

Teacher Advancement Program<sup>TM</sup>  
Implementation Manual

**Appendix B: Strategies for Restructuring**



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# Appendix B: Strategies for Restructuring

## *Introduction to Restructuring*

An increased awareness of the need for professional development for teachers has led to a variety of major efforts to identify where the time might be found to provide that need. In 1994 the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (NECTL) reported:

*The daily working life of most teachers is one of unrelieved time pressure and isolation; they work, largely alone, in a classroom of 25-30 children or adolescents for hours every day. Unlike teachers in many systems overseas, who can take advantage of continuous, daily opportunities for professional development, American teachers have little time for preparation, planning, cooperation or professional growth.*

One of the key findings in the NECTL report was:

*We recommend that teachers be provided with the professional time and opportunities they need to do their jobs.*

The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE), sponsored by the National Education Association, echoed the recommendation in its report “Teachers Take Charge of Their Own Learning,” stating that teachers need to:

*...find time for continuous professional development. To keep up with change, teachers need the time to collaborate with their colleagues and to update their knowledge and skills — as professionals in other fields are required to do.*

One of the key principles of the Teacher Advancement Program is continuous and ongoing professional development. Finding the time to provide this professional development, as well as the leadership and collaborative practices described in the model, is the topic of this section. In it, eight strategies will be introduced that have been suggested in the literature to free the time needed for professional practice (Purnell and Hill, 1991; Raywid, 1993; Canady, 1988).

## These strategies vary according to several key characteristics:

### Cost

**What level of additional funding is required to implement the strategy?**

- » A low-cost strategy may be free, or at least cost less than \$1,000.
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### Extent of Change

**To what extent will the staff and school be required to change in order to implement the strategy?**

- » Low-impact strategies may require a simple schedule change.
  - » High-impact strategies may require a complete overhaul of the school schedule.
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### Reliance on Personnel Resources

**To what extent does the strategy rely on additional personnel (i.e. learning guides, parent volunteers, special-area teachers, etc.) who may not be available to a particular school?**

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### Grouping

**To what extent does the strategy rely on the existence of the grouping strategies described in the previous section?**

**Will the strategy only work, for example, in a team-teaching environment, where several teachers share responsibility for students?**

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### Impact on Parents

**To what extent might the innovation inconvenience parents, force families to revise schedules, or simply cause friction with parents who misunderstand or disagree with the innovation?**

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### Ability to Provide Time

**To what extent does the strategy, by itself, provide the amount of time necessary to meet the requirements of the professional development block and master and mentor teacher leadership needs?**

- » The goal for TAP schools should be to provide each educator with a minimum of 50 – 100 minutes per week for professional development.
- » A broad look at various strategies in operation across the country will provide additional ideas for reorganizing the school day to allow for professional development. Included in this section is a look at working models, along with some references to investigate for further information.

## Realignment of the School Day

This strategy involves manipulating time within the existing schedule to recover time for professional development and collaboration. The most common example of this strategy involves the lengthening of student attendance time on four days of the week by approximately 30 minutes. On the fifth day, students are released early to provide a complete morning or afternoon of common planning or staff development time. To accommodate working parents, arrangements are usually made with aides, parent volunteers or community organizations, such as park districts, to provide supervised activities for students who need to remain at school for the normally allotted time.

While this strategy is low in cost, it provides a minimum of common time. Parents must be involved at all stages of the planning, as this strategy is often misinterpreted by the community as an attempt to decrease instructional time.

### Scenario: Early Release Day

**Table 1: Schedule before establishing the early release day**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Instructional Block I</b>	9:00 – 11:30	9:00 – 11:30	9:00 – 11:30	9:00 – 11:30	9:00 – 11:30
<b>Lunch</b> <i>(includes 30 minutes of planning time)</i>	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30
	Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning
<b>Instructional Block II</b>	12:30 – 3:30	12:30 – 3:30	12:30 – 3:30	12:30 – 3:30	12:30 – 3:30

**Table 2: Revised overall schedule**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Instructional Block I</b>	8:30 – 11:30	8:30 – 11:30	8:30 – 11:30	8:30 – 11:30	8:30 – 11:30
<b>Lunch</b> <i>(includes 30 minutes of planning time)</i>	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30
	Common PD Block	Common PD Block	Common PD Block	Common PD Block	Common PD Block
<b>Instructional Block II</b>	12:30 – 3:30	12:30 – 3:30	12:30 – 3:30	12:30 – 3:30	12:30 – 3:30

**Table 3: Teacher schedule**

(shared PD/planning time: 5.5 hours; individual PD/planning time: 3 hours)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 – 9:30	Instructional Block	Instructional Block	Instructional Block	Instructional Block	Instructional Block
9:30 – 10:30	Music (Individual PD Block)	Art (Individual PD Block)	Instructional Block	P.E. (Individual PD Block)	Instructional Block
10:30 – 11:30	Instructional Block	Instructional Block	Instructional Block	Instructional Block	Instructional Block
11:30 – 12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:00 – 12:30	Common PD Block	Common PD Block	Common Planning and Professional Development Time	Common PD Block	Common PD Block
12:30 – 1:30	Instructional Block	Instructional Block		Instructional Block	Instructional Block
1:30 – 2:30	Instructional Block	Instructional Block		Instructional Block	Instructional Block
2:30 – 3:30	Instructional Block	Instructional Block		Instructional Block	Instructional Block

**Table 4: Realignment of the school day**

Cost	Low
Extent of change	Low
Reliance on additional personnel resources	Medium
Impact of grouping practices	Low
Impact on parents	Medium, if alternative activities are provided for students; high if not
Sufficiency	Medium alone; with special teacher availability, high



*With this schedule, the assumption is made that each teacher will have additional planning and preparation time when students are not present. A typical eight-hour workday of 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. will allow for an additional hour per day for materials preparation and work with individual students.*

## Increasing Available Time

This strategy involves increasing the amount of time available by increasing the number of days dedicated to professional development and collaboration. This can be done through increasing the length of the school year; providing stipends for summer training; or through additional time spent after school, on weekends or during scheduled vacation days. This strategy is particularly useful for training initiatives that support new instructional or curricular programs (e.g., the introduction of a new science series, as the time provided is in the large blocks, usually complete days). The costs can be significant as well.

In the case of an extended school calendar, the cost may be a proportional salary increase for each affected teacher. If the extension is provided on a one-time basis, a stipend of some kind is typically offered.

### Scenario: Increasing Available Time

In Table 5, time for professional development and collaboration has been gained by increasing the number of days in the teacher contract. Six days have been added at the beginning of the school year and four at the end. Additionally, two holidays have been converted to professional development days, and four half-day release days have been converted to full days. The additional student attendance days have been added to the end of the calendar. A budget for making these changes in a school with a staff of 30, based on a salary increase of approximately 6.7 percent in compensation for the extra days, and the national average salary of \$42,000, would be about \$84,000 per year.

**Table 5: Normal school calendar**

August 9	New teachers start	December 20 – 31	Winter Recess
August 11	All teachers: first day, Staff Development	January 14	Early Release (Grades K-6 and 9-12)
August 12 – 13	Teacher workdays	January 17	Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
August 16	First day of school	February 16	Student holiday, Staff Development
September 6	Labor Day (no classes)	February 21	Presidents Day (no classes)
October 11	Columbus Day (no classes)	March 16 – 17	Parent/Teacher Conferences (Grades K-6, 9-12)
October 28 – 29	Parent/Teacher Conferences (Grades K-12)	March 22 – 24	Spring Recess (no classes)
November 11 – 12	Veterans Day and Fall Recess (no classes)	April 21	Good Friday (no classes)
November 25 – 26	Thanksgiving holiday (no classes)	May 23	Last day of school
December 1	Early Release	<b>TOTAL DAYS:</b>	

Teachers: 180 days; Students: 175 days  
Professional Development/Collaboration: 5 days

**Table 6: Revised school calendar**

August 2	New teachers start	January 14	Professional Development Day
August 3 – 6, 9 – 11	All teachers: Professional Development, Collaborative Planning	January 17	Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
August 12 – 13	Teacher workdays	February 16	Professional Development Day
August 16	First day of school	February 21	Presidents Day (no classes)
September 6	Labor Day (no classes)	March 16 – 17	Parent/Teacher Conferences (Grades K-6, 9-12)
October 11	Professional Development Day	March 20 – 21	Professional Development Days
October 28 – 29	Parent/Teacher Conferences (Grades K-12)	March 22 – 24	Spring Recess (no classes)
November 11	Professional Development Day	April 4	Early Release
November 12	Veterans Day (no classes)	April 21	Good Friday (no classes)
November 25 – 26	Thanksgiving holiday (no classes)	April 27	Professional Development Day
December 1	Professional Development Day	May 23	Last day of school
December 20 – 31	Winter Recess	May 24 – 26	All teachers: Professional Development, Collaborative Planning

**Table 7: Increasing available time**

Cost	High
Extent of change	Low
Reliance on additional personnel resources	Medium
Impact of grouping practices	Low
Impact on parents	Medium
Sufficiency	Low

**TOTAL DAYS:**

Teachers: 192 days (180)\*

Students: 175 days (175)\*

Professional Development/Collaboration: 17 days (5)\*

*\*days in normal school calendar*

## Block Scheduling

**“Block scheduling” is described as a strategy in which:**

*At least part of the daily schedule is organized into larger blocks of time (more than 60 minutes, for example) to allow flexibility for varied instructional activities (Canady and Rettig, 1995).*

Block scheduling, by itself, does not help create time for professional development and leadership. However, in combination with flexible grouping patterns or strategies for using special-area teachers and learning guides, block scheduling can make a powerful contribution to the freeing of time. Block scheduling has several characteristics that provide the opportunity to free up time for teachers:

- » Block scheduling forces the teacher to develop a consistent, predictable schedule. This makes the intensive planning for teachers with shared responsibility for students easier and more realistic. Everyone knows what everyone else is doing ... and when.
- » Block scheduling causes teachers to adopt a variety of instructional strategies, combining whole group instruction with collaborative group work and time for independent work. This provides more points at which learning guides might be used to provide release time for teachers, as well as opportunities for teachers to cover for each other where the activity allows.
- » A form of block scheduling known as “Parallel Block Scheduling” allows teachers to synchronize their schedules with those of support teachers. This can be used to reduce the size of instructional groups, as in Canady’s example, or to provide additional flexibility for release time for teachers.

### Scenario: Parallel Block Schedule

In this scenario, the block facilitates freeing individual teachers or pairs of teachers for professional development, planning or other collaborative activity by coordinating activity among members of a teaching team. There are 120 students assigned to a team of two career teachers, two mentor teachers and two learning guides. Additionally, a master teacher teaches on the team for at least one hour per day. The school day for students in this example would be from 8:30 a.m. – 2:40 p.m. During Block 1, Language Arts, primarily a reading instruction period, students are assigned to one of six reading groups. These assignments are reviewed, based on progress and assessment data, and reconstructed every four weeks. All teachers on the team also rotate assignments every four weeks.

During the Math Block, a “Teach/Re-teach/Enrichment System” is employed. Students are divided into two groups based on readiness. All students in each group participate in learning the skill or process at hand, practicing the skill, and then completing a post-test. Based on the results of the post-test, students are divided into “re-teach” and “enrichment” groups. The “re-teach” group(s) are small and are provided with multiple alternative paths to the development of the skill, based on their individual learning needs. The “enrichment” group(s) applies the skill in complex, authentic problem-solving environments.

**Table 8: Common grade-level schedule**

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>8:30 – 9:55</b>	Language Arts Block I	Language Arts Block I	Language Arts Block I	Language Arts Block I	Language Arts Block I
<b>9:55 – 11:20</b>	Math Block	Math Block	Math Block	Math Block	Math Block
<b>11:20 – 11:50</b>	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
<b>11:50 – 1:15</b>	Language Arts Block II	Language Arts Block II	Language Arts Block II	Language Arts Block II	Art/Music/P.E. Block
<b>1:15 – 2:40</b>	Science Block	Science Block	Science Block	Science Block	
<b>2:40 – 3:30</b>	Student Assistance, Preparation	Student Assistance, Preparation	Student Assistance, Preparation	Student Assistance, Preparation	Student Assistance, Preparation
<b>3:30 – 4:30</b>	Common PD/ Planning	Common PD/ Planning	Common PD/ Planning	Common PD/ Planning	Common PD/ Planning

**Table 9: Teacher schedule for Monday**

(shared PD/planning time: 1.5 hours; individual PD/planning time: 1.5 hours)

	8:30 – 9:55	9:55 – 11:20	Lunch		11:50 – 1:15		1:15 – 2:40	2:40 – 3:30	3:30 – 4:30
<b>Teacher A</b>	Groups A and E (with Learning Guide 1)	Math – Intro to unit, Enrichment Groups with Learning Guides 1 and 2		PD Block	Groups A and E (with Learning Guide 1)		PD Block	Prep	Team Planning
<b>Teacher B</b>	Group B	PD Block		PD Block	Group B		Social Science – Independent projects, Groups A and B with Learning Guide 1	Prep	Team Planning
<b>Teacher C</b>	Groups C and F (with Learning Guide 2)	Re-teach Group		PD Block	Groups C and F (with Learning Guide 2)		PD Block	Prep	Team Planning
<b>Teacher D</b>	Group D	PD Block		PD Block	Group D		Social Science – Independent projects, Groups A and B with Learning Guide 1	Prep	Team Planning
<b>Learning Guide 1</b>	Groups A and E	Assist Teacher A		Silent Reading Groups A–C	Groups A and E		Groups A and B	Student Assistance	
<b>Learning Guide 2</b>	Groups C and F	Assist Teacher A		Silent Reading Groups D–F	Groups C and F		Groups C and D	Student Assistance	

**Table 10: Block scheduling**

Cost	High
Extent of change	High
Reliance on additional personnel resources	Medium
Impact of grouping practices	High
Impact on parents	Low
Sufficiency	High

## Providing Release Time through Substitutes

Providing release time through substitutes is one of the major strategies currently used in schools to provide time to individual teachers for professional development, particularly when that professional development is in the form of workshops or off-site training. In addition, some schools have established regular visits from substitutes to release teachers from class for learning and collaboration.

One frequent implementation of this strategy is to bring a consultant in an area of curricular need and a substitute to a building on a given day. The substitute then releases a different teacher each hour to allow them to meet with the consultant for individual questions and technical assistance. In some schools, teams of three or four substitutes are brought in to release entire teams for a half-day to day-long planning and collaboration session. Major inhibitors to these practices include the cost and availability of substitutes.

**Table 11: Providing release time through substitutes**

Cost	High
Extent of change	Low
Reliance on additional personnel resources	High
Impact of grouping practices	Low
Impact on parents	Low
Sufficiency	Low

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## Use of Special-Area Teachers

This set of strategies assumes that certain personnel resources, special-area teachers (art, music and P.E), learning guides or instructional aides, and/or community resource people are available in your building and are able to supervise groups of students. There is a variety of strategies for using these personnel to free teachers for other professional purposes, and some of these are related to other strategies, such as block scheduling or team teaching.

In the Elementary Model described in *A Matter of Quality: A Strategy for Assuring the High Caliber of America's Teachers*, all three special-area teachers are assigned to a given grade level in the same period, freeing up staff members at a consistent hour for collaborative planning and professional development. This, of course, makes the optimistic assumption that these resources are available on a regular and sufficient basis.

**Table 12: Use of special-area teachers, learning guides and community resource people**

Time	Activity	Learning Guide	Career	Mentor	Specialists
7:30 – 8:15	Before School		Professional Growth Block	Professional Growth Block	Professional Growth Block
8:15 – 8:30	Students Arrive	Classes 1 and 2			
8:30 – 11:00	Learning Block	Classes 1 and 2	Class 1	Class 2	Classes 3 and 4
11:00 – 12:00	Lunch	Classes 1 and 2	Break	Break	Classes 5 and 6
12:00 – 2:00	Learning Block	Classes 1 and 2	Class 1	Class 2	Classes 7 and 8
2:00 – 3:00	Arts Block	Classes 1 and 2	Professional Growth Block	Professional Growth Block	Classes 1 and 2

## At Hefferan School in Chicago:

*Students ... have four intense days of classroom work each week and a fifth day called Resource Day. On Resource Day, students are involved in art, music, gym, library and computer lab. The students look forward to Resource Day because of the variety in their schedules and the possibilities for creative and experimental learning experiences. With the faculty divided into five instructional teams, each teacher has one free day per week — the Resource Day for students is a planning and study day for teachers. The Resource Day is also economical, since no substitute teacher pay is needed; students simply rotate their classes. Security monitors and parent volunteers are present throughout the building to oversee the rotations from class to class.*

In schools that lack the resources to provide special-area teachers on a daily basis, an effort can be made to schedule the available special-area teachers on the same day. This allows for the simultaneous assignment at the same grade level, freeing the teachers for a certain amount of collaborative time. If music, art and physical education were only available three days per week, for example, having them each come on Monday, Wednesday and Friday would allow them to be assigned simultaneously.

In schools that employ team-teaching models and block scheduling, learning guides can be used to supervise work periods and other activities, such as silent reading or computer work (see “Parallel Block Schedule” beginning on page 47).

**Table 13: Schedule for one grade at Hefferan School**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>9:00 – 10:30</b>	Reading Block	Reading Block	Reading Block	Reading Block	Reading Block
<b>10:30 – 12:00</b>	Learning Block	Learning Block	Learning Block	Learning Block	Arts Block, Teacher PD and Planning
<b>12:00 – 12:45</b>	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
<b>12:45 – 3:45</b>	Learning Block	Learning Block	Learning Block	Learning Block	

**Table 14: Use of special-area teachers, learning guides and other resource people**

Cost	Low	Impact of grouping practices	Medium
Extent of change	Low	Impact on parents	Low
Reliance on additional personnel resources	High	Sufficiency	Medium to High

## Refocusing Existing Time

Two recommended strategies, refocusing existing time and increasing efficiency, need only a brief explanation. These strategies should probably be employed in most situations.

The first rather simple strategy involves identifying existing blocks of time that might be dedicated to professional development and collaboration. For example, weekly staff meetings that were formerly used for announcements and minutia might instead be given over to professional development activities. Team or department meetings that were previously scheduled might be used in the same way. In some districts, there are half-day release days that were previously occasions to bring in a speaker or local guru on a topic that might or might not be useful to the staff. These days can be enumerated and turned back to the team for professional development and collaboration.

**Table 15: Refocusing existing time**

Cost	Low
Extent of change	Low
Reliance on additional personnel resources	Low
Impact of grouping practices	Low
Impact on parents	Low
Sufficiency	Low

STRATEGY  
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## Increasing Efficiency

This strategy, which fits well with the previous strategy, suggests that time might be gained by increasing efficiency. Much of what takes place at a staff meeting, for example, might be replaced through a newsletter or through a school intranet. E-mail, listservs or Web boards might be used to continue or develop conversations that were initiated at collaborative sessions. The need for grading days might be ameliorated through the general use of grading and student information software, which automatically generates reports formerly produced by hand.

**Table 16: Increasing efficiency**

Cost	Low
Extent of change	Low
Reliance on additional personnel resources	Low
Impact of grouping practices	Low
Impact on parents	Low
Sufficiency	Low

## Grouping

In order for teachers to have increased flexibility in the assignment of their time, student assignment and grouping may need to become more flexible. The administratively convenient model of one teacher with sole responsibility for a group of 20 – 40 students places significant barriers in the path of planning, professional development and professional collaboration. Before recommending changes in the grouping of students, it is important to understand the implications of different grouping strategies on student learning and social/emotional development. It is easy to become immersed in the details of administrative and organizational arrangements and forget that the central question must always be, “Is this good for children?”

The grouping of students for instruction has been a source of significant controversy for almost 20 years. In 1985, Jeannie Oakes published *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*, decrying the use of ability grouping in secondary schools. Some of the arguments proffered by Oakes pertain to the elementary school as well. In her book, Oakes challenged the assumptions upon which ability-grouping systems are typically based. These assumptions include:

**Students of similar ability learn best when taught together.**

- » Oakes argues that there is virtually no evidence to support this. While there may be minor advantages to gifted and talented students in accelerated programs, this has not been consistently demonstrated and, even if true, would not be sufficient to justify the negative impact that ability grouping has on students in the lower tracks.

**The self-esteem of lower-ability students suffers when they are forced to compete and compare themselves to higher-ability students.**

- » Oakes contends that there are alternative strategies for ensuring a successful school experience for all, and in reality, when tracked, lower-ability students develop a negative self-image as “average” or “low” students that may negatively impact their willingness to take on academic and life challenges.

**Ability groups are fair to all.**

- » Oakes points to what she perceives as an over-representation of poor and minority students in lower tracks, coupled with an under-representation of these same populations in higher tracks.

**Tracking makes teaching easier, as teachers can prepare a more focused lesson when the class is homogeneous.**

- » Oakes contends that this is probably true only because teachers lack training in teaching to the needs of a diverse class of learners, particularly at the high school level. She further argues that, even if true, it would not justify the damage done to students by tracking.

In 1987 Robert Slavin published a synthesis of research on the impact of ability-grouping strategies on elementary students. Slavin classified grouping strategies as falling into two major categories: between-class and within-class. In regards to between-class ability grouping (defined as assignment to homogeneous classes for the entire instructional day), Slavin reported that, “Overall, the effects of ability grouping cluster closely around zero for students of all achievement levels,” (Slavin, 1988).

There are several qualifications to this finding, including:

- » Programs for the gifted that feature acceleration as the primary strategy may improve achievement for this population.
- » Flexible plans, such as the Joplin Plan (described later in this toolkit), regrouping for selected subjects, and certain forms of nongraded plans can be instructionally effective.

Slavin identifies the following key characteristics of successful regrouping plans:

- » Students are left in heterogeneous classes for most of the school day.
- » Regrouping is only for reading and math according to student skills in these content areas.
- » Student placements are flexibly changed.
- » Instruction is specifically adapted to student needs and preparedness.

A similar meta-analysis by Kulik and Kulik (1991) reported similar findings; i.e., grouping students by ability for specific subject areas can be beneficial if the instruction is tailored to the level of the group. New proponents for ability grouping have arisen in recent years (Loveless, 1998; Grossen, 1997), but these proponents tend to be in general agreement with the findings described above.

# Options for Grouping and Assignment of Students

The options for grouping discussed in this toolkit will be described in direct relationship to the Teacher Advancement Program. Again, philosophical and pedagogical implications will be left to the implementing school. Three strategies will be described for assignment of students: *traditional classroom groups*, *“family” grouping with team teaching*, and *multi-age classrooms*. For each of these strategies, the implications will be discussed in relationship to the TAP model. In the end, schools may find that a hybrid strategy might be necessary to meet their needs.

It is also important to remember that without the guidance provided by curriculum and instruction initiatives, grouping of students is simply a bureaucratic detail.



## Traditional Classroom Groups

### Description

The term “traditional classroom” refers to the practice of grouping students by age and assigning these students to a grade level. These classrooms are typically heterogeneous in ability, with the exception of the special-needs students, who are often removed and given special services. As most schools are already configured according to a traditional classroom model, this model requires little explanation. One of the key features of the traditional classroom is the assignment of a single teacher to a group of 20 – 40 students, essentially for the entire school day. It has been suggested that this arrangement, while beneficial in terms of the relationship that develops between teacher and students, may be a primary cause for the professional isolation that many teachers experience.

### Implications for TAP

The Teacher Advancement Program requires that teachers be provided with a daily Professional Growth Block. The responsibility for a classroom makes it more difficult to free a teacher for this block of time. Additionally, in a traditional school arrangement, the resources offered by the learning guides and the master teacher may not be used as efficiently in this environment. Finally, one of the significant benefits of the Teacher Advancement Program is that all students have the benefit of exposure to teachers at all three levels: career, mentor and master. This advantage is lost if a traditional structure of student assignment is maintained.



## “Family” Grouping with Team Teaching

### Description

In this grouping model, students are arranged in groups of up to 100 students, who are assigned to a team of four to eight teachers and learning guides. In schools with full-time special education, remedial reading or gifted and talented staff, a strategy often employed is attempting to include a staff member on each of these teams who has background in each of these areas (see Darling-Hammond, 1997, pp. 188-192). Each “family” contains students of the same age and grade. The primary difference between this and the previous model is that the teachers in a family group share responsibility for all students. Typically, when grouping in this fashion, an attempt is made to include staff on each team with complementary skills and interests.

### Implications for TAP

This type of student grouping has significant implications for the teaching staff as well. Family grouping requires team teaching. Team teaching — a loosely defined set of strategies for professional collaboration in support of student learning — has been in place in a variety of settings since the late 1950s. Benefits of team teaching include: more professional instruction, greater flexibility in teacher time, higher levels of personal and professional support, greater

accountability for quality instruction, and decreased sense of isolation. In the context of the Teacher Advancement Program, team teaching has additional benefits in supporting the mentorship and professional development requirements of the program. Drawbacks may include: loss of the close relationship with a small class of students, loss of spontaneity, decentralization of decision-making, and the need to compromise (Shields, 1997).

The flexibility of the family-grouping approach allows for flexibility in teachers' schedules as well ... with careful planning. When implemented with a variety of instructional strategies — whole-group instruction, independent projects, teacher-directed work periods, etc. — it is possible for one or more staff to be freed at a variety of points during the day. In a situation where content is being introduced in a lecture format, for example, one teacher may present to the entire group, assisted by one additional teacher and two learning guides who monitor and assist students during the guided work period. This would free other staff to meet, plan or participate in professional development. An additional benefit is that students have the opportunity to work on a daily basis with a variety of staff. No student is sentenced to spend the entire year alone in a room with a less-able teacher. The primary disadvantage may be the amount of planning time that is required to manage this flexible environment. An additional challenge in team teaching is assuring accountability for the progress of all students.



## Multi-Age Classrooms

### Description

In the multi-age classroom, students are grouped heterogeneously with others from a span of at least two years of age. These students are grouped together in a class where neither they nor the curriculum are divided into graded units. NWREL offers the following list of benefits for multi-age grouping:

- » Chronological age and mental age do not always correspond.
- » A child may excel in one curricular area and simultaneously have difficulty in another.
- » Children are able to work at different developmental levels without obvious remediation, thus avoiding the social or emotional damage typically caused by retention.
- » Students stay with their teacher(s) for more than one year; thus teachers get to know students well and provide for continuity in their learning, and children avoid the trauma of adjusting to new teachers annually.
- » Children have more time to assimilate and consolidate their learning in a familiar environment.
- » Children accept age and achievement differences as normal.
- » Non-graded arrangements lend themselves to integrated curriculum.
- » Non-graded grouping lends itself to the use of validated practices, such as cooperative learning and cross-age tutoring.
- » The increasing diversity of contemporary society is more easily accommodated by non-graded programs.
- » Research shows that non-graded grouping leads to more positive student attitudes and behavior than graded structures, and that achievement outcomes are similar.
- » The team teaching and family-like atmosphere typical of non-graded programs leads to increased job satisfaction for teachers (Cotton, 1993).

### Implications for TAP

Multi-age grouping is frequently implemented in team teaching or “family” grouping situations. These approaches can provide the added flexibility that is necessary in order to find time for leadership and professional development, which are key components of the Teacher Advancement Program.

## Sources and Recommended Readings on Other Strategies

**Watts, Gary D., and Shari Castle. "The Time Dilemma in School Restructuring." *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 1993.**

Recent survey of time usage in restructuring schools disclosed five time-management strategies, including freed-up time (temporary interventions freeing teachers from scheduling constraints); restructured or rescheduled time; common time (for teacher planning and preparation); better-used time (to replace faculty meetings and professional development activities); and purchased time (hiring additional teachers). Other study results and future implications are summarized. (Contains 12 references.)

**Raywid, Mary Ann. "Finding Time for Collaboration." *Educational Leadership*, September 1993.**

Collaborative time for teachers to undertake and sustain school improvement may be more important than equipment, facilities or even staff development. Although some schools have managed to include pupil-free workdays in their annual calendars, others must find low-cost alternatives. This article presents 15 examples involving creative scheduling or instructional groupings favoring teacher collaboration. (Contains 18 references.)

**Bull, B., M. Buechler, S. Didley, and L. Krehbiel. "Professional Development and Teacher Time: Principles, Guidelines, and Policy Options for Indiana." Indiana Education Policy Center, School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, ED384112 (1994).**

This paper summarizes a study of professional development in Indiana and six other states and its connection to the provision of teacher time. The study examined state provisions for professional development in Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Washington. The states used different approaches to providing teacher time for professional development in their definitions of the school year, linkage to state reform goals, governance level and funding. Experts agree that effective professional development must go beyond skills training to organizational development. An effective professional-development program is school-based and collaborative; uses coaching and other follow-up procedures; is embedded in the daily lives of teachers; and focuses on student learning and is evaluated in part on that basis. Such a program also requires the following conditions: advocacy-oriented leadership, resource and policy support, norms of collegiality and experimentation, and adequate time. Ten state-policy guidelines for making time available for professional development are outlined. Options for establishing a state system of teacher time for professional development are also described. It is recommended that Indiana educational policy: (1) provide state support in the form of person-days per full-time-equivalent (FTE) teacher; (2) make at least four person-days available per teacher; (3) allocate teacher time directly to the school; (4) require schools to develop a written five-year strategic plan; (5) submit annual fiscal and performance reports; (6) provide state startup assistance to schools and a state infrastructure of policies and resources; and (7) provide state and local funding to individual schools.

**Cambone, J. "Time for Teachers in School Restructuring." *Teachers College Record*, 96(3): 512-43, 1995, EJ505811.**

Time for teachers cannot be readily constructed and scheduled by reformers. Teachers need to construct their own time. The article examines different kinds of time for teachers, arguing that much of school reform will fail if it ignores the multiple constructs, boundaries, rhythms and patterns of time for teachers.

**Kentucky Education Association and Appalachia Educational Laboratory. "Finding Time for School Reform: Obstacles and Answers." Frankfort, KY: Author, 1993, ED359181.**

The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 has given educators the authority as well as the responsibility for improving educational practices within their schools. A study group of five Kentucky teachers assisted by the Kentucky Education Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory was formed to research the extent and uses of out-of-school time investment in KERA reforms and to identify promising initiatives that create collaborative planning/meeting time. This document reports the results of a statewide telephone survey of Kentucky educators who implement innovative methods to create time. According to the findings, the majority of respondents spend time attending meetings and participating in professional development or training; they have made tremendous commitments to KERA-related activities in personal out-of-school time in comparison to released time provided. The report also provides a review of related literature, a rationale for overhauling the organizational culture of schools to create time for reform, graphs and charts illustrating survey findings, recommendations for creating time for reform, descriptions of successful school plans for implementation of reform mandates, and a bibliography.

**Peyton, David. "Time Management and Educational Reform." Directions in Language and Education, v1 n6, Fall 1995, ED394303.**

This report is an excerpt from the National Education Commission on Time and Learning's Final Report, "Prisoners of Time," published in April 1994. In it, the commission concludes that the reform movement of the last decade is destined to flounder unless it is able to harness more time and better management thereof for learning. The excerpt discusses how students and teachers are prisoners of time and how schools in other countries handle time. Some innovative time schedules found in schools with high minority enrollments are highlighted. Specific recommendations include centering schools around learning rather than timing, using time in better and new ways, disregarding grouping of children by age, and establishing an "academic" day. Longer school days are advocated, with more technology and local action plans that involve the community and parents. Elimination of government "red tape" and increased involvement by higher education, as well as business, parents, students and teachers in schooling, is suggested.

**Miller, Barbara, Brian Lord, and Judith Dorney. "Staff Development for Teachers: A Study of Configurations and Costs in Four Districts," Newton, MA, Education Development Center, 1994.**

Teachers' professional development is a key feature of wider reforms in curriculum, instruction and assessment. This report includes four case studies of district staff development programs, and activities and an analysis of findings in four parts: Configuration of Programs, Nature of Staff Development Work, and Estimated Costs for Staff Development. The authors use the results of this study and other recent research to outline new directions in teachers' professional development and to offer recommendations for supporting teachers as learners.



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