

In the 1990s an innovative approach to structuring the school day, called block scheduling, gained widespread adoption in American secondary schools. Block scheduling allows schools to depart from the traditional fixed-time class periods in order to implement a schedule that is more flexible and to allow extended sessions for courses that would benefit from more time.

Block scheduling is intended to provide classroom teachers and students with more time to thoroughly cover a particular subject area, (2) integrate different perspectives on a subject, such as history, English, and science approach to studying the impact of technology on society, and (3) devote to research projects, class discussions, lab experiments, etc. A major goal of block scheduling is to structure the day in a way that maximizes student learning time while providing teachers with enough time for planning and collaboration.

As with other educational innovations, the case for block scheduling sparked debate. Many schools that have implemented block scheduling have reported their good and bad experiences in a variety of publications.

There is a wealth of information on this topic. The Web alone has more than one million sites devoted to this topic. A search of the ERIC database reveals three ERIC Digests and more than 500 ERIC (ED) documents, journal articles, and monographs devoted to block scheduling. However, only ten of those documents focus on block scheduling. The ERIC monograph ED115118 (1991) is a good starting point for researchers and

and cons, and addresses some ideas for researchers and

## What Is Block Scheduling?

Block scheduling has been described as a reorganization of school time around longer class periods (Scheduling Foreign Languages 1998; Zepeda 1999). While there are many alternative methods for structuring the school day, block scheduling appears to be the most frequently implemented in American schools. The most well-known and widely used model of block scheduling is the Copernican model as advocated by Joseph Carroll. With the Copernican model, students attend longer classes in a shorter period of time (e.g., a 2.5-hour class for two subjects

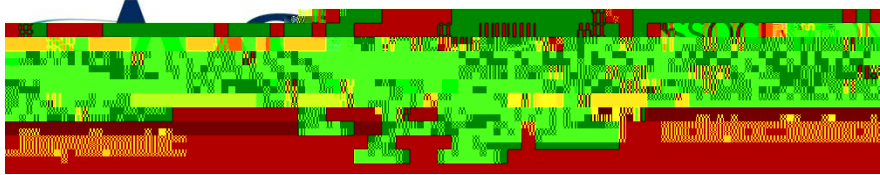


research projects. Geiken et al. (1999) describe their personal experiences and lessons learned from block scheduling implementation in their schools. Their observations indicate that block scheduling may, in fact, reduce the amount of time students spend in the library due to bus schedules, elimination of study halls, and crowded conditions during class time. They also describe a positive impact on collection development and collaboration with classroom teachers.

There has been very little research on library media centers in schools with block scheduling. Shaw (1999) provides a wealth of useful information about preparation for and implementation of library programs, services, and resources in schools with block scheduling. She provides survey instruments and other forms for collecting data that help in planning and development. She also reports on the results of surveys given to library media specialists on the impact of block scheduling on their library media specialists. Shaw devotes one chapter to four descriptive case studies written by four library media specialists on the implementation and impact of block scheduling in their high schools.



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