Introduction

The primary goal of restructuring is to make improvements on an existing structure. Its effects are extensive, and its impact is felt by all within its path. This study incorporates the testimonials of all the participants involved in a restructuring episode or event, but forefronts the experiences of the primary participant, Tess Carpenter. It documents her experiences as she metamorphosed toward a more student-centered focus in her classroom. The changes supported by the school-division wide restructuring (Fullan, 1993). These changes will be evident throughout the discussion.

The research was conducted in three phases: a preliminary ethnographic study, a more focused pilot study, and a dissertation study. The questions raised in each study yielded information which ignited the proceedings for the next. In the ethnographic study, the research focus was the impact of school restructuring upon a middle school setting. The pilot study's focus was more specific. It stemmed from the data obtained in the ethnographic study. Its question was: How does a seventh grade language arts teacher adjust instructional practices when introduced to a scheduling change, namely block scheduling? This question remained the focal point throughout the dissertation study but other restructuring innovations surfaced as the study progressed. The final research study, stemming from the pilot study, focused on the following question: How does a

seventh grade language arts teacher adjust instructional practices when implementing reform pedagogy and innovations? The reports on the research studies will begin with the occurrences of the ethnographic study. However, to better understand the process of restructuring, the discussion will begin with reports from lead researchers on the dynamics of educational reform relative to the occurrences at Lewis County and Turner Valley Middle School.

Chapter One

Literature Review

Introduction

School reform is a process by which an educational institution seeks to enact programs that will facilitate the accomplishment of certain goals (Fullan, 1993). Educational reform is complex. There are many individuals such as policy makers, educators, and parents and members of the community who have a vested interest in schools, who believe that they have the answers for what should be occurring in schools. The following paragraphs discuss researchers' perspectives on school reform issues as they relate to the approaches taken in Lewis County and Turner Valley Middle School, used in their decisions regarding reform.

Educational School Reform

Hargreaves (1994) suggests that educational change should be viewed as a process, not an event. He defines the change process as “the practices and procedures, the rules and relationships, the sociological and psychological mechanisms which shape the destiny of any change, whatever its content, and which lead it to prosper or falter”(p. 26). Sarason (1993) says that educational change is a complex process, which takes on different forms depending upon those who are advocating it.

According to Sarason (1993) many times those who advocate educational reform are not usually speaking of changing themselves, but someone else.

Fullan defines a change in educational practice as a change in material, teaching approaches, and/or beliefs (Fullan, 1991). According to Fullan (1991), educational reform is for schools to enact programs that will assist them in accomplishing their identified goals. Thus, ineffective programs are supposedly replaced with better ones.

During the 1960's, huge quantities of funding were being allocated for school reform efforts to improve educational programs in the United States. An evaluation of these efforts resulted in great disappointment (Fullan, 1991). This period was followed by a phase of inactivity during the 1970's and revisited in the 1980's with the release of A Nation at Risk (1983). This response was designed to identify the problems in our nation's schools through the implementing of structured top-down regulatory policies and procedures.

Thus, perceptions of change varied according to the individuals involved with the change. Those who enacted policies perceived the change as vital to education but at the same time perceived some teachers as resistant (Fullan, 1991). Whereas teachers perceived the change as forced by dictatorial administration and politicians having no understanding of the occurrences within the classroom (Fullan, 1991).

Fullan (1991) states that "productive change is the constant search for understanding," (p. 24), knowing there is no ultimate answer. He states that change needs to be considered in terms of more complex relationships between events. Fullan (1991) discusses eight basic lessons which should govern new paradigm of change:

1. You can't mandate what matters.

Mandates can limit the efforts of reform by placing restrictions on attributes that govern the effectiveness of the change, such as skills, creative thinking, and committed action.

2. Change is a journey not a blueprint.

Change is a never ending process, therefore it is continually being addressed as needs arise throughout the restructuring.

3. Problems are our friend.

Through problem-solving, richer, more creative thinking occurs which results in better decisions.

4. Vision and strategic planning come later.

The early stages of reflective thinking promote a more in-depth understanding for developing and pursuing the vision.

5. Individualism and collectivism must have equal power.

All views should be considered equally vital to the decision making process.

6. Neither centralization nor decentralization works.

In order for change to be effective, there must be collaboration from all directions.

7. Connection with the wider environment is critical for success.

The process of restructuring extends beyond the confines of the institution, requiring input from the external environment as well.

8. Every person is a change agent.

The opinions of all individuals should be considered during the process, not just those considered to be "experts".

According to Fullan (1991), the success of any reform is determined by the extent to which all voices are validated. Each phase of this process is of equal importance and should not be viewed in isolation. Change is complex; therefore, it is imperative that the decisions which facilitate this process be influenced by various sources. “The new wave of school reform aims to develop better answers to school problems by involving teachers along with parents, students, and school administrators in school decision making and management based on an understanding that simple top-down answers to complex problems essentially don’t work” (Hammond, 1990, p.10).

Throughout the years, analysis governing school reform efforts have identified many factors as influencing the events occurring at schools. Some factors include: pedagogical models, instructional time, year-round schooling, flexible scheduling and outcome-based learning. The effective implementation of these innovations can be crucial to the success of an educational program. The relationship between the allocation of instructional time and pedagogy are essential to this study and will be addressed throughout this document.

Research Reports on Time and Learning

The most effective use of time for instruction has been a key issue in the school change research literature. More specifically, researchers focused their attention upon the concept of time to determine how it should be modified to improve instruction and learning. Reports such as: A Nation at Risk (1983), National Education Commission of Time and Learning (1994), and The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (1980) have produced findings that have influenced educational reform over the past 20 years. There is much diversity among the actual research concerning time. The following section summarizes findings from the key reports.

A Nation at Risk

In 1983, the National Commission of Excellence in Education released its report on our nation's educational scene, A Nation at Risk (1983): The Imperative for Educational Reform." This report called attention to the poor state of education in the United States, and prompted for reaching-efforts to improve the system.

One of the most important concerns expressed in the 1983 report, A Nation at Risk (1983), related to how *time* was used in America's schools. The Commission analyzed the concept of time around the following questions: How do we use time; How do we

allocate time; and How do we account for time? The main findings regarding time from the Commission are as follows:

- compared to other nations, American students spend much less time on school work;
- time spent in the classroom and on homework is often used ineffectively; and
- schools are not doing enough to help students develop either the study skills required to use time well or the willingness to spend more time on school work.

The report (1983) recommended "that significantly more time be devoted to learning" (p. 4). This will require more effective use of the existing school day, a longer school day, or a lengthened school year. State legislatures supported such a step, however educators contended that such a step was not necessarily the only solution and would be very costly (Canady & Rettig, 1993).

Research has long suggested that educators should become more efficient with the use of time. Canady and Rettig (1993) cite such research findings from the early '80s:

- 60% of the school day is actually *available* for instruction (Rossmiller, 1983).
- actual time devoted to instruction in a school day is less than 30% (Gilman & Knoll, 1983).
- 16% (or approximately 1 hour) of time during the school day is lost due to organization and distractions (Justiz, 1984).
- 38% of the school activities involve students in "productive academic activities" (Karweit, 1985).

On April 3, 1998, the Center for Education Reform and Empower America, released its report on the progress since the

Nation at Risk. The report indicated that the US education system needs improvement, but also stated that "the nation has turned the corner on many measures" (p. 1). Areas of improvement include coursetaking, achievement test scores, dropout rates, and postsecondary enrollment and attainment. The report also stated that the economic returns to further education are "equally impressive".

Despite the fact that time usage in schools was not mentioned, the report commended the fact that the proportion of high school graduates taking the core courses recommended in A Nation at Risk (1983) (4 years of English, 3 years of social studies, 3 years of science, and 3 years of math) had increased to 40 percent, up from 13 percent in 1982. Also, high school students taking advanced placement courses increased from 140,000 to 450,000.

National Education Commission of Time and Learning

The National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1991) observed the rigidity of school schedules. In an executive summary, the following findings were highlighted:

- With few exceptions, schools open and close their doors at fixed times in the morning and early afternoon -- a school in one district might open at 7:30 a.m. and close at 2:15 p.m.; in another, the school day might run from 8:00 in the morning until 3:00 in the afternoon.

- With few exceptions, the school year lasts nine months, beginning in late summer and ending in late spring.

- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, schools typically offer a six-period day, with about 5.6 hours of classroom time a day.

- No matter how complex or simple the school subject--literature, shop, physics, gym, or algebra--the schedule assigns each an impartial national average of 51 minutes per class period, no matter how well or poorly students comprehend the material.

- The norm for required school attendance, according to the Council of Chief State School Officers, is 180 days. Eleven states permit school terms of 175 days or less; only one state requires more than 180.

- Secondary school graduation requirements are based on seat time-- "Carnegie units", a standard of measurement representing one credit for completion of a one-year course meeting daily.

- Despite the obsession with time, little attention is paid to how it is used: in 42 states examined by the Commission, only 41 percent of secondary school time must be spent on core academic subjects.

The Commission reported that the results were predictable. "The school clock governs how families organize their lives, how administrators oversee their schools, and how teachers work their way through the curriculum . . . how material is presented to students and the opportunity they have to comprehend and master it" (p. 8).

On May 5, 1994, the Commission issued its latest results of a two-year investigation in its report entitled, Prisoners of Time. "Learning in America is a prisoner of time," said the Commission, arguing that the time available "in a uniform six-hour day and a 180-day year is the unacknowledged design flow in American education" (p. 9).

The Commission suggested to support Congress and the Clinton Administration in the Goals 2000 by having schools remain open longer (Sommerfield, 1994, p. 12), while adjusting

time to help individual students meet high standards. Other suggestions from the commission are as follows:

- Schools should be reinvented around learning, not time.
- State and local school boards should work with schools to redesign education so that time becomes a factor supporting learning, not a boundary marking its limits.
- Schools should provide additional academic time by reclaiming the school day for academic instruction.
- Teachers should be provided with the professional time and opportunities they need to do their jobs well (Sommerfield, 1994).

Prisoners of Time was issued after 24 months of study that included visits to 19 schools, testimony from more than 150 teachers, administrators, parents, students, and experts, and two fact-finding trips to schools and research institutes in Germany and Japan.

According to the report, longer school days and school years overseas, combined with better use of time, mean that "French, German, and Japanese students receive more than twice as much core academic instruction as American students .... American students cannot learn as much as their foreign peers in half the time," the report concluded.

According to the Commission, time is a key element in school reform. If it is wisely used, it will help solve some of the academic problems experienced in America's school. Students' success in schools will improve when school systems restructuring process focuses on maximizing the students utilization of time. The Commission believes that too much time has been devoted in reporting how time is being wasted, as

opposed to how time should be used more efficiently. In 42 states, the report noted, "only 41 percent of secondary school time must be spent on academic subjects" (p. 6).

Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study

The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (1980), examined the relationship between Academic Learning Time and students achievement. It was a six-year study funded by the National Institute of Education through the California Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing. The results of the study are reported in the paragraphs that follow.

The study's major focus was on Academic Learning Time (ALT) as a measure of learning, identifying what teaching activities and classroom conditions fostered student learning in elementary schools. Denham and Lieberman (1980) define ALT as the "amount of time a student spends engaged in academic tasks of appropriate difficulty" (p. 14). One aspect the study focused on was how often the teacher made presentations, monitored, and gave feedback. The areas of concentration were reading and mathematics in the second and fifth grade. This document will only report the findings relating to the fifth grade level, the age group closest in age to the seventh grade students who participated in this dissertation research.

The amount of time teachers allocate to instruction in a particular curriculum content area is positively associated with student learning in that content area (Denham & Lieberman, 1980). The study revealed that the amount of allocated time in fifth grade reading and reading-related instruction varied from 60 minutes in one class to 140 minutes in another. The

variations of allocated time on instruction has an influence on student learning (Denham & Lieberman, 1980); however, student engagement during allocated time was also considered. Student engagement was found to vary across classes and among individual students.

The difficulty level of the materials in this study were categorized as: high success, medium success, and low success. The average student, in this study, spent about 50% of the time working on activities providing high success. In fifth grade math, the average time students spent on activities providing high success was approximately one-third, somewhat less than the average for the study. The results indicated that students, who spent more time on high success activities, received higher achievement scores in the spring. These students were also found to have better retention of learning over the summer, and more positive attitudes toward school. The study also reported that when students worked with materials or activities that yielded a low success rate, achievement was lower.

The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (1980) reports a significant relationship between academic learning time and student achievement. Students who spent more time engaged in academic learning activities received higher achievement scores.

Tough more than a decade has passed since the 1983 publication of A Nation at Risk (1983), improving achievement levels of American students remain at the top of state and national policy making agendas (Maruyama, 1995). Maruyama concludes these improvements are usually organized around one or more components of the current reform movement. Reform movement ideas such as: more participative management at the school level, outcome-based education or national curriculum standards, expanded use of computers and other instructional technology, or comprehensive staff development programs focusing on more effective instructional approaches, and block scheduling.

Block scheduling is an alternative to the traditional seven- period schedule, where most classes are approximately 42-minutes in length. In this schedule, additional responsibilities such as recording attendance and assigning homework limit much needed classroom time. Block scheduling reduces the percentage of classroom time demanded by these procedures by increasing the amount of time students spend in the classroom. As a result, classes can be more productive, as teachers incorporate more learning activities in a class period.

Block scheduling is an administrative means of circumventing the time constraints of a single class period (Maruyama, 1995). Going on the block means students generally attend fewer but longer classes -- usually lasting approximately 90 minutes each, rather than the traditional 45 or 50 minutes. In essence, the traditional school period is expanded into larger blocks of time, usually 3 or 4 in a given day. Block schedules are influenced by different time segments; the way the day is organized, the way the week is organized, and the way the

year is organized. This will depend on the schedule format a school incorporates during restructuring. The following section discusses block scheduling formats that schools may adopt.

The term "block scheduling" is also used by some educators to "describe the practice of scheduling a group of students to attend all or most of their classes together" (Maruyama, 1995, p. 12). The traditional seven-class schedule is double-blocked, combining two or more classes from the traditional schedule, to offer additional class time for lab or project-oriented work, field trips or work-based learning, and special assemblies or speakers. Moreover, block scheduling reduces the instructional time lost in passing between classes (Maruyama, 1995). According to the National Study of High School Restructuring report, block scheduling is being used in some fashion by one in ten high schools (Cawelti, 1994).

One of Lewis County's goals during the restructuring phases was to transform their junior high schools toward a more philosophically based middle school structure. One area that remained a replica of their high school arena was their schedule. In this study, the middle school restructuring committee adopted block scheduling as a tool for the transformation. This would enable the teachers to build in flexible chunks of time to meet instructional needs. Lewis County Middle schools schedule inhibited such freedom. The following sections explain sample schedules according to high school formats.

Sample Schedule/Programs

There are several approaches to block scheduling. Among them are the 4x4 block, A/B plan (alternating block schedule), modified block, and the intensive block.

4x4 block. Sometimes called the accelerated block, this schedule allows students to take four subjects each semester in blocks that last between 85 and 100 minutes each (see Figure 1). The pace allows students to complete a year's academic work in a single semester.

Block	Time	Minutes
One	7:30 - 8:55	85 minutes
Pass	8:55 - 9:05	10 minutes
Two	9:05 - 10:30	85 minutes
Pass	10:30 - 10:40	10 minutes
Three Lunches	12:35 - 12:45	115 minutes
Four	12:45 - 2:10	85 minutes

Figure 1. Example of 4 x4 block schedule.

Ideally, teachers see half of the students they normally see at one time, and students take fewer courses. By the end of the school year, students on a 4x4 schedule have taken more courses, and their teachers have taught more students and more courses. For example, if students normally have a 7-period day for the entire school year, seven courses would be their maximum course load. With the 4-period schedule, students have eight courses (four per semester). In a 7-period schedule, a teacher, most likely, would teach five classes and have two preparation periods. With the 4x4 schedule, a teacher would teach three classes per semester with a total of six classes for the school year, seeing more students overall. This increase will vary

according to the average class size. For example, a teacher may attend to approximately 125-150 students with the traditional seven-period schedule, teaching five classes averaging 25 - 30 students per class. The teacher, in the 4x4 block has 6 classes, one more than the traditional schedule. This increases the total number of students to 150 - 175 over the course of the year. In each semester, one block is used for planning.

This two-semester sequence gives students twice the opportunities to complete required courses. For example, if a student fails freshman English during the spring term, the course may be retaken in the fall, staying abreast with his/her peers. Students can retake up to 6 classes with this schedule and still graduate with their class. The sequence also permits all students to complete a rigorous program of study.

A/B plan or the alternate block schedule. An alternating block schedule has an "A" day and a "B" day, where students attend 4 classes on A days and four other classes on B days (see example in Figure 2). The first day of school would be an "A" day rotating with the "B" day the remainder of the year. If you have a week where Friday is a holiday and Thursday was an "A" day, Monday would be a "B" day. In a 180 day school year, a student will have 90 "A" days and 90 "B" days.

Time	Mins.	Block	Block	Block	Block	Block
7:35 - 9:00	85	1	2	1	2	1
9:09 - 10:34	85	3	Enrich.	3	Enrich.	3
10:43 - 12:38	85	5	4	5	4	5
12:45 - 2:10	85	7	6	7	6	7

Figure 2. A/B alternate block schedule.

Students must attend and prepare for a maximum of four classes a day. The schedule offers the same classes as in a 7-period day with the 8th period set aside for enrichment, activities, remediation, or assemblies. For teachers, there are no more than three preparations daily.

Modified block. Many schedules are labeled modified block. A modified block may mean the school is on a 4x4 block four days a week, with a traditional 7 or 8-period day that allows electives of Fridays as shown in Figure 3:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	1	2	1 2
3	4	3	4	3 4
5	6	5	6	5 6
7	8	7	8	7 8

Figure 3. Modified block schedule.

Another example of a modified block allows students to take two block courses and three single-period classes each day. The block courses end after a semester, but the single-period classes continue all year to accommodate music, foreign languages, and other courses that may need daily sessions.

Intensive block. The intensive block schedule allows students to concentrate on just one or two subjects at time. Generally, this is accomplished through a trimester plan approach, with each trimester being 60 days. Students complete two courses every 60 days. Each class or block is 160 minutes long, allowing for two subjects to be integrated into one class.

This schedule is difficult for students who transfer to or from school on traditional schedules.

The trimester schedule can also be divided into terms of varying lengths. For example, a trimester schedule may consist of two terms of 75 days and 30 days in the last, or third term. The 30-day term provides enough time to repeat a course, to complete specialty classes or accelerated activities such as extended field trips. Academic students could take a vocational course and focus on that for the last 30 days (i.e., electronics). Art, drama, and music could be combined to produce musicals. This schedule may allow for more flexibility. This schedule is also modified to meet as 75, 15, 75, 15 days consecutively. The 15 days are used for acceleration or remediation after each 75-day term.

The scheduling options multiply when schools combine different block modifications with different ways of dividing up the school year. For example, some schools use a sliding schedule to meet their needs.

With the 7-day cycle slide, each day begins with a different period. The days are thought of as first day, second day, etc. Seventh period students, who may be tired at the end of the day, will have equal opportunities to meet earlier. This schedule can also be modified to an AM/PM slide. For two days of the week, periods are extended into larger blocks of time so that each week, every class has at least one double period. The morning and afternoon classes on the remaining days slide from day to day. This schedule works well for schools that have 1/2 day itinerant teachers. The students attend two days of double classes together so that if time is needed for double classes,

the students can participate in the activity before it is broken down. For example, a chemistry teacher could set up labs for all classes, without having to break down and return to single periods.

Block scheduling formats allow teachers to teach fewer students per day with longer preparation periods (Jones, 1993). According to Jones (1993), teachers say that "they accomplish more in each class session because they don't waste so much time taking the roll, starting up, and winding down. The longer class period allows -- actually, "it forces -- them to drop the lecture format and try a variety of more effective teaching strategies and learning activities" (p. 6). The effective use of block schedules depend on teachers' ability to use different class formats effectively.

Behavior Management Models

Quality Schools. Dr. William Glasser (1992), a psychiatrist and educational consultant, has written and spoken extensively on issues relating to quality education. Glasser (1992) defines a Quality School as one that educates children supported by the following definition: "Education is the process through which we discover that learning adds quality to our lives" (p. 6). His classroom management model deals with meeting the needs of students without coercion called control theory. This theory is based upon meeting the essential, genetically-structured internal needs of students, including: survival, love, power, fun, and freedom. If these needs are not met, students will seek ways to do so. For example, if a

student is seeking the need of "fun", they will seek out ways to fulfill that need, most likely disrupting the classroom setting.

Glasser based his theory around Dr. W. Edward Deming's non-coercive training of Japanese workers to create very high-quality products, including automobiles and electronics, at prices the average person could afford. Dr. Deming said, "Quality is based on joy" (p. 6). From this same approach, Glasser believes, if used correctly, Deming's ideas can be brought into schools, creating systems where almost all students experience quality work and create quality products. He advocates that once students see themselves as quality and gaining in quality work, they will continue that option. Glasser (1992) concludes that understanding motivation through the role of the teacher is key to determining the success of a non-coercive environment.

A boss-manager motivates students by using external factors through a stimulus-response approach, using an outside stimulus to motivate, depending on rules and punishments when the stimulus is ineffective. The outside event does not determine how an individual will act but the individual chooses to act accordingly to how important the outside information is to them. Glasser (1992) believes that if teachers do not teach in "need-satisfying" ways (meeting the needs of their students), then they will most likely resort to coercion to try to make students learn. Under the control theory approach, a lead-manager tries to understand what students are looking for. Students will behave accordingly to what they want (need) at that particular moment. Once the lead-teacher understands their students'

needs, they most likely will not only motivate them to do their work but to do it well (Glasser, 1992).

> While the manager cannot make people do quality work -- control theory contends that no one can make anyone do anything -- it is the job of the manager to manage so that the workers or the students can easily see a strong connection between what they are asked to do and what they believe is quality (Glasser, 1992, p.8).

Lead-teachers rely on minimal rules developed through a discussion with their students, determining what rules the students think are important to complete their work emphasizing the goal for the teacher is to help the students learn. Quality is a key component in these discussions including courtesy, kindness, and listening. Students should also be encouraged not to criticize one another.

Through the Quality approach, Glasser (1992) believes creating and sustaining warm, supportive relationships among all staff and between staff and students achieves quality learning. Doing this helps rid the coercion which otherwise destroys relationships. As relationship building between teacher and students develop, students may in fact do what is distasteful to them because the need to please the teacher strongly satisfies the students' basic need for love and friendship (Glasser, 1992).

Relationship building among teachers and students to develop a quality classroom environment requires a sufficient amount of time to establish. "Many educators in schools using block schedules say that overall school climate improves as students and teachers spend more concentrated time with one

another" (O'Neil, 1995, p. 14). This time helps to personalize the school and allows teachers and students to know one another better (O'Neil, 1995).

Teaching Models

The longer time provided by block scheduling permits more active engagement of student learning. Canady and Rettig (1993) cite several teaching models that can assist teachers in creating more active classrooms and thereby engage the interest and efforts of their students. The models included are: Paideia seminars, cooperative learning, synectics, concept attainment, and inquiry. Brief descriptions follow:

Paideia. Paideia is a group discussion technique that focuses on a piece of text which all participants must read before the seminar (Canady & Rettig, 1993). The purpose of this *seminar component* is a way for students to deepen their understanding of the ideas they have been studying, and apply them to their own lives and values (Adler, 1982). For example, a seventh-grade class has just completed reading the story "A Little Red Hen." The teacher begins the Paideia session by asking the students to write their responses to a particular question. The teacher sets the tone by explaining a situation followed by a question such as, "Steven Spielberg, the famous movie maker, has bought the rights to the short story you have just read and wants to make a movie. He will pay you one million dollars to come up with a title for the short story movie creation. What title would you select for the movie?". This title must be different than "A Little Red Hen". Once each student selects a title, a discussion session begins with

students sharing their titles. This discussion should prompt and generate more questions and discussion from the class. If the group is inexperienced with the Paideia process, the teacher may develop a line of questions, to help them through it. These questions must be open-ended. The teacher must be careful not to sway the students. For example, a teacher may ask "Did you see any changes in the character?" instead of "How did the character change?" which implies there was a change in the character. Another question could be, "Using the text, how did you come up with that?". The teacher facilitates the process but the students control it.

Coaching is the core of the Paideia Program and requires practice, mastery, and learning by doing. The *coaching aspect* of the program is the way students gain the intellectual skills necessary for further learning. The amount of time given to this activity should be greatly expanded, and a wide array of methods and approaches should be used in the classroom (e.g. labs, cooperative learning techniques, project-centered learning).

Pam Brewer, Assistant Principal of Person County High School, Roxboro, North Carolina lists the difference between Paideia seminars and traditional group discussion (see Figure 4).

Paideia Seminars	Traditional Group Discussions
97% student talk	97% teacher talk
Average response by student 8 - 12 seconds	Average student response 2 - 3 seconds
No teacher approval or disapproval	Correctness from teacher is crucial
Thinking, backed up by textual evidence, is paramount	Rightness is paramount; thinking ends as soon as one is right.
Student listens to peers	Students listen primarily to teacher

Accountability of student according to pre-agreed-upon criteria	Students see discussion as a "frill" just for a participation grade
Students have ownership for flow	Teacher has ownership for flow

Figure 4. Paideia and group discussion components.

Seminars should be used as a regular instructional method in all grades, K-12. The seminar process, with the teacher facilitating an open exploration of the ideas in a work, has the greatest capacity to transform the nature of school for students and teachers because:

- a bond of mutual respect is created, both peer to peer and teacher to student;
- each student must think critically to understand ideas, solve problems, make decisions,
- resolve conflicts, and apply knowledge and skills to new situations;
- articulation, listening, and critical thinking skills are improved.

Cooperative learning. Cooperative learning refers to students working together to solve problems, complete a task, or to produce something. Students work in cooperative learning groups to develop communication skills and think through problems to develop knowledge.

According to Johnson and Johnson (1987) the characteristics of cooperative learning are:

- Students work together toward a group goal.
- Group members cooperate, rather than compete with each other.
- Ideas and materials are shared.

- Each member of the group receives the same reward.
- Each member of the group is recognized as contributing to the group's success.
- Each member of the group is expected to make a contribution.

In cooperative learning, members are assigned to small groups and assigned a role. Group members may be designated as the recorder, a reporter, a motivator, or a leader. Typically cooperative learning groups consist of two to five members of different ability, motivation, socio-economic status, or ethnic/racial origin with a common learning goal.

The ground rules and teacher expectations are established. The teacher introduces the students to the basic tools they will need to work together and a common goal for each group is decided upon. The teacher then assigns roles and responsibilities for each group member, guidelines for behavior in the cooperative groups, a signal for stopping group work, and the rationale for cooperative work.

After the teacher establishes the cooperative group ground rules and gives the assignment, the teacher then becomes the facilitator and the mediator. The group comes to an agreement and completes the task. Some examples of cooperative activities to assign in a language classroom are book making, discussion about literature, the editing and revising of writing projects, and the writing of stories, poems, raps, songs or cheers, comic strips, ads, video scripts, and plays. An example of a middle school cooperative writing activity, creating a book, follows.

- Each student writes a description of an imaginary character.
- The cooperative groups are formed.
- The members identify the relationships among the characters that they each bring to the group.

- They add a setting, conflict, and ending.
- The teacher types the stories so they may be read aloud to the class.
- The teacher binds the class collection and adds it to the class library.

Synectics. The synectics model was developed by William Gordon (1961) to develop "creativity groups" within industrial organizations. The idea was used to help groups of people, trained to work together, to function as problem solvers or product developers. Gordon, in recent years, has adapted the synectics process for use in the school setting.

The synectics teaching model is used to help teach students how to make unique and creative connections between what they know and what they are to learn, through the use of metaphors. These connection are facilitated through the use of direct analogies, personal analogies, and symbolic analogies.

A direct analogy compares two objects. For example, how is a snowflake like a television set, or how is a book like a shoe? Another example could be, how are the veins in our bodies like a plumbing system? Each of the questions are implied metaphors, or an analogy by metaphor. In the analogy, how is a book like a shoe, students may give answers such as, you can use a book and a shoe, or they both may have leather covers. As students practice with the use of analogies by metaphor, they are able to increase the tension through their connections (Gunter, Estes, & Schwab, 1995). For example, after such practice, students may respond to the same analogy with the following answers: a shoe is like a book because a shoe has laces to hold it in place, and a book has a binding and threads to hold the pages in place; they both have soul; or the book and shoe can be worn out.

A personal analogy allures students to become part of the experience being explored or the problem to be solved. For example: how does it feel to be a cloud? How does it feel to be a tree that is subjected to acid rain? How does it feel to be a zipper? According to Gunter, Estes, and Schwab (1995), "the personal analogy in synectics is to provoke the learner into projecting his or her consciousness into the particular object or idea so as to experience an emotional understanding that goes beyond the merely cognitive" (p. 136).

A symbolic analogy, or compressed conflict, generally involves two-word descriptions of an object in which the words seem to be contradictory or the opposite of one another. Example questions could be: When is silence deafening?, How can love be both kind and cruel?, or How is a computer shy and aggressive? This kind of questioning, according to Gunter, Estes, and Schwab (1995), reflects the student's ability to incorporate two frames of reference with respect to a single object.

Metaphorical questioning can be used as a warm-up activity to a creative process such as problem solving. Although the metaphoric activities are not directly related to a specific problem, the process teaches metaphoric thinking; a quality pertinent to problem solving, creating a design, or exploring a design (Gunter, Estes, & Schwab, 1995).

Concept attainment. Concept attainment is the process of defining concepts by finding those attributes that are absolutely essential to the meaning and disregarding those that

are not (Gunter, Estes, & Schwab, 1995); it also involves learning to discriminate between what is and is not an example of the concept. Based on the study of classification processes, this model helps students learn categories and study how to learn and apply them (Joyce, Weil, & Showers, 1992).

In the classroom, students learn the meaning of concepts through an inductive process of comparing examples and non-examples of the concept. This comparative process continues until a definition of the concept is obtained by the students. According to Gunter, Estes, and Schwab (1995), the concept attainment model process is comprised of nine steps. The first three steps are completed by the teacher prior to instruction. The steps with examples follow.

1. Select and define a concept.
   - A teacher selects a rectangle as the concept.
2. Selecting the attributes.
   - The attributes of a rectangle are: geometric figure, four-sided, contains all right angles, and opposite sides are parallel and equal.
3. Develop positive and negative examples.
   - The teacher selects as many examples of the concept as possible, containing all of the attributes from step number two. A square would be appropriate for this concept; a triangle would not. The negative examples help students to focus on the essential attributes.
4. Introduce the process to the students.
   - The teacher explains that the goal of the activity is for the students to define the concept by identifying what is essential in developing a meaning. The objective is for students to arrive at an understanding and definition of the concept in their own words.

5. Present the examples and list the attributes.

    - The teacher presents the first positive example. This can be drawn on the board, projected on an overhead screen, or through the use of an animate object. The students begin to list the attributes associated with the example. If an animate object is used and the material is plastic, the attribute will most likely be included under the positive list. The attribute, plastic, will be eliminated once an example, made of another substance, is presented,. For example, if the teacher uses a green plastic square as a positive example, the attribute list would include green, plastic, four sides, contains all right angles, etc. The negative example includes a solid block of wood in the shape of a triangle painted white. This will eliminate the green and plastic attributes.

    - This process continues as negative examples help to emphasize the positive attributes of the concept, without eliminating any attributes of the positive list.

6. Develop a concept definition.

    - The teacher has the students develop a definition for the new concept that includes all of the attributes remaining on their list.

7. Give additional examples.

    - The teacher, at this point, adds a few more positive and negative examples in order for students to test their initial definition. Students can also participate by adding their own examples with an explanation of why it fits the concept definition, however, this step would be difficult with the example stated above. All positive examples are exhausted after the use of the square and the rectangle.

8. Evaluate.

    - A teacher could have students develop their own concept with the necessary positives and negative attributes.

    - The concept could be reviewed periodically to check for retention.

The concept attainment model deviates away from teachers telling students what a concept is and allows the students to participate in their understandings, establishing ownership and authority in what they are taught.

Inquiry. The inquiry model was developed by Richard Suchman (1961). Although originally used with the natural sciences, it has been applied in the social sciences and in training programs with personal and social content. Educators use the inquiry model for teaching students how to make inferences and build and test hypothesis. Used in conjunction with other models in a design process, the inquiry model provides a stimulating option for solving problems and teaching thinking skills (Gunter, Estes, & Schwab, 1995).

This inquiry model is based on the belief that we learn best, that which intrigues and puzzles us (Gunter, Estes, & Schwab, 1995), therefore inquiry training begins by presenting students with a puzzling event. For example, an intriguing event may be established when students are asked why moisture sometimes accumulates on the outside of a glass? The steps used in the Suchman Inquiry Model, and a sample scenario follows.

1. The teacher selects a puzzling situation or problem.

2. The teacher presents the puzzling situation or problem to the students.

3. The students gather data by asking the teacher questions, answered only with yes or no. The teacher is not to give information explaining the phenomenon.

4. The students develop a theory and verify. Once the students post a question they believe answers the problem, the question is stated as a theory.

5. The students explain the theory with stated rules.

6. Students analyze the process to consider how they arrived at the acceptance of theory.

7. Evaluate.

Scenario: A tractor trailer truck driver must make a delivery from point A to point B. As the driver approaches a tunnel along the route, he notices that the height restriction to enter the tunnel is 13 feet 2 inches. The truck's height is 14 feet. How will the driver get the deliver to the town?

After presenting the scenario, the teacher informs the students of the questioning format with only yes and no answers permitted. Sample questions could be as follows (the answers are supplied).

Can the truck driver go another route? NO

Can we empty the truck? NO

Must the original truck make the delivery? YES

Can we take off the trailer? NO

The data collection, through questioning, continues as students attempt to develop a theory of how to get the truck through the tunnel in order to make the delivery. In this particular case, the teacher is looking for the theory of releasing air from the truck's tire in order to meet the height requirement. The driver could then proceed through the tunnel. The teacher can use a fact sheet to supply additional information at any time but students should be encouraged to discover the information for themselves. The students then state the rules for the theory they had postulated, followed by an analysis and evaluation of the process.

Pacing Instruction

Deciding upon an appropriate model is only one phase of planning and implementing instruction during the block. Canady and Rettig (1993) suggests a schema for pacing instruction in the block. The steps are: application, explanation and synthesis. They are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Canady and Rettig (1993) borrowed the terms *Explanation*, *Application*, and *Synthesis* from Hunter, Bloom et al.(1954) to describe the process of working throughout a block of time. They believe to be successful teaching in the block, teachers should plan lessons around these three areas: explanation, application, and synthesis.

Explanation. In most cases, this phase takes up 25 to 40 minutes in a directed instructional activity. During explanation, the focus is on what is to be learned, appreciated, constructed, dissected, prepared, developed, discussed, written or performed (Canady & Rettig, 1993).

Application. The application phase is approximately 35 – 55 minutes. Students become more active learners during this stage. The information from the explanation stage is now in the hands of the students. Students now become involved and participate in "hands on" activities, causing them to apply what they have learned or been instructed to accomplish. This part of the lesson is often the most difficult for the teacher to plan (Canady & Rettig, 1993).

Synthesis. The final phase is similar to Bloom's concept with some type of closure involved. This phase gives students the opportunity to develop meaning about what they are doing and learning in school. Components of the synthesis stage include reflection, review, and possibly re-teaching or re-explaining.

Teachers having experience planning and implementing instruction in block schedules, have many things to say about its use in schools. The following section discusses the advantages and disadvantages of block scheduling as reported by teachers from various research reports.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Scheduling Practices

Teachers report the traditional 45 to 50-minute class period to be an obstacle when they attempt to use cooperative learning, hands-on activities, laboratory experiments, long term group or individual projects, and interdisciplinary lessons (Willis, 1993). Lengthened class periods is a way to address this problem. With longer class periods, students can "delve more deeply into their subjects before the bell rings" (Willis, 1993, p. 1). The extended class periods allows for more teacher/student interaction and students can concentrate and focus their use of time and energy.

Canady discusses anecdotal reports on the disadvantages of the traditional 45-50 minute, 6/7-period schedules:

- Multiple class changes causes time lost for stopping, starting, and passing in the hallways

.

- Stress is evident in the emotional demands of serving 125-150 students a day.
- Students have difficulty in handling 7 or more subjects and teachers each day.
- Interdisciplinary or integrated units are often difficult to deliver.

Information obtained by the Association for Supervision of Curriculum and Development (1995, p. 4), through an interview

with Dr. Lynn Canady, discusses the advantages of block scheduling for students:

- There is good evidence that with sufficient time, support, and staff development, many teachers change teaching strategies; they eventually help students become active learners.
- The changed teaching strategies enable students to work harder and learn more.
- The changes in structure seem to reduce discipline problems. Teachers may not notice these as much as administrators because of the school-wide perspective of the front office.
- There is good evidence that students earn a larger number of A's and B's with block schedules. There is also some evidence that there may be an increase in Fs. If teachers and students understand that there is time to repeat a course, teachers may grade tougher, and students may opt not to put forth the effort.
- Students have indicated that teachers are able to help them more during class.

Common Concerns with Block Schedules

Roger Schoenstein, a member of the Colorado Education Association, is the foreign language department chair at Wasson High School in Colorado Springs. Wasson High School is now in their fifth year of operating with a block schedule. Wasson has sent staff members to more than seventy-five schools around the country to share what they have learned about teaching on a block schedule (Schoenstein, 1994). Schoenstein shares anecdotal reports of the concerns his group has found from nation-wide staffs preparing to switch to some type of block scheduling format.

- Does block scheduling permit as much of the curriculum to be covered at the traditional schedule?

  This concern will depend upon the schedule a school is currently using, and the block format they switch to. Some teachers have reported they cover just as much ground under block schedules; others, a little less. Schoenstein (1995) states "it's what they learn" (p. 15), not what is covered.

- If a student misses a day of school it is like missing two days.

  Students absent from block classes do miss more in each class than they did when they were absent from a traditional 50-minutes class, however, a student absent the whole day will now miss just four classes instead of six or seven. The students misses a lot in each day but only need to locate four teachers to obtain the missed work.

- Teachers who only lecture may have difficulties with this type of scheduling.

- Students with poor attention spans may have difficulty.

  Team teaching blocks of science/math and language art/social studies, with the support of special education, can help. The combining of talents will produce a wide variety of methodology to deal with shorter attention spans.

- Substitute teaching may be more difficult.

- Students may not be able to "survive" a class lasting so long.

  This would be true if teachers only lectured. According to Willis (1993), students say the schedule has forced the teachers to become more creative in the classroom.

Successes with Block Scheduling

Schools that have implemented block scheduling reported many successes. The following paragraphs reveal testimonials of such schools.

In 1970 a Catholic high school reported using a 4-period day which: provided additional curriculum for students, allowed time for ideas to settle, allowed more time for teacher preparation, and forced teachers into a variety of learning activities (Gunther, 1970).

In 1979 Manchester, Georgia, had a high school schedule with 2 1/2-hour instructional blocks in each of three 12-week quarters (Forehand & Watkins, 1979). Manchester teachers and students found: less scattering of students effort, more ease in meeting individual students needs, and more supervised study for less advantaged students. Teachers also reported that students can take additional courses or retake a failed course without having to wait a year. Other findings were that students stayed in school to take units beyond the minimum required, visits from former students increased noticeably, and teachers sensed a growth in responsible behavior.

A 1989 study of an alternative, school-within-a-school, block program found the program especially good for high risk mobile students who could start over more often (Munroe, 1989). Students completed more courses than they had the year before, grade point averages were higher, attendance improved, and the dropout rate was lower. Students noted that it helped concentration and retention and reduced stress. Teachers knew students better and used twice as many teaching strategies in their block classes.

A 1994 report of seven Copernican Plan high schools found a positive impact on student behavior, some improvement in attendance, significant improvement in dropout rates, improved teacher-student relationships, and more manageable workloads for both teachers and students. "It appears that students who know their teachers and feel a part of their classes tend to be less disruptive and to stay in school" (Carroll, 1994, p. 112).

Blaine High School, Minnesota, after one year of block-scheduling in 1993-94, reported these findings:

- average ACT and PSAT scores increased;
- the school's grade point average and students on the honor roll stayed the same;
- the dropout rate dropped by 1.4 percent;
- students suspended dropped by 46 percent from 740 to 400; and
- incidents of fighting went from 64 incidents to 20 incidents.

Clarence Edwards, curriculum coordinator of Orange County High School in Orange, VA, agrees that data is limited from schools switching to some type of block schedule, particularly the 4x4 plan. According to Edwards (1993), the limited data compiled from the Orange County Schools are positive. He reports that students are completing more courses, grades are going up, and more students are taking and passing advanced placement exams. Perhaps the most telling sign of the popularity of block scheduling is that teachers who experience it say they can't conceive of returning to the "inflexible treadmill" of 55-minute classes (O'Neil, 1995).

The Central Park East Secondary School in East Harlem, New York City, with mostly minority, low income students classified as special education, operates under a simplified schedule with

two 2-hour periods and two shorter periods, including lunch, per day (Scherer, 1994). Central Park East has a dropout rate of 5 percent versus the citywide rate of 40 percent, and 90 percent of its graduates attend college.

A study done by the University of Minnesota compared conditions from 2 schools using a 4x4 block schedule with two systems using the 7-period day. The study found that teachers in the four-period schools said the schedule allowed them to do their jobs better; students had more positive attitudes toward school, and students had higher levels of engagement.

Canaan Memorial High School reported some positive aspect after implement the block three years prior. Ginnett (1998) reports that teachers were very positive and wanted to stay with new scheduling. She also reported students had experienced the old scheduling method aid they never wanted to go back to it. Ginnett (1998) reports that both teachers and students are more relaxed and have better attitudes about the school.

Principal Paul Clark (1998) reveals their middle school started on the block this year. They plan to measure the success of block scheduling by taking a look at student and teacher attitude, test results, attendance, student behavior and other indicators. Clark (1998) feels at this time that the block is going well, reporting that teachers, students, and parents are positive about the change.

Summary

Block scheduling is a major innovation being implemented across the nation, however, according to O'Neil (1993) empirical data on the effects of block schedules are scarce. However, the

anecdotal reports that are available, including the ones documented in this report, appear to report significant outcomes.

Block scheduling decreases the number of students for teachers and the number of classes for students and teachers. This seems to improve behavior, attitude, and academic achievement. Students are more focused on the classes, the teachers know the students better, and individual students' needs are better addressed. There is little evidence of change in classroom activities except that teachers purportedly use a greater variety of teaching strategies. Only when the change in schedule is accompanied by other changes, does there appear evidence that other teaching and learning issues are addressed.

With longer segments of time being devoted to each subject, block schedules are purported to be a catalyst for classroom innovation (Canady & Rettig, 1993). The longer class periods liberate teachers whose innovative teaching methods do not fit the traditional schedule, and encourage teachers that stand-and-deliver information to modify instructional methods.

As with any new reform in education, the success of block scheduling will be determined largely by the ability of teachers and administrators to work together to improve instruction. "What happens between individual teachers and students in classrooms is still most important, and simply altering the manner in which we schedule schools will not ensure better instruction by teachers or increased learning by students" (Canady & Rettig, 1993, p. 22).

Chapter Two

History of the Research Design and Methodology

Investigating and exploring events in their natural surroundings was the primary foci for the series of research studies comprising this dissertation (see Appendix A). This chapter begins with an account of the first research study, expressing how it served as a springboard for the questions which guided the subsequent studies. All three studies will be addressed, including the appropriate research methodologies approaches used in order to establish a more credible and reliable study.

The Preliminary Ethnography

Qualitative methodology enables the researcher to understand the experience being studied by providing him/her with the opportunity to observe events in context (Hamel, 1993). As a student enrolled in an ethnography course, I was introduced to a variety of research studies utilizing diverse methods for conducting qualitative research. In each of the studies read, the data were reported as narratives, portraying the stories as they were lived by the participants and interpreted by the researcher. I was impressed with the manner in which meanings were related through the sharing of the experiences.

Qualitative research, then, as described by Sherman and Webb (1988), "has the aim of understanding experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it" (p. 7).

Qualitative research allows those who are being studied to share their perspectives, providing a realistic account of the experiences as they are lived.

To fulfill the requirements for this class, three other classmates and I organized and conducted a study of school reform. The group implemented strategies comparable to ethnography studies read in the class. This project provided me with firsthand experience of the procedures for conducting this type of research.

The study. The focus of this study stemmed from the interest of one member of my ethnography work group. She was directly involved in the restructuring process at Lewis County Middle Schools. Having a vested interest in this process, she requested the group to explore school reform in this setting. All members of the group complied. Our roles were to conduct interviews and to observe and record field notes at all restructuring committee meetings. The articulated purpose was to understand the experiences of Lewis County Schools' faculties as they began joint planning for a combined middle school which served different kinds of communities with different educational ideologies.

Beginning in November and continuing throughout the school year, we were participant observers during all meetings of the restructuring committee. At first, we wanted to investigate it the planning process. Our group looked at Glasser's Quality School model and the model for restructuring offered by the Coalition for Essential Schools (Coalition for Essential Schools). All data from the meetings were recorded in the form

of field notes supplemented by audio recording. Researchers interviewed teachers, administrators, and central office personnel from both schools, totaling thirteen interviews.

The interviews were open-ended discussions prompting elaboration and clarification from the participants' (Anderson & Jack, 1991; Mishler, 1986). The goal was to use these discussions to retell the restructuring story in the participants own words. The individuals were allowed to speak at length, defining salient issues, and talking about restructuring in their own categories and terms (Anderson & Jack, 1991; Mishler, 1986). Memos, articles, and other documents distributed to committee members were copied and analyzed (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The interviews were analyzed, looking specifically for points which were made, what areas needed further clarification or elaboration, and what additional questions could be asked. As we read, we realize that there seemed to be a pattern of common concerns in the interviews. These areas were defined and clarified, and quotes were selected from each interview which addressed them.

Through data received from the interviews and participant observations of planning meetings, assemblies, and workshops, we began to see how teachers and administrators developed and sustained multiple interpretations of the planning process and the proposed restructuring itself.

Eventually, the process seemed to take on a life of its own. It began to speak to us about issues other than schools, curriculum, and programs, and more about people, perspectives, and opinions. Because of the sensitive and often shocking

information that came out of our interviews and conversations, we began thinking about how we would represent this work in a professional, intellectual, and honest manner.

The group wanted this to be useful, informative, and presentable to an audience made up of many people with varied perspectives on this issue. Our theoretical framework became that of an alternative research presentation -- a readers' theater based on the work of McCall and Becker (1990). We began to realize that the process that we had been documenting revealed itself much like a play. There were distinctive "voices" which were taken directly from the interviews, and which were woven into a restructured narrative, depicting the multi-level and varied perspectives on the process and the product. The play evolved and our "Restructured Voices", from the interview responses, spoke for us all.

During data analysis, it became apparent to me that instructional practices surfaced repeatedly. I resolved that the demands of this restructuring process were causing many teachers to contemplate adaptations in their instruction. The demoralization that they were facing was forcing them to brainstorm means by which they could successfully fulfill the goals of the restructuring process, which where integrated curriculum, differentiated instruction and the Quality School's model. Thus, towards the final phases of this study, the restructuring committee began to discuss increases class time, through block scheduling, as a possible vehicle for supporting their efforts. I believed apparent that this transformation

process could yield information crucial to educational reform, and expressed an interest to explore it further.

The curriculum director recommended that I meet with Tess Carpenter, a committee member and key trainee in Glasser's Quality School Model (Glasser, 1992) . Tess was portrayed as a key informant for providing me with pertinent information. I expressed this interest to my committee during my preliminary examination in late July, 1995. The committee suggested that I review the literature concerning block scheduling and the use of time and instruction and conduct a pilot study of this process. I was advised to spend time in the classroom with Tess to gain a better understanding of her adjustments. I contacted Tess at Turner Valley, explaining my interest in pursuing a research project involving her as the key participant.

The Pilot Study Stage

For the pilot study, my interests were with instructional practices and how they may or may not change in a newly-adopted block schedule. To negotiate this study, I arranged a preliminary meeting with Tess Carpenter, which was general in nature in March, 1995. During the meeting, Tess had reservations concerning her ability to provide pertinent data for the research. She believed that her instructional strategies would remain fairly unchanged; however, despite her apprehension, she agreed to participate.

A second meeting occurred in mid-July, discussing the guidelines of the approaching school year. After this meeting, I decided that I wanted to conduct a case-study methodology, through a pilot stage, to examine the influence of block scheduling on Tess's instructional practices. The case-study methodology was selected because it provides an opportunity to more thoroughly investigate a single phenomenon within a particular context, richly described, as opposed to multiple situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I wanted to investigate how one middle school teacher coped with restructuring and its impact upon her classroom. I proposed my idea to Tess and an agreement was made to begin the study with the proper administrative permission. The research question was formulated from discussions with Tess -- How does a seventh-grade language arts teacher adjust instructional practices when introduced to a scheduling change?

Data collection was also pre-determined in agreement with the participant as indicated in the informed consent release form signed by the participant (see Appendix B). I also obtained permission from the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board to begin the study.

Specific components in this section include: the research focus, setting, participants, data sources, data collection procedures, data analysis, and trustworthiness.

Research Focus

Because this research study focused on the lived experiences of one participant, a qualitative, case study design was implemented. Merriam (1988), posited that by concentrating

on a single phenomenon or entity, the case study approach aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon. The case study can bring about the discovery of new meaning, illuminate the reader's understanding, or confirm what is known. The techniques, employed in a case study methodology, were appropriate for investigating the instructional strategies of a single teacher switching to block scheduling.

The 7-week pilot study began at Turner Valley Middle School on Thursday, August 24, 1995, and ended on Friday, October 13, 1995. My scheduled visits were as follows: Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:50 am - 11:25 am, (this time period included the first academic block and individual/team planning), Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 PM - 3:05 PM (this time period included the second and third academic blocks). Friday was an optional day for visits with either morning or afternoon observations.

Setting

The location of this case-study was a seventh-grade language arts class at Turner Valley Middle School, located in Southwest Virginia. During this phase of the research, all academic blocks and planning were visited and observed.

Turner Valley's Program Purpose**:** As expressed in the mission statement, Turner Valley Middle School was committed to providing a quality education to all of its students. The primary objective in the implementation of a block scheduling structure was to allow teachers to make the best use of time and resources. According to the restructuring committee, this structure afforded teachers a realistic opportunity to meet individual need through the use of a "continuous progress"

model. Teachers believed that lower class sizes and a desire by them to learn and incorporate research proven relevant teaching strategies were essential to meeting the needs of all their students.

Through restructuring efforts, Turner Valley intended to provide a quality of programs and equity of access to all students. The objectives were:

- to increase the amount of time students spend in language arts and mathematics.
- to encourage teachers to find links between subject areas, integrating the curriculum.
- to encourage teachers to use a variety of instructional strategies within a class period.
- to utilize student input to assist in planning instruction.
- to plan instruction that is accommodating to various learning styles.
- meet the orientation needs of students coming to middle school and prepare them for the transition to the high school.

Turner Valley's Program Components. The block plan incorporated the following components:

- four classes rather than seven (an additional team member reduced the number of students per class);
- fewer students in each class
- greater teacher contact with students (teachers have more time and fewer students);
- opportunity for more changes in instructional methodology (for example, lecture, discussion, group work, presentations, etc.);

- more interdisciplinary units (team members planning instruction based on relationships that exist between disciplines);
- greater emphasis on team-teaching
- less stressful atmosphere (fewer class changes, fewer students, and more time);
- greater focus on technology through a pilot in the sixth grade (Turner Valley Vision, 1995).

Turner Valley seventh grade block schedule. The seventh grade educational program was offered in a school day comprised of four instructional blocks of varied lengths. There was a 4-minute passing period between all of the blocks. Students and staff shared a 35-minute common lunch period between the morning and afternoon blocks. The schedules varied by a few minutes in all grades levels to alleviate the number of students in the hall and to avoid grade mixing.

Students spent one block of the day (on average of 82 minutes) in language arts, a second block in mathematics, and a third block in science. Students spent a fourth block of the day in physical education, music, and/or exploratory courses, which meet for 76 minutes every other day. They attended only three academic courses daily. Students attended language arts and mathematics everyday for the entire school year. All students attended science everyday for the first half of the year with all students switching to social studies for the second half of the year.

Students were only assigned to four courses and four teachers throughout the school year. Teachers instruct a

reduced number of students, from over 100 in the previous year to approximately 77 with the new schedule.

Language arts and mathematics teachers taught three groups every day for the entire year. Social studies and science teachers worked with three groups per day, but with six groups the entire year. Physical education, exploratory, and elective teachers worked with only three groups per day (see Figure 5).

8:30 - 8:46 (Advisory and roll call)

Block I 8:50 - 10:00 (Academic Block -- 75 minutes)

Block II 10:09 - 11:25 (Physical Education/Exploratory -- 76 minutes)

Lunch 11:25 - 12:00

Block III 12:04 - 1:30 (Academic Block 2 -- 86 minutes)

Block IV 1:34 - 3:05 (Academic Block 3 -- 91 minutes)

Figure 5. Turner Valley Block Schedule.

The advisory period, 16 minutes in length, was developed to serve as an extension of the guidance function of the Turner Valley School. Teachers used this time period to enhance students' self concept and improve interpersonal relationships between students and faculty.

The two afternoon blocks were designed to be somewhat longer. Academic block two was designed to be 11 minutes longer for "settle down" time because teachers needed to deal with

students returning from the lunch time activity, a time period meeting the social needs of students. Academic block three was 16 minutes longer than the first academic block. It was lengthened to allow for locker visits and preparation for dismissal.

Participants

Because of the nature of this study, it was decided that the participants would consist of those directly involved with classroom instruction. Thus, the participants selected for this study was Tess Carpenter and all students of her three academic blocks.

Primary participant. The primary participant of this study was Tess Carpenter. Tess has been a Language Arts teacher at Turner Valley Middle School for eleven years. She was the team leader of a three-member team.

Tess's ideas coincided with the philosophy of the school's restructuring efforts. The district adopted William Glasser's Quality School Model as part of the restructuring process. Tess introduced the school year to her students upholding these beliefs and applying them to her classroom environment. She defined her focal points as quality, control, motivation, responsibility, and management.

Tess believed in the longer blocks of time, especially being given the time to know her students as individuals, as a "whole" child. She also believed that the longer blocks also provided the opportunity for in-depth, active learning rather than passive learning. Tess contended that she could never go back to the old traditional classroom schedule.

Participant observer - the investigator. As a secondary computer/business education teacher for six years, I began my career instructing my classrooms in the manner in which I was taught as a student -- lecturing. I had my toolbox of creative ideas and had students work with one another occasionally, but I did not have the knowledge base that provided all students with the ability to effectively process information.

As a teacher, I was conscious of students' needs but lacked various instructional practices to meet those needs. I continued with whole class instruction -- the way I was taught. My instructional process included the typical scenario of "here's the information, process it, and take a test." Student scores scattered the entire scope of the bell curve, fulfilling the prophecy that "this is how it should be."

As time passed, as I desired to expand my knowledge base about instruction and the way students learn this became a bothersome approach. Coming to Virginia Tech, as well as becoming involved in a teacher training program in New Jersey caused me to broaden my ideas about pedagogy and helped me grow in these areas. I have learned this through my involvement in graduate courses, my peers, professors, and through training in various teaching models and theories. Training in multiple intelligences, quality schools, cooperative learning, and an understanding of Paideia, added diversity to my traditional pedagogical approach. My most beneficial experience came from being involved in this study, seeing firsthand how a single teacher dealt with changing occurring from a restructuring process.

Investigator’s role. During my first visit to her classroom, Tess introduced me to the students, as a student from Virginia Tech there to observe the daily activities of the classroom. I then located myself in a non-distracting position within the classroom (at Tess's desk off to the side of the room), and began my role as a participant observer.

My role as participant observer remained fairly constant throughout the study. According to the literature, smooth transitions are pertinent to a teacher's success in block scheduling. Teachers need to structure their classrooms giving adequate time to the instructional phases of their lessons. Consequently, I logged transitional times occurring during instructional methods, to better understand Tess's utilization of time. I also formulated questions for interviews from my observations.

Challenges to my role. One concern I considered while doing observations was my role and the issue of "intervention". At times, I became actively involved in curriculum and general discussions with Tess. This occurred during planning time or through telephone conversations. I also had occasional interaction with the students during group work. I never participated in direct instruction at any point during the study but did help some students with writing conferences, asking them questions about their writing to initiate further thought. Periodically, the students approached me with questions about writing or for clarity dealing with assignments. In fact, the day I conducted the student questionnaire, one student commented, "wow, he's finally teaching us something."

From the onset of the study, some students tested my authority by asking things of me they normally would not ask of Tess. Initially, I was unsure of what my reactions should be. After a discussion with Tess, I was encouraged to follow my good judgment mainly due to similarities that she perceived to exist within our educational philosophies.

> The children in some of the classes, it appears to me that they are very comfortable with you being in there was not your purpose anyway, but I have noticed that they tend to come up to you. I'm going to just kind of ignore that and let you go with it. If you're comfortable with it then fine. Your philosophy about kids seems to be very similar to mine so I want you to be comfortable too. If you want to jump in, fine or if you want to stand back and be an observer, that's OK too. What ever your comfort level is, is all right with me.

I proceeded with caution. I referred students to Tess when those situations seemed to merit her attention. The students' reactions towards me when I returned to the classroom to continue the case study (4 months later), was non-distracting. I had become a part of the classroom environment. The students were familiar with me and understood my role.

Data Sources/Collection Procedures

During each block, I positioned myself at Tess's desk located at the front of the classroom. I began each observation by logging the start time, the topic of instruction, and the instructional practices in relationship to transitions between

instructional phases. This process continued throughout the block and the results were recorded in a spiral notebook.

I collected data using a triangulation approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I chose this approach because I believed that using multiple methods of data collection would strengthen my research. My interpretations were more reliable than using observations alone.

- Journals from Tess
- Participant Observer -- observations
- Interviews with Tess
- Participant Observer at team meetings/planning
- Student feedback through a survey
  -- journals, evaluations, conferences, and class meetings.

Primarily due to time constraints, I made adjustments to the data collection methods mentioned above as the pilot study progressed throughout the seven weeks. Originally, I intended to have Tess journal via tape recorded messages before and after the school day. Due to Tess's time constraints, I combined the journal idea and the interview process into a single category. To accomplish this task, I formulated questions during observations each week and gave them to Tess on Thursdays (see Appendix C for the cumulative research questions). Tess answered the questions over the weekend via tape recorder and returned the answers ready for transcribing. The transcription reading prompted additional questions pertinent to the interview process. This process continued throughout the 7-week study.

I observed team planning sessions to learn of possible accomplishments or frustrations reported by Tess's team

teachers. The original plans to gather information from students through journals, evaluations, conferences, and class meetings did not occur. Tess's time became scarce with planning for the blocks, the restructuring process, and establishing a rapport with the students.

I did not conduct formal interviews with students at this time due to the time constraints of parent permission waivers. To compensate, I conducted an anonymous student questionnaire during the seventh week of the pilot. Responses were aggregated by individual student groups based on their appropriate class.

Tess and I wanted to know what the students' thoughts were about various aspects of block scheduling, such as: the schedule, group work, and what they liked or disliked about the school year; in particular the schedule. Eight questions were asked of the students (see Appendix D).

Tess and I designed the original questionnaire which were reviewed by Dr. Magliaro. The principal made several revisions to questions that he felt had positive or negative connotations. For example, a question asking "What do you *like* or *dislike*?". The word "prefer" was added to question number two for this reason. The majority of students asked what "prefer" meant. I verified the response with the meaning "what do you *like* about the schedule this year?" They understood. There were seventy-four respondents out of a possible seventy-seven students.

Question six lacked the response of "both". This was a question asked by students in the first block. I made the appropriate adjustments with the third and fourth blocks by explaining that "both" was an option.

Several of the questions asked of the student did not produce answers that were easily categorized therefore lacking pattern matching in the data collection. For example, when students were asked "how they felt about working in groups?", many replied they felt "good", with no further comment.

Data Analysis

After leaving the field, I remained in contact, via phone conversations, with Tess for explanations or clarification of any question or issues that surfaced during the analysis. To test and refine the research questions, a continual analysis was conducted throughout data collection. At the beginning stage of analysis, Lincoln and Guba (1985), suggest unitizing the data -- identifying "units of information that will, sooner, or later, serve as the basis for defining categories" (p. 344). The data were analyzed and organized into categories and themes based on the recurring concepts and information.

Negative case analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the questions and the data. In this process, the researcher examined the data to detect instances where the research findings conflicted with the hypotheses. "The object is to achieve a perfect fit between the hypothesis and the data" (Merriam, 1988, p. 143). These methodologies aided in establishing the credibility of the study, thereby substantiating trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness. Four criteria are used traditionally for judging the quality of research designs: (a) construct validity, (b) internal validity, (c) external validity, and (d) reliability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a researcher

using a qualitative research methodology has to establish *trustworthiness*. This means that the researcher has to convince the reader that the study was worthy of its findings. To reflect qualitative approaches, Guba (1985) coined new terms to replace the traditional ones described below such as: *credibility* to replace internal validity, *transferability* to replace external validity, *dependability* in place of reliability, and *confirmability* in place of objectivity (construct validity). The assurability of trustworthiness is discussed in accordance to this case study.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), prolonged engagement and persistent observations are two of several safeguards an investigator may use to avoid bias. As the researcher, I conducted classroom, planning, and team planning observations throughout the study for 22 weeks (including the Pilot and Dissertation stages). The multiple engagements for this research provided for prolonged engagement and persistent observations, thus enhancing the credibility of the work.

Using dissimilar methods of data collection, daily logs, observations, and interviews, strengthens reliability as well as validity (Merriam, 1985). "The rationale for this strategy is that the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies" (Denzin, 1970, p. 308). The use of multiple sources of evidence develops *triangulation*, creating converging lines of inquiry, developing a more convincing and accurate study. The multiple sources of

evidence provide measure of the same phenomenon. Yin (1994) contends that no single source of evidence has a “complete advantage” over another but are in fact “complementary”.

Interviews are verbal reports and, consequently, subject to bias (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1988), interviews can help the investigator see things differently during observations, helping to validate or invalidate observational data. Corroborating interview data with information from other sources (i.e., triangulation), such as observations and artifacts, allows for triangulation, thus also increasing credibility.

A *chain of evidence* was established in this study, allowing an outside reader or external observer to follow the traces of the research study, from the initial research questions to the conclusion of the study. A case-study report was established that reports in the form of a unitary, cohesive study, the actual evidence established by the investigator; for example: interviews, observations, times, dates, and places. This report contains citations directing the reader to the appropriate location in the case study report. This chain of evidence allows the investigator and outside observers to examine all aspects of the study with clear cross-referencing methods.

Periodically, *peer debriefing* occurred, analyzing fieldnotes, observations, and transcriptions. In peer debriefing, "the inquirer's biases are probed, meanings explored, the basis for interpretations clarified" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). Appointments were established with my advisor to explore aspects of the research to validate or

invalidate the findings of the researcher. The purpose was to identify questions and concerns that arise throughout the study that may require further inquiry.

A validation occurs when the researcher has the key informant of the study review the draft report of the study. The review helps determine if the reviewer finds any differences in the investigator's conclusions and interpretations. If the reviewer cites differences in the facts of the case, the investigator may decide to search for further evidence, trying to resolve the discrepancies. The key informant, Tess, reviewed the case study report. Reviewing the case study report with the key informant also produced further evidence that may have been overlooked in the initial data collection procedure. These three tactics, triangulation, chain of evidence, and having the participants review the case study report, aided for increasing what Guba (1985) calls *confirmability*.

To enhance the transferability of the study, a "rich, theoretical framework" was developed (Yin, 1984, p.54). Merriam (1982) describes one characteristic of a case study as being "descriptive," meaning that the end product of a case study is a rich, "thick" description that can be used in judging the possibility of transferring the situation, reducing potential error to external validity.

I presented the findings from the pilot study in the form of a prospectus exam to my committee on February 16, 1996. The committee agreed that further investigation of this study was warranted. The formal dissertation investigation focused on the following question: How does a seventh-grade language arts teachers adjust instructional practices when implementing school

reform innovations? The research question evolved due to the evidence of the effect on Tess's classroom instruction due to reform innovations.

The Dissertation Stage

Research Focus

The continued study provided me with the opportunity to observe the actual implementation of instruction of Tess's classroom as a result of the reform. My specific focus during the pilot-study was to examine the implementation of one specific innovation, block scheduling, and its impact on Tess's instructional practices. After observing this transition for a short period, many innovations stemming from the restructuring efforts, also impacted Tess's instructional efforts. My dissertation research focus/question was then modified to include these issues: How does a seventh-grade language arts teacher adjust instructional practices when implementing school reform innovations/pedagogy? Secondary participants were also selected to be part of this case-study according to these modifications.

Setting

The setting for the dissertation research remained in Tess’s classroom at Turner Valley Middle School. The focused case-study process began the week of February 19, 1996. After conferencing with Tess, we selected the first block of the four academic block schedule to focus for this phase of the research. Block one was selected due to class demeanor, diversity among student grade levels, and perceived legality violations with

other blocks. That is, two blocks of classes contained students of extreme learning disabilities and attention deficit problems. Tess was concerned of ethical problems that might ensue. I narrowed my focus to the first academic block of language arts visiting 3 days per week for 14 weeks. My observations of individual and team planning remained the same as during the Pilot Study Phase.

Participants

Primary participant. Tess Carpenter remained the primary participant of this study.

Secondary participants. The secondary participants, or other participants who influenced or witnessed the transition to the restructuring process were:

- team teachers
  - -- math teacher
  - -- social studies teacher
  - -- science teacher
- students
  - -- nine students
- two counselors
- principals
  - -- head principal
  - -- assistant principal
- talented and gifted specialist

Tess's team underwent a team member change midway through the school year. During spring semester, the science teacher moved from seventh to eighth grade and the social studies teacher went from the eighth to seventh grade. Thus, team teachers included in this phase of the study were the social studies and math teachers.

The counselors and the principals were administrators were also interviewed. Administrative issues such as Literacy Passport Test, budgets, and duties surfaced during this stage of the study. The need for their inclusion within the study developed based upon these administrative issues and their involvement with the restructuring efforts.

The talented and gifted (TAG) specialist was a resource teacher serving three students in the first instructional block. Periodically, Tess's team met with the TAG specialist. In these sessions, briefing occurred about each TAG-labeled student, discussing the expected abilities of their performance. All TAG students in the first block were interviewed for this phase of the study. Participating students were determined by the professional judgment of Tess, according to achievement in reading and writing. Goetz and LeCompte's (1984), calls this *reputational-case* selection, whereas instances are chosen "on the recommendation of experienced experts in an area" (p. 82). A sample of three students were chosen from below grade level, at grade level, and above grade level (see Appendix E). The TAG students comprised the higher level reading group category. This type of purposeful sampling was achieved through the interaction between the teacher and students.

In order to protect the rights and identities of all participants, Human Subject protection regulations were employed (see Appendix B) .

Data Sources/Collection Procedures

The timeline for data collection began on February 19, 1996, and lasted approximately 14 weeks, with a final visit and

interview with Tess at the end of the school year. The data collection table, in Appendix F, lists the data collection activities that occurred during each week of the study including: classroom and planning observations, primary participant interviews, and secondary participant interviews.

Since the researcher developed a professional, as well as a personal relationship with the participant, any possible interventions on the researcher's part were noted in a personal log. Informal discussions, including phone conversations, were also included. The teacher maintained her role as the instructor of the class and was not asked to change any methods or assignments. Observations conducted during classroom time included the instructional strategies of the participant and the participation of the students in the daily activities of the classroom.

Due to a time lapse between the end of the study of the reporting of the results, a final interview was conducted with Tess and of the principal in February of 1998. The purpose was to clarify the process of restructuring since the end of the study. Due to several ethical concerns around changes that have occurred, no other participants were interviewed. These reasons are noted in an epilogue concluding Chapter Five.

Fieldnotes. Fieldnotes were written as a result of observations of classroom activities and individual and team planning sessions. The field note journal contained my record of thought, ideas, and reflections about the ongoing analysis of

the study. It also included the actual events that took place. The journal also included all documents dealing with instructional practices that Tess provided me. The fieldnotes were formatted in such a way that allowed the researcher to find the desired information easily. The format included the time, instructional strategies, student activities (group work), paraphrases, and observer comments. Suggestions from Taylor and Bogdan (1984) include leaving wide margins for later notes, forming new paragraphs for ease of reading and data analysis, and using quotation marks to indicate direct quotes. In addition to the narrative account and the fieldwork journal, ethnographers often write memos or "think papers" containing analysis and interpretation (Spradley, 1979).

Interviews/recordings. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed; transcriptions were returned to all participants for verification. These *member checks* occurred throughout the study. This practice, as suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1981), should be accomplished throughout the study to increase *credibility*. In this process, I returned all data and interpretations back to all participants, excluding the students, and asked if the results were plausible. The participants were pleased with the results.

The most common type of interview is the person-to-person encounter in which one person elicits information from another (Merriam, 1988). The purpose of the interview is "not to put things in someone else's mind (for example, the interviewer's

perceived categories for organizing the world) but rather to access the perspective of the person being interviewed" (Patton, 1980, p. 196). I conducted unstructured types of interviews with Tess via taped phone conversations. The unstructured interview is often used in conjunction with participant observation in the early stages of the case study (Merriam, 1988). The researcher was, in fact, learning enough about the situation to formulate questions for subsequent interviews. I changed my interview process procedure for the dissertation stage due to a learning experience gained from the Pilot Study. During the pilot study, Tess answered the questions over the weekend via tape recorder and returned the answers ready for transcribing. After reading several transcriptions that were analyzed by a peer debriefer, it was determined that sufficient detail was lacking with the interview conversations. Therefore, the investigator adjusted the interview process to include a weekly taped phone conversation during after school hours. The transcription reading prompted additional questions pertinent to the interview process.

Secondary participants were each interviewed once during this third phase of the research. Semi-structured interviews were guided with general questions, specific to participants based on their roles, allowing the researcher to respond to the situation at hand. Certain information was desired from all respondents such as general viewpoints about reform innovations. The pre-determined list of questions (see Appendix G) was

supplied to the administrative participants, who had requested such structure.

Data Analysis/Trustworthiness

The procedures for data analysis and trustworthiness for this study mirrored that of the pilot study. Briefly, those safeguards to ensure trustworthiness were:

- Negative case analysis
- Peer debriefing
- Prolonged engagement
- Triangulation
- Chain of evidence
- Confirmability
- Transferability

Summary

The research question in this study reflected the shift from the broader investigation of the impact of school reform on many participants, to the narrower focus on a single classroom situation. It began with an emphasis on the process of school reform, ending with how the innovations impact pedagogy. The shift was also evident in the methodology, which began with obtaining interview and observation data for the purpose of understanding and explaining the impact of school reform on the whole, to its impact on Tess. This change is more vividly portrayed in the following chapter which highlights the

historical accounts of the restructuring efforts, followed by an analysis of the participants' projections of these innovations.

Chapter Three

History of the Restructuring Efforts

This chapter provides the historical framework that laid the foundation for the transformation of one teacher's practice. The data that informed this narrative emanated primarily from the pilot stage of this research. By examining the contextual changes, as the school moved through multiple restructuring phases, we can see how the experiences and instructional strategies of reform innovations set the stage for the metamorphosis of one Language Arts teacher, Tess Carpenter.

Overview

Three phases of restructuring preceded the 1995-96 school year, the year in which both the pilot and dissertation research took place. The first phase attempted to move Lewis County Middle Schools away from the traditional junior high-school format toward a middle school structure based on the current middle school philosophy; one that emphasized the social development of learners (Turning Points, 1988). The second phase was the adoption of Glasser's Quality School model (Glasser, 1992) to help deal with the issue of discipline, a key concern for the teachers. The third phase included a vision for a new middle school building, which would house the two merged e

existing middle schools. A restructured curriculum and a block scheduling format would be the two features that would frame this merger.

<u>Phase One</u>. During the late 1980's to early 1990's, declining student enrollment had forced reduction in spending and the reallocation of resources in the Lewis County Schools. Despite district-wide cuts, Lewis County managed to foster a positive climate as transformation began in its schools. District personnel and community members were actively involved in the strategic planning process as they attempted not only to operate more efficiently but to restructure their schools and improve the instructional programs. Basic academic and social skills formed the centerpiece of the division’s curricular and instructional efforts. From that base, through multiple restructuring phases, Lewis County set its sights on the future striving to prepare the students for future demands. Let's start with the first events in Phase One.

Prior to 1988, the basic structure of Lewis County Middle schools resembled that of their high school, a departmentalized organization. Beginning in 1988, Turner Valley Middle School engaged in a restructuring process that involved moving from this traditional, departmentalized organization to assume a format which modeled the middle school philosophy as outlined in the Carnegie report (Turning Points, 1988). The two major initiatives in this first phase of restructuring were the organization of teams and the development of the teacher advisory program.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade team configurations included four academic teachers (one from each discipline: language arts, science, social studies, and math). Keeping in mind the middle school philosophy, the teams began to focus on the adolescent needs of the students. This emphasis arose as a result of the teacher research into the middle school journals, such as the Middle School Journal, Science Scope, Language Arts, and Educational Leadership, Carnegie Institute reports and relevant periodicals -- all supplied from the administration. While there was no change in the curricular format at this time the teachers decided to move from a 6-period day to a 7-period day, allowing time for team and individual planning time. The individuals within teams, however, continued to control their own subject matter planning and did not engage in interdisciplinary discussions. This was part of the plan as the first year was used for team relationship building. Teachers used the team planning to become acquainted with one another, their habits, and instructional practices. For example, in these meetings, teachers would share particular instructional approaches and educational beliefs.

A school-wide teacher advisory program, Children are Really Exciting (C.A.R.E.), replaced homeroom time. The advisory period, 16 minutes in length, was developed to serve as an extension of the guidance function of the Turner Valley Middle School. This time period was used by teachers to enhance students' self concept and improve interpersonal relationships, through individual and group discussions (Maciver, 1990).

After implementing this phase of the restructuring process, Lewis County Schools applied for state recognition of its middle school status. The State Department of Education accepted and qualified both county middle schools as Vanguard Quality, a state issued “label” identifying model middle schools, meaning “leaders of a movement.” These schools were recognized for incorporating models and programs that are in compliance with the Middle School Philosophy, designed to meet the needs of adolescent students.

While the teachers were dealing with the organizational changes, the number of their responsibilities increased. For example, the move from departmentalization to teaming required teachers to collaborate on curricular issues. In addition, they faced other issues such as familiarizing themselves with the needs of adolescents, preparing for teacher advisory periods, educating themselves about different teaching models and strategies, and most importantly, learning to work together within teams. (These areas are discussed in more detail the upcoming discussion of in Phases Two and Three.) These issues demanded extensive time commitments. The lack of funding and secondary teacher certifications were two additional district dilemmas which added more complexity to the situation. Due to the lack of funds, some positions were eliminated and in some cases, three person teams were established. Secondary certification of some faculty complicated the principal’s flexibility of team building due to content specificity. Teachers with more than one endorsement could be placed in different positions within a team, whereas teachers with single

certification were limited in the positions in which they could be placed. All three dilemmas (i.e., time, funding, and certification strained effective team building. Team members shifts were then implemented in attempt to eliminate what administrators believed were non-compatible teams. This was a continual process in order to establish the most effective, cohesive groups to benefit students.

Poor morale developed with the shifting of teams. Relationship building among teachers was the key issue. Nevertheless, the teams continued to function, making changes in curriculum and in instructional delivery. Each team worked to create its own team identity, develop its own instructional teaching units, develop its own discipline policy, and create its own student incentive programs. The faculty met and decided it wanted to establish team names and further establish identity by designing team tee-shirts, developing extracurricular activities (eg., hall parties), and special field trips. As mentioned in the opening paragraphs, interdisciplinary teaching units were not established within the first year of this phase. Relationship building was their primary initiative. Interdepartmental communication increased as teachers were slowly coming out of traditional, isolated modes of operation. Discipline policies and incentive policies were team specific. Each team organized and established its own rules and consequences for its students.

Team identities grew with some teams developing interdisciplinary units based on links identifies among subject matter. The teams became so uniquely separate that their

efforts resulted in team competition. Even more notable, parents called the school requesting placement of their children on particular teams. Once again, in an effort to establish an increase in effective teaching across teams, the principals intervened by reorganizing some teams at the end of the school year, with little input from the teachers. As stated by Tess, turnover was high, speculating the reasons being from natural attrition and possibly the restructuring efforts. Absenteeism was also a problem. Morale for some continued to weaken.

Phase Two. In the Fall of 1990, another restructuring phase emerged as a result from a county-wide survey conducted through central office, designed to understand teacher concerns occurring in the schools (a hard copy of this survey was unavailable). The survey results yielded concern in the areas of discipline and management problems. As a result, sub-committees were formed to determine teacher expectations and viewpoints of what restructuring entailed, in order to develop a concrete, doable disciplined-based plan. The results included an interest with William Glasser's Quality Schools discipline model (Glasser, 1985). Subcommittees collaborated and reported their findings to the central office. A task force was then developed to travel to other school districts to further study other districts' discipline models. The principals believed their program should emphasize relationship building, respect for teachers, and mutual respect among students and teachers. To accomplish this goal, the task force, through further research and school visitations, recommended the adoption of William Glasser’s Quality School classroom management model

(Glasser, 1985), a model in support of relationships, student choice, and student responsibility. Glasser's premise is that student behavior changes intrinsically. Students will behave simply because they want to, feeling good about themselves (Glasser, 1985). For example, if students' basic needs are met (e.g., survival, belonging, power, fun, and freedom), they feel pleasure and, in turn, feel good about themselves. Good choices produce good behavior (Charles, 1996).

The administration accepted the committee's recommendation. The guidelines found in William Glasser's (1985) book, The Quality School, were implemented. The management of this program allowed for increased teacher input, which was orchestrated by assigning teachers to groups and meeting at specific times, dates, and places. Groups of six to eight teachers, with one designated group leader, were developed by the principals. In the initial stages, the administration had the faculty read individually about the Quality School's model. Once a week, at a designated time and place at the school, the groups discussed their reading. The meetings were generally 20 to 30 minutes in length. During the sessions, teachers were required, by the administration, to answer questions affiliated with the reading provided by Glasser's Institute. This procedure of learning was suggested by guidelines formulated through the Glasser Institute.

At the completion of this stage, teachers were given an option of signing the contract from Glasser's Institute in support and continual investigation of the program. Approximately 85% of the staff members signed voluntarily. Others felt the philosophy was forced upon them, cynically

regarding Glasser’s book as the “bible” for teacher attitude and action. Job security was said, by some faculty, to be a deciding factor for the remaining members to sign. Despite the 15% of faculty not fully accepting the model, Quality Schools continued into the next phase of restructuring as a disciplinary guide and key aspect of the school’s mission statement to be developed in Phase Three of restructuring.

During a school board meeting, the administration officially adopted the Glasser’s Institute’s contract. One principal from Turner Valley attended Quality Schools training the previous summer to gain a perspective and a practical guideline on what was expected of his/her faculty in terms of classroom instruction and management. The principals made additional Quality Schools training available the following summer for all county teachers. Forty teachers, throughout the county attended the first basic training session held at a designated school in the county. Two teachers and two counselors from Turner Valley Middle School were included. Tess was one of those teachers. Approximately 50% of this initial group of forty went on to the next phase of training, including the four faculty from Turner Valley. Tess and the two counselors also completed an advanced practicum training during successive summer training at Glasser's Institute. The principals believed the Quality Schools model would be a better way to conduct a school, with their trained personnel were being used as their key models. One of the principals stated the following.

> The success that they were having in their classrooms was quite evident to anyone, subjected to all. And so we were

given a lot of information, most likely positive towards Quality School and toward developing a better learning environment.

Every summer for five summers, basic training was offered to the county's faculty. Approximately 23% of teachers completed at least the basic Quality School training (80 teachers in all). Ten of them were from Turner Valley Middle School.

Efforts from the principals were directed toward collecting more data, especially those data showing a decline in referral rates to administrative and guidance offices from teams incorporating "quality" into the classroom. One principal stated "Just like in the Quality School approach, the choices they make (the teachers), determine their consequences." In addition he noted that individual personality had some effect on accepting new theories. "It's difficult, you know, people can be trained in it but you have to have a personality that's open to that kind of thought, too, some people just don't have that, and it makes it very difficult."

Phase Three. In October 1994, middle school administrators and faculty were invited by the superintendent to be part of the process of defining middle school education in Lewis County for the 21st century. Programs for pre- and early adolescents, as suggested by the central administration, were to meet the demands of an information age and respond to curricular and instructional changes (e.g., technology) being initiated in elementary schools. Administrators and teachers at both County Middle Schools were challenged to develop a plan for integrating

the curriculum and meeting the needs of adolescents. Changes made to meet these specific needs would provide the basis for:

1) comprehensive changes in middle school curricular and instructional programs;

2) consolidation of the two middle schools; and

3) decisions about buildings, staffing, and allocation of resources.

The superintendent of Turner County met with teachers and administrators from the county's two middle schools and said: "Your task is to design Lewis County's Middle School program for the twenty-first century. The program will drive our decisions about a building." In other words the directive was to "restructure the middle schools." The contextual issues identified by the administrators to be considered when planning this restructuring were:

1. A declining enrollment.
2. A significant reduction in operational funds.
3. The increased cost of maintaining the sixty-year old deteriorating buildings (the structural makeup also inhibited restructuring efforts).
4. The cost of making the buildings handicap-accessible would be astronomical.
5. The impossibility to wire the buildings for the technology needed in every classroom.
6. The energy inefficient facilities resulting in high heating costs.

7. The poor condition of the kitchens in the school cafeterias, which barely meet health and safety standards.

According to a letter written by the Superintendent and distributed to the faculty, the purpose of the current restructuring process was to lay a foundation for the two faculties to build a working relationship that would eventually be needed for the unified school. The plan to restructure the middle school curricular and instructional program was consistent with Lewis County’s ongoing initiatives and current research on teaching and learning. A number of teacher-led planning groups were covered to address various aspect of the restructuring process (see Appendix H).

Beginning in November, 1994 and continuing through January, 1995, groups of middle school personnel met to discuss how programs might be restructured. A 24-member restructuring committee including teachers (academic, exploratory, special population), administrators, guidance counselors and support personnel was established. This committee drew equally from both middle schools. The Committee's mission was to provide direction and coordination of curricular reform within the context of the overall restructuring effort. Sub-committees were also established to research and report results to the restructuring committee. The description of these additional groups follow.

Five teachers participated in a nationally-known Appalachian Educational Laboratories (AEL) program *Dissolving the Boundaries* (Burns, 1995) recommended by the county's curriculum director and supported by the school system. Designed to stimulate reflection and conversation, the program allowed interested faculty from both middle schools to:

1. Explore integrated curriculum as a holistic approach to teaching and learning;
2. Identify boundaries, proposing solution, and recognizing support for integration within schools and communities;
3. Reach consensus; and
4. Develop an implementation plan.

Following the completion of the six-week *Dissolving the Boundaries* program, the 24-member restructuring group and the 5-member *Dissolving the Boundaries* group merged, creating a 29-member restructuring committee. The expanded committee met weekly and provided direction and coordination for curricular reform within the context of the overall restructuring effort. A questionnaire was developed by the committee to obtain faculty views on the restructuring process (no copy available). Results of the questionnaire, completed from Turner Valley Middle School teachers in early November, suggested that the faculty was interested in professional development and support to:

1. Implement integrated thematic units, differentiated instruction, alternative assessments, and writing across the curriculum.

2. Adapt curriculum and instruction to meet students' learning styles and with an awareness of multiple intelligences.

To meet these goals, the curriculum director, along with the administration, requested additional volunteers from both middle schools to begin researching the Association for Supervision of Curriculum and Development publication Inspiring Active Learning: A Handbook for Teachers (ASCD, 1994). Thirty-three teachers actively participated in small group discussions. The handbook describes strategies for increasing time-on-task, encouraging responsible self-management, adapting instruction to meet different learning styles, integrating curriculum, and shifting attention from extrinsic rewards to intrinsic learning satisfaction. This information paralleled and supported aspects of Glasser's Quality School model (Glasser, 1992). The group participants emphasized discussions in mutual respect, collaboration, and the dignity of all.

A vision statement was constructed by this 33-member group based on their shared belief about the needs of pre- and early adolescents and the curricular innovations and instructional practices perceived to be consistent with the vision. This vision statement read as follows:

> Turner Valley Middle School is dedicated to providing a quality learning-centered environment in which all students have an opportunity to develop: a commitment to life-long learning; respect for themselves an others; social, emotional, and physical health; and the academic,

communication, and problem solving skills necessary to become a responsible citizen.

The “Active Learning” research group reported their findings to the 29-member restructuring committee. The curriculum director encouraged members of the restructuring committee to write a formal proposal containing all findings to the superintendent and the board. Their goal was to develop a program that was dynamic, effectively driving the design of a new structural setting, and one that establishes credibility and marketability to the voting community. This process continued for approximately 4-6 weeks. Four teachers and the assistant principal presented the compiled research findings to the school board. (A full explanation is included in the presentation section of Phase Three, page 87.)

Key elements of the committee’s plan included:

1. Focusing additional attention on students’ acquisition of essential skills in language arts and math due to low test scores in these areas (presented by a teacher).
2. Maintaining high academic and behavior standards and supporting students as the work to achieve those standards (presented by Tess).
3. Offering a meaningful, integrated curriculum grounded in Virginia’s Standards of Learning and Lewis County’s curriculum objectives (presented by a teacher).
4. Creating a structure that serves as an appropriate transition for self-contained elementary classrooms to the block schedule of the high school (presented by the assistant principal).

5. Providing equity of access to quality curricular and instructional programs to all middle school students (presented by all four presenters).

In early February, the 29-member restructuring committee wrote a proposal for the Superintendent’s review, including all research groups' efforts. The proposal outline included:

1. Curriculum integration in the context of middle school restructuring based on recent research on teaching and learning.
2. Turner Valley’s Plan for Systematic Change and Quality Assessment (see Appendix I).
3. The Quality Schools model.

The need for curriculum restructuring was verified by the results of a Quality Assessment Plan survey conducted in October, 1994, descriptive data of student absenteeism (see Appendix J), and an assessment questionnaire developed by the restructuring committee, completed by all teachers (no copy available). Results of the Quality Assessment survey indicated that middle school teachers were interested in professional development and support to:

1. implement integrated thematic units, differentiated instruction, alternative assessments, and writing across the curriculum.
2. adapt curriculum and instruction to meet students' learning styles and with an awareness of multiple intelligences.

The descriptive data collected and compiled supported the need for restructuring to better meet the needs of all students. The resultant plan established short- and long-term objectives, the methods and procedures necessary to achieve the objective, and a time line for implementation (see Appendix K). Consistent with the objectives, evaluation of the program would be based on results of the State-required Quality Assessment Plan survey to be administered in October, 1996 through the Central Office, including: documented observations, descriptive data, and assessment of students' competencies in technology.

On March 14th, 1995 an overview of the plan was presented to the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, and Director of Personnel, by teachers and administrative from both schools. On March 21st, the same information was presented to all middle school faculty, elementary principals, department chairs, and administrative personnel from both high school and middle school faculties.

In April, the emphasis of the restructuring effort had once again expanded, using administrative feedback to make necessary modifications and refinements to the plan. Subcommittees had been established and efforts made to involve parents, additional faculty members, and personnel from both elementary and high schools. Committees were co-chaired by 18 representatives, appointed by the administrator from each middle school. The committees' foci were:

1) *Use of time*. Representatives explored and evaluated the effectiveness of innovative scheduling options.

2) *Technology*. Representatives from both middle schools worked with the Director of Research, Media and Technology and the Manager of Information Systems to:

- determine what technology is currently available in both middle schools (hardware, software, networking capabilities);
- decide how to best utilize available technology;
- prioritize technology needs, cost associated with implementation, and recommended time line; and
- work with district's technology committee to communicate and coordinate technology effort.

3) *Parental involvement and communication*. Representatives from both middle school worked with parents to:

- improve parental involvement and establish PTA's or comparable parent organizations at each school;
- improve communication between the home and school;
- organize opportunities for parents to receive programmatic information, participate in the decision-making process, and evaluate the effectiveness of the schools' curricular and instructional programs; and,
- develop volunteer programs in both schools (for example, volunteer readers for students).

4) *Evaluation*. Representatives from both middle schools worked with central office statistical research expert to develop and implement assessment instruments and

analyze data to evaluate various elements of the curricular and instructional programs.

5) *Staff development*. Representative from both middle schools worked with Coordinator of Elementary and Middle School Instructional Programs to identify, coordinate, and evaluate professional development opportunities consistent with the program objectives for middle school personnel.

6) *Curriculum development*. All administrative and teaching personnel involved in the program participated in on-going professional development programs to:

- Construct a shared understanding of what is meant by integrated curriculum and best instructional practice.
- Plan and implement integrated thematic units.
- Evaluate and revise integrated thematic units.
- Integrate technology into all aspects of the curriculum.

In addition, sixth grade teachers from both schools worked together to develop integrated curricular units.

As the restructuring process continued, the committee noticed that concepts began to intersect. They identified linkages between differentiated instruction, integrated curriculum, and the Quality Schools Model. However, the committee believed that more time in class was needed to effectively meet the goals of the restructuring efforts as

indicated in Turner Valley's belief statement (see Appendix L). At this time, the committee focused its restructuring efforts and research toward the area of block scheduling -- a means to the ends of the restructuring efforts. The committee believed that more classroom time was needed to accommodate their goals. They felt that the extended time periods would aid in accomplishing their goals of establishing a viable middle school, satisfying the criteria of the middle school concept.

A team composed of a principal, guidance counselor, and teachers from both Middle Schools, traveled to a nearby university to meet with researchers of block scheduling. The group discussed scheduling options in relationships to the linkages identified focusing upon issues such as reducing teacher/pupil ratio, maintaining integrity of teams, and providing curricular opportunities appropriate for early adolescents. Based on the information received from the meeting, the team invited the researchers to visit its school. A committee of faculty members and administrators from both county middle schools attended. After a presentation from researchers in the field, the committee agreed that block scheduling would become part of the restructuring efforts. A block schedule was developed shortly thereafter (see Appendix M). The schedule was comprised of four ninety-minute blocks as well as a 20-minute advisory period (entitled C.A.R.E., see page 69) beginning the school day. Three blocks were of an academic base with the fourth being an exploratory area. Seventh graders would change exploratory sections on a quarterly basis while eighth graders on a half-year time frame. Band and Choir were

also considered exploratory options for students. Those students who remained in Band and Choir the full year school fulfilled one exploratory requirement. The block schedule was considered to be the tool to help create a more fluid curriculum and student-centered instructional practices.

Several professional development opportunities had been explored during them months from June through August 1995, and would be available for teachers at both schools. For example: 1) use of technology in classrooms, 2) electronic networking, 3) authentic assessment/grading, 4) multiple intelligences, 5) differentiated curriculum, and 6) learning styles. Weekly, team teachers met to discuss their subject matter, creating fluid connections within the curriculum.

During this time, professional development needs were assessed. The needs were identified using the staff development sub-committee's research with the coordinator of elementary, middle, and secondary schools instructional programs. The purpose was to identify, coordinate, and evaluate professional development opportunities consistent with the program objectives for middle school personnel. Summer opportunities for professional development workshops included: 1) Paideia (UNC - Chapel Hill), 2) Quilt (UNC – Chapel Hill), 3) Cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson 1987), 4) Integrated curriculum, and 5) First Aid. Each of these training sessions was advertised as voluntary.

By May 1996, the committee wrote a plan describing their restructuring efforts. A presentation was prepared for the other middle school personnel, central office staff and

supervisors, and the school board in order to gain approval of their current restructuring efforts. On May 4th, teachers and administrators presented the restructuring plan to the school board members. The general content of their presentation focused on 1) active versus passive learning, 2) integrated instruction, 3) block scheduling, and 4) Quality Schools. Among those presenting was Tess Carpenter. As well as being an active restructuring committee member involved in many of the aforementioned projects and committees, Tess conducted personal research on topics including Glasser's Quality schools and middle school philosophy. Due to her commitment and interest in the middle school philosophy, Tess was asked by the curriculum coordinator to make a presentation discussing her perceptions of the benefits of this restructuring plan to her classroom.

Tess began her presentation discussing several intriguing moments during her professional career at Turner Valley Middle School. She cited her first year of teaching, studying and training in Quality Schools, and participating in the phases of restructuring as the basis for her commitment to this restructuring plan. Tess emphasized that the foundation for restructuring was the adoption of William Glasser's Quality Schools. She created an analogy of Quality Schools as being the "foundation" of a house with Glasser being the "contractor" (see Appendix N). Active verses passive learning, integrated instruction, and scheduling were considered to be the framework, the bricks, and mortar of the house being constructed (see Appendix O).

Tess wanted to show the board, through her perspective as a language arts teacher, how to "build a house of learning." She

distributed a handout containing the components of Quality Schools. This handout showed the basic statements from Glasser (see Appendix P). Tess shared that these basic beliefs of Glasser begin by “building from the ground upward, brick by brick." Integrating the curriculum supports this by providing the nails, screws, and glue to begin constructing a quality educational program. Tess then described the process of building a house:

1. "We must read for information about what’s available.
2. Analyze data and compare properties.
3. Negotiate with sellers and builders.
4. Understand contracts and communicate with all parties involved.”

In other words, according to Tess, a systematic, integrated, construction process must be used to “build a sturdy house of learning”. The process must consist of reading, writing, speaking, analyzing or thinking to solve problems, and working cooperatively. This process was begun by the restructuring committee in the previous months. The committee believed that in their middle schools, blocks of time and an integrated curriculum must be provided for the students and teachers to add the framework to the foundation. Based on its reading and earlier restructuring meetings, the committee found that a thinking curriculum is unlikely to be realized without fundamental changes in instructional approaches which would give students personal meaningful experiences.

Based on the restructuring activities, Tess described the foundation as being secure and the framework nailed. But she stated, one vital portion of the house was missing, the “roof”. The roof, in this case, was time provided through a block schedule. As a language arts teacher, Tess believed more time was needed in her classroom to provide new, in-depth experiences. Tess stated that she needed time to accomplish the following:

1. To teach a process of writing and reading, connecting the two with time for discussion, thinking, and talking about the reading and writing.
2. To secure uninterrupted time for sustained writing and reading through stages of drafting, essential to quality work.
3. To allow time for publishing, sharing, and working cooperatively. Skills that Tess admitted were not easily learned by adolescents.
4. To ensure time for presenting, reflecting, and evaluating.

In addition to curriculum changes and blocks of time for implementation of programs, Tess also expressed concern for training of all faculty. Tess wanted training as an essential ingredient for successful change. Training was needed to help teachers challenge all students, develop learning-centered lessons during a longer time frame, and become familiar with software for better use of computer labs. To support such developmental practices, Tess stressed the importance of making funds available for training and for the necessary technological

tools. Moreover, she requested stipends for additional teacher workshops, seminars, etc.

Tess concluded this presentation by directing the School Board’s attention to a poster containing a completed house (see Appendix Q). Her final words to the School Board were “help us build our house of learning." The Board accepted the restructuring committee’s proposal and gave approval for the committee to implement its plan.

CHAPTER FOUR

Building the House of Learning: Tess's Story

Introduction

This chapter chronicles a year in the life of Tess Carpenter, as she built her personal "house of learning." Guided by a desire to provide quality instruction for her students, Tess realized the need to revamp the preexisting structure. The transformation was prompted and validated from her two-year involvement with the restructuring efforts at Turner Valley Middle School. Integrated into this discussion of Tess's metamorphosis are the reactions from other faculty members, administrators, and students who were directly affected by the restructuring phases. These data emanated from the pilot study and the main dissertation study, introducing new issues which directly impacted the research findings.

Many innovations were attempted during the 1995-96 year in Turner Valley, prompting change and concern within the schools. This section will specify those major issues that enabled or inhibited the successes of such changes at Turner Valley Middle School. The specific transformative agents included new block scheduling, modification in classroom management, and staff development (Glasser's Quality Schools/Paideia) impacted the whole school. This school-wide district perspective, explained in both the Pilot and Dissertation studies, sets the context for Tess's story. Threaded throughout this discussion are the secondary participants' views and changes that were of *greatest* significance to them. For example, if classroom management or

passive versus active learning is not discussed by a particular team teacher, it was not an issue exposed during the overall interview process. Additional administrative issues are also discussed.

School-Wide District Picture

The Impetus for Change: Block Scheduling

Implementation of the block scheduling provided the roof under which all other changes were housed. Prior to this restructuring phase, Turner Valley Middle School housed a 7-period, 42-minute schedule. It was a traditional junior high-school setting with bells signaling the end of each class period. Students reported to 7 teachers per day.

Teachers reported that the traditional schedule inhibited teams' ability to function properly. First, the 7-period school day made it impossible for team teachers to schedule team planning periods. Also, team members were not housed in classrooms located near to one another, impeding collaboration and unity. This not only posed a problem with the cohesiveness of effective teaming, it also interfered with teachers' instructional practices. For example, laboratory activities, cooperative grouping, as well as individual learning activities such as journalizing and reading were minimized due to the lack of time. Students were not given the opportunity to see connections in their learning from one class to another, experiencing fragmented days of instruction.

The large number of discipline problems at Turner Valley were also attributed to the 7-period scheduling format putting students into the hallways 7 times per day. As a result, many social problems, occurring within the hallways, filtered into the classroom requiring the use of valuable instructional time for settling students down at the beginning of each period. The mixing of grade levels was also noted as a contributor to the social problems within the hallways since all classes were dismissed at the same time.

Consequently, a block scheduling format was implemented in the fall of 1995 in order to provide needed time to effectively meet the components of the restructuring efforts.

A school-wide account of the reactions to the innovations from all of the informants sets the stage for Tess's story. The implementation of each component of the restructuring process affected individuals differently according to their prospective roles. A discussion follows of how the influences of these innovations supported Tess's conjectures about a need for change. Finally, an analysis of Tess's reactions and her instructional modifications relating to these innovations is presented. This analysis provides a more vivid account of the actual changes as they unfolded throughout the year: her year of metamorphosis.

<u>The teachers' views</u>. Block scheduling provided teachers with the opportunity to use a variety of approaches and techniques in instruction. Lewis County High School's restructuring efforts, one decade prior to the current middle school restructuring, proposed cooperative learning and Quilt/Paideia as their primary pedagogical innovations. Lewis

County Middle Schools' restructuring committee followed suit in order to prepare students in a similar instructional fashion. The middle schools added Quality Schools training as their classroom management model. First aid training was also incorporated for the safety of the children.

The social studies and science teachers had similar viewpoints concerning the initiation of the new schedule than of Tess and the math teacher. With this schedule, language arts and mathematics teachers would teach three groups every day for the entire year, seeing students for twice as much time than the social studies and science teachers. Social studies and science teachers would work with three groups per day, but with six groups for the year, alternating grade levels mid-way through the year. In other words, social studies and science teachers would work with seventh graders for one semester and switch to teach the eighth graders the other semester.

Both the social teachers and science felt that this schedule would inhibit their ability to cover all areas of the curriculum. Although they were given the same amount of time, their meeting days were decreased by 50 percent, limiting their ability to plan year-long projects.

The social studies teacher believed the decision to block occurred for many reasons: 1) to keep a productive way of organization since the high school had been blocked for several years, 2) to increase test scores, particularly math and language arts, 3) to reduce the number of classroom changes, and 4) to complete projects and assignments in a more fluid manner. This teacher, indirectly involved with the

restructuring process, felt that "short notice" was given about implementing a new schedule, hampering his ability to be fully prepared for the change.

> Most of all, he was concerned about his ability to cover the curriculum in the time allotted. You can't expose the students to some of the things they probably need to be exposed to in social studies. I don't think I am able to cover what all needs to be taught -- things students we be held responsible for in state testing.

He expressed a sense of devaluation created by this schedule. As far as he was concerned, his class was equally as important as all others. "I kind of think in a way that your sense of pride is damaged knowing that what your are doing and what you think you are doing is important, but the time given is not equal across the board." However, this teacher admitted that the skills in language arts and math would easily "carry over" into science and social studies.

The social studies teacher felt slighted with the current blocked time frame. Approximately 7 years prior, classes were 55 minutes long, switching to 42 minutes the previous year. He believed he utilized instructional time more efficiently for 55 minutes, every day, all year.

> A prime situation would be to have the students 60 minutes all year. And again, that’s not prime I guess -- some days you need 60 and others you may need 90. I don’t necessarily think it has to be the same amount everyday. I really think we need more time for social studies and science, more time than we have.

This teacher was unable to "cover" the curriculum with the current schedule (only seeing students for one-half year) and provide the enrichment activities he thought were necessary to truly understand the content.

> This certainly is contradictory. They want you to have a fairly rapid pace to expose them to a lot of things, which I think really needs to be done. And then also, cover it enough in depth so that it might have some meaning to it.

It was difficult changing of teams and curriculum. The social studies teacher estimated that only 55% - 60% of the his curriculum was addressed during this school term. Considering all of the changes that occurred, negative aspects outweighed the positive ones, leaving to this teacher feeling “greatly slighted.”

The social studies teacher, along with the science teacher switched teams and levels half-way through the school year. The social studies teacher switched from 8th grade to seventh grade with the science changing to the 8th grade from seventh grade. Both teachers saw each grade level for one-half of the year. The social studies teacher felt a struggle, not so much with the longer time frame, but familiarizing himself with new team members, new students, and a new curriculum.

> I’ve know the people of the team but not their approaches. Getting to know the curriculum myself, getting to feel comfortable with what I was teaching has made it harder for me to work with them (the team members) as far as developing interdisciplinary units. It’s not anything they’ve done or the students. It’s just getting comfortable.

Contributing to this dilemma was the lack of information available for covering the curriculum, only being supplied with one textbook as a resource. “As for giving them some really interesting information, I need some more to work with them. I feel like I’ve given the students the short end of the stick.”

In agreement with the social studies teacher, the science teacher was also concerned about the ability to complete all components of the curriculum effectively.

> I felt like we were being told we could do as much in half a year as we did in an entire year because we had a longer block of time. That math and language arts were going to get the whole year that we, getting the feeling that science and social studies weren't as important."

Since students attended language arts and math the entire school year, this teacher was concerned that they would perceive science and social studies as insignificant. She felt that students were being sent the wrong message. "That language arts and math are very important, but you don't need as much social studies and science, so we won't give you as much time." . This feeling of “unimportance” surfaced in some student interviews (discussed in the “school-wide picture” section).

The math teacher, on the other hand, spoke favorably of the time increase. While she sympathized with the concerns of the social studies and science teachers, she delighted in the possibility of being able to add enrichment and more student connections to the curriculum.

The math teacher described the newly blocked schedule as a “double-edged” sword. Although she had more time to spend with students individually, she found that those students requiring

such time did not focus during direct instruction time, despite the decrease in lecture from previous years. “The students have realized that I have the time to spend with them. They know I’ll sit at their desks and teach them individually. That is not where I want to be.” The teacher tried to alleviate some of this frustration by pinpointing those students “slacking” during direct instruction time.

> If they’re paying attention during instruction time and asking questions, then I’ll help them. If they have their books closed, their heads down, and not paying attention, then as soon as I give them an assignment and their hands goes up, I will not help them.

She utilized Quality School’s questioning techniques, requiring students to take the initiative and responsibility in their learning. For example, she may ask students not paying attention: “Is what you’re doing appropriate at this time? What is it that you need to be doing? Can you take care of this problem on your own or do I need to help you?” -- making them responsible for their behavior. If this technique failed, students were then responsible for writing a disciplinary “plan”, explaining how they proposed to find a solution to the problem.

The math teacher’s instructional intentions have not changed from previous years but proclaims the extra time permitted the inclusion of enrichment activities and relevant instructional materials. In previous years, during the 42-minute classes, a new skill was taught on a daily basis.

> I can bring in more relevant material that has to do with their everyday life and help them make the connections,

> whereas before it was the skills everyday. I feel like they understand things a lot better this year due to these activities. In the past, they just did the formulas they were told to do and didn't understand why. I didn't cover double the materials but that wasn't the agenda.

She reported that test scores did not necessarily increase this year but felt that overall comprehension/understanding of the material did, as evidenced through her assessment adjustments. She was able to acknowledge this through student discussion as opposed to the written, objective tests. "The students are able to verbalize their understanding of what they've learned." Finally, the teacher proclaims that the longer blocks of time permitted her to deal with student issues expeditiously.

> If you have 42-minute periods, by the time you come in, get role, get their books out, if you had any problems to deal with in the classroom environment, you did not have time to take of those at all. It was you know, meet me in the office, or meet me here to take care of it -- the block has changed that.

While contemplating the tasks ahead, Tess recognized how important it would be to have extra time to accomplish her goals. She knew that she wanted to create an environment that would foster student dialogue. She also knew that she wanted the students to have more time to fully complete writing assignments in order to avoid fragmentation. Therefore, Tess resolved that the components of this restructuring phase would not only be advantageous to her instructional endeavors, but for her students as well.

Considering the impact of these dilemmas on the classroom, Tess was concerned about her effectiveness as a teacher. Since her first year of teaching, whole class instruction dominated Tess's instructional strategies enacted during the traditional 42-minute class periods. She felt that this teacher-directed stance hampered her ability to meet the individual needs of her students and inhibited her instructional capabilities. As she reflected on her effectiveness during those early years, she rated her ability to meet students' needs as a "two" on a 10-point scale.

Tess believed that the students played an important role in her need to make adjustments from passive to active learning. The nurturing, caring environment was always a part of Tess's classroom, but active learning was not. It was the Quality Schools training that confirmed her suspected beliefs of the need for to take part in active learning. It was the missing link that Tess was looking for, the link established from the need to change.

> I knew within myself, my principal knew it, and obviously the guidance counselors did too, that I did not have management problems. And it was not a big thing up until the last 4 or 5 years when we started seeing a difference in the types of clients that were coming to schools. And as society changed, the kids started changing and the management problems were getting stronger, and stronger, and stronger. I taught the way I was taught to. But I noticed that kids were changing. They were more active. They weren't sitting still and listening.

Changing the classroom structure from passive to active learning and from direct instruction to facilitating was a little discomforting for Tess at first. "It was real hard for me to conceptualize the whole thing because when I first read it, it was like, well, I'm not teaching." It was difficult for Tess to make one statement and then have the students doing their own thing. "It feels like you're not earning your keep so to speak." Active learning was the unknown in Tess' instructional practices and Glasser's training supported her internal beliefs. "So it was coming together for me, hey, this is what I need to do."

Counselors. Two counselors were involved in the restructuring and participated in this study. They conducted an inservice for the parents, familiarizing them with the block schedule format. The counselor directly involved with parents, received positive feedback concerning longer classes. She admitted that some teachers were skeptical during the initial talks and adoption of the schedule -- fearing their students may become restless during a long duration of instruction. Both school counselors agreed that the increased time was pertinent to meet curricular and adolescent needs, but report some teachers struggled with the change. One counselor stated that the "blame must fall upon the teachers' instruction and not on the time issue." The counselors received similar negative complaints during 42-minute class periods. "So it's not the block of time, it's the lack of activity or strategy by the teacher, and it's the same ones."

The two school counselors were important participants in the implementation of Quality Schools throughout restructuring phases one and two. One counselor's role is part-time teacher resource person. She assisted academically, helping teachers with instructional issues relating to the curriculum, organizing and giving assessments (state and nationally), and scheduling of students.

> I think one of my main things when I was on restructuring was to look at how can we provide meaningful instructions for students. That was a big thing for me, just meaningful instruction and what does that mean. It means changing methods in the way teachers teach, which translated into actually changing the schedule. ...but our whole purpose was curriculum and instruction on restructuring, how can we do meaningful instruction, that was the whole focus I think.

According to this counselor, enhancing instruction to benefit the learner was the priority. An assessment of the current schedule indicated that it was not capable of supporting the vision the restructuring committee had in mind. The current schedule prevented them from accomplishing their goals.

As a committee member, the second counselor applauded the importance of a new schedule for the teachers and students. The counselor, aware and knowledgeable about the curriculum, time constructs, and student needs, was directly involved with student schedules. She expressed its effect upon her. "The increased time really affects what we do in preparing an

effective program and curriculum." This counselor supported the implementation of the newly blocked schedule to help encourage a more "fluid and integrated curriculum."

> There's just a whole lot of things that make good sense to go to block since you waste so much time every 45 minutes getting kids back in a room and settling them down. We must build relationships within each of the core subject areas, not so much, "this is English and this is Math," but to provide connections relevant to student learning.

Principals. The head and assistant principal participated in this study. The assistant principal reported many positive outcomes concerning the switch to block scheduling. Students were contained within particular classroom settings for longer periods of time, changing classes less often per day. This provided less time to develop social conflicts with their peers. In addition the reduction in conflicts occurring in the hall was credited to the staggering of class changes -- so that only one group was in the halls at any one time.

Through personal observations, evidence of effective utilization of instructional time was apparent to this principal. "We still have frustrations of teachers that can't work too well together but some worked beautifully together." One problem plaguing this principal was those teachers resistant to change. He credited this to personality and instructional preference.

> It's difficult for them to change their style. It's not a simple thing. It's very difficult. Some people change readily, some people are looking for change. Some people

> come alive when they’re given a chance to change. Some people fight it to their death.

The assistant principal judged the first year of the restructuring as an overall success. One of the key pieces of evidence came from an external evaluation done by a research committee from a Tennessee middle school. At first, he felt that the arrival of a committee to evaluate and base judgment on their restructuring efforts was somewhat premature. A big surprise was noted, however, teachers who he felt were not particularly “on board”, expressed to the visiting committee positive comments about the time change.

The principals agreed that the basis for change was to improve instruction. One principal reported that the first four months of restructuring efforts, from September through January (1994), focused upon "developing a better learning environment, better climate, and emphasizing better classrooms of instruction." The restructuring committee, including the two school principals, resolved that increased time through block scheduling, along with the Quality Schools approach, was needed to help meet these needs. The head principal reported a "need" for increased time in Language and Math areas due to "decreased reading skills and lower math scores," revealed from the results of the state-mandated testing program.

> We just felt that these were the two basic areas that needed a lot of extra attention, providing additional time for instruction. Now approaches were still a problem, how does a teacher approach use of this much time. What can they use as real quality in that situation? So we

> (restructuring committee) focused on two areas . . . Quality Schools and increased instruction time.

The assistant principal stated that Glasser's Quality School model was an "integral part and guiding force" in the adoption of a new schedule and a key aspect of the curriculum. His premise was that Glasser's model was philosophically based on improving relationships between students and teachers. Consequently, believing that the allocation of more time would provide the support necessary to effectively implement the model. "So the new schedule was pertinent to our restructuring goals."

Talented and gifted specialists. The main concern for the Coordinator of programs for the Gifted and Talented (TAG) was to have a program that was able to deliver the curriculum through enrichment, acceleration, and through differentiation -- giving students choices and opportunities. The TAG specialist, also a restructuring committee member, gave credence to the increased time to do just that.

> In the past, instruction has been so choppy. Teachers didn't have time to do anything much except get out the information and do the very basic things. There wasn't time to differentiate or even to excel in some cases.

The talented and gifted (TAG) specialist was able to work more closely with the teachers than in the past, seeing the actual resources provided integrated into the teacher’s classroom instruction. The extra time afforded by the block scheduling eliminated the use of Turner Valley’s traditional pullout programs. That is, TAG or special needs students were previously removed from classes for "special" instruction

appropriate for their needs. With the new schedule, the TAG specialist provided resources dealing enrichment, differentiation, and funding information available for classroom teachers. “I think the block has made my task easier, the accessibility of the teachers and we don’t feel as pushed all the time. In short planning times, you are forced to run and do lots of classes in my day.”

Students. During the pilot-study (October, 1995), students were given a survey asking general questions about their views of the new schedule and how the new school year was going for them. Forty-six percent of students reported the school year started out “good” with varied reasons why they “preferred” the new schedule. Having more time to finish work, homework, and experiments were among the most common responses. Twenty-six percent of the students felt the school year started out “great”. One student described the schedule as positive stating, “The classes are longer and you can start to get into stuff without having to do something else or go to another class."

Students who refer themselves to the counselors did not complain about classes being too long but reported “boring” instruction consisting of long lectures. Students reported positive aspects of the longer time, for example, “they like being able to get something finished and not having to rush.”

Twenty-seven percent of the students preferred leaving the schedule in its original format, however, and responses ranged according to the student’s particular preferences. Some “loved” having more time in physical education while others wanted

physical education eliminated. Some preferred as well lesser time in science, while others wanted science placed in the longest block.

Sixty-one percent of the students responded that the new schedule seemed to make their day pass by more quickly. Having fewer classes with the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities was seen as the primary benefit. For some, it depended on the time of day and the time period of their preferred class.

For each class, students were asked if the class was too long, too short, or just right and were asked to explain their choices. Approximately 59 percent of the students responded “just right” in the subjects of language arts and math whereas science responses varied across the board. Almost all students responded that social studies seemed to be "too long".

An overwhelming number of students (65%) preferred to work in groups rather than working alone. Asking for or getting help was the most common response. As one student puts it “four brains are better than one." Two students wanted to work alone. Those who preferred working alone expressed concern about carrying the work load and receiving credit for their own work. These students demanded more credit for their efforts. Some students reported that they felt they were not welcome in a group.

As a follow-up to the student questionnaire, nine students were selected to be interviewed regarding their views on the changed schedule. The interviews were used to get a more in-depth understanding of their perception of block scheduling and daily classroom activities within the longer time frame.

Given that the students were told about switching to a block schedule the previous school year, I asked the students what they thought about the announcement at that time. Several of the students said they felt "nervous" or "scared" about the change. One student stated, "I didn't know what it would be like. I was sort of scared because sometimes I thought with the longer time that they would give you more work." A major concern was that longer classes would be boring. Most of the students had positive feelings about the schedule once they were a part of the change. One student believed that more time was needed to "develop good work habits." Other students realize that they “rushed” through work in previous years with the 42-minute class periods.

All students agreed that the longer classroom time permitted them to accomplish and complete more work in class. In turn, they also reported having less homework. In the past, most projects had to be done at home individually.

The students admitted that time seemed to pass quickly as long as they were actively involved with a task, whether it be individually or in groups. Time seemed to pass by slowly when teachers consumed the time by lecturing, allowing little student input and active participation.

Students were informed of the new scheduling change at the end of the prior school year. Student interviews, conducted in the spring of 1996, revealed their perception of block scheduling prior to its implementation. I asked the students what they thought about the announcement. Several of the students felt "nervous" or "scared" about the change. One student stated "I didn't know what it would be like. I was sort

of scared because sometimes I thought with the longer time that they would give you more work." Other students expressed the concern that longer classes would be boring. "We got tired of sitting the 42 minutes classes so I was thinking this is going to be really tiring sitting for twice as long." Conclusively, student responses were vague in their comments due to their unfamiliarity of this process.

Staff development. In order to prepare teachers for the goals of restructuring, staff development sessions were offered to all teachers. The sessions included Quality Schools and Paideia. The purpose of these sessions was to provide teachers with the tools necessary to be successful during the restructuring process. The following paragraphs will discuss the influences of these sessions.

Quality Schools. The influence of the Quality School component was defined by the roles that the participants played, as well as their attitudes towards restructuring.

Teachers. The math teacher attributed her sense of awareness of how to transfer responsibility and expectations onto her students to Quality Schools training. She believes this awareness became a positive attribute to her instruction. One illustrative incident, occurring midway through the year, made her “belief” more evident.

> We had a student transfer from the other team, a team who does not believe in the quality or philosophy, or maybe they had not had extensive training. The student was making lower grades. I don’t think it’s because the work is any harder. She has to apply herself more than she did

down there. I don’t see the quality there like we have in our classes. I think our team feels trusted and safe and quality.

Her students made more decisions, had ownership, and understood consequences -- believing consequences produced more work. Students had basically two choices: one, to understand their misbehavior and rectify through readjustment of their actions -- understanding their consequences, or two, to suffer the consequences through punishment.

According to Glasser (1992), teachers solicit student advice on what should be done when rules are broken; as the discussion proceeds, students will usually see that the best action is to try to remedy whatever is causing the rule to be broken; the teacher assumes responsibility for attempting to see that the problem is corrected. Remediation is usually done by teachers' talking with offending students, assigning no blame but asking what can be done to resolve the problem so that it does not interfere with class work (Glasser, 1992). These changes lessened teacher frustration. “I feel less frustrated as far as I don’t have to say this is how it’s going to be, this is what we’re going to do. I let them decide and then they have ownership for what happens.”

The social studies teacher had some difficulty accepting wholeheartedly the belief of Quality Schools, mainly with the expectations that students would gain too much “control” and “responsibility”. He admits to reading and understanding and accepting the material but reveals his doubts in the approach.

I know it's not supposed to be a panacea, or answer all the questions dealing with every single student. I don't have trouble with students having some involvement in decision making and not giving them responsibility we ought to keep to ourselves per se. I hope in giving them authority, we're not just giving it to them because we don't want to make the decisions ourselves. So I guess in that sense, I have some concerns.

Counselors. As mentioned, one counselor's role was that of part-time resource person. One of the obligations was to present seventh-grade students with information concerning careers, helping them select eighth grade courses commensurate with their interests. She began the orientation by reinforcing their year-long ability to "choose" various aspects of their classwork. "I know you've been talking all year long about choices, and that's the primary reason for this today." Quality Schools was woven into this year's presentation, emphasizing student "choices", a key component of Glasser's theory, and how it affects their future. The counselor promoted student choice this year for the first time. "It was not designed to be this way. It's from the Quality Schools. I wanted to approach it from that direction, keeping in synch with the teachers."

Both counselors reported a decline in referrals from teams incorporating Quality training, crediting student responsibility as a possible variable.

I think students still have the same kind of transitional needs that, you know, coming to the middle school. The same developmental issues as always which impacts on how they get along with others. The have less opportunity

> thought to act on things because, you know, there are typical times and days, typical places that you'll see a physical type of conflict going on ... between classes and in the locker room. You know you'll still have those.

The counselors also were able to distinguish the teams to which students belonged, identifying teams either “on-board” or not with implementing Glasser’s discipline model. One counselor was “amazed” at the differences in students.

> Certain teams, you know the kids ... I mean they have developmental concerns, friendships, and boyfriends, and fighting with parents but that has nothing to do with the team they are on .... although a lot of friendship issues are resolved on the teams utilizing Glasser’s tools -- taking care of those kinds of issues up front. But you really can tell, you can tell the difference.

The other counselor stated that not only are they seeing fewer referrals from teams implementing Quality within their classrooms, but also saw a decline of student self-referrals. “I have a lot of training with this area myself. The Quality Schools approach has been adopted in one team sufficiently and efficiently.”

Principals. The head principal supported the claims from the counselors. “There is no question that referrals from those teams that are practicing Quality Schools approaches are minimum.” He reported that the nature of the referrals were entirely different dependent upon the teams. Teams utilizing Quality Schools exhaust all interventions prior to referrals, minimizing administrative intervention. The principal believes that additional referrals stem from confrontations between the

teacher and student, believing that teachers make the choice to be confrontational and coercive -- going against the Quality Schools approach of a non-coercive environment. “Students are normally reasonable people and when treated with some respect and with some expectations, they resolve their own problems. Basically I think all students would like to please their teacher given the opportunity.” The principal also acknowledged the community’s awareness of quality in the schools. “They know where the comfort level is the highest, where the relationships are less positive. They also now where the expectations are highest.” From this awareness, many parents requested their children be placed on teams based upon "quality."

Paideia.

Teachers. The Math teacher had a difficult time “fitting” Paideia into her everyday teaching, finding it inappropriate for the average math lesson. He explained that students must arrive at a specific answer in math. An explanation was given to this with an analogy to literature.

> I’ve had a hard time with it you know. In literature, there may not be one specific outcome -- you may think it means one thing and somebody else might think it means something else. There’s an exact answer in math most of the time.

However, this teacher utilized Paideia techniques during class meetings especially when dealing with problems to be solved in their particular class. “They have to learn to work through everyday class problems -- I see a maturity level come out in them that you don’t see the rest of the day.”

The social studies teacher attended a Paideia workshop in August prior to the start of the school year. A follow-up workshop was held school-wide later that fall. When asked if he had utilized the Paideia components in the classroom, the reply was "yes" ..."we had been doing debating speeches, which were not very much different from Paideia session anyway, so they just fit right in."

The science teacher on the team did not incorporate Paideia, using instead cooperative learning activities during lab time. Again, according to the principals, the use of particular models may be due to teacher preference and content.

Tess used the Paideia model to enable her students to think on their own, lead the learning process, and take responsibility for their own learning. This model was used to help students find all of the elements in literature. She believed that when Paideia is used, "kids" gain two things: 1) creative thinking, and 2) observing peers' ideas.

Tess had successes and, in her opinion, one failure with Paideia throughout the school year. Her failure occurred using folk singer Tracy Chapman's music lyrics. Tess felt the information was "easy" for the students to comprehend and carry out the Socratic questioning technique required of a Paideia session. The session never developed (students reported the material was difficult to comprehend). Tess became frustrated with the outcome and stopped the process, creating an open discussion with them afterwards to determine the demise of the lesson. To Tess's astonishment, students reported a lack of understanding concerning the material presented.

> Well, it bombed and I'm not so insecure that it bothered me. Never assume, constantly keep learning, constantly willing to change, be flexible. Ah, the teacher learning with the students is just as wonderful as the student learning themselves.

Planning Time

During my observations, team planning time was rarely used for the development of interdisciplinary units. The majority of conversations dealt with student issues and administrative tasks, and lacked any discussion on instructional strategies, problems with time, or interdisciplinary units. Time, set aside for the purpose of planning, seemed to be occupied with administrative issues. Initially, Mondays were set aside to discuss the agenda in each class, to collaborate and create parallels within their curriculums.

Teachers. The social studies teacher contributes the lack of preparedness to the failure of team planning, lacking a set of stated goals to abide by. "We must state what we are going to do in one day, do it, and that's the only way we will get it done." But again, the major concern for this teacher was the "fine tuning" of a new curriculum.

> I think the biggest problem was keeping up with what I was doing, and that made it really hard for them to try to do anything different than our standard thing. I was feeling uncomfortable teaching history or being able to develop a unit.

The math teacher expressed an overwhelming feeling of trying to "juggle" both instructional and administrative tasks that time did not permit effective team planning. “There’s so many tasks that are sent down from I think administration and we don’t have the time. Where’s the time to care of all those things other than at home?”

Tess believed that team planning needed more structure and focus. She felt that too much time was spent on administrative issues and student concerns. Tess, along with the science teacher, agreed that individual planning time allowed for enough time for taking a bathroom break, collecting their mail, calling parents, and getting a soda, leaving little time remaining for planning. Again, the math teacher stated “There’s no time, I don’t grade papers here, most of the time, very rarely do I grade papers here. All that stuff goes home with me every time.”

Counselors. A counselor empathized with the teachers but related their situation to her everyday duties, stressing that administrative tasks can become "overwhelming but the tasks at hand must be prioritized."

> I’m lucky if I get lunch. If didn’t manage my time I could get caught up in the paperwork and wouldn’t be seeing kids or things that I have to do. As far as teams, you have 3 or 4 people working together as far as contacting parents or anything along those lines. I feel some of that can be managed at some other time, delegating to each other specific tasks at hand. We must look at what is important during our day, continually shifting our priorities.

Principals. The assistant principal recognized this as a continual problem with teams. “This is something we are going to be addressing more next year. Some are not just using time wisely. Discussing what went on in class and concerns about certain discipline problem students can eat up your time.” He believes that "competent meeting skills" are necessary to prevent planning meetings from digressing.

Counselors and principals alike stressed that inefficient time management skills inhibited effective team and individual planning. Moreover, they commented that teachers lacked the appropriate skills necessary to conduct competent meetings.

Classroom Management

Tess’s approach. Longer blocks of time required Tess to make adaptations within the classroom structure to manage students' behavior. Two areas of concern were seating arrangements and bathroom breaks. At first, Tess had the desks in a circle (which she called a "Quality" circle). The students' behavior in this seating arrangement was not conducive to their learning. For example, in a circular seating arrangement, students were able to view many of their peers which caused many distractions during direct instruction. Tess tried several other seating arrangements that also failed.

From my position in the classroom, I observed that all of the seating arrangements had one factor in common, the students were always facing one another. I brought this observation to Tess. After having a brief discussion with Tess, she resolved that the students were incapable of handling the responsibility for these arrangements; therefore, she decided to arrange the room so that all students were facing the same direction. The

outcome was positive. “You would think with 11 years of experience I would figure that out on my own. But no, I didn't and I needed your help and it was greatly appreciated.”

Bathroom breaks was another issue Tess faced concerning classroom management. Initially, the entire class was given a bathroom break approximately midway through the block. As a result, when returning to the classroom, the students would manifest disruptive behaviors, requiring the need for an additional settle-down time, lessening instructional time. Tess tried two variations to rectify the problem. First, three passes per gender was allotted during the break. Students could use a pass at any time during group activity. This policy ended when students began taking advantage of their privileges. Friends planned breaks at the same time, some students took multiple breaks, and others remained out of the classroom for extended periods of time. The final solution was to issue one pass per gender per block.

During the second semester of the school-year, Tess was still concerned about transition times occurring within her instruction. The time lost was directly related with time spent on individual student concerns. Tess noticed an eighth-grade teacher wearing a clip-on timer and asked its purpose. The teacher was using the timer for pacing and time management. Tess and another team member purchased similar timers to improve time issues, including bathroom breaks and gathering materials. It worked. Tess explains,

> With the use of the timer, I can keep track of students away from the classroom, saying to them, they have 3 minutes to go to the bathroom. It has also helped me with

the transitions -- I'm going to put the timer on for three minutes and in that amount of time, you get your books, you get your material. Middle school kids do not remember to bring their material everyday. I thought after a while they would but they didn't and now they know they will get three minutes to do so -- which is no big deal to me.

Administrators. A staff development committee was one of many committees available for the faculty and staff of Turner Valley Middle schools to participate in during restructuring. Tess was one of three, out of a possible 80 faculty and staff, who volunteered to be on this committee. Other members included a teacher and administrator. The second teacher failed to report to any of the committee meetings, leaving only Tess and the administrator. "We started talking last year, what do we need?, what do we need?" Tess and the administrator developed a survey to gain insight of faculty views pertaining to training, asking questions to better understand what the faculty expected to gain from staff development approaches (survey form unavailable). "It (the survey) comes back with nothing but garbage." . . . remarks from teachers such as: "I've had enough, get a life, we need a life, etc. "We dumped them into the trash." "We forgot that completely and set up a program." The survey was disregarded.

The program developed for teacher training for the summer of 1995 was as follows:

- Quality schools -- managing students without coercion.
- Cooperative learning.
- Quilt and Paideia (both questioning techniques for whole group instruction).

- First aid.

This plan was based on the high school's blocked schedule and restructuring efforts several years prior. Quality Schools was an addition to this middle school's restructuring.

Training sessions were voluntary, and my discussions with Tess indicated that she was not pleased indicating a lack of teacher participation. “It increased my knowledge base but it’s right back to the same thing that I’ve said before -- because I’m too afraid not to read and keep up with what’s going on.”

A Paideia workshop was held during a 1/2-day teacher workday during the Fall semester. Since Tess had taken advantage of the opportunity to participate in the summer session, the repeat workshop held during the school year provided her with information that she had already studied.

> What I sat through this afternoon was enjoyable. I learned maybe a smidgen of things that I didn’t already know because it pretty much was review for me and I didn’t think it was fair that I gave up 2 and 1/2 days of my time this summer to learn a particular teaching technique and then find out that it was going to be planned for staff development for the entire county. And when I asked the reason for me being there, I was given the usual line that it was necessary in order to help the people that was leading the seminar and model. One of the things that have been burdening me is the repetitiveness.

Teams budgets were smaller this year due to the cost of teacher training. Each team was accustomed to having about $800 for instructional expenses, such as materials for

interdisciplinary units and supplies. This year, each three member team had $450 available for instructional expenses. Tess expressed her concern.

> We’re panicking as far as the best way to use this particular money. It should be used to plan interdisciplinary units and supplies that we’ll need for that. But I don’t know. We’ll just have to wait and see as we sit through all of this mess and all of the other concerns we’re being hit with at this time.

All of the participants discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the innovations as they related to their expectations and responsibilities. It seemed that the participants' perceptions were key to determining whether the innovations would be considered favorable or unfavorable. It also seemed that those who felt that the restructuring disconnected them by devaluing their content area responded unfavorably, as with the science and social studies teacher. Conversely, those who spoke more favorably in support of the restructuring, considering the changes to be effective in enhancing their roles as teachers.

In Tess's Classroom

Introduction

Tess entered the 1996-96 school year energized about implementing ideas that she thought would improve her instruction. Her focus was on the following changes in her daily practice: Quality Schools, planning/pacing in the new blocked schedule, and the process approach to writing. These

three components are woven into this discussion delineating the differences in pedagogical units, including materials, grouping practices, teacher roles, and students roles (including their reaction to the process of instruction and learning). Threaded throughout the discussion are the ways that these changes, especially Glasser's Quality School, "freed" Tess to become the teacher she always envisioned she should be. That is, while the new block scheduling set the stage for change, Tess took this opportunity to evolve in ways that matched her beliefs and conceptions of teaching and learning. This chapter will show the metamorphosis Tess went through.

Quality Schools

The Quality Schools (Glasser, 1992) approach provided Tess with the foundation she needed to make the other changes in her classroom practice possible.

> When I read the Quality Schools, the first book by Glasser that I read, and had since read about four, it was like "wow", there is actually a name for what I do. Instead of it being just Tess's personality there are other people in the world as renowned educators. I just didn't have the questioning techniques. The same philosophy was there but I just didn't know it had a name. So the Quality Schools training gave me the tool to fine tune what I knew already.

She was especially attracted to the control theory component which explains behavior, especially in classroom contexts. In this theory, a teacher recognizes and honors the students' basic needs, which are to survive, to be loved, to

have fun, to have freedom, and to have power or acceptance. This addresses adolescents' need to belong and to be accepted.

Tess defined her focal points as quality, control, motivation, responsibility, and management. Students were key participants in the development of their class rules and responsible for creating a "plan" to help solve discipline problems (see Appendix R). Parents were also informed of the procedures. Rapport among students was fostered through short introductions, interviews (see Appendix S), and team work through group activities. In these activities, the students participated in discussion about quality needs such as love, power, fun, and freedom. According to Glasser (1992), meeting these needs in the classroom is essential to preparing students for learning. He emphasizes that teachers who are implementing a quality program are teaching in "need-satisfying ways." Each need and its components are identified below:

1. Love (belonging, friendship, caring, and involvement).
2. Power (importance, recognition, skill, and competence).
3. Fun (pleasure, enjoyment, learning, laughter).
4. Freedom (choice and independence).

From my observations, Tess' patience and the ability to use the control theory method worked remarkably well.

Students were involved in many aspects of Quality Schools' instruction during the first three weeks of school. They talked and participated in activities encompassing how to be quality students, conduct quality work and presentations, to be quality listeners, and quality cooperative group members. For example, Tess had students analyze how well they believed their basic needs were being met (love, power, freedom, and fun). Students

were asked to think about the people they know and the activities they encounter frequently, and listed these ideas in the appropriate quadrant of the need being met (see Appendix T). Students answered a list of provided questions (see Appendix U) to help determine if their needs were being met concerning their activities, themselves, or for the people in their lives. For instance, if a student thought of their best friend, students determined which needs were met by this person being a part of their life. For example, for the need of love, students answered the following questions as a guide:

- Do I feel a true sense of belonging and closeness?
- Does s/he care about me and what happens to me?
- Is s/he there in good time and in bad times?

If the students believed only one need was met, they listed their best friends name within that particular quadrant. Once they completed their list and filled in the quadrants, students had to examine all quadrants, asking, "Is there something in every quadrant? Do some quadrants list more than one person or activity? Students were then guided to think about new way to meet their needs -- new people and activities they might add to their quadrants (their lives) to make a better balance in meeting their needs.

Students learned to foster "quality" work and most importantly "quality" attitudes toward their classmates. When asked what it meant to be a quality student, one student replied. "It tells me that I need to not wait to the last minute and hurry up and get done. I've learned to take my time with it and do my best."

All students agreed that quality was important in their lives and in school, although at times, they admitted that quality was not always a part of their everyday thought process.

> I think it's good but sometimes I don't follow it when I'm with my friends and I talk. I think it is good she (the teacher) took the time to talk about it. She laid down the expectations, making it easier to know what you are expected to do. It makes you want to do better in what your really doing. Because if you get a B you want to get an A. You feel bad that you let yourself down and your teacher down. Mrs. Carpenter always reinforces us and when you mess up, you feel and is you disappoint her as well".

One student believed that his/her teachers had faith in the students as learners. "I like quality. They believe in us. They know we can listen, follow directions, and all of that. I think it's pretty good." Tess supported "quality" throughout the school year, modeling the concept throughout all content areas. During my interview conversations with the nine students, all students felt, in some way, that the quality school concept made them more conscious and aware of their work, producing quality oriented products.

Another point of concern for Tess was group work and social skills.

> Our focus, prepared for this summer, was citizenship and team working within groups. If these kids cannot get along with each other, how to work in a group, how to be empathetic and sympathetic to others, it would be impossible to teach them anything or expect them to effectively work in groups.

After observing her group activities, Tess resolved that the students did not possess the social skills necessary to work in larger groups (4 or 5 in a group); therefore, she decided to reduce the groups to teams consisting of two members.

> As far as what I'm doing differently than at the beginning of the year, I'm not doing as much small group instruction as I originally had planned to and even started with at the beginning of the year. I don't think it is good or healthy for the kids because there are too many different reading levels. As I'm planning, I believe instructionally I'm going to try working with a partner and adapting my novel group instruction to work for just 2 kids working together instead of four.

Planning/Pacing in the New Blocked Schedule

Having spoken to Tess during the spring of 1995, I found her at this time to be less calm and more anxious about successfully implementing and *planning* instruction in a block schedule. At the beginning of the 1995 school year, I perceived Tess to be confident and optimistic about switching to block scheduling.

Tess has a general scope of content she needed to address over a certain period of time. This was primarily based upon experiences from the past and administrative requirements such as the Literacy Passport Exam.

> I don't have lesson plan per lesson plan. I have an overall idea. I know what I want to work on for the first nine weeks and that's reading and writing because that's

> when the Literacy Passport comes up. And we'll get more into themes and that sort of thing as I get to know them better as writers.

Tess believed that it would be more difficult to plan for longer periods; however, she trusted her planning would improve as the school progressed. She was confident that the longer blocks of time allowed her to incorporate a variety of approaches and techniques in instruction. Tess introduced information, organized students in cooperative learning groups, conducted a discussion, and completed reading and writing assignments. I noticed that Tess would start with direct instruction and continue with cooperative learning, whole group discussion, or independent learning activities in a given day in no particular order. Because her instructional focus, at the beginning of the school year, was on improving student's reading and writing skills in preparation for the Literacy Passport Exam, she spent much time evaluating her instruction in relation to student performances. She was identifying the needs of the students determining what should be addressed within the classroom and adapted her strategies accordingly. For example, Tess has shifted from whole class instruction to individual and small group work.

> I'm not interested in a whole class assignment. My biggest concern during the first few weeks is to get these kids as far as they can individually in writing. I'm 100% for this longer time as far as that goes. I can introduce a mini lesson. They can actually work. I don't care if Tommy is doing one thing and Jenny is doing another thing.

The additional time that block scheduling provided helped Tess accomplish these goals. Tess has ample time to conduct writing conferences with each student, to determine the strategies that needed to be included within her instruction.

> I am getting to know the student as a person instead of just trying got cram a certain number of minutes of language arts. Also, back then I spent an awful lot of time with mechanics. I did not see that my kids were doing any better back then as they are doing now.

During planning, Tess was concerned about keeping a particular time schedule within the block and pacing the students through various activities. Factors such as the time of day, the classroom atmosphere, and students' needs influenced the frequencies and of the transitions. “My lesson plans do determine transitions and have to reflect the transitions, keeping in mind the dynamics of the class. It's almost as if I’m a new teacher trying to learn how to pace myself.” She was pleased with the way things were going, saying "I truly believe they're spending active time on an actual task." For example, Tess spent the first 20 minutes of the block describing the expository writing process through direct instruction. Students were then given 20 minutes to brainstorm ideas to write about. Thirty-five minutes of time was designated to begin the process of writing. The remaining 15 minutes was used for closure, reviewing the concept of expository writing and explanations for the next day.

The Process Approach to Writing

Block Scheduling provides the time periods required by process writing, a more in-depth aproach to learning how to write. Expository writing was completed by students during the fall months, followed by fantasy writing the second semester. Through expository writing, students begin to write and understand about themselves. For example, Tess believed that students would have an easier time seeing "bravery" within oneself during a reflection of a personal experience rather than finding this attribute in a story character. This type of personal description of oneself is utilized as a natural progression into units of fantasy writing (novels, biographies, and short stories). Students were required to complete an autobiography character development, believing that this natural progression made character development "much easier for them." This progression parallels Quality Schools by meeting student needs.

The components of the process approach were: 1) prewrite, 2) draft, 3) revise, 4) edit, and 5) final copy (see Appendix V). Time was allotted for the pre-write, allowing students to brainstorm, cluster, and list ideas. After the pre-write, students began their free-write, expanding from the brainstorm list.

Once students completed the final copy, which took several class periods, time was designated for cooperative group work. At this point, students conducted conferences with their peers, asking questions of one another's writing. This questioning technique prompted students to edit their writing, adding

details to their stories. Once the conferencing phase was completed, the students were instructed to reassemble to complete their writing assignments.

Tess had two types of journaling activities established for students, namely, dialog and partner journals. Tess had employed both of these learning tools in previous years. Dialog journals were written during the first semester of the school year, with the contents being discussed with Tess during designated teacher/student appointments. Partner journals occurred during the second semester, allowing students to converse with their peers.

In the past, Tess used the readings and assessment materials provided from two county-based curriculum textbooks as the basis for all of her instructional units. In the current year, Tess used the old curriculum-based textbooks as reference guides, for grammar support in student writing. Tess attributes the easy change in curriculum textbooks usage to her personal boredom and to the restructuring innovations. "I was so bored in previous years. You have to remember, I've been using them for approximately 10 years."

The instructional materials that she used were a conglomerate of resources obtained through personal discoveries based on the philosophy of making learning relevant to student's lives. For example, Tess would rather choose a well-written contemporary trade book such as "The Outsiders", which deals with gang issues because she believed that the students readily related to these concerns than simply using unrelated stories

compiled in McMillan’s (1985) Introducing Literature textbook. The next section explains in detail how Tess approached her thematic units in the current year as opposed to years past.

Thematic Units and Pedagogy

During my observations, during the Spring of 1996, Tess's instruction consisted of a series of instructional units. They were: 1) novels and character sketches, 2) biographies, 3) forensics/poetry, and 4) short stories/fantasy stories. Short stories and fantasy stories was added curriculum this year to assess students’ overall writing progress. Her main objectives within each of the other curricular units did not sway from those of the past.. In years past, Tess's writing instruction was influenced by the county-selected Language Arts textbooks. She maintained that focus; however, she expanded upon her instructional approaches by incorporating quality schools and Paideia to capitalize on the increased class time. In the discussion of each curricular unit, pedagogy and assessment will be compared from previous years to the current school year.

Novels/Character Sketches

Previous pedagogy. In previous years, a whole class novel was established -- meaning all students read the same novelette. All students read The Little Red Pony, an excerpt from Steinbeck's novel. The unit was completed in two weeks.

Tess's pedagogy consisted of preliminary teacher-directed discussion as a warm up activity into the novel reading, where she explained or asked questions about family problems to the class. Tess emphasized that there was “little student

interaction involved." The students had approximately 5-10 minutes of reading time during the 42-minute periods. All other reading was done at home. Groups were teacher assigned, with one high, one low, and two average ability levels. Tess was not particularly pleased with this manner of grouping.

> I have had so much experience with the cooperative learning. I've tried tracking. I've tried the high, the low, and the two average -- that was a big push in our county two years ago. I find it best to have them work with whom they want. Although I have to do some separating.

Cooperative groups were manipulated by Tess, including two high, two low, and two average reading levels. Tess became very uncomfortable with the group cohesiveness and positive interdependence.

> I was forcing kids to stay in their groups last year, making me and them feel uncomfortable -- there were some kids that just couldn't do it. I have learned to back off of that, If it doesn't work, They work alone. But I do not pull all of the work. I make it as difficult in the group as being out of the group. But it is not a punishment if they come out.

Tess attributes the change once again to Quality Schools training.

I asked Tess to describe a typical 42-minute class period during the novel unit. She outlined the class period as follows (see Figure 6).

9:00 am - 9:08 am	settle down time and role
9:08 am - 9:18 am	whole class discussion from
previous	night's reading
9:18 am - 9:37 am	complete job tasks
9:37 am - 9:42 am	reading time

Figure 6. Time format (9:00 to 9:42 am).

Tess stressed how little time was left in previous years for reading or time to write about their reading. "You're talking start-up and shut-down, clean up, and get ready. I could do very little writing about their reading last year." This time frame was similar in all of Tess's units with approximately 10 minutes to settle students, 10 minutes for class discussion, 15-20 minutes for individual and group tasks, and approximately 5-10 minutes for reading.

Similar activities were completed last year before blocking, with an exception of the helper role (these procedures are explained in the current pedagogical paragraphs). A recorder role was used instead. Lee briefly explains the process.

> I spent approximately 2 weeks on the novelette. When I say two weeks, that's 42 minutes doing the Red Pony. Some of the reading was assigned for homework. And then quickly went through it an that was it. I just touched on it. There was no comparing other families. Comparing and contrasting families. And absolutely no follow-up family novel from that.

Character development was minimally established. In previous years, character development was done primarily as whole class discussion, asking students questions such as "What was your character like in the beginning of the book? How did they change?" For example, if the class novel was Tom Sawyer, Tess may ask the students, "Why do you suppose Tom Sawyer said to Ben and his friends that white washing the fence was too big of a job for them to handle?" Through whole class instruction, the students realized that Tom is sneaky, that he is sly, that he’s deliberately trying to get out of the work himself. Tess asked students how characters "grow" and "change", believing that the word "develop" is difficult for middle schoolers to understand.

Previous assessment. Students were assessed solely on a teacher-made (objective/short answer questions) test pertaining to the novel (see Appendix W).

Present pedagogy/novel groups. While Tess's goal for the novel from last year and this year were basically similar, she added activities that would enhance students' creativity and critical thinking. In addition, she spent more time with formative evaluation sessions, something she had little time to accomplish in previous years.

Students were organized into novel groups according to the novel they selected. Tess assigned roles to cooperative group members entitled vocabulary enricher, discussion director, and helper, and included specific job requirements for each. The students were responsible for identifying new vocabulary and descriptive writing, developing questioning techniques cued from open-ended questions, and supporting and encouraging all

students within their designated roles, giving each of them the opportunity to experience the activities associated with the individual job requirements.

Students were assigned specific job roles/titles in their novel groups (see Appendix X). A rotation of jobs occurred weekly, allowing students to experience each job position. The jobs and descriptions are listed below:

Vocabulary enricher. Vocabulary enrichers were responsible for finding unfamiliar vocabulary terms within the novel reading (see Appendix Y). Their goal was to become familiar with the new terminology. The vocabulary enricher could determine the meaning of the terms by context clues, a dictionary, or by asking other group members. The word must be developed within a sentence, a sentence other than the novel's original. Five terms were required on Monday and Tuesday, ten in all. Wednesday was activity day, a day the vocabulary enrichers developed an activity used to teach the rest of the group the words and their usage. Most students came up with matching activities, games, and flashcards. On Thursday, vocabulary enrichers developed a quiz in any form they wished, such as fill-in-the-blank or creating sentences utilizing the words. Tess preapproved the quiz and made copies for distribution on Friday. The vocabulary enrichers were exempt from taking the quiz.

Language leader. The language leaders scanned the reading for descriptive writing (see Appendix Z). The writing could include a simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, or an onomatopoeia, all types of writing that Tess covers. Tess believed this is one of the tougher job roles for students,

requiring students to understand various writing techniques. Language leaders followed the same format as vocabulary enrichers using Monday and Tuesday for searching, Wednesday for an activity, and Thursday for designing the quiz.

Discussion director. Tess developed open-ended questions, containing context clues, to help foster students' ability to develop questioning techniques (see Appendix AA). Discussion directors completed the questions with information pertaining to their novels. The students had some flexibility, being able to rearrange the sentences to their liking. This is the second year Tess has used this technique, initially used in Social Studies the previous year. Tess was amazed with the results. "I'm still amazed at what the kids come up with. They are good critical thinking questions. It's a lot of work. They're really scrambling to meet their deadlines."

Students disclosed the questioning format encouraged them to become better "question makers", sparking their thinking process. The starter questions made the process "easier because it gives you context clues of what to look for."

Helper one and two. This job task changed from "recorder" the previous year. The helpers assisted the vocabulary enrichers, discussion directors, or the language leaders. Students informed Tess whom they were helping. Tess believed that this was a "weaker" group role assignment, lacking a specific task and responsibility for students. Tess is working on a change in this role assignment for next year.

Students seemed to favor job assignments that lacked heavy workloads, for example, the helper role. Discussion director and language leader were considered to be the most tasking roles

for students. The helper role required students to develop testing and reviews with group members. All in all, students felt important and responsible for their job roles. One student expressed in this fashion. "The job made me feel important. That you could do all that stuff by yourself." Students overwhelmingly enjoyed the novel process. "Oh, I like this much better than reading the green books and stuff - the literature books."

Most students agreed that working in cooperative groups was more enjoyable than working alone, depending on the task at hand and the members of the group. One student stated that cooperative groups enhance creativity. "I rely on them and if they don't know it then maybe another group member may know it. It helps you to develop more creative ideas."

Tess began her novel unit by talking through a Paideia session with the students. Paideia sessions are student-run. The students are given a topic and time to discuss the issues surrounding the topic. Since this class was inexperienced with the Paideia process, Tess developed a line a questions to help guide the students through the process. The questions were open-ended, carefully designed not to sway student opinions. For example, Tess may ask "Did you see any changes in the character?" instead of "How did the character change?"

Tess believed that Paideia provided two aspects of learning for students, creative thinking and the ability to acknowledge other people's ideas. This Paideia was based upon "choices". "Choice" is also a key component of Glasser's Quality school program.

The Paideia started out as an open discussion about the different types of family, asking "what is a family? or what constitutes a family?," using Paideia techniques developed earlier in the year, using The Little Red Hen, students brainstormed and came up with different variations of a family. The purpose was to reveal that a family is not always a "mom, dad, and 2.5 kids." Tess stressed that at this age, "they'll share very, very, easily without any shame." Students defined family and family choices, and discussed contemporary family problems, understanding that students normally cannot walk away from families as an adult could.

Students had mixed feelings about the process itself. This uncertainty was warranted by the difficulty level of the piece being used for the Paideia session. For example, during The Little Red Hen Paideia session, students started and maintained control of the process throughout the session, with little guidance from Tess. Students were familiar with this novelette from the previous year. Another Paideia occurred using the novelette, The Little Red Pony, continuing to support Tess's novel selections from the library, focusing upon families and family issues. The selections were chosen from all reading levels.

Tess designated approximately 30 minutes of class time, during two consecutive days, discussing themes and ability level of each novel selected. Groups were based upon novel selected by students. Students were not informed of novel groups until after novel selections occurred. Tess did not want students selecting novels based upon their friends' choice, fearing "they may pick a different level of what they are capable." Tess

reported that 95% of the students selected novels "according to their reading level." Discrepancies occurred most often with TAG students selecting below reading level material. If this occurred, Tess selected five novels with similar and appropriate reading levels, giving students an option of selecting one of the five. She used this procedure to try to maintain the Quality Schools' belief in student choice. When novel groups were established, I noted that groups were gender specific. I approached Tess with this observation.

> Yeah, it just happened. I did not say this is a boys' book or this is a girls' book. I said things like, if you like adventure, or if you like mystery, if you like a tear jerker, you know, those types of things. And the kids chose the novels.

Students and their choices was a focal point stressed at the beginning of the year during "quality" instruction. Students expressed that this was a positive attribute, allowing them to choose and not be forced to conform to using the same materials.

Tess designated 20-25 minutes of daily class time for novel reading. Reading was not assigned for homework unless reading goals were not attained. Reading goals were established together between Tess and the students. First, Tess had students become aware of total pages contained in their novels, informing them they had three weeks to complete their novel. Students then calculated the number of pages to be read daily, understanding their goal to complete the book on time. Tess informed students that reading not completed in class became their responsibility to complete at home. Students took

advantage of this time to read in class . . . "getting our reading done in class gives us more time to do stuff in the evening. To do things around the house."

Tess developed a process called "reading feats". This was a contract among students, parents/guardians, and the teacher, requiring students to read two hours at home weekly. They could read a variety of selections, including magazines, newspapers, or recipes. Tess explains the homework procedure. "I told them in class that their homework would be according to what they needed to do in order to be with the class. They could use their novel as their reading feats time if they chose too." A small percentage of students completed reading earlier than the three-week allotment. Tess dealt with this in the following manner.

> I said "you're still responsible for your job" but you may get a novel of your choice and during reading and writing time, you need to be writing in your dialog journal. And they did that. Now some kids read a lot at home while some didn't.

Tess had one group working with a book on tape. She had learned of this reading tool during staff development activities prior to this year. She described these students as being most disruptive or "cutting up" in class, having difficulty staying focused during individual reading time. Other students asked to join this group, escalating Tess's incentive to order more books-on-tape. "I just ordered $300 worth of books on tape because I want to use more of that. It is a very wonderful motivation for reading They all want the headset."

This is something new that, you can't relate it to the block but books on tape is a new tool that we're using because of our inservice from switching to the block. It's not something a regular classroom teacher is accustomed for using a lot. It's more of a special education technique.

Character sketches. During the fall semester, students had the opportunity to write about themselves during expository writing. This writing expanded upon, not so much about character development, but how they felt about themselves. It was an autobiographical character development. For example, "what are you thinking?", and "how are you feeling?." Tess believed that "character development should be much easier for them" by understanding themselves first, leading up to the understanding of characters from novels, creating biographies, and eventually developing fantasy stories. Again, Tess noted that increased time allowed for a more "natural progression" in writing, a process leading into character sketches.

Tess introduced character sketches at the conclusion of the novel unit. Students developed personality traits of the novel's main character, including their personality traits and appearance. This process influenced character development. If the novel included more than one main character, the student chose a character of preference. Tess used a T-chart, as a graphic organizer, for students to develop character sketches (see Appendix BB), fostering their ability to create an image and description of characters. On one side of the t-chart, the

students included the character’s likes and dislikes with personality and appearance traits being posted on the other side of the chart.

Students agreed that thinking about themselves helped to further understand the attributes of their characters in novels, biographies, self-portrait poems, etc.

> When I was writing my fantasy stories, I used the T-chart for my listing of my character’s personality and appearance. Because if I couldn’t find a good appearance for somebody, it was there to help. If I couldn’t think of a good word for describing myself or a character, for example using a plain old work like he was “nice”, I could look at my list and use a better word like he is “enthusiastic."

One student noted a sense of confusion thinking about himself and then trying to adapt this process to characters. Overall, students agreed it was an effective guide to character development.

Character sketches were formed at the conclusion of novels, presenting this information as a group presentation. During biographies, students capitalized on character development to present individual biographies.

This warm-up activity was a natural progression from the novel section into the biography unit, utilizing the character sketches as a tool for character development in creative writing. Tess felt this was a key prerequisite before continuing with biographies. "By the time they get to biographies, they really have to infer personalities because

it’s harder from a non-fiction to a fictional book." The extra time afforded with the block scheduling allowed students the time they needed for deeper comprehension.

Present assessment. *******

Tess's perception. The writing from novel groups was used to progress into the poetry unit, fostering students' figurative language awareness and usage (metaphors, similes, etc.). On occasion, Tess had students record their thoughts on paper, including their perceptions of group and individual efforts. Students also participated in self-assessment. Tess kept a narrative on each student, rather than a running grade average.

> Sometimes I make notes from what I got from them and sometimes I read them and trash them. Sometimes I write back. Now when they did their grades the other day (Tess is talking about giving them the opportunity to write what they believed their grade was for this grading period) I wrote them all back. And you probably should make a note of it wherever you want it in assessment, almost, I would guess 95% of them hit it right on the head exactly what they are receiving, from the D's to the A's. It's incredible.

Tess subjectively assessed groups, recording group and quiz grades in a notebook, basing summative evaluation on quality work including concept understanding, process skills, and communication skills, and creativity and knowledge of the subject. No formal rubric used for assessment. On a weekly basis, Tess distributed group grades. "What I would do is on Monday, I would go to each group while they were working, giving

them a grade from the week before. I would give them an individual and a group grade." Students believed that “quality” was the major expectation from them in assessment.

Questions developed by the vocabulary enricher, language leader, and the discussion director were used as the basis of their objective tests. Tess also questioned students in each group. For example, she asked "Did you do your job?", or "Were you a cooperative group member?", in order to get a better understanding of their perception of progress and self-evaluation.

Tess stated that there is a social and academic intent when doing novel groups. The social is "group cooperation, getting along, listening to others opinion, and leadership qualities." The academic is "reading comprehension, critical thinking, and creativity." Once the novel section was complete, Tess had students use selective pieces of writing, found by the language leaders, as part of their next writing assignment in biographies.

Students' perception. A team, daily record evaluation form was used during novel groups this year (see Appendix CC). This group evaluation was a technique Tess adapted from her Social Studies class taught the previous year for projects, but this was the first time she used it as a self-evaluation guide. The self-evaluation guide was new to Language Arts this year.

Students used "quality" as a guide in self-assessment based on their perception of how their end-products compared with the guidelines and expectations outlined by Tess. The students' projects were evaluated according to their efforts, their use of available resources, their presentations, and when applicable,

group participation. A daily grade was recorded by students. They tallied points on Fridays, producing self and group grades. Most students awarded themselves higher points during the first week's review -- hoping their grade would count as their final grade. After reviewing their grades with Tess, groups immediately realized their self assessment had to be an honest assessment of their progress. Discrepancies were discussed, providing expectations, understanding, and a final grade. I asked the students if they or other group members altered grades to benefit them individually or for the group. One replied as follows:

> Sometimes I thought some students cheated a lot. They thought if they didn't put the best grade, they would get a low grade on their report card, or that the group was going to get divided up or something. I told them that it wouldn't hurt anything as long as they just put what they really thought.

Students favored the opportunity to express their current assessment standing from their viewpoint, making them “responsible” and cognizant of their progress. “We could review over what we did and how good we think we did it -- I think it was real good.” Another student agreed. "I think it is a good idea. It gives us a chance to tell her what we thought we deserved and how far we had done work." Student responsibility is also a key component of Glasser’s Quality Schools management model.

Biographies

Previous pedagogy. The biography unit was not covered in previous years. Instead, students read three non-fiction readings from McMillan's book (see Appendix DD), a County-adopted curriculum selection Tess used for approximately eight years. Tess spent approximately two weeks on the non-fiction unit. Students had classroom time to read the selections, completing the rest as homework. Tess reported that approximately 50% of the students did not read at home and came to class unprepared. Tess describes her intent for the former unit.

> It was for them to experience reading non-fiction. They answered the questions at the end of the story. Your old teacher/text. Students were responsible for the discussion questions. The whole bit. It’s very traditional. The old read the story answer the questions at the end.

Previous assessment. Groups were established for students to answer the interpretive and recall chapter questions, part of their assessment for non-fiction (see Appendix EE). They submitted the questions to Tess followed by whole class discussion. Tess utilized questions established from the teacher's manual. Students were also assessed by unit tests, including 80% true and false and fill-in-the-blank, and 20% short discussion questions. Again, these questions were compiled from teacher manuals.

Present biography pedagogy. Within this new unit, students were responsible to "choose" a biography based on their own interests. Tess selected approximately 80 biographies from the

school's library. Tess had the selections available on several pushcarts within her classroom. From their previous development of character traits, student were required to present to their peers the overall, fundamental facts of their selected biographies via a presentation (used for assessment).

The selections included various reading levels and content. For example, students could choose a biography about Ely Whitney, Spike Lee, Hank Aaron or Jane Goodall, to name a few. If Tess's biography collection did not suffice a student's preference, they had the opportunity to pursue different selections from either the school or public library with permission. Students enjoyed the freedom to select their biographies. "It was nice not having someone telling you what to read."

Tess required approximately 15 TAG and HAL (High Language Arts) students to gather supplemental research, supporting either a biography selection or a student-selected topic. Students had specific questions they had to answer (questions unavailable) and 17 different topics to select from. Some examples include dance, famous outlaws, famous buildings, and Greek myths. Tess approved student selected topics. Computer software, available in the sixth-grade technology center, was one source of data. Tess provided classroom time for students to accomplish such a requirement.

Students had approximately 20 minutes per class set-aside for silent reading. Once the biographies were completed, students had the option of presenting oral or written representations of their biographies. Tess did not want to force students to do one over the other, but rather to have a

choice. For oral presentation, students could utilize notes and any necessary props to help portray their story. They were required to present for 1 - 2 minutes. Two written pages were necessary for the written biographies to be read to their classmates. Despite these requirements, all students ultimately read their writing, even if they submitted to present orally. Surprisingly to Tess, all students produced a written piece as well as an oral presentation.

> What I was finding is that all of them ended up doing kind of the same thing. I didn't realize that this was going to happen so it kind of evolved naturally. They all ended up presenting and they all ended up turning in the written. When I first started out I gave them the option, because I wasn't going to force anybody. Then it ended up them all telling it.

Students primarily read their presentations from their written text or notes. At times, the student audience seemed restless and uninterested. Tess admitted that she herself was getting bored.

> Well, we were getting bored. They were getting confused and I was getting bored and the class was getting bored. And so me doing something different for the first time, it just evolved naturally. I personally believe if I'm bored they must be bored totally out of their gourds. And if you're bored you figure they must be bored too.

After several presentations, I mentioned to Tess that students seemed to respond, with confidence, to questions asked by her periodically throughout the presentations. The monotony of the students' presentation was interrupted during these

question and answer moments. Tess began to see a change in their demeanor while presenting, with students showing signs of relaxation and effective communication of knowledge.

At this point, students were no longer permitted to rely on written work during their presentations. Tess provided prompts for students to respond to throughout the process. The class seemed to respond positively to this change. At times, students projected their own questions to their peers, revealing an interest in the presentation.

Students maintained the idea of “quality” when presenting their information to their peers. They were instructed to be organized, to speak clearly and distinctly, stay focused on their audience. “Thinking about quality teaches you to control yourself, because you can’t laugh or you’re not supposed to laugh during these things."

At the conclusions of student presentations, Tess asked students questions such as, "What was quality about your presentations?, What could you have done better?" Students readily became aware of their responsibility and expectations of final work, enhancing their accountability. Tess had not done this type of questioning in the past. When asked why the change this year, she had this to say.

> I’ve never done this before. It was my Quality School training. "Self-evaluation", because I have to do this type of thing when I’m in training. Because we have to get up and present in class. I’ve been doing this for two years. It’s part of the Glasser model. That’s the Glasser

> model. The resubmission, the self-evaluation, all that I’ve used is based upon the Glasser Quality School Model as a guide.

This questioning technique was a constant reminder to students about “quality”, maintaining a level of accountability. A student shared, “Knowing that Mrs. Carpenter is going to ask questions about what you can do better makes you want to get it done right the first time so you don’t have to tell anything.”

Present assessment.

Tess's perception. Grades were established through student's individual and group processes as well as final presentations. The criteria included concept understanding, process skills, and communication skills. I asked Tess what specifically she is observing when assessing presentations.

> More understanding of the character. I guess basically I’m looking for the same thing in a different way. Not only the reading comprehension which is always one of the main things that they’re understanding and they’re reading. That they could read more technical non-fiction stuff instead of just stories all of the time. I guess the objectives have not changed but the method of getting there has. The students are actually presenting the information that they are learning. There is more internalization. The means to the ends are different.

Tess reported that students retained more information when given the chance to research and report their findings rather than objective assessment.

> I am finding that they are reading more and know more than when I was doing -- "you will have a test on such and such." Which I'm now finding this out from their presentations. Instead of the old pencil/paper tests.

Resubmission is also a new aspect of Tess's instructional procedures in the block schedule, an element taken from Quality Schools. Tess understands that many outside factors are involved in her student's lives, factors many times affecting their educational responsibilities. Resubmission is an option occasionally provided to students, allowing them to polish work and resubmit without grade penalties. Tess said, "before, it was a one shot deal, here’s your test, and that was it." Tess also stated that if some students had too many low tests scores in the past, on occasion, she would allow them to retake an exam, a parallel somewhat to resubmission.

Tess also gives the students the ability to "pass" on presentation day, allowing flexibility in their schedule, keeping in mind that social factors occurring within their lives may hinder student work occasionally. For example, if Tess calls upon a particular student to present their presentation on Monday, they have the option to pass their turn until the following day. Students were given one opportunity to pass. One student expresses a positive attitude about passing.

> Some days you don't feel like getting up in front of the class or present your project because your just not ready. The opportunity to pass may be on a day that you are not up to it.

Student's perception. Several of the students believed that the tests this year seemed to be easier than in the past. They didn't attribute this to the teacher lessening the content of the exam but to the increased time in classes. "It's not the teachers. They are the same tests, it's just that you have more time to study and have help to study." Students were not assessed through formal testing procedures in Language Arts class. They were evaluated according to their writing skills, presentations, group work, and individual work. Not having to study for "paper and pencil" tests seem to make the students feel more at ease. One student indicated an increase in grades this year. The student attributed higher grades to the increase in time.

> You have longer to do your work and you can ask the same teacher more questions about your help. Because sometimes when you take it home, you don't have the help that you have when you are in school from your teacher.

I asked the students if they understood how they were being assessed in Language Arts since formal assessment was not being used. Most students expressed that it was the quality of their work that determined their grade. For example, one student felt that the following were quality features in a presentation, determining their grade: "1) Reading from your paper instead of looking at the class, 2) Not being organized, and 3) You don't know your material, you're just skipping around."

Students expressed resubmission as a positive aspect. It gives them the opportunity to polish areas that may have been lacking in the original form.

> I think that it is wonderful because it gives you time to do better than the first time. If you didn't understand it, you can get help and understand it better the second time. That helps me out. That's a good thing because you can't have good days everyday.

Resubmission is not always an option for student work. Most students agreed that they intend for their initial work to reflect quality attributes because they were unsure of when they would have the option to resubmit. At the conclusion of a presentation, Tess would ask the students "What do you think could have been better?" Students' responses to this question were the basis for adjustments needed when using a resubmission -- a guide to "quality" revisions. "The questions from the teacher gives you a chance to think about what you need to do, what you need to work on, and the ability to prove yourself if you don't do a good job the first time." One student acknowledged that resubmission eased some pressure when dealing with expectations after school and from home. "It gets a little tougher when you have after school activities and your parents are working swing shifts and stuff. It's hard to deal with all of that. But it's nice to know you have the opportunity to resubmit." Many students opted to resubmit even if they believed their first attempt was "quality". "Sometimes I resubmit anyway just to make sure."

Forensics/Poetry

Previous forensics pedagogy. Tess required all students to participate in forensics in previous years. Tess did not consider Forensics as a unit but included the components of

forensics within the Poetry unit. Those components were: prose, speech, extemporaneous, dramatic and humorous interpretation, and story telling. For explanations of each component and guidelines used for forensics competition, see (Appendix FF). Tess taught social studies in previous years and included speeches and extemporaneous in that course.

Tess approached forensics by introducing each component, at various times, throughout the poetry unit. She only had enough time to talk about the components and model it, and at the same time presented poetry.

Previous forensics assessment. Students read specific pieces of writing pertaining to forensics from their classroom textbook (see Appendix GG). Tess used the objective questions at the end of the reading for assessment purposes (see Appendix HH).

All students were required to present a component of forensic in front of the class as the method of assessment for Tess. The students had the option to participate in forensics competition held at Turner Valley. Assessment was subjective, focusing for eye contact, organization, delivery, and quality of information.

Current forensics pedagogy. During the 1995 summer staff development, the teachers agreed on a more "natural blending" of the curriculum, emphasizing Quality Schools, self-evaluation, and presentation skills as essential components of instruction. This year, Tess included Forensics as part of the poetry unit, with poetry being one of the components of Forensics. From this “natural” blending, Tess taught poetry and forensics as a simultaneous unit, unifying the two curriculums.

Tess also stressed that teacher "boredom" initiated her need to change the poetry unit, sensing similar feelings from her students. "Now this decision to change was probably because the teacher was bored. If she's bored, therefore the children have to be." Teacher and student boredom prompted Tess to adjust pedagogical and learning approaches in her classroom.

This year, Tess had time to introduce a forensics component on a daily basis, model them, and still have time for students to practice. Tess did not force students to present one of the components stating that "they didn't enjoy it because not all kids are comfortable with that but yet, at the same time, they need to be exposed." Again, Tess gave the students the option to compete.

Tess also had the Turner Valley High School forensics team visit and perform each of the components of forensics to both the sixth and seventh-grade classes. Tess believed exposing the sixth grade students may help increase their comfort level and possible encourage them to participate in competition. Competition is held for a one week period during the school day. Teacher volunteer to help judge the competition during their preparation time. Tess opted to have the high school students perform in the classroom instead of having her students perform.

Tess believed that "quality" was added to the forensics unit this year through modeling and student choice. Tess stated that the intent and objectives remained the same as in previous years.

> I was able to get the kids more actively involved as far as getting more comfortable with being dramatic in front of a group. I did not do that last year. They were required to

get up and read or perform one of the categories and I didn’t do any exercises to prepare them for what it is like getting up in front of a group.

Current forensics assessment. Tess did not formally assess her students in forensics but gave extra credit to those performing in competition.

Previous poetry pedagogy. She believed her students lacked enthusiasm with the poetry selections she used in the past. "Kids did not get excited about any of the poetry in this book. Instead of going back to what had been our county selection, I just went off of the book so to speak, searching for new materials during the summer training months to prepare for the current year." She credits her Quality Schools training and the blocked time as key components of moving away from the county selected materials and instructional strategies.

Tess taught forensics and poetry as separate units as opposed to a more simultaneous approach used this year. In the past, Tess started the poetry unit with students working on a poetry anthology, introducing them to the rhyme of language (see Appendix II). A skills review (see Appendix JJ), in the Literature Review book, was the emphasis of the poetry unit. The elements of the poetry unit included similes, metaphors, limericks, concrete poetry, and narratives.

Students worked with partners during the simile, metaphor, and limerick sections. Concrete examples of poetry from the literature book were used as whole class instruction and discussion (see Appendix KK). Recall, interpreting and extending questions, at the end of each poetry sample was used

as an oral assessment tool (see Appendix LL). At times, students wrote in their partner journals, responding to the questions.

Students read, out loud, in a round-robin fashion, Highway Men, for exposure to narrative poetry. Highway Men is a history piece and Tess used this example to show students they could learn from poetry.

Previous assessment. Once the poetry unit was complete, students were required to individually write a poetry anthology, including a simile, a metaphor, a limerick, and concrete poem. The anthology was a used in a summative assessment by Tess, looking for similes, metaphors, and limericks. Tess did not allow students to resubmit work. "They did not get a chance to resubmit. If it wasn't right, it wasn't right, and they were marked down and I moved on." Tess expressed that student interaction was minimal.

Tess became aware of the sixth grade teachers introducing poetry in a similar fashion, despite it being part of the seventh grade county curriculum. Tess believed that this occurred from the lack of effective communication and a loosely-based constructed curriculum. "There is not enough communication between the grade levels or enough differentiation in our county curriculum. I found out quite accidentally that they were do a poetry anthology and I had done that up until this year." Tess decided not to make an issue of the overlapping curriculum and focused on a new approach to poetry.

Present poetry pedagogy. During the poetry unit, students were assigned another Paideia session using a Tracy Chapman music selection (see Appendix MM), requiring them to discuss the

artist's viewpoint of the word usage. Students revealed the wording of the song was difficult to decipher. One student implied two reasons for the Chapman Paideia failing. "We really didn't know what she (Chapman) was talking about in the lyrics and most students just didn't seem to want to talk that day." Overall, students enjoyed the process.

> I enjoyed the ability to share feelings about certain topics like what was on the songs and all the stories. I think it was fun since you were able to talk about what's on your mind, expressing your feelings and tell everyone what you thought about what it was we were talking about, the topic. I think is was one of the best things we ever did in there.

All students agreed that the process made them "think", "defending" their responses to the class. "I guess it's a way of showing us that we can be given responsibility to control an activity. We don't need people all of the time, being able to handle some our learning ourselves." This year, Tess started the poetry unit with music. Students selected one of their favorite songs as an out-of-class assignment. This idea stemmed from limericks, a poetry component used in previous years that incorporates the idea of rhythm. The objective was to show that poetry does not have to rhyme.

Tess felt using song lyrics was the "bait" so to speak "the worm on the hook" to heighten student interest with poetry. Students were reminded to keep quality in mind when making their choice of lyrics. They were required to bring in their selection, as well as a hard copy of the lyrics. The adoption of lyrics into poetry stemmed from professional journal

readings; namely, The Middle School Journal. Tess believed the change in the poetry approach was positive. "I think there's a lot of potential to using songs once I get more, find more materials, you know, I'll get better at it myself."

Student choice once again granted students freedom to reveal their interests, constantly providing a more cohesive environment of understanding differences and similarities of their peers. This process helped students developed a "deeper" comprehension of their piece of music.

> I thought it was really neat. It was a good experience I guess. Well, other than hearing the music, it helped you understand what the words meant. What the lyricists and all of them were trying to say.

Students agreed that music increased their interest in poetry, stating that reading poetry from the literature books in the past was "boring". "I listen to country and rap and rock-n-roll sometimes, but I just thought music was just song lyrics and not no poetry stuff." This heightened interest prompted student appeal in other poetry sections. "It kind of showed you that poetry doesn't have to be in a book, it could be anywhere if you look for it."

Once the lyrical component of poetry was completed, Tess required students to list, in five words or less, what poetry meant to them, such as feeling, sensitivity, beautiful, or emotions. "Rhyme" could not be utilized in their description. Tess used this anticipatory set to lead into exposure to many types of poetry, lacking a rhythmic pattern. Examples used were poems written by High School students (see Appendix NN).

Students agreed that seeing other student's work helped them to relate and develop their own sense of approach to poetry writing.

> Yes, it told about the lifestyles about people and some of them were about you -- you could use some of the ideas from theirs -- the same things. I mostly wrote on my own but the examples gave me an idea of what I could do with mine.

Tess used these steps to prepare her students to develop a self-portrait poem, requiring the usage of similes and metaphors -- elements part of the previous novel group unit. Two selections, Sometimes and Life Behind a Face, were models of rhythmic patterns containing similes and metaphors (see Appendix OO). I was trying to have students build on previous knowledge during the second semester. So much in the past we just do a unit, forget it, do a unit, forget it. And I'm trying to figure out a way -- so they started in the year writing about themselves and then going into the creative writing. I think I will stick with that. I was trying to do what we call, map the curriculum. To make the connections. So they could build upon prior knowledge.

Tess reported that the success of the self-portrait poems is due most in part to the connections that the students are seeing in their learning. "I think that is why the self portrait poems were so good. They just blew me away. I was just so tickled with some of the stuff."

Tess believed that her intent remained the same in all of the units, including poetry, with additional materials adopted into her pedagogical approach.

> I think the basic intent was still there but I think I took them to, well on my way, I haven't reached by any means, to show them how much deeper poetry can get. How you could express yourself and that's why I had them do their self-portrait poems. That um, you know my not can say, just standing up in front of a group and speaking but through song, which is a form a poetry that powerful messages come across. That you could be political. You know and I need to get deeper into that.

Present assessment. Students answered questions relating to the poems as a pre-writing technique in preparation and completion for the self-portrait assignment, continuing a "smoothness" to her instructional approach (see Appendix PP). The completed poems were printed or typed on posters created by the students (see Appendix QQ). The self-portrait poems were used for student assessment requiring the usage of similes and metaphors.

Short Stories/Fantasy Stories

Previous pedagogy. The Short Stories unit was not a part of Tess's curriculum in previous years. She expressed the intent of short stories as a way of assessing the process of student's writing over the course of the year. "I just chose to . . .it was a way to assess -- me checking to see if they had grown as writers with elaboration." Tess did not grade the short stories. "I didn't put out any guidelines. And, see, they are technically not graded. The purpose of the assessment for me for them so that I could see who needs what." Tess ended the previous school years with the poetry unit and an annual team play production. School grades were due two and one-half

week prior to the end of the semester. Tess uses the play as an end of the year production for team cohesiveness and partially to keep the interest of students during this time of the year.

Present pedagogy. The objective in the short stories unit was to pull all of the elements of Literature together (plot, setting, character, climax, and resolution). As a "warm-up", Tess reviewed the literature piece All Summer and a Day, a selection used as a Paideia session during the Fall term (see Appendix RR). Tess used this already familiar piece for students to find the elements of literature.

Next, students read a science-fiction selection Jackie and the Bean Futures as a model of fantasy (see Appendix SS). Tess selected this science-fiction reading as exposure to what the students would encounter in the eighth-grade Language Arts curriculum, continuing to provide connections and flow in their learning.

Tess introduced the basic idea of plot through the use of nursery rhymes delineating a lack of plot, revealing very little about the setting and the characters (see Appendix TT). Nursery rhymes are very concrete examples. For instance, with the nursery rhyme Jack and Jill, the reading does not know what the characters are like, where they live, etc. Tess used this premise to help students write their own short stories, expanding upon the concrete nursery rhymes. She believed that seventh-graders are unable to write original short stories but need the connection from familiar readings.

Each student, along with a partner, chose a familiar nursery rhyme, such as Humpty Dumpty, or Jack and the Bean

Stalk, adding elaboration to the setting and character traits (see Appendix UU). Tess used student interviews and monitoring to understand the contribution of group members to the story.

> I can tell with interviewing the kids and talking to the kids and watching the kids, I know who . . . and they really are, they really were both working. Now I do know that one kid at times did all of the illustrations but that didn't bother me. It was mainly an assessment, it was two-fold -- to have them do something enjoyable toward the end of the year that I could assess what I've done for the year.

Illustrations of the story was an option for students to add. Once again, students appreciated the ability to expand upon an already familiar piece of work. "I like it because we get to see example of how to start it off and what to pick."

Present assessment. Tess wanted to see if the students were able to pull the elements together from their prior knowledge throughout the year, including plot, setting, character, climax, and resolution (see Appendix VV).

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

To fully appreciate and profit from the understandings derived from the occurrences of the restructuring process, it is important to recap the events of the restructuring efforts over the entire eight-year period. During the ethnography study, observations were conducted of the restructuring committee meetings as well as interviews with staff members during Phase III of the process at Turner Valley Middle School. This process yielded information relating to the origin of the reform to the time of the observations. Those individuals who were not members of the committee revealed their viewpoints concerning the development of the restructuring. There were those who felt that the individuals who were selected to be committee members were hand selected by administrators, even though the process was considered voluntary. These individuals hinted that the selected individuals were in some ways forced to participate, fearing job security.

Those individuals who were on the committee responded differently. They spoke more in favor of the process; given the opportunity to research and share information, and participate in decision making; they felt ownership. They were assigned responsibilities which aided in determining the direction that they would follow. The responsibilities included conducted

surveys of the staff, researching classroom management models, studied middle school philosophy, and studied curricular and instructional issues. They were responsible for organizing and developed staff development for the staff. A lead teacher, Tess Carpenter, emerged as a prime candidate for gaining profitable information regarding this process.

In the pilot study, instructional practices within a block scheduling format was the focus. Observations of Tess's classroom at the initial phase of her implementation of this schedule were conducted. Data from this study indicated that there were other issues that influenced her instructional practices besides block scheduling. These issues centered around modification in classroom management and staff development. The appearance of these issues inspired the need for further study.

In the final phase of this study, the influence of the schedule, classroom management, and staff development training on Tess's instructional practices was analyzed. Secondary participants were also interviewed during this stage. The primary focus was to gain insight concerning their views of the state of the restructuring processes. Much was learned from all three studies which correlated with information discussed by leading researchers. This discussion will begin with Tess's experiences as they relate to the research which follows. It will end with a discussion of my experiences and the impact that this research had on me.

About Tess

To answer the question concerning how this classroom teacher adjusted instructional practices during district reform efforts, many factors have to be considered. The implications for this study suggest that success in reform depends greatly upon the approaches used in decision making, the level of teacher preparation and ownership, and the perspectives of all individuals involved. The results of this study suggest that this teachers' success occurred as a result of the school division's posture toward restructuring and the teacher's level of readiness and intense personal desire for change. The restructuring efforts were a catalytic effect, giving Tess the opportunity and permission to change.

Tess explained to me that boredom, quality schools, student needs, and the restructuring efforts played an important role in her changes. With this in mind, her "lens" shifted to focus on how she could address these issues, in a way that would accommodate the needs of her students.

Fullan (1982) emphasizes that for any school reform to be successful, an understanding of the difference between change as an event, and change as a process is necessary. He explains that change occurs gradually. It does not occur in a vacuum, it involves the entire school community. Furthermore, Fullan (1982), emphasizes the teacher's involvement in the process of

change, explaining that an understanding of the needs of the students, their interests, learning outcomes, the teachers' efforts and abilities is essential to changing instruction.

As a restructuring committee member, Tess was an integral part in the decision making process. She, along with fourteen other teachers, had the extensive Quality School's training. She felt very connected with the processes of this reform, having had a long period of time to reflect as well as provide input.

Several weeks into the second phase of this research study, I became aware, through interviews and observations, that Tess was employing many more instructional and learning strategies than in previous school years. For example, Tess was no longer using texts and materials that she had during her 11 years of teaching. This heightened my curiosity of how one teacher could go through such a transformation and evolution across the year. Her pedagogy and management techniques shifted to benefit all students through enrichment and active learning strategies. I told Tess that she reminded me of a caterpillar forming a cocoon and then into a butterfly; a new form of being so to speak. She felt it wasn't that dramatic of a change.

> But it isn't that dramatic. Because I still had the humor and I still had the relationships with the kids so the basic person hasn't changed but it has allowed me to take those risks. There is no doubt about that. I can't separate those two. It is the first time you've asked me

> that and I've never really thought about it. I am answering it as honestly as I can. The self-doubts about myself are gone. You are really getting into me more as a person.

To meet these needs effectively, Fullan (1993) believes that teachers must strike a medium between "moral purpose" and "skills of change agentry." He provides four "core capacities" or skills which are necessary for molding teachers into effective change agents. They are: shared vision-building, inquiry, mastery, and collaboration. These core capacities are used below to frame and summarize the changes I observed in Tess over the year.

In *shared vision building*, the teacher searches within to delineate personal reasons for desiring change. During this phase, the teacher establishes meaning for the mission at hand. Tess, herself, had a vision of how she wanted her classroom to be. Tess's major goal as a teacher was to mold her students into caring, productive citizens, giving something back to their community. Tess states, "To use something as concrete as being able to be computer literate without a sense of mankind. What good is it?"

Tess also believed that without student relationships and a caring nurturing environment, her classroom was not conducive to learning. "No matter how strong your curriculum is, I truly don't believe learning in its best form will take place. With active learning and the nurturing environment, they can choose to go as far as they choose to go."

Within her Language Arts' content, Tess's goal was for her students to communicate as effectively as they could orally and in writing as well as to enhance their comprehension of literature. Tess wanted her students to "learn and grow from characters in their novels. I wanted them to be thinkers and problem solvers."

Boredom was a another key factor verifying the need for Tess to change. She became bored with the repetition of years past, using the same materials and finding little connection to student's learning. Tess also believed that the students played an important role in her need to make adjustments from passive to active learning.

> I knew within myself, my principal knew it, and obviously the guidance counselors did too, that I did not have management problems. And it was not a big thing up until the last 4 or five years when we started seeing a difference in the types of clients that were coming to schools. And as society changed, the kids started changing and the management problems were getting stronger, and stronger, and stronger. I taught the way I was taught too. But I noticed that kids were changing. They were more active. They weren't sitting still and listening.

In *practices of inquiry*, the teacher revisits the personal ramifications, reinforcing them by incorporating information and ideas from other sources, ultimately leading to personal growth. Tess made major adjustments to pedagogical practices through research and training to accomplish the visions she had as a teacher. Reading professional journals during the restructuring phase, such as *The Middle Schooler*, gave Tess new ideas and

strategies to adopt in her classroom. This knowledge helped accommodate students' needs by allowing more individualization in students' assignments.

During the onset of establishing Glasser's model (1992) in the Turner Valley school, the faculty read about the model. Once a week, at a designated time and place at the school, the teachers answered questions affiliated with the reading provided by Glasser's Institute. Tess felt that this self-paced, "teach-yourself" approach to understanding the model was ineffective. Tess then attended four sessions of Quality Schools training at Glasser's institute. Forty teachers attended one session of training while only 14 continued through advanced training, including Tess. She found this much more satisfying.

As she proceeded with her Quality School training, she found that her life-long convictions were starting to make more sense. She saw this model as having the potential to fill voids she believed to exist within her instructional program. "I think the Quality Schools came along at a time when I was starting to question."

In *mastery*, the teacher develops their expertise through various learning experiences. These experiences enhance the teacher's ability to successfully accomplish the skills required and open mind to diverse opinions. Tess began to sharpen her knowledge of the Quality Schools training as she transferred the theory into practice.

> And we learned in the classes if you don't talk the word quality and talk about it, it doesn't become an integral part. You know, when you first learn a new philosophy or take on a new concept, your thinking, you have to actively

> think about it before you could ever verbalize it. But I had to internalize it and roll it around in my head and kind of like tasting wine, you have to roll it around in your mouth a little bit, take a few sips, you know that kind of thing. And the more training I had, the more excited I got about it.

As Tess incorporated more student choice, a key quality school element, a more relaxed classroom learning environment was created. Students worked on project ideas and reading that interested them. This promoted student ownership and group cohesion. According to Fullan (1993), all of these skills are interdependent with each skill reinforcing and strengthening the other.

Tess reported that she often felt as if she had "walked the beat of a different drummer" at Turner Valley Middle School. Her strength had always been the ability to establish relationships with her students, but at the same time has been embarrassed due to colleagues teasing of such relationships. Tess perceived others of thinking of her as "the flaky language arts teacher or that Tess was as big a kid as her students." Tess hung onto this belief of relationships after a report on her test scores.

> Well, when the test scores were being looked at and my test scores were really good, hey, there is something to this, and the Quality Schools brought along this relationship stuff. So it like validated the basis of which I taught and allowed me to go further with it and be able to be

> proud of it and find more to add to it instead of just kind of staying back. Instead of being embarrassed about it, I'm proud of it.

I wondered if these were timely events in Tess's career. That is, "Did Tess need changes?" Could it have been a timely event with the schedule or was the schedule a catalyst? Tess worked with the same materials for 10 years and suddenly abandoned most of the materials.

> The timing of the change benefited me as a professional. You see I haven't actual thought about that, Dale. But it's got to be because why else would I have gotten so excited about it. I still can't help to go back to the fact that it was more of a validation of who I am as a person. I was trying to be the square peg in a round hole.

Tess believes that the quality aspect of her instruction and learning techniques would have remained the same without the schedule change. Without actually experiencing the 42-minute period and quality schools, she speculates the abandoning of content would have occurred. "The time would not have allowed for such diversity and active learning without sacrificing content."

And finally, Tess admits that she never felt the classes were too long but had days of uncertainty of instructional practices.

> No, it was never too long. Yeah, and I always thought, god, you've wanted this time and you've read that this is good for kids and they will get to work in groups and I'll get to do this. I could use more time. The flow was a lot better by the end of the year for me. I need to do more

> self-evaluation, developing a form. I won't promise but maybe work on a rubric (laughter). I don't know, Dale. I just don't know at this point. I'm just kind of tired from the year.

The nurturing, caring environment was always apart of Tess's classroom, but active learning was not. It was the Quality Schools training that confirmed her suspected beliefs of the students partaking in active learning. It was the missing link that Tess was looking for to facilitate her metamorphosis to become a more student-centered classroom teacher. The block scheduling daily format enable her to test out her conjectures, belief and hopes. But it was her own stance as an educator that made change possible.

<u>Global restructuring and change itself</u>

Cuban (1998) refers to administrators and policy makers as "closet historians", meaning "they have a picture in their heads of the past an interpretation that form the basis in creating a better present." He says that most school reforms today are rushed to judgment. The policy makers envision ideal solutions and move quickly to support their implementation.

According to Sarason (1994), there is no need for policy makers to make a "hard sell" for educational reform. Most teachers acknowledge the need for improvement within school settings. Sarason (1994) states that although most policy makers are sincere in their commitment to change, they do not

have the “experienced” knowledge. Hargreaves (1994) in a similar context states that too often the earnest intentions of administrators and policy makers are stifled by restrictive policies and guidelines. Therefore the teachers are not supported in their efforts to change, rather they are discouraged and sometimes shattered.

Futrell (1995) stresses that the success of any reform effort relies upon empowering teachers as agents of change. After all, teachers understand the needs of their schools, the needs of their students, in collaboration with an awareness of their own personal strengths and weaknesses. Tess’s involvement as a stakeholder in the restructuring efforts was substantiated in the modifications she implemented within her classroom. Hammond (1992), also stresses the importance of teacher input in reform efforts. She implies that teachers roles in reform are quite complex in that they must be able to diagnose students’ needs and devise strategies for meeting the needs.

According to Hammond (1990), the complexity of teachers’ role in restructuring requires that more attention be focused upon teacher education. Thus teacher preparation should complement the reform objectives. She believes that efforts be directed toward shifting teacher’s roles from an authority figure in the classroom to a leader in the school. Hammond (1990) believes that teacher education should:

1. Pay more attention to developing norms of collegiality among prospective and experience teachers.

2. Include more thoughtful consideration of schools as organizations, as contexts that influence teaching and learning.
3. Include greater attention to issues of professionalism.
4. Involve students and thinking about school curriculum over time, rather than simply about lessons to be taught.
5. Give systematic and ongoing attention to problem solving and other forms of inquiry.
6. Be seen as ongoing and developmental and must be conducted in intellectually sound and organizationally productive ways.

In evaluating Turner Valley's restructuring efforts according to the research, there were some approaches which resonated with research recommendations. A county-wide survey was conducted to assess teacher concerns, and a plan of action was developed based on the data collected from the survey. Training in Glasser's Quality School was conducted to help teachers meet their goals of having better relationships with their students and more effective discipline. Also, teachers were invited to serve on restructuring committees to identify additional components that would enhance their restructuring efforts. Although these approaches were incorporated to ensure the success of the restructuring, other issues influenced it's overall effectiveness. These will become apparent throughout the lessons learned section that follows.

What this study meant to me

The results of the research study revealed other caveats which directly influenced reform efforts. These issues were found to be key in determining the success or failure of the reform process. They will be discussed according to their impact on the restructuring process highlighted in this research study.

Change occurs gradually. The objectives for promoting change presented to the teachers were quite extensive (see Phases One, Two, and Three, explained in Chapter Three). Introducing large quantities of information in a short period of time can be overwhelming. With each reform effort, there is much information which needs to be internalized, if it is going to be successful. Teachers need time to study the process, to provide input, and receive clarification. Teachers, like students are also diverse in their abilities to absorb and process information. Individual attention should be focused on their readiness levels, offering the support and reinforcement that is needed for the change to be effective.

Implementation also occurs gradually. Teachers should be supported in a step-wise process avoiding the possibility of immediate failure due to unreasonable expectations. Teachers who receive an abundance of information may perceive it as being another "quick fix" to their problems. They tend to compare it to other trends that have occurred in education, condemning it

to failure before initiation. This mindset is detrimental to any reform process recognizing that teacher attitudes are key to determining its success. Especially in middle schools with teams in place, a negative member can hamper the collaborative effort needed for effectiveness.

Change should not be forced. As indicated within the research study, change that is introduced as a school-wide program does not guarantee the support of all teachers. To expect all teachers to be in full compliance is absurd. In retrospect, those teachers who valued the approaches that were suggested in the reform may attract those who are skeptical. Educators should find contentment with the elements of the program that are working, recognizing that some students are benefiting. Eventually, with proper support and attention, the confines of the program may expand. The use of force may only serve to heighten resistance.

Also, change does not have to occur globally. Educators should not be expected to abide by all components of the restructuring. Thus, teachers may opt to select portions of the program most suitable to their needs. As this process continues, teachers must be given the opportunity to conduct ongoing analysis adjusting their programs appropriately. This process promotes continuous restructuring which is ideal.

Preparation is a necessity. Preparing teachers for reform involves the inclusion of teachers at the beginning phase of the process, during the thinking phase. Teachers should be involved

during data collection and analysis. Data collection, meaning the point at which information is obtained and analyzed for developing a plan of action. This places teachers in a position to assume ownership, involving them in the process responsible for promoting the change.

When teachers are involved with the process of change, the possibility of them feeling as though the change is being “done to them” is limited. Change in itself can be perceived negatively. Teachers may respond defensively in fear of the implication that they are doing something wrong. As a result, they enter a protective mode, supporting their strategies and decisions from those who refute or disagree with them.

Preparation also includes training teachers to implement the components of change, those factors which will be involved in producing the change. Alternative methods and strategies require staff development sessions and workshops to provide teachers with the training and support necessary for them to effectively implement the plan. In many cases, resistance and failure is linked to inadequacies and misunderstandings. Thus, a very effective program can be dismissed simply because the teachers are unprepared to implement it. Teachers, like students need to experience a certain level of success as rewards for their efforts. Inadequate training may prevent them from having these experiences.

Finally, preparation should include an understanding of the expectations for the program. Teachers should be clear in what they should expect the new program to accomplish in their classrooms. No program of itself is a fool proof cure for all of the problems within a classroom. Expectations should be reasonably established. Reform stands a greater chance for survival when it accomplishes more that what was expected, than when it accomplishes less.

Basically, from the findings of this study, I learned that a major key to the success of any reform rests within the laps of the participants. Those who feel more connected are more apt to be successful. There was much information yielded which could aid in future restructuring efforts at other institutions, and yet there is much more to be learned from further study incorporating different strategies.

Implications for further study

Much information was learned from the current study; however, further investigations of this process could provide information which could either could substantiate or discriminate findings.

Recommendations would be to extend the length of the study. A lengthier study of the restructuring process could provide further insight into the change process. In the case of Turner Valley Middle School, a revisit to the site revealed a breakdown in the restructuring process. Many of the reform innovations

were no longer supported. The reasons provided were: personnel changes, a decrease in the principal's influence, a decrease in classroom time, and a move away from the Quality Schools Model.

Another recommendation would be to expand the number of participants. This research study involved an in-depth investigation of the performances of one teacher. Expanding the number of participants would provide data for an investigator to make comparisons.

Finally, suggestions for a future research study would be to study the restructuring process, prior to the implementation of the plan or strategies, during the thinking phase. An investigation earlier into the process could provide information useful for future reform efforts.

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