



Teaching Physical Education In A Block Schedule

Middle and Secondary School Physical Education Council

A Resource Paper from the
National Association for Sport and Physical Education

What is Block Scheduling?

Block scheduling is a modified way to divide time into instructional blocks ranging from 20 to 110 minutes. Block scheduling offers a new and, as many researchers say, more efficient way to organize the school day (Bryant & Claxton, 1996; Canady & Rettig, 1995a, 1995b; Edwards, 1995; Rettig & Canady, 1996). Alternative scheduling continues to augment the learning environments in the schools across the nation. The research concerning the effects of block scheduling indicates that the system has many advantages over traditional schedule approaches for both students and teachers (Bryant & Claxton, 1996; Edwards, 1995; Hopkins & Canady, 1997; Thomas & O'Connell, 1997).

Positive Effects of Block Scheduling

1. Environment

- fewer interruptions-more flowing day
- additional instructional time
- increase time for Silent Sustained Reading
- eliminates unnecessary passing times between classes
- increases the experience of an educational community
- student behavior problems decrease; improves attendance; reduces discipline referrals
- fewer suspensions

2. Curriculum

- student centered instruction
- allows for flexibility in curriculum
- integrated curricula experiences
- interdisciplinary experiences
- thematic instruction
- better networking opportunities for teachers
- use of the community as a learning resource

3. Instruction

- environment to improve instruction and learning
- less lesson fragmentation
- fewer students on a daily basis
- innovative and creative teaching
- active learning strategies: cooperative learning, problem solving, decision making, research, use of manipulative, guided discovery, projects
- students have more intense focus on subject matter
- meets the needs for the different learning styles of students



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- meets the needs for the teaching styles of teachers
 - increases individualized teacher-student interaction
 - more time to teach
 - less stress
4. Assessment
- reduces the failure rate
 - improvement in scores on standardized tests
 - standard based assessment
 - less daily paperwork and grading
 - an improvement in student achievement
 - self assessment
 - reflecting journals
 - peer assessment
 - portfolios
 - rubrics

Negative Effects of Block Scheduling

1. Denies students access to the entire physical education curriculum.
Solution: Not having equal access to the entire physical education curriculum will alert physical educators to articulate with feeder schools so curriculums can be sequential rather than repetitive.
2. Students have long periods of time between classes. States that require a semester or a year of physical education limit long term participation of students during school.
Solution: Physical educators need to negotiate for successive semesters of physical education to instill concepts for an active lifestyle.
3. Student absences result in greater content loss. **Solution:** Absenteeism forces students to become more responsible for their own learning and for the make-up work which can be arduous. Students need to become self directed and motivated to ask for assignments to stay abreast of current class content. Long term absences need pre assignments.
4. Transfer students are at an increased disadvantage. Although units are transferable, the students learning structure is interrupted. **Solution:** Teachers need to monitor the students transition into block scheduling to keep them on task.
5. Poor teachers have more problems. **Solution:** Administration needs to target these teachers for further staff development. Departments need to have more staff meetings



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to share the lesson format, instructional units, instructional concepts and teaching strategies.

6. Teacher absences are more costly. **Solution:** Teachers need to establish crews which assign students to class management tasks, equipment set-up & take down, warm-ups and on task behavior. Teaching leadership skills to students will enhance the structure of the class in the absence of the teacher.

7. Mainstreaming special education students. The extensive time frame is lengthy for the student population with a short attention span. **Solution:** Physical educators need to use a variety of teaching styles and an assortment of tasks to engage their mind and skill ability.

Block Scheduling

The Do's

1. The use of technology in physical education:
 - Computer Lab-opportunity to use instructional software, update personal portfolio and access the internet
 - Instructional software use to enhance students learning concepts
 - CD's- extensive interaction with accessing information and learning concepts
 - Video use a short clip for an anticipatory set of the lesson
 - VCR monitor used for viewing and student projects and presentations
 - Camcorder used to analyze student motor skills along with teacher feedback
 - Digital camera used to show progress in students motor skill development and placed in the students electronic portfolio to show before and after growth
 - Multi-media projects used to demonstrate what students know and are able to do
 - Heart monitors are accurate ways to teach exercise physiology concepts
 - Spirometer used in a station approach to assess lung capacity
 - Blood pressure used in a station approach to emphasize importance of exercise
 - TriFit used to assess and prescribe personal fitness program and monitor progress
2. Prepare a daily lesson plan
 - Teach to content standards
 - Logical transition: social initiative, warm-ups, work-out circuit (use of devices and computer), present lesson objectives, drill & practice (use of video camera & feedback), modified game, (groups present offensive strategy in modified game) closure (ask questions to check for understanding)
3. Implement a variety of instructional strategies



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- Peer teaching with social initiatives
 - Self check in fitness stations and critical elements during skill development
 - Command style introducing the concept and beginning stages of skill development
 - Guided practice in skills development stations recording repetition
 - Reciprocal style to further enhance skill development
 - Guided Discovery method used to instill thinking skills with total physical response to develop motor learning and motor skill development
4. Make use of school and community resources
- Extended period allows for excursions, job shadowing, guest speakers, community service, integration of technology interdisciplinary projects
 - Research the school and community for means of making course content relevant to the world outside of the classroom
5. Allow time for reflection
- Journals, reflection pieces portfolios and quick checks
 - Use these tools so students may monitor their progress
 - Create opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning
 - Reflection tools enhance student focus and provides evidence of their personal and academic growth

The Don'ts

1. Don't talk the talk and not walk the block
- Teachers accept the block without professional development
 - Don't find solutions to the many challenges created with a new schedule
 - Don't have the answers for extended period
2. Failure to prepare for block scheduling
- Not prepared an environment conducive to learning
 - No curriculum in place
 - Not aware of the National Physical Education Standards
 - Not aware of a variety of instructional strategies
 - Not assessing what students know and are able to do
 - No corrective feedback to students from the teacher
3. Lack of experience
- No training in cooperative learning
 - No training in class building
 - No training in team formation with other teachers
 - Transition time intentionally wasted
 - Students off task and hanging out



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- Waste time with extended time in the locker room
- Same activity for 90 minutes
- No structure

Steps to Developing Lesson Plans for the Block Schedule

Researcher Robert Canady and Michael Rettig (1995) have observed that “teachers who are most successful in block scheduling typically plan lessons in three parts”.

Steps 1 through 3 are found in the following organizing schemes mentioned below.

Step 1: Explanation

- Select standards to be addressed in the lesson
- Identify the concepts to be learned
- State the objectives of the lesson
- Give examples and further explanation

Step 2: Application

- Experience the concepts through guided practice
- Reiterate the concepts and check for understanding
- Skill application in modified practice experience
- Groups review concepts through demonstration

Step 3: Synthesis

- Demonstrates understanding through another example
- Links understanding with an open-ended question- Resistance is a principle of motion that slows the ball down. What resistance occurs in the game of basketball?

Possible Organizing Schemes for Extended-Period Lessons

1. Single Complex Concept or Skill:

For use with complex or difficult to grasp material. Devoting an entire extended period to a single, well defined skill or concept allows for more rapid mastery.

- A. Roll activity - review prerequisite skills/information (5 min)
- B. Introduction of concept or skill (5 min)
- C. Examples and further explanation (10-15 min)
- D. Small group or partner activity (25-30 min)
- E. Regroup to share results/ check progress, reiterate focus (5-10 min)
- F. Individual activity of independent work period (15-20 min)
- G. Regroup for final check/review (5-10 min)
- H. Quiz, demonstration or other assessment of mastery (5-15 min)



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2. Teaching or Culminating Project:

Best when used to complete a project students have been well prepared for in advance. The key to making this plan work is to require that the project (or some well defined phase of it be completed by the end of the class period.

- A. Roll activity - review prerequisite skills/information (5 min)
- B. Introduction/review of project guidelines (5-10 min)
- C. Work period (25-30 min)
- D. Pause for progress check and clarification (5-10 min)
- E. Work period (25-30 min)
- F. Regroup to share results (10-20 min)
- G. Submit final product

3. Tying Up Loose Ends:

For use with concepts and skills to which students have already been exposed but which they have not yet mastered. Avoid trying to address more than three separate areas in a single class period. Consider using an individual activity in the first half of the class period and a group activity in the second half or using two small group /partner activities and skipping the individual activity altogether. All three scenarios work well. Your choice will depend on the types of activities you have planned and on the needs of your particular student group.

- A. Roll activity - review and practice (skill concept #1) (5 min)
- B. Brief review (skill/concept #2) (5 min)
- C. Small group or partner activity (skill/concept #2) (20-25 min)
- D. Regroup to share results (5-10 min)
- E. Brief review (skill/concept #3) (5 min)
- F. Individual activity/work period (skill/concept #3) (20-25 min)
- G. Regroup to share results (skill/concept #3) (5-10 min)
- H. Review (skills/concepts #1-3) (5-10 min)
- I. Quiz, demonstration, or other assessment of mastery (5-15 min)



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How can physical educators prepare for the longer blocks of time?

Educational reform is focusing on standard based curriculum. Physical education is apart of this movement. The National Content Standards for Physical Education can be found in the document, *Moving Into The Future*. The purpose of the document is to establish content standards for the physical education program that clearly identify what a student should know and be able to do as a result of a quality physical education program. It also provides teacher-friendly guidelines for assessment of the content standards. Ask the question. Are there physical education standards in place in the State? The next step is to check with the school district, regional or state department of education. If this curriculum exists, get a copy and update the school site curriculum. If there are no standards in place, it is time to move into the future and use the NASPE document to guide the curriculum writing process.

What content is to be taught to provide the knowledge and skill needed for students to be physically educated?

The role of State K-12 Physical Education Framework is to provide a model scope and sequence of appropriate physical activity that delivers a diverse and varied curriculum. The NASPE Physical Education Standards are considered exit standards. It is up to the curriculum committee to address the exit standards through the grade level content standards. Content standard are also known as benchmarks. What are the specific cognitive, affective and psychomotor behaviors expected to be achieved a at each grade level? It is the grade level content standards that are inserted in each of the instructional units taught in the curriculum. The lessons are designed to instruct concepts that address the content standards that in turn, accentuate the exit standards.

What concepts will students need to know and be able to do to lead and enjoy a physically active life style?

The book, *Concepts of Physical Education - What Every Student Needs to Know*, Bonnie Mohnsen, Editor, is the perfect source to introduce concepts to be taught in the daily physical education lessons. The book imparts the specific information about what must be taught in grades K-12. The content is grade specific and can be addressed during each instructional unit.



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The Vision

Teachers: 21st Century Roles and Skills

- Design opportunities for group interaction.
- Design debriefing activities to assess process.
- Center learning around students' interests and learning styles.
- Model a variety of information management strategies (plan, gather, organize, test, question).
- Decentralize responsibilities for learning to students.
- Act more like "coach", an idea planter and obstacle remover.
- Intervenes in students' learning process with questions & cues.

Learner: 21st Century Roles and Skills

- Is aware of process for learning, a critical thinker.
- Can manage information and apply it to appropriate situations.
- Assumes increased responsibility for learning.
- Is self-directed for life (6-10 career changes).
- Cooperates in group projects and collaborates in problem solving situations.
- Empowered planner with a rationale for organizing.

The Transformed Learning Environment

- Information comes from a variety of sources in response to problem situations.
- Students create, manipulate, and use information to solve real-life problems.
- Students have access to global resources through on-line services and CD-ROM technology.
- Students are expected to use information to solve novel problems or complete authentic work tasks.
- Students solve problems that come from real situations.
- The curriculum is shaped by the knowledge needed to solve real-life problems or complete real learning or work tasks.
- Evaluation is based on quality of solutions, portfolios documenting student performance, self and teacher assessment, and standardized measures.
- The teacher is mentor and guide, often learning material along with the students.



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The Nuts and Bolts of Blocks

It is important to design a block schedule that is unique to your school and that which will enhance student achievement. Make the schedule fit the staff, the students and the community needs. The following are a few questions that can be helpful when researching the block schedule.

1. How has class size been effected?
2. How have the elective offerings been impacted? How does the orchestra/music/athletic programs operate?
3. What has this change done for your reluctant learner? For the gifted learner? For the student in the middle?
4. What do you like about this change (schedule)? Is your job more enjoyable? Are the students learning better?
5. What has happened to your work load?
6. How has this affected your teaching techniques and methods?
7. What can you do in instruction and curriculum that you could not do before?
8. What has happened to specific programs?
9. How does this give people time to do team planning?
10. How has this affected your method of evaluation and assessment?
11. What kind of training/preparation is needed before the change is made?
12. Schedule questions:
 - 4 period day - what about retention problems from term to term?
 - 6 period day - what about the problems of only meeting every other day?
 - what about the day without a prep period?



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A Variety of Block Schedules

A/B Block Schedule

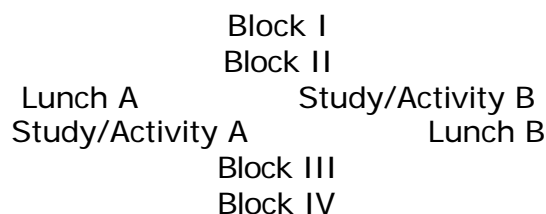
| | | |
|----------|---------------|----------------------|
| Period 1 | 8:00 - 9:30 | "A" Day |
| Period 2 | 9:35 - 11:05 | English 10 |
| Lunch | 11:05 - 11:50 | Physical Education |
| Period 3 | 11:55 - 1:25 | Biology |
| Period 4 | 1:30 - 3:00 | Spanish 2 (elective) |

| | | |
|----------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Period 5 | 8:00 - 9:30 | "B" Day |
| Period 6 | 9:35 - 11:05 | Band |
| Lunch | 11:05 - 11:50 | Educational Resource Period |
| Period 7 | 11:55 - 1:25 | Geometry |
| Period 8 | 1:30 - 3:00 | World History (elective) |

A/B Block Schedule

| <u>Monday</u> | | <u>Schedule A</u> | <u>Schedule B</u> |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Period 1 | 8:00 - 8:56 | Period 1 8:00 - 9:38 | Period 2 8:00 - 9:38 |
| Period 2 | 9:06 - 10:06 | Brunch 9:38 - 9:46 | Brunch 9:38 - 9:46 |
| Brunch | 10:06 - 10:14 | Tutorial 3 9:56 - 10:32 | Tutorial 3 9:56 - 10:32 |
| Period 4 | 10:24 - 11:20 | Period 4 10:42 - 12:17 | Period 5 10:42 - 12:17 |
| Period 5 | 11:30 - 12:26 | Lunch 12:17 - 12:53 | Lunch 12:17 - 12:53 |
| Lunch | 12:26 - 1:03 | Period 6 1:03 - 2:38 | Period 7 1:03 - 2:38 |
| Period 6 | 1:13 - 2:09 | Common Planning Time | Common Planning Time |
| Period 7 | 2:19 - 3:15 | | |

4/4 Semester Block Schedule





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The Block On-Line

The internet provides a tremendous resource for information about working with extended periods. Through the use of web pages, information is available via the following web sites and many more:

<http://www.ascd.org/pubs/el/canady.html>

<http://www.msdsteuben.k12.in.us/ahs/stats/ahsdfs.htm>

<http://www.msdsteuben.k12.in.us/ahs/ahs.htm>

<http://www.state.vt.us/educ/alliance/block.htm>

<http://www.beaulib.dtx.net/~job/Block.htm>

<http://carei.coled.umn.edu/blockscheduling/research/tables.htm>

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Bukowski, B. & Stinson, A. (2000). Physical educators' perceptions of block scheduling in secondary physical education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 71(1), 53-57.

Claxton, D., & Bryant, J. (1996). Block scheduling: What does it mean for physical education? *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 67(3), 48-50.

Canady, R., & Rettig, M. (1995a). *Block scheduling: A catalyst for change in high schools*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 387 930).

Canady, R., & Rettig, M. (1995b). The power of innovative scheduling. *Educational Leadership*, 53(3), 4-10.

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LESSON PLAN

Teacher: _____ Unit: _____ Grade: _____

Teaching Style: A B C D E F

Grade Level Standards: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Teaching Cues:

Time:

Equipment/Materials:

Anticipatory Set:

Introduction/Warm-up:

Teacher Activities (explain, model, check for understanding, motivation):

Student Activities (guided practice, independent practice):

Closure/Assessment:



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Block Schedule for Physical Education

Modified example of an extended period in physical education inspired by an issue of JOPERD, March 1, 1996.

Sample "A"

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 8:00 - 8:10 | Dress out and roll call |
| 8:10 - 8:15 | Stretching and warm-up |
| 8:15 - 8:35 | Cardiovascular and fitness routine |
| 8:35 - 8:40 | Lesson concept #1 introduced |
| 8:40 - 8:55 | Guided practice/skill development/modified activity |
| 8:55 - 9:00 | Lesson concept #2 introduced |
| 9:00 - 9:15 | Guided practice/skill development/modified activity |
| 9:15 - 9:20 | Closure: debriefing, check for understanding, homework |
| 9:20 - 9:30 | Dress and pass to the next class |

Sample "B"

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 8:00 - 8:30 | Computer Lab - Sim-Athlete by Bonnie's Fitware (design a practice plan based upon the characteristics of the athlete) |
| 8:30 - 8:40 | Dress and roll call |
| 8:40 - 8:55 | Cardiovascular and fitness routine |
| 8:55 - 9:00 | Lesson concept #1 introduced - practice variables: varied, whole-part-whole, distributed, feedback |
| 9:00 - 9:15 | Guided practice and skill development analysis |
| 9:15 - 9:20 | Closure: debriefing, check for understanding, homework |
| 9:20 - 9:30 | Dress and pass to the next class |