

Public Abstract

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Title:Teacher Perceptions Regarding the Influence Block Scheduling has on Student Learning as Compared to Traditional Scheduling in Middle Schools

Adolescence is a time when students go through profound changes physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. These changes may lead educators to address early adolescent development in varying ways than the elementary student. As more and more educators begin looking at meeting the needs of the early adolescent and the demand for student achievement increases, some middle school educators are beginning to look at block scheduling to meet those needs. There has been significant research on block scheduling at the secondary level, but little research has been done at the middle school level. If the concepts and principles of block scheduling appears to work at the secondary level, perhaps altering the middle school schedule could impact student achievement.

Quantitative research was conducted through surveys of middle school teachers in the A/B block schedule and the traditional 6 or 7 period day schedule. The study was based on how middle school teachers perceived their respective schedules impacted student learning. The survey was divided into three criterion based on student achievement, teaching strategies, and professional development. Results revealed there were significant differences in the perceptions of the respective schedules in student achievement and teaching strategies. Middle school teachers in the A/B block schedule perceived their schedule increased or enhanced student achievement more so than the middle school teachers utilizing the traditional schedule. Teachers in the A/B block schedule also believed their schedule allowed for more individualized instruction, alternative assessment approaches, activities with higher level thinking, using a more diverse delivery of learning strategies, and allowed for more active and hands-on learning. However, professional development was not seen as a strong point in either group. Middle school teachers in the A/B block schedule and the traditional schedule both felt professional development was lacking.

The intent of this study was to provide current research on how teachers perceive A/B block scheduling impacts their instructional strategies and student learning. As the success of any type of scheduling is dependent on how educators implement and perceive it, the information in this study may provide guidance for schools considering block scheduling. Evaluating how schools divide instructional time may involve implications on whether middle school students' achievement is affected by schedule type..