

RESEARCH AREA & SOURCE	DESCRIPTION & MAIN FINDINGS / ARGUMENTS
<p><b>Teaching Strategies – ESL</b></p> <p><i>TESOL in Context</i> Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 21 - 28</p>	<p><b>Rushton, K. (2008) Cooperative planning and teaching for ESL students in the mainstream classroom.</b></p> <p>This article describes a pilot program conducted in disadvantaged urban schools where ESL teachers and mainstream classroom teachers were supported in developing a unit of work which was jointly planned and jointly taught.</p> <p><b>Main Arguments / Findings:</b></p> <p><b>Intellectual Quality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching focused on a model of intellectual quality drawn from research and including the following elements: Deep knowledge; Deep understanding; Problematic knowledge; Higher-order thinking; Metalanguage; and Substantive communication</li> <li>• Within the model, in relation to language, <i>deep knowledge</i>, <i>deep understanding</i> and <i>metalanguage</i> were developed through analysis of the language demands of the teaching and learning strategies. This language knowledge was then clearly articulated to students and they were explicitly taught about the language choices available to them. <i>Higher-order thinking</i> was developed by having students to think about these language choices and opportunities for <i>substantive communication</i> were provided through guided reading and writing exercises.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support for Participating Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was found that teachers in general clearly recognized the importance of language and literacy learning but generally did not provide this for their students in a systematic way.</li> <li>• In order to address this situation the following support was provided: demonstration lessons and planning support from the project coordinator; the provision of time for ESL teachers to meet, plan and work together with classroom teachers to identify and meet the needs of students; and working guidelines such as the requirement that students be given details of assessment procedures and criteria at the beginning of the unit and that these should be linked to explicit teaching; the provision of protocols with specific questions to support writing conferences.</li> </ul> <p><b>Project Results</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For students: In general it was found that the learning in terms of language transferred to student work in subsequent units and teachers felt that student writing in general had been enhanced by the project.</li> <li>• For teachers: The explicit teaching of language and literacy was a constant focus in teachers' reflections about the unit. The unit was felt to have demonstrated "what teachers can do", but to also have demonstrated the importance of ongoing support to achieve this.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership</b></p>	<p><b>Perillo, S. (2008) Fashioning leadership in schools: an ANT account of leadership as networked practice.</b></p> <p>Actor-Network Theory (ANT) was used to analyze perceptions of how leadership was related to changes in teaching practices, curriculum and</p>

<p><i>School Leadership &amp; Management</i> Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 189 - 203</p>	<p>professional learning in two Australian schools. Perceptual data was collected through interviews with school administrators and teachers. ANT conceives of leadership as being 'stretched' across people, situations and tools in a networked, ongoing process. Elements derive their significance from relations with, and in the way they differ from, other elements.</p> <p><b>Main Findings:</b></p> <p><b>Site One</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this school leadership positions and attributes were the largest contributors to conceptions of leadership of curriculum and classroom practice</li> <li>• The knowledge of school leaders and their development of staff knowledge were commonly identified as important characteristics of leadership practice as were their leadership attributes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Site Two</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this school the most commonly attributed example of leadership was an unanticipated event which had a mobilizing effect in the area of professional development. A teacher had the opportunity to engage in action research in conjunction with a university.</li> <li>• Leadership in professional learning at this school was perceived as being fashioned collectively with groups of teachers engaging in and sharing reflective writing led by the teacher who had done the action research.</li> <li>• The connection between an individual teacher's experience and the shared experiences that followed was perceived as central to this leadership.</li> <li>• Similarly, an initiative to upgrade teachers' IT skills was not fashioned in isolation. Benchmark Classrooms were established where facilities were upgraded and technology trialed, the results of which led to modifications in the set-up of subsequent classrooms.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Professional Development / Teacher Quality</b></p> <p>In Calderhead, J. &amp; Gates, P. (2005) <i>Conceptualizing Reflection in Teacher</i></p>	<p><b>Russell, T. (2005) Critical Attributes of a Reflective Teacher: Is Agreement Possible?</b></p> <p>The author seeks to define the critical attributes of a reflective teacher by posing a series of questions. He claims that if each teacher educator were to respond to the questions they would better come to understand their personal assumptions related to reflection in teaching. The author's responses to the questions are based on his own experience as a teacher educator and draw on specific examples.</p> <p><b>Main Arguments:</b></p> <p>The questions and the author's own responses are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>"How does a teacher know when reflection is productive?"</b> – "...when it leads to changes in practice that may or may not be retained but that result in a better personal understanding of one's practice."</li> <li>• <b>"How does an observer recognize a reflective teacher?"</b> - "only by investing considerable time in observation and discussion...with a view to listening for puzzles and dilemmas, for re-thinking of assumptions and beliefs, and for evidence that these are taken into the practice setting."</li> <li>• <b>"Is a reflective teacher a good teacher?"</b> – "... we are more likely to understand reflection if we keep it separate from the elusive and</li> </ul>

<p><i>Development</i></p>	<p>time-worn issue of what represents 'good' teaching.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<b>How is a weak reflective teacher different from a strong un-reflective teacher?</b>” – “here there is no simple reply...there are at least three issues involved here: quality of teaching ( as perceived by pupils and by observers), quality of reflection ( based on spoken and written words and on observations of practice), and consistency - the extent to which one’s teaching practice matches one’s beliefs and self-perceptions.”</li> <li>• “<b>Can a teacher whose practices never change be said to be reflective?</b>” - “probably not”</li> <li>• “<b>Is a teacher who can articulate principles of practice being reflective?</b>” – “Yes, - if the principles of practice match the practice rather than personal beliefs about the practice.”</li> <li>• “<b>Does being reflective mean thinking about one’s teacher, or does it require doing something about one’s teaching?</b>” - “...being reflective serves little purpose if it does not involve, in central and essential ways, changes to teaching as well as development of thinking about teaching.”</li> <li>• “<b>Can one be a reflective teacher while denying all interest in reflection?</b>” – “...it seems possible but improbable.”</li> <li>• “<b>Can reflection help the weak teacher improve?</b>” - “We assume that beginners learn to teach by being told how to teach... We also assume that practical experience in schools leads directly to learning how to teach.” In the case of the weak teacher...”rather than questioning our medium of communication or our assumptions about how one learns to teach, we conclude that the weak student teacher failed to take the advice offered...” An alternative interpretation would be that the weak teacher has not seen the connections the observer has seen to their practice and needs substantially more help than we generally offer in learning how to reflect on their teaching.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership</b> / <b>Using data</b>  <i>International Journal of Leadership in Education Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 319 - 329</i></p>	<p><b>Shen, J. &amp; Cooley, V. (2008) Critical issues in using data for decision-making.</b></p> <p>The authors identify eight critical issues in using data for decision-making based on their work with 16 principals, the state department of education, major state level professional associations, and universities in a midwest state of the USA.</p> <p><b>Main Findings / Arguments:</b></p> <p>The eight issues identified are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An overemphasis on achievement data based on standardized tests does not provide a clear student learning profile and has limited implications for curriculum and instruction.</li> <li>2. The current emphasis on data tends to centre on data ‘of’ learning, rather than data ‘for’ learning, the data being used more for accountability purposes, rather than to improve teaching and learning. Data is currently used primarily for accountability purposes.</li> <li>3. Student achievement data not intersected with other streams of data will not facilitate student learning. Intersection involves four types of data: (a) demographic data; (b) perceptual data; (c) student achievement data (both formal and informal); (d) school process data. Of the 16 principals interviewed, only two used student and community background data and only 3 reported using school process</li> </ol>

	<p>data.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Many districts do not possess the technological infrastructure to analyse data in a form for efficient and effective use by teachers, principals, central office administrators and others.</li> <li>5. District level and school level turf wars and the politics of data compromise school and district effectiveness. These turf wars are related to the purposes for which data is used.</li> <li>6. University teacher education and administrator preparation programmes fail to meet the needs of the teachers and administrators they serve.</li> <li>7. The function and role of data in the educational process must be clearly defined or the promise of data will likely be compromised - are decisions data-driven, data-based or data-informed? The authors claim they should be data-informed since while data provide a sound foundation for influencing education, the moral dimension of education must also be considered.</li> <li>8. Data-informed decision-making along will not renew the educational system, there has to be coherent changed in the system to make sure that stakeholders have the knowledge and skills in data-informed decision-making and structural arrangements in place to facilitate date-informed decision-making and harness the power of data-informed decision-making.</li> </ol>
<p><b>School Structures – Block Scheduling</b></p> <p><i>The Clearing House v.75, n. 6 pp. 319 – 323</i></p> <p><i>Economics of Education Review v. 21, pp. 599 – 607</i></p> <p><i>Phi Delta</i></p>	<p><b>Evans, W., Tokarczyck, J., Rice, S. &amp; McCray, A. (2002) Block scheduling: An evaluation of outcomes and impacts.</b></p> <p><b>Rice, J., Croninger, R. &amp; Roellke, C. (2002) The effect of block scheduling high school mathematics courses on student achievement and teachers’ use of time: Implications for educational productivity</b></p> <p><b>Hackmann, D. (2004) Constructivism and block scheduling: Making the connection</b></p> <p>I have summarized the findings published in three articles here.</p> <p><b>Main Findings:</b></p> <p><b>Relating to student achievement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are only a limited number of studies relating block scheduling to achievement and the results are mostly inconclusive. For example, Bateson (1990) and Rice et al. (2002) found that block scheduling led to a drop in mathematics achievement, whereas Walker (2000) found an improvement in math achievement.</li> <li>• One study of three US schools found that block scheduling resulted in improved academic achievement generally, including higher SAT test scores.</li> <li>• The studies are often problematic because they fail to control for the type of block scheduling (eg. two day rotations vs semester rotations where students only take each subject every second semester) and they rarely take professional development into account. More crucially, I could not find a single study which controlled for the type of instructional activities taking place.</li> </ul> <p><b>Classroom Practices</b></p>

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- Studies generally found that the introduction of block scheduling led to changes in teachers' classroom practice. In particular it tended to lead to the use of more varied instructional activities and to more work with small groups and individual students. However, the introduction of block scheduling in the absence of a coherent philosophy of learning can lead to a situation where teachers implement a "host of relatively minor and disconnected instructional strategies simply to fill time"(Hackmann, 2002). One author noted the possibilities offered by block scheduling for implementing a coherent constructivist vision of learning.
- There is some evidence that teachers felt they were able to cover concepts in more depth with a block schedule, though this was not linked to a particular assessment of student understanding of the concepts in question.
- There is evidence that block schedules can lead to a reduction in the amount of homework that a student must do or that a teacher must mark on any given day. There is also evidence that block schedules may lead to students receiving more help with homework in class.

**Behaviour Issues**

- There is some evidence that block scheduling can lead to a reduction in discipline issues, with one school experiencing a decline in detentions of 50% ( Evans et al., 2002)

**Problems**

- The problem of substitute teachers cropped up regularly in the studies. Teachers must prepare much more detailed materials for substitutes to be able to cope with block schedules and substitutes were less able to improvise when needed. Often worksheets were used, which was not a suitable way of occupying students for an extended period of time.
- Students in some studies noted that some teachers were less able to engage students for extended periods of time than others.
- Some writers expressed the opinion that block schedules may be more suitable for some subject areas than for others.