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# Examining Instructional Design in Block and Traditional Scheduling: A Case Study

Lawrence Pryzblick  
*Indiana University of Pennsylvania*

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EXAMINING INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN IN BLOCK AND  
TRADITIONAL SCHEDULING: A CASE STUDY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Lawrence Pryzblick

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
The School of Graduate Studies and Research  
Department of Professional Studies in Education

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Lawrence R. Pryzblick, Jr.

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

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Douglas Lare, Ed.D, Co-Chair  
Professor of Professional and Secondary  
Education  
East Stroudsburg University

---

Joseph Marcoline, Ed.D., Co-Chair  
Professor of Education  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

---

David Rheinheimer, Ed.D.  
Professor of Academic Enrichment & Learning  
East Stroudsburg University

ACCEPTED

---

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.  
Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: Examining Instructional Design in Block and Traditional Scheduling:  
A Case Study

Author: Lawrence R. Pryzblick, Jr.

Co-Dissertation Chair: Dr. Douglas Lare  
Dr. Joseph Marcoline

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. David Rheinheimer

Reader: Jack Gallo

Many alterations have been made to education in America to develop and improve quality, including changes to the master schedule. Various types of scheduling formats have been designed over the years to fulfill a variety of educational needs. The complex rationale for transitioning impacts the benefits a school can achieve from the scheduling format. One such format, *block scheduling*, allows educators to use multiple strategies to meet individual student needs and develop greater student understanding. However, if teachers do not change their instructional design and maintain the new design when their school transitions to block scheduling, their school may not realize the benefits noted in the research. The purpose of this study was to analyze how teachers alter their instructional design when transitioning scheduling formats by conducting an in-depth pre-post case study of a mid-sized school district in northeastern Pennsylvania that had transitioned to block scheduling in the 1997-1998 school year.

The results of the Wilcoxon signed rank test showed no statistically significant differences ( $p > .05$ ) between the instructional designs teachers implemented in both schedules. The teachers' scores were correlated to the observer's and students' using Kendall's tau. Most of the results showed no statistical correlation ( $p > .05$ ) between the external raters and the individual teachers. The study found that the teachers use the same

instructional design now that their school uses block scheduling as they had when their school used traditional scheduling. Although this finding contradicts the literature, it was attributed to the additional finding that the teachers had been using multiple strategies in student-centered classrooms even before their school had transitioned to block scheduling. This finding points to the importance of building the scheduling format around the instructional design, not vice versa, and overcoming a lack of formal training in block scheduling by maintaining collegiality among faculty, administration, and guidance to achieve greater student understanding and block scheduling success. The study results add to the body of knowledge regarding how schools sustain implementation after transitioning scheduling formats and sheds light on why some schools similar to the one studied do not achieve the same benefits.