THE ACCEPTANCE-ADOPTION OF THE BLOCK-TIME APPROACH IN TEACHING OFFICE EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF A NATIONAL PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

THE ACCEPTANCE-ADOPTION OF THE BLOCK-TIME APPROACH IN TEACHING OFFICE EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF A NATIONAL PROJECT

By

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This was a study of the adoption-acceptance of block-time programs in office education with particular emphasis on assessing:

(1) The quantitative aspects of block-time programs in order to obtain a definitive picture of the growth of block-time programs, general trends of the growth of block-time programs, general trends in their development, preparation of teachers, and kinds of classroom practices to be found.

(2) The qualitative aspects of block-time programs in order to determine those factors that are obstacles to and/or facilitating to progress to block-time teaching as perceived by block-time teachers.

The sample included 36 block-time teachers participating in the Vocational Office Block Project of the Research and Development Program in Vocational-Technical Education at Michigan State University. The Vocational Office Block Project was a national research project which involved five states, their state departments of education, teacher education institutions, and clinical programs in 39 high schools. This consortium was constructed in the fall and spring of the 1965-66 school year with actual teaching starting in September, 1966. The project was terminated in July, 1968.

Findings

(1) There was a strong commitment to the block-time approach on the part of the participating teachers in this study. In light of the rapid development of block-time programs, it is important that teachers strongly favor block-time classes.

(2) Most of the block-time teachers were involved in initiating and planning the block-time programs in their schools; however, in one-half of the participating schools, no time was given to prepare for this curriculum change, although research and experience stresses the need for staff involvement in planning curricular changes.

(3) Ninety-one per cent of the block-time teachers participated in many and different kinds of in-service programs.

(4) Forty-four per cent of the block-time teachers had taught block-time classes one to two years, while 34 per cent had taught from three to six years.

(5) Ninety-four per cent of the block-time teachers had the same group of students for two consecutive semesters.

(6) Almost all participating schools retained the subject areas as suggested in the Michigan State University course of study for the project although the University recognized the right and responsibility of each participating school to determine its combination of subject areas.

(7) The prevailing pattern for scheduling block-time classes was two consecutive periods a day for a total of ten periods a week.

(8) Grade cards were used to report students' progress. Many different evaluative instruments were used to evaluate student progress. However, the major emphasis was on final job performance.

(9) Students elected the block-time class in all schools. In general, one year of typewriting or one year of typewriting and one year of shorthand were prerequisites for block-time classes.

(10) Although some block-time teachers believed that the administrator was their greatest obstacle, a larger number of teachers were facilitated by the supportive behavior of their administrators. Most block-time teachers derived security from the structure provided by the administration.

(11) The lack of teaching techniques ranked second as an obstacle followed by lack of material and relationship with students in third and fourth place as obstacles. However, a larger number of block-time teachers reported these same factors as major facilitating factors to block-time teaching.

(12) The block-of-time made it possible for teachers to know their students better. Most teachers believed that knowing and understanding their students was facilitating to block-time teaching.

(13) The teacher's self--including the teacher's educational and teaching background, work experience, feelings about block-time classes, and subject matter--was facilitating to block-time teaching.

(14) In-service activities--including conferences and meetings, resource help, and professional readings--were facilitating to block-time teaching.

(15) Teacher-staff relationships and teacher-parent relationships were minor facilitating factors to block-time teaching.

(16) Much teaching continued to follow traditional patterns.

(17) It was apparent that some teachers were reluctant to change their teaching style.

Recommendations

For pre-service training:

(1) Teacher-training institutions should provide experiences similar to block-time teaching.

(2) Teacher-training institutions should provide programs which cut across subject areas instead of their traditional programs.

For in-service training:

(1) In-service assistance should provide more of a cooperative endeavor between administrators and teachers examining change together.

(2) In-service assistance should provide workshops structured by the participants in terms of their needs and purposes.

(3) In-service assistance should provide for a better vehicle for communications, thus enhancing better learning.

(4) In-service assistance should provide consultants who by their intuitive action and thinking would encourage teachers to free themselves from the framework of pre-planned units or course of study.

Regarding leadership:

(1) Leadership should change so that those who stand at the forefront of this type of teaching are the leaders.

(2) Leadership should change so that the skills and abilities needed by block teachers are identified and defined.

(3) Leadership should change so that administrators provide a climate of freedom which makes an experimental approach possible.

(4) Leadership should change so that administrators provide a friendly climate and environment in which an innovative and experimental teacher may work without criticism from other staff members.

Relating to educational beliefs:

(1) Educational beliefs should change so that teachers understand the concepts and purposes of block-time teaching.

(2) Educational beliefs should change so that teachers understand that integration or fusion of subject areas is inherent in block-time teaching.

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A special recognition and appreciation is given to Dr. Robert Poland for his constant encouragement, counsel, and guidance during the period of time necessary to complete this study. I also want to thank Dr. Elaine Uthe and Dr. Donald Meaders for serving as members of my doctoral committee and for their suggestions, directly and indirectly, while working on this project.

I am grateful to all those people at Michigan State University and Western Michigan University who made it possible for me to be associated with the Vocational Office Block Project in its initial stage as project leader, which in turn made it possible for me to conduct this study. I am especially grateful to the block teachers, state supervisors, and teacher educators participating in the Project. Their cooperation and contributions and their friendship were wonderful.

To my wife and children, I owe a special debt of gratitude for

their encouragement, understanding, and cooperation. I hope the future will somehow compensate for the many sacrifices of the past.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Since the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963, preparation for office occupations has been designated for funding as part of the total program of vocational education. As a result of this act, increased emphasis has been placed upon developing new programs in office education, centered around the needs of individuals and their career objectives and provided by laboratory experiences with emphasis on simulation, integrated practice, and individualized instruction.

A major development program following the Vocational Education Act of 1963 was the Vocational Office Block Project of the Research and Development Program in Vocational-Technical Education at Michigan State University.[1] This Office Block Project was one of four developmental projects administered by the Research and Development Program of Michigan State University with financial support from the United States Office of Education. These projects were based on the clinical school concept which involved the local school systems as partners in the development phases of theoretical constructs for curriculum

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[1] A Study of a Block-Time Schedule for Teaching Vocational Office Practices. Final Report, Project 201. Research and Development Program in Vocational-Technical Education, Michigan State University, July 1969.

development, instructional material development, and other aspects of vocational-technical education.

The block-time approach to vocational office education, as prescribed, utilized two or three consecutive class periods a day during the high school senior year in which to develop advanced office competencies. The techniques emphasized for use in block programs included integrated task practice, simulation, and individualized instruction based on defined career goals. A basic assumption was that the block-time schedule may be supportive of effective teaching for the office subjects.

The project implemented a block-time approach in clinical schools. Experimental blocks of instruction were scheduled and students were encouraged to progress individually at their own rate through the use of a flexible schedule of activities. This development necessitated the preparing of instructional material and curriculum guides and the training of teachers through seminars and workshops to function effectively with the new instructional approach.

The Vocational Office Block Project was a national research project which involved five states, their state departments of education, teacher education institutions, and clinical programs in 39 high schools.

The consortium was arranged in the fall and spring of the 1965-66 school year with actual teaching getting underway in September, 1966. The project was terminated in July, 1968, due to funding, except for reporting and preparation and publication of the final report.

The project was conducted in four states in addition to Michigan: Arizona, Florida, New Jersey, and Washington. These states were selected from several which expressed the willingness and desire to

improve the status of business education in their schools.

The over-all objective of the block-time project was to improve vocational office education through several patterns of curricula using the block-time approach.

The ultimate objectives of the project were to improve education for employment in office occupations and to integrate the learning experiences for the students based, whenever possible, on an environmental situation simulating employment conditions. More specifically, the stated goals and objectives of the project were:

1. To identify a means to develop on-going working relationships between institutions and states to carry on large-scale research projects.
2. To promote the idea and process of program developoment in vocational office education.
3. To develop an interest in action research in state and local school systems.
4. To provide different learning structures which enhance individual student needs and produce employable workers.

The participants felt that this assignment called for a new way to use subject matter, a new kind of teacher-student relationship, and some changes in method. The participants were ready to learn to be block teachers. They saw the opportunity to integrate and simulate the various facets of the business course offerings in a laboratory environment similar to office working conditions for an extended period of time--two or three consecutive class periods.

Because many states were beginning to utilize block-time programs to prepare young people for office occupations, it was imperative that

planners be kept abreast of policy and procedures pertinent to a block-time class as well as the factors that were obstacles and were facilitating to the development of such a program. A review of the literature revealed a scarcity of studies in this area and reinforced the need for this information.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to assess the acceptance and adoption of block-time programs in office education. The basic areas of the problem were:

1. Assessment of the descriptive (quantitative) aspects of the block-time programs as perceived by the block-time teachers in order to obtain a definitive picture of the growth of block-time programs, general trends in their development, preparation of teachers, and types of classroom practices to be found.
2. Assessment of the feelings and beliefs (qualitative) of the block-time teachers about their block-time programs in order to determine those factors that were obstacles to and/or facilitating to progress in block-time teaching.

OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

This study was an effort to determine the characteristics of on-going block-time classes as perceived by the block-time teachers to be used as a basis on which to:

1. Develop informational programs for teachers, counselors, and administrators.

2. Prepare instructional materials for developmental programs.
3. Develop in-service training programs for business teachers and business supervisors at all levels. (Retraining)

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Specifically there were two needs for this study:

1. There was a need for office education to be redefined and reorganized to meet new needs through a laboratory approach and the growing acceptance of the block-time approach.
2. There was a need to assess a developmental program, especially one the size of the Vocational Office Block Project, the first large-scale curriculum developmental project at the national level in Business Education.

Ample evidence existed of the increasing emphasis on office education in our secondary schools. Bruce I. Blackstone, Head of Office Education, U.S. Office of Education, describing the progress in office education, has indicated that "many states are carrying out laudable programs to help students prepare to enter and advance in office careers."[2] Most of these programs are a result of the Vocational Education Act of 1963.

Dr. Robert Poland, Michigan State University, in a survey conducted in November, 1968, stated that "thirty-six of the state supervisors indicated that there were block-time programs in office education in the high schools of their states."[3] All of these programs

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[2]Bruce I. Blackstone, "A Progress Report - Office Education 2,000 Plus," National Business Education Quarterly (Winter 1965-66), 5-9.

[3]Robert Poland, "Block-Time Approach in Office Education," National Business Education Yearbook (1970), 8:265.

were fully or at least partially vocationally reimbursed. This indicated the growing emphasis on the block-time approach in office education.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to the reported perceptions of the block-time teachers participating in the Vocational Office Block Project concerning what they considered factors for their own progress or growth or lack of progress or growth.

These teachers were asked to do a difficult thing--they were asked to communicate their feelings to others. Does one freely reveal insecurities, frustrations, or inadequacies? Such revelations were needed in order to reveal all the characteristics of a block-time class to the researcher.

The study was also limited to the block-time teachers in the schools participating in the Vocational Office Block Project sponsored by Michigan State University.

The study was limited by a new idea in curriculum development at the national level in Business and Office Education. Because this was a new idea, there were no established procedures, policies, and guidelines to follow in organizing, administering, conducting, and evaluating the project.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Most of the terms and concepts used in this study are familiar and are used in the conventional manner. The following terms are defined to delimit the intended understanding:

Block-time Class (Block Class)

Two or three consecutive class periods a day in which the same teacher teaches a combination of two or more advanced office education subjects to the same students. Techniques emphasized include integrated task practice, simulation, and individualized instruction based upon defined career goals.

Block-time Teacher (Block Teacher)

The teacher or instructor of business subjects in an office block-time class. These individuals are also referred to as research associates.

Vocational Office Block Project

A curriculum development program aimed at establishing experimental block classes in several types of schools, training teachers through local and national seminars and workshops, and developing curriculum guides and instructional materials. The Vocational Office Block Project was a part of the Research and Development Program in Vocational-Technical Education at Michigan State University.

Categories of Obstacles and Facilitating Factors

The findings were classified into eight areas of concern or categories. Thus, it was necessary to find some degree of likeness among them. The following definitions were made of the categories:

1. Teacher-Administrator.--Includes all of those things which are in the hands of the administrator but which somehow have an effect upon the teacher. (Scheduling, class size, attitude of principal, plans or decisions over which the teacher has little or no control belong in this category.)

2. Teacher-Student.--A category which focuses upon those kinds of items which refer to teachers' relationships with students and their reactions to behavior, interests, abilities, and individual differences.

3. Teacher-Staff.--Refers to relationships between the teacher and other staff members who may or may not be block-time teachers.

4. Teacher-Materials and Resources.--Has reference to all of those things which might be utilized in the classroom as teaching or learning aids and runs the gamut from books to physical facilities to field trips.

5. Teacher-Techniques.--A category in which teachers have indicated specific items related to methods or the implementation of teaching practices. (Content, correlation or integration of subject areas, management of small groups, and planning with students fall into this category.)

6. Teacher-In-service.--An area concerned with the kinds of assistance at the in-service level which have been offered or which teachers wish were offered.

7. Teacher-Self.--Includes items related to teachers' perceptions of their personal behavior or their philosophy, attitudes, abilities, experiences, or backgrounds. (Concern about subject matter, preparation, and lack of experience in methods fall into this category.)

8. Teacher-Parent and/or Community.--Describes how the teacher feels about what seems to be the attitude or reaction of the parents or community to his block-time teaching or the block-time program in general.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Office education was a part of the secondary curriculum long before being recognized as an official part of the total vocational education program as a result of the Vocational Education Act of 1963. Over the years there has been a continuing effort to seek ways to make learning experiences more relevant for students in office education. These efforts were greatly enhanced by the financial support provided by the Vocational Education Act of 1963. Research continued with renewed interest and new programs developed. However, there was very little research concerning the practices, procedures, and problems of the teachers involved in these programs. This was evidenced especially by the paucity of literature and research concerning block-time classes.

LEGISLATION

An ideal program of vocational education for high school youth would provide every student an opportunity to undertake training in the occupational field of his choice, based upon sound vocational guidance.

> The high schools have failed to provide for basic training programs for groups of occupations, perhaps because Federal aid is not available for such programs. On the other hand,

> although no programs in the field of office and business occupations receive Federal aid, large numbers of programs in this feld are offered in the high schools.[1]

The Report of President Kennedy's Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education clearly indicated (1) the need for more programs designed to prepare youth for office occupations and (2) the need to develop new programs which would prepare persons for the newer office occupations as well as to perform the activities resulting from the technological changes.

Federal laws have been passed which make education for office occupations a part of the total program of vocational education. The most important of these laws was the Vocational Education Act of 1963; others include the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, and the Area Redevelopment Act of 1961.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 (and its amendments) authorized certain amounts of money to be appropriated each year for the purpose of making grants to states for vocational education. It was stipulated that the funds be used in accordance with approved state plans for the following purposes:

1. Vocational education for persons attending high school;
2. Vocational education for persons who have completed or left high school and who are available for full-time study in preparation for entering the labor market;
3. Vocational education for persons (other than persons who are receiving training allowances under the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, the Area Redevelopment

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[1]U.S. Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education, Education for a Changing World of Work. Washington, D.C., 1963, p. 118.

Act, or the Trade Expansion Act of 1962) who have already entered the labor market and who need training or retraining to achieve stability or advancement in employment;

4. Vocational education for persons who have academic, socio-economic, or other handicaps that prevent them from succeeding in the regular vocational education program;
5. Construction of area vocational education school facilities;
6. Ancillary services and activities to assure quality in all vocational education programs, such as teacher training and supervision, program evaluation, special demonstration and experimental programs, development of instructional materials, and State administration and leadership, including periodic evaluation of State and local vocational education programs and services in light of information regarding current and projected manpower needs and job opportunities.[2]

The most important development in education for office occupations is found in the activities of the states in support of their programs of education for office occupations. For example:

....supervision has increased
....planning has been undertaken
....research has been conducted
....meetings have been held
....materials have been produced
....teacher education has been established for office education.

All these things flow directly from the several Vocational Education Acts passed by Congress.[3]

The Michigan State Plan for Vocational Education as well as the plans for many other states stipulated special provisions applicable

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[2]Vocational Education Act of 1963.

[3]Blackstone, op. cit.

to business and office education under the Vocational Education Act of 1963. In addition, Section 2.33-1 of the Michigan State Plan reads:[4]

Instruction Related to Occupation

> Instruction related to the occupation for which the student is being trained means that which is designed to fit individuals for employment in a recognized occupation and which is particularly suited to the needs of those engaged in or preparing to engage in such occupations.
>
> Such instruction shall include classroom instruction and field, shop, laboratory, and cooperative occupational work experience. Such education must be related to the occupation for which the student is being trained.

RESEARCH ON LABORATORY INSTRUCTION

As a result of this emphasis on classroom instruction and laboratory experience, the State Board of Education authorized money to high schools in Michigan for experimentation with different approaches or programs in office education. One such approach was the Vocational Office Block Project[5] developed at Michigan State University, which involved eight Michigan high schools together with approximately thirty other high schools in four other states.

Another laboratory approach which received state and national attention was the Senior Intensified Program developed at Wayne State University.[6] The Senior Intensified Program and the Office Block

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[4]Michigan State Board of Vocational Education, The Michigan State Plan for Vocational Education, Bulletin No. 201, January 1, 1965 (Revised April, 1967).

[5]Final Report, op. cit.

[6]A Senior Intensified Program in Business and Distributive Education, Wayne State University and University of Michigan, A Curriculum Demonstration Project Developed Jointly by the Detroit Public Schools, The University of Michigan and Wayne State University, funded by the U.S.O.E. under 4 (c) of the Vocational Education Act of 1963.

Project differ considerably, but both utilized block scheduling in the laboratory approach. The Senior Intensified Program required that the entire content be taught in a minimum of 80 minutes and/or 120 minutes a day for not more than one school year.

In June, 1968, a simulation project called Mobile Office Education was initiated in Utah.[7] Mobile Office Education, was a unit composed of two 36-foot trailer houses which had been remodeled so they could be connected together and used as a single unit. Utah has been concerned with office occupations and many new techniques, especially simulation. Simulation was described by Utah as "Simulation in the office classroom is a teaching process which uses the basic functions, equipment, and interactions which occur in a real office."[8] Mobile Office Education spent a total of eight weeks in a school system in three separate visits.

> The first visit will be a two-week visit which will include an acquaintance session, employment interview, and positional training where each student will spend one day at each of the positions in the office. MOE will then rotate among all four schools using the same process as it goes. The second tour will also involve two weeks, with a two-day rotation at each position for each student in a presimulation briefing. During this time the students will see how their position relates to the other positions. After rotating among each of the four schools in this manner, MOE will remain at each school for four weeks while each student spends three days in each position in a full-scale simulation which includes full student operation with teacher supervision.[9]

Hanson and Stocker[10] stated that

> The fundamental difference between this and a genuine office is that the surrounding environment (other company departments, their products and resources, and the outside business community) is imaginary and the office organization is simulated.

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[7]Garth A. Hanson and Robert Stocker, "Mobile Simulation in Office Education," Business Education Forum (October 1968), 23:17.

[8]Ibid. [9]Ibid. [10]Ibid.

> A student's learning of the various office occupations in this kind of setting is carried forward by actually performing the occupations--not alone, but in concert with other students under circumstances as similar as possible to those which are maintained in the business community.

They pointed out that in conventional typewriting, shorthand, bookkeeping and other business classes, the primary relationship was between the student as an individual and the teacher. It was not essential that students coordinate their class activities with each other nor did they necessarily depend upon each other in order to learn. In a simulation situation, group learning was emphasized. Students learned to work together. The teacher in this case was responsible for establishing the learning objective, the over-all task, the circumstances, and the setting. Hanson and Stocker also pointed out that the purpose of establishing simulated offices in classrooms was to provide a means of anticipating and accelerating the real life process.

Several business educators have written about the possibilities of laboratory instructions in Business Education. A general prediction by Hayden and Lemaster concerning vocational education in area vocational and technical schools reads:[11]

> Increased emphasis will be given to self-contained or laboratory-type programs in vocational office education. This is desirable because more students could benefit from the improvements brought about through the use of Federal funds. At least twice as many students can be served through a laboratory-type program, as compared with a cooperative work-experience program, with no increase in expenditures for equipment, room facilities, or instructional staff.

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[11]Carlos K. Hayden and A. J. Lemaster, "Area Vocational and Technical Schools--Projections for the Future," National Business Education Yearbook (1968), 6:299-300.

In a speech about new approaches in providing major field content for vocational business and office education, Calhoun stated:[12]

> Block programming, cooperative education, individual progress, articulation of subject matter, the gradual but sure disappearance of the Carnegie unit, all call for a new approach to curriculum construction and greater adaptability to change.

Kilchenstein stated that simulation in business and office education takes many forms; such as, "task simulation, integrated exercises, simulated project, position simulation, model office, simulated office laboratory,"[13]--all to help bridge the gap between school and job entry. Simulation can be incorporated into the business and office education curriculum in many ways. She challenged teachers to improve their business and office education programs when she stated, "The possibilities of simulation in business and office education appear limitless. Give your imagination a chance."[14]

In Virginia, fully one-third of the high schools have switched or are planning to switch from single-subject and single-skill oriented classes to block-time programs.[15] In these block-time programs a student will learn to integrate skills just as he would on the job.

Sawaia explained the vocational office education simulated block-time approach for secretarial office procedures at Scottsdale High

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[12]Calfrey C. Calhoun, "New Approaches in Providing Major Field Content for Vocational Business and Office Education," Vocational-Technical Teacher Education: National Seminar Proceedings. Columbus, Ohio: The Center for Vocational and Technical Education, 1968.

[13]Dolores Kilchenstein, "Simulation in Business and Office Education," Business Education Forum (February 1970), 24:7.

[14]Ibid.

[15]B. June Schmidt, "Office Observation Shows Need for Attitude Training," Business Education Forum (February 1970), 24:9-10.

School (Arizona) as a student-centered laboratory approach for senior students. The primary objective was to bridge the gap between the classroom and the initial job. Many techniques were used to achieve this primary objective.[16]

In Ohio, intensive office education programs were designed to bring the office to the students so that when the student goes to the office, there is little, if any, adjustment to face. The Ohio State Plan for Business and Office Education made provision for three plans in each of the areas of business and office education. Lynch described a typical day in a block class utilizing simulation.[17]

Funk described some terms used in office education regarding the building of a simulation. They are:

> Office simulation implies the copying of an existing structure (a business) to provide realistic learning in office education. Model office describes one portion of the classroom set aside to simulate the home or main office of the company used as a model. Parent company refers to the company housed in the model office. Training laboratory describes the remainder of the classroom that houses branch office or agencies that provide source documents for the parent company. Presimulation may be described as encompassing those activities which all students experience prior to the activation of parent company, agencies, or branch offices. To be more specific, presimulation is an initial exposure rotation early in the year that involves all students working through units of instruction that will better prepare them to handle equipment and tasks in the parent company.[18]

She then described the blueprint for a successful simulation used in a block-time class.

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[16]Josephine Sawaia, "Block-Time Approach Meets Student Needs," Business Education Forum (March 1970), 24:10-12.

[17]Claire Lynch, "Ohio Program Brings the Office to the Students," Business Education Forum (February 1970), 24:16-17.

[18]Beverley M. Funk, "A Blueprint for Successful Simulation," Business Education Forum (February 1970), 24:21-22.

Fruehling[19] predicted that the clerical curriculum of the future will increasingly be structured in terms of block programs. Such programs provide greater opportunities for flexibility and provide greater ease to supplement the integration of clerical skills and concepts. Such a program must prepare the student for initial employment and it must provide a foundation for career development according to Fruehling.

The status of block-time programs in office education in the United States was surveyed by Poland in November and December, 1968. He was specifically interested in the number of programs, types of programs, descriptive statements of programs, amount of time spent in block-time classes, courses integrated or combined, and materials developed for block-time instructions. Thirty-six state supervisors reported that there were block-time programs in the high schools of their states and that all programs were partially vocationally reimbursed. One conclusion of the survey read:[20]

> State Supervisors appeared to believe in the worth of block-time programs as evidenced by their belief that it produced better qualified students for entry positions.

A review of the related literature revealed much varied information concerning the acceptance-adoptive process. Rogers[21] reviewed more than 500 publications and synthesized these findings and theories on

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[19]Donald L. Fruehling, "The Clerical Curriculum of the Future," Business Education Forum (February 1971), 25:21-22.

[20]Robert Poland, "A Survey of State Supervisors to Determine the Status of Block-Time Programs in Office Education." Unpublished paper, 1969.

[21]Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations. New York: The Free Press, 1962.

the spread of ideas. Although his work was multidisciplinary in nature, he was concerned with the adoption process. In summary the five stages of this process are: (1) awareness, (2) interest, (3) evaluation, (4) trial, and (5) adoption.

It was necessary then for an educational innovation to pass through these stages in order to become accepted. The block approach of teaching office occupations lent itself to Rogers' adoption process.

SUMMARY

These projects and studies emphasized the interest and desire for different approaches to teaching office education. At the present time, there is very little research available concerning the practices, procedures, and problems of teachers in block-time classes in office education.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY

POPULATION

The population of this study were the schools and their staffs which were involved in the Vocational Office Block Project of the Research and Development Program in Vocational-Technical Education at Michigan State University. These schools were selected through an office education representative of the State Department of Education in each of the five states. These schools were representative of the classes of schools in each state and conducive to innovative programs. A list of the schools is found in Appendix B.

Each school furnished a fully qualified teacher to conduct the block class. The teacher was vocationally competent and professionally adaptive to an innovative approach. A list of the teachers is found in Appendix B.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE RESEARCHER

The qualifications of the researcher are important in the analysis of the data as well as throughout the entire study. Because of his personal association with the Vocational Office Block Project as Project Leader in the early stages of the project and as a Research Consultant throughout the project, he observed block classes in all five

states; consulted with the block-time teachers, supervisors, and administrators; and reviewed all reports submitted to Michigan State University. He prepared many reports for the project and helped prepare the final report for the project. On the basis of his close association and knowledge of all phases of the project for the duration of the project, his expertise is important in the preparation of this study.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The validity of the questionnaire as a data-gathering instrument has been questioned countless times by writers of research. Significance can be attributed to the questionnaire because its "starting point is the subject's report about self." Although this was a most direct method of finding out how teachers feel about their block-time classes, there was a serious limitation to the use of this instrument. The limitation was the inability of an individual to identify and evaluate his feelings about himself and then to communicate them to others.

A questionnaire was prepared based on available literature on the research studies completed in other educational areas utilizing block-time classes. The questionnaire was then reviewed at a meeting of ten project personnel; namely, three research consultants, two state coordinators, and five research associates. Several changes were made in the questionnaire based upon the recommendations of this group.

The questionnaire was completed in June, 1968, by 31 participants at a national seminar at Michigan State University. The questionnaire

was mailed to the other six participants in the Project, five of whom completed and returned it. Thus, as of June, 1968, 36 of the 37 participants replied, representing a 97 per cent return.

OBTAINING DESCRIPTIVE (QUANTITATIVE) DATA

Descriptive (quantitative) data were important in that they indicated patterns of growth or areas of development; yet, they may have been superficial too. The real status of a curriculum needed to be evaluated in terms of where its strength and weakness were. Surely, its strength rested in the positive, supportive feelings of the teachers who demonstrated their commitment by their behavior in the classroom. Its weakness was found in the negative, resistant feeling of these same teachers.

Descriptive (quantitative) data obtained from the questionnaire included:

1. General trends in program development.
2. Preparation of teachers.
3. Kinds of practices to be found.

OBTAINING FEELINGS AND BELIEFS (QUALITATIVE DATA)

Feelings and beliefs (qualitative data) have great significance and were considered the real focus of this dissertation. The feelings and beliefs (qualitative data) obtained from the questionnaire included:

1. An indication of the procedures used in individual block-time classes.
2. Factors which teachers feel are obstacles.
3. Factors which teachers feel are facilitating.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

To observe what kinds of items teachers cited within the areas of obstacles and facilitating factors, a profile of categories was structured by means of a frequency count. To create the profile, categories were placed in decreasing order according to the frequency with which items within the category were stated. It thus was possible to make generalizations about which category presented the greatest obstacle and which had the greatest potential for facilitating block-time teaching. If these things were known, it was assumed that the obstacles could be reduced and the facilitating factors enhanced.

The responses related to obstacles and to facilitating factors were classified into the following categories:

1. Teacher-Administrator
2. Teacher-Student
3. Teacher-Staff
4. Teacher-Materials and Resources
5. Teacher-Techniques
6. Teacher-In-service
7. Teacher-Self
8. Teacher-Parents and/or Community[1]

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[1] See pages 7 and 8 for definitions.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THE DESCRIPTIVE (QUANTITATIVE) CHARACTERISTICS OF BLOCK-TIME TEACHING

ORGANIZATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Initiation of the Program

It was expected that the initiative for curriculum change would emerge from any part of a school community or staff; however, more acceptable practice in curriculum development encouraged total school involvement in producing new programs or changes. As one educator wrote:

> Furthermore, in good schools the principal tries his best to involve not only teachers but also pupils and patrons in curriculum development. He knows that the durability of change in school programs depends upon the extent of "ownership" felt by the teachers, pupils, and patrons of the school. He also knows that they feel this sense of ownership more when they have helped discover the need for, plan, and carry out the improvements which should be made.[1]

As shown in Table 1, the block-time programs in 20 per cent of the participating schools were initiated as a joint effort by administrators and teachers or by administrators, teachers, and State Department. In 19 per cent of the schools, the administrator was solely responsible for the plan. Teachers had been primary initiators of the block-time program in 30 per cent of the schools. No mention was made

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[1]Harold C. Hand, Principles of Public Seconday Education (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1958), p. 264.

TABLE 1

INITIATION OF BLOCK-TIME PROGRAMS

Initiator	Schools N	Schools %
Teachers	11	30
State Department of Education	10	28
Administrator	7	19
Administrator and State Department	5	14
Administrator, Teacher, and State Dept.	2	6
Do not know	1	3

of the influence of Michigan State University or the influence of participating in the national project sponsored by Michigan State University. This is probably because Michigan State University sought to have the change occur at the local effort.

The fact that an idea for curriculum change originated with a particular person on a school staff is not under criticism here. If it was the administrator, this was a function of his role. The extent to which others were involved in the decision-making, in defining goals and purposes, and in the planning could be questioned, because it related to the continued existence of the programs. It could relate to the support and opposition they might receive, and to the security and enthusiasm of all of the participants in the program.

There is much recent and ongoing research in support of the argument that the doer ought to be involved in the doing, particularly when a curriculum change is to be made.

Nature of Orientation

What happened after the decision to have a block-time program had been made but before its actual inception in a school? Rather extensive orientation took place in most situations. Responses from 26 teachers indicated that efforts were made to orient those who would be involved directly in the program, but eight responses indicated that no orientation took place.

TABLE 2

EXTENT OF ORIENTATION PRIOR TO THE PROGRAM

Extent of Orientation	Schools N	Schools %[a]
Involving teachers, counselors, librarians	26	72
None	8	22
Entire faculty	1	3
Public	1	3

[a]Total per cent does not have to be 100 because respondents could make several responses.

It was found that even though a change in teaching method and philosophy was involved in instituting a block-time program, a large number of teachers spent relatively little time in studying these possible changes. One respondent stated that he had spent one year or more in planning the new program. In 16 per cent of the schools, six weeks or less was spent in planning or studying the significant change about to be made in their programs. At least 50 per cent provided no time for preplanning. Table 3 indicates how much time was

utilized for planning before starting block-time programs in the various schools.

TABLE 3

AMOUNT OF TIME PROVIDED FOR PREPLANNING OR STUDY PRIOR TO ESTABLISHING BLOCK-TIME PROGRAMS

Amount of Time	Schools N	Schools %
No planning time	18	50
Planned two weeks or less	2	5
Planned three to six weeks	4	11
Planned seven to twelve weeks	6	17
Planned approximately a year	4	11
Planned more than a year	1	3
No answer	1	3

This lack of preparation was undoubtedly a factor in the kinds of negative feelings expressed by some block-time teachers. Six weeks or less was hardly time to move into a new way of working with their students and to develop "know-how" or security.

Selection of Block-time Teachers

How did school people become block-time teachers? Responses to this question showed that it was common for an individual to become a block-time teacher by assignment by the administrator of his school. Forty-two per cent of the respondents reported that they entered the program at their own request. At least 56 per cent of the teachers

were involved in initiating and planning block-time programs in their schools.

TABLE 4

MEANS BY WHICH INDIVIDUALS BECAME BLOCK-TIME TEACHERS

Means	Teachers N[a]	Teachers %[a]
Assigned by administrator	24	67
Helped initiate and plan program	20	56
Requested it	15	42
Prepared for it in college	2	6

[a]Totals are greater than number of respondents because some respondents made more than one choice.

The last item in Table 4 may represent a misconception on the part of those surveyed or a lack of communication by the instrument. Of the 36 respondents, two stated that they became block-time teachers by means of pre-service preparation in college. However, in analyzing the replies, it was obvious that most teachers simply indicated that they were graduated from a college of education because most colleges and universities do not have programs for preparing block-time teachers.

In-service Assistance

Assistance given to block-time teachers in the various schools was of significance to the success of the program. Whether or not these teachers were involved in establishing the program at its inception, their need to be recognized and their need to be competent, both in their classes and with other staff members, were paramount.

The extent or frequency with which assistance was given was not determined. In viewing the data in Table 5, it should be noted that each choice did not represent a single school; in other words, some respondents indicated their use of more than one kind of assistance.

TABLE 5

KINDS OF IN-SERVICE ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO BLOCK-TIME TEACHERS

Kind of Assistance	Schools N[a]	Schools %[a]
Extra planning period	18	50
Consultants	14	39
Funds for materials	12	33
Workshops and study group	11	31
Pre-school conference	10	28
None	3	8
Other	14	39

[a]Total per cent is over 100 because more than one choice was made by respondents.

As shown in Table 5, the types utilized most frequently implied direct involvement or action on the part of the teachers and other staff members. Workshops, study groups, and pre-school conferences exemplified this involvement. Consultants were often brought into the school in conjunction with an in-service workshop. Only three respondents indicated that no in-service help was given to teachers in their school.

Funds for materials and the scheduling of time during the school day for planning were considered to be kinds of assistance needed by block-time teachers. Twelve respondents indicated funds for materials were provided, and 18 indicated that planning time was provided. The role of the state department of vocational education and of Michigan State University was not mentioned. Once again, this may have been due to the non-centralized approach emphasized by the Michigan State University project staff.

Teaching Experience in Block

According to responses, new programs apparently go hand in hand with new teachers; perhaps they "grow up" together. Forty-four per cent of the respondents stated that they had taught block-time classes one to two years, while 34 per cent had taught from three to six years. Few teachers had had block-time classes for more than ten years as shown in Table 6.

It is probable that teachers, some with years of experience, were not likely to turn to a way of teaching which demanded creativeness and skill. Nor were those who have taught traditionally, or those who felt insecure in situations which differed from the usual, likely to turn to block-time teaching. Thus, an administrator, in seeking teachers for block-time classes, turned to the new recruit. He had no supply of experienced block-time teachers from which to recruit.

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF YEARS OF TEACHING BLOCK-TIME CLASSES REPORTED BY TEACHERS

Years in Block-time Teaching	Teachers N	Teachers %
None	1	3
One	3	8
Two	13	36
Three	6	17
Four-six	6	17
Seven-ten	4	11
More than ten	3	8

Semester Scheduling Patterns

Adhering to the belief that many benefits were derived from students and teachers working together for a longer period of time, the largest number of respondents had the same group of students for two semesters. Although 94 per cent stated that this described their program, the schedule may not have been exclusive to the block-time teachers. The fact that many schools had no mid-year change may account for this high figure.

Subject Areas in the Block

Probably a most typical characteristic of block-time programs was the subject areas combined or included in them. Although the Michigan State University project staff suggested different combinations of subject areas, the University recognized the right and responsibility

of each participating school to determine its combination of subject areas conforming to local or state policy. As a result, there were different combinations of subject matter as indicated in Table 7. However, in almost all programs, the subject matter lines were retained as suggested in the Michigan State University course of study for the project.

TABLE 7

SUBJECT AREAS COMBINED OR REPLACED IN BLOCK PROGRAMS

Subject Area	Reported N	Reported %[a]
Secretarial		
Advanced Shorthand and Office Practice	14	39
Advanced Shorthand, Typewriting, Busines English, and Office Practice	7	19
Advanced Shorthand, Typewriting, Office Practice	4	11
Miscellaneous	4	11
Replaces no subjects	2	6
Clerical		
Advanced Typewriting and Office Practice	4	11
Advanced Typewriting, Office Practice, and Business English	2	6
Office Practice and Business Machines	2	6
Office Practice, Business English, and Machine Transcription	2	6
Office Practice and Business English	1	3

[a]Total per cent is over 100 because more than one choice was made by some respondents.

Scheduling Block-time Classes

The prevailing pattern for scheduling block-time classes provided 10 periods a week for a class; this was two consecutive periods a day. Any arrangement less than two consecutive class periods provided no continuity with the group and negated a primary objective often given for the block-of-time--that of providing the opportunity for teacher and students to come to know each other better by extending their time together. It is possible, too, that teachers in these situations would not tend to cross subject-matter lines.

The Recording of Grades

An area of concern for teachers was the marking system. This appears to be a problem, however, for most teachers and may not be a distinctive area for block-time teachers. In the block it may have been more distinctive because emphasis was on final job performance.

Seventeen respondents gave one grade for the block class, contrasted to 16 respondents who gave a grade for each subject included in the block. Two respondents gave one grade on the grade card submitted to the student but separate grades on the permanent record maintained by the school. One respondent gave the same grade two times--once for each subject in the block.

Method of Reporting Progress

Thirty-five respondents used grade cards to report progress to the students and to the students' parents. One used parent-teacher conferences but sent failure slips at intervals if the students were doing failing work. In addition to grade cards, "poor work" notices and conferences were used by many respondents to report student progress.

Schedule of Progress Reports

Eighteen respondents sent out student progress reports regularly four times a year, and 17 respondents sent out student progress reports regularly six times a year. One respondent reported that he sent out reports regularly seven or more times a year. In addition, four respondents reported that they used interim reports when students were doing failing work.

Student Selection

All 36 respondents stated that students elected the block class. However, several respondents commented that they held individual conferences, had prerequisites, and maintained other requirements before accepting students in the class. Two respondents stated that their school used some kind of ability grouping in selecting students for their classes.

Many different practices existed for determining the business prerequisities for the block class. In general, the basic typewriting and/or shorthand classes were prerequisites for the block.

Support and Opposition

Certainly a major factor in the success of any program is the kind of support it receives and from whom the support comes.

In replying to survey questions which were related to support and opposition to block-time programs, 100 per cent of the block-time teachers supported the block-time classes. Next in order of frequency was the support given by other business education teachers and business education students with 31 respondents, or 86 per cent, indicating support for the program. Next in order of frequency were the counselors,

superintendents, boards of education, and faculty other than Business Education.

TABLE 8

TEACHERS' VIEWS OF THOSE FAVORING BLOCK-TIME IN THEIR SCHOOLS

Persons Favoring	Schools N	Schools %[a]
Block-time teachers	36	100
Other Business Education teachers	31	86
Students	31	86
Counselors	20	56
Superintendent	17	47
Board of Education	14	39
Faculty, other than Business Education	12	33

[a]Total per cent is over 100 because more than one choice was made by respondents.

As evidenced in Table 9, respondents indicated that opposition of some kind occurred in about one-third of the schools. Twelve respondents stated that there was no opposition and 16 did not answer.

The feelings of students toward their block-time classes should be of particular significance. Thirty-one of the 36 respondents agreed that students favored these classes and five did not answer.

TABLE 9

TEACHERS' VIEWS OF THOSE OPPOSING
BLOCK-TIME IN THEIR SCHOOLS

Persons Opposing	Schools N	Schools %[a]
No one opposing	12	33
Other Business Education teachers	5	14
Faculty, other than Business Education	3	8
Counselors	3	8
Principal	1	3
No answer	16	44

[a]Total per cent is over 100 because more than one choice was made by some respondents.

Future Status

If the viewpoints of the participants prevail, there is little doubt that block-time programs not only will continue to exist, but also will expand. As indicated in Table 10, 16 reported that their programs would remain unchanged, and 15 predicted expansion. Only four respondents replied that the program would be eliminated.

TABLE 10

TEACHERS' VIEWS OF FUTURE STATUS OF THEIR BLOCK-TIME PROGRAMS

Future Status	Schools N	Schools %
Program will remain as it is	16	44
Program may expand	15	42
Program may be eliminated	4	11
No opinion	1	3

PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES OF INSTRUCTION

A means of discovering the characteristics of block-time classes is a look at what goes on within the structure.

Because there was so much variation in practice, an attempt was made to identify the extent to which certain activities were carried out by teachers. Procedures listed in Table 11 did not attempt to set a limit nor to establish criteria for what was "expected" to happen in block-time classes. The table represents a summary of teacher responses to some of the practices which were usually found in these classes to a greater or lesser degree. It specifies to what extent block-time teachers reported that they engaged in these practices by showing the per cent of response.

Responses in this section are revealing; indeed, they are crucial to an understanding of the status of block-time teaching. Furthermore, these data now showed more clearly that, in spite of opportunities afforded by the experience, teaching itself remained quite traditional--even static.

TABLE 11

EXTENT OF USE OF SELECTED PROCEDURES IN BLOCK-TIME CLASSES
(Frequency of responses expressed in per cent)

Question	Responses			
	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
Teacher-Student Planning				
1. To what extent do you plan with students in establishing class goals?	6	50	41	3
2. How often do you use teacher-student planning in selecting areas or programs for study?	8	61	31	0
3. How often do you use teacher-student planning in deciding on procedures to be used in studying an area or problem?	11	72	17	0
4. How often are pupils involved in evaluating procedures or outcome?	6	31	55	8
Materials and Resources				
1. To what extent are textbooks used in classroom study?	3	28	63	6
2. To what extent are supplementary books and printed material used in classroom study?	0	6	63	31
3. To what extent do you use audio-visual aid?	3	39	52	6
4. To what extent are other staff members used as resource persons?	14	69	17	0
5. To what extent are parents or other community people utilized as resource persons?	6	58	36	0
6. To what extent does your class visit community agencies or resources to augment classroom experiences?	6	72	22	0

TABLE 11--Continued

	Responses			
	N	O	F	A
Methods and Procedures				
1. To what extent are small groups or committees used in studying problem topics?	19	50	25	6
2. To what extent are situations provided whereby work in your classroom is varied to adjust to individual differences?	0	22	67	11
3. To what extent do students in your classes carry on research which is self-directed?	22	56	19	3
Guidance				
1. To what extent do you plan time for individual conferences outside of class time for counseling on individual problems?	8	64	25	3
2. To what extent do you confer with other school personnel about pupils whom you have in common?	3	36	58	3

The majority of teachers, for example, were only occasionally involved in planning with their students. The teacher who felt it imperative always to establish goals with students, always to involve students in choosing problems to study, or always to encourage students to make decisions as to procedures, was in a distinct minority.

In the utilization of materials and resources, block-time teachers seemed little different from other teachers. The majority made occasional or no use of other staff members, community persons, or field trips. There was an almost equal percentage who made use of audio-visual aids. One thing these teachers did have in common was the textbook; there were few who did not have an assigned text. Much use was made of supplementary materials, however, by most block-time teachers.

Table 11 indicates that in half of the block-time classes small groups were used only occasionally, and nearly 25 per cent made frequent use of them. Responses on this item paralleled the extent to which students carried on self-directed research.

A recognized purpose of block-time classes is that opportunity is afforded the teacher to know and understand students better. This improved relationship is expressed in terms of method when it appears that in most block-time classrooms, work was varied to adjust to individual differences. How this is achieved without involving students in planning or evaluating or making choices or by giving little opportunity for self-direction was not examined in this study.

As a guidance person, the block-time teacher was more likely to discuss students with other school personnel rather than to provide opportunities for individual counseling; although 92 per cent of the teachers made such time available to pupils, 64 per cent did so only occasionally.

Guidance Responsibilities

With the growing acceptance of guidance as a function of the classroom teacher, most school people agree that this is a major purpose of the block-of-time. If educators agree upon little else regarding the block-of-time, there is harmonious acceptance of the possibilities for guidance. Teachers of such classes usually cite guidance as the primary reason for having block-time classes; they feel that by being with a group of students for a longer time they "can get to know and understand them better." The "knowing" and "understanding" seemingly underlie better teaching and better learning.

When the block-of-time produces a setting which focuses upon the needs and interests of students, it particularly affords a unique opportunity for the kind of living together that makes guidance a function of daily life. Here personal and social problems are recognized as a part of the wholeness of the individual; he brings them into the classroom group and so they are part of his interactive life there. Here can be the freedom to help pupils solve the problems of living with others; this is guidance.

This function of the block-time teachers was explored by means of a question related to the extent of responsibility they had for the guidance of their pupils as individuals and in groups.

It can be concluded from the summary in Table 12 that the major responsibility of these teachers was vocational forms of guidance. This was indicated by about 70 per cent of the population. No attempt was made to determine the types of guidance in this study. About half the respondents reported responsibility for educational guidance of either individuals or groups, and about a third reported responsibility for personal-social guidance. It can also be assumed that the guidance role of these teachers was perhaps more significant with individuals than with groups in the classroom.

TABLE 12

SUMMARY OF GUIDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES OF BLOCK-TIME TEACHERS
(per cent)

Extent of Responsibility	Types of Guidance	
	Individual	Group
Vocational Guidance		
Much	69	69
Little	31	22
None	0	9
No answer	0	0
Educational Guidance		
Much	52	47
Little	36	36
None	3	6
No answer	9	11
Personal-Social Guidance		
Much	33	33
Little	58	50
None	3	3
No answer	6	14

Evaluation Practices

What a teacher does about evaluation of student progress can be considered a most significant indicator of both the attitude of the teacher toward subject matter and the concept that is held of goals and purposes. To the block-time teacher, because content is derived from pupils' purposes, evaluation is based upon the goals of the learner. Thus teachers look upon evaluation not as a means for a teacher to appraise the students' ability to achieve the goals (standards, values) of the teacher, but rather as a process of growth of the individual. A more realistic evaluation takes place only when the one to be

evaluated is himself involved. When the solving of problems is the real focus of the classroom, and these problems are those of the learners, then the use of a standardized test as a means of evaluating the learner is not feasible. The block-time teacher looks to other evaluation techniques, preferably those which help make students aware of their own growth.

The data in Table 13 show that 100 per cent of the respondents used teacher-made tests. A large number (97 per cent) evaluated students by observing and rating them, and 47 per cent of the teachers made use of standardized tests to evaluate their pupils.

TABLE 13

USE OF EVALUATIVE INSTRUMENTS IN BLOCK-TIME CLASSES

Evaluative Instruments	Per Cent of Teachers Selecting Item[a]
Teacher-made tests	100
Teacher observation and rating	97
Self-rating inventories of personal and social adjustment	72
Interest inventories	50
Standardized achievement tests	47
Reaction sheets regarding effectiveness of group work	47
Attitude scales	25
Michigan State University Project tests	25
Sociometric devices	8
Other instruments or techniques	28

[a]Total per cent is over 100 because more than one choice was made by respondents.

The result of having teachers check a list of evaluative instruments which they used in their classrooms led to the conclusion that they were inclined to utilize those means of evaluation which were traditional and were more closely related to the subject matter than to student growth. The percentage of those using techniques other than tests or observations and ratings was small indeed in contrast to the overwhelming use of these devices.

CHAPTER V

THE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THE FEELINGS AND BELIEFS (QUALITATIVE) OF BLOCK-TIME TEACHERS

In this chapter, there is an area of uncertainty because it deals with the feelings and beliefs of people. It is inherently a facet of such data that uncertainty exists because it is only possible to learn what people say and not necessarily what they mean. Nor does communication growing out of a questionnaire necessarily reflect the real feelings of responding teachers; it may only reveal those things which teachers feel they can share with safety.

It has been suggested that "real communication is achieved when we see the expressed idea and attitude from the other person's point of view, when we sense how it feels to him, when we achieve his frame of reference."[1] Within the limitations of this study these things can only be projected because building the rapport needed to attain such a state of communication is not possible.

Recognizing this limitation, nevertheless there is the certainty that, regardless of their type of block-time setting, teachers find themselves hindered by factors which seem to be obstacles to achieving goals, and they are facilitated by some factors which help them move

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[1]Carl R. Rogers and F. J. Roethlisberger, "Barriers and Gateways to Communication," Harvard Business Review, XXX, No. 4 (July-August, 1952), 29.

ahead or seem to make teaching in their classes better. Perhaps these factors are more apparent to the block-time teacher who recognizes an implication that in this class he might be operating differently than he would in a more conventional setting and who possibly experiences some anxiety because of this.

This chapter seeks to gain insight into those factors which relate to how teachers in block-time programs in the Michigan State Project felt about what they were doing in their classroom. It is assumed that an analysis of these feelings will extend the picture of block-time teachers and teaching. An underlying premise of this entire chapter is the belief that what one individual feels is an obstacle, or a facilitating factor, grows out of his perception of his unique situation.

The obstacles and facilitating factors are dealt with in successive phases of this chapter. The categories into which data are classified, as described previously,[2] define the kinds of feelings teachers had in these areas.

OBSTACLES TO BLOCK-TIME TEACHING

In simple definition, an obstacle is something standing in the way of progress or success.[3] The implications of 'obstacle' reach beyond this when we consider that what seems to one individual a roadblock which can be overcome becomes a causal factor of insecurity to another, or may become an unsurmountable barrier to still another. These degrees of 'obstacle' are not revealed to any extent by the questionnaire.

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[2] See pages 7 and 8.

[3] Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, College Edition (New York: World Publishing Co., 1960), p. 1014.

It is assumed, however, that regardless to what degree the obstacle exists, it lends itself to a feeling of insecurity.

The following profile of the categories which were obstacles to block-time teachers shows that the administration and/or administrator of a school constituted an obstacle to a majority of teachers; 57 of the responses were in this category. Lack of techniques for teachers in block-time classes ranked second highest, constituting 34 responses as an obstacle to teachers. Materials and pupils rated third and fourth respectively. The most unexpected feature of the profile was the last category in which parents and community were not considered obstacles by any teachers. These data are surprising because it is often a commonly held viewpoint among teachers and administrators that they cannot make curricular changes because parents object. Obviously changes are either being made with practically none of the anticipated objections, or it can be assumed that the changes are not taking place.

PROFILE OF CATEGORIES WHICH ARE OBSTACLES

Category	Frequency
Teacher-Administrator	57
Teacher-Techniques	34
Teacher-Materials and Resources	16
Teacher-Student	14
Teacher-Self	7
Teacher-Staff	4
Teacher-Parent/Community	0

Category 1--Administrators as Obstacles

The kinds of things which happen in a school that somehow relate to the role of the administrator are reported by block-time teachers as obstacles which they felt stood in their way. These factors seem to cluster into phases of school life; the clusters are listed as follows

in descending rank according to the number of responses cited by teachers: physical facilities (16), lack of time and organization (12), attitude of administrators (9), class size (6), curriculum policies (4), marking system (3), class schedule conflict (2), school wide problems (2), financial problems of school (1), student grouping (1), and field trip red tape (1).

Physical facilities.--Rooms which were too small and general lack of space (storage) were considered obstacles. Some teachers reported sharing a classroom resulted in having "no room for guidance or make-up," or "room not conducive to laboratory experiences."

Teachers desire the ideal in physical facilities. There is a limit, however, as to what teachers can do about the existing physical facilities. Likewise, there is a limit as to what administrators can do. Most teachers and administrators continuously strive for improvement of their physical facilities.

Time and organization.--Time and organization within the block-of-time obviously were obstacles which, as teachers saw it, could have been controlled by the administrator. Most of the responses expressed the feeling that there was "not enough time to cover requirements" or subjects in the block. Several felt that lack of time kept them from giving individual help or counseling.

Some teachers reported that time for planning and preparation was restricted even though each participant was to have a research period for planning and preparation for the block class over and above any other planning period.

Attitude of administrator.--A cluster of obstacles which are difficult to define have to do with the attitude of the administrator toward

the block-time program in his school. Behavior, the key to the individual's attitude, varies so greatly in the eyes of the beholder that it is hardly justifiable to make an evaluation from only nine items. On the other hand, it is not possible to ignore the feelings expressed by a few teachers that the attitude of the administrator was an obstacle to them. Two respondents stated that there was "lack of sympathy from higher administration," and "no administrative help or direction in implementing the program."

Class size.--Responses in this cluster do not clarify the question as to what is considered proper class size; however, some block-time teachers felt that the size of a group conditioned their success with group work or success in completing expected courses of study.

Curriculum policies.--Two opposing results which occur when curriculum policy is being established bring some criticism of administrators by block-time teachers. Some teachers stated they were hampered considerably by rigid requirements or policies. They felt "the curriculum is too strict," or they were "required to adhere to a given subject." One teacher reported that because students must buy a textbook "they are bound to use it"; another reported the "need for strict adhereence to the textbook."

Although it appears from these data that some block-time teachers were restricted by lack of freedom, there were others who seemed hampered because there was freedom. This is noted in such statements as: "We lack a course of study." "No set policy as to what to teach." It appears that these latter responses were, in reality, a plea for specific direction because these teachers were uncertain about procedure or method.

Since previous data have already shown that few programs were developed by involving school staffs, then these kinds of responses should be an expected outgrowth. Major research in curriculum development consistently points to the need for total involvement of those concerned. It can be expected that when teachers are involved in the planning, there will be some understanding of the advantages of freedom. If the wish is to develop block teaching, then these teachers need the freedom to explore with their students their many goals which transcend the framework of any course of study. Yet other research points out that the responses given by these teachers are valid, for they express a resistance to the difficult task of making a change. As Sharp has shown in his study, traditional teachers are likely to be "resistant to attempts to build up a feeling of responsibility on their part for the over-all program of instruction."[4] They prefer the security of a well laid out course which will predetermine their behavior. Long ago Erich Fromm explained this wish "to escape from freedom."[5]

Marking system.--Three teachers looked upon their school's system of marking students as an obstacle. There was a wide variance that seems to represent the differences in thinking found among block-time teachers regarding the handling of subject matter within the block-of-time.

The data seem to indicate that the teacher who adhered to separate

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[4]George Sharp, Curriculum Development as Re-education of the Teacher (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951), p. 37.

[5]Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom (New York: Rinehart Co., 1941).

subjects was hindered by "marking one grade for two subjects." Those who wished to unify subject matter were held back by "subdividing for marking," or having "separate marks for each subject in the block." One teacher contended that being "required to submit two or more grades 'means' they tend to separate the work."

One might surmise that the way a mark is given is a clue to beliefs held by teachers about evaluation and therefore highly indicative of what goes on in the classroom in terms of goal-setting and the place of the individual in general procedure. Indeed, one might expect that this cluster of obstacles would appear as a more significant factor in block-time programs that are less traditional in approach. A block teacher, to whom evaluation has meaning in terms of goals and purpose of the learner and who believes it is a way to help the learner discover new things about himself, would no doubt be frustrated by the need to 'give a mark.' There seems to be a little of this sense of frustration in the evidence presented here. It must be recognized, of course, that the school system's pattern of marking (or report cards) can seriously limit the teacher and the students.

Marks, which are most often considered concrete evidence of an evaluation which has been made, seem necessary to a system which focuses upon the retention of subject matter as its main purpose. Evaluation in such a setting is not a part of a problem-solving process as described by Kelley and Rasey,[6] but, then, such systems seldom utilize problem-solving procedures as their classroom method.

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[6]Earl C. Kelley and Marie J. Rasey, Education and the Nature of Man (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), pp. 126-39.

School-wide problems.--These are obstacles which may apply to any school situation and not necessarily to a block-time program; or they might be related to how the block-time classes fit into or articulate with the rest of the school program.

Some responses seemed to raise the question as to whether there were particular problems arising out of trying to carry on block-time classes in a traditional school setting. Some emerging obstacles had much to do with scheduling and organization, such as: "Conflicts with other classes." "Too many interruptions caused by single hour bells."

Summary.--It appears from the general tenor of responses in this category that the administrator has a unique role because he has involved teachers in a new setting, a new concept of teaching students. This seemed to be not a problem of block-time necessarily, but a symptom of the need to find better ways for staffs to plan and work together.

After surveying studies of the status of block-time programs, Gordon Vars concluded that responsibility for success rests with the administrator. Vars stated:

> Any program which departs materially from the conventional is doomed to failure if it is initiated without adequate orientation and planning, or if those involved are not given continuous support, both material and psychological.[7]

Category 2--Lack of Teaching Techniques as Obstacles

Among the most obvious indicators of what a teacher believes about the teaching-learning process are the techniques employed to achieve

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[7]Gordon F. Vars, "Administrative Leadership--Key to Core Program Development," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XLVI, No. 271 (February, 1962), 102.

the goal of helping students learn. This is not to say that a purpose exists within every technique, but the way a thing is done in a classroom can reveal intent or purpose. An example, the incorporation of small groups may mean a teacher feels such procedures are an expected activity for block-time classes. Another teacher may utilize small groups as a vehicle for providing a democratic social setting or personality development condition. Thus the technique is the same but the intent is different.

In studying the responses in this category it was apparent that most of the responding teachers felt that, if they could attain a particular skill or technique, they could make progress. A few stated obstacles have been forced into this category because they seem to denote a lack of skill. The respondent who stated "group study is of minimum value" may not have known how to teach students to work in groups. It was also apparent in this category that most of the wished-for techniques could apply to any teaching situation as well as to block-time classes.

In this second largest category of obstacles the 34 responses grouped themselves into nine clusters. These are ranked in descending order according to numbers of obstacles listed: paperwork (11), preplanning and preparation (6), evaluation (4), teacher-student planning (4), lack of planning period (4), giving remedial help (2), individual differences (1), general method and scope (1), and subject matter (1).

Paperwork.--Eleven respondents stated that the overload of paperwork was a definite obstacle. The subjects combined in the block naturally involved much paperwork. If little attempt is made to integrate or correlate subjects, it is possible to conclude that this is why teachers were confronted with large amounts of papers to grade.

Preplanning and preparation.--It may be that those teachers who described problems in planning and preparation were showing what might be termed a 'traditional' concern. That is, they were less hampered by lack of techniques for planning with students than they were by the more usual problems of presenting content and materials which had been preplanned and predetermined. Because they were teaching two or more separate subjects in their blocks, some found they were held back by "the number of different assignments there are to prepare." Similar responses stated: "Block of time takes too much extra planning." "Much preparation is required for each class."

When teachers felt that they were not able to plan with students or when they showed an inclination to retain independent subjects and to plan for these without consulting students, they may have been evidencing a show of resistance to curriculum change. Anderson and Davies, who have studied this phenomenon, pointed out that

> . . . building curriculum through the group planning of students and teachers is frequently opposed by those accustomed to working exclusively in specialized areas of the curriculum. . . . New methods of planning create a complex problem for teachers who have looked upon instruction as covering a specified area of subject matter . . .[8]

Evaluation.--Evaluation was a factor which held back four teachers. Three felt hampered because they did not have devices for evaluation of their students. Another was concerned about evaluation as marking and had "difficulty in marking two areas of the block."

Teacher-Student planning.--Four respondents showed a concern or need for techniques in the area of teacher-student planning. Teachers found it difficult to get students to help plan.

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[8]Vivienne Anderson and Daniel R. Davies, Patterns of Educational Leadership (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1956), p. 41.

Planning period.--Four respondents stated that the lack of a planning period was an obstacle. Planning time is essential to the successful development of any program when the classroom is used as a clinical laboratory.

Other clusters.--Some other clusters in the category of needed techniques had few responses and are mentioned here as a miscellaneous group. They are giving remedial help, handling individual differences, using general method and scope, and teaching subject matter.

Summary.--Other research concerned with problems teachers have when attempting curricular changes also found that problems arose when teachers lacked techniques for working with students. Reid's research found responses similar to those reported in this study. Her population described difficulties in planning with students in terms of their interests. Teachers found students reluctant to make their own decisions; they seemed to cling to traditional plans. Teachers needed to find ways to help students develop new values and at the same time to provide security while a shift was taking place. Problem-solving, small group work, and maintaining discipline were among the problems which they faced when attempting curricular changes.[9]

Category 3--Materials and Resources as Obstacles

The lack of materials, or the kinds of materials and resources which were available, constituted the third largest obstacle to block-time teachers. The term 'materials' is rather encompassing here,

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[9]Chandos Reid, "A Study of Teachers' Problems Resulting from New Practices in Curriculum and Teaching Procedures in Selected Secondary Schools" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, College of Education, Northwestern University, 1943), pp. 102-16.

because it includes all manner of resources which would enhance classroom teaching and learning. The following is the manner in which responses in this category cluster in descending rank, the figures indicate the number of times they were cited: lack of integrated (correlated) material (4), physical facilities (4), general lack of material (2), textbooks (2), audio-visual aids (2), lack of equipment (1), school and classroom library (1).

Of the 17 responses in this category, a total of four teachers stated that they lacked resources and/or instructional materials or supplies.[10] Some found they could not get materials when they were needed and, as one teacher stated, this "limits spontaneous research at the peak of interest." Many teachers developed their own supplementary materials to make up for this lack.

Physical facilities.--Some teachers believed that they were held back by the physical inappropriateness of the room or rooms in which they worked. There were those who wished to utilize visual aids but "have no equipment to darken the room." One teacher responded that she was hindered because she did not have adequate work space or storage space. As was noted earlier in this presentation, teachers are limited in improving existing physical facilities; but they continuously strive for improvement.

Miscellaneous.--That cluster of obstacles which included textbooks as classroom material was small. Only two teachers out of the total population responded that they felt hampered because they had a textbook in their classes.

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[10]Severe and unexpected cutbacks in U.S.O.E. funding caused drastic reductions in the scope of the project, especially in the development of materials and other resources for classroom use.

Two block-time teachers felt that lack of audio-visual aids, somehow, were obstacles to progress in their block-time classes. They not only "lack visual aids," but one pointed to "lack of money for audio-visual aids."

Summary.--Participating teachers were encouraged by Michigan State University to develop materials and resources for possible use by all participating teachers. Although there were 16 responses indicating lack of materials and resources as an obstacle, most participants had their own material which they used. This obstacle is common to most all teachers in any area.

Category 4--Teacher-Student Relationships as Obstacles

It is highly significant that 14 out of 36 teachers believed that the students who were taught were obstacles. In some ways these students limited the teacher in a block-time class because of the ways students reacted to being in a block-time class. Some of the clusters were not specifically related to block-time classes but could account for problems with students in any class. Indeed, some responses could be easily assigned to categories related to techniques because they seemed to indicate an inability to cope with the range of student needs.

This category of teacher-student relationship divides into a rather wide range of clusters listed here in descending order by number of responses. These are: individual differences (5), study or work habits (3), student absenteeism (2), student attitude toward block (2), reading problem (1), and student interest (1).

Individual differences.--It is hoped in a block-time class that individuality will find enhancement; that individual abilities, skills,

and needs will have greater opportunity to unfold. In looking at these data, one senses a degree of negativism toward young people because of that most human of characteristics--they are unique. Five of 14 teachers felt that individuals' differences in abilities and needs were a detriment to them.

Mainly these students constituted an obstacle because of "too wide range of interest and ability," and "wide difference in intelligence and desire to accomplish work." The differences described were largely those between the more able and the slow learners, such as: "Meeting individual needs when there are extremes--very bright and very slow."

Of course, there is no way to estimate what teachers mean by a 'slow learner'; there seems to be a considerable looseness of terminology. In most cases the teacher seemed to be describing a less able student.

It is often stated that because a block of time reduces the number of different students teachers have each day, they are better able to give attention to individual differences. Yet there seems to be a negation of this in these responses. Indeed, block-time programs which emphasize a flexible organization, as Faunce and Bossing have pointed out, "provide the best milieu for the development of each individual in keeping with his individual needs."[11]

Study or work skills.--Some responses related directly or indirectly to study and work skills and are dealt with here as a group rather than individually.

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[11]Ronald C. Faunce and Nelson L. Bossing, Developing the Core Curriculum (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1958), p. 119.

Three teachers cited students' poor study habits as an obstacle in their classrooms. One teacher was held back because of students' reading problems, and one teacher was held back because of students' lack of interest. Two teachers cited student absenteeism as an obstacle in their classrooms. Two teachers were held back because of students' attitude toward block-time classes. This is a sensitive area because it is difficult to define how much of student feelings are derived originally from the teacher himself. Some researchers report that what the teacher believes to be important has an inevitable effect upon his own behavior and hence upon the behavior of students.[12]

Because the block class is limited in the school, it competes with the traditional class in students' thinking. It may be accurate to conclude that students in this setting encounter conflicting kinds of practice during their school days. It is understandable that to some students the block-time class is unexpectedly different and therefore gives a sense of insecurity. If the teacher is unable to give support, or seems negative, or does not show strong commitment, then the students seek security in the known. In this they are no different from the adults around them.[13]

Regardless of the origin of this negative feeling on the part of students, it is an obstacle to progress for some teachers.

Summary.--Three teachers cited poor study habits as an obstacle in their classrooms. This type of data, which seem to give support to

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[12]Arthur W. Combs and Donald Snygg, Individual Behavior: A Perceptual Approach to Behavior (rev. ed.; New York: Harper and Bros., 1959), pp. 397-99.

[13]Jane Warters, Group Guidance, Principles and Practices (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), pp. 240-41.

teachers' feelings that students are obstacles, may diminish the commonly held view that block-time classes enhance student-teacher relationships. Perhaps this merely serves to point out that these teachers are not unlike teachers in conventional classrooms.

Bush, who has explored in depth the facets of teacher-student relationships, gives support to the understanding that problems of differing interest or motivation are not unique to the block-time teachers in his study. His research found that the interest of students as a group and teachers as a group are directly opposite. Among other differences, teachers prefer verbal and abstract activities, whereas students' interests are in manipulative activities.[14]

In addition, those who have studied the young adolescent remind us that student morale declines as students move into junior and senior high school. They become less eager about things that definitely belong to the school. One writer in this area believes that lack of interest is due in part to the shortcomings of the school program. He states, that, to be interested in what is taught, the student must find something of meaning and value in it.[15] To carry this thinking one step further--the student will find little meaning or value unless he can find something of himself (in what is being taught).

In view of this research, it seems likely that many of the behaviors described by respondents as obstacles may be present, not because the student is in a block-time class, but because he is at a

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[14]Robert N. Bush, The Teacher-Pupil Relationship (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1954), pp. 103-16.

[15]Arthur T. Jersild, The Psychology of Adolescence (New York: Macmillan Company, 1957), pp. 251-52.

particular period of growth or development. Thus, any class in the senior high school might have students expressing their needs with similar behaviors.

Category 5--The Teacher's Self as an Obstacle

Those obstacles which were identified in this study as having to do with self were perhaps the least definable because teachers did not readily point out ways in which they were obstacles to themselves. Some responses appeared to be self-evaluative.

The seven obstacles in this category formed clusters ranked here in descending order according to numbers of responses. They are: the first-year teacher (2), feelings about block-time teaching (2), time utilization in and out of school (1), lack of experience in method (1), and better prepared for stenographic than clerical (1).

The first-year teacher.--Most of the participants were experienced teachers; thus, few teachers replied that this was a very real problem to them. However, two teachers felt hampered because they were first-year teachers. Research for this study did not include data which demonstrate whether length of teaching affects the kinds of problems teachers have.

Time and load.--One block teacher felt that she was hindered by limited time. Many of the activities of the block-time class which are time-consuming are also time-consuming for a traditional class. Some of the activities include grading papers, work load, and outside activities.

Feelings about block-time teaching.--If it can be assumed that teachers select secondary school teaching as a career because of an

idealistic commitment to a body of subject matter, then we might expect to find teachers who feel hampered because they have been assigned to a setting which expects they will give consideration to a second, sometimes third, content area. This seemingly negative feeling was expressed by one respondent who stated, "I prefer not to teach shorthand and typewriting concurrently."

Lack of experience in method.--A feeling of insecurity seemed to be expressed by the one respondent who cited lack of experience in method as an obstacle. All respondents had the minimum amount of preservice preparation for block teaching; therefore, this need for method may stem from lack of self-confidence in academic preparation.

Category 6--The School Staff as an Obstacle

Four of the responding teachers regarded others on the staff as a hindrance to their progress. There was no indication as to why these respondents felt this way.

Category 7--Parents and/or Community as Obstacles

When changes take place in the curriculum of a school system, it is expected to bring questions from a concerned community. Parents want to know how this change will affect their children, and it becomes the job of the teachers and administrators to communicate with them as best they can. If parents do not accept a change, then teachers might become uneasy and feel hampered by their questioning.

It is interesting to note that parents and community did not enter into the block-time picture as obstacles. Later it was found that they did not enter into the picture as strong facilitating factors either.

Other experiences in planning curricular changes lead most educators to believe that new offerings or programs which are unfamiliar to parents might evoke questions. Their concerns have grown into attacks on programs in many instances. Parents, as one source contends, might feel isolated by these unfamiliar developments unless they have been involved in the planning or there are effective lines of communication between school and home.[16] There is no evidence in the findings here that such involvement or communication did or did not exist.

The conclusion might be made that so little change has taken place in block-time classes that they do not seem different or unconventional to parents but instead conform to the experiential picture most parents already have of the school--thus, no questions or protests arise.

FACILITATING FACTORS IN BLOCK-TIME TEACHING

Just as an analysis of the obstacles teachers face yields negative factors, an examination of the positive is possible by exploring those factors which facilitate teachers in their block-time classes. These are not necessarily the reverse of each other. Indeed, some respondents who found it difficult or threatening to describe their obstacles used the negatively stated facilitating factor as their way out. A response which exemplifed this was that of the teacher who would be facilitated "if given a correlated machine and typewriting text." It can be inferred that because he obviously did not have

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[16] Joseph Leese, Kenneth Frasure, and Mauritz Johnson, Jr., The Teacher in Curriculum Making (New York: Harper and Bros., 1961), pp. 432-33.

such a text it was an obstacle. The facilitating factor thus has a negative base.

In the main, however, in responding to this section of the questionnaire, teachers were saying, "There are things that happen in my block-time classes which help me feel successful or help me make progress with my students."

These facilitating factors have been forced into the same categories as were the obstacles described earlier in this chapter. However, because in-service assistance was listed by several teachers, it was necessary to add this as a category.

The following profile ranks the categories according to the number of responses made in each:

A PROFILE OF FACILITATING FACTORS

Category	Frequency
Teacher-Administrator	77
Teacher-Technique	52
Teacher-Student	49
Teacher-Material	41
Teacher-Self	28
Teacher-In-Service	25
Teacher-Staff	19
Teacher-Parent	12

The data in this profile of facilitating factors show a pattern of similarity to that of the profile of obstacles.[17] In comparing the two it was found that, although administrators were the greatest obstacles to teachers, at the same time they were the greatest facilitating factor; 77 of the responses were in this category. Materials and students were similarly given high priority as facilitating factors just as they were

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[17] Above, page 46.

as obstacles. Having needed techniques was facilitative as indicated by 52 responses in this category, which also ranked high as an obstacle.

There was more consistency in the area of staff relations, for in this category only four responses indicated that other staff members were obstacles. On the other hand, 19 responses demonstrated that other staff members were a facilitating factor to the block-time teacher.

In the area of the self, seven respondents indicated that they felt they were obstacles to themselves; this is nearly one-fourth of the number who felt there was something about themselves which was facilitative.

There were no responses to be found in the category of parents or community as obstacles, but 12 teachers indicated that these were facilitating factors in their block-time teaching.

Category 1--Administrators as Facilitating Factors

Generally, those responses which describe the attitude of the administrator as a facilitating factor point out two kinds of behavior which move teachers ahead. One of these is cooperation and support, and the second is active help.

Responses describing the administrator's role as a facilitating factor broke down into several clusters. The following lists these in rank order according to the number of responses in each cluster, thus: student load (11), general attitude and behavior (10), scheduling and time allotment (10), administration of total school (8), administration of block-time program (8), attitude toward content and method (4), curriculum development (4), grouping of students (3), attitude of state vocational education department (2), and team teaching (2).

Student load.--Eleven block-time teachers pointed out that small classes were a factor in making progress possible for them. They did not give any data as to the numbers of students making up these small classes; however, they were satisfied with their class size. This may be unique among these teachers, because usually teachers wish for fewer students regardless of how many they have.

General attitude and behavior.--Ten teachers stated that the supportive general attitude and behavior of the administration was a facilitating factor. This exemplifies the supportive behavior of administration which moves teachers ahead.

Freedom, too, was felt to be a factor which moves teachers ahead. Several of these ten respondents indicated that the administrator who makes it possible for his teachers to experiment and to be flexible in their approach was a facilitating factor.

Scheduling and time allotment.--A large cluster in this category of relationships included responses related to the time factor. Ten teachers stated that their administrators facilitated their teaching by providing a block-of-time. Some felt it gave more opportunity to "carry through projects" and "allows greater flexibility." Providing a block of time exemplified the giving of active help by the administrator.

Administration of total school.--Although two teachers had reported that they felt hampered in their block-time classes by school-wide administrative problems, others reported they felt they were facilitated by certain procedures and policies of the administrator. The eight responses in this cluster were so varied that they are identified best by simply listing some of them. They include: "Free period for

planning." "Classes not artificially interrupted by bells." "School records are kept by clerical people and are available."

Apparently the availability of records and extra school services were most helpful in the total school picture. Perhaps it can be inferred from these responses that the teachers who were facilitated by availability of school records were thinking in terms of their guidance function.

Administration of block-time program.--Eight responses form a cluster which describes administrative practices more specifically allied to block-time programs. Specific mention was made of direct communication between department and state supervisor as an example of administrative practices which were facilitative.

Physical factors in the school.--Eight block-time teachers pointed out that the physical factors in the school were conducive in making progress possible for them.

Remaining clusters.--Specific administrative assistance was felt to be facilitative by seven teachers. Most of these respondents indicated the assistance of their department head and state supervisor was facilitative to their progress. The remaining clusters, namely attitude toward content and method, curriculum development, grouping of students, attitude of state vocational education department, and team teaching, were positive factors that indicated administrative support for facilitating progress for the block-time teachers.

Summary.--It can be concluded from these data in this category that the principal's supportive role is essential to the development of block-time programs. It can also be concluded that teachers select out of their environment a variety of factors which give them security.

These, of course, vary in terms of their individual differences. Specifically, however, it should be noted that some block-time teachers derive security from a structure which they have been given. Others indicated that they gained security from the freedom to teach as they wished.

Category 2--Teaching Techniques as Facilitating Factors

The block-of-time apparently provides an opportunity or setting for some classroom procedures which seem to facilitate teaching. Although earlier in this chapter it was reported that 34 responses described the lack of certain teaching techniques as obstacles, the opposite also exists. The survey reported 52 responses describing the ability to utilize particular techniques as facilitating to teaching.

These techniques or procedures apparently originated from the feeling that these things can be done or need to be done because this is a block-time class. Again, as in the category of obstacles, many of the procedures might be utilized in classes other than block-time.

Responses seem to show that block-time teachers are facilitated by the opportunity to be more flexible and to work more closely with students. It will be noted that in some instances responses make it appear that teachers feel they progress because the program also gives more time to carry on their more usual conventional procedures. In either case, these are techniques which teachers feel help them to make progress or to achieve.

The clusters of responses rank themselves in the following manner: guidance of students (8), correlation (integration) subject matter (7), techniques utilizing block-of-time (6), planning period (5), course

of study (4), methods used with content (3), and testing (3).

Guidance of students.--In this cluster of responses eight teachers described techniques which assisted their guidance role in the block-time class. Mainly, the respondents gave evidence that they felt the block-of-time in itself was facilitative because it provided greater opportunity to carry on guidance procedures.

A few responses descriptive of things actually done by teachers in their guidance role are: "Student-teacher conferences." "Personal contacts enable teacher to evaluate the student more accurately." "Enables me to see student in various situations." "Have more familiarity with individual differences and aptitudes."

Techniques of working with students.--Eight teachers described particular techniques which they felt aided progress in their classes. These teachers did not expound on the techniques; therefore, an analysis is not presented here. This may be an area for further study.

Organizing techniques.--The eight responses which group around the ways in which teachers organize students, time, and subject matter in their classrooms are considered in this cluster.

Organization within a block-of-time might assist those who insist that they do not have block-time programs. An example of this is the teacher who is assigned to block-time classes in his school, but who states he is facilitated because these are "taught as separate classes, not block-time." The responses that the "class is self-contained; can integrate and juggle course around" is in the same context. Indeed, one might reach an impasse in attempting to 'integrate' and 'juggle courses' at the same time.

Correlation of subject matter.--To be able to correlate two or

more separate subjects was felt to be a facilitating factor by seven respondents. Correlation is defined as integrating or merging two or more subjects into one project, job, assignment, or task. The terms 'co-ordinate' or 'merge' describe the same procedure. The respondents did not describe any specific techniques used to correlate subjects.

Techniques utilizing the block-of-time.--Six teachers indicated they were facilitated because of techniques utilizing a block of time. Some stated the longer time meant lessons could be extended or subjects expanded when necessary. Specifically, some stated they could extend work periods when needed or to complete a lesson when needed.

Some indicated that the flexibility of time resulting from the block schedule made for progress in teaching. They were "able to adjust time to the situation at hand."

Planning period.--Five block-time teachers responded that the planning period provided by the project was a factor in making progress possible for them. The relationship between planning period and teaching techniques is difficult to understand. However, the additional time makes it possible to prepare new techniques and perfect experienced ones.

Methods used with content.--Three of the respondents in this phase of the questionnaire reported that the methods they employed in teaching the content of their subject areas were facilitating factors in their classrooms. Again, no one was specific in naming or describing a method or technique. There seemed to be many possibilities for working with content rather than with specific methods.

Course of study and testing.--Two final clusters in this category of techniques deserve some mention. Four respondents were facilitated

because they used predetermined courses of study or texts. It might be surmised that they derive a feeling of security from these. Three teachers revealed that they moved ahead in block-time classes because of their testing programs. They responded in such a general way that it is impossible to analyze their responses.

Summary.--On the whole, it appears that a majority of the responses in this category give the impression that the intent of classroom procedure remains the same, or traditional, and that many teachers are facilitated by this approach.

Category 3--Teacher-Student Relationships as Facilitating Factors

Clusters of responses within this category describe those factors in the teacher's relationship with students which seem to help the teaching process succeed; they facilitated the process of interacting with students.

Forty-nine responses make this the third largest category of facilitating factors, much larger than the same category of obstacles.

This category makes it obvious that a large number of responding teachers believed that getting to know and understand their students better was one of their best experiences in block-time classes.

Responses fall into smaller clusters which are ranked in descending order as follows: students' attitude toward block of time (14), getting to know students better (7), having students for block of time (7), students' behavior which facilitated (6), student adjustment (6), reduction of problem behavior (5), and student abilities and differences (4).

Student attitude toward block.--Fourteen teachers described their feeling that students' positive attitudes toward the block-time class were facilitative. Their responses were seven times the number of those who declared that students' negative attitudes were obstacles. These teachers have stated they were moved ahead by: "Student attitude." "Students are receptive to program." "Interested students."

Knowing students better.--Out of the 49 responses, seven teachers have indicated that the possibility of knowing their students better was a significant factor in block-time teaching. Teachers felt that they came to understand students' problems and needs socially as well as academically. How this happens was described in statements as: "There is opportunity to come closer to students." "Am able to work better with students because have more time with them." "Understanding the problems and needs of individual students."

Two teachers described the means by which this 'knowing' was achieved in their classrooms. They stated that they had available "information about individual differences" and "have student files in classroom."

Knowing students better is certainly an accepted concomitant of the guidance function of teachers and is a prerequisite for building good relationships in the classroom. There is general agreement that this is an outstanding virtue of block-time programs in that the longer time with a group affords more opportunity to achieve this state with students. In spite of this, it appears that only 20 per cent of the total population of this study found it facilitative in working with their students.

Those interested in improving block-time programs might question

the significance of these data. Some research indicates that a positive relationship exists between teachers knowing their students and how the students and teacher relate to one another. For example, Bush hypothesizes that

> Effective education relationships will be promoted by increasing the teacher's knowledge of the pertinent individual differences of his students, provided that such knowledge is attended by an objective attitude toward, and insight into, human behavior.[18]

Having the same students for block-of-time.--Although this cluster might seem to belong in the teacher-administrator category, it is also fitting that it be listed here. The seven responses in this cluster indicated that because they had students for a longer than usual time, somehow relationships were better and the teacher was facilitated.

Student behaviors which facilitate.--It is probably correct to assume from the data that students whose general behavior facilitates the block-time teacher are those who overtly display some degree of interest in the work of the class. According to six teachers, it was this factor which helped them make progress. Responses describing such behavior state: "Interest of students in preparing for an occupation." "Active participation by students."

Student adjustment.--In this cluster of six responses, block-time teachers reported that they felt facilitated by the kinds of adjustments made by their students. The majority of respondents indicated that there was very good adjustment toward the block-time class.

These teachers appear to be saying that if students are able to make a happy adjustment to the school life because of the block-of-time,

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[18]Bush, op. cit., p. 97.

then the situation is happier for the teacher too. Also, they seem to be saying that as students grow and develop in subject matter they adjust better; consequently the situation is better for the teacher too.

Reduction of problem behavior.--A reduction of problem behavior constituted a cluster of five responses. Here teachers expressed the feeling that their block-time classes "lessen discipline problems" particularly when students "don't move from room to room." These factors seem to have facilitated block-time teaching.

Students' abilities and differences.--According to the data presented here, four teachers indicated that they were moved ahead in their classes by the abilities of their students. One teacher in this cluster was facilitated by the fact that her students were in a heterogeneous group. The remaining respondents indicated satisfaction with some kind of ability grouping.

Category 4--Materials and Resources as Facilitating Factors

The need for tools to aid in implementing teaching is a major concern of all teachers and administrators. Data in this study have shown that the lack of materials and resources constituted an obstacle to 14 block-time teachers. Conversely, data derived from the questionnaire also show that, in terms of number of responses, materials were the fourth major facilitating factor.

As in previous categories, clusters are ranked in descending order according to numbers of responses: school equipment and facilities (9), field trips (7), audio-visual materials and equipment (5), materials and supplies (4), teaching aids (4), resources (4), library (3), textbooks (3), and physical condition of classroom (2).

School equipment and facilities.--Responses derived from the questionnaire show that "adequate facilities" or "excellent equipment" in the school as a whole became a means for progress in some block-time classrooms. Nine teachers responded in this general vein. This is nearly two times as many as was indicated as obstacles. Also, if all respondents in this study are conducting successful programs, and there is reason to believe that they are, equipment and facilities are not too influential to their success.

Field trips.--Seven teachers stated that field trips made for progress in their classes. Observation of a working situation was an excellent resource. This, of course, might be applicable to a traditional class.

Audio-visual materials.--A "good selection of visual aids" was mentioned by five respondents as a facilitation in their block-time teaching. This included not only having adequate supplies of such resources but also having ready access to them.

Materials and supplies.--The four responses in this cluster are both general and specific. Specifically, teachers were facilitated because they had ample paper, materials, and business forms.

The more general kind of response reported that efforts were made to secure materials, or that adequate materials were available to them. Some of these were designated as "free and inexpensive" or "supplementary."

Teaching aids.--Four teachers stated that teaching aids made for progress in their classes. These teachers did not describe or identify specific aids.

Resources.--Although the term "resources" was not defined by them,

four teachers have stated that these were facilitating factors in their block-time classes. Two responses in this cluster refer to people as resources. One respondent felt progress was made in his classroom because of community resources and the willingness of resource people to help when asked.

Libraries.--Although responses from block-time teachers did not expand upon how the library facilitated their teaching, three respondents reported that an "excellent library" was a factor which helped them make progress. Room library was reported by one as a facilitating factor.

Text materials.--The kinds of textbooks which were selected for use in their block-time classes pleased the three teachers whose responses make up this cluster. Texts used in block classes were the same as used in the traditional classes.

Physical conditions of the classroom.--Two respondents indicated that the physical conditions of the classrooms contributed to their progress. It appears that the physical condition of a classroom is not an important factor in the success of a block program because only 18 respondents mentioned it as an obstacle or a facilitating factor, leaving 18 respondents with no impression.

Category 5--The Teacher's Self as a Facilitating Factor

In looking at those things which seem to facilitate their block-time teaching, teachers might find that their own feelings are responsible for progress. Out of the population of 36 block-time teachers in this study, 28 responded to this phase of the questionnaire that the self is the moving factor.

The responses give some evidence of satisfaction with some phase of the program or with themselves. Clusters formed by these responses are ranked as follows: teacher's background and work experience (7), feelings about block of time (7), feelings about subject matter (5), contribution of Michigan State University project teachers (5), and general attitude (4).

Teacher's background and experience.--Seven of the 28 respondents in this cluster stated that the educational background they experienced as students was currently a facilitating factor in their block-time teaching. One mentioned that she initiated a block-time class and developed with it. Another mentioned that her years of office work contributed to her progress.

Feelings about the block-time program.--A cluster of seven makes up this group of responses in the category of self. Respondents stated that they were facilitated because they felt pleased with their block-time classes.

Feelings about subject matter.--Five respondents in this cluster identified subject matter as a facilitating factor. Reference was made to their major subject or subjects in college as the course or courses they desired to teach.

Contribution of Michigan State University project teachers.--Five respondents reported that the contributions of other teachers participating in the project were facilitating factors in their progress in the classroom. These contributions were shared at workshops and conferences in which project personnel participated and/or attended.

General attitudes.--Some responses do seem to form a cluster around a theme, and yet they are an expression of individual feelings

about one's self in the block-time setting. They might also be reactions to teaching which seem to be highly personal. There were four respondents who were facilitated by flexibility of teaching, opportunity for experimenting, and participating in a national research project.

Category 6--In-service Activities as Facilitating Factors

Among the responses to this study were 25 which pointed out that in-service activities were factors which helped some block-time teachers' progress. These teachers were facilitated by some self-initiated action, such as reading, association with others in conferences or meetings, or by resource help in their schools.

Clusters form in these areas and are listed here in rank order as follows: conferences and meetings (12), resource help (6), and professional readings (6).

Conferences and meetings.--In this cluster of 12 responses, different kinds of meetings were described; however, they seem to have one common facilitating factor. This appears to be the possibility for individuals to derive security from a group. In addition, there is a sharing of knowledge and skills which is felt to be valuable. The meetings become a means for communicating these things. However, in view of the usual positive evaluations made at such meetings, it seems inconsistent to find only 12 responses of this kind out of the total population.

The following variety of responses describes the kinds of in-service meetings which facilitated these 12 teachers: "Conferences with teachers and administrators." "Meetings of teachers involved in the project."

It is probably agreed among many educators today that the feeling of security derived from such group involvement is an expected outcome. Research in the dynamics of groups by Herbert Thelen and others suggests that "the first organizational principle of in-service training is to get each person into a small, supportive group in which the member's responsibility is to help others."[19]

Resource help.--Two kinds of consultant help are available to teachers, according to respondents. These were considered factors which helped some teachers progress. One of these is the consultant who comes from outside the school system; the other is the consultant who works in an ongoing curriculum study program within a school system.

Six teachers in this cluster indicated that their block-time classes were assisted by this help. In their responses they named facilitating factors such as: "Consultants from the State Department and the University." "City supervisor, department head, and other teachers."

Educational reading.--Certain kinds of professional reading materials are a resource which was facilitative to six block-time teachers. These teachers did not mention any particular readings.

Category 7--Staff Relationships as a Facilitating Factor

Responses in this category of teacher-staff relationships show that 19 respondents felt they were facilitated by supportive behavior on the part of other staff members.

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[19]Herbert A. Thelen, Dynamics of Groups at Work (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 77.

The kinds of staff attitudes which are facilitative to block-time teachers seem to fall roughly into four clusters. These are ranked as follows according to number of responses in each cluster: general staff behavior (7), contributions of other teachers (6), school climate (5), and other curriculum area (1).

General staff behavior.--Seven teachers who responded in this category have indicated that they were moved ahead by the "cooperation among the staff" of their schools.

Contributions of other teachers.--In the second largest cluster in this category, block-time teachers relate in more specific detail ways in which their colleagues assist them. Assistance comes from fellow block-time teachers as well as from other members of the local teaching staff. The exchanging and sharing of ideas by informal means is the more usual way that help is given.

Responding teachers were also facilitated by more formal means in schools where some kind of organization had taken place for the purpose of studying and working together.

School climate.--This cluster of five responses is almost inseparable from the first two in this category of teacher-staff relationships. If teachers are sharing their experiences, if they are contributing to each other in some way, then it seems the climate in their schools must facilitate the individual teacher.

Other curriculum areas.--Other areas of the curriculum gave facilitative assistance to one block-time teacher. There was no discussion or explanation accompanying this response.

Category 8--Parents and Community as Facilitating Factors

It was noted earlier that parents or the community are obviously not looked upon as obstacles to block-time teachers. Findings are small when considering the same category as a facilitating factor. Twelve responses are found in this category. In general, these respondents felt they were moved ahead by the co-operation and acceptance of parents.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem of this study was to arrive at a definitive picture of the characteristics of block-time teaching of the participating schools in the Michigan State University project.

The block-time approach to vocational office education, as prescribed, utilized two or three consecutive class periods a day during the high school senior year in which to develop advanced office competencies. The techniques emphasized for use in block programs included integrated task practice, simulation, and individualized instruction based on defined career goals. A basic assumption was that the block-time schedule may be supportive of effective teaching for the office subjects.

The project implemented a block-time approach in clinical schools. Experimental blocks of instruction were scheduled and students were encouraged to progress individually at their own rate through the use of a flexible schedule of activities. This development necessitated the preparing of instructional material and curriculum guides and the training of teachers through seminars and workshops to function effectively with the new instructional approach.

The Vocational Office Block Project was a national research project which involved five states, their state departments of education, teacher education institutions, and clinical programs in 39 high schools.

The consortium was arranged in the fall and spring of the 1965-66 school year with actual teaching getting underway in September 1966. The project was terminated in July 1968, due to funding, except for reporting and preparation and publication of the final report.

The project was conducted in four states in addition to Michigan: Arizona, Florida, New Jersey, and Washington. These states were selected from several which expressed the willingness and desire to improve the status of business education in their schools.

The over-all objective of the block-time project was to improve vocational office education through several patterns of curricula using the block-time approach.

The ultimate objectives of the project were to improve education for employment in office occupations and to integrate the learning experiences for the students based, whenever possible, on an environmental situation simulating employment conditions. More specifically, the stated goals and objectives of the project were:

1. To identify a means to develop on-going working relationships between institutions and states to carry on large-scale research projects.
2. To promote the idea and process of program development in vocational office education.
3. To develop an interest in action research in state and local school systems.
4. To provide different learning structures which enhance individual student needs and produce employable workers.

It was recognized at the inception of the study that it would be necessary to consider several factors which make up the total picture.

Thus, growing out of the central purpose were certain concomitant or parallel aims which included the desire to show by quantitative analysis of data the growth, trends, and general practices in such programs and to explore by qualitative analysis of data those factors which teachers perceived as obstacles and facilitating factors in their block-time classrooms.

A questionnaire was completed by 31 of the block-time teachers at a workshop held at Michigan State University in June, 1968. Five of the other six block-time teachers completed and returned the questionnaire via mail. Responses were interpreted and summarized in categories which reflect the statement of the problem, namely:

1. A quantitative analysis of data to obtain a description of the growth of programs, general trends in their development, the preparation of teachers, and the kinds of classroom practices to be found.
2. A qualitative analysis of data to obtain those factors that are obstacles to and/or facilitating to progress in block-time teaching.

NEED FOR STUDY

The growing emphasis on the block-time approach in office education carries with it the need to determine the characteristics of the block-time approach. Specifically, there were two needs for this study:

1. There was a need for office education to be redefined and reorganized to meet new needs through a laboratory approach and the growing acceptance of the block-time approach.

2. There was a need to assess a developmental program, especially one the size of the Vocational Office Block Project, the first large-scale curriculum developmental project at the national level in Business and Office Education.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Out of the many data which have been presented in this study, certain findings have particular importance for the evaluation made here. They are important to the belief that it is from these findings that we are able to draw implications, reach conclusions, and propose changes which might perpetuate block-time teaching. Pertinent, too, are those data which give greater insight into factors which impede block-time teaching. Some of the findings are reviewed briefly in the context of this chapter.

1. There was a strong commitment to the block-time approach on the part of the participating teachers in this study. In light of the rapid development of block-time programs, it is important that teachers strongly favor block-time classes.

2. Most of the block-time teachers were involved in initiating and planning the block-time programs in their schools; however in one-half of the participating schools, no time was given to prepare for this curriculum change, although research and experience stress the need for staff involvement in planning curricular changes.

3. Ninety-one per cent of the block-time teachers participated in many and different kinds of in-service programs. The remaining nine per cent did not because they were replacements of block-time teachers who could not complete their teaching assignments because of various reasons.

4. Forty-four per cent of the block-time teachers had taught block-time classes one to two years, while 34 per cent had taught from three to six years.

5. Ninety-four per cent of the block-time teachers had the same group of students for two consecutive semesters.

6. Almost all participating schools retained the subject areas as suggested in the Michigan State University course of study for the project although the University recognized the right and responsibility of each participating school to determine its combination of subject areas.

7. The prevailing pattern for scheduling block-time classes was two consecutive periods a day for a total of ten periods a week.

8. Grade cards were used to report students' progress. Many different evaluative instruments were used to evaluate student progress. However, the major emphasis was on final job performance.

9. Students elected the block-time class in all schools. In general, one year of typewriting or one year of typewriting and one year of shorthand were prerequisites for block-time classes.

10. Although some block-time teachers believed that the administrator was their greatest obstacle, a larger number of teachers were facilitated by the supportive behavior of their administrators. Most block-time teachers derived security from the structure provided by the administration.

11. The lack of teaching techniques ranked second as an obstacle followed by lack of material and relationship with students in third and fourth place as obstacles. However, a larger number of block-time teachers reported these same factors as major facilitating factors to block-time teaching.

12. The block-of-time made it possible for teachers to know their students better. Most teachers believed that knowing and understanding their students was facilitating to block-time teaching.

13. The teacher's self--including the teacher's educational and teaching background, work experience, feelings about block-time classes, and subject matter--was facilitating to block-time teaching.

14. In-service activities--including conferences and meetings, resource help, and professional readings--were facilitating to block-time teaching.

15. Teacher-staff relationships and teacher-parent relationships were minor facilitating factors to block-time teaching.

16. There was evidence that in spite of the possibilities for change inherent in block-time settings, much teaching continued to follow traditional patterns. Content was largely based upon predetermined courses of study, and much content was taught separately within the block-of-time with some effort made to reach across subject-matter lines at times in order to correlate or integrate. Cooperative planning, problem-solving, determining career objectives, and student self-evaluation--all of which are part of the teaching pattern in block classes--were in meager evidence. Many aspects of teaching behavior seemed to remain the same, and many block teachers were as concerned about covering subject matter and giving tests as might be found in conventional secondary classrooms which specialize in particular subject areas.

17. That many teachers were not prepared for a change in teaching style was apparent. Their own school experiences have been traditional and few teacher-training institutions have prepared teachers to operate in block-time programs.

IMPLICATIONS

Although many responses have indicated obstacles that hindered individual teachers, those factors which generally impeded block-time teaching were not as discernible. There is a need to go behind the data to determine what they seem to indicate as reasons for the retention of the status quo or slow change from traditional teaching to block-time teaching emphasizing the laboratory approach. Some of the implications are:

1. Although a setting conducive to the growth of block-time existed, growth has been in terms of structure and organization, not so much in terms of teaching.

2. Because block-time programs and teachers cannot be isolated from the context of their total environment, they are bound to be influenced by external forces. One of these forces is the conservative trend in the American educational scene.

3. Resistance to change on the part of teachers is implicit in many responses and is evident in the tendency to adhere to the traditional. Resistance to curriculum change is a recognized behavior among seconday teachers.

4. The kinds of assistance, preservice--and especially in-service--given to teachers may have produced some changes in method but not in behavior. Techniques empty of purpose will not produce a change in behavior.

The setting for change.--Upon further interpretation, many factors impinge upon these areas of concern. Probably the factor which has had the most profound impact upon today's curriculum is the growing trend toward conservatism. The educator caught in this movement might well become uncomfortable in not conforming to an expected mode of operating in the classroom. Evidence of this pattern of conformity can be seen in such developments as the mechanistic programed instructions, mass presentation of instructions by television, team-teaching

patterns in some school systems, and others. All are part of our educational pattern today.

Another factor in the school setting which may well inhibit movement toward block-time teaching is the role played by the processes of evaluation. If teachers and administrators are never involved in looking at purposes, deciding what could be better, and establishing new goals, how can change take place? By not evaluating what one does, in effect one obviates the need for change. Thus, block-time teachers retain the status quo by not exploring what could be better or different with pupils and peers. Feeling free to try out ideas, perhaps to fail, and then to try again is a basic need that can be nourished by such evaluation. Such a climate was encouraged and supported by Michigan State University in this project, however.

Resistance to change.--Evidences of resistance to change are abundant in this study. There are signs in those who are facilitated because subjects are taught separately or because there is a predetermined course of study to follow. More subtle resistance is found in the numbers of block-time teachers who do not ask for assistance in the area which is a problem to them. For example, teachers apparently feel more secure to ask for assistance in the form of supplies, or equipment, or some other inanimate object because this does not involve a change of self. If teachers ask for assistance in terms of their relationships with administrators or students, then obviously they will need to involve themselves. Most of those surveyed have not done this.

How many other private reasons exist for resisting change, for adhering to traditional procedures, is not known. These reasons may

be no more than the scowl of the administrator who really wants every child doing the same thing at the same time because he believes this maintains standards and keeps the halls quiet; or they may be the questions of students who do not understand why they are expected to work independently or to learn from many sources instead of from a single text. It is in the face of such obstacles in the environment that some teachers prefer to conform to the conventional modes.

Although conformity seems to be a major factor in the retention of traditional teaching patterns, other factors should be mentioned as being of equal importance; namely, fear, rigidity, and lack of skill. Also, schools themselves may make movement improbable if not impossible when teachers are not freed from rigid curricular requirements, or if the school does not clarify their purposes in making changes. When school administrators assign block-time teachers and give them courses of study or textbooks to 'cover' in two subject areas (or three as the case may be), they are unlikely to find integration becoming a part of their block-time programs. On the other hand, too much freedom may cause resistance.

Another facet of resistance to move in new dirctions is the lack of techniques and skills and the understandable insecurity of not knowing what to do next. Both as a student and as a professional in the classroom, each teacher has already attained some degree of success following more conventional procedures. To move from the security of known classroom behavior creates new problems for teachers. To foster change, the traditional teacher needs to ask: What new techniques are needed? What skills are needed to use problem-solving? How will students learn to perform research and independent study?

What needs to be done to foster good working relationships between students and teacher? Few questions such as these can be answered by turning to a textbook or a course of study or even to previous experiences.

An aspect of the block-time picture which needs to be scrutinized is the way in which efforts have been made to give assistance to teachers. Leadership may stand in the way of change. There is probably significance in the fact that consultant help and conferences received little attention as facilitating factors. Responses seem to indicate that most teachers want prepared materials and specific techniques. It may be that it is easier to accept things than it is to accept ideas, and yet it is the realm of ideas that needs to become the focus of those who work with block-time teachers. Leaders in the field have contributed to the block-time structure by feeding many of their own techniques or methods into it. Prestructured units, orientation devices, standards for evaluation, and other methods all undoubtedly have a contribution to make. Too often, perhaps, teachers are told what to do and how to do it, but they are rarely told why. Leaders who act as consultants have a difficult role. In their anxiety to help, they may easily forget that their techniques were developed in a unique classroom setting in which they tried to meet the unique purposes of their students. In this instance, the learner (the block-time teacher) is not helped to solve his own problems; he is given answers. Although such techniques are not intended to be blueprints, they may be accepted as such by teachers, thus inhibiting the experimental thinking and exploring needed for effective block-time teaching.

The place of guidance in block-time classes seems to exemplify these premises. It is disappointing that data have shown that guidance is not more important than indicated in this study. It is generally conjectured that this is the strongest feature of block-time programs--good guidance--and this argument is often used to convince others that block-time programs are good. In recognizing that a guidance relationship exists between themselves and their own students, leaders have assumed that guidance exists in block-time classes. Perhaps they forget that, in their own teaching, guidance was not injected into the meeting but that it evolved from the interactive relationships they had with their students. It is part of the relationships which the block-time teachers seek to have with students. An orientation unit or other separate guidance units or 'methods' are not likely to produce the attitude which will make this ideal relationship possible.

Most teacher-training institutions, which also have a leadership role to maintain, continue to prepare subject-matter specialists for secondary schools. They contribute little to the field of general education. The future teacher brings into the college program a perception of the teacher's role that emerges from years of traditional school experiences. If nothing happens at the college level to change this perception, then the resultant classroom behavior will perpetuate the traditional image.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS IN BLOCK-TEACHING

The following recommendations have been derived from the findings of this study.

Pre-service Training

1. Teacher-training institutions should change the setting so that educators at the college level are cognizant of the research data which tell them that many of their students elect to teach in high schools because they are subject-matter-oriented and are perhaps more rigid than those in elementary education. This understanding may encourage institutions to plan some elementary school experiences for secondary students to start them on the way to a less conventional role they will assume as a block-time teacher.

2. Teacher-training institutions should change the setting so that college programs would focus more upon general education. They would provide blocks-of-time which cut across subject-matter lines and indicate that colleges do not feel insecure about moving away from their traditional programs.

In-service Assistance

3. In-service should change the setting so that assistance would be offered at the local school level with the block-time teachers and administrators examining change together. Consultants, working over an extended period of time, could involve block-teachers (and administrators) in a cooperative experience in which they could test ideas in a supportive climate.

4. In-service assistance should change the setting so that workshops would be developed and the participants would structure the workshop in terms of their needs and purposes. Consultants would not prestructure such workshops. The individual differences of participants would be recognized as a factor in learning; it would not be expected that each participant will learn in the same way or will come up with

the same product. The block-teacher's cognizance of individual differences would be broadened in such an operation.

5. In-service assistance should change the setting so that those who give in-service assistance would examine the data which showed that only 12 out of 36 block-time teachers responded that they were facilitated by conferences. Although the conference technique is used widely with seeming success, responsible committees and consultants should evaluate the conference as a vehicle for communication and learning. Perhaps a much stronger stimulus for block-teaching could be provided.

6. In-service assistance should change the setting so that consultants would not focus upon specific techniques and units which seem to reinforce the tendency to conform to a guide or a course of study. They would help teachers become free of this framework rather than giving more structured learning with preplanned units and other methods.

Leadership

7. Leadership should change the setting so that the leader's role is not only identified with administrators, consultants, and college teachers but encompasses the block-time teachers who stand at the forefront of this type of teaching. This kind of leadership role may leave one quite alone on the educational frontier. To change this aspect of the setting, leaders in the field would seek out such individuals in an effort to provide them with opportunities for security that would emerge from communication and recognition.

8. Leadership should change the setting by accepting block-time teaching as an approach and define the kinds of skills and abilities

needed by block-teachers. It would no longer be said that block time is "just good teaching," but instead leaders would say what kind of good teaching they have in mind for block classes.

9. School administrators should change the setting so that an administrator can give support and at the same time provide a climate of freedom which makes an experimental approach possible. He would not require conformity to a structure (such as a course of study or textbook requirements) on one hand and attempt to encourage new approaches on the other. Such ambivalence increases teachers' feelings of insecurity.

10. School administrators should change the setting so that an administrator would be aware that a fragmented program places block-time teachers in a vulnerable position as members of his staff--they do their work differently than the traditional teacher. He would provide for some means of communication between those in and out of the program so that understanding of goals and purposes flows two ways. Thus, the administrator guards against hostile feelings and the wish to conform which may arise when a divided staff does not understand each other's goals.

Educational Beliefs

11. Educational beliefs should change the setting by changing the thinking that teachers have about the concepts and purposes of block-time teaching. Data in this study do not indicate an extremely strong commitment to block-time teaching--even when the participants are participating in a research and development program to establish and perpetuate block-time programs and block-time teaching. A change in this area will require a different perception of goals and purposes.

12. Educational beliefs should change the setting so that block-time teachers would believe that integration of subjects and tasks is inherent in block-time classes. They will not see block classes as the manipulation of subjects within a framework nor will content courses be separated into packages to be opened one by one by the teacher because they 'fit' into a plan. These teachers will free themselves from the traditional role and provide a simulated laboratory setting called a block class.

Future Research

It is recommended that this study be repeated (years later) with the new schools that have joined the Michigan State University Project. This study repeated with the same schools would probably have different results because of the lapse of time since the adoption of block-time programs by the original schools.

It is recommended that achievements of students from Vocational Office Block Programs be determined so that a definite evaluation of such programs may be determined.

It is recommended that state and local plans for introducing new programs be made based upon the findings and recommendations of this study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

VOCATIONAL OFFICE BLOCK PROJECT
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____
Last First Middle

SCHOOL _____ City _____ State _____

I. Background Information

_____2-hour Secretarial Block _____2-hour Clerical Block
_____3-hour Secretarial Block _____3-hour Clerical Block

Degrees Held	Date	Institution	Degree	Major	Minor
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Office Work Experience _____ years (round off to nearest year)
Non-office Work Experience _____ years " " " " "
Teaching Experience _____ years _____ at what level
_____
_____

Type of Teaching Certificate Held _____

Type of Vocational Certificate Held _____

II. General

A. How was the block-time program inaugurated in your school?

1. The idea was initiated by ____administrator(s), ____teacher(s), ____public, ____state department of education, ____other (specify)_____

_____

2. Before the program was initiated, (first actual teaching day) there was orientation of

____those who would be most actively involved, such as block-time teachers, librarians, counselors, business education department head, etc.
____the entire faculty
____the public
____other (specify) _____
_____
_____

3. After the decision to have a block-time program was reached and before a program was started, the business education staff was involved in studying and planning for it over a period of
____no time
____two weeks or less
____3 to 6 weeks
____7 to 12 weeks
____approximately a year
____more than a year

B. How did you become a block-time teacher? (check as many as apply)

1. ____Prepared specifically for block-time teaching in college
2. ____Assigned to it by school administration
3. ____Requested it
4. ____Helped initiate and plan program
5. ____Other (please specify) _____

_____
_____

C. What activities are specifically provided by your school or school system to improve block-time teaching?

1. ____Extra planning period for block teacher
2. ____In-service training programs such as workshops and study groups
3. ____Time provided during the day for cooperative planning among teachers
4. ____Preschool conferences
5. ____Assistance from consultants
6. ____Additional funds for needed materials
7. ____Others (specify) _____

_____

D. Number of years you have taught block-time classes (including 1967-68):

1. ____ One year
2. ____ Two years
3. ____ Three years
4. ____ Four to six years
5. ____ Six to ten years
6. ____ More than ten years

E. Check the number of semesters you usually work with the same group of students (in block-time classes):

1. ____ One
2. ____ Two

F. What courses are combined (or replaced) by the block class you teach?

Secretarial

1. ____ Adv. Sthd. and Ofc. Prac.
2. ____ Adv. Sthd,, Ofc. Prac. Adv. Typ.
3. ____ Adv. Sthd., Adv. Typ., Bus. Eng.
4. ____ Other _____
_____
_____

Clerical

1. ____ Ofc. Prac., Adv. Typ.
2. ____ Ofc. Prac., Adv. Typ., Bus. Eng.
3. ____ Other _____
_____
_____
_____

G. How many regular class periods per week (35-60 minutes) does your block-time class meet?

8____ 9____ 10____ 11____ 12____ 13____ 14____ 15____

H. How many minutes per day does your block-time class meet (regularly)? (Specify) _____
_____
_____
_____

I. What description best fits the marking system (on their school record) in your block-time classes?

1. ____ One grade for the block-time class
2. ____ Separate grade for each subject
3. ____ Other (describe) _____
_____
_____

J. How do you report pupil progress to parents?

1. ____ Report cards
2. ____ Written reports
3. ____ Scheduled parent-teacher conferences
4. ____ Other (describe) _____
_____
_____

K. How often is reportint to parents carried out each year?

1. ____ Once
2. ____ Twice
3. ____ Three times
4. ____ Four times
5. ____ Five times
6. ____ Six times
7. ____ More than six times

L. How are students assigned to block-time secretarial, clerical, business education and other classes?

1. ____ Required of all
2. ____ They may elect
3. ____ Some form of ability grouping is used in assigning students
4. ____ Other (specify) _____

M. What are the prerequisites for the block-time classes?

1. Secretarial _____

2. Clerical _____

N. Which of the following groups seem to favor the block-time program in your school?

1. ____ Block-time teachers
2. ____ Other Bus. Educ. Teachers
3. ____ Faculty (other than B.E.)
4. ____ Students
5. ____ Local Board of Educ.
6. ____ Superintendent (local)
7. ____ Counselors

O. Which of the following groups seem to oppose or not favor the block-time program in your school?

1. ____ Block-time teachers
2. ____ Other Bus. Educ. Teachers
3. ____ Faculty (other than B.E.)
4. ____ Students
5. ____ Local Board of Educ.
6. ____ Superintendent (local)
7. ____ Counselors

P. What do you believe to be the future status of the block-time program in your school?

1. ____ It will probably remain as it is
2. ____ It may be eliminated
3. ____ It may be expanded
4. ____ It may be reduced
5. ____ Other (specify) _____

If you checked the above question "2," what do you believe will be the reason for this action _____

Q. Do you have your students prepare individual career goal projects?

____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please describe (briefly) two.

R. Do you use a model office?

____ Yes ____ No

If no, why?

III. Practices

Check the statement which best describes the most common practices in your block-time class (check only one)

1. ____ The scope of the block-time class is not predetermined. Pupils and teacher are free to select the problems upon which they wish to work. Subject matter content is brought in, as needed, to develop or help solve the problems.

2. ____ Each subject in the block-time class is taught separately with no planned correlation.

3. ____ Each subject is taught separately in the block-time class, with consciously planned correlation.

4. ____ Subjects in the block-time class are unified or fused around a central unit, or around problems stemming from one or more subject fields in the block.

5. ____ Predetermined problem areas based upon the needs of adolescents determine the scope of the block-time class. Subject matter is brought in, as needed, in working on the problems. Students may or may not have a choice among these problem areas but will have some responsibility for suggesting or choosing activities in developing units of study.

6. ____ Your program does not fit any of the above descriptions. It is more like the following: _____
_____
_____
_____

IV. Operation of the class. (Check in colum to the right to indicate appropriate response)

	1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Frequently	4 Always
A. Teacher-pupil planning				
To what extent do you plan with students in establishing class goals?	_____	_____	_____	_____
How often do you use teacher-pupil planning in deciding on procedures to be used in studying an area or program?	_____	_____	_____	_____
How often do you use teacher-pupil planning in selecting areas or problems for study?	_____	_____	_____	_____
How often are pupils involved in evaluating procedures or outcomes?	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. Material & Resources				
To what extent are textbooks used in classroom study?	_____	_____	_____	_____
To what extent are supplementary books or other printed material used in classroom study?	_____	_____	_____	_____
To what extent do you use audio-visual aids?	_____	_____	_____	_____
To what extent do you use other staff members as resource persons in your block-time classes?	_____	_____	_____	_____
To what extent are businessmen or other community people utilized as resource persons?	_____	_____	_____	_____
To what extent does your class visit community agencies or resources to augment classroom experiences?	_____	_____	_____	_____

C. Methods & Procedures

To what extent are small groups or committees used in studying problems or topics?	_____	_____	_____	_____
To what extent are situations provided whereby the work in your classroom is varied to adjust to individual differences?	_____	_____	_____	_____
To what extent do students in your class carry on research which is self-directed?	_____	_____	_____	_____

D. Guidance

To what extent do you plan for individual conferences outside of class time, for counseling on individual problems?	_____	_____	_____	_____
To what extent do you confer with other school personnel about pupils you have in common?	_____	_____	_____	_____

E. Extent of Guidance Function

How much of the guidance function do you carry on? (To indicate your response, use "N" for none, "L" for little, and "M" for all or nearly all.)

1. Individual Guidance

_____ Vocational
_____ Educational
_____ Personal-social

2. Group Guidance

_____ Vocational
_____ Educational
_____ Personal-social

F. Evaluation and Research

1. Has information been gathered regarding the effectiveness of your school's block-time program? ____ Yes ____ No

   a. Is this information available upon request? ___Yes ___No
   b. Who should be contacted to obtain such information_____

   _____

   _____

2. Check the evaluative instruments or techniques used with pupils in block-time classes:

A._____ Standardized achievement tests
B._____ Teacher made tests
C._____ Self-rating inventories of personal and social adjustment
D._____ Sociometric devices
E._____ Interest inventories
F._____ Attitude scales
G._____ Teacher observations and ratings
H._____ Reaction sheets regarding effectiveness of group work
I._____ Other (name) _____
_____
_____

Obstacles and Facilitating Factors

What are the chief problems you have encountered in developing and maintaining your block-time classes?

What kinds of assistance or resources would help you do a better job?

What are the factors in your present situation which are of the most help in teaching block-time classes?

What is your feeling about block-time classes?

1. _____ I strongly favor them
2. _____ I feel they have some value
3. _____ I have doubts as to their value
4. _____ I do not favor them
5. _____ Other (describe) _____

APPENDIX B

TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Arizona

Mrs. Diane Hammit	Alhambra High School, Alhambra
Miss Charlotte Hopper	Tucson High School, Tucson
Mrs. Domenica Jenkins	Sunnyslope High School, Phoenix
Mrs. Cheryl Kelly	East High School, Phoenix
Mrs. Beverly Kirk	South Mountain High School, Phoenix
Mrs. Mary Lou Myers	Tempe High School, Tempe
Miss Lydia Olszewski	Sunnyside High School, Tucson
Miss Josephine Sawaia	Scottsdale High School, Scottsdale
Mrs. Stella Sorensen	Yuma High School, Yuma
Mrs. Lola Wager	Maryvale High School, Phoenix

Florida

Mrs. Peggy Ashley	Satellite High School, Satellite Beach
Miss Gloria Brinkley	Paxon High School, Jacksonville
Mrs. Anne Carr	Seabreeze High School, Daytona Beach
Mrs. Louise Hines	Santa Fe High School, Alachua
Mrs. Veda A. Long	Kathleen High School, Lakeland
Mrs. Meriba Ogden	Columbia High School, Lake City
Mrs. Claudia Stephens	King High School, Tampa

Michigan

Miss Frances French	Grosse Pointe High School, Grosse Pointe
Mrs. Mildred Hamblen	Lake Shore High School, Stevensville
Mr. Edmund Hebda	Roosevelt High School, Wyandotte
Mrs. Mary Korni	Highland Park High School, Highland Park
Mrs. Elaine Price	Petoskey High School, Petoskey
Mrs. Pauline Ward	Creston High School, Grand Rapids

New Jersey

Mrs. Marjorie Adkins	Watchung Hills Regional High School, Plainfield
Mrs. Lillian Chance	Rancocas Valley Regional High School, Mount Holly
Miss Beverly Geduldig	Rahway High School, Rahway
Miss Maribeth McEwan	Notre Dame High School, Trenton
Mrs. Lois Reed	Oakcrest High School, Mays Landing
Mrs. Carol Ruhl	Northern Highland Regional High School, Allendale

Washington

Mrs. Marion Bellows	Mountlake Terrace Senior High School, Mountlake Terrace
Miss Agnes Bushnell	William Winlock Miller High School, Olympia
Mrs. Ruth Church	John Rogers High School, Spokane
Mrs. Beverley Funk	Mountlake Terrace Senior High School, Mountlake Terrace
Mrs. Betty Heiken	Tyee High School, Seattle
Mrs. Helen Humbert	Kent-Meridian High School, Kent
Mrs. Helen Klossner	Hudson's Bay High School, Vancouver