleven students' proficiency in language and mathematics.

Inclusion- For the purposes of this study, describes classes in which classified students and non-classified students are taught together.

Intensive Scheduling- For the purpose of this study, a synonym for block scheduling.

Social Validity- For the purpose of this study, the extent to which participants in a program perceive the program is accomplishing worthwhile goals through acceptable means (Slate & Jones, 2000).

Student Achievement- For the purpose of this study, teacher interviews and student interviews will serve as the tools to measure student achievement.

Student Satisfaction- For the purpose of this study, the level to which students are either pleased or displeased with the changes that are a result of implementing block scheduling.

Taylor Model- For the purpose of the study, another name for the traditional schedule. (Named after efficiency expert Frederick Taylor)

Teacher Satisfaction- For the purpose of this study, the level to which teachers are either pleased or displeased with the changes that are a result of implementing block scheduling.

Traditional Schedule- For the purpose of this study, a school's master schedule that divides the day into seven or eight periods of equal length, usually between forty and forty-five minutes in length.

## Chapter II

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

The review of literature was divided into three main sections. The first section describes the effect that block scheduling has had on objectively measured data. Section two deals with perception of block scheduling. The final section reviews that which educational theorists have written about block scheduling.

#### Block Scheduling and Objective Data

There is a significant body of literature on the subject of block scheduling. Much of it describes the effects this system of scheduling has had on objectively measured data. The current literature suggests that this model holds significant promise; nevertheless, there are also data that casts doubt on the model's validity. The first section of this literature review gives a framework of some the more important studies on block scheduling.

After a district-administered study that cast doubt on the efficacy of block scheduling at Coventry High School in Akron, Ohio, Hess, Wronkovich, and Robinson (1999, December) conducted a study to determine whether or not the implementation of block scheduling would be a significant predictor of success on standardized pre-tests and standardized post-tests.

Coventry High School implemented a hybrid 4 x 4 block schedule. Students were required to take some courses with block scheduling, some classes with traditional

scheduling, and could choose between the two schedules for other classes. Teachers had similar choices in their teaching schedules. Throughout the school year, most students took at least one class within the block schedule and one within the traditional schedule. For the purposes of the study, the school scheduled particular classes in block scheduling and other classes in traditional scheduling.

Hess, Wronkovich, and Robinson (1999, December) administered the SAT-II as a pre-test and as a post-test. The researchers focused on world history, geometry, English, and biology. They found that block scheduling was a significant predictor of higher post-test scores in English and biology, but was not a significant predictor of higher or lower post-test scores in world history and geometry. In all four courses, however, students who took the classes under block scheduling had higher grade point averages than their counterparts in traditionally scheduled classes.

Hess, Wronkovich, and Robinson (1999, December) concluded that the mixed results of the study should not persuade school administrators to move back to “an old way” of scheduling. Rather, they believed that the results of the study suggested that all aspects of school management, including the yearly calendar, the school day, and movement from grade to grade, play important roles in the success of students on standardized tests.

Wronkovich, Hess, and Robinson (1997) conducted another study to measure the effectiveness of block scheduling as it relates to achievement on the *Ohio Colleges Early Placement Test* (EMPT). The sample for the study included high school students who received mathematics instructions in algebra 1, geometry, and algebra 2 in traditional (yearlong) classes and students who received mathematics instruction in algebra 1,

geometry, and algebra 2 in block scheduled classes. The sample also included teachers who taught mathematics in traditional (yearlong) classes and those who taught mathematics in block scheduled classes. The students and teachers involved in the sample were from two suburban districts in Ohio.

The researchers concluded that the traditional (yearlong) study of mathematics was preferable for the students in the sample as it related to their ability to perform on the EMPT. They went on to say that students who received their mathematics instruction in block scheduled classes were at a significant disadvantage when competing against students from traditionally scheduled classes. These results were much more dramatic than the results of the Hess, Wronkovich, and Robinson (1999, December) study that did not show much difference in standardized tests scores between students who took their courses in block scheduled classes and those who took their classes in traditionally scheduled classes.

Wronkovich, Hess, and Robinson (1997) interviewed ten teachers to gain further insight to the data obtained from the statistical analysis. The researchers identified the following trends among the teacher comments:

1. Concern over covering all the material
2. Concern over “gaps” in the math learning process
3. Holding the attention of students for ninety minutes
4. The need for assimilation time between practice sessions.

Wronkovich, Hess, and Robinson (1997) concluded by suggesting that it might be prudent to conduct the same type of research in all academic areas. At the end of the research, the schools in the study might design a modified block schedule in which only



the classes that showed positive results would be block scheduled. The other courses would be offered in traditional schedule classes.

The results of a study that Knight, DeLeon, and Smith (1999) conducted in a high school in a suburb of a large Texas city that had recently implemented a modified block schedule contradicted the 1997 Wronkovich, Hess, and Robinson research. Knight, DeLeon, and Smith concluded that block schedule students performed significantly better than their traditional schedule counterparts. In this study, Knight, DeLeon, and Smith compared grade point averages, final exam scores, course grades, and when applicable, advanced placement test scores of block schedule students with grade point averages, final exam scores, course grades, and advanced placement scores of traditional schedule students. The results of the study suggested that students who took block schedule courses performed better in all of the previously mentioned dependant variables when adjusted for prior academic performance. These differences continued when adjusted for class size, although they were less pronounced.

Louden and Hounshell (1998) conducted a study to determine if more student-centered teaching practices were taking place in biology as a result of implementing block scheduling. The objective of their study was to determine whether teachers in block scheduled or traditionally scheduled biology classes:

1. Implement inquiry-based instruction more often or with different methods,
2. Understand the concept of inquiry-based instruction as described in the standards,
3. Have classes with significantly different student achievement, and

4. Believe that their school schedule facilitates the use of inquiry-based instruction (p 50).

The results of the study suggested that there was not much difference between the block scheduled biology class and the traditionally scheduled biology class when other factors were considered. Louden and Hounshell (1998) concluded that student achievement in the block scheduled classes was not significantly different from student achievement in the traditionally scheduled classes when pre-existing differences were considered, despite the thirty fewer hours of total instruction time in the block scheduled classes. Moreover, the researchers concluded that there was a significantly higher level of achievement in classes that used student-centered learning methods, regardless of the schedule. They also found that teachers who believed that student-centered learning methods were effective made these methods fit into either type of schedule. Louden and Hounshell felt that their research might lead to the hypothesis that separate variables and not the schedule itself might be the factors that lead to success under block scheduling.

Elizabeth Howard (1998) saw serious problems with block scheduling after she conducted a series of interviews with teacher, students, parents, and administrators regarding their perceptions to block scheduling. She found that the results of switching to block scheduling were frequently negative. Howard found that students and teachers were often ill prepared. Teachers often wound up with less actual classroom time. She suggested that the current way of evaluating teachers was inappropriate for the new schedule. She also found that students were often less prepared for standardized tests.

Howard (1998) did say that most of the problems are correctable if the school district adequately prepares the entire school population for the switch to block scheduling.

Nevertheless, she is not convinced that block scheduling is a better master schedule than traditional scheduling.

### The Importance of Perceptions

As stated previously, Rist (1970), in his study, *Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education*, suggests that a teacher's expectations and perceptions of a student will often serve as important factors in determining how well the child performs. If the teacher expects that the student will be successful and perceives that the child has the tools to be successful, that child will very often be successful -- at least in that classroom. If, however, the teacher does not believe that the child will be successful or that the child does not have the skills required for success, that child will not likely perform as well as other students.

Rist (1970) points out that many studies have been conducted to "determine what affects on children a teacher's values, beliefs, attitudes, and, most crucial to this [Rist's] analysis, a teacher's expectations might have" (p.268). Rist summarizes many theorists in saying that a teacher's expectations and perceptions may have a significant influence on the academic success of a student. Rist points out that these studies "validate a self-fulfilling prophecy: if the teacher expects high performance, she receives it, and vice versa" (p.268).

It seems likely, therefore, that a teacher's perceptions of block scheduling and a student's perception of block scheduling would influence the success teacher and students will have with that system. However, before the impact those perceptions have can be measured, scholars must attempt to identify the perceptions that teachers and students have regarding block scheduling.

## Perceptions of Block Scheduling

Before studying the effects of extended block scheduling at Becker Middle School in Becker, Minnesota, Ullrich and Yeaman (1999) found in their literature search that students generally had a positive view of block scheduling. They found that under that schedule, students had a positive view of school climate, engagement during class, attitudes toward schoolwork, and ratings of teacher effectiveness using "progressive methods." They also reported higher student self reported GPA under block scheduling than under traditional scheduling.

Specifically, Ullrich and Yeaman's (1999) search results indicated:

1. Stress is reduced because students prepare for three or four classes rather than six classes.
2. Longer class periods provide ample time for processing. Extensive time, for example, accommodates the following sequence: direct instruction, individual/small group practice, and time for application.
3. Academic achievement and retention of material increase because students have fewer classes to prepare for and can study topics at a more in-depth level. There is time for hands-on, application activities; and problem- or issue-centered connections can be made with other content areas.
4. 90-minute periods or 270-minute blocks of time facilitate projects and labs.
5. Discipline problems and referrals decrease markedly because students are more meaningfully engaged with the curriculum. There is reduced stress because they have had to prepare for fewer classes and can study topics at a more in-depth level.

6. Attendance increases and fewer tardies occur because of positive school and classroom climate.

7. Students are more positive and enjoy school to a greater extent because teachers can provide individual academic and social attention.

8. A sense of belonging and affiliation is increased because there are fewer students on a team and student-student and student-teacher interactions are more productive.

9. Curriculum offerings can easily be expanded.

10. Students are able to have more community involvement and service learning opportunities.

In that same study, Ullrich and Yeaman (1999) reported on Becker Middle School's switch from a traditional schedule to a modified block schedule, which they called an extended block schedule. At Becker the day is divided into three blocks of 90-minute classes and two 45-minute periods, one 25-minute lunch period, and one 20-minute *Prime Time* period. The year is divided into two semesters. The schedule is flexible enough, so that if the teachers wish to create interdisciplinary lessons, the blocks can be set up in one block of 180-minutes and one 90-minute block, or in one 270-minute block. Ullrich and Yeaman report that this design gives teachers more flexibility and gives teachers greater opportunities to "connect the curricula."

In their literature search, Ullrich and Yeaman (1999) found that teachers had positive feelings toward extended block scheduling. Teachers reported improvement in many areas including ability to do their jobs more effectively and their general attitudes toward teaching.

In their review of literature, Ullrich and Yeaman reported teacher benefits that included:

1. Fewer preparations and less stress.
2. Less fragmentation in presenting material thereby improving instructional climate.
3. Better and closer relationships with students and colleagues.
4. More flexibility for "connecting the curriculum."
5. School climate is enhanced because of more effective use of time, space, and resources.
6. Greater chance for academic growth.
7. Greater opportunity for instructional innovation and varying instructional strategies.
8. Provides greater opportunity to accommodate different needs of students because there are fewer students in longer blocks of time.
9. Allows for grouping and regrouping of students according to what they are interested in and have mastered.
10. Additional class time allows for field trips and guest speakers.
11. Record keeping is less of a burden.
12. Additional time allows for more individualization and grouping of students.
13. Much of the statistical evidence available indicates that scores on standardized tests remain as high or higher under block scheduling.
14. The North Central Accreditation Committee had given unqualified support to this type of modified block.

15. Additional time allows for peer counseling and other education activities.

16. Longer class time allows teachers to develop issues and concepts, to be more creative and innovative, and to use a large variety of teaching methods.

Ullrich and Yeaman (1999) found three concerns with block scheduling:

1. The change to block scheduling takes commitment, time, and energy. If one of these aspects are missing, failure is a significant possibility
2. When a student is absent, he/she misses twice as much work as he/she would under a traditional schedule.
3. Block scheduling is nontraditional and is often looked upon with skepticism.

Becker had not been on a block schedule long enough for Ullrich and Yeaman (1999) to make substantive conclusions; nevertheless, they reported that the initial reactions to block scheduling were positive. The results of their study validated the conclusions of the studies in their literature search. In general, students and teachers reported that students are learning more and have a better attitude about school. Teachers reported having a better attitude about teaching and about their relationships with students.

In their study, Knight, DeLeon, and Smith (1999) went further than just measuring student and teacher perceptions. They examined student and parent perceptions toward block scheduling; compared the academic performance of students in block schedule classes with that of students in traditional classes; and compared the strategies and classroom techniques of teachers in block schedule classes with that of those who teach in traditionally scheduled classes.

Knight, DeLeon, and Smith (1999) gathered quantitative and qualitative data to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in the academic performance of students enrolled in block schedule classes and that of students enrolled in traditional classes with the same content, ability level, and teacher?
2. Do students' perceptions of academic involvement, classroom processes, and learning environment vary by type of schedule?
3. Is there a difference in the instructional behaviors of teachers in block schedule classes compared with their instructional behaviors in traditional classes with the same content and ability level?
4. What are parents' perceptions of block scheduling?

The data sample for this study consisted of students, parents, and teachers from a high school in a large southwest city. The population was diverse including 59% white students, 19% African American students, 17% Hispanic students, and 6% Asian and other students.

The results of the study showed statistically significant differences in the different schedules. Students in block schedule classes earned better grades than did students who took the same course in a traditional schedule class. Knight, DeLeon, and Smith made their conclusions after comparing means. It should be noted that the class sizes for the block schedule classes in this study were generally smaller than class sizes for traditional schedule classes, a factor that might have affected the data.

These findings lead Knight, DeLeon, and Smith (1999) to question if the type of schedule affected grade averages, or if the better grades in the block schedule classes



were a result of the smaller class sizes. To address the problem of class size, the researchers compared courses in which the number of students in the traditional schedule classes were approximately equal to the number of students in the block schedule class. Whereas the difference was not as pronounced, the students in the block schedule classes still had higher grades than their counterparts in the traditional schedule classes.

When Knight, DeLeon, and Smith (1999) looked at results in Advanced Placement (AP) classes, the results fell decidedly in favor of students who took the classes in traditional schedule classes. Students in the block schedule AP classes tended not to take the AP exam as frequently as their counterparts in the traditional schedule classes. Moreover, those students in the block schedule classes who did take the exam did not perform as well as their peers in the traditional schedule classes.

Knight, DeLeon, and Smith (1999) felt that it was also important to study student perceptions toward block scheduling. "Since student perception of classroom process and learning environment may impact their achievement and persistence in school, two forms of student data were obtained" (p.5). The researchers focused on surveys and focus group sessions. The results of the surveys showed that students had positive perceptions toward block scheduling. Block schedule students reported better study habits, more involvement in classroom activities, and a more positive learning environment than did students in the traditional classes. Eighty-three percent of the students said they were inclined to take another block schedule class and fifty-nine percent said they would like all of their classes to be block schedule.

The results of Knight, DeLeon, and Smith's (1999) focus group clarified the findings of the surveys. Students generally reported favorable attitudes toward block

scheduling. Students perceived that they could “get it over with quick” and have “fewer subjects for homework.” It should be noted that comments that suggested there was less work in block schedule classes came only from groups that were less successful than their peers in the traditional schedule classes. Successful students reported that the block schedule classes challenged them more and gave them more motivation. Most students reported that being absent for a class could have a “devastating effect” on their academic progress. However, students also said that being absent was a significant problem in both the block schedule classes and the traditional schedule classes.

When looking at teacher behaviors, Knight, DeLeon, and Smith (1999) did not find significant differences between teaching activities in the block schedule classes and teaching activities in the traditional schedule classes. They did note that this was contrary to most current literature and suggested that the small sample size might have affected the reliability of their study. However, when interviewing and observing individual teachers, the researchers concluded that teachers do change their instructional methods based on the type of schedule in which they are teaching. Knight, DeLeon, and Smith studied four teachers and suggested that all four changed their teaching methods when they taught a block schedule class. The inconsistencies in the study of teacher behavior lead the researchers to conclude that further research is necessary.

Wilson and Stokes (1999) also looked at teacher perceptions of block scheduling. “The intent was to determine the effectiveness of block scheduling, the relationship between teachers’ perceptions of block scheduling and years of experience, and teachers’ perceptions of block scheduling and subject area taught” (p.45). They also wanted to

determine if teachers experiencing their first year of block scheduling had the same perceptions as teachers experiencing their second year of block scheduling.

To address these areas, the researchers developed the following two research questions:

1. What do teachers perceive to be the major advantages of block scheduling?
2. What do teachers perceive to be the greatest measurable outcomes of block scheduling?

The researchers used a deliberate selection technique to obtain samples for the study. They chose two high schools in the initial year of block scheduling (one city school and one suburban high school) and two high schools in the second year of block scheduling (two separate city schools). Wilson and Stokes (1999) then developed a Likert Scale to collect data for the study. They assigned numerical values to answers, in which 1 was assigned to “strongly disagree,” 2 was assigned to “disagree,” 3 was assigned to “undecided,” 4 was assigned to “agree,” and 5 was assigned to “strongly agree.”

The results of the Wilson and Stokes (1999) study suggested that the teachers involved in the study had positive views toward block scheduling. There were a few differences between teachers in the first year of block scheduling and teachers in the second year of block scheduling; however, both sets of teachers reported positive opinions. They generally felt that they had more time to prepare for class, were more energized in the classroom, and had a better attitude about teaching.

The teachers in Wilson and Stokes’ (1999) study also reported that there were advantages for students under block scheduling. They believed that students who were on a block schedule were more motivated, were better focused, were more disciplined,

and had a better attitude than students who were on a traditional schedule. It is possible that these responses were based more on the teachers' perceptions than they were on the reality for the students.

The measurable data supported these claims. The results of the Wilson and Stokes (1999) study indicated that under block scheduling: discipline problems decreased; daily attendance increased; standardized test scores increased; failure rates decreased; and dropout rates decreased.

Slate and Jones (2000) aimed their study on the attitudes of students towards block scheduling. The study focused on a high school in Georgia that instituted a one-week trial period for a 4 x 4 model of block scheduling. One thousand, two hundred five high school students participated in the study, a number that represents fifty-seven percent of the high school's student population. The students were randomly chosen from ninth grade, tenth grade, eleventh grade, and twelfth grade.

The study included the following guiding questions:

1. What difficulties and advantages do students believe is associated with block scheduling?
2. What instructional behaviors do students perceive in teachers during block scheduling?
3. To what extent do students believe block scheduling is an acceptable alternative to traditional scheduling?

The results of Slate and Jones' (2000) study were mixed. Nearly fifty percent of the students surveyed had trouble concentrating during the longer class periods. Twenty percent of the students perceived greater discipline problems and felt less productive

under block scheduling. However, seventy-four percent of the students felt that they were more prepared for each class. Approximately forty percent of the students said they would have a better chance of passing a block scheduled class and would earn better grades in a block scheduled class.

The students' perceptions of teacher behavior in Slate and Jones' (2000) were also mixed. Just over fifty percent of the students felt that teachers used the methods that block scheduling should promote. Forty-five percent of the students said that teachers used more than one method of teaching. On the negative side, fifty percent of the students said that teachers continued to use the lecture method of teaching and fifty-five percent of the students said that their teachers only used one method of teaching.

Bukowski and Stinson (2000) also looked at teachers' perceptions toward block scheduling, but focused specifically on physical education teachers. The subjects of the study were thirty-one physical education teachers from nine Wisconsin schools. The researchers provided the teachers with a list of questions that would be asked during a telephone interview. The seven questions in the interview were:

1. For you as a teacher, what are the positive effects, if any, of block scheduling?
2. For you as a teacher, what are the negative effects, if any, of block scheduling?
3. For your students, what are the positive effects, if any, of block scheduling?
4. For your students, what are the negative effects, if any, of block scheduling?
5. For your program, what are the positive effects, if any, of block scheduling?
6. For your program, what are the negative effects, if any, of block scheduling?
7. Would you consider returning to a more traditional school time schedule?

The physical education teachers in Bukowski and Stinson's (2000) study reported several positive effects of block scheduling. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents reported increased time with students; eighty-seven percent reported that test scores and grades improved; eighty percent said that discipline problems decreased; seventy-seven percent reported increased time-on-task; and sixty-six percent said that they had more time to prepare for class.

The physical education teachers in Bukowski and Stinson (2000) study also had negative perceptions of block scheduling. Ninety-four percent of the teachers interviewed said that students did not have access to the entire physical education curriculum; eighty-one percent said that students did not participate in physical education for long periods of time; fifty-five percent said that student absences were more costly under block scheduling; sixty-six percent were concerned that transfer students were at a disadvantage; fifty-five percent felt that ineffective teachers have more problems under block scheduling; fifty-five percent reported that teacher absences were very costly under block scheduling. Finally, fifty percent of the teachers said that special education students have more problems in block scheduled class.

Despite the negative aspects associated with block scheduling, all of the participants in the study insisted that block scheduling was more beneficial than harmful and that they would not like to return to a traditional schedule. They felt that block scheduling proved beneficial to students, to teachers, and to the entire school community.

In her study of block scheduling, Hassenpflug (1999) interviewed a recently retired art teacher regarding her experiences with block scheduling. In general, the teacher had a positive opinion of block scheduling. When asked her impression of block

scheduling, the teacher said, “favorable.” Her answers, however, belied this answer. The teacher gave many more negative answers to questions than she did positive. She said that most teachers were opposed to the new schedule and students did not perform better. Moreover, her answers contradicted the current research that suggests discipline problems and referrals decrease in schools in which block scheduling is implemented. Hassenpflug found the results of her interview inconclusive and suggested that further research was necessary to determine if the inconsistencies in answers would occur with other teachers.

Because of what Bugaj (1998) saw as insufficient data on the implications of block scheduling for secondary gifted students, he studied the perceptions of teachers and administrators toward block scheduling as it relates to gifted students. He sent questionnaires to teachers and administrators from ten randomly selected high schools in Pennsylvania in which block scheduling was the dominant schedule. Sixty-eight teachers and eight administrators returned their questionnaires.

Bugaj's (1998) questionnaire was set up with a Likert scale in which responses were assigned the following numerical values: Strongly Disagree(SD) = 1; Disagree(D) = 2; Neutral(N) = 3; Agree(A)=4; and Strongly Agree(SA)=5. The questions were categorized into the following three areas:

1. Administration—Items of a planning nature that are under the control of the school district.
2. Teaching—Items of an instructional nature that are under the control of the classroom teacher.

3. Compliance—Efforts of the school district to ensure that services offered to gifted students meet the requirements of Pennsylvania regulations and standards.

The answers to the questionnaires led Bugaj (1998) to conclude that teachers and administrators found block scheduling to be superior to traditional scheduling in all three areas mentioned above. The effect on the administration area, however, was more significant than the effect on the teaching area or the effect on compliance area. The answers to the questionnaire suggested that the effects of block scheduling, while still positive, are felt least in the area of compliance.

In his study, Bugaj also asked open-ended questions. He found that in some cases the answers to the open ended questions contradicted the answers to the Likert Scale questions. For example, the answers to the questionnaire suggested that the respondents believed that block scheduling had a direct, positive effect on improving services to gifted students. However, in the interviews more than fifty percent of the respondents said that factors other than the type of schedule were more likely to improve services to secondary gifted students. Bugaj's results are consistent with Ann Hassenpflug's study (1999, October), in which a teacher said she had a very positive attitude toward block scheduling, but other questions belied that attitude.

Weller and Mclesky (2000) conducted a qualitative study of teachers' perceptions of block scheduling as it related to inclusion. The participants in the study were seven teachers of students with disabilities and seven general education teachers. Data were collected using interviews and classroom observations. The study was based on the following questions:



1. What are the benefits that accrue for an inclusion program when a block schedule is implemented?

2. What are the challenges for an inclusion program when a block schedule is implemented

The data collected in the Weller and Mclesky (2000) study suggested that teachers saw significant benefits as a result of block scheduling while also recognizing that there were challenges for the inclusion program. Weller and Mclesky summarized the results of the study in the following chart.

Benefits of Block Scheduling:

1. Team teaching facilitates block scheduling.
2. Longer block classes allow for more student-centered activities.
3. Changes made in teaching strategies in general education classrooms because of block scheduling benefit all students, especially less traditional learners.
4. Block scheduling allows students to take up to two additional classes.
5. Longer block classes enhance resource classes for students with disabilities.
6. Block scheduling and inclusion fit well together.

Challenges to block scheduling:

1. Block scheduling has increased the need for students and teachers to develop effective organizational techniques.
2. Block scheduling increases the need for teachers to communicate frequently and effectively.
3. Block scheduling increases the significance of students' absences.

4. Adjusting to the block schedule is difficult for some students and may increase the need for support from resource classes.
5. Block scheduling would be more effective if all students had access to resource class support.

It should be noted that the study did not offer the teachers a chance to state the negative aspects of block scheduling. The questions focused only on benefits and challenges of block scheduling.

Hackman (1995) looked at the subject of school climate when conducting a study at Center Middle School in Kansas City, Missouri, where in 1991 the school climate had significantly declined. Students were becoming openly hostile toward faculty and other students, verbal and physical confrontations were increasing, and discipline referrals increased in every category. Teachers, students, parents, and administrators expressed their concern and began to look for solutions.

After considerable preparation, Center Middle School implemented a block schedule. The teachers were encouraged to look at themselves as coaches and facilitators as opposed to seeing themselves as lecturers. The teachers had more freedom and began to develop new creative ways to teach. The students became active learners who took responsibility for their progress. Overall, the school was revitalized and took on a positive climate. Hackman (1995) reports that the school became “user friendly” and more relaxed. All available data suggested that the school became a place conducive to learning.

In another study in which he looked at the perceptions of students and teachers toward block scheduling, Hackman and Waters (1998) conducted a study in a small

midwestern junior/senior high school that had implemented an A/B block schedule. The goal of the study was to answer the following questions: (a) What is the present level of faculty and student satisfaction with the A/B block schedule? (b) What instructional changes have occurred, and what instructional changes need to occur to accommodate student learning needs in a block schedule? To answer these guiding questions, Hackman distributed questionnaires and conducted interviews.

The subjects in Hackman and Waters' (1998) study displayed strong feelings. Fifty-six percent of the teachers preferred block scheduling to the traditional schedule, but thirty percent preferred the traditional schedule. Teachers who preferred block scheduling were strong advocates of the new schedule. Those opposed to block scheduling were adamant in their beliefs. They said that they not able to cover as much content within the context of the new schedule. They also said that the alternating day schedule made it difficult to have continuity of instruction. The other significant concern was that student would not retain the information.

Supporters of block scheduling agreed that they did not cover as much material, but said the content that was taught was covered in much greater depth. Supporters also said that block scheduling allowed for a variety of instructional approaches, more hands-on learning, and more direct interaction between student and teacher. These teachers also pointed to more classroom time for student practice.

The students were more united in their feelings toward block scheduling. Over sixty percent of the students preferred block scheduling to the traditional scheduling. The students said that they felt more motivated and enjoyed going to school more than they did before. The students said they felt that they were better prepared for classroom tests

and standardized tests. The students overwhelmingly said that having two days to complete their assignments were a significant benefit of the A/B block schedule.

Those who were opposed to the new schedule were not particularly resolute in their beliefs. They said that the teachers who lectured for the entire block were “boring.” Many students also said that up to one fourth of all teachers did not change their styles of teaching after the switch to block scheduling. Overall, negatives responses were given much less frequently than were positive responses.

#### Education Theorists on Block Scheduling

In order to design questions that will identify teacher perceptions of block scheduling and student perceptions of block scheduling, it is important to have an understanding of what theorists and educators have written regarding different aspects of block scheduling. The following section gives an overview of the current literature regarding block scheduling.

In his article, “The Administrative Challenges of Block Scheduling,” William M. Reid (1996) discusses his experiences as the principal of L. V. Rogers Secondary School, a school that has switched from traditional scheduling to block scheduling. Reid focuses his article on the challenges that face the administrator of a school that follows a block schedule.

According to Reid (1996) In 1991, L. V. Rogers Secondary School switched to the Copernican Plan (developed by Joseph Carroll) for their model of intensive scheduling. This plan utilizes a ten-week period in which the students take two courses a day. At the end of that ten-week period, the students are given a final exam in each

course. Under the Copernican Plan, there is a one-half hour period set aside each day for teachers to assist students with problems that might arise.

Reid (1996) reports that the school has enjoyed a great deal of success in the first five years the block schedule has been in place. Despite that success, he says that there are obstacles that must be addressed by the administrator of any school that implements a block schedule. Reid believes that every one who is affected by the new program must see himself/herself as a “stakeholder” in the project. The principal and other school administrators must consider the possibility that the intensive schedule will meet with opposition from groups that are “resistant to change;” such groups may include (but are not limited to) teachers, students, the teachers union, and parents.

Reid (1996) states that although the principal has a major role in promoting change, such a significant change will be unsuccessful if there is not cooperation with other members of the school community. He therefore thinks that the school staff should vote on the new proposal. The project should not go forward without at least seventy-five percent support. He suggests that the time taken to gain support from all the groups that affect the school climate will be worth the time.

Reid (1996) lists several prospective problems that might face the administrator who is implementing a block schedule. Reid calls one set of problems “Changes in Pedagogy”. Many teachers, says Reid, are very willing to change their teaching techniques to fit the new extended periods; however, there will be some teachers who strongly resist any effort to encourage them to change their techniques. The timetable for fully implementing a block schedule should include time for dealing with this problem.

Another problem is “Tutorial Time.” Each school under the Copernican Plan includes a one-half hour period a day for teachers to assist students. It is possible that these periods will not be used for the reason intended. Reid (1996) suggests that one reason for this could be unclear guidelines. If the teachers and the students do not have a clear idea of what is required during the Tutorial Time, it is unreasonable to expect them to meet specific guidelines.

“Preparation Time” is another conceivable problem. Under a traditional schedule teachers have a standard, predictable period of time for their preparation periods. Under a block schedule, the preparation periods may not be as predictable. School staff members consider their respective situations when dealing with preparation time. Reid (1996) says that some of the areas to be considered are, “grades taught, teacher qualifications and preferences, community, and daily required hours of instruction” (p.27).

Some members of the staff may suffer from “Teacher Fatigue.” Reid (1996) believes that the extended time periods, the stress of starting new classes four times a year, and the amount of preparation time required, all add to the fatigue a teacher may be feeling. Reid does not agree with those who think that fatigue is a result of the new schedule itself. He thinks that the staff must receive the support of the administration, but the principal should not back away from what is expected of the staff. As the teaching staff becomes more at ease with the schedule, their level of fatigue will lessen.

Reid (1996) warns against expectations that are too high. He refers to these over inflated expectations as “Silver Bullets.” Whereas Reid believes that a properly implemented schedule will show positive results, he says that principals and staff who

expect too much could be let down. This feeling could lead the staff to think that block scheduling will not work. Principals should have reasonable, yet challenging expectations.

Reid (1996) concludes his article by saying that scheduling on the block can produce significantly positive results. These results include, “improvements in school climate, a decrease in academic failure rates, improved attendance, some budgetary savings, pedagogical changes from teachers, easy implementation of work experience programs, and strong support from the majority of students and parents.” The key to success is including every member of the school community as a stakeholder. If a person is personally involved in implementing the new schedule, he/she will have a higher level of dedication to it.

In their article about block scheduling and inclusion, Eisenberger, Bertrando, and D’Antonio (2000) state that the changing of a school schedule in itself has little to do with improvements that occur for general education students or for special education students under block scheduling. They suggest that what teachers do with the increased time is what makes the difference. The authors believe that to successfully teach students with special learning needs within the context of block scheduling, the general education teachers must teach the processes and strategies needed for independence. These skills include:

1. Planning, organizing, and managing activities
2. Enlisting help and resources at the appropriate times
3. Regulating one’s own motivation to sustain involvement in activities
4. Applying metacognitive knowledge and strategies for task completion

5. Acquiring the knowledge and skill for managing the environment.

Eisenberger, Bertrando, and D'Antonio (2000) also believe that the role of the principal must change. Principals must once again see themselves as educators who instruct the teachers on the strategies that are most successful for block scheduled inclusion classes. The principal should promote the values and skills that will lead the students toward independence. The authors believe that these values begin with high expectations. All other skills must begin with the belief that students with learning needs can become independent learners.

At the same time, the principal should encourage teachers to move away from antiquated practices that do not promote independent learning. These antiquated practices include:

1. Lockstep sequencing of instruction
2. Ability grouping and tracking
3. Competitive reading
4. Comparative evaluation

Eisenberger, Bertrando, and D'Antonio (2000) argue that these skills should be replaced with differentiated instruction, constructivist classroom, student evaluation based on growth over time, and cooperative rather than competitive classroom structures. They believe that without removing antiquated values, skills, and structures, block scheduled inclusion classes will not be successful.

Queen and Gaskey (1997) believe that implementing a block schedule will improve the school climate. They say that a block schedule will result in smaller classes, a greater variety of subjects, and more in-depth, hands-on study. Furthermore, the



flexibility of a block schedule will assist the school in meeting the needs of an increasingly diversified student body. The block schedule allows the teacher the time and space to attend to the needs of all students.

Unlike Reid (1996), who lists the possible problems of block scheduling, Queen and Gaskey list the steps they believe will result in successful implementation of an intensive schedule. The first step should be to select to appropriate block schedule for the school. They say that there are several different block schedules, and a district must take a significant amount of time in selecting the correct one for their school(s). Next, be sure to align the schedule with curricula. In most cases, the curricula will be expanded because of the increased class time. Once the classes and curricula are arranged, develop courses so that they will be effective under the new schedule. Course development should be included in the course designs. Likewise, instructional strategies should be included in course design.

Queen and Gaskey (1997) emphasize the importance of classroom management. For block scheduling to be successful, teachers will need to move away from the lecture style of teaching and move to a more hands-on approach. A significant amount of time must be dedicated to helping teachers move to the more in-depth styles of teaching. Above all, Queen and Gaskey suggest the teacher remember, “the next semester will be better.” Implementation of a block schedule takes time; however, with time and effort, the intensive schedule can be very beneficial to the climate of a school.

Joseph M. Carroll (1994), the creator of the Copernican Plan of block scheduling outlines his plan in the article, “The Copernican Plan Evaluated.” He says that under his plan, classes are taught in much larger periods of time, typically ninety minutes, two

hours, or four hours per day. The courses last for only one portion of the school year, for example, thirty days, forty-five days, sixty days, or ninety days. Carroll also proposes other changes, such as, “evaluation based on a mastery credit system, individual learning plans, and multiple diplomas” (p.105).

Carroll (1994) does not believe that block scheduling will cure all of the problems within a school. He does believe that it is a starting point that will help improve the school environment, foster better relationships between students and teachers, and produce more manageable workloads for teachers and students. Implementing and intensive schedule takes a great deal of effort and preparation; however, if done properly, Carroll contends that an intensive schedule will provide significant benefits.

Edwards (1995) believes that the “4 x 4” scheduling plan is often the best block schedule. Under the “4 x 4,” the students attend four, ninety-minute classes a day for ninety days. The schedule is simple and straightforward. Students and teachers know exactly where they are going each period for half of the year. The students do not change schedules until the year is half over.

Edwards (1995) suggests that the “4 x 4” has all the benefits of other block schedules, yet it has a few added benefits. Like other plans, the “4 x 4” plan increases student time on task, cuts down on time spent outside of class, improves student and teacher relationships, reduces student stress, and improves teacher satisfaction. Edwards argues that the “4 x 4” plan lessens the stress on students and on teachers even more than do other plans. The schedule, which is simpler to follow than other block schedules, allows the students to focus more of their energy on class work and less energy on other aspects of the school schedule. He realizes that all school district administrators must

decide what schedule is best for their school(s), and that if done properly any of the block schedules will improve the school climate.

In their article on block scheduling, Buckman, King, and Ryan (1995) say that implementing intensive scheduling is a means to improving the school climate. They suggest that the fragmented schedule of traditional scheduling leaves the students and the teachers without clear path to meeting academic objectives. Under traditional scheduling, the students report to a different teacher every fifty minutes. The teachers see too many students to meet the needs of each student.

Buckman, King, and Ryan (1995) are very clear that improving the school climate begins with the *process* of selecting the new schedule. They believe that all groups involved, must be involved in the decision making process. If teachers, parents, and students feel that they are part of the decision process, they are more likely to take personal responsibility for their part in making the new schedule work.

Buckman, King, and Ryan (1995) looked at several different aspects of the school climate including “safety, success, involvement, commitment, interpersonal competency, and satisfaction” in determining if block scheduling had been successfully in improving school climate. In studying the effects of block scheduling at Colonial High School in Orlando, Florida, they found that each of these areas had shown significant improvement under intensive scheduling.

Hackman (1995) points out that there are potential problems with block scheduling. Teachers may find it difficult to teach in the extended periods. Teachers who rely on lecturing must change their methods. Teachers will have to spend more time in preparation. In some cases faculty size will have to increase. Furthermore,

implementing a block schedule may decrease the total amount of instruction time. Nevertheless, Hackman is convinced that potential problems can be overcome with proper planning and early intervention.

Canady and Retig (1992) address the aspect of equal access to education for all children. Under traditional schedules, especially in ability-grouped classes, students are not given equal access to a quality education. Canady and Retig believe that it would be very difficult to offer equal access to all students under the present schedule. They suggest that one alternative is to move to block schedule.

Among the benefits that Canady and Retig (1992) point to under block scheduling are: all students are exposed to grade level curricula, students are taught in smaller classes, teachers meet with fewer students and are able to meet the needs of individual students, the mainstreaming of special needs students is more feasible, and students spend more time on task and less time in the hallways between classes. Canady and Retig believe that intensive scheduling can significantly close the gap between students who perform at or above grade level and those who perform below grade level.

Canady and Retig (1992) also emphasize the flexibility of the block schedule. They believe that the teacher has the ability to tailor his/her teaching style to meet the needs of each student under intensive scheduling. There are fewer lectures and more time for students to explore and learn subject matter in a manner consistent with their individual learning style.

Under the block schedule, the teacher utilizes the textbook as a supplement to the curriculum, not as the curriculum itself. The teacher uses many different materials and sources to teach and challenge the class. There are many opportunities for curriculum

enhancement and far more “safety nets.” Fewer students, therefore, fall far behind while the class moves ahead. Canady and Retig argue that students have a greater opportunity to understand difficult subject matter. The teacher has more class time to develop and reinforce difficult subject matter. The smaller classes allow the teacher to challenge accelerated students to move ahead while ensuring that the other students have the opportunity to grasp grade appropriate material.

Kruse and Kruse (1995) believe that implementing block scheduling can improve the overall quality of education in a school. They believe that the type of block scheduling is relatively unimportant. Whether a school uses a more traditional block schedule or a more “intensified block schedule” (students attend fewer classes a day, but spend more time in each class), the results can be positive. This notion is in contrast to those who say that a school district must implement the correct type of block schedule to suit the needs of the individual school.

Kruse and Kruse (1995) suggest that one way to make the block scheduling effective, is for the school administrator to use a “master schedule.” A master schedule is an attempt to develop an overall school schedule that is efficient and improves the quality of education. With the help of school staff, the school administrator schedules all activities in a way that allows every student to learn grade appropriate material while still taking part in other school activities. The master schedule incorporates the benefits of block scheduling, while keeping some of the structure of traditional scheduling.

Sommerfeld (1993) believes that schools should look at the possibility of increasing the length of the school year. She realizes, however, that this will not happen soon and that changes need to take place in the present. Sommerfeld says that one

possible solution is block scheduling. Block scheduling will allow for more time on task and less down time. Students will be able to focus their efforts on fewer classes, thereby increasing comprehension.

Sommerfeld (1993) points out that there is a degree of risk involved with moving to intensive scheduling. Sommerfeld also brings up the point that Reid had already made: that school districts must be willing to face the possibility that some groups might resist the changes. Teachers who are very comfortable with the traditional schedule might not wish to change. Their first year under the block will be much like their first year of teaching. Nevertheless, Sommerfeld believes that taking the risk of implementing a block schedule will produce positive results.

In a separate article, Sommerfeld (1996) stresses the importance of moving away from the traditional schedule used by many schools. "Teachers would pass out if someone asked them to prepare eight different classes every day. Why is it we think students have the time to do that," says Sommerfeld (p.4). Sommerfeld points out that many students have after school lives that are just as busy as the lives of teachers. More homework is not necessarily better. Under the block schedule, students may or may not have less homework than under a traditional schedule, but at least the homework will focus on four or fewer subjects. The students will be able to put their energies into those classes, without scattering their efforts across eight different classes.

Sommerfeld (1996) also reports on Lawrenceville Middle School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, a school that switched to block scheduling. The students attend four, seventy-eight minute classes each day. So far, reports Sommerfeld, the results are encouraging. The students have become actively involved in the learning

process. Students feel freer to learn subject matter that suits their learning styles. School administrators say that academic achievement has risen.

Sommerfeld (1996) says that the key to success has been the extensive amount of teacher training. Teachers spent a significant part of the year prior to implementation, learning new skills and strategies that have been found to be effective under intensive scheduling. Teachers who are still having trouble with the new schedule are given encouragement and are offered suggestions at improving. According to Sommerfeld, teachers and students say the new schedule has been a success.

Fitzgerald (1996), principal of Minuteman Science-Technology High School in Lexington, Massachusetts, says that under a block schedule, “students face one of two realities—longer periods of more effective, brain-compatible teaching or longer period of less effective, brain-antagonistic instruction” (p.20). His premise is that if done poorly, block scheduling will simply be the addition of more time for using teaching methods that are ineffective. Under these circumstances, the extended period will only have negative effects.

In order for block scheduling to be effective, a lesson should be different from standard lecture. Fitzgerald (1996) says that the following components are examples of useful sections of a lesson: (1) establish relevance; (2) hook the students; (3) use novel beginnings and novel lessons; (4) implement cooperative learning; (5) realize that students have different learning styles; and (6) use a variety of teaching strategies.

Miller (1992) says that the problem with traditional schedules is that the student is forced to adapt to the schedule rather than the schedule adapting to the student. Under the block schedule, the teacher has more of an opportunity to meet the needs of each

student. Within the confines of a traditional schedule, the teacher has only enough time to teach the subject matter to the entire class. If a student or a small group of students does not grasp the material, the teacher does not have the time to reinforce the subject matter. Those students are left behind.

In a block scheduled class, says Miller (1992), the teacher can employ several different teaching techniques to meet the different learning styles of the students. In order to monitor the progress of each student, the teacher must be diligent in his/her evaluations. Proper evaluations make it possible for the teacher to know which students should be challenged to move ahead and which students require reinforcement.

Shortt and Thayer (1995) say that the most important aspect of implementing a block schedule is “teacher processing.” They say that the process cannot work if it is done from the top down. Some districts that follow the top down theory will meet with opposition from the teachers and may be doomed to failure. Teachers will only work toward making the new schedule a success if they feel as if they are part of the entire process.

If the implementation of an intensive schedule is done correctly, the results can be impressive. Shortt and Thayer (1995) cite a high school in Colorado where the failure rate has dropped from twenty-nine percent to nine percent since the implementation of block scheduling. They say that each school they looked at where block scheduling has been implemented correctly showed an improved climate and improved student performance.

Martin (1995) addresses the importance of lesson plans when teaching within a block schedule. He believes that in the first year, lesson plans are especially important



because the new schedule provides many new challenges. Martin understands that writing lesson plans in the first year of a new schedule will take a significant amount of time and can be difficult to do. It is, therefore, important that the administrators and colleagues assist the teacher who is having trouble.

Martin (1995) says that when a teacher writes lesson plans, he/she is creating professional literature. "The plans must be clear, concise, and publishable" (p.20). Martin believes that a significant amount of time should be spent on writing lesson plans. He suggests that it can be very helpful to work with other teachers. Not only will the teachers be able to help one another with the plans, but they will also have the perfect opportunity to create interdisciplinary lessons.

Interdisciplinary lessons work very well within an intensive schedule, writes Martin (1995). One of the most important factors in block scheduling is that it provides the opportunity for more cohesive learning. Plans that coordinate lessons between different classes enhance the cohesiveness of block scheduling.

Some scholars have looked at the effects block scheduling has had on classes outside of the traditional, academic classes. Claxton and Bryant (1996) say that block scheduling provides a golden opportunity for Physical Education. Within a traditional schedule, too much time is spent on preparing for the class. With an extended class, Claxton and Bryant report, "there is sufficient time to address the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and fitness learning domains of Physical Education" (p.48). Moreover, there is enough time every period to assess each student's progress.

The problem with intensive scheduling comes when the schedule does not fully recognize the importance of Physical Education. Frequently, Physical Education classes

are not given the extended period. In other cases, the Physical Education classes are allotted the extended period, but meet only once a week. In each case, there are two problems, report Claxton and Bryant (1996). The first problem is that the benefits that could be gained under block scheduling are lost because of the lack of class time. The second problem is that the lack of class time sends the message that Physical Education is not as important as the other courses.

Larson (1992) points out that Music and Art classes, which he calls “Encore subjects,” can also benefit from the block schedule. The extra time provides the teacher with the same benefits it provides the core curriculum classes. Schools report that under the block schedule, more students are joining the musical ensembles, more students are experiencing success in Music and Art, and teachers are better able to meet the needs of all students in the class.

Hoffman (1995) also looked at the effects of block scheduling on music programs. In her opinion the schedule holds both advantages and disadvantages. The longer periods allow for more variety of methods and activities. The teacher does not feel as if he/she must rush to fit everything into a forty-minute class. There is more time for performing, listening to, and discussing music. Hoffman contends that the extended period gives the teacher a chance to “enhance the students’ aesthetic sensitivity.”

However, Hoffman (1995) says there are disadvantages, as well. Some teachers report that students have difficulty paying attention for the period. Instrumental music students, especially brass and woodwind players, do not have the stamina to play for the length of the extended class time. Vocal music teachers also report that it is difficult for the students to sing for prolonged periods of time.

Some schools, Hoffman (1995) reports, have found that implementing an intensive schedule has forced them to drop some music programs (Jazz Band, for example). The schedule that has between two and four classes a day does not always allow for all of the music classes that were available under the traditional schedule. In other schools, performance groups compete with one another for students. Hoffman suggests that when implementing a block schedule, it is important to address these issues up front.

Bryant (1995), on behalf of the Wasson High School administration, made a list of possible “traps and pitfalls” that could present themselves to schools implementing a block schedule. They made a list after their fourth year on a block schedule and placed it on the Internet. The administration at Wasson High School believes that if a school is aware of these possible problems, they can address them head on and will be more likely to have success.

According to Bryant (1995), the Wasson High School Administration contends that the new intensive schedule will not solve all problems. They believe that for the new schedule to be successful, the entire notion of the mission of the school must change. They also suggest that school staff give the new schedule time to work. After many years of a traditional schedule, it will take more than a few months for block scheduling to be effective. Moreover, they suggest that it is important to monitor student progress closely. Early intervention is particularly important to stop any student from falling too far behind.

The Wasson High School administration lists many other recommendations and potential problems. One of their final suggestions, reports Bryant (1995) is that a school

district not put too much emphasis on statistical evaluations. They believe that testing is important, but the district should also look at soft data. Contentment of students, teacher and student relationships, teacher satisfaction, and building cleanliness are all indicators of how well the new schedule is working.

### Summary

The literature reviewed in Chapter II suggests that there is a strong relationship between block scheduling and student achievement. In general, schools that switched from a traditional schedule to a block schedule tended to see measurable improvements in classroom grades as well as increases in standardized test scores. Despite some studies in which students performed better in traditionally scheduled classes, students tended to perform better under block scheduling than they did under traditional scheduling.

The literature review also points to an overall positive perception of teachers and students toward block scheduling. Teachers who had negative perceptions of block scheduling tended to work through these perceptions and perform successfully within the new schedule. Moreover, the importance that Rist (1970) and many other theorists place on perception in creating reality, the literature review supports the contention that further research is necessary to gain a more complete understanding of teachers' perception regarding block scheduling.

Theorists who have written on the subject of block scheduling tend to agree that block scheduling is superior to traditional scheduling. They point to increases in student and teacher satisfaction, increases in objective measurements of student achievement, and improvement in school climate to name just a few of the benefits. These same theorists

believe that problems with block scheduling can be resolved with enhanced teacher training and greater involvement of the entire school community.

Notwithstanding some concerns and minor negative perceptions of block scheduling, the current literature strongly suggests that block scheduling has been successful and will continue to provide benefits for schools that switch to it.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify and to compare teachers' perceptions regarding block scheduling. More specifically, the study focused on teachers in a district factor D/E high school that implemented block scheduling at the beginning of school year 1997-1998. Before implementing a block schedule the sample school was using a traditional schedule. In a traditional schedule, classes meet each day at the same time, five days a week. The duration of each class is typically forty to forty-five minutes long. This schedule is based on the model of efficiency expert Frederick Taylor. A block schedule is a schedule in which students attend four classes each day. Depending on the type of block schedule, students may or may not attend the same classes each day. In an alternate day schedule (also called an A/B schedule), classes meet every other day for the entire length of the school year. In a 4x4 model, the model used by the sample school, students meet every day in the same classes for one half of the school year. They go to four other classes for the second half of the school year.

The researcher looked specifically at perceptions of teachers who taught at the sample high school both before and after it switched to block scheduling. Given that research suggests perception often determines a person's reality, it is appropriate to study the perceptions of teachers toward block scheduling, toward the school that is employing

the schedule, and toward the members of that school community. Rist (1970) suggests that a teacher's expectations and perceptions of a student will often serve as important factors in determining how well the child performs. But Rist presents just one of many studies that point to the importance of perception in determining reality and to teachers' perceptions as an important factor in determining many aspects of school life.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the sample to be studied, the procedure for data collection, and the data analysis plan.

### Sample Population

The subjects of this study were all teachers from a large suburban high school with urban characteristics. The teachers who served as the sample population all taught at the school at the time of the study. The teachers were selected with the advice and consent of the principal.

Before describing the school from which the sample population was derived, it is helpful to describe the community in which the high school resides. The information presented is derived from the Woodbridge Township School District Local Government Budget Review (2001). The district in which this study will take place is Woodbridge Township. With a population of 95,659 residents, Woodbridge is the fifth largest municipality in New Jersey. The median age of the township is 35.4 years. The median household income in 1989 was \$45,516 and the median value of a single-family home was \$160,000.

Woodbridge Township is a school district of twenty-four schools; there are three high schools, five middle schools, and sixteen elementary schools. Presently, there are approximately 13,000 students in the Woodbridge schools. The New Jersey Department

of the Treasury Local School Budget Review for Woodbridge Township (2001) reports the following about Woodbridge Township School District:

The Woodbridge Township School District is the fifth largest district in New Jersey. It had an equalized valuation per pupil of \$460,687, while the state K-12 median was \$436,442. The Woodbridge professional staff members per 1,000 pupils were 89.2 in 1999-2000 compared to a Middlesex County average of 87.6 and a state K-12 median of 85.4. The Woodbridge equalized school property tax rate in 2000 was \$1.79, compared to \$1.62 for Middlesex County.

The New Jersey Department of Education (2005) (DOE) utilizes District Facto Groups (DFG). Research shows a strong relationship between socioeconomic status and educational outcomes. The state's DFG system is used for analysis of district-by-district test results and in calculating spending differences between districts. Since it has been held that socioeconomic status cannot be measure directly, indicators were selected in formulating a composite statistical index to produce statistical scores, which are used to rank school districts. Districts were divided into eight groups reflecting the lowest to the highest socioeconomic districts starting with A, through B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I and ending with J. The DFG for Woodbridge is DE.

The sample population of this study comes from the newest and smallest of the high schools in Woodbridge. The length of the school day is 6 hours, 50 minutes and the instructional time per day is 5 hours, 48 minutes. The total enrollment in the school for school year 2000-2001 was 1,038. "(Counts may include a decimal in tenths for shared-time students. Shared time students are those individuals who attend two schools in one



day for a half school day (.5) at each location.)” (Woodbridge, 2001). The attendance rate was 93.2%. 12% of the students had an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The average class size was 20 students per class. Student mobility rate was 8.4%, while the dropout rate was 0.5%. There were no student suspensions or expulsions for school year 2000-2001.

For school year 2000-2001, the student to faculty ratio was 11.6:1, while the state average was 11.8:1. The student to administrator ratio was 389:1. The state average was 185.1:1. The faculty attendance rate was 95%, which was 1.3 percent lower than the state average. 64% of administrators and faculty possess no higher than a bachelor’s degree, 35% possess a master’s degree, and 1% possess a doctoral degree.

For school year 2000-2001, Students at the sample high school tended to perform better than the state average and below the DFG (District Factor Grouping) average on the HSPA (High School Proficiency Assessment – Grade 11). In Reading, 91.2% of students in the sample high school passed the test, 89.9% of students in the state passed the test, and 92.4% of students in the same district factor group passed. In Mathematics, 91.2% of the sample high school students passed the test, 89.9% of students in the state passed the test, and 92.4% of students in the same district factor group passed. 87.2% of students from the sample high school, 85.8% of students in the state, and 88.8% of students in the same district factor group passed both sections of the HSPA.

#### Data Collection

The data collection instrument used for this study was an interview designed to obtain in-depth data regarding teacher’s perceptions of block scheduling. The interview was recorded on audiotape and then transcribed into written text. The questions for this

survey were developed after reviewing the current literature for Chapter II of the dissertation. The researcher looked at the studies and created questions based on areas that required further elucidation or areas that had not been studied. The researcher then presented the questions to a panel of experts who reviewed and eventually approved the data collection instrument

The following section presents the justification for each of the questions asked in the interviews.

In her study, Hassenpflug (1999) interviewed a retired art teacher to obtain in-depth data about her experiences with block scheduling. At the beginning of the interview, the teacher said that her impression toward block scheduling was favorable. Answers to other questions, however, belied this response. The teacher saw significant problems with several key components of block scheduling. The first question in this study focused on basic feelings toward block scheduling. When analyzing the data, the researcher compared the answers to later questions to see if they were consistent with the answers to the first question. The first question was:

1. What is your overall impression of block scheduling?

There has been significant research conducted to measure the effect of block scheduling on academic achievement. Much of the evidence suggests that block scheduling has a positive impact on academic achievement. Knight, Deleon, and Smith (1999) found that block schedule students performed better in all academic areas than did their traditional schedule counterparts. There is, however, disagreement on the extent of that impact. Moreover, some studies suggest that in certain courses, students who receive instruction in traditionally scheduled classes perform better on standardized tests. For

example, Wronkovich, Hess, and Robinson (1997) found that students performed better on standardized mathematics tests when receiving instruction in a traditional schedule class. Therefore, the second question of the interview was:

2. What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advanced placement test scores, and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores.

Some of the research suggests that different classifications of students perform better than others in block scheduled classes. Bugaj (1998) found that secondary gifted students performed particularly well in block scheduled classes. Other researchers found that teachers of self-contained students had concerns about the effects of block scheduling on their students. The third and fourth interview questions were:

3. What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students?  
These classifications include but are not limited to: gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students, and students for whom English is a second language.
4. What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

Many studies suggest that if block scheduling is to be successful, teachers must alter their teaching methods. The National Commission of Excellence in Education (1984) points out that in most schools, teachers continue to teach using only one method of teaching. In most cases that method is either lecture and test or drill and practice. Rettig and Canady (1996) point out that the inflexible nature of the traditional schedule does not allow teachers the time necessary to utilize varied instructional methods. Mistretta and

Polanski (1997) say that if the teachers do not vary their instructional styles, block scheduling cannot be successful. The fifth through eighth interview questions were:

5. What teaching methods do you employ?
6. In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
7. What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?
8. In what ways are your colleagues' teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?

Current literature suggests that one benefit of block scheduling is that it improves the climate of the school. Ullrich and Yeaman (1999) suggest that under block scheduling, students have a greater sense of appropriate social interaction with teachers and with other students, and are less likely to create discipline problems. Ulrich and Yeaman also found that teachers had better relationships with colleagues under block scheduling than they did under traditional scheduling. Based on the current literature, the next question asked was:

9. What affect has block scheduling had on:
  - a. relationships among students;
  - b. relationships among teachers;
  - c. relationships between teachers and students.

Rist (1970) suggests that a teachers perceptions shape the reality for his/her classroom. It is, therefore, important to consider if teachers made the switch to block scheduling with positive attitudes and if their attitudes have changed since switching to block scheduling. The next questions were:

10. What were that reasons that led to switching from a traditional schedule to a block schedule.

11. What were your feelings towards block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?

12. How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?

13. What type of training did you receive in preparation for the change?

a. Was this training sufficient?

b. If the answer was no, the follow-up question was: What training would have been sufficient?

William Reid (1996) believes that teachers should have a significant role in all decisions regarding block scheduling. In taking part in the decision making process, teachers will see themselves as stakeholders and will have a greater interest in the success of the new schedule. Moreover, it will improve relationships between administrators and teachers. Based on this premise, the next questions were:

14. What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?

15. What roles do other teachers have in the decision-making process regarding block scheduling?

16. How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?

There might be further information that teachers would like to offer. Therefore, the final question was:

17. Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

### Data Analysis

The purpose of this section is to present a description of the method that was used to analyze the data collected in this study.

The method of inquiry in this study was an interview. The purpose of this method was to obtain rich, in-depth data that could not be as easily obtained using quantitative methods. Given the freedom that teachers had in giving responses, the researcher did not set forth hypotheses in this chapter. Rather, after all data had been collected, the researcher presented conclusions that might lead to hypotheses in other studies.

After all interviews were complete, the researcher carefully read all transcribed records of the interviews. He looked for similarities and differences in the responses. He then looked at patterns and generalizations based on these similarities and differences. Moreover, the researcher compared the responses of the sample population with the current literature on block scheduling. After all comparisons of the transcribed answers were complete, the researcher listened to the interviews, attempting to obtain information based on the manner in which answers were given. Changes in volume, differences in vocal intensity, and fluctuations in pitch offered clues to the respondents' opinions.

### Summary

A description of the data collection instrument was presented in chapter three. Moreover, the researcher presented a rationale for the study and a description of the sample population. The chapter concluded with a description of the procedures for data analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the collected data. Specifically, the results are presented within the context of the two guiding questions: 1.) What are teachers' perceptions of block scheduling? 2.) What similarities and differences exist among teachers regarding their perceptions of block scheduling?

#### Teachers' Perceptions

In responding to a question on their general impressions of block scheduling, the subjects' answers were very positive. All subjects said that they were very pleased with block scheduling. They said that the increased time allowed them to accomplish more activities thoroughly and efficiently. Some subjects also said that the reduction in daily interruptions had a positive effect on the school climate.

Several subjects said that teaching under block scheduling allowed them to be innovative and fully engaged in the class activities. They suggested that teaching a subject two or three times a day for half of the year was much more interesting than teaching 5 classes for the entire year. One of the respondents said that the eighty-five minute block allowed him to vary his assignments and to plan a number of different activities. This variety allowed him to remain "fresh" for every class.

Only one subject was ambivalent in his support for block scheduling. The subject said that block scheduling has 'good points and bad points.' He said that it was difficult

for the students who do not have mathematics all year long. Nevertheless, this subject reported, "I didn't think I would like it at first." "I do like it now."

In discussing the effect that block scheduling had on academic achievement, once again the responses tended to be positive. Most respondents said that student achievement rose over the time period since block scheduling was implemented. The subjects said that advanced placement test scores and Scholastic Aptitude Test scores had risen. Some subjects pointed to the fact that the sample high school tended to have higher scores on standardized test than the other high schools in the area.

However, not all subjects gave such positive responses. A small number of respondents suggested that in order to prepare students for advanced placement tests and Scholastic Aptitude Tests, the teachers were required to meet with students outside of class hours. The teachers did not say if this was different from when they taught under a traditional schedule. One subject suggested that because any given class only meets for one half of the school year, it was difficult to prepare the students for standardized tests. He also said that moving to an A/B model block schedule could solve this problem. This ambivalence was not significant because only one participant presented it.

Responding to the impact that block scheduling has had on various classifications of students (classifications include, but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, students with behavioral disabilities, and students for whom English is a second language), there were no negative responses. Four respondents did not feel that block scheduling had much of an effect on any particular classification of students. All other respondents said that block scheduling had a significant impact on student achievement. These subjects felt that students of all classifications benefited



from the increased time in each class. Most respondents said that gifted students could be better challenged and that there was greater interaction between teacher and student; consequently the teacher could better meet the needs of all students.

It is notable that even among the subjects who thought no impact took place as a result of the change in schedules, no respondent suggested that block scheduling had a negative effect on the various classifications of students. Given that 16 valid interviews took place, this is a particularly strong statement.

The researcher next asked the subjects, “What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?” Eight subjects either felt they were unable to answer the question or felt that block scheduling had no effect. All other respondents said that block scheduling had a positive effect on inclusion. They pointed to the increased time as a catalyst for creating an appropriate classroom environment and an effective relationship between student and teacher. The subjects also said that the increased time allowed them to deal better with problems and issues that arise during the class period.

Given that six respondents were unwilling or unable to answer the question, the reader must consider the possibility that the question was either not credible in its content or inappropriately presented. Nevertheless, given that eight responses were so similar, the researcher has concluded that block scheduling has had a significant impact on inclusion at the sample high school.

The next question—What teaching methods do you employ?—was asked only as a precursor to the question, “In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under the traditional schedule?” The researcher thought that the precursor question would encourage the subject to consider his/her teaching

methods. The true intention of these two questions was to ascertain to what degree teachers had changed their methods since utilizing a block schedule. In this respect, it was obvious that the teachers who taught under both a traditional schedule and a block schedule had significantly altered their methods. These teachers utilized many different methods including, cooperative learning, lecture, small group learning, deductive reasoning, one to one instruction, and other active learning activities. Even two subjects who said that their instructional methods hadn't changed later pointed out several ways in which their instruction had in fact changed. The reader might conclude that although the perceptions of these two subjects differed from the other respondents, the reality is quite similar.

The researcher employed the same technique in inquiring about how the subjects' colleagues had changed their methods since implementing block scheduling. The researcher first asked, "What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?" He then asked, "In what ways are your colleagues' teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?" The responses to these questions were consistent with the responses to the previous two questions. The subjects said that their colleagues were now utilizing a variety of active learning techniques.

It is apparent that the teachers from the sample high school no longer used lecture as the primary pedagogical method. Lecture at the sample high school is but one of many tools now utilized at the sample high school.

In responding to a question that asked what effect block scheduling had on relationships among students, the responses were similar. Of those who responded directly to the question, the subjects said that relationships among students had improved,

in some case significantly. The subjects said the increased time in class allowed the students greater opportunity to interact. No subject said that relationships among students had grown worse as a result of block scheduling. One subject said that with fewer class changes in the day, there were fewer opportunities for trouble to arise among students in the hallways.

Equally significant, all subjects who responded directly to the impact that block scheduling had on relationships between teachers and students, with one exception, said that the relationships had improved. Again the subjects said that the longer class periods allows for greater interaction between student and teacher. The teacher is able to spend more time getting to know the class in total and getting to know the individual students. This allows the teacher to understand the needs of all students. Moreover, the teacher can spend more time assisting the students with their academics as well as their personal issues.

The one subject who did not say that his relationship with students had improved felt that having students in class for only one-half of the school year had a moderately negative impact. This subject felt that he did not get to know the students as well as he did under the traditional schedule and that he tended to have a more difficult time remembering the students after semester is over.

There was no clear trend in the responses to the question regarding the relationships among teachers. Three respondents did not answer the question directly. Four subjects said that relationships among the staff had improved. These subjects said that increased class time required the teachers to work collaboratively in creating

innovative and interesting activities. One subject said that the longer professional period allowed the teachers to spend more time getting to know one another.

Two subjects said that there had been no significant change in the relationships among teachers since the implementation block scheduling. Neither of two respondents elaborated on his/her answer.

One subject said that that block scheduling had both a positive and a negative impact on relationships among teachers. This subject said that if one shares a professional period with a particular teacher, one would get to know that teacher very well. However, if one does not share a professional period with a particular teacher, one sees that teacher less under block scheduling than one did under a traditional schedule. This subject's answer revealed significant equivocation.

Seven subjects said that block scheduling had a negative impact on the relationships among teachers. These respondents felt that the teachers saw each other less than they did before block scheduling. They also said that with fewer class changes, teachers had less opportunity to take part in casual badinage and banter when passing in the halls. The subjects specifically said that under block scheduling, teachers very rarely saw colleagues from other departments. Notwithstanding their perceptions regarding relationships among teachers, these subjects viewed block scheduling positively. This suggests that relationships among teachers are not of significant importance in teachers' opinions of block scheduling

Nine of the respondents said that they had no idea why the school district decided to switch the sample high school to a block schedule. The other seven subjects said that the district was looking to make a significant change. The answers all centered around

increasing the time that students spent on task. A minority of the subjects said that the school district administration noticed that other schools that switched to block scheduling had enjoyed significant benefits. One subject also said that they administration was looking to improve attendance.

Five respondents said that one of the reasons for switching to block scheduling was financial. These respondents said that the district was looking to save money and reduce staff levels. One subject said that the district was looking to reduce the teaching staff by twenty percent. However, none of these subjects presented any information that would substantiate their claims. More importantly, none of the respondents suggested that these perceived financial considerations had any impact on their feelings towards block scheduling.

When asked their feelings about block scheduling before the school made the change to it, five respondents did not answer the question and two said they had been looking forward to the change. All other respondents said that they had been very apprehensive. Some respondents even said they had been fearful about making the change. These colleagues said that they had not been sure how they would keep the students' attention for eighty-five minutes.

It is interesting to note that all of the teachers who reported being previously apprehensive about block scheduling, said that their feelings had changed significantly and that they were very pleased with the change. The only ambivalence among this group appeared when one subject said that although he was very happy teaching under block scheduling, he would prefer an A/B schedule to the 4 x 4 schedule.

All other respondents indicated that they were very pleased with block scheduling. No respondent said that his/her feelings toward block scheduling had become negative.

When answering the two questions on the training that the staff received when the district moved to block scheduling, the answers were mixed. A near equal number of respondents said that they had received significant training, that they had received little to no training, or that they had received a moderate amount of training. The subjects gave no information that could explain this discrepancy. However, even the respondents who said they received very little training did not suggest that they should have received more.

It is interesting that despite the number of respondents who said that they received little to no training and a moderate amount of training, the most significant trend in the answers to the next question was that the training they received was sufficient. One can reasonably assume that either their perceptions regarding the amount of training they received was not accurate or that they in fact had not required much training to become comfortable with block scheduling. The responses given did not give indications as to which of these assumptions is correct.

The subjects in this study generally did not feel that they had a role in the decision-making process regarding block scheduling. Moreover, they did not feel that their colleagues had any role in the decision making process. Most answers trended towards the perception that the school administration and the school district administration made all decisions. However, the researcher did not notice any sense of resentment or disappointment in the subjects. It was evident that even though they did

not feel they had a role in the decision making process, the teachers still had very positive feelings about block scheduling.

It is apparent from the responses given that the subjects did not notice any discernable change in the relationship between staff and administration since the change to block scheduling. The subjects tended to answer the question in a straightforward manner that lacked emotion or affectation.

When asked what changes the subjects would like make in the manner the block scheduling is implemented in the sample high school, most subjects did not offer any suggestions. The general trend in answers suggested that the subjects were very pleased with block scheduling and would not want to make changes. Nevertheless, one subject suggested that he/she would like to move to an A/B schedule, and one suggested that he/she would like to be certain that students would go no longer than six months without taking a mathematics course. A small number of respondents did give suggestions for changes, but these changes had little to do with block scheduling. The suggestions they gave were specific to the way in which students were placed in classes, the number of students in classes, and other issues that could arise regardless of block scheduling.

In analyzing the responses to the question, "What are the most significant factors in either the success or failure of block scheduling," the most frequently given answer focused on the willingness of teachers to change their teaching methods and classroom activities. The next most frequently given answer was that the staff requires the support of the administration if block scheduling is to be successful. The only other response given often enough to make it significant was the importance of staff and administration working collaboratively. Given the positive feelings that respondents had towards block

scheduling, one can assume that the subjects believe that these three criteria are being met.

### Summary

In summarizing the results of the collected data, it was obvious to the researcher that the responses fit neatly within the context of the two guiding questions (1. What are teachers' perceptions of block scheduling? 2. What similarities and differences exist among teachers regarding their perceptions of block scheduling?). The respondents were very open and thoughtful in answering the questions. The data presented in this chapter clearly outlines the areas in which the subjects agreed—which was the majority of areas—and the few areas in which there were disagreements.

It is obvious that the participants had very positive perceptions of block scheduling at the sample high school. Subjects felt very comfortable in teaching under a block schedule and would not wish to return to a traditional schedule. It is also clear that any concerns the subjects had with the manner in which block scheduling was introduced to the staff or was being implemented were not sufficient enough to have an impact on their very positive perceptions.

The few areas in which the subjects were not in general agreement present possible conflict with previous studies and are further explained in chapter V.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify and to compare teachers' perceptions regarding block scheduling. Specifically the study focused on teachers' perception at a district D/E high school in central New Jersey.

Despite minor discrepancies, the data from this study was generally consistent with the literature that was reviewed in Chapter II. The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions and recommendations that arose from the study.

#### Conclusions

The results of this study suggest that the perceptions of the subjects tend to be consistent with the current literature. The subjects had very positive attitudes toward block scheduling and said that they would not want to go back to a traditional schedule. This is a very significant statement given that the researcher interviewed sixteen subjects. The fact that there was no ambivalence in the positive perceptions of block scheduling suggests that those same positive feelings exist throughout the school.

It is also notable that the answers strongly pointed to the increased academic achievement under block scheduling. Consistent with the current literature, the subjects said that the students were performing significantly better on a variety of objective

measures including but not limited to grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advanced placement test scores, and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores.

The results of this study suggest that Ullrich and Yeaman (1999) were correct when they found that teacher benefits under block scheduling included:

17. Fewer preparations and less stress.
18. Less fragmentation in presenting material thereby improving instructional climate.
19. Better and closer relationships with students and colleagues.
20. More flexibility for "connecting the curriculum."
21. Enhancement of school climate because of more effective use of time, space, and resources.
22. Greater chance for academic growth.
23. Greater opportunity for instructional innovation and varying instructional strategies.
24. Provides greater opportunity to accommodate different needs of students because there are fewer students in longer blocks of time.
25. Allows for grouping and regrouping of students according to what they are interested in and have mastered.
26. Additional class time allows for field trips and guest speakers.
27. Record keeping is less of a burden.
28. Additional time allows for more individualization and grouping of students.
29. Much of the statistical evidence available indicates that scores on standardized tests remain as high or higher under block scheduling.

30. The North Central Accreditation Committee had given unqualified support to this type of modified block.

31. Additional time allows for peer counseling and other education activities.

32. Longer class time allows teachers to develop issues and concepts, to be more creative and innovative, and to use a large variety of teaching methods.

The only area in which a significant number of subjects did not agree with Ullrich and Yeamen (1999) was the area of relationships among colleagues. Although there was no clear trend, there was a level of ambivalence when discussing the impact of block scheduling on such relationships. All other aspects of this study suggest that Ullrich and Yeamen findings are correct. Moreover, this study suggests that as a result of these benefits, the teachers at the subject high school are happier and more productive.

The data collected in this study show plainly that teachers at the sample high school have moved away from the traditional lecture strategy and have employed many other strategies that engage students as active learners. This is not to suggest that teachers at the sample high school have totally abandoned lecture as a classroom activity. Rather, the data suggest that lecture has become one strategy among many, from which the teachers can choose. This is consistent with the current literature, which suggests that one of the most important factors in the success of block scheduling is the willingness of teachers to adjust their methods and move towards student centered activities.

The objective literature suggests that it is very common for teachers to move from apprehension at the implementation of block scheduling to confidence and success after the program has been implemented. The data from this study are consistent with the objective literature in this area. Subjects in the study tended to report being apprehensive

and ill at ease with the new program. However, after several years of implementation, the subjects clearly felt comfortable and confident. No subject in the study said that he/she would want to return to the traditional schedule.

There were only two areas in which the subjects in this study gave answers that ran contrary to the current research. In this study, there was significant ambiguity in the area of professional development. A near equal number of respondents said that they received significant training, little to no training, or a moderate amount of training. Nevertheless, the subjects reported very positive feelings toward block scheduling and reported that block scheduling had been very productive and successful at the sample high school.

The objective literature, however, strongly suggests that in order for block scheduling to be successful, the teachers must receive significant training. This leaves this researcher to believe that there are three possibilities. First, it is possible that the teachers did not give valid responses. This could be a result of any number of factors including, but not limited to: 1. the interview question was not valid; 2. the subjects did not accurately remember the amount of training; 3. the sample size of the subject interviews was not large enough to obtain valid data.

The second possibility is that the objective literature is incorrect, and it is not necessary to offer significant professional development to ensure the success of block scheduling. If this is true, then the teachers find other ways to learn the skills needed to make block scheduling successful. However, current literature so strongly points to the importance of professional development as to cast significant doubt on this possibility.

The third possibility is that the teachers were incorrect when they said that the students performed better on objective measures of performance under a block schedule than they did under a traditional schedule. It is possible that the teachers did not receive adequate training and therefore the students were not performing better on academic measures. Given the subjects' unanimity of perception regarding student achievement and the achievement trends presented in chapter three of this dissertation, it is highly doubtful that this is the case.

The other area in which subject responses ran contrary to the objective data was teacher input in the block scheduling decision-making process. The subjects reported that they did not have input in the decision-making process regarding block scheduling. The objective literature, however, suggests that teacher input is very important, if the teachers are truly to embrace the new schedule. In this study, the subjects reported that they did not have input in the decision making process. Nevertheless, it was clear that the subjects embraced block scheduling and saw themselves as stakeholders and as responsible for the success or failure of the schedule.

The consistency of answers to this question suggests that the current literature might overstate the importance of teacher input in the decision making process. More specifically, in assuming that teachers will not take responsibility for the success or failure of block scheduling unless they take part in the decision making process is to severely underestimate the professionalism and dedication of teachers. This study suggests that teachers will demonstrate dedication whether they help make administrative decisions or not. It might even suggest that teachers are more comfortable and will demonstrate more dedication when they do not take part in administrative decisions.

## Implications

The implications from this study are significant. There is reason to believe that once teachers are comfortable and confident with block scheduling, they will successfully implement it. In this study, the teachers expressed their happiness with the schedule and their belief that many areas of academic achievement had increased. It is conceivable that the most important factor in the success of block scheduling is the teachers' confidence and satisfaction.

This is not to suggest that confidence is necessary when block scheduling is first implemented. This study demonstrated that it is possible and perhaps probable that teachers who are apprehensive when block scheduling is first implemented will eventually gain confidence and ability.

The overall positive feeling that the subjects expressed toward block scheduling was consistent with the current literature. However, it was particularly notable that even teachers who had concerns with specific aspects of block scheduling or about the manner in which the schedule was implemented still had very positive feelings toward block scheduling in its entirety. Although the current literature does not specifically address this issue, it might be that the impact of block scheduling is so significant as to withstand the negative effect of flaws in theory, implementation, or practice. Simply stated, mistakes will not doom the results of block scheduling.

The subjects in this study suggested that block scheduling had a positive impact on inclusion students. If the subjects are correct, then one must consider what it is about block scheduling that improves the effectiveness of inclusion. It might be a result of the

increased class time, but it might also be a result of the teachers' willingness to utilize new and innovative teaching strategies.

Although the results of this study did not present a clear trend on the impact that block scheduling had on relationships among colleagues, the current literature tends to suggest that it has a positive effect on these relationships. However, it is possible that relationships among teachers are not important unless those relationships have a direct impact on the success or failure of block scheduling. However, if relationships among teachers are important to increased student achievement, then more research must be done to further consider the role that block scheduling plays in developing relations among colleagues.

Unlike relationships among teachers, the impact on the relationships between teachers and students is clearly important. There are many studies to suggest that the relationship between teacher and student is a vital one in achieving academic success. If this is true, then the improved relationships that take place between teachers and students under block scheduling can only improve academic achievement.

However, factors that have long been held as important in the success of block scheduling might not be as significant as previously thought. For example, the subjects reported that they were not part of the decision-making process regarding block scheduling. Whether this is true or not is immaterial; they believed it to be true and so regardless of its objective truth or falsehood, it was subjectively true, and it is their subjective feelings that would affect the success of block scheduling among them. Nevertheless, the subjects reported that block scheduling was successful on many levels and that they were happy teaching within a block schedule. It is possible that teachers do

not require active participation in the decision making process for block scheduling to be successful. It may be that other variables, which have little or nothing to do with teacher input, make up the important factors in the success or failure of block scheduling.

This study also casts doubt on the importance of teacher training. If the teachers were giving honest answers, then only 1/3 of the subjects received significant training. Although there was significant ambivalence in the responses to the questions regarding teacher training, the results from this study at least put into question the long held belief that professional development is a key to the success of block scheduling.

### Recommendations

In light of the collected data, the researcher has divided recommendations into three categories: recommendations for policy, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research.

#### Recommendations for Policy

There are several recommendations for policy. Based on the results of this study, the researcher believes that school boards and central administrators should consider changing from a traditional schedule to a more flexible schedule; specifically a block schedule. The results of this study are consistent with current research in this area, in that the majority of the current studies point to very positive results for schools that implement a block schedule. Given that all types of block scheduling have shown equally positive results, it would appear that districts could simply choose the type of block schedule that meets their individual needs.

In creating policy, boards of education should not be concerned if the initial response to block scheduling from teachers is negative or ambivalent. The results of this



study suggest that teachers will be apprehensive at the initiation of block scheduling, but will quickly become comfortable with the new schedule.

The most important recommendation for policy is for central administrators and boards of education to spend significant time reviewing the current literature before implementing a block schedule. Each year, more studies are being conducted on block scheduling. Administrators are therefore able to review the large body of literature, but focus on the studies that have the most significant implications for their particular school district.

#### Recommendations for Practice

Recommendations for practice from this study fall into two categories: recommendations that are consistent with current literature and those that are not consistent with current literature. In implementing a block schedule, administrators should not be concerned with ambivalence or apprehension from the staff. The results of this study and the results of many other studies suggest that teachers will quickly change their opinions and embrace block scheduling. Likewise, if the teachers have primarily used lecture as their principal pedagogical method under a traditional schedule, with encouragement from the administration, they will soon adapt and utilize a variety of methods, many of which are more suited to student learning and student achievement.

This researcher also recommends that administrators spend a great deal of time learning the various intricacies of block scheduling before introducing it to the teachers. It is clear from this study, as well as from the current research that teachers require not only the dedication from their administrators, but also the knowledge that the administrators can provide. If the administrator does not have a significant grasp of the

literature and studies regarding block scheduling, the teachers will simply turn to those who appear to have greater knowledge. In this scenario, the administrator not only becomes irrelevant, but is also unable to monitor the success or failure of block scheduling.

The results of this study also point to the need for frequent and objective evaluation. Administrators and staff members alike must be willing to look honestly at the success or failure of block scheduling. The practices that have lead to success must be encouraged and fostered, while the practices that hinder the success of the program must be discouraged and in some cases eliminated completely. The current literature suggests that when schools do not enjoy success under block scheduling it is likely the result of mistakes in implementation and practice and not the result of the schedule itself.

The final two recommendations for practice that grew out of this study stand in contrast to the current literature and must be considered in light of this contradiction. The results of this study suggest that teachers do not have to be part of the decision making process in order to ensure the success of block scheduling. If this is true, then a significant amount of time is wasted on obtaining the opinions and viewpoints of staff members. It must be noted, however, that many studies suggest that teacher input is essential to the success of block scheduling. Therefore, the administrator who is considering implementing a block schedule would be best served by looking at the large pool of literature on the subject and making the decisions that are best interest of that particular school.

The results of this study are inconclusive in the area of professional development, but do at least suggest that significant teacher training is not necessary for successful

implementation of block scheduling. This researcher is hesitant to write that school districts might consider that professional development be provided in areas other than teaching under a block schedule, because the current literature tends to be conclusive in the need for this type of professional development. Therefore, this researcher merely suggests that administrators give careful thought to the manner in which professional development is conducted.

#### Recommendations for Future Studies

As a consequence of this study's findings, further studies should be conducted to elucidate the areas of ambiguity and areas in which the results of this study ran contrary to objective literature. An in-depth study should be conducted to determine how important teacher input in the decision making process is when block scheduling is being considered. If the results of this study are accurate, then school administrators are spending too much time gathering thoughts and input from the teaching staff.

It will also be important to conduct further studies to determine how important staff development is when implementing block scheduling. Although the current literature suggests that staff development is very important, the results of this study seem to indicate that this importance may be overrated.

The author of this dissertation believes that it would be very beneficial to use a quantitative instrument to study teachers' perceptions of block scheduling. Combining the rich data that this research obtained with quantitative data could give a clearer understanding of teachers' perceptions of block scheduling.

It is also recommended that future research be conducted to recreate this study. In doing so, the efficacy of the data collection instrument and the validity of answers to the

various questions will be tested. If the future study elicits similar responses to this research, the validity of this study will be enhanced.

The final recommendation for future researchers is to conduct a meta-analysis of the current literature. There have many been studies conducted on block scheduling. In some cases those studies are in conflict with each other, but in many instances the studies appear to confirm previous analysis. It would be of significant benefit to the academic body if meta-analysis could be conducted to obtain a general sense of the current trends.

#### Summary

The ever-increasing demands placed on schools, teachers, and students require that school districts embrace school reform as both necessary and expedient. Block scheduling, as just one aspect of significant school reform shows great promise. However, if the benefits of block scheduling are ever to be fully exploited, it will be necessary to devote effort and resources to further research. If any program is to be successful, it requires that researchers and school personnel be willing to honestly and forthrightly conduct in-depth research. The author of this dissertation is confident that this goal has been accomplished.

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## Appendices

Appendix A  
Data Collection Instrument

1. What is your overall impression of block scheduling?
2. What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advanced placement test scores, and New Jersey High School Proficiency Test scores.
3. What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to: gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disabled students, and students for whom English is a second language.
4. What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?
5. What teaching methods do you employ?
6. In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
7. What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?
8. In what ways are your colleagues' teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
9. What affect has block scheduling had on:
  - a. relationships among students;
  - b. relationships among teachers;
  - c. relationships between and among teachers and students?
10. What were the reasons that led to switching from a traditional schedule to a block schedule?

11. What were your feelings towards block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?
12. How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?
13. What type of training did you receive in preparation for the change?
  - a. Was this training sufficient?
  - b. If the answer is no, the follow-up question is: What training would have been sufficient?
14. What is your role in the decision-making process regarding block scheduling?
15. What roles do other teachers have in the decision-making process regarding block scheduling?
16. How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
17. Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
18. Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

Appendix B  
Transcribed Interview B

- John Crowe** What is your overall impression of block scheduling?
- Subject B** I like block scheduling very much.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in your school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject B** At [name deleted] High School, the block scheduling actually has had no impact. The scores actually improved over the years, according to the data that I've seen.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained rooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.
- Subject B** At [name deleted] High School, we offer classes for gifted students. Well, we have classes for English as a second language for in the English Department, no other department, and we spread the self-contained, I guess, students with disabilities out to the other classes. And then we also have self-contained. So they seem to just schedule it just as you would a regular high school program.
- JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?
- Subject B** No effect. They just include them into the regular ed classes, just as you would if you have a regular eight period day.
- JC** What teaching methods do you employ?



**Subject B** You have to be pretty creative when you have block scheduling so that you don't bore the kids in ninety minutes. I teach physics. So what I do is a half hour review; a half hour for new material and a half hour of some type of activity.

**JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under the traditional schedule?

**Subject B** I didn't teach in [name deleted] High School when they had traditional scheduling so my experience is that of a middle school teacher, 45 minute blocks. What I would say is under the block scheduling I try to make sure that I don't take a whole period of just lecturing. Ninety minutes of lecturing is really rough on the kids. The nice thing about block scheduling is that if I have a long term activity, I could do it all in one block as oppose to carrying it over to 2 to 3 days. Could I also speak on behalf of the home arts teachers whom I supervise? It used to be that they would not get their activities done in one period, now they can do an entire cooking activity in one block too.

**JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?

**Subject B** I try to get them to do the same thing that I do to break the block down at least they're not going to do the thirds like I do. It's a little bit easier to do that in Physics. That they at least do half lecture (inaudible) review and the other half some type of activity. On the downside, is that I think a lot of teachers tend to show more videos because they cannot come up with an activity to break up the block. What they'll do is show a video. We allow the teachers to show a video for a half block. So even if you have a ninety minute video, you can only show forty-five minutes in one period or one day.

- JC** In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject B** I'm not sure because as I said I wasn't here when they had regular scheduling.
- JC** Question 9 has three parts: What effect has block scheduling had on relationships among students?
- Subject B** If you have great kids, it wouldn't matter if you had traditional scheduling or block scheduling because you wouldn't mind having them for the full year. But it's my opinion, that if you have a tough class, you could put up with those kids for ninety days. Knowing that you're going to only see them for six months, I think, makes it easier for the teachers to get through rough classes.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on relationships among teachers?
- Subject B** I think what I've been told is that teachers don't see one another as much any more. We use to have more common prep periods and more time to spend together at lunch. The only time you see teachers now is in-between classes, during home room when you can go around and talk to people, because we don't have the same prep periods.
- JC** And relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject B** I actually kind of got it backwards then, 'cause A should have been just a students. Do you want me just to go back to A?
- JC** Sure.
- Subject B** I really don't think it makes a difference if they spend forty-five minutes together or ninety-minutes together. Their big time together is lunch and lunch is fixed by the school day not matter what kind of schedule you have. However, with the ninety-minute blocks you can do more cooperative learning. As I said, you can do more

activities, so they do have an opportunity to spend more time working together in class. I don't know if that improves relationships or not. I find that kids when they pick lab partners, they also pick the same lab partners. It is up to the teacher to spread the kids around a little bit.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

**Subject B** I don't know. Like I said, I wasn't here at the time.

**JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to the schedule? I assume it's the same answer.

**Subject B** OK. As I said, I went to ... I came from [name deleted] here, OK, right into block scheduling but I teach at [name deleted] University at night, I'm an adjunct professor, and we have technically, block scheduling. So I didn't have any adjustment problems. I knew I had to teach for extended periods of time. So that didn't create a problem for me.

**JC** Is your answer the same for question 12. Have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?

**Subject B** But I do like it. I like it, so no, it doesn't seem to create a problem for me.

**JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for the change to block scheduling?

**Subject B** No training.

**JC** Question 14. What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?

- Subject B** I don't think I have much of a roll in decision making, I think it's here and it's going to stay here. As a matter of fact, they, I think what they did was that they piloted it here and now they put it into the other high schools. So I think the district sees it as a successful model.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject B** I understand when they thought about it the first time, everyone played a major role. Since then, most things in most districts not just in this district, tend to be top down. The decisions are made at the central administration level and put down. I don't think we have a bottom up type of decision making process here.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject B** I couldn't answer that question in any way. A lot of the administrators have changed since block scheduling. When I came, [principal's name deleted] came with me. Prior to that, [name deleted] was the principal. I think she might have been the person around when they switched to it in the first place. I don't really know.
- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manor in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject B** I think they really need to reconsider how they schedule some classes with the AP classes or which what I teach. We have too many conflicts. We have students who maybe want to take four AP classes, but what happens is we can't. There all single sections. In any type of scheduling, scheduling single classes is going to create a number of conflicts. So when we start out with freshmen scheduling, we need to

either fast track some kids so that they can take all of the classes that they want plus the AP classes. Or, we have to be able to offer more classes, more of a particular class, each year for the kids who want to take these special classes. There is a problem because we have limited space in the school, limited in science and this is really a major problem in science. You have to be certified in that particular science. I'm comprehensive certified but now you have to be either certified in biology or chemistry/physics. I can't just take my chemistry teacher and say, "Oh I have an extra bio class would you like to take it." I can't do that. I can't take a bio teacher and give them an extra physics class. So that in itself limits enrollment in classes. As a result you have, we tend to have overcrowded physical science classes and that creates a problem with scheduling. I have to count up my physical science people and that limits enrollments in those classes which might be. Block scheduling might create a problem with that too, I don't know. I don't know what engine pushes what on that particular situation.

**JC** Next question, what are the most significant factors in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?

**Subject B** The downside of block scheduling is that in ninety days you cannot cover all of the material in a particular course. For example, I teach physics, AP physics B. The test is on the entire book. It is almost impossible to cover the entire book in ninety days. I understand when they were on the traditional schedule, they had double labs which meant science classes met seven periods a week. We lost time. All right, so it wasn't for a lot of other classes it was an equal amount of time. For science, we lost time. So I understand that's created a problem. So what we had to do with AP Bio, is offer

over the entire year. There's been discussions about other AP courses being a ten-credit course where you offer it for the entire school year. But once you start doing that, you've lost block scheduling and you're really going back to a modified traditional schedule. The other thing, there are some school districts who do the alternating. You take the course for the year but you alternate. You have an alternate block. I think they do that in [school district deleted]. That sounds like a little better model than the traditional four by four because then you would meet these kids for the entire year. The problem with something like AP physics is how much material you can give a high school student in one block. After a while you feel like you are beating them over the head: Learn this, learn this, learn this. You have to know this, you have to know this. And I think after a while you take the joy out of learning and then you are reluctant to do creative projects because you have to think about now if I do this project with them I'm going to lose valuable lecture time, which means I'm not going to cover the material, which means they may not do well on the standardized test. So it does put a little bit of a damper on going outside of the strict curriculum to do things that would enrich them. OK if you lose out on the enrichment, at [school name deleted] I was able to do projects – enrichment projects because I had a lot of time. Here I don't do that. Here, it's just we do what's in the curriculum with what we know to be on the test and do that. And I understand when I listen to the other teachers now because we may have a half-split component – a science component to the HSPA that will count now. Again they are starting to feel they don't want to do any enrichment activities. Let's focus on HSPA skills because I only have ninety days to get this information to my students. That is the disadvantage.

The advantage though is that everything is a little bit fresh because as I said before, you're only going to see these kids for ninety days, so you build a special relationship with them, which could be a downside too because you kind of miss them especially if you get a good class. But if you don't have such a good class you know you can move on to something else. One other thing about the block scheduling, when you have, remember you teach three and two or two and three, the semester that you only teach two is a nice easy semester because you teach two, you have a professional and a duty and a lot of teacher like that because you don't have that grind of an eight block day where everyday you know for the full one hundred eighty days is going to be this same. It's like starting school every six months. So in that respect, I see that there is no burn out at the end of the year where people are walking around like oh my goodness I can't wait to get done, I can't wait to get rid of these kids. They don't have that feeling about them, OK.

**JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

**Subject B** Well, it's pretty much what I just said. I think that the teachers they stay enthusiastic because they don't run out of material. Sometimes when you have the traditional schedule, by May/June when the kids have had it, you're kind of running low on material. Here you go right to the very end you must cover quality because you've got your curriculum to cover.

**JC** Thank you.

Appendix C  
Transcribed Interview C



- John Crowe** What is your overall impression of block scheduling?
- Subject C** Right now I like it. I think it's good for the kids; it's good for the building.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject C** The easiest thing to say, is that everything's gone up. The kids seem to have more time to devote to the things that are meaningful for them and because of that they achieve more.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.
- Subject C** I can speak to everything except the emotionally disturbed. The brighter kids, we have more time to dedicate to more material so they can be more challenged. The slower kids, we have more time to get to one on one and help them out.
- JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?
- Subject C** I haven't had an inclusion class so I can't answer that.
- JC** What teaching methods do you employ?
- Subject C** I've switched from basic lecture and do to more of a kids teaching themselves, more cooperative learning, and it seems to be a much better mix. I can look around the room and listen to the kids help each other and help them to help each other. It seems like its working out better.

- JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under the traditional schedule?
- Subject C** That's the biggest difference it the cooperative learning and now I have more time to do that. I would have never tried it before in the traditional scheduling.
- JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?
- Subject C** It seems like the cooperative is the better system but a lot of teachers are playing games in class. Educational games and the kids have a lot more fun and they get a lot out of it.
- JC** In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject C** Seems like they get more into the actual material then anything. I hear teachers say they have more time to devote to specific topics. They use teachers can cover entire books rather than little sections of it. It seems to be more helpful that way.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on the following: (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and, (c) relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject C** You get more time to know a student in a shorter period of time. We have an hour and a half to meet with a kid everyday rather than the forty-five minutes spread out over the whole year. And I think its better. You get to know the kid more in-depth there. Among teachers, when we sit down in the room we can actually talk and discuss things that we're doing in class and I think it helps. Teachers and students, in general, I think you know, I can't see any detriment to it. In the old days if you had a

kid that you didn't like or a kid that didn't like you, you had to deal with the kid the whole year. Now, it's just a couple months and everybody can be happy.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to a block schedule?

**Subject C** I would have to get into the mind of the guy who did it. What I think he wanted to do is cut twenty percent of the teachers.

**JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?

**Subject C** Fearful. Very fearful.

**JC** How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?

**Subject C** After you get into it and realize that it's a good thing to have, its much, much better. I think it's better for the teacher than it is for the kid but I think it's better for both groups.

**JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for the change to block scheduling?

**Subject C** Little to none.

**JC** Was that sufficient?

**Subject C** No. It would have been nice if we could've seen more teaching in the block rather than just saying you can do this and this and have fun.

**JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?

**Subject C** I was in on the first meeting when the Superintendent proposed this and he promised us that you know we would have a vote on whether it was going to happen but we're still waiting for the vote.

- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject C** None.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject C** I'm not sure it's really changed. We've got good administrators here and we get them all. I really don't know if it's really changed.
- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject C** It seems like there's trouble with the AP classes. If they could get the AP classes going half in the first semester and half in the second semester that would cover when the AP class is taught and it would stop all of the teachers spending an awful lot of extra time for reviews.
- JC** What are the most significant factors, in your opinion, in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?
- Subject C** I think everybody's gotten into it and enjoying it and if you enjoy something you do a little better at it.
- JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?
- Subject C** No, I think it's really worth a shot. We have one difficulty with it now if a student is coming in. Vince just had a student coming in now and we're like halfway through and the kid was like a quarter of the way through so he's got an awful lot to catch up on. So, someone was proposing that one of the three high school stay on the

traditional schedule. I'm not sure if that good, better or indifferent but it would at least address that problem.

Appendix D  
Transcribed Interview D

- John Crowe** What is your overall impression of block scheduling?
- Subject D** I am very happy with block scheduling. I feel that it provides students with the optimum learning opportunity because they have fewer subjects to deal with during the course of the day and those that can excel by devoting more time to each subject. Block scheduling also improves the school climate by affording less interruptions to learning during the school day.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject D** While I do not have all of the statistics at my fingertips, I would feel that block scheduling has improved every academic area significantly. As an example of this, there were five SAT scores in math of 800 last year. I comment specifically as I did not teach in [name deleted] prior to block scheduling. However, advanced placements scores in calculus, AB and BC have never been higher. And block has allowed most students to climb up the math ranks and attain the high levels of calculus.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.

- Subject D** Again, unfortunately I do not have access to all of those statistics but I would feel from what I've observed that every subcategory has improved.
- JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?
- Subject D** I cannot comment on block significantly affecting inclusion by number. However, I do feel that the special ed students like the regular education population get the benefits of a lighter course load. I don't know enough to comment on special ed students with short attention spans having a difficult time in a eighty-five minute as opposed to a forty-three minute period.
- JC** What teaching methods do you employ?
- Subject D** Well, I really teach calculus classes so I still lecture. However, I still try to incorporate interdisciplinary based learning and a heavy emphasis on cooperative learning.
- JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under the traditional schedule?
- Subject D** Well, for calculus it provides a dream opportunity because you can present material in a less fragmented way than before. I can fully develop a new lesson as well as go over homework from the night before. Whereas in the past homework could not be covered or reinforced as well. And block scheduling also forces you to incorporate cooperative learning whereas on the traditional schedule you might not do that.
- JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?
- Subject D** To the best of my knowledge, I think a lot of my colleagues have gone away from lecture and definitely using a lot more cooperative learning but again (inaudible) upwards.



- JC** In what ways are your colleagues' teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject D** I think the advent of cooperative learning has been a huge addition brought on by block.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and, (c) relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject D** I feel that the relationships among students have improved because we have fewer interruptions during the day with the result that less negativity between class periods, less opportunity to fail and have things of that nature. Regarding teacher to teacher, I really don't think there's really been any significant change. The one thing I sometime hear teachers lament is the fact that this last communication in other words you don't see it first. I used to be able to see. From teachers to students, I feel that it's really improved. I really feel that you have a sort of more familiar atmosphere cause you have the student for eighty-five minutes as opposed to forty-three and you really get to know that student better.
- JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?
- Subject D** I have no idea. I actually started in [name deleted] High School the first year the block arrived.
- JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?
- Subject D** I was totally unsure. I had no idea what to expect.

- JC** How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?
- Subject D** I really like it. I can't say enough good things about it.
- JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for the change?
- Subject D** No training whatsoever.
- JC** Was that sufficient?
- Subject D** Definitely not. Again, like most teachers just sort of learned on the fly, talked to colleagues to learn what would work best. I think we could've observed possibly other schools or had somebody from another school give us a workshop on good methods to use.
- JC** And would that be your answer to question what training would have been sufficient?
- Subject D** Yes. What training would have been sufficient, yes.
- JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject D** None.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject D** None.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject D** No discernable change.
- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject D** Well, the scheduling in guidance can sometimes create quite a bit of difficulty. For example, one area we have to address I feel is when we have weaker students who

have a basic skills math class and also a serious subject math class. Sometimes for example if they had a basic skills math fall class as well as an algebra 2 class in the fall, that means that 50% of their day will be devoted to a subject that they potentially hate. On the other side of the coin, the brighter and better kids, block allows them to climb up the ranks of mathematics. However, it would be nice if we had the flexibility to have an AP class in the first semester and just a quarter in the second semester then we could devote more time to AP preparation.

**JC** In your opinion, what are the most significant factors in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?

**Subject D** Well, I feel the most significant factors at least in [name deleted] High School for making it a success was the fact that the administration and faculty worked together and spoke to each other and communicated and define the process and iron out the kinks that they possible saw arisen. I also think the student body as a whole has been very warm to embrace it.

**JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

**Subject D** I think that it's a great process to follow and again the only tweaks I would like to see ironed out are the scheduling difficulties.

Appendix E  
Transcribed Interview E

- John Crowe** What is your overall impression of block scheduling?
- Subject E** I think block scheduling is good for the students and in one part you learn more in less time as opposed to having to cancel all your preps.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in your school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advanced placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject E** Well the most part, HSPA scores improve every year. While last year 88% passed junior to the junior class. SAT scores are up there as well. There were a couple students that got perfect scores on SAT's based on block schedule. I think that's pretty good.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained rooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.
- Subject E** It gives students a chance to express themselves with other kids in class.
- JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?
- Subject E** I don't think it has any effect on it.
- JC** What teaching methods do you employ?
- Subject E** I allow kids to work. I usually bring a strong student with a weak student especially with math. If it's difficult for the students to work alone, I think if they work with the stronger student it will benefit them.

- JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under the traditional schedule?
- Subject E** I will not be able to answer that question because when I got here six years ago, it was already on the block scheduling. So I was unable to even see what the traditional schedule was like.
- JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?
- Subject E** Pretty much kids going to the board in math is very advantage as opposed to history class or the other class. Group work is also essential. It helps the kids learn more about the topic then hearing the teacher lecture.
- JC** In what ways are your colleague's teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject E** I think there was not too much group work or activities because time was a factor.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a)relationships among students; (b)relationships among teachers; and,(c) relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject E** Relationships among students, I think the students work well with each other. I mean their in class for ninety minutes, so they get to know each other for a longer period of time. As with teachers, teachers were in class for ninety minutes and teachers don't get to see other teachers as much as they want to. Relationship between and among teachers and students I think that teachers, same thing. Students, you get to have students in the class for ninety minutes so I think that's a good enough time to get to know the kids more rather than with the forty-five minute traditional schedule.

- JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?
- Subject E** Well, again, I will not be able to answer that because the traditional schedule had been here.
- JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?
- Subject E** I can't answer that question.
- JC** Have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?
- Subject E** I can't answer that.
- JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for the change to block scheduling?
- Subject E** Again, the change from the block scheduling I didn't know. The only thing I knew was that time was a factor. That's the only thing that I know from traditional to block scheduling.
- JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject E** No role.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject E** I don't think they have any role.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject E** No change.

- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject E** I think with these lunches could be adjusted. When you want to give a test, for example, last year I had an early lunch and I think we want to give a test, it's hard to get a way to give it. You know, you could have the kids take it but then when they don't finish, come back you know the kids can discuss this with the teacher. That matter can be adjusted.
- JC** What are the most significant factors, in your opinion, in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?
- Subject E** Don't have an opinion.
- JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?
- Subject E** No.
- JC** Thank you.



Appendix F  
Transcribed Interview F

**John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?

**Subject F** I would say block scheduling has really allowed the teacher to interact in a much more concentrated manner with their students. Most of the teachers in our building I think enjoy block scheduling I think for mathematics and for language there is a lot of down time perhaps between when you have a math class and you have a first semester of one year and not till second semester of another year. That's a lot of down time especially in a world language class. I think that would have more of an impact. I think for students who struggle mathematically it's probably not a good idea to go a full year with mathematics. But to our credit, namely in this school, most of the students that do struggle mathematically that are in a Math 1 or a Math 2 or a Math 3 are also taking another math class. So in many cases our weakest students are taking a full year of mathematics, either Geometry with a Math 3 or an Algebra with a Math 1 or a Math 2.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?

**Subject F** Some of these questions are difficult for me to answer because since we've gone to block scheduling I've taught a lot of people the same classes. I've had a lot of Geometry "R" track and I can't compare it much to "S" track. I've always had the Math 4 students which is a case unto itself. They are students that haven't passed the HSPA. But I would say more of our students make the honor roll, of course, for some of them it's

the semester they don't take a Math class that their making the honor roll. But you'll see kids just come back and say "I made the honor roll this marking period, I've never done that before." So, I think it allows students to focus, certainly, on what a smaller amount of material. You don't have that seven period day with a study hall built in. You may have only two major academic classes in the semester, so it allows you to put more time, if you choose, into those classes. Our SAT scores are up. Speaking as the 12<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, I think there's other impacts that have – that come to effect daily but because we spend a whole semester now, in the fall with our juniors that are at risk and we do a black book program for our at risk students for the month of February, our numbers are way down on those not passing the HSPA. So my classes, I've gone from three sections of Math 4 with 15 to 20 students in a section, down to one class this year, just 9 students. Part of that is losing the ESL to Woodbridge and Colonia, their home schools now but I don't know if we would still have the success in a traditional format.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.

**Subject F** Our students, English as a second language, those numbers have been way back I don't even come into contact with those students that much anymore. Gifted students, I have Geometry "R" track, I don't really see a big difference in their ability

to succeed under a traditional schedule versus the block scheduling and I don't really come into contact. We haven't been in self-contained or disabled students.

**JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

**Subject F** I haven't taught an inclusion class, so to be honest with you I don't know the impact we would have. I would think it would give teachers more time to spend with those students in an inclusion class but I can't speak from personal experience.

**JC** What teaching methods do you employ?

**Subject F** A lot of it hasn't changed. There's a certain amount of lecture but with block scheduling I do a lot more cooperative learning, small group learning, inductive reasoning to discover relationships in mathematics, so it gives you more time to do that but I also find block scheduling is relentless. If I had a traditional eight period day, you'd have a test on a Friday and that's it. The kids would study Thursday night and have a test on Friday basically the weekend would be off perhaps. Now, there's never, to me, there's never an off day. You might do a new lesson the day you're have a test so the day you have a quiz your still doing a new lesson so you have to constantly push, push, push. I find it very hard, even though, we are an eighty-five minute classes to double up on a lesson so you are still maybe doing singular topics but you're creating activities to go with those topics. So there's a lot more cooperative learning. Students work with each other which I think is great.

**JC** In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?

**Subject F** I think it still is just about the same thing. There's a lot more, again, I teach geometry and geometry is a very easy subject to create activities for. There's a lot of

manipulative hands-on types of things you can do. Algebra I taught last year for the first time in a long time and the first time under block scheduling. That was a little bit harder to be creative and have supplemental activities for but I would say most of the teachers probably haven't varied too much from their own teaching styles but maybe have incorporated more hands-on, more activities in class.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and, (c) relationships between and among teachers and students?

**Subject F** I think the students in this school really work very well together so I think with our diverse population the kids are wonderful in working with students with different ethnicities. Their friendships cross lines of race, color, religion all of that. Relationships among teachers, this is a pretty close staff. I think block scheduling has limited the amount of camaraderie that's available. I think that we limit ourselves many times to our department offices now instead of going down to a faculty room or going down to lunch. The semester you teach three, you don't interact with anybody. But teachers and students, again you have good relationships. My thing is that I'll see students walking around the halls now and said "haven't they graduated yet." We lose track of when you've had them because every semester seems like it's another school year. So you might have had a child two years ago but it seems like you have them forever ago because so many classes have passed, so many semesters have gone past.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

- Subject F** I'm not positive they gave us reasons. I'm sure they did but I don't remember them. My impression would probably be financial obviously. Time on task, it gives you more time in an eighty-five minute setting to spend on an activity and I think it gives you a greater opportunity in a long time setting to develop a lesson. So, those are probably the reasons they gave us. Obviously, textbooks to me are used, their doubling up instead of having eight classes of Geometry maybe you have four and four. So instead of having enough for eight classes you only need enough for four. You need half that amount which you can run it that way. But I would assume there was some financial aspect to the deal.
- JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?
- Subject F** No strong feeling but certainly a little concern as to how am I going to fill eighty-five minutes. And now, when we have a delayed opening or a reduced time schedule, I say, "Oh, man, I couldn't get anything done today." So you adapt to your environment and eighty-five minutes, we know how to fill eighty-five minutes, now.
- JC** How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?
- Subject F** It depends upon whether you're asking me during the semester I'm teaching three classes or the semester I'm teaching two. I still think it's a lot of time to go between subjects. I don't think I like the AB block scheduling at all. A friend of my taught in [name deleted] High School and tried it one year where you basically had the class year round but you met every other day. I don't think that's a break for the students and I don't think it's a break for the teachers. But I like it. Would I want to go back? No.

**JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for the change?

**Subject F** I sure I'm forgetting workshops that we had to train us on block scheduling but I would say not a lot. But again a good teacher or an experienced teacher or a caring teacher is certainly going to adapt quickly to any change in the educational environment.

**JC** The training that you did receive, was that sufficient?

**Subject F** I guess, yes.

**JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?

**Subject F** I would say I had no role at all. In fact, I remember we had a couple of schools come in, a school from Pennsylvania, they came in and they spoke to us. One of our concerns was I know we're going from a hundred eighty days to ninety days but you can't as I said you can't always double up on a lesson. So we talked about the amount of content that could be covered. This school from Pennsylvania said they covered twenty percent less content from their curriculums. We didn't do that. Our curriculum guides have not changed going from the traditional to the block scheduling. I feel like it's, while sometimes I can cover that material, I'm not sure the absorption is always there for the students. So I think that was a problem. We were also told we would never go to block scheduling unless the teachers were in favor of it. But I must have been absent the day we had the vote.

**JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?

**Subject F** I don't think a whole lot. I don't even know whether part of your question there is actually scheduling the students to block. One of the issues that we just talked about

yesterday in our math meeting, a lot of kids, the beauty of block scheduling and one of its strengths, I probably answered that later, is allowing students to take more math, more science, more history classes or double up, so if the student is a little slow starter in middle school and isn't identified as on the fast tract in mathematics, there isn't a reason why in one year couldn't take two math classes which would have been difficult to do in other situations but whether its because we're a small school or whether because it just difficult to do, I would like to see a student that is doubling up at least split it between two semesters. But I have some student that go from Algebra II to Geometry or vise versa. So I think that's a scheduling problem but we don't have any input in that.

**JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?

**Subject F** I think I see less of them. While I personally see less of them, I know they are around a lot more, roaming the building, I don't have a whole lot of contact with them but there in the cafeteria, they walk through the halls, so they're very visible. Though I don't have any increased contact with them, per se.

**JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manor in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?

**Subject F** I don't think I have a problem with block scheduling. I think I have a problem with just scheduling in general and that sometimes class sizes. As I said, the doubling up sometimes with students taking two math classes in a year like in the same semester as opposed to trying to split them up. But I know part of our problem is it might only



be offered only once or twice and depending on what else they're taking that creates a problem.

**JC** In your opinion, what are the most significant factors in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?

**Subject F** I think, obviously, a teacher is very important in any type of educational environment and I think the support of your department and the support of your administration in getting you what you need to teach and helping you to develop your selections and make things available.

**JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

**Subject F** Nothing really significant. As I said, I pretty much go with the flow. If I have to teach for eighty-five minutes I teach for eighty-five minutes. If we went back to forty-five, I go back to forty-five but one of the things I was talking about with a couple of teachers recently is that now we have two ends of the year. So usually students wouldn't start to get antsy until May, June and it was a struggle to get through each lesson. Now, they get antsy in January and May or January and June. So sometimes you never tire, I never tired of my class until we got into June and I'd say, Oh, its time for this year to end." Now sometimes I get tired in my class twice a year. I get tired of them in January and I get tired of them in June. But you just spend a lot of time with the students. I think and don't know if there are numbers to back me up on this but because there's less between class times, it's a lot quieter. There's less problems, probably, in the hall. The kids don't have time to really

socialize as much between classes because you just don't that many between classes involved with the schedule.

I just thought about this too. One of the problems I see with block scheduling is transfer students - students coming in from a district that had a traditional schedule. You have students and parents move and they come into school in December, say. They're coming from an eight period day schedule and now what do you do. They're so far behind in the classes that they're entering because we're winding down and their just really starting to kick into drive. I thought perhaps [school district name deleted] would be a little creative and since we have three high schools, keep one of them under a traditional schedule and keep another the other two under block if they wanted. I don't know if it's a contractual thing with the Association that everybody has to be teaching the same, even though it was phased in over a period of time. But for a student coming in whether they're coming in from block – coming in from block is not a problem but even our kids that leave and go to another school district that's always an issue. I think that that's a problem with block scheduling and that's the transfer students and in this school, honest to goodness, it seems like we're getting new people every week.

Appendix G  
Transcribed Interview G

- John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?
- Subject G** I think it's absolutely fabulous. It allows us to expand on our basic lessons and it allows the students to practice theories and for us to observe them.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject G** From what I can observe everything seems to be on the upswing. It gives us more time to practice with the students and it seems as though we are on top on every single measure.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.
- Subject G** I think it's two-fold. I'm a special education teacher so what I'm seeing it's allowing a more team relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and therefore the students are coming in they're able to practice what they're viewing and at the same time it's allowing them to get better skills to move on to some mainstreamed classes. On the other hand, sometime if they're in a class with teachers who don't have the experience to deal with them it can be a very frustrating atmosphere for them.
- JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

- Subject G** I think it affords the special education teachers more access to mainstream students and in respect we bring our students with us. It exposes them to much more of the curriculum.
- JC** What teaching methods do you employ?
- Subject G** In my own classroom, I do a lot of hands-on. I do a lot of lecturing. I do a lot of note taking, I get the students out of their seats. I do a lot of review with them. Basically, that's it.
- JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject G** It allows me much more time to let the students practice and let me observe watching them practice that afford a lot of open ended questions. We can discuss and review and much more of a give and take, instead of me being front of the class lecturing.
- JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?
- Subject G** I think a little bit of everything. A little cooperative learning, lecturing, in lab situation as in science class you are able to complete a lab. You actually review it in detail first, do the actual the lab and review it at the end and guide your students in the writing of the lab report.
- JC** In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject G** Time wise they're allowed to do so much more which allows us the opportunity to incorporate so much more into the curriculum.

- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on the following (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and, (c) relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject G** First of all with the students, I think it gives us more time to get to know our students and it allows us to let us know that there are things going on at home that we don't normally see in a forty-five minute classroom. As far as our colleagues, I think it allows us to share information because we need each other to get through that eighty-five minute period and to discuss the curriculum in general. What was the last one?
- JC** Among students.
- Subject G** Among students, I think it gets students to get to know one another better.
- JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?
- Subject G** It was two-fold. I think it's financial and I also feel that the trend is to get it to look more like a college atmosphere so that the students transition better from high school to college. And I think the overall education, the students learn more in the block scheduling. I guess that's the main goal, but I think there's a financial reason behind it.
- JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?
- Subject G** Very apprehensive, like everyone else. No one likes changes and we were, we received a lot of schooling in block scheduling but we were very resistant I think in the beginning.

- JC** How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?
- Subject G** I could never go back. Just different atmosphere.
- JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for the change?
- Subject G** We had a lot of workshops. We had presenters coming in. We had amongst our staff going out and observing the schools in block scheduling. Coming back and talking to us and then we had practice sessions. It was nice.
- JC** Was this training sufficient?
- Subject G** I think so, yes.
- JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject G** Well, I think they wanted to make sure that we were very comfortable in doing it and they did come to us with specific questions on it. I don't think it was a matter of do we like it or not. It was going to go that way but they were very, very curious and understanding with our reservations.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject G** I think they come to us for our opinion, which is very nice. Through department heads, through faculty meetings, they like our input with that.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject G** It's changed in that we're much more comfortable with one another but in the same, I don't think that it's changed in that we do have a different relationship between administrator and teaching staff.

- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject G** I would like to see the credits for graduations increase because I feel a lot of our students are done by the junior year. One thing that didn't happen with block scheduling, they didn't bring on more classes and that seems to be holding students back.
- JC** What are the most significant factors in either the success or the failure of block scheduling in your opinion?
- Subject G** I think its time wise. I think the students gain so much more with the extended time. I think in the end they get less homework because its only four subjects for each semester.
- JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?
- Subject G** I don't think so. I think it's just a wonderful experience. I think every school should go to it.



Appendix H  
Transcribed Interview H

**John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?

**Subject H** I like it. I think it's working out for school. First of all I think it's difficult for students in some ways because in some subject matter for math, they have to absorb a lot of material at one time. But I do feel we do get a lot more done with block scheduling. You know, you could do more activities, more cooperative learning activities and I think overall it's a good thing.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores

**Subject H** I know that you know that we've improved the SAT's and the HSPA scores. We do have time in class now to set aside to improve the HSPA scores and work on that. We do have a black book that we work out of for the HSPA. So those lead themselves to doing that I think.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.

**Subject H** I can't speak for a lot of that. I don't have any emotionally disturbed students. English as a Second Language I guess it gives them more time to interact within the classroom. You do have more time to spend individually with the student and in a forty minute class I think that would

go by really quickly and the ESL students you can spend more time helping them out.

**JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

**Subject H** It does give you more time to interact and spend more time on their needs for the individual students.

**JC** What teaching methods do you employ?

**Subject H** I employ lecture, cooperative learning, and that's it.

**JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?

**Subject H** I think like I said, there's more time you have them work together and have them work on projects like that and more time to answer questions.

**JC** What teaching methods do your colleagues employ?

**Subject H** I think the more cooperative learning, lecture, as so on.

**JC** In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?

**Subject H** I think that's basically what I said before.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and, (c) relationships between and among teachers and students?

**Subject H** Among teachers, I guess, you're on the same schedule. You see them. But if you're not on the same schedule you may not see somebody, you know, another teacher the way its set up. Between teachers and students, we think it's a good thing because you

get to spend a lot of time with the students. You get to know them better. There's more time to help.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

**Subject H** Well, I wasn't here when they made the switch. I came right afterwards. But the school that I had taught at previously, it was a middle school in [name deleted] and they were thinking about going to block scheduling and still stayed in touch with the principal, the vice principal that was over there. One of the reasons that he wanted to go to block scheduling was that there would be less disruption during the day. He was to do the class to class and it's an urban school and they had a lot of problems in the hallways and felt that that would be better. But as far as here, I wasn't here for that.

**JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?

**Subject H** Apprehensive. If I was put into that place but I just walked into block scheduling.

**JC** How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?

**Subject H** Like I said, I was kind of apprehensive about it. At the time period of ninety minutes it would be a big change. It really wasn't that much of a change.

**JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for teaching under block scheduling?

**Subject H** When I came here they knew that I was coming from a traditional schedule and Mr. [name deleted] had me observe classes and see how they manage the time. What activities they did.

- JC** Was this training sufficient?
- Subject H** Yes. I think the classes he placed me in were informative.
- JC** What is your role today in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject H** I don't think right now that I have much input in that.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject H** Right now, I don't think anything.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject H** Between administrators and teachers, I think you have more time to interact with them in a ninety-minute period. You don't have to rush in between classes to talk to them or I think it just gives more time for interaction.
- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject H** I really don't think I would like them to go for three classes for each semester. This is such a wide, big difference from two to three and I really wouldn't really want to see it go in that direction.
- JC** In your opinion, what are the most significant factors in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?
- Subject H** Support from administration, training, basically.
- JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?
- Subject H** No. I think I covered it.

Appendix I  
Transcribed Interview I

- John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?
- Subject I** I really like it. I wish my kids had block scheduling. My daughter's a junior at another high school. She works her butt off studying for the traditional seven or eight classes. She's ranked fourth in her class and I say she could do even better if she was on the block scheduling.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject I** For the most part, I believe everything is improved, gone up.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.
- Subject I** I believe for all of them, kids have improved drastically with block scheduling.
- JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?
- Subject I** Gives the teachers and the students more time to work with each other, both classroom teacher and the inclusion teacher have a lot more time to deal problem students.
- JC** What teaching methods do you employ?
- Subject I** Maybe more cooperative learning group work.
- JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?

- Subject I** There basically the same. Its just we have more time to do group work with the kids and have the kids work with their peers.
- JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?
- Subject I** I believe we all do a little more cooperative learning, more so than what we did in the past. That would be the biggest one.
- JC** In what ways are your colleagues, teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject I** Again, more group work.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and,(c) relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject I** With the students, it's still the same because they're always together. With my other peers, we're always in class so we don't see each other that often but we're here for the kids. With the teachers and the students, I mean, you get to know your kids very well. You're with them more during the day and it's a better atmosphere I believe.
- JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?
- Subject I** I heard all reasons, business wise and educational wise. Business wise I think they did it to save money here and there. But, for education wise, kids are in class always, less time in the hallway. You have approximately at a quick guess, maybe twenty, twenty-five minutes a day more instructional time as oppose to passing time.
- JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?



- Subject I** I didn't particularly care for it because I didn't think the kids could concentrate for the full time. I didn't think it was going to work at first.
- JC** How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?
- Subject I** I think it's the best thing. I think it's great. Students have four classes to study for. If they have four academic classes or maybe three and one, or maybe two and two, it's a great schedule for the students.
- JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for the change?
- Subject I** Talking to other teachers, told to be a little more organized, but just like all the other teachers it just you organize yourself and you break your timeframe down a little bit different.
- JC** Was the training sufficient?
- Subject I** It made me, when I went to a training course, it made me feel a little more comfortable and when that first day of block came I was much more prepared as if I didn't go to training.
- JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject I** They just asked for my comments at the time.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject I** Some of the teachers, I guess, the ones that had been around at the time. I was a younger teacher but some of the more experienced teachers were asked a little more questions.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?

- Subject I** I think it's easier for the administrators now in the respect that there's less discipline, therefore, a little easier to talk to.
- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject I** No. I think the transition was pretty smooth.
- JC** In your opinion, what are the most significant factors in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?
- Subject I** Again, the students' responses as far as their academic achievement have been tremendous. As I said before, if my daughter the junior, I wish she had had block scheduling. My son's in the eighth grade and they're talking about going to block scheduling themselves. So he's a little excited about that cause he knows he's only going to have four classes to study for as opposed to seven.
- JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?
- Subject I** I think it's very good for the students, the best thing in the world for them.

Appendix J  
Transcribed Interview J

- John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?
- Subject J** I am very much in favor of it. I've come from teaching at [name deleted] Middle School which is on a period schedule. This is my first year with block scheduling. I'm very please by it and I think will be some great benefits down the road as well.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject J** Since this is my first year, I don't know if I can really answer any of those questions since this is my first marking period, just finished up. Overall, grades seem to be improved over the middle school grades which does use a period schedule.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.
- Subject J** I think that I definitely have some students right now, ESL students, I think that they are benefiting greatly. At the beginning of the year they were, the test scores, their quiz scores, their overall homework grades were very poor. And right now, I teach a math 3 class and they're extremely they probably don't even belong in my math 3 class anymore. The learning curve for them is (inaudible).
- JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

- Subject J** I don't have any inclusion students.
- JC** What teaching methods do you employ?
- Subject J** I have a variety of hands-on activities as well as group collaborative activities as well as the students really enjoy. I bring in a lot of activities with manipulatives so to speak. They love any manipulative I can use there they seem to have the greatest impact and attract students in a positive way.
- JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject J** I have more time to complete a subject matter. Sometime over the traditional scheduling I was able to touch on it then it would be another day before we go back and have to re spend the beginning of the period reviewing what we just learned the day before. I feel that with the block scheduling I am able to get through an entire subject area or topic or discussion that we can complete in the appropriate time.
- JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?
- Subject J** I would say very similar methods that I discussed in the previous question.
- JC** In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject J** You probably have to ask them that question. I think that they probably taught block scheduling for the last couple of years so I am sure that everybody seems to like it here. My overall impression new to the staff but everybody does enjoy it.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and, (c) relationships between and among teachers and students?

**Subject J** Relationships among students, I think the students are able to concentrate on not having eight or seven subjects to worry about. They can concentrate and they only have three or four topic areas per semester and usually maybe only one or two of them are difficult. So a student weaker in math can focus on the math and have be able to help another student out with math because they're not worried about a science project, a history project, a math project, and an English project all in one because of the block scheduling they are able to focus on that one area that they need to. As far as the relationships among the teachers, I knew this staff here but I enjoy it a lot. I think we share a lot of activities, a lot of things I'm photocopying I'll give to another teacher and visa versa. They give me their work. We do a lot of sharing among especially among the subject areas. They are very similar. On even different my math 3 can apply to other areas, Algebra class and Geometry class, as well. That relationship is very strong. Among teachers and students, I have a very good relationship among students. I feel it's much improved with the block scheduling.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

**Subject J** I wasn't here at that point so my colleagues would have to speak to it. I had just moved from the middle school.

- JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?
- Subject J** I can tell you before coming up here, coming from forty-two minutes, just worried about if I had enough time to finish and still. Now I feel like wow. I can't even imagine what the forty-two minutes. I don't think I could ever go back. It would be hard. Very difficult.
- JC** How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?
- Subject J** As I said, I would have difficulty going back to the other. It would be very difficult switching everything and compress into forty-two minutes.
- JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for teaching under block scheduling?
- Subject J** None. I did not receive any on training but I did speak with the teachers during the summertime in the math department getting a feel for how they did their scheduling for the block scheduling. What we do now, class activity, class notes, review the homework type of, what their methodology was.
- JC** Was that sufficient?
- Subject J** Absolutely.
- JC** What is your role today in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject J** I don't have any.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject J** I'm sure they have. Just nothing formal but certainly informal input to the department heads as well as administration.

- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling
- Subject J** I was here at the onset.
- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject J** My only suggestion would be care in math students from one – if they have it now in the fall not getting math again until next spring would be they can watch the scheduling. Be careful because that would be the greatest time lapse between them. Have math and then again the next time they had math would be almost another year. Over a year.
- JC** What are the most significant factors, in your opinion, in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?
- Subject J** Teachers are on board with it. I think if the teachers believe in the program it will funnel down to the students and reflect in the test grades. But if the teachers themselves don't believe in the program it funnels its way down to the students.
- JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?
- Subject J** As I said, I think you know this is my first year here I really, I love it. I don't think I could go back. It would be difficult. I'd have a very difficult time going back.



Appendix K  
Transcribed Interview K

- John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?
- Subject K** At first I didn't really think I would like it. I think eighty-five minutes is a long period at the time which I still think it is. I do like it now. Its very intense. When you teach three its extremely intense. You don't have time to scratch your back. The paperwork is unbelievable because you're testing and quizzing much quicker. So, it's not fair to the kids if you don't get it back. We try to get it back within a day or two. And I know some teachers take a week to get some things back. And in some subject that might be OK but not in math. So, you know, it has its good points, it has its bad points. Mathematically, I think its difficult for some not to have math all year round.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject K** I think that's a tough one to answer because different kids learn differently. You know, how do you compare unless you compare the same subject mean as the same student. I think its difficult. I find that some students do a lot better and some students don't but I think the attention span is the problem. Some of them have difficulty paying attention for that length of period of time. Also, it moves quickly. Again, mathematically, sometimes the student needs time to digest something and work it through over a period of days and you don't have the time. You've got to learn it right away. Where some schools do the AB block that

actually gives them more time to digest it, I think. So, I don't find a significant difference one way or another.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disabled students and students for whom English is a second language?

**Subject K** I don't have too many classes; so I don't know if my opinion would be helpful to use there. I do have some ESL students and again with math I think they do a little bit better with Algebra. I teach Algebra so the Geometry is taught because of the language.

But with the Algebra the numbers are the numbers and they can follow me even if they can't understand what I am saying. I don't see any difficulties with that.

**JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

**Subject K** Again.

**JC** What teaching methods do you employ?

**Subject K** They do some cooperative learning. I find that some of the other teachers use it a little bit more than I do. Again, with the subject the pre-calc they do. They work a little bit together. I'll put problems on the board. They have a little more time for discovery than you did in your traditional, you know, to give them fifteen minutes to work on one problem in a traditional schedule takes out such a chunk of your time that you can't give them as challenging problems. Where I find I can

give them a little more challenging problems now for them to work on in small groups.

**JC** You'll excuse me if some questions seem redundant?

**JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?

**Subject K** Again, with me, not too much different. I find that I teach first now. I used to go over homework first and then teach my new lesson and I changed that right away with the block scheduling because at the end of the block some of them were getting a little bit drained and they weren't paying as close attention to me and they need to pay attention. So I usually go in and I just start right away with my new lesson or continue where I left off and I don't have a problem. I find that most of them I have their undivided attention for the entire block. And then we save the homework until the end. Again, they're checking their homework. Some of them have it right so that a little bit of a down time. So I'd rather do the down time at the end of the block with the length of the period.

**JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?

**Subject K** What's nice with the Geometry and some of the lower level classes is that they do get to do some group work and more discovery than I do with the classes that I teach. So, I've seen some actually one of the teachers had a quest speaker come in one of his classes and that was nice. They get to take them into the computer room and use that as an option. So again, depending on what particular area in math, they do some nice things though.

**JC** In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?

**Subject K** I don't know I can answer that one.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and, (c) relationships between and among teachers and students?

**Subject K** I think the students get along with each other better because they have to because they're in classes with each other for eighty-five minutes. So I do think they get along better with each other. I don't think that my relationship has changed as much. I think that I got to know them better under the traditional over the whole year. For example, if I have a student in the fall and they're participating in activities in the spring, I don't get to share that with them like I would in the traditional. So I think I did get to know them a little bit better under the traditional and I find that I have a harder time remembering their names in the block afterwards when I see them in the hall because I have them for that shorter period of time. I don't think its because I'm getting older.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

**Subject K** I'm not sure. They were looking for a change. I think they were looking to improve attendance and some of the schools were crowded so there is less time in the hallways. I don't know if any of it was financial. My personal opinion I think they were hoping some of the older teachers would retire because they wouldn't want a change and get some new blood in and that, of course, did happen with

some. I don't think it happened with as many as they anticipated. I think most people were pretty optimistic and said I'll give it a shot for a year or two and then if I don't like it I can go then.

**JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?

**Subject K** I was not for it. I was not for it and I still do honestly believe that you can take a teacher that is a good teacher in a forty-five minute period and now that teacher goes to one of two extremes. They either become a great teacher or they become a just OK teacher. Holding the attention for forty-five minutes is challenging. It is challenging and I think some teachers have difficulty doing that.

**JC** How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling, if they have at all?

**Subject K** Well, again I think I would like the AB schedule better. When you teach three it is very, very intense and then that we give you leg at every other day so it would kind of even it out and for math and foreign language maybe even more so for foreign language the block scheduling is difficulty because you could have a whole year off and now you have to come back and remember where you left off and the end of Spanish two and pick up on Spanish three. So, you know, it might even be nice if they tried to just do an AB with certain classes and do the semester block with other classes. It might be something experimental that they could try. But, I adjusted to it pretty easily which I did not think that I would. I think all of the administrators should talk me or survey more the teachers to get some ideas of what they think should be changed.

- JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for teaching under block scheduling?
- Subject K** I did go out to a school in Pennsylvania and observed and talked to teachers and that was pretty helpful.
- JC** Was this training sufficient?
- Subject K** It was for me. I don't know if it was for everyone though. And everyone also didn't go so you know they only picked certain teachers to go. So they probably should have done something overall with the entire faculty.
- JC** What is your role today in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject K** I don't really have one.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject K** I'm not so sure that they have one either. [name deleted] was here. We started with her and she did ask for opinions and when it was new and I think not because of any administrative I think just because now you're here for awhile you doing it for awhile. She may have done the same thing. It's good to get a variety of opinions.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling
- Subject K** Again, I think that's a tough one to answer because the administration also changes so you're comparing one administrator to another and I don't think you can do that.

**JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?

**Subject K** Well, besides what I've mentioned before with the A and the B, more communication, guidance needs to make some more adjustments but

**JC** What are the most significant factors, in your opinion, in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?

**Subject K** It does have to be a team. Everybody does have to kind of work together and help each other with it when we're starting. It's not an easy adjustment sharing ideas with other teachers with your colleagues. I think it's very significant for it.

**JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

**Subject K** Yes. I always have the student's best interest in mind. I find that I think one of the reasons that they went to block scheduling was to open up their schedules so they can take different subjects. A lot of students are now taking more major courses than electives. I don't think that that's exactly what it was designed for. You can take my boss for example, I think he would have loved to have woodshop class so he knows how to hammer a nail into the wall when he was in high school but he didn't have room for it. They have room for it now, so you think that they should be pushing for those areas. We have excellent programs here, home ec, wood areas, arts areas and I think the kids should take advantage of that more than they are instead of doubling up on majors. What's also happening is you're getting a student who will take seven majors and it is unbelievably intense when they have the four majors. So, there should be some kind of check point and some kind of limitations and some of them



will double up on the math for which it is ok if there in different semesters but some of the students walk out of my Algebra II and walk across the hall and walk into the Geometry room and I love math. I don't think I'd want three hours straight of it. I find that they're not as successful as they would be if they had it in different semesters. So, that is something should be corrected. Again, you have the student's signing up for these classes if there very involved with school their activities I seen kids just cry their eyes out because they're so overwhelmed and that breaks my heart. A lot of my students will come and ask me to look over their schedule and will ask for my opinion. So that's good because I don't want them to be overwhelmed and I'll say suppose it comes out in fifths you have to look at the whole picture. Suppose you have these four classes together and its during your soccer season are you going to be able to handle it. No. Then that's not the schedule you want. Those are some of the problems. So those are some of the problems.

Appendix L  
Transcribed Interview L

- John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?
- Subject L** I love it. Absolutely, love it.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on a variety measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessments scores.
- Subject L** Well, I can speak only about the AP scores and the Senior Honors classes that's all I'm teaching. I couldn't answer about HSPA or SAT. Well, when we introduced the block scheduling we were a bit fearful how we would manage with the AP classes because under the block scheduling timing the marking period ends at the end of January and the exams are in May and we were concerned that students would forget their material. It would be too far, spaced out because of the space. But I found that we really overcame that short coming of the attention minus by having review sessions and we have to be flexible. Some of us due it before school, some after school, and some are doing professional periods. We're always running up to the kids to come to review. So in terms of scores we did not suffer. Neither did we suffer the regular honor classes. Should I tell you know about the benefit?
- JC** Sure.
- Speaker L** The benefit is I'm always fresh. I don't do five times? The same things. B. The fact that I have eighty-five minutes, I can vary assignments, I can plan a number of different assignments. I find that the interruption, the

absence of interruptions between a forty-five minute period were we have eight periods a day, is a blessing to both to me and to the students because I don't have - the bell doesn't ring at the high points in the lesson. The bell doesn't ring in the middle of or too soon. So, in terms of ability to plan, student scores, there is no deterrent to the faculty. In terms of allowing me to plan and map out larger maps it is a great advantage. In terms of absences, well if a student is out one day it is as if he were out two days but by the same token the time, the ability to make up, is extended too because now he has eighty-five minutes to work with me. So I don't think this is a deterrent either. I really love block scheduling.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.

**Subject L** I can speak on about ESL students because some of them have crossed into the normal classes. I don't see any deterrent whatsoever. I don't. I see only positive.

**JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

**Subject L** I never had inclusion.

**JC** What teaching methods do you employ?

**Subject L** I need to think about that because I do so many things. I cannot sum it up into one sentence.

- JC** Well, perhaps, then, in what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject L** I have time to plan diverse lesson plans and strategies. I can read, speak, write, brainstorm carry discussions, read samples of student writing and critique by virtue of having eighty-five minutes. I can employ every strategy, Bloom's Taxonomy.
- JC** In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject L** I can speak only colleagues in my department, I think they, we all embrace hold heartedly the method, so I am assuming that my colleagues have adapted their methods and their quantity and quality of the lessons to the new reality. So obviously you have forty-five minutes, you have limited time. When you have eighty-five, you can try different diverse strategies that come together really neatly. I mean it's like a puzzle, you know. How many pieces can you pick in forty-five minutes versus eighty-five minutes? How much thinking can go into placing the puzzle?
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and,(c) relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject L** I think students made a wonderful transition to block scheduling because it offered them more – it offers them more freedom commensurate with the adult world. If something can be fourth class, they can work most of them have jobs. Block scheduling has eliminated free periods which was not

productive. I can speak only for my seniors, the fact that they can plan out electives, how hard they want to work in springtime or fall. They can eliminate redundancy I think my students have a very positive reaction to it. My colleagues, I can, I don't know. I'm connected with eight teachers in my department and in the math department. I don't know what other departments. It seems that, I don't know, that we have a very positive attitude with this.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

**Subject L** Well, I am assuming that benefits were discovered by the pioneers in the field and the rumor spread. We went onto block scheduling, people came here, teachers, administrators, came to our school and spoke to us and voiced opinions that were very favorable. Apparently, this is the way to go. I don't know, it seems to be the way of the future and we like it. I don't know whether all departments like it but my department loves it.

**JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?

**Subject L** I always, I don't know how to say this, I have a problem with attitude, period – towards anything - anything in writing. And when a new possibility appeared, I'm curious about it and then I listened to people praise the system and I don't know I had good feelings about it. I wasn't worried. That's it, I wasn't worried. How will I fill the time? What will happen? Oh, my God, eighty-five minutes where the kid whose

obnoxious. I didn't have the feeling intensity enough to consider them or worry. It was a new way and I was curious about it.

**JC** How have your feelings changed since switching to block scheduling?

**Subject L** I love it.

**JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for teaching under block scheduling?

**Subject L** We had, people came and talked to us about it, about how it works, about the general idea. How maybe it worked in their school, so we got the idea. These people tried

**JC** Did you get a chance to observe any other schools?

**Subject L** No. Some of us, I didn't. And some of us, I just listened.

**JC** Was that training sufficient?

**Subject L** I'm a veteran teacher, I really. Yes, it was sufficient because the idea was make it work, make it creative, make it good for the kids, make it good for you. And that was enough I didn't need more than that.

**JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?

**Subject L** I didn't know, this alright.

**JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?

**Subject L** None.

**JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling

- Subject L** I don't think (laugh) there at the beginning there were teachers who objected. I believe in every school system there are teachers who will object period and those who will accept and be curious about it. I don't think it has changed relationships between the staff and the administration. I mean this is a fact complete you know, so those who complain hushed up and those who were excited got more excited. Then you could positive manifestation.
- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manor in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject L** I didn't know if my answer would fall under the right category. The only gripe I have is that we have students who are very involved in physical activities and other events with academia and if they're out one day I lose them for a long period of time and the same students who are brilliant in my classroom are also great citizens and are involved in many activities and are out of class for many reasons. That is the only problem I have. Yeah, the absences doubling time.
- JC** In your opinion, what are the most significant factors in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?
- Subject L** I would say the ability of the teacher to make it work. I think this is more the responsibility on the teacher than the students, you know, because ultimately, we have them, and what we do carries to the creativity of the teacher and willingness to be creative.



**JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

**Subject L** I don't know how to answer that. For me it was a positive experience from the very beginning and this was so because I had a positive attitude and I wanted to make it work. I think for, I don't want to speak for my department, for my humble me, it is a blessing in disguise. Not in disguise, it is a blessing. I didn't what to add because I'd be infringing on other teachers to write. No, keep experimenting we all do that in a way.

Appendix M  
Transcribed Interview M

- John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?
- Subject M** I think it really works well. It gives you the opportunity to provide many activities to the students. Every day I start my lesson with a warm up activity due now, which usually related to the lesson from the day before. Just refresh it. And then we go over the homework. It gives me a chance to have the kids put work on the board. Whereas, in a forty-five minute class you're pretty much rushing to get your lesson out and giving your lecture and giving your notes and, basically, it all business. We work a lot in cooperative learning groups. It gives the kids a chance to know each other a little bit better. After the cooperative learning groups, they usually do independent practice and there is just so much that you can do with it so I just feel like in a block schedule, in an hour and a half, you have so many opportunities to do so many different things and, basically, I use probably five different teaching methods in a block. Whereas, if I had to do it in a forty-five minutes, it would be a whole lecture and independent practice.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject M** I know for sure our building that our High School Proficiency scores, have gone up, significantly, at least, in the math area. I think they have improved slightly a lot but I'm not guaranteeing it but in English but I know that in math overall we have

improved so much. So I can guarantee that that is correct. As far as grades with my students, I don't have anything to really compare it to. I used to teach in a middle school so I can't compare those grades to my high school students. But I would say generally, that the kids probably do better because they only have to focus on four academic or four subjects as opposed to eight. So I think that gives them more of an opportunity to work on and focus on and most of them only have two academics and sometimes a gym as an elective so it at the most they are focusing on two or three academics as opposed to six if you have a regular schedule of eight periods a day. So I would say that their grades probably improved just because their focus is on just two or three subjects instead of more.

**JC**

What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and students for whom English is a second language.

**Subject M**

I can speak on the self-contained classrooms because that's what I teach. Basically, the focus again, my kids have four subject so they are able to just focus on four things instead of seven or eight if we were to have the full periods. And the other thing is that, I just think that they're getting so much more meat in the subjects because I'm doing so many different things and spending so much more time on it. I don't need to rush to the next lesson just to get it all in the forty-five minute block. So I just, there are so many different opportunities for them to come to the board and to work together and if there's anything that they struggle with I have the time to go back over

it and spend more time on the lesson. So I think it's definitely a benefit for special education kids.

**JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

**Subject M** As far as inclusion, I teach I have one in class per class each year so far and I've been here for three years. I would say that the biggest thing they're benefiting from two teachers in the classroom. There's more time for me as a class four teacher to get involved in the activities. Whereas, if it was a forty-five minute block, I think it would be the regular ed teacher presenting a lesson and not really handing the roles over to me. I mean I don't know for sure because I've never done it in the middle school but here I'm involved with the lesson. I've presented ?do now? I've checked their homework. I have more responsibility in a block schedule setting I think then I would in a regular forty-five minute class and the kids benefit because they have two teachers. Two different people who have different views on things they might understand it better from me then the regular ed teacher, I might present it in a different way. So I think they benefit cause they have two people in the room that are both taking an active part.

**JC** Again, forgive me if my questions are redundant.

**Subject M** That's OK.

**JC** What teaching methods do you employ?

**Subject M** I usually start with a lecture, OK, we do a lot of cooperative learning in groups of two or three and then we usually end up in an independent practice where they're working on their own. That's what I basically do each day. Pretty much follow the same routine.

- JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject M** I would say cooperative learning. There's more time for it.
- JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?
- Subject M** From what I can see, I see a lot of cooperative learning, especially, in the English classes. I always see them having a circle discussion in English, History and Science classes even. I know that they do a lot of group discussing.
- JC** In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject M** Again, the same thing, cooperative learning.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and, (c) relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject M** Relationships among students, I think that they get to know each other better, again, through all the group activities that we do. They seem to get along a lot better. They spend so much time together, an hour and an half every single day with the same group of kids and in my room at least I change their partners all the time. So they're interacting with so many different people. I have a small class. I only have ten. So they've all work with each other. I sure the same goes for the larger classes too. It gives them an opportunity to work with so many different kids and really get to know them because they've so much time to discuss.
- As far as teachers, there are days that I go by that I never I might not even see certain teachers. So I guess my relationship with certain teachers doesn't really exist so

much right now. As in the next semester, if we're off the same time, the teachers that I mostly speak to are the ones that have the same professional as me, because it's an hour and one-half; so in that hour and a half, depending on whose off at that time, I can collaborate and talk about the students. Especially, in the special ed department we have to track our students and that's when we're suppose to do it during our hour and a half off. The teachers that have off with me are the ones I basically spend my time with but there's times when friends of mine don't have the same block and I won't see them the whole semester during the school day because if you are teaching three and they're teaching three and you don't have the same time off, you know, you don't really spend much time together. And then my relationship with the students, I think have improved again because I have the time to ask them about their other classes. I have the time to ask them about their weekend and what they did. I can take a minute at the beginning of class because I know I have time to do that. And, again, from the group you learn so much more from the kids and I'm spending an hour and a half with them each day.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

**Subject M** I wasn't here during the switch so that these next questions the group of questions I wasn't here for the decision making or I was in a middle school. I was on regular schedule and this all happened while I was there.

**JC** When you did begin teaching here, what type of training did you receive in preparation for block scheduling?

- Subject M** I actually didn't receive any training. It was just kind of, you know, I just had to work it out for myself. Some days I planned a little bit more than I needed to and some days I was under. I'd say about three weeks into teaching in a block you kind of get the pattern down and you know how much you can present in the next hour and a half. I mean there are still days when I plan too much and you continue it the next day and there were still days where you plan too little and you end up short and you have to review a little at the end.
- JC** Would it have been beneficial to you if you received training?
- Subject M** It probably would have been.
- JC** What is your decision making role today regarding block scheduling?
- Subject M** My decision or role?
- JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject M** As far as scheduling the kids?
- JC** Anything to do with block scheduling.
- Subject M** Any of my roles in block scheduling? The only role that I play I guess is just suggesting the courses that they'll take the following year. I really don't have any decision making about the block scheduling process.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject M** The only thing I know we all have a say in is the kids scheduling what track they're going to be in the following year.



- JC** You may not be able to answer this but how has the relationship between administrators and teacher changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject M** I wasn't here before that.
- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manor in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject M** I think it works pretty well. The only thing that I think that maybe they could take a look at is as far as math goes, there's times when kids will have let say their freshmen year, they'll have math in the fall and the following year if they don't have it in that fall semester and they take it in the spring, that's a year and a half that they haven't touched any math. I think that the main thing. I think it may be good for all subjects, Math, English, History, Science to make sure the kids each year if you have Math and English in the fall then the following year they give them Math and English in the fall. That is the only a year gap between subjects and I think it's a big disgrace to the student if you have Math and English in the fall, and then in the following year not till spring because they forget that stuff. And it's very hard to pick up where they left off with most of the students.
- JC** In your opinion, what are the most significant factors in either the success or the failure of block scheduling?
- Subject M** I think the success is the teachers and their willingness to change. I think when most teachers taught just forty-five minutes. They were use to lecture the whole entire time and I think now especially for the teachers who have been here a for a while, I

think they were all very nervous about this and I think they've all changed themselves and tried – I have to do cooperative learning, I have to do so many different things to spend the hour and a half, there's just so many things you can do with the lesson. So I think the teachers have made the change, you know, a positive, a block scheduling positive.

**JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

**Subject M** We had a Math department meeting yesterday and it came up about a student who was transferred here from [deleted] and they have forty-five minute periods and now here he is transferring in second semester where we are on block scheduling. He's going to be off with his credits because he's not putting in the entire time that the students that we have done. Mr. [name deleted] had made mention of maybe, because we have three schools in the district, that one of the schools should stay on the eight period day so that if there are kids transferring in that were on that kind of schedule they could transfer into that school to finish out the year so their credits won't get messed up. So I would say that's the only thing that they need to maybe look into.

Appendix N  
Transcribed Interview N

- John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?
- Subject N** I think block scheduling from my prospective give us help in physical education. It has had a positive impact on student participation in my area as well as achievement and it's been positive amongst the staff in my department as far a scheduling and continuity of instruction.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on varying measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject N** You know in the small areas where physical education and health have an impact on final exam scores when we give a final exam, in physical education there's more time dedicated to review. Those students that are required to take the final exam, usually, score on an average of 85 or better. As far as SAT scores, placement scores, things of that nature, as for proficiency you never ditch a policy or writing across the curriculum which we implement in health and phys ed, at least, four times a semester in each block, blocks 1, 2, 3 and 4. So as far as what that impact is I can honestly say I think it is positive.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and honor students and students for whom English is the second language.
- Subject N** Again, I think there's a positive impact from the phys ed, health standpoint. As far as the emotionally disabled students, students that are in self-contained

classrooms, the way the district has it set up they have a separate physical education teacher that comes from the outside to take care of their physical education instruction and their health instruction for whatever model that they are functioning at as provided by that particular classroom teacher. Inclusion has been on a very limited basis just because of scheduling for the students. In general, I think it's been positive.

**JC** What teaching methods do you employ?

**Subject N** Well, within the physical education it's, you know, a lot of team sports because of the facilities, number of students involved, cooperative learning, obviously, team sports again because individual sports are amended based on the facilities and the number of students and the staff. With block scheduling combined I think again it's probably the environment for the students.

**JC** You'll forgive me if some of my questions are redundant.

**Subject N** Well, the other too is just reading over your list I had not been at the high school before here at [deleted] for block scheduling. I came from [deleted] Middle school so I've experienced the traditional eight period day there and I made the transition day, I came into block scheduling and now some of these questions are the school and how it ran pre block scheduling which I wasn't here for so I won't be able to answer some of those.

**JC** Well, that's fine. So in coming from the other high school in what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling then they were under the traditional schedule?

- Subject N** Well, I think there's more time that's geared for students centered activities and students driven material amongst the class; which is out there I think probably the best learning situation for a student to be in because you have the time where more or less teacher centered in the 40 - 45 minute class period. So I think that's the biggest impact, student centered proficiency.
- JC** What teaching methods do the colleagues in your department employ?
- Subject N** I mean if you could give me a few examples,
- JC** You can skip on any question that you wish.
- Subject N** As far as method goes, I mean, the style of teaching again goes its teacher oriented to the point of, you know, instruction with an overview of activity, demonstrating activity, modeling the activity and then letting a student model the activity, either work individually, more or less its on a group basis then provide the feedback to the students and progress from those activities into a team setting.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and,(c) relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject N** I'll start with teachers and students; I think teachers and students develop a closer rapport by being in classroom for a longer period of time. Again, when you focus on student centered activity it gives the teacher an opportunity to have direct communication with students on an individual basis. So I think that's positive as far as teacher/ student is concerned. As far as among teachers, I think with the four blocks I think it would be the same as with a traditional schedule. I really

can't speak to much about this again I didn't have the staff that I have here now, you know, pre block scheduling. And amongst students, I think the students given the amount of time again that block scheduling allows get a chance to develop their social skills on a daily basis that again that improves relationships. You get a chance to communicate because you're in there for that block of time. Communication, I think, is enhanced and that just the communication is enhanced there's a better understanding, the students have a better understanding of each other. Their behavior really socially is going to have a positive impact.

**JC** Are you in a position to answer what the reasons were that led to switching from the traditional schedule.

**Subject N** Nah.

**JC** But before coming to your school, what were your feelings toward block scheduling before you began teaching under it?

**Subject N** I had very limited knowledge about block scheduling. I was just apprehensive because I think teachers were getting into routine in the traditional eight period day. So when you get thrown off that you know you just apprehensive just out of human nature.

**JC** Now have your feeling changed?

**Subject N** Yeah, the feelings have changed. From my perspective and particularly related to some other questions, when I have to schedule my staff it's much easier scheduling and again because of the time, the delivery of material in the classroom, the instruction I think is improved in the ninety minutes.

**JC** What type of training did you receive before you started with block scheduling?

- Subject N** I didn't have any training.
- JC** Was that sufficient?
- Subject N** It was sufficient because of the support of the staff when I came into the position and the administration. So I'm, with my personality, I pick it up quickly.
- JC** What is your role today in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject N** Again, as far as scheduling is concerned, you know, setting up the courses and the staff schedule within my department, Health and Physical Education, days I didn't have any other than to work with the administrators to fit my department schedule into the, you know, into the entire school schedule.
- JC** What roles do others have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject N** The only role they have within physical education scheduling becomes gender specific because you need coverage with boys/girls locker rooms so you always need to have at least one male and one female teacher on the floor teaching a class at one time. So there a gender basis that goes into scheduling. As far as any other role that they have you get a sheet that asks what their preferences are for the subject specifically in health. That they like to keep teach I try to accommodate it but if the schedule work out. Where it doesn't they don't have any recourse to change it. That's basically it.
- JC** Is it fair to say that you will not be able to answer about the relationship between administrators and teachers how it's changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject N** Yeah. I don't know how to answer that.



- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject N** No. No.
- JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?
- Subject N** Well, in Physical Education I think that the major drawback is, again, it's for the other classes as well, you have when a semester is completed and your done physical education and you know you might not have physical education for another year. Given the current state of fitness levels, in general, that's not a good thing because most students apparently are getting their activity in school. So that's dealing with the continuity of the subject, I mean, the continuity of offering fitness related activities, block scheduling's major drawback is that that time lapse from one year to the next the student may not have that continuation of a particular subject for another year. I think that's a long time to go for physical education as well as other subjects.

Appendix O  
Transcribed Interview O

- John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?
- Subject O** Block scheduling is a different approach for the students to learn and it provides more time to be put in and finds a lot of model problems first to be broken down and to be continued followed up by problems by themselves that they can relate back to in the beginning of the block. It provides different aspects of the subject to be approached at different views.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on a variety of measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?
- Subject O** I would get to them 50/50. We have certain students that will adapt to it pretty well. They enjoy the time being spent and then on the other hand we do have students that do get nervous and the anxiety starts to effect. They get very anti so you have two different views but between the two different views you're able to come up with some type of model that you can use to get through the block scheduling.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students? These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disturbed students and honor students and students for whom English is a second language.
- Subject O** Number one thing would be time. Time is a big factor. You have ninety minutes instead of forty-five minutes. You have a chance to go through the complete lesson and then you do have time to have the question answer session at the end to

make sure each student understands the purpose of the lesson and what the goal was for that particular day or the prior day if you want to use a spiral review within two to three days or two to three lessons days put together. Within the special ed department, for myself, I feel that the extra time depending on the teacher personality and the teacher's outlook, it benefits them. Even though they're in the room for ninety minutes you can provide a lot more technology, use computers, use overhead projectors, and the next thing you know the class is – the block is finished or the class is finished. That's it.

**JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

**Subject O** Once again, it provides a lot of time. They're not rushed. OK? It gives them a sense of understanding instead of being part of a forty minute class, let's say the first twenty-five minutes they don't understand what's going on you have that extra time to go back for them to understand even if its one aspect of the lesson your goal for the day, especially, for the inclusion class.

**JC** What teaching methods do you employ?

**Subject O** Coming from a different state there's a lot of different strategies. My number one strategy is the [inaudible] format providing the student with some type of concrete information right from the beginning and explaining to them the steps that are to be followed get through that particular lesson. Once again, each teacher has different strategies, there's numerous strategies out there but when you're teaching special ed it comes down to what strategy fits your personality and what strategy will work for that first half of the year or second half of the year depending on the students.

- JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?
- Subject O** Once again it comes back to time, especially within the special ed department. It does provide more time for the student if you want to set up a project the student do have to rush. They do not have to meet a deadline so called deadline they have the extra time to work on it because most of the time they might not have their technology at home so within the block scheduling it does provide extra time to complete the project. Its, also, to use the technology that's out there because the technology out there right now, day after day is getting better. I can't think of another word to use but it's a bad thing.
- JC** What teaching methods do your colleagues employ?
- Subject O** I'll have to skip that question because I guess I'm still new to the system.
- JC** Sure. Would it be fair to say that you would skip question eight then as well? "In what ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional
- Subject O** That's correct.
- JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and,(c) relationships between and among teachers and students?
- Subject O** Relationships among the students, once again the time issue – the time is there the trust is built. OK Once the trust is set as the foundation you have the students. The students want to do whatever it takes to complete the course or get a decent grade to satisfy that requirement. Among the teachers, it's a mixed feeling

because some teachers within the new generation of teachers their understanding of time is the importance. If you have a traditional teachers, they're use to forty minutes, come in put up their objective, do now, complete a quick mini lesson hoping that the students do catch on and their on there way with two, three questions for homework. The following just they'll review for the first few minutes but going back to the block scheduling that's where the time is a factor.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

**Subject O** No clue.

**JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?

**Subject O** Looking forward for it. I find with block scheduling you are able to complete certain tasks in the classroom and it can be your lesson, it can be projects, it could be even a review game. The review game at this level is very important because by providing a review game I even review the material and they gaining points on their next exam or its for them and they realize it. So they are not rushed they play the review game two minutes three minutes at least if you have a review game within the block scheduling they'll get the full gist of the review.

**JC** Have your feelings changed now that you are teaching block scheduling?

**Subject O** My feelings are the same. It's a ... I'm for block scheduling and once again it provides the time for the students. Basically, that's it.

**JC** Did you receive training in preparation for teaching under block scheduling?

- Subject O** Yes, back in New York I went to a couple meetings. I was part of the lead membership team, the executive board where they started to come up with the block scheduling. Within the New York system, the block schedule was weaned in so it wasn't given to you at one time. Each teacher had a little single classes, you have forty minute class and a block schedule. So last year on a Monday, I would teach one single period. Period one I would teach for forty minutes and then periods five and six was a block. So I had my class for an hour and an half. So you have to deal with the balance, the work, especially, when you have singles and doubles, meaning the block period, you have to make sure whatever you start on Monday by Friday because I had three classes everybody had to be at a certain I wouldn't think level by at a certain page for that particular chapter or lessons for the week.
- JC** What is your role today in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject O** I'll skip that question cause, I guess
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling? Skip that as well?
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject O** Only thing I have to say is that administration understands where the teacher's coming from if they are familiar with the block scheduling. Once you step into a block scheduling or a block period, period one two, you must be prepared because the kids will sense if you're not prepared. They'll pick it up one , two, three. You have to make sure you have enough work because if you don't they sense it. Just like blood in the water, they sense it and it comes on OK like if this teacher prepared or was he

prepared only twenty minutes and the second half of the block he let them play a game. So you have to be prepared within a block schedule.

**JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?

**Subject O** As of right now I would leave it alone. Just leave it because its working. The scores I have done some homework on this school that I joined this staff and within the math department it's the numbers are there. Its proven. Block scheduling worked last year and the year before and the scores keep going up.

**JC** What are the most significant factors in your opinion in either the success or failure of block scheduling?

**Subject O** I'll skip that one.

**JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

**Subject O** Once again, its up to the teacher to provide the work for block scheduling. It's a big responsibility because you're not dealing with two kids. You have a class of twenty, twenty-five students and the more work they could put forth the better understanding that they'll come out later on. By having the single classes, it takes longer to cover something or cover a certain topic or chapter but for in the block scheduling you're able to try and condense the most important but by continuing with the most important issues and the key facts you also have time to provide for the review game and for the students to say ok I do understand what's going on. That's it.



Appendix P  
Transcribed Interview P

**John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?

**Subject P** I think block scheduling is very effective. What it does is give the kids, especially, high school students, is the age I have which is 11<sup>th</sup> grade English also the SAT prep, to have a short intense experience with which they're pretty much involved. So, and that not be a very effective to do so. Obviously, there are good things and bad things about kind of scheduling but that seems to be the best we have at this point in time.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on a variety of measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?

**Subject P** Well, the two things I work with consistently be the test scores New High School Proficiency Test and also the SAT. I teach the SAT class here at [name deleted]. Now, with the SAT class it's treated almost like some of the other outside institutions do. It's treated like a semester a big grouping. Now what happens is with that big grouping with the SAT it gives them a good experience before the test. If it was a year long class I don't think it would be as effective because when I teach it say in January or March or even May or June whatever test they're going to take they would probably drop off their diligence and try to keep up their studies. Now what happens because it's a block schedule, it's for a shorter amount of time in weeks the kids are attentive the whole period of time. That means they know because whatever semester we do it whether it be spring or fall where we take care of that and you really get a good score. HSPA training I think it works great for the fall semester because if the

English kid in the eleventh grade has fall semester HSPA training what happens is he does a great job cause you can go throughout the whole semester, he or she shows, excuse me. In the spring semester though you only have a month to deal with it and that's a lot of stuff to cover between the beginning of February and the end of March. So the fall semester, I really like block scheduling for the HSPA but the spring semester I kind of suspect if it going to be real effective on it.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students?

These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disabled students and honor students and students for whom English is a second language.

**Subject P** The only ones I have involvement with are the students' IEP and that includes inclusion. Self contained I don't deal with, obviously, emotionally disabled falls into the category I mentioned. ESL not as much ESL as you remember or as I kind of go through my experiences that as they go through say they do have 4 IEP's, what happens if they get lost. They continue to stay lost and it's harder to get them on track, especially, for an eighty-five minute lesson. That could really kind of be bad. However, if you keep them going, they keep going for a longer period of time. A lot also with some of those things with the (inaudible), IEP's, whatever it may be they have a hard time sitting still; so we generally call it sitting still for period of time.

**JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion classes?

**Subject P** I have one inclusion class and that works rather well the way we schedule it and also worked around a bit the inclusion teacher. And myself, we have the inclusion

students on one two rows of the room and I had the other rows in the room so basically we would teach the lesson, I would do a lot of the teaching lesson and she would do a lot of the individual instruction. She wouldn't limit it to just those kids which were focus on those (inaudible). When we would go to other activities we would break off into groups and for some reason, obviously purposely some reason these kids were always in the same grouping clusters. It goes really effective to have another teacher for eighty-five minutes.

**JC** What teaching methods do you employ?

**Subject P** For English we have a new curriculum that's out. A lot of teaching methods is built upon the modeling writing and reading. You kind of have the state separate time between writing and reading sections. So what happens we do a lot of modeling its one of the big things we're doing. I do a little bit of lecturing here and there. I do a lot of test preparation techniques and a lot of graphic organizers, a lot of breaking it into ten fifteen minutes segments so the kids are basically always moving through the lesson as opposed to sitting there stagnant for a half hour, forty minutes break time.

**JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?

**Subject P** I've only taught under block scheduling. I've never taught under the traditional schedule so I guess the teaching methods I have are the ones I've always had.

**JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?

**Subject P** I don't visit a lot of their classrooms so I guess they probably have changed and I assume they probably have changed under the block scheduling so that could be a little bit different. But I know this from before it a curriculum based instruction and

teaching method I know they're all using a lot of the modeling techniques we've been doing within the last couple of years. Two years, actually.

**JC**

What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and, (c) relationships between and among teachers and students?

**Subject P**

Well, its good and bad. Between students you have if you have it for a whole block; if I have tension for the whole block between many students it remains tense for the whole block. And I'm not talking about anything that can be involved as a violation of school code. I'm talking about just general tension. But also you have to realize they're only with them for a couple months and they're a little bit better with a couple of months. So it's good and bad. Between teachers it seems as though a lot of us don't have the time to interact with one another because with block scheduling we don't have those short periods of time where we all have off because of blocks being off at different times. So you might know a teacher especially in the English department you want to get materials from one another that you may have a teacher first block off one year, one semester shall we say. The next semester you're off third he's off second so you don't have kind of camaraderie again. So it's good and bad. So you can't get the materials and talk with you colleagues about certain what we do in certain situations and ask for advise and also its good though because you get the experience of a lot of different people around to talk with and interact. Between teachers and students I think it works well. I think in the eighty-five minutes we can really develop some rapport with the students and if you work hard at it you have them you have the time in the first two weeks to really get to know them as opposed

to I suppose if you only have forty-three forty-five minutes that would be a short amount of time. You wouldn't know them until maybe October or a little later in the years.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

**Subject P** I can't answer that because I've always been on block schedule.

**JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before you taught under block scheduling?

**Subject P** Obviously, the same answer as the previous question.

**JC** Have your feelings changed at all since actually teaching on block schedule – same answer?

**Subject P** Yeah.

**JC** What type of training did you receive in preparation for teaching in block scheduling?

**Subject P** No. Basically I had the block schedule teachers. So I never got anything to kind of switch to change but I remember teachers telling me about certain things, like you're always noticing the time cause you want to keep them going through out the lesson. And in eighty-five minutes you have distinct sections in the English department were we wanted forty to forty-five minutes of reading or so and forty forty-five minutes of writing or so. Depends on how much you want to do. Obviously, some days you it might get skewed but you want to take this to the activities and diversify.

**JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?

**Subject P** It's none.

- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject P** I suppose some people did have some roles in it but I couldn't give you a fair answer.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject P** I can't answer that one.
- JC** Is there any thing you would like to change about the manor in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject P** Not in I couldn't really suggest a greater answer to have for that or in answer that would be sufficient or anything I would change like I said before some things I like about it and some things I don't like about it especially at the spring semester. I also think it would be interesting how certain things some classes that would go all year long and some classes would obviously be would be in this semester or a block semester. The kids do the one thing I'm always concerned about though is say they have English or Math something that is very specific say like a certain type of science you going have it in fall one year, say math specifically, even though I'm teaching English – say they have Math this year – they have spring they don't have math fall they don't have math then spring again so that almost a solid year between your two math courses. So that could be the skill thing that is really kind of hard for them to back up.
- JC** In your opinion what are the most significant factors in either the success or failure of block scheduling?

- Subject P** I think it's successful. I think a lot of it is first off is the depth you go into in block scheduling in the English department I think you go more in depth in a lot of the curriculum, as opposed to trying to get through the curriculum because you made the assumption that you're going to take whatever you have in the curriculum and learn from that as opposed to trying to get to a certain point in time which might be a problem say with history course or certain math courses where you have to get to a certain point in time. We try to go in depth in certain books poems, stories whatever it might be essay and the writing process. So I think that is successful. I think the interaction between the kids and the teachers are successful. I also think that the kids are never overburdened with multiple six, seven, eight courses whatever it might be you have three or four courses to come in and take into I mean I say three because gym might be one, elective might be another but the true academic courses they have only so many of those and I think time into it and do it right.
- JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?
- Subject P** No, I think that's pretty good. I've covered all information I wanted to.



Appendix Q  
Transcribed Interview Q

**John Crowe** What are your overall impressions of block scheduling?

**Subject Q** Well, first of all, I think block scheduling is the best way to make the transition from high school into college and I think it benefits the kids who have been on block scheduling and they do get to the next level. I think in our present district of [deleted] Township I think its beneficial maybe to keep one school in a forty-five minute style schedule and the others in the block. This way if you do have a transfer student come in you always have that ability to send them over to one of the schools. Now if you are in a district with only one high school then I'd still stick with the block scheduling but then you come into a little bit of a problem when you have the transfer student coming. And I would like to see more schools start getting into the block scheduling style.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on a variety of measures of academic achievement in the school? Measures of academic achievement include grades, final exam scores, SAT scores, advance placement test scores and New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment scores?

**Subject Q** Well, I'll speak specifically on the SAT scores because I am the SAT Math teacher in this school and I feel its been very and extremely beneficial to the kids. Our scores have risen to about the 530 mark in math; close to the 500 mark in verbal which are both highs in respective categories. And the one thing I really like is seventy minutes of the SAT is spent on the Math section. If I have a forty-five minute class I'm unable to get the whole math section in. Whereas, in the eighty-five minute block scheduling, now I can give them the whole math section and cover it all in one and one of the main factors in the SAT from teaching it is

the time limits. So to have them extend it to over an hour, I mean it really gets them use to and comfortable with being there for such an extended period of time.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on different classifications of students?

These classifications include but are not limited to gifted students, students in self-contained classrooms, emotionally disabled students and honor students and students for whom English is a second language.

**Subject Q** Well, we recently have made a change in this district where we went to two tracks. You know, block scheduling or even in a forty-five minute I think you still need to stick with the three tracks. Like our English program has what we call S track a standard track; R track which is a little more above average; and the Honors. Where as with the Math we got rid of that and we only have the S and the R and I think you do need the three tracks, especially on the block scheduling.

**JC** What effect does block scheduling have on inclusion?

**Subject Q** I think it benefits the inclusion students in the fact that I think it offers a little bit more time in the class where the teachers can specialize in a little extra help time period where it's a little bit more individualized, where in a forty-five minute period, you're strictly with the whole class for the whole entire time. And there is not that time for the group work or to divide the class up into smaller groups where you could have a little bit more individualized attention.

**JC** What teaching methods do you employ?

**Subject Q** I basically break the class up into five sets of fifteen. First fifteen minutes would be like an anticipatory set, do now starter activity, then I go into review last nights material, return work that they might have had. Then we go into notes, examples,

cover the topic of the day, then we break off into group work whether its most of the time pairs, small groups of four, just so there's some peer learning going on and then we bring it in for a closure or basically a fifteen minute period.

**JC** In what ways are your teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under a traditional schedule?

**Subject Q** Well, I've only taught on block scheduling. I have not taught on a traditional scheduling. But, I think flows a little bit nicer I would probably employ the same technique on forty-five as block but one day I would be doing class work type, and one day I would be doing the notes, examples and it sort of breaks it up. Whereas it flows nicely in the one day with block scheduling.

**JC** What teaching methods do most of your colleagues employ?

**Subject Q** I went to this school and I was the student teacher under a lot of these teachers so I think I pick and choose a lot from each of them. And I think some people might concentrate a little bit more on the class work some a little bit more on reviewing homework and more examples but I think the five ingredients that I have in my lesson are implied one way or another.

**JC** What ways are your colleagues teaching methods different under block scheduling than they were under the traditional schedule?

**Subject Q** As a student here, I had Mrs. [deleted] twice, who was in the school and just very much like I said whereas we get it done in one day she did it over the course in two. So it's a similar set up but it doesn't have that flow. It has sort of a break where you got to go home and pick it up the next day.

**JC** What effect has block scheduling had on (a) relationships among students; (b) relationships among teachers; and,(c) relationships between and among teachers and students?

**Subject Q** Well, I was just talking about my students about a questions seminal to this and they feel they get to know other students closer. Even though you do not get to see more people you're with them over a longer period of time and they do get to know them personally a little bit better that way. Whereas, just being there for a short time period of time, meeting more people it doesn't open you up to where you might see as many people in the hallway and things like that but you become closer with the kids that you have in that particular class. Next one is student to teacher relationship, again, you get to know that student and visa versa the student gets to know the teacher in a much different way than you would on a normal forty-five minute period.

**JC** What were the reasons that led to switching from the traditional schedule to block scheduling?

**Subject Q** Again, I was in college at the time of the change.

**JC** What were your feelings toward block scheduling before your school made the change to this schedule?

**Subject Q** Well, I coming from college I think its an easier transition for high school kids going to college when their on block. I think it also works in reverse when you're coming from college, student teaching, and getting use to that time period, I think it makes it easier transition for the college kid to come back to high school to they're use to that format as well.

- JC** Have your feelings changed at all since actually teaching on block schedule?
- Subject Q** Again, that was the only way I've taught so far. On a block schedule format.
- JC** What type of training did you receive before you started teaching under block scheduling?
- Subject Q** That training I did receive I got to see the forty-five minute block on my student teaching experience so I did get to see both aspects and getting to see both of the I do like to block much better.
- JC** What is your role in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject Q** No involved in that the decision.
- JC** What roles do other teachers have in the decision making process regarding block scheduling?
- Subject Q** Not aware.
- JC** How has the relationship between administrators and teachers changed since the change to block scheduling?
- Subject Q** I think the relationship had improved in the fact that you have kids that are in the hallways less and less troubles for it this way the interaction of (inaudible) kids up you minimize it by having kids not in the hallways as much. That's where they get into trouble more often than not.
- JC** Is there anything you would like to change about the manner in which block scheduling is implemented at your school?
- Subject Q** Now, just to reiterate how it is, increments run eighty-five minute periods, you have block three is where the lunch periods are, if you have lunch A you go from the second block straight to lunch and then you have the third block if you have

lunch B its broken up into two forty-five minutes and if you have lunch C you go from second to third and then to lunch. That's exactly how I would keep it.

**JC** What are the most significant factors in either the success or failure of block scheduling?

**Subject Q** I think the most significant fact is just the fact that you have them there for that period of time. And I really I'm an advocate of having kids work in groups and having that fifteen minute time where you get to sit down with the kids and learn from each other and not just learn from the teacher. And particularly in Math, I think it work well in like a Geometry class where you get to do a hands on activity or I teach consumer math group I could take them a computer lab for forty-five minutes and it doesn't take up the whole period and we could still do other things and learn new topics and I know you could do that in forty-five but like I said you do that over a course of two days and that break just breaks up the flow of the classes.

**JC** Is there any other information about block scheduling or about your experience with block scheduling you would like to offer?

**Subject Q** I feel as though block scheduling is where I would like to teach if I mean if I went to a different district for some reason. I would definitely look for a block scheduling type. I just like the way it runs I think its beneficial to not only the students but I think its beneficial to the a lot of the teachers as well just by getting to know the kids.