

Future Research

There is more research to be done at Suburban High School. When they were in twelfth grade, some students in the Traditional cohort completed two blocks of items from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) focusing on geometry and on probability and statistics. Students in the First Reform cohort completed the same items, and students in the Second Reform cohort are scheduled to do so this year. These items will be scored and analyzed, to provide a picture of differences between cohorts in knowledge of geometry and probability and statistics. Also, standardized tests administered by the state in which Suburban High School resides will be analyzed, to provide another view of how the curriculum and schedule have affected achievement.

It is more important, however, to extend the current study to other and contrasting sites. A particularly useful study would be to implement a similar program at an historically under-achieving high school. Block schedules, when implemented correctly, are purported to have particularly positive effects on schools with discipline problems, and to be particularly helpful for low achieving students (Kramer, 1997a). Further, there is general agreement both among proponents of the IMP curriculum and among those who have opposed some of its implementations that IMP is likely to be particularly effective for students who have historically been disaffected from mathematics (Alper, et al., 1997; Wu, 2000).

Most importantly, the experience at Suburban High School has demonstrated that a semestered block schedule, when properly implemented, can provide students the opportunity to take a larger number of advanced mathematics courses than they would otherwise. When implemented together with the IMP curriculum, previously reported

negative side effects of a semestered block schedule on student mathematics achievement were prevented and even reversed.

Adelman (1999) in reviewing data from the High School and Beyond longitudinal study found that the highest level mathematics course completed in high school was a strong predictor of whether or not a student would eventually be able to complete a bachelor's degree successfully. Adelman's study was correlational so it is unclear whether providing a student with more opportunity to study advanced mathematics will truly improve his or her prospects later in life but it is a possibility. Given the current emphasis on educational opportunity for all, as reflected in the such documents as the *Principle and Standards for School Mathematics* (NCTM, 2000) and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (U. S. Department of Education, 2002) such a possibility is certainly worth pursuing. Implementing a semestered block schedule together with IMP or a similar curriculum is a promising vehicle for increasing all students' opportunity to study advanced mathematics.