

Perspectives on Scheduling for Job Sharing Teachers:
Practices, Problems, and Possibilities

by

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the job sharing schedules and experiences of ten elementary school teachers. The purpose of the study is to gain women's perspectives on how successful job sharing can be ensured within flexible scheduling arrangements. The importance of the study is confirmed by the growing number of women trying to balance their personal and professional lives through alternative work options.

Research is limited on scheduling for job sharing teachers and on ensuring effective instruction within flexible scheduling arrangements. This qualitative study intends to contribute to the literature on job sharing in this area.

The study is designed specifically to: describe different scheduling arrangements of elementary job sharing teachers, to gain the perspectives of women who job share, and to find out how these women ensure continuity in instruction. Ten women teaching in British Columbia school districts were purposefully selected to describe five different job sharing partnerships. Through semi-structured interviews the women provided information rich case studies on flexible job sharing arrangements.

The teachers confirmed that the key elements for successful job sharing identified in the literature review are important considerations. These elements are: scheduling,

compatibility, communication, and responsibility sharing. The women offered their perceptions on addressing these key issues. Several new patterns for ensuring successful job sharing emerged in the study. The themes of balance, flexibility, and choice recurred throughout the study.

The study finds that educationally sound job sharing arrangements are possible within many types of schedules. The value of this study lies in its ability to promote interest in and consideration of the practices, problems, and possibilities of flexible job sharing.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Title Page..... | i |
| Abstract..... | ii |
| Table of Contents..... | iv |
| Acknowledgements..... | v |
| Prologue..... | 1 |
| Chapter 1 Introduction..... | 4 |
| Chapter 2 Literature Review..... | 10 |
| Definition of Job Sharing and Related Terms.. | 10 |
| General History of Job Sharing..... | 12 |
| Findings of Related Research..... | 14 |
| Chapter Summary..... | 25 |
| Chapter 3 Methodology of Research..... | 27 |
| Research Questions and Objectives..... | 27 |
| Research Design..... | 28 |
| Sampling Procedures..... | 29 |
| Research Measures..... | 31 |
| Research Procedures..... | 33 |
| Data Analysis..... | 34 |
| Chapter Summary..... | 35 |
| Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis..... | 36 |
| Case Studies..... | 36 |
| Key Elements | 58 |
| Emerging Patterns..... | 72 |
| Themes..... | 74 |
| Chapter Summary..... | 75 |
| Chapter 5 Summary and Implications..... | 76 |
| Summary of Study..... | 76 |
| Limitations of Study..... | 79 |
| Implications of Study..... | 80 |
| Suggestions for Further Research..... | 81 |
| Bibliography..... | 83 |
| Appendices..... | 86 |
| A) Job Sharing Agreement..... | 86 |
| B) Flexible Job Sharing Policy..... | 87 |
| C) Restrictive Job Sharing Policy..... | 88 |
| D) Interview Guide..... | 89 |
| E) Letter of Informed Consent..... | 91 |
| F) Face Sheet..... | 92 |

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PROLOGUE

This qualitative study grew from my own interest in job sharing. After having my first child I began looking into the options available for part-time teaching. I am a primary classroom teacher, without a specialty area. Teaching Kindergarten was a part-time option I had considered. However, I preferred not to have to work five days a week. The logical choice for me was to share a classroom with another teacher interested in job sharing.

I enquired at the local school board office about making job sharing arrangements for my return to work. The Director of Personnel described the board as being supportive of job sharing. I was disappointed to find out, however, that local board policy requires that both teachers in a job sharing partnership be at work each day.

This policy discouraged me in my attempts to find a flexible work schedule. Arranging daycare, commuting to work, and teaching every weekday would not allow me the flexibility and balance I was looking for. The five day work week was what I was trying to avoid.

The objective of the restrictive scheduling policy is to ensure continuity in instruction for the students. I did not believe, however, that it was necessary to have job sharing teachers work split day schedules to provide continuity. With careful planning I felt certain that job sharing teachers could offer educationally sound instruction within a variety

of schedules.

In order to understand the issue more fully, I began questioning colleagues in other districts about their job sharing practices. Some of my colleagues complained that job sharing was not practised in their districts at all, others enthusiastically described the very flexible job sharing practices in their districts.

This was the beginning of my inquiry into job sharing. In my own interest, as well as in the interest of other teachers, I felt a responsibility to continue the study. Flexible job sharing programs have the potential to improve the quality of work life for teachers. In The New Meaning of Educational Change, Fullan (1991) writes that individual teachers have a "personal responsibility...to make schools better, if for no other reason than that this might represent one of the few routes to improving their own working conditions" (p. 140).

As a woman I felt additional responsibility to continue the study. Job sharing is an alternative work option used mainly by women. Raising awareness and understanding about job sharing may help improve working conditions for women.

Initiative for change in women's situations continues to come from women themselves...an analysis of issues, based on a description of how those issues are actually experienced by women, is essential to the development of effective strategies for social/political action. (Women's Research Centre, 1987, p. 1)

I hope that this study gives me a better understanding of flexible job sharing and the confidence to encourage it within

my own school district. I hope it gives the women interviewed in the study a greater appreciation and awareness of job sharing, as well as a sense of empowerment regarding their position. I also hope that this study shows interested teachers viable alternatives to restrictive scheduling practices. My intent is to raise commitment to and encourage development in flexible job sharing practices and policies.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Women's growing participation in the workforce is a major impetus in the demand for alternative work options. Working women with families are in need of flexibility and choice in employment schedules. Part-time work, job sharing, flexitime, home based work, weekend work, and shift work are some alternatives to the traditional 5 day-40 hour work week.

Traditionally it has been the case that women left the workforce when they married. More recently, women continued working until having children. Today most married women remain working whether or not they have children. In 1990, 71% of all couples with children in the home aged 18 or younger were "dual earner", in comparison with just 30% in 1970 (Statistics Canada, 1993). With more Canadian couples than ever before balancing family and employment obligations, there is an increasing demand for alternative work options.

Dual earner couples with young children are the most likely to have different work schedules, with at least one partner **not** working the traditional 9-to-5 or Monday-to-Friday work week. Of the two parents, it is almost always the mother who has a non-traditional work pattern. (Statistics Canada, 1994, p. 30)

Part-time employment is the most common form of alternative work. Its usage over the past four decades has increased dramatically. Labour Canada (1983) reported that "the part-time component of the labour force is expected to increase by the end of the century to between 15 and 19

percent of the labour force" (p. 21). Labour Canada (1983) also reported that almost three quarters of part-time workers are women (p. 21).

In Part-time Work, Part-time Rights the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1982) found that the most common reason women work part-time is the same as the reason women work full time: economic necessity. The current social reality is why women choose part-time work:

- 1) In our society women do not only give birth to children, they also bear the major responsibility for their care.
- 2) In our society women also bear the major responsibility for the housework. (p. 15)

In Women and Part-Time Work, White (1983) noted the conflict that many women with children feel about combining home and labour force activities:

It is not possible to understand the phenomenon of part time work without grasping the social, economic and ideological realities of being a mother. A woman with children experiences conflicting pressures as to whether she should work in the home or go out to work in the labour force....The kinds of pressures experienced by mothers...[include] finances, day care, housework, paid work and ideology. (p. 3)

Part-time work offers women a compromise. It allows mothers to bring in extra income and provides for family time. However, there are many disadvantages inherent in traditional part-time work. The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1980) noted that:

The major problem with part-time work in Canada today is that it is not an integral part of the primary labour market either in theory or in practice. It constitutes a peripheral or secondary labour market where jobs are generally low skill, poorly paid, insecure, rarely

unionized and offer few advancement opportunities. (p. 3) Labour Canada's (1983) Commission of Inquiry into Part Time Work found "conclusive evidence to support the view that part time workers in the Canadian labour force are treated unfairly compared to full-time workers" (p. 21).

Job sharing is one answer to discriminatory part-time employment opportunities. Job sharing is a form of part-time employment in which two people choose to share the salary, benefits, and responsibilities of one full time job. It gives women the opportunity to maintain continuity in employment while allowing time for family life. Job sharing "overcomes many of the disadvantages inherent in conventional part-time employment while allowing similar amounts of work-free time" (Macrae, 1989, p. 18).

The high percentage of female elementary school teachers in British Columbia suggests a strong need for job sharing opportunities in the schools. It is reported in Gender Equity that 83% of elementary school teachers are women (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 1991).

Part-time work has not been readily available to elementary school teachers. Many mothers who teach have had to choose between working full time or withdrawing from the work force altogether while their children are young. The regular classroom teacher who would like to work part-time views job sharing as an attractive alternative.

[Job sharing] is of particular importance to teachers of contained classrooms (usually elementary school

teachers). Before job sharing was used in the schools, these teachers had few choices if they wanted to work less than full time. They could either quit or give up their classroom and take another position with the school district, if they were lucky enough to find...[a part-time] position available. (Moorman, Smith, & Ruggels, 1980b, p. 11)

Job sharing has the potential to allow mothers to continue in their teaching careers while still allowing for family time. Job sharing offers regular classroom teachers a real solution when they want to reduce their hours.

Support for flexible work options for teachers can be found in the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Education:

School districts and teachers' unions, in establishing employee contracts, establish flexible working conditions for women which allow for an appropriate combination of professional employment and family child rearing. (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 1988, p. 214)

Flexible job sharing policies would demonstrate a commitment of the education system to gender equity. The Ministry's Policy Direction on gender equity is:

...to ensure that the school system reflect the changing role of women....The goals of the working plans on gender equity are to....achieve gender equity in policies and practices in the education system. (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 1991, Introduction)

Forty-seven of the 75 British Columbia school districts had job sharing language in their collective bargaining agreements in 1994. Existing agreements regarding job sharing are not systematized, and many do little to support flexible job sharing arrangements. Agreements range from simple statements such as "Two teachers employed by the Board may

jointly request a specified job sharing assignment of a single full time position" to very comprehensive agreements (See Appendix A).

Some British Columbia school districts have implemented flexible scheduling policies for job sharing (See Appendix B) as well as contractual agreements. These districts believe that the educational interests of students can be met in flexible job sharing arrangements.

Other school districts have implemented restrictive scheduling policies for job sharing (See Appendix C). requiring teachers to work "portion of the day schedules". This calls upon teachers to be at school each day. Even in districts without this written policy, many administrators will choose to restrict teachers to portion of the day schedules.

The reasoning behind restrictive scheduling policies is to ensure effective instruction:

While students may benefit from exposure to more than one teacher, they must also adjust each time there is a change of teachers. This adjustment is less noticeable if it coincides with a change in subject area, but it is very difficult for two teachers to share the same subject area (especially at the elementary level) and provide a smooth coherent program....[therefore]at the elementary level, all part-time teachers' assignments shall be considered as part of a day and not part of a week. (See Appendix C)

This type of restrictive scheduling policy changes the flexible nature of job sharing. It limits the potential of job sharing to meet the needs of working women. It contradicts the flexible policies being practised in other

districts. In addition, this restrictive scheduling policy requires "splitting" the teachers responsibilities and the curriculum subjects. This practice contravenes recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Education (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 1988). The Commission recognized the importance of teachers' interdisciplinary approaches and the integration of curriculum subjects: "This teaching approach is to be encouraged greatly, not only in the early years of schooling, but throughout all years of the Common Curriculum" (p.100). Furthermore, the Commission made recommendations to facilitate integration and continuity in instruction:

We Recommend that throughout the years of the Common Curriculum...

- 1) teachers use an interdisciplinary approach in their teaching;
- 2) teachers instruct in ...[several] subject areas and work in interdisciplinary teams, at any given grade level (p.100)

Inquiry into flexible scheduling arrangements that are being successfully practised may be the first step in promoting change to restrictive job sharing policies. This study describes five different job sharing scheduling arrangements. Focus is on the perspectives of women who job share; their experiences and their methods of providing effective, cohesive instruction. This study explores viable alternatives to restrictive job sharing schedules.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This literature review on job sharing incorporates relevant Canadian studies, as well as the major American studies. It starts with a look at the meaning of job sharing and its related concepts. Next, it gives a brief general history of job sharing. The review then focuses on the literature relevant to this study. This includes research findings on: job sharer profiles, reasons for job sharing, support for job sharing, advantages and disadvantages of job sharing, and key elements for successful job sharing. These areas are relevant because they provide the foundations and impetus for this study.

Definition of Job Sharing and Related Terms

Job Sharing

Job sharing involves two or more people voluntarily sharing the responsibilities of one full time position with pro-rated salary and benefits.

Flexible Job Sharing

In this study flexible job sharing refers to scheduling practices and policies that are responsive to the needs of teachers. Choice and flexibility are stressed.

Restrictive Job Sharing

In this study restrictive job sharing refers to

scheduling practices and policies that are not responsive to the needs of teachers. Choice and flexibility are not offered.

Job Splitting

Job splitting is when two or more people split (rather than share) the duties and responsibilities of one full time position.

Work Sharing

Work Sharing is an employer initiated option presented as a temporary response to unemployment.

Catalyst, a New York based organization founded to create flexible working conditions for college educated women, was the first to use the term job sharing. In 1973, Catalyst issued a position paper defining job sharing and other forms of part-time work. The paper outlined the advantages of the flexible work alternatives for employers.

Meier's (1979) study Job Sharing. A New Pattern for Quality Work and Life was one of the first comprehensive research projects on job sharing as an alternative work option. Meier's study drew information from a lengthy questionnaire survey sent to several hundred job sharers. It also included selected interviews with partners, their supervisors, and some of their full time co-workers. Meier found four basic criteria for job sharing. Job sharing:

- 1) is voluntary - an option chosen by the worker;
- 2) involves the deliberate conversion of a full time

position;

3) depends on the existence of a partner or other half;

4) includes provision of fringe benefits. (p. 2)

Job sharing is a creative alternative to the traditional concept of part-time work. Part-time work has traditionally offered low wages, few benefits, little security, and little opportunity for training or promotion. In job sharing professional positions are restructured in ways in which they continue to provide benefits and allow career momentum:

Formalized job sharing arrangements can address the disparities between full and part-time workers. Shared jobs are generally fuller, more rewarding and carry greater responsibility and opportunity for advancement than the average part time position. (Williams, 1990, p. 4)

The term job sharing has often been used to define employment spreading strategies. Employment arrangements that attempt to retain employees during economic recession by reducing hours of work are more correctly defined as work sharing. Catalyst (1973) stresses that the concept of job sharing is to meet varying employment needs, not to reduce unemployment.

A General History of Job Sharing

In Britain and Europe, job sharing has been a popular work option for several decades in both the private and public sectors. For example, Barclay's Bank in England has had a job sharing program since the 1940's. The government of Britain encourages job sharing by offering employers a grant for implementing shared jobs. The European Economic Committee is

also reported as being in support of the development of job sharing programs for employees (Labour Canada, 1983).

In the United States interest in job sharing began in the 1960's. Many substantive studies on job sharing have taken place in the United States. Catalyst (1965) evaluated one of the first job sharing studies involving teachers. This project took place in Framingham, Massachusetts. One hundred and twenty job sharing positions had been created in school districts in Framingham and nearby towns. Initially administrators were reported as being negative regarding the concept of job sharing. At the conclusion of the study, however, Catalyst reported enthusiastic support for job sharing by principals, teachers, parents, and students.

Other major studies of job sharing in the schools were initiated in the seventies. Comprehensive studies took place on job sharing projects in the school districts of California (Moorman et al., 1980b), Wisconsin (Duttweiler, 1982), and Hawaii (Tanimura, 1981). All of these projects were evaluated as being very successful with benefits being reported by the teachers, administrators, and parents.

In Canada, job sharing is a relatively recent phenomenon, growing in popularity over the last three decades. There have been no large scale studies on job sharing in Canada. Labour Canada's (1983) study Part-Time Work in Canada does include a chapter on job sharing. Public hearings and two questionnaires were used by Labour Canada to obtain

information on job sharing. Through the questionnaires the views of 104 job sharers and 37 employers were received. The study found that job sharing in Canada "has become increasingly popular....and it appears to be working with considerable success" (p. 173).

Findings of Related Research

Profile of Job Sharers

Studies have found that most job sharers are professional women with young families (Labour Canada, 1983; Meier, 1979; Meltz, 1981; Plant, 1985). The profile obtained of Canadian job sharers in Part Time Work in Canada (Labour Canada, 1983) is similar to the profile found in the large American studies:

...women in professional occupations where part-time work opportunities with fringe benefits have not traditionally been available...generally from two income families...[with] young children at home. (Labour Canada, 1983, p. 175, 177)

Reasons for Job Sharing

Studies have indicated that job sharers have varied motives for job sharing. In Worksharing, Jobsharing, and Skill Development Leave, Swartz (1983) outlines the main reasons for job sharing:

People job share in order to meet other needs for more leisure, more time for family and household responsibilities, the desire to pursue other activities, (not necessarily just those which result in income), to gain work experience while still in school or training, as a means to facilitate entry to or exit from the labour market on a less than full time basis. (p. 12)

In Labour Canada's (1983) survey of job sharers respondents cited the following reasons for job sharing:

...young family,...keeping job skills current,... keeping a "foot in the door",... couldn't afford not to work,... desire for more leisure,...full time preferred but not available,... phasing into retirement,... maintaining seniority. (p. 178)

Although the reasons for job sharing are varied, studies have found the main reason cited is to meet both career and family needs (Labour Canada, 1983; Meier, 1979; Spencer, 1993).

Support for Job Sharing

Ongoing support for job sharing has come through several organizations committed to the promotion of flexible and fair workplaces. In the United States there are two major organizations formed for this purpose, Catalyst and New Ways to Work.

Catalyst began working for the advancement of women in the workplace in the early 1960's. Catalyst's work originally focused on helping individual women with career related issues. Their focus now centres on working with corporate policy makers to effect change for women. Catalyst makes major contributions to job sharing in its research on flexible work arrangements.

New Ways to Work is also committed to making the workplace more flexible. New Ways to Work promotes change through research, seminars, and public education. New Ways to

Work has many aides for promoting job sharing in the schools, including guide books and slide presentations.

In Canada, there is only one organization actively promoting job sharing. Work Well is Canada's first "Work Options Resource Centre". Work Well was founded in 1985 to help both employers and employees implement flexible work options.

Employers are often noted as being unsupportive of job sharing. Several studies have found that school boards often perceive job sharing as administratively inconvenient and educationally unsound (Caplan & Caplan, 1981; Davidson & Kline, 1979; Moorman, Smith, & Ruggels, 1980a, 1980b; Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1985). In an article in The Clearing House, Davidson and Kline (1979) write that:

Studies by the Catalyst organization have shown that superintendents in regions where part time teachers have not been employed tend to resist the notion of job sharing, even though their objections have proven unfounded elsewhere when the plan has been tried. (p. 228)

Traditionally, unions have also been unsupportive of job sharing. Unions often perceive job sharing as another form of part-time work that if abused by the employer may threaten collective bargaining. The National Union of Provincial Government Employees (1988) reported that job sharing is a "potential threat to our members....and can...have the effect of undermining the number of full-time positions and the negotiated provisions of the collective agreement" (p. 1). The British Columbia Federation of Labour's (1984) policy

paper on job sharing states that "besides losing half a paycheque, workers desiring job sharing stand to lose many hard-won working conditions and benefits" (p. 5).

As more union members demand flexible work schedules, union attitude is beginning to change. In Unions and Job Sharing, Williams (1990) writes that:

As Job sharing becomes more widely accepted, those concerns that have been raised about job sharing will have to be addressed through collective agreement provisions....Where appropriate collective agreement language is in place Job Sharing will not present any threat to union security. (p. 2 & 4)

The demand for job sharing within the teaching profession has resulted in many teachers' unions supporting their members' needs. Many teachers' unions have actively sought bargaining agreements which include job sharing (Moorman et al., 1980a, 1980b; Olmsted, 1980; Williams, 1990).

Advantages of Job Sharing in Education

Many advantages of job sharing have been reported from teachers, administrators, students and parents. These include time and flexibility, improved productivity, improved instruction, higher job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, career options, and valued employee retention.

Time and flexibility.

Labour Canada's (1983) study found that "flexibility to balance time at work with time to be with their family or to pursue other interests" (p. 181) was the most commonly noted benefit of job sharing for teachers. Tanimura's (1981) study

found that increased family time was the highest rated advantage of job sharing.

Improved productivity.

Many studies have found that job sharing teachers perceive themselves as being more productive than when they worked as a single full-time classroom teacher. Administrators have also noted the increased productivity of job sharing teachers (Davidson & Kline, 1979; Moorman et al., 1980a; Plant, 1985; Spencer, 1993; Tanimura, 1981).

Improved instruction.

Tanimura's (1981) study found that most teachers believed that their teaching had improved through job sharing. Spencer (1993) found indications that "expertise, and the quality of education increase with job sharing teachers" (p. 54).

In The Effects of Job Sharing on Student Performance Literature Review, Garman (1988) noted that literature on this topic is very limited. However, data questionnaire responses from teachers, parents, and administrators indicated very positive perceptions of the quality of education in job sharing arrangements.

Higher job satisfaction.

Studies have found that stress and burnout decrease in job sharing, and teachers have more enthusiasm and job satisfaction (Duncan, 1983; Duttweiler, 1982; Spencer 1993). Spencer (1993) writes that the "morale of both teachers ...appears to be higher...and burnout, stress, and absenteeism

are lessened or alleviated" (p. 54).

Reduced absenteeism.

A reduction in absenteeism is related to the more balanced lifestyle, decreased stress, and higher job satisfaction in job sharing (Davidson and Kline, 1979; Labour Canada, 1983; Olmsted 1977; Spencer, 1993).

Career options.

Job sharing provides career opportunities for several circumstances. Job sharing provides career continuation for women trying to balance professional and family responsibilities. "Job sharing has allowed women to avoid total absence from their careers for several years while their children grow" (Galy, 1989, p. 10). Job sharing provides career reentry for teachers returning to work after an absence (Galy, 1989), as well as opportunities for older employees to ease into retirement (Labour Canada, 1983).

Valuable employee retention.

Because job sharing meets the needs of many employees who might otherwise choose to leave the profession, there are lower turnover rates in job sharing (Howrigan, 1991; Meltz, Reid, & Swartz, 1981; Olmsted, 1977).

Disadvantages of Job Sharing in Education

Studies in job sharing have found disadvantages as well as advantages. Disadvantages include a decrease in wages and slower benefit increases for teachers, and increased

administrative demands and costs.

Decrease in wages and slower benefit increases.

The main disadvantage of job sharing to teachers is a decrease in wages due to reduced working time. A decrease in pension, superannuation, and increments are related disadvantages. "While job sharing, teachers progressed slower on the salary scale and accumulated seniority at a slower rate" (Galy, p.23).

Increased administrative demands.

Studies have frequently reported on the additional evaluation and supervision demands for administrators (Caplan & Caplan, 1981; Davidson & Klein, 1979; Duttweiler, 1982; Kumar, 1978; Moorman et al., 1980b). Studies have also found that these increased administrative demands may be more perceived than real, and that the job sharer's commitment to making the arrangement work helps ensure that the administrators duties are not increased (Mitchell, 1986; Moorman et al., 1980b; Olmsted, 1977; Tanimura, 1981).

Increased administrative costs.

Administrative costs incurred due to job sharing include increased hiring costs, benefit costs, and professional development costs (Duttweiler, 1982; Meltz et al., 1981). These disadvantages of job sharing for administrators are important considerations. However, a number of major research projects on job sharing have indicated that job sharing programs are cost efficient (Meltz et al., 1981; Moorman et

al., 1980b; Plant, 1985; Tanimura, 1981). Increased costs may actually be compensated for by reduced absenteeism, reduced staff turnover, increased productivity, and higher morale. However, it is difficult to assess these variables.

Key Elements for Successful Job Sharing

Job sharing studies have recognized several interrelated elements as being important for successful job sharing. These elements are compatability, communication, scheduling, and division of responsibilities.

Compatability.

Compatability between partners is generally recognized as the most important characteristic of a successful job sharing arrangement (Caplan and Caplan, 1981; Duncan, 1983; Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation, 1985; Spencer, 1993).

In order to increase the liklihood of compatability between partners, "most school districts either allow or require teachers who want to share to find their own partners" (Caplan and Caplan, 1981, p. 34). The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1985) reports that the questions teachers need to ask when choosing a partner are:

Do we share the same teaching philosophy and education goals?
 Are our opinions on discipline similar?
 Are our habits similar enough to share the same space?
 Are we both apt to put in about the same amount of effort?
 Do we like and respect each other? (p. 45)

Communication.

Communication is another key element in successful job sharing. Spencer's (1993) study found that "job sharing partners need to communicate clearly, frequently, formally, and informally" (p. 42).

In A Manager's Guide to: Job Sharing, Howrigan (1991) stated that job sharers must communicate effectively not only with each other, but also with their coworkers and supervisors:

This includes reporting changed work schedules and any alterations of stated plans or routines. Frequent, clear communication reduces the incidence of duplication, errors and omissions. (p.12)

Scheduling.

Scheduling is another consideration in successful job sharing. Caplan and Caplan (1981) found that a primary concern of teachers looking for a sharing partnership is to find "someone who wants to teach...the same schedule" (p. 34). Meier (1979) also noted that scheduling, as well as compatibility, communication, and task division is a principle issue for job sharing teachers (p. 29).

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1985) reported that scheduling possibilities for teachers are:

...limited only by the imagination. One must keep in mind, of course, the welfare of the students. At no time should a schedule be detrimental to their learning and development....The challenge is to devise a schedule that will meet the personal and professional needs of the teachers, as well as the needs of the students and the school. (p. 46)

Several studies have found that teachers usually prefer

scheduling arrangements of two or three days a week but that administrators often prefer split morning/afternoon schedules. Many administrators inexperienced with flexible job sharing fear that alternate schedules are not educationally sound (Mitchell, 1986; Moorman et al., 1980a, 1980b; Olmsted, 1980). Studies have also found, however, that administrators experienced with full day schedules are very satisfied with the quality of instruction being offered the students (Mitchell, 1986; Moorman et al., 1980a, 1980b; Olmsted, 1980).

Moorman et al. (1980b) noted that "school districts that seek to promote job sharing should note that many teachers may not find the option attractive when restricted to a split day" (p. 8). Meier (1979) found that "working half days for some respondents defeats shorter hours because of commuting or 'gearing up' for work" (p.77). Moorman et al. (1980a) reported that "Teachers cite the time and cost of commuting as well as the lack of large blocks of free time for themselves as disadvantages of the split day schedule" (p. 8).

Division of responsibilities.

Division of responsibilities is another key element that needs to be considered to ensure successful job sharing. Program planning, instructional duties, evaluation, and representation have all been identified as responsibilities that need to be considered to aide successful job sharing. (Howrigan, 1991; Moorman et al., 1980a, 1980b; Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation, 1985; Williams, 1990).

Addressing the key elements.

The importance of teachers planning how to address all of these key areas for successful job sharing is often reported (Howrigan, 1991; Moorman et al., 1980a, 1980b; Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1985). Many employers ask teachers initiating a job sharing partnership to write a proposal covering the key elements of job sharing. In Guide to Policies and Contracts on Job Sharing in the Schools, Moorman et al. (1980b) found that:

Most districts with experience in job sharing also require that teachers submit a detailed proposal explaining how they intend to share. (p. 5)

They found the very practice of having partners sit down together and make plans and commitments helps ensure effective instruction, and also indicates the compatibility of the partners. Article 30.50 in Appendix A gives an example of such an application proposal.

Research on how teachers with flexible job sharing schedules can effectively address the key elements of successful job sharing is lacking. Mitchell (1986) recommends that "studies of various models of job sharing and various ways of sharing the work would be both interesting and practical" (p. 120). This study intends to contribute to the literature in this area. This study looks at how job sharing teachers working within different scheduling arrangements address the key elements for successful job sharing.

Chapter Summary

Job sharing is generally defined as two or more people voluntarily sharing the duties and responsibilities of one full time position with pro-rated pay and benefits. It is an alternative employment option that is becoming increasingly popular. Job sharing is employed mainly by women from dual income families trying to balance their personal lives and professional careers.

A number of women's organizations have been involved in the promotion of job sharing for women. Support for job sharing from employers and union organizations has been limited. With the growing popularity and increased understanding of job sharing, support has been increasing.

Job sharing in education has a number of advantages and disadvantages. Main advantages include: time and flexibility, increased productivity, improved instruction, higher job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, improved career options, and valuable employee retention. The main disadvantages include: reduced salary, slower benefit increases, increased administrative costs, and increased administrative demands. Many studies have indicated that the disadvantages of job sharing may be outweighed by the advantages.

Research indicates the key elements of successful job sharing are compatibility, communication, scheduling, and responsibility sharing. These interrelated areas need to be carefully considered in order to ensure a successful job

sharing arrangement.

Compatability is considered the most important factor in job sharing. Choice in partner selection will help ensure compatability. Communication between the partners must be ongoing and frequent. Choice and flexibility in scheduling is important, however schedules are often restricted to split days by administrative policies. The sharing of responsibilities includes program planning, instructional duties, evaluation, and representation.

Research on flexible job sharing schedules, and on how to provide effective instruction within flexible scheduling arrangements, is lacking. This study intends to contribute to the literature in this area. This study focuses on the perspectives of women and their experiences with different scheduling arrangements. It describes how job sharing teachers provide continuity of instruction through their consideration of the key elements of successful job sharing. This descriptive inquiry offers practical information on the practices, problems, and possibilities of flexible job sharing arrangements.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology of Research

Research Questions and Objectives

The research questions for this study evolved from the researcher's experience, preliminary inquiries, and the review of the literature.

Research Questions

1. How do women who teach experience flexible job sharing arrangements?

2. How do these women, within their flexible job sharing arrangements, address the key elements of successful job sharing: scheduling, communication, compatability, and responsibility sharing?

3. Do these women perceive their arrangement as being educationally sound, and personally and professionally satisfying?

4. What recommendations do these women have for other job sharers?

Researcher's Assumptions

1. Women need flexible job sharing programs to provide time for their families and to continue in their careers.

2. Women experience personal and professional satisfaction through job sharing.

3. Integration, communication, and collaboration help ensure continuity of instruction in job sharing arrangements.

Research Objectives

1. To gain women's perspectives on scheduling for job sharing.

2. To describe various flexible scheduling arrangements.

3. To understand how continuity in instruction is provided in flexible job sharing arrangements.

4. To provide teachers with insightful and useful information regarding flexible job sharing.

Research Design

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study. This choice was made because of the researcher's personal interest in job sharing, the importance of obtaining women's perspectives on job sharing, and the nature of the questions and objectives of the study.

The design of this study resembles several other descriptive studies on job sharing (Labour Canada, 1983; Meier, 1979; Moorman et al., 1980b; Spencer, 1993). It differs, however, in its focus. It is designed specifically to describe different scheduling arrangements of elementary job sharing teachers. It details the perspectives of women who job share: their experiences with scheduling arrangements, and their methods of providing continuity in instruction. The

intent of the study is to offer viable alternatives to restrictive job sharing schedules.

Five types of job sharing schedules were studied. These schedules were chosen after preliminary inquiries found them to be popular with teachers who job share.

Schedule A two week rotation 50/50 split

| | Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Th. | Fri. |
|--------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| week 1 | A | A | A | B | B |
| week 2 | A | A | B | B | B |

Schedule B one week rotation, 80/20 split

| Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Th. | Fri. |
|------|------|------|-----|------|
| A | A | A | A | B |

Schedule C one week rotation, 60/40 split

| Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Th. | Fri. |
|------|------|------|-----|------|
| A | A | A | B | B |

Schedule D split day schedule, 50/50 split

| | Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Th. | Fri. |
|------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| a.m. | A | A | A | A | A |
| p.m. | B | B | B | B | B |

Schedule E one week rotation, 50/50 split

| Mon | Tue. | Wed. | Th. | Fri. |
|-----|------|------|-----|------|
| A | A | A/B | B | B |

Sampling Procedures

The population for this study was female job sharing

teachers in British Columbia elementary schools. Purposeful sampling strategies were employed to select informants.

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. (Patton, 1990, p. 169)

Purposeful sampling was used to select female elementary school teachers engaged in successful job sharing arrangements. Women were chosen for this study because of their need for more flexible work options. Successful job sharing arrangements were a selection criteria because the purpose of this study is to provide viable scheduling alternatives for teachers interested in job sharing. The measure of "successful job sharing" was based on the teacher's perception that her job sharing arrangement was educationally sound, and personally and professionally satisfying.

Variation sampling was used to select job sharing teachers who helped demonstrate the diversity of scheduling possibilities. This sampling strategy provided detailed descriptions and perspectives from teachers within different types of scheduling practises. It also helped identify important patterns that cut across the variations in scheduling. Patton (1990) notes the usefulness of variation sampling for "describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across...participant or program variation" (p. 172).

Snowball or chain sampling (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992;

Patton, 1990) was used to locate potential informants. Initial informants were asked if they could recommend any other teachers to take part in the study. Recommendations were followed up on, and informants were selected.

The participants in the study were ten elementary school teachers. Both teachers in a job sharing partnership were interviewed. This sample size provided in-depth descriptive information on five partnerships with five different scheduling arrangements. The participants taught at five different elementary schools within four British Columbia school districts.

These sampling procedures were useful in "looking for information that elucidates programmatic variation and significant common patterns within that variation" (Patton, 1990, p. 172). These sampling procedures were helpful in selecting information-rich cases for this descriptive study of flexible job sharing arrangements.

Research Measures

An informal preliminary test was performed to compare two research instruments being considered for this study. An open ended questionnaire was given to two job sharers, and a semi-structured interview was held with two other job sharers. Both instruments employed the same questions regarding job sharing. It was found that the questions were more thoroughly answered through semi-structured interviews.

This finding is corroborated by other studies. Meier (1979) described the selected interviews in her study as being "more telling than the survey percentages" (p. xiii). "The interview situation usually permits much greater depth than the other methods of collecting research data" (Borg and Gall, 1989, p. 446). In Action Research For Women's Groups, interviewing is described as:

a particularly effective data gathering method...to use when descriptions of people's experience are needed, and when you intend to use the research as an organizing or action tool...the rich descriptions of women's experience and knowledge usually found through the interview process provide depth to the topic and the opportunity...to develop analysis that will be helpful [for]...ongoing action. (Women's Research Centre, 1987, V, p3)

In Qualitative Research for Education, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) note that "feminist researchers have commented on the ease with which women informants have opened up to women researchers conducting in-depth interviews" (p. 96).

An interview guide (see Appendix D) was developed through:

1. Studying the research questions and objectives.
2. Reviewing the key elements for successful job sharing found in the literature review (communication, compatibility, scheduling, and division of responsibilities).
3. Reviewing descriptive job sharing studies for ideas about content and style (Labour Canada, 1983; Meier, 1979; Moorman et al., 1980b; Spencer, 1993).
4. Sharing interview questions with advisors and teaching colleagues, revising them, and sharing again.

5. Reviewing preliminary inquiries.

A pilot study was conducted in a small Vancouver island school district to further test the research instrument. Interviews were held with two job sharing teachers. Comments from the informants in the pilot study were positive and no major changes were incorporated into the research design.

Research Procedures

Prior to their participation in the study informants received a letter of informed consent (See Appendix E). This letter provided information to informants about the intent of the study. It assured the confidentiality of information obtained, and the voluntary nature of participation in the study.

A 'face sheet' (see Appendix F) was used to collect data on the informant's age, number of children, experience teaching, experience job sharing, etcetera.

Both personal interviews and telephone interviews were employed. Personal interviews were the instrument of choice. Personal interviews took place at the homes of the teachers involved and ranged from one to two hours in length. Telephone interviews were used only when distance or the informants preference required this alternative. Only two telephone interviews were used.

Informants who were personally interviewed were asked if they were comfortable with being audio-taped. Only one

informant preferred not to be audio-taped. Telephone interviews were not tape-recorded.

Informants who were personally interviewed were invited to read through the interview guide prior to the interview. Once the interview started most informants provided such a wealth of information that the interview guide did not need to be used as a reference.

Immediately after the interviews the audio-tapes or interview notes were transcribed and observer's comments were added.

The interviews took place near the end of the school year. This allowed informants to reflect on a whole year of job sharing.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was an ongoing process in the study. It started when the interviews were in progress and continued after all the data had been collected. This process involved reading the data, re-reading, and categorizing. The data was continuously reviewed and analyzed. (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989; Wolcott, 1990)

Quality and Validity of Analysis

The main technique used to ensure quality and validity in the analysis of the data was triangulation (Patton, 1990). This included comparing the data of both teachers within a

partnership for consistency. It also included comparing the data from primary and secondary sources; information gathered in this study was compared with information obtained from other studies. Another validity check was to re-interview informants regarding their interview responses and the analysis.

Chapter Summary

To address the questions and objectives of this study a qualitative approach was chosen. The study is designed specifically to: describe different scheduling arrangements of elementary job sharing teachers, to gain the perspectives of women who job share, and to find out how these women provide continuity in education. Purposeful sampling, variation sampling, and snowball or chain sampling were strategies used to select 10 job sharing teachers who could provide information-rich case studies for a descriptive study of flexible job sharing arrangements. Semi-structured interviews were conducted near the end of the school year with the informants. Data analysis was ongoing throughout the study. It involved reading, re-reading and categorizing the data. Triangulation was the main technique used to ensure quality and validity of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Analysis of Interviews

The findings and analysis of the study are organized into four sections: Case Studies, Key Elements, Emerging Patterns, and Themes. Each case study represents a particular scheduling model. The case studies include a description of the partners' schedule, background information, and the experiences and perceptions of the job sharing partners. The second section brings together information from the case studies on the key elements for successful job sharing. These elements include scheduling, compatibility, communication, and responsibility sharing. These areas were identified in the literature review, and confirmed in this study, as being important considerations for the success of job sharing arrangements. The third section reviews several patterns that emerge in the study, not found in the review of the literature. The fourth section identifies common themes that run throughout the study.

Case StudiesCase ASchedule A.

50/50 split: full day, alternating Wednesdays

| | Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Thurs. | Fri. |
|--------|------|------|------|--------|------|
| Week 1 | A | A | A | B | B |
| Week 2 | A | A | B | B | B |

Background.

Leah and Nancy share a grade two class. Both women are mothers. Leah, 43, has four children, three in university and one in grade six. Nancy, 50, has two daughters in university. Job sharing is helping Leah devote more time to her family, her craftwork, and her studies. Job sharing is helping Nancy ease back into teaching after a lengthy medical leave.

The teachers have a 50/50 job sharing arrangement. They work in a semi-rural school district that has a regulation specifying that job sharers be at work each day. For medical reasons Nancy was permitted to arrange a schedule that allowed her full days off. Nancy works Monday, Tuesday, and every other Wednesday. Leah teaches the alternate Wednesday, every Thursday, and Friday. Leah and Nancy offer continuity in instruction through their yearly program planning, common themes, and daily time table.

Teachers' experiences.

Nancy had been nervous about returning to her full time job after her illness. "I was on medical leave for two years. One of the symptoms of my condition was fatigue. I didn't feel I could cope with full time. Job sharing gave me the opportunity to return to my classroom part-time." Nancy had previous experience with job sharing on a split day schedule and had not found it satisfactory. "It was like a full time job." She now finds many advantages in having the full days off in her current scheduling arrangement. "It gives me the

time and energy to work two or three days, as well as attend my support group and do a bit of volunteer work."

Leah also finds the arrangement very suitable, "because I'm working on my Masters, it's worked out perfect". Leah feels that the schedule has its advantages, however, she would prefer to do it differently next time. "It's nice on weeks when I only work two days; I never get worn out or stressed out. Everyone else is bagged on Friday. The disadvantage of the schedule is you can't do big art projects or research projects. I would prefer to go for a whole week, then be off for a week. Then I could do more creative art, and not have to worry about finishing up in just two or three days."

Nancy and Leah feel that their partnership has worked out exceptionally well, especially considering they had no part in the selection process. When Nancy requested a partner to share her classroom she asked to be involved in the interviewing. "Well, because of seniority and the layoffs, that never happened. My concern was that I have someone I was compatible with. Anyways, Leah has been a wonderful partner. At first I was worried about how I would ever keep up with her. She's go go go! Working on her Masters, substituting, doing this job, on accreditation teams...then I realized that's not me, at least not now. And I don't have to keep up. We're both professionals. We're both doing a good job."

Leah feels that if she had been given the opportunity to choose a partner at the beginning of the year, she would have

looked for someone with the same teaching style as herself. "Now, I'm not so sure if that's valid. We have different styles. I'm more into the creative arts, and Nancy's strengths are more with basic skills. So in one sense the children have both sides. What's more important than style is your partner's attitude and personality. You have to be able to get along."

Nancy and Leah consider communication an important component of their partnership; yet they do not spend a great deal of time meeting or talking on the phone. As Leah explains: "I wanted half time work, not half time work and half time communication." The partners met at the beginning of the year to plan their program, themes, and timetable. "Now we get together when we're changing themes. We go through our boxes and share ideas."

Nancy says that "we probably contacted each other more at the beginning of the year. Now, sometimes I'll phone her or she'll phone me. We leave notes for each other. There is a teacher's aide in the class for a special needs child. She is a communicator between us."

Nancy notes the importance of the daily timetable as a communication tool. "We made our own day plan form up. We use a large sheet divided into five day blocks. On my last day for the week, I would have made up my day plans for the next week. Then Leah can see what I'm doing. She does the same for me. When she leaves on Friday she has filled in what

she plans to do the following week. I can look and see what she's doing." Leah also finds this pre-planning in their daybook an effective communication tool: "We don't say to each other, 'I'm doing story grammar on Monday and poetry on Tuesday'. It's all written in the daybook, and we can look and see what each other is doing".

Nancy finds that because she is in on Mondays she usually starts the shared themes. "I'll often do the brainstorming, getting as much information as possible on the board, then do an activity. The brainstorming is left on the board for Leah, so she can also use it for ideas."

Although the teachers share responsibility for the subjects, they are very flexible about their approach. They have each found their own strengths within the arrangement. Nancy notices that in Language Arts "I tend to do the skills a bit more, we both do Journal writing, but I always do chalkboard spelling and printing. She sort of left that for me. She may do more poetry, I tend to do more research. We just complement each other." This style of responsibility sharing also suits Leah. "We do the same theme, and we both teach everything, but we do our own thing. I don't want to take ownership for her thing, I want to take ownership for mine."

The teachers share the responsibility of writing report cards. For the first reporting period they each wrote evaluations on half the class, and were aided by feedback from

each other. For the second reporting period Leah was grateful for the flexibility job sharing offered, "I was busy with craft fairs - so Nancy did the reports. At the end of the year I will do them. We proofread them for each other." Nancy finds that "reports are alot easier when you can collaborate with someone".

Nancy recommends that special consideration be taken for scheduling of the itinerant teachers who work in the classroom. "The Music teacher and the Learning Assistant teacher need to be a little more accomodating, to try to slot you in so that it's fair to each partner." Leah recommends that long weekends and Professional Development days be thought out and discussed ahead of time. She also suggests that the local school board and the union get together to make a list of helpful suggestions and recommendations for job sharing.

Case B

Schedule B.

80/20 split

| Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Thurs. | Fri. |
|------|------|------|--------|------|
| A | A | A | A | B |

Background.

Norah and Kathy share a grade three class in a small Vancouver Island community. Their schedule actually changed through the year. Norah started the year working four days a

week, with Kathy coming in on Friday. In November Norah was off on maternity leave, and Kathy took the class full time. In the Spring Norah returned to work on Fridays, with Kathy working Monday to Thursday.

Norah, 29, had not planned on returning to work quite so soon after her baby was born. However, her school district contract required her to return to her position within 17 weeks or she may have to return to a different position. Returning to her classroom just one day a week in a job sharing arrangement was the solution.

Kathy, 39, has four step children aged 15, 16, 17, and 20. She had been covering temporary positions in the district for three years. When she saw this job posted she decided to apply because it offered a full year of employment.

Kathy and Norah provide continuity in instruction through their shared routines and constant communication.

Teachers' experiences.

When Norah was planning her maternity leave, she and her principal sat down and worked out what would be best for everyone concerned. "We decided by reducing my time to four days it allowed Kathy to come in one day. Then when I was off on maternity leave it would be a smoother changeover."

Norah was worried at the beginning of the year as to how the parents would accept the scheduling arrangement. "It was probably hard for the parents to understand. People probably wondered why I didn't just stay off for the year. The date

that I was leaving was a part of it. I was due in November. Also, the date I had to return was another factor. I had no idea I had to return in 17 weeks if I wanted the same school and the same position. I really wanted to return here."

Kathy was pleased to step into this job sharing arrangement. "When this job came up, and it was all year long, I was delighted. The schedule was good in a lot of ways. The kids got used to me, and I got to know them and the lay of the land. The parents also had the opportunity to get to know me, before I took over full time."

Norah has found one disadvantage to the scheduling arrangement: "Now that I only work on Fridays, I really miss the staff comraderie I enjoyed before. But it's still what I want right now. To have time at home with my son."

Kathy and Norah both feel that compatability has alot to do with the success of their job sharing arrangement. Because of contractual obligations Norah had no choice in who was to be her partner, "but luckily I knew Kathy from before. It's the first time I've job shared, and it's worked so well. We both admitted that our biggest concern in the beginning, was what if we don't see things the same way, what if we're not compatable."

The respect Kathy and Norah have for each other is very evident. They both work hard to ensure the other teacher feels she is an equal partner, not a substitute. Norah states, "We've both been very conscious of making the other

teacher feel that she is a teacher in the classroom, a part of things. We talk to the kids alot about each other, always including each other." Kathy notes that this made the transitions during the year easier. "Alot of the credit goes to Norah. She prepared the class, that was part of the sharing. She did that right from Septmenber."

The teachers met in the summer to establish routines and rules together. Kathy says, "We picked certain routines that we thought were important to establish, to have continuity right through the week and year". Norah says, "We combined our experiences and chose what we thought would work".

Although they share routines and subject areas they decided not to share themes. Kathy states, "We thought that for the one day, rather than just carry on with a theme, the person coming in would have a focus area". In the fall Kathy had a science focus on Fridays. In the Spring Norah's focus was a math unit on money. Kathy feels this arrangement works well for the teacher only working one day a week, "You can bring in things that you can tie up quickly in a day. And it gives the children a little break, a change of pace."

Kathy recommends that job sharers establish ground rules at the beginning of the year. "Decide how you want the notebook, daybook, schedule, instructional duties, etcetera to be shared, so it starts off on the right foot." She also recommends that teachers be careful about communication with parents, "...so you can show you have similar expectations, to

put them at ease". Norah recommends that job sharers try to meet parents at the beginning of the year. "If I were to do it again, I might have the parents come in and talk to us both." She feels that compatibility is very important, and that job sharers need to show their respect for each other. "Always make sure the other teacher feels she is a part of things, an equal."

Case C

Schedule C.

60/40 split - full days on

| Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Thurs. | Fri. |
|------|------|------|--------|------|
| A | A | A | B | B |

Background.

Laura and Diane have been job sharing a grade four class in a rural school district for a year. Laura, 36, has a 20 month old daughter, and Diane, 29, has an 18 month old son. They have found job sharing provides the balance they need in their lives to enjoy their careers and their young children. In their schedule Laura works all day Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Diane works all day Thursday and Friday. They provide continuity in instruction through communication, common themes, and an integrated program.

Teachers' experiences.

Laura and Diane both knew that they didn't want to work full time with young children at home. Job sharing offered

them the perfect solution. Diane says, "I couldn't have gone back full time. With job sharing I feel like I can be a good mom and a good teacher."

When Laura and Diane first talked to their principal about job sharing, he was skeptical. However, they convinced him they would make it work, and he gave them the go ahead to arrange their own schedule. Laura says, "He had enough respect for us professionally to give us freedom. He knew that we would keep in touch and communicate. He knew we'd be sure to get what had to be done, done. Why wouldn't I know what it takes to get the job done? I've been teaching 13 years!"

The schedule chosen was a 60/40 split, with three full days for Laura, and two full days for Diane. Laura felt this schedule would suit her needs. "I knew I didn't want to work full time, and I knew if I worked part of a day I might as well be working full time. With packing my daughter up, taking her to daycare, then working a half day, my day would be shot. For me and the things that I do I wanted to be working full days and at home full days."

Diane also finds the full day schedule advantageous. "As a working mom, it is so nice to have five days off, then go in for two. When I first started teaching, I job shared on a split day schedule. I wouldn't want to do that now, five days a week."

Having both worked full time for many years, they found

they had to make an effort to set personal and professional limits with their new schedule. Diane noticed that, "initially for me job sharing was difficult, because I felt like I had to do it all in the two days I was in. That's just the type of person I am. I tried to fit in so much, I just couldn't get through my agenda on any given day."

Laura found she had to set limits as far as school meetings on her days off. "I just can't always be there. I don't have the time, or the babysitting money. And I don't feel that I need to be there all the time." Diane states that "Our philosophy is that the teacher from the classroom is there, we can act for each other, and inform each other. We don't need to both be there. The onus is on us to communicate."

Diane and Laura started out the year both teaching all of the subjects each day. As the year progressed they found it more effective to split the subjects that don't need to be taught each day. Diane found this arrangement much more effective. "In the beginning we were both trying to teach Music and French. It was hard to get to all the subjects in on the days you work. So we decided that I would teach the Music and she would teach the French. That's the nice thing about job sharing, you are able to trade off your favorites."

The instruction of the Math program also evolved through the year. Diane states "We started out both teaching the same math units, but we found it difficult to know where to pick up

when the other teacher left. Also, the way Laura taught a lesson might be different than the way I would teach it. We decided to sort it out so that, for example, I was doing money on Thursday and Friday, and she was doing multiplication on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday."

Their Language Arts program is shared in a similar way. The subject is connected through a novel study program that was organized at the beginning of the year. Using the novel studies to integrate their work, Laura focuses on the writing skills, and Diane focuses on reading skills.

Diane wondered how the kids would experience this program with the two teachers focusing on different strands within the same subject and theme. She worried that there might be some difficulties or confusion. She is now pleased with how effective their program is in providing quality instruction. "It works out really well. It's been really neat to know the kids can handle it. It's just not an issue or problem for the kids."

Diane and Laura have various communication techniques that help provide continuity in their instruction. They keep a 'Dear Laura Dear Diane' book in which they write down any important occurrences, or upcoming events. They also keep a 'communication clip' on their bulletin board to attach notices and memos to. Diane places great emphasis on their phone calls. "We phone each other at least once a week. There's lots of communication that has to happen. I need to talk. We

talk alot about the kids. I think it's important for the students." Laura also feels that the extra time spent communicating is necessary. "It adds more to the job, but then you get your freedom with days off."

Evaluation of the students is an area that the teachers believe has benefited through job sharing. "I feel we know our kids as well as a full time teacher. You really do get a sense of them. And because we're in contact with each other, it adds to our student evaluation."

Diane describes their report card writing process as being very thorough and collaborative. "We get together and decide on the skeleton, and do a few reports together. Then we split up and write some more. We both focus in on different areas. We check with each other and read them over. It works out really well. Laura is very intuitive, and she picks up things. I feel really good about the report cards, because there's been input from two different teachers."

For Laura and Diane the job sharing has been a rewarding experience. They both feel they have learned from each other, and have formed a lasting friendship. Job sharing gives them the balance they need in their lives. Laura says, "The three days I'm teaching I'm go go go, thinking teaching the whole time. Then on my days off I can devote myself to my daughter." Diane says, "Job sharing really does work. It's especially important for women. If full time was my only option, I would've had to quit and start all over later."

Today in teaching you just don't get out of it. You've worked too hard to get where you are. I wasn't going to give that up."

Laura recommends that job sharers find a schedule that is mutually agreeable. "It has to be something you both come up with and are happy with. You have to have something that works for both of you". She also suggests that teachers take time to refocus on work, when returning after three or four days off. Diane recommends that communication be kept open, "We communicate alot, and alot of teachers would not be into that. I think it's necessary".

Case D

Schedule D.

Split day

| | Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Thurs. | Fri. |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|--------|------|
| a.m. (9:00-11:30) | A | A | A | A | A |
| p.m. (11:30-3:00) | B | B | B | B | B |
| *shared lunch hour 12:00 -1:00 | | | | | |

Background.

Sarah is the mother of two elementary school age boys, and Janice has a son and a daughter both attending university. Both women have over 20 years teaching experience. They have been job sharing together in the same classroom for 11 years. Currently they teach a grade four class. They teach in a fast-growing urban school district that supports job sharing. Flexible scheduling arrangements are commonly practised in

their district, however, Sarah and Janice prefer their split day schedule.

Job sharing is important to these teachers because of the balance it gives their lives. They find it allows them to put extra time, energy, enthusiasm, and enjoyment into their teaching. Sarah and Janice provide continuity in instruction through overlapping their time at work for communication, sharing common philosophies, and taking responsibility for different subject areas.

Teachers' experiences.

Eleven years ago, when Sarah was returning to work after having her first child, she decided she didn't want to go back to work full time. Her principal suggested job sharing, and arranged for her to meet Janice. Janice was new to the district and was covering for a teacher on leave. Sarah says, "I met her, I liked her, and I hired her!" They have been working together ever since and are extremely pleased with the arrangement.

When Janice and Sarah began job sharing they were encouraged to use a split day schedule. Janice remembers that, "At that time the split week schedule was discouraged. Our principal felt that split days offered better continuity in instruction. Now teachers are using all sorts of different schedules in our district. But we feel this one is best for us." Janice and Sarah find many advantages to their schedule. Sarah says, "I love going in to work each morning. I'm a real

morning person. And being at work each day keeps me in greater touch with the school." Janice also enjoys being at work each day. "Each morning I have time to see my kids off to school, then do some prep work and marking. When I get to work the kids are starting to wind down from the morning. I'm fresh and ready, and really re-energize the kids. Working half time each day is a good balance for me. There's not one high stress day where you work full time. And our schedule allows us to teach the subjects that we enjoy most."

The teachers both find that the main disadvantage of their schedule is the extra time they put in. Sarah works mornings but will often stay through the afternoon. "I don't often leave before two. Then I bring stuff home and work in the evenings and weekends. I put alot of pressures on myself." Janice admiringly describes Sarah as a 'workaholic'. Janice, however, also puts extra time and effort into her job. She arrives for her afternoon shift early, often with a big suitcase she's prepared at home with extra activities for the children. She notices that, "because I start teaching at 11:30 a.m. I don't have much of a morning".

Both women realize that their schedule might not suit all teachers. Sarah feels that, "For mothers with young children, I can see that they'd prefer full days on and off, for babysitting and all". Janice feels that, "if you have a long distance to travel you probably wouldn't want to work each day".

In working a split day schedule Janice and Sarah divide the subject areas. In the morning Sarah teaches Language Arts and Physical Education. To split the day evenly Judith starts teaching at 11:30. She teaches a half hour of science before lunch break, and then teaches Math and Social Studies or Art in the afternoon. The teachers sometimes share common themes and integrate their subjects. Sarah finds, however, that, "sometimes when you try to link themes you're restricted in the activities you can do".

Because of the extra hours the teachers work their schedules overlap. They find that this overlap gives them time to ensure that they are providing continuity in instruction. Janice says that, "because I'm there early I see Sarah teach. I know what she's teaching, I see her methods and techniques. I can continue on some of these things. We take time to talk during lunch hour. I'll know about a child with a problem, or someone having a bad day." Sarah feels that their overlapping schedule has ensured that their philosophies and standards are consistent for the children. "Because we spend so much time together, we have developed the same expectations and standards for work and behavior."

Janice and Sarah enjoy the flexibility that job sharing offers them. "If either of us ever need a day off, to make a long weekend, for R. & R., whatever, we swap days." When Janice took a three week holiday in Europe, Sarah substituted for her, "...and used the extra money to buy beds for the

boys!"

Sarah recommends that job sharers have choice in their partner selection. "When I looked for a partner, I wanted to find someone who loved teaching as much as I did. Someone who had the same expectations. I wanted to see them teaching in the classroom. If you aren't given choice you might end up with someone you're not compatible with. It would be like a bad marriage!"

Janice recommends job sharing as the answer for people trying to balance their lives. "Whether you have young children or not, if you can afford it, job sharing is the answer. Teaching is such an all encompassing thing. Job sharing gives you time to organize and prepare things, to experiment with new ideas, and to enjoy your hobbies and homelife."

Case E

Schedule E.

50/50 split - 2 1/2 days per week

| Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Thurs. | Fri. |
|------|------|------|--------|------|
| A | A | A/B | B | B |

Background.

Sally and Jennifer are mothers who each have two school age children. They were both working part-time at a rural school in the fall. The school experienced a major growth in students, and many of the classes overfilled. Reshuffling

took place at Christmas, and a new grade two class was formed with Sally and Jennifer as job sharing teachers. In spite of local school board restrictions on scheduling, the new partners were given permission to work a split week schedule, rather than a split day schedule. Sally works Monday, Tuesday, and half day on Wednesday. Jennifer works half day Wednesday, and Thursday, Friday. The teachers find that their job sharing schedule allows them to be more involved with their own children's activities at home and at school. They find Wednesdays, when they both teach half day, a useful meeting time. They provide continuity for their students through shared research projects, themes, and communication.

Teachers' experiences.

When Sally and Jennifer became job sharing teachers in January, they were pleased to find they were very compatible. Jennifer, who was new to teaching primary, says that, "Sally took the lead, she had the experience. This was a perfect way for me to figure out how to teach primary."

Sally finds that job sharing really suits her needs right now. "Today families often need two salaries. We find it hard financially, with just one income. And I love it, I would hate not to be teaching. It's a nice compromise. I'm able to carry on teaching, help with the finances, and yet I'm still a mother. I love being able to go on my own children's fieldtrips, and drive them to activities. I think my children benefit from my involvement, and I actually think society

benefits from this."

Sally had previous experience job sharing on a split day schedule, and wanted to try a split week schedule. "It certainly is nice for the teacher, having a couple days off, and in all honesty it has worked out well for the kids. I think our principal let us try this schedule because of all the hassles with overcrowding. He was willing to accomodate us." Jennifer enjoys the personal freedom the schedule gives her. "If it was a split day schedule, working afternoons, you don't really have a morning. You spend it getting ready for work."

As well as the personal advantages of the schedule, Sally and Jennifer have found advantages in being able to work with the students for full days. Jennifer feels it's advantageous that the students only need to adjust to a change in teachers once in a week. "I can deal with students consistently for the full day. I know the history behind the day, and can handle the rest of the day appropriately. The kids are totally yours for the days you're in." Sally feels that because the day in a primary classroom is so busy and eventful that there's more continuity when a teacher is there for a full day. "There are so many things that come up. So and so was sick last night, or a problem at recess on the playground. If you're there all day and aware of the problem, then if something comes up in the afternoon you know where the child is coming from. Whereas if there is another teacher in the

afternoon, she can't possibly get that feel. Another advantage is you can work with the mood of the kids, you push in the morning, and lay off in the afternoon."

Currently the class is working on research projects. Both teachers are involved in these projects. Sally finds that she can get more accomplished with the children on these big projects if she works with them for full days. "This writing process for research papers, it takes quite long. You have to walk them through it step by step, really work with them individually. That's why it's nice having that full day, so you can get to all of them."

Both teachers feel that continuity in instruction is provided in their scheduling arrangement. They get together at the beginning of themes to plan their program. They also discuss their program and the children regularly. Jennifer says, "We're on the phone pretty well every day, or every other. We leave notes as well." She adds that they talked about keeping a journal, "...but it seemed easier to talk on the phone. That way you get feedback."

The midweek "changeover" day is used as a meeting time. Staff meetings are usually held Wednesday as well, so the teachers often spend extra hours at the school on Wednesday. Sally and Jennifer make an effort to both attend the staff meetings. Sally feels that, "...you have to make an effort to keep in touch with what's going on in the school".

Sally has been thinking about her next job sharing

arrangement, "I have been wondering about Language Arts. Sharing the subject and themes, but splitting the reading and writing, if that is possible. We could do journals throughout the week, but one of us could take the stories and do reading strategies, and the other person take the stories for writing, or poetry, or research. I just wonder if we would get more done, if we split it, and maybe switched half way through the year."

Jennifer recommends that job sharing teachers should decide on their own schedule, "If two people have choice, they are going to work hard to make it work". Sally recommends that teachers have a choice in their partners. "It's really important that you get along, and that your teaching styles are fairly similar. Kids have to learn to be flexible, but styles should still be somewhat similar."

Key Elements

In the case studies, the teachers interviewed described their perceptions of job sharing. The teachers' motivations for job sharing and various practises and problems experienced are discussed. Their perceptions of job sharing provides information on effectively addressing the key elements for successful job sharing. The key elements include: scheduling, compatability, communication, and responsibility sharing. These key elements are identified in the literature review as being instrumental in successful job sharing (Meier,

1979; Moorman et al., 1980a, 1980b; Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation, 1985; Spencer, 1985). The teachers in this study confirmed the importance of these elements. This section brings together information from the case studies on addressing these key areas.

Scheduling

The job sharers interviewed were all enthusiastic about their job sharing schedules. In most cases the job sharers designed their schedules together, ensuring that the needs of both teachers were being met as well as the needs of their students. The importance the women placed on choice and flexibility in scheduling is an emerging pattern found in this study.

It should be something you both come up with and are happy with. If you're given choice, you'll make it work.

Many of the teachers working split week schedules stated that they would not want to teach a split day schedule. They felt the daily preparations for going to work, (getting children organized for daycare, packing lunches, commuting, etc.) would minimize the benefits of working part time.

I particularly wanted to work with days on and days off because of my previous experience with job sharing when one person is in in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. That is like a full time job. It was quite unsatisfactory.

The teachers working split week schedules were confident that they provided continuity in instruction. They all felt very strongly that a split day schedule is not necessary for

continuity in education. They provided continuity through their compatability, communication, and responsibility sharing.

We're not teaching isolated subjects. We're teaching an integrated program, using themes. It's easy to have a continuing program, and beneficial to the kids.

When you're planning your program together you think about these things. How to ensure the kids will get the best of your abilities, how to ensure consistency within your schedule.

The partners who teach the split day schedule were also very satisfied and confident with their arrangement:

I enjoy being out at work for a part of each day. I'm in better contact with the school and the class. Because we're both in each day we can split the subjects. There's no problem with continuity in instruction, and we get to teach our favorites.

All of the schedules studied have advantages for some teachers, and disadvantages for others. One type of scheduling is not meant to be considered as better than the others. It is a matter of personal choice. But choice is important. By allowing teachers flexibility in their scheduling arrangements they will be able to plan a schedule that works best for them, while keeping the educational interests of the children in mind.

Compatability

The importance of compatability between partners, as described by the teachers in this study, verifies the findings of past research cited in the literature review. Compatability of the job sharing partners is described by all

the informants as essential for ensuring a successful job sharing arrangement.

You need to have some sort of meeting of the minds, to know you don't have a personality clash, a sense that you can work with that person.

It's your partner's attitude and personality. Your ability to get along is important in ensuring collaboration and continuity.

One of the teachers brought notes to the interview and exclaimed, "I've got compatability written all over here!"

Mutual respect, shared philosophies, and similar or complementary styles were often mentioned by the teachers when they discussed compatability.

The respect the teachers all showed for their partners was remarkable. The teachers all noted that they were benefiting professionally from working with their partner. A new pattern on this element of compatability and respect is the noncompetitive nature of the relationships. The relationships were all collaborative.

We don't let the kids play us against each other. We can't try to be everyone's favourite teacher. We are both good teachers.

We both made the decision that we're not the kind of people to have petty jealousies. We're both professionals.

You have to be secure in your teaching ability. And you have to respect your partner's abilities.

A variation on this pattern is the respectful acknowledgement the teachers gave each other. Many teachers commented on the importance of showing their respect and appreciation for each other.

I really appreciate the fact that although it was her class initially she insists that we share this class, and we have equal say. This has been really important to me.

A shared philosophy was also described as being important for ensuring effective instruction. Expectations for students' behavior and work, and organization of the classroom were noted as areas in which partners should have common ideas.

You want to be close or share a similar philosophy on discipline and expectations for children, and the organization of the room.

I think it's really important for the kids if teachers have the same expectations. We have developed the same standards for behavior and work to be done.

I think little nit picky things might bother you if you didn't have the same ideas on organization of the classroom. Little things could build up. Small things that can bother you, like not having a clean space, not having a cleared desk.

Teaching style was another area that teachers commented on. Most teachers advised that teaching style be either similar or complementary, yet not necessarily the same.

Your teaching style can be different, because you teach at different times. Children have different learning styles. Some kids will learn better from one teacher, some from the other. It works out well that way.

We have different teaching styles, so the kids get two ways of learning things.

Choice in partner selection.

Choice in partner selection was a high priority amongst the job sharers interviewed. They felt that choice helps ensure compatible partners whose collaborative efforts will provide effective instruction.

Many partnerships started when a teacher requested a partner to share her classroom responsibilities.

I think it's important that the teacher who is going to be sharing her class, that the principal ask her opinions on what she is looking for in a partner. In fact, if the teacher could sit in on the interview process, that would be great.

I wanted to see my potential partner in action. I went to her class and observed her at work.

Other job sharers actually found each other by chance, and then started making arrangements for job sharing.

We saw each other at a playground, and recognized each other from university. We both had our little ones. It turned out we were both on maternity leave and were wanting to job share when we returned to work.

In some districts choice in partner selection is facilitated by files kept in the school board or union office. Teachers fill out a form specifying their grade preference, experience, interest areas, etc. This file is left open for interested teachers to look through. The board or union does not get involved in the selection of partners. That is left for the teachers themselves.

A few districts have yearly meetings for those interested in job sharing. One of the teachers interviewed described the program that her district has to help those interested in job sharing find suitable partners:

The union holds a job sharing meeting in April, and anyone interested in job sharing the following school year goes. There's some information, and an opportunity to meet other teachers interested in sharing.

Many of the job sharers interviewed had no choice in the selection of a partner. They had been placed together due to

recalls from layoffs and seniority considerations. An emerging pattern found in this study is that the teachers placed together without choice were still very satisfied with the way the arrangement worked out. Some of the women interviewed felt that most teachers would be able to make a partnership work, with or without choice.

Most teachers do a good job no matter what. If you don't have choice in who your partner is, you make the best of it. It's the nature of the job.

All of the teachers felt, however, that there is potential for compatibility problems when choice is not allowed.

It seems that now, in my school district, the way the contract is, the teachers aren't having input into who their partner is, and it's terrible, just terrible. Because teaching is such a personal thing, it can be a difficult thing to share.

What if I'd been teamed up with someone who was purely skills, who didn't want to do themes, or try anything new? That would've been very difficult to plan around.

The other job sharing experience I had, we had no idea who we were sharing with, no opportunity to get together. It was a very difficult situation. We were just polar opposites, in virtually everything. We learned quickly to agree to disagree.

Communication

The teachers interviewed had all developed various communication techniques to stay informed with each other, the students, the parents, the staff, and the administration. The type and frequency of communication depended on the scheduling arrangement and the preferences of the individuals.

Phone calls were the most frequent communication technique used by the teachers working full day schedules. Most partners talked on the phone at least once a week, before a changeover occurred. Some teachers phoned each other more frequently, talking every other day.

We talk on the phone probably two or three times a week. We talk a lot about the kids. And we make sure that kids don't play one of us against the other. We discuss things that have happened and things that are going to happen. And we share ideas.

Teachers with common teaching days (as in schedule D and E) have regular informal meetings, as one teacher is preparing to leave work and the other is preparing to begin. Others kept meetings minimal, getting together to develop the yearly program, for theme changes, and when evaluating students.

We met at the beginning of the year and did a yearly plan. We decided upon themes and our weekly timetable. Now we get together when we're changing themes. We go through our boxes and share ideas.

Journals, log books, and memos were used to keep each partner informed of incidents in the classroom, upcoming events, etcetera. A new communication tool found in this study is the use of a common Day Planner. On the last day before a change the teacher fills in her day plan(s) for her next shift. Her partner can then see what she is planning to teach when she returns, as well as what she taught before she left.

Sharing Responsibilities

The literature review identified four areas of

responsibility sharing that need to be considered by job sharers. These areas are: program development, instructional duties, evaluation, and representation. The partners in this study had various ways of sharing these interrelated responsibilities, depending on their schedule and their preferences.

Program development.

The job sharers in this study all put considerable effort into their program planning. They worked collaboratively to ensure that the students had a sound educational program.

Long term planning usually involved meeting at the beginning of the year to decide upon a general program, course plans, themes, timetables, and routines. The collaborative effort in program planning was described as being very effective. Terms such as "Two heads are better than one!" were often used.

We planned in advance, making a yearly overview that's pinned in the cupboard for reference. And then we planned the themes we wanted to have. Next we worked out a timetable that we both share.

We met in the summer, talked about routines, some of the bigger umbrella things.

Planning a common day plan and routines provided consistency for the children. This was particularly important for the teachers working full day shifts.

Our timetable provides continuity in instruction. We do some little things a bit differently, like the calendar for example, but the kids accept that. They have no problem adjusting to our different ways.

We combined our experiences and picked things that we

felt we couldn't live without, and established those right at the start.

The teachers also met for short term planning. New themes, new units, upcoming events, etc. were discussed as needed. Teachers often decided to make changes in the program as the year progressed. Collaborative assessment of the program in progress led to improvements.

Our program has had changes throughout the year, as we've found what worked and what didn't. Because we're always discussing things, we're on top of things. We can share new ideas and discuss ways of improving things.

An emerging pattern in program planning is the use of common themes. Some partners had a common theme continuously on the go. They felt themes helped integrate their program. Another emerging pattern is the need to consider Learning Assistant time and preparation time when program planning. A few of the teachers noted that special attention may have to be paid to job sharers by itinerant teachers who help in the classroom.

Instructional duties.

The teachers who worked split day shifts divided the subjects areas equally. Most of the teachers who worked full days split some subjects that are not required to be taught each day. The job sharers all mentioned how advantageous this arrangement was, as they were able to choose their favorite subjects, and concentrate on these.

Some subject areas are required to be taught each day. Teachers working split week schedules need to share these

subjects. Through planning and communication these teachers were able to teach within the same subject area effectively.

In math we just carry on from where each other left off. When I finish my days at work I fill in the math day plan for my partner's first day back. She does the same for me. It hasn't been a problem. If we teach certain concepts with different styles, then the children benefit from two different approaches.

The kids have been practising spelling all week when my partner teaches. When I'm in I carry on by doing the review test and then the final test.

We do a review every morning, so I see how they are doing on the math concepts. I get a good feel for what they need help with and where they are at.

A new pattern in sharing instructional duties emerged in the study. Some of the teachers interviewed decided that it was more effective to divide some of the subjects into integrated areas. They felt the adjustments they made improved instruction by capitalizing on an individual teacher's special interests and strengths.

In math, we both use the math text. But she'll do little sheets, drill sheets, each week. I usually work more with the manipulatives.

In our novel study program I concentrate on the writing skills, and she concentrates on the reading.

By focusing on specific areas you get to do the things you have a passion for and the kids get more out of it.

Another emerging pattern in the area of sharing instruction is the setting of personal and professional limits. Most of the teachers had been teaching full time previous to job sharing, and many of them mentioned that they had to come to terms with the fact they couldn't possibly be responsible for everything.

You have to remember that you are sharing the responsibilities. You have to readjust your thinking and set new limits on what you can accomplish when you're not working full time.

Evaluation of students.

Evaluating the students' needs is an ongoing process for which the teachers shared responsibility. An emerging pattern in this area is the confidence the teachers felt in their collaborative evaluation. Even though they were not teaching the children full time, all of the teachers felt strongly that their evaluation of students benefited from job sharing.

Evaluation is really good with us. My partner sometimes has a totally different perspective. And just to be able to talk about students, it really opens your eyes alot more to what might be going on with your student.

We keep an observation sheet under the timetable. It has little squares for each student. We both write on it. Then we can both see what the other has written.

The teachers also felt confident about the quality of their evaluation reports. They described their evaluations as very thorough because of their collaborative efforts.

We've taken turns with the report cards. But we discuss each child together, and proofread the drafts for the report cards. It's worked out really well.

Our reports are very thorough. The evaluation of students is one of the strengths of job sharing.

We did student led conferences for one evaluation. I was apprehensive, but my partner showed me how it worked. It was amazing. It was so successful and I learned alot.

Representation.

Methods of representation at staff meetings, parent conferences, staff development, and inservice training are important areas that should be considered when planning a job

sharing arrangement.

Representation at staff meetings varied between the partnerships. Many of the job sharing teams tried to attend all of the staff meetings together.

We both want to be there. To keep abreast of what's happening.

Other teachers found it difficult to attend meetings on their days off. They felt it was more practical to have one partner attend. They took full responsibility for keeping each other informed.

Initially the principal and vice principal had the expectation that we would both be in for everything. Because job sharing was new for them, they were unsure. We worked it out quite well. They now realize that we've got it covered between us and there's no problem there.

Communication between the partners and parents needs to be consistent, therefore conferences were usually attended by both teachers. The teachers had various ways of handling these parent conferences.

At the parent teacher interviews we're both there, and same with the student led conferences we had. It means putting in extra time, but it's necessary, and it is very effective.

For our parent conferences I took the lead in the first term, then my partner took the lead the next time. But we were both there. We added our input and supported each other.

A few of the job sharers mentioned that the next time they job share they would like to make more use of "meet the teacher night". They felt this could be an opportunity to present themselves as a cohesive team to the parents, to discuss their program, and to answer any questions and

concerns.

In September there is a chance to meet the parents. The parents that came I feel really connected to. Next time I might make more effort to encourage all the parents to come in and talk to us both. To show them that there are two faces, and that you can contact us both.

Next time at 'meet the teacher night' I want to take the parents into the classroom. They could see our yearly overview, daybook, timetable, etc. We could answer any questions or concerns. This would help with not having to explain things over and over.

Representation at staff development and in-service training also needs to be considered. Very often staff development days are on a Friday. For partners on full day schedules, one teacher is attending on her day off. Some districts paid the teachers for their attendance at these professional development days. Other teachers attended regardless of whether they were to be paid. Some partners worked out an arrangement where they exchanged days in order to be fair to each other.

Professional Day was on my day. We both went, but we had a choice. I made up half a day to her later.

Pro D days always seem to be on a Friday. I don't get paid but it's my choice to go. I feel that because I'm half time I can elect to attend just a half day workshop.

On weeks when there was a pro-d day we'd both work two full days, and both attend the pro-d. Then we might attend workshops for the full day, or just half a day, because we would only be paid for half. It depended on how interested we were in the workshops being offered.

This study found that most of the teachers did not consider the areas of responsibility sharing until they came up. The teachers did not want to be given rules regarding these areas, but they do advise job sharing teachers consider

these areas when making their job sharing arrangements.

Pro D days, holidays, staff meetings, and those sort of things should be discussed between partners. I don't think that regulations or policies need to be made. Because the whole idea is to have flexibility.

Emerging Patterns

This study verifies the importance of the key elements of job sharing. These key elements (scheduling, compatability, communication, and responsibility sharing) are identified in the literature review as being essential for successful job sharing (Meier, 1979; Moorman et al., 1980a, 1980b; Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation, 1985; Spencer 1989). Through the perceptions of women who job share within various scheduling arrangements different ways of addressing the key elements were described. Several new patterns for addressing these elements emerged in the study. This section reviews the "emerging patterns" from this study not found in the literature on job sharing.

Noted in this study is the importance the teachers placed on choice and flexibility in scheduling. The teachers felt that choice is necessary in order to meet the needs of the partners and the needs of the students. The teachers were all confident that they were providing continuity in instruction within their various scheduling arrangements.

Findings on compatability in this study also brought forth some new patterns. The non-competitive nature of the job sharing relationships was noted by all the teachers

interviewed. The teachers felt strongly that a partnership would suffer if teachers tried to outperform each other. The need to have confidence in one's own ability, as well as respect, confidence, and appreciation in a partner's ability is an important aspect of job sharing.

The importance all of the teachers placed on choice in partner selection verifies findings in the literature. An emerging pattern on the issue of choice is the feeling by some of the informants that teachers will try hard to make an arrangement work, whether or not they choose their own partner.

Many of the teachers found that planning ahead for the next shift is an effective communication tool that helped provide continuity in instruction. By sharing a day planning book, a teacher can see what her partner has done, and what she is planning on doing when she is in next.

In planning the program for the year, a few teachers noted the importance of dividing preparation time and Learning Assistance time fairly. They felt the cooperation and accomodation of itinerant teachers was important in this area.

In program planning many of the teachers also noted the usefulness of sharing themes. They felt themes helped integrate subject areas and provided consistency and continuity for the children.

Many of the partners were developing new ways to share instructional areas. Some of the partners were focusing on

different areas within the same subject.

The need to set personal and professional limits was also an important consideration for teachers sharing instructional duties. Teachers who were used to working full time noticed they had to readjust to their new arrangement.

The confidence of the teachers regarding evaluation of the students was very strong. All of the teachers felt that through collaboration their evaluation of students improved, even though they were not with the children full time.

This study found that many partners did not address the issues of representation at staff meetings, parent conferences, staff development, and inservice training at the beginning of the year. Many of the teachers suggested that these areas be given more consideration when planning a partnership. The teachers did not recommend rules on these areas, just that consideration should be made to ensure equity for both partners.

Themes

The themes of balance, flexibility, and choice recur throughout this study. In order to balance their lives, women who job share desire flexibility and choice. Flexibility and choice in job sharing schedules are necessary to ensure that the needs of mothers who teach are met. In order to ensure compatibility, choice in job sharing partners is important. Compatibility and communication are aided by each partner

being flexible. Choice and flexibility in responsibility sharing are also important to ensure that the needs of the teachers and students are met and the strengths of both teachers are recognized.

Chapter Summary

In summary, the case studies described various scheduling models, and the perspectives of teachers who use them. The job sharers interviewed verified the importance of addressing the key elements for successful job sharing: scheduling, compatibility, communication, and responsibility sharing. Their experiences offered many ways to address these key areas. Several new patterns for addressing these elements emerged in the study. Themes that prevailed through the study are balance, flexibility and choice.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Implications

Summary of Study

This research began with the authors's personal interest in job sharing. The purpose of the study evolved into a quest for women's perspectives on job sharing, and on how successful job sharing can be ensured within flexible scheduling arrangements.

Women's perspectives are important to hear, as job sharers are most often women. Women usually take the main responsibility for family and household considerations, therefore they often need flexibility within their work schedules to balance their home and career lives.

Many school districts put restrictions on job sharing schedules, requiring each teacher in a partnership to be at work each day. This restrictive scheduling limits the flexibility and choice that many women are looking for.

The literature review provides information on the background of job sharing, as well as research findings on job sharing in education. It identifies key elements in successful job sharing that partners should carefully consider. These key elements include: scheduling, compatability, communication, and responsibility sharing.

Research on ensuring continuity in education within flexible scheduling arrangements is limited. This study

intends to contribute to the literature on job sharing in this area.

Ten women in successful job sharing arrangements were selected for the study. "Successful" job sharing arrangements were those perceived by the teachers as being educationally sound, and professionally and personally satisfying. Partners from different districts within British Columbia were chosen through purposeful, variation, and snowball sampling methods. Interviews were semi-structured.

Models of scheduling arrangements and the perceptions and experiences of women using these schedules are described in the case studies. The teachers were all enthusiastic about job sharing, and were happy to share their experiences.

The teachers confirmed that the key elements for successful job sharing identified in the literature review are important considerations. Many new patterns on addressing these key elements were found in this study.

All of the teachers noted the importance of flexible job sharing for women. The women found their scheduling arrangements offered them the flexibility they needed to balance their home and career responsibilities. Choice in selecting a schedule was considered a priority. The job sharers expressed the desire to design their own schedule, in order to best meet their needs as well as the needs of the students. All of the teachers were confident that they were providing sound, cohesive education within their schedules.

Compatability was also considered important for successful job sharing. The teachers all felt that the ability to choose their own partners would help ensure compatability. Some of the teachers noted that if choice was not given, most teachers would probably be able to make the arrangement work. The teachers considered mutual respect, a noncompetitive relationship, shared philosophies, and similar or complementary styles as important components of a partnership.

Communication of the job sharers was ongoing and frequent. Phone calls, meetings, journals, notes, memos, and day plans were some of the communication strategies used to ensure effective cohesive job sharing.

Sharing responsibility for program planning included both long term and short term planning. Yearly overviews, themes, units, routines, and timetables were planned collaboratively to help ensure continuity in the program. The scheduling of Learning Assistant time and preparation time was also noted as an important consideration.

The sharing of instructional duties depended on the job sharers' schedule. The teachers working a split day schedule divided the subject areas equally. Many of the teachers working split week schedules divided the subjects that do not need to be taught each day. Some found that an effective way of teaching subjects required to be taught daily was to divide subjects into integrated strands. Each teacher had a focus

area, capitalizing on the teacher's strengths.

The responsibility of evaluation was also shared by the partners. Because they were constantly communicating about the children, they felt very confident in their evaluation. The teachers felt they were meeting the needs of the children through their collaborative efforts. In writing evaluation reports the teachers divided the task in many ways, but collaborated throughout the process.

Methods of representation at staff meetings, parent conferences, professional development, and inservice days were also recognized as important considerations. Staff meetings were sometimes attended by both members. Others found it more practical to have one member attend and to keep the other member informed. Parent conferences were attended by both teachers. Professional days were usually attended by both members, although one member attended on her day off. Some districts paid members for their attendance. Some teachers traded a half day in order to make the arrangement more equitable.

The themes of balance, flexibility, and choice recur throughout the study. Many women are looking at job sharing to provide balance in their lives. With flexibility and choice job sharing arrangements can be educationally sound, and personally and professionally satisfying.

Limitations of Study

The findings of this study have limitations. The study

does not claim to represent the views of all women who job share. However, the opinions and concerns of the informants are valid. Their perceptions have significance for understanding job sharing, and for providing viable alternatives to restrictive job sharing policies and practises. This study is not trying to portray the general state of job sharing in British Columbia, but to demonstrate the possibilities of flexible job sharing practises.

Implications of Study

Implications for policy emerge from the findings in this study. Suggestions for initiating and facilitating flexible job sharing can be made, and questions for further examination can be asked.

The importance of flexible job sharing for women who teach is supported in this study. Districts need to meet the needs of mothers who teach by supporting job sharing and allowing flexible job sharing schedules.

Support could begin with policy implementation that encourages flexible job sharing. Contract agreements, such as the example in Appendix A, help to ensure that teachers will not be impeded in their efforts to initiate job sharing. Policies, such as the example in Appendix B, help to encourage and facilitate flexible job sharing schedules.

Job sharing could also be facilitated by providing teachers with an access system to find potential partners.

Files with information on teachers interested in job sharing could be provided. Meetings for teachers interested in job sharing could be held each year, to provide information and allow potential job sharers to find partners.

Allowing choice in partner selection for job sharers is important. However, choice is often limited due to contractual obligations. All effort should be made to allow choice in order to help ensure the compatibility of the partners.

To help ensure that job sharers provide an effective cohesive program measures could be taken. The union and school boards could make a list of recommendations and suggestions for teachers undertaking a job sharing arrangement. Suggestions for successfully addressing the key elements of scheduling, compatibility, communication, and the sharing of responsibilities will help ensure an effective job sharing arrangement.

Suggestions for Further Research

Many studies have shown that administrative support is important for the implementation of flexible job sharing policies (Meier, 1979; Mitchell, 1986; Moorman et al, 1980b; Olmsted, 1983). A study of the perspectives of administrators experienced with flexible job sharing is implicated. It may provide useful information for administrators inexperienced with job sharing, and further encourage flexible job sharing.

In conclusion, this study finds that educationally sound job sharing arrangements are possible within many types of schedules. Careful consideration of the elements of scheduling, compatibility, communication, and responsibility sharing is important in ensuring success. Balance, flexibility, and choice are common themes that run throughout the study. The value of this study lies in its ability to promote interest in and consideration of the practices, problems, and possibilities of flexible job sharing.

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APPENDIX A

Job Sharing Agreement

30.10 DEFINITION

Job sharing shall refer to two employees who elect to share a full-time position. Normally, the position will be shared 60/40 or 50/50.

30.20 REDUCTION OF ASSIGNMENT

An employee who moves from full-time to a job sharing assignment will be a full-time employee on an approved leave for the percentage of time not worked.

30.30 PARTNERSHIPS

30.31 When a job sharing partnership is proposed the two employees must make written application (unless agreed otherwise by the employees and the principal), by April 1, to the principal with a copy to the Human Resources department.

30.32 The principal shall provide the applicants with a written approval or rejection at least two weeks before the scheduled circulation of vacancies under Article 31.41. Proposals to job share shall not be denied unreasonably.

30.33 In the event that two employees who have no guaranteed assignment (under Article 40.15) are simultaneously returning from leave, they may make a proposal as a partnership to the Human Resources department to share an assignment.

30.34 Where a partnership has been approved under Article 30.32, then the two employees may jointly apply for vacancies as a partnership. The selection will be pursuant to Article 33.60. The proposed partnership shall not be denied unreasonably.

30.35 Where a partnership has been approved, that partnership shall not be dissolved prior to the end of the school year (except with the approval of the Human Resources department and the President).

30.40 RENEWAL

Job shared positions shall be reviewed annually.

30.50 APPLICATIONS

Applications should include proposals on:

30.51 The schedule/timetable of each partner,

30.52 The percentage of assignment applicable to each partner,

30.53 The division of responsibilities,

30.54 The method of planning between the partners to ensure continuity of instruction and consistency in the classroom.

30.55 The method of communicating to students and parents about course planning and student evaluation.

30.56 The methods of representation at staff meetings, parent conferences, staff development and in-service training.

30.60 PREPARATION TIME

Preparation time will be shared with the full knowledge and consent of the job sharing partners.

30.70 SENIORITY

The seniority of the job sharing team shall be the same as that of the more senior partner.

30.80 DISSOLVING PARTNERSHIPS

Where a job sharing partnership has not clarified, within the job sharing application, who will retain the position upon dissolution of the partnership, then when the job sharing arrangement is dissolved:

30.81 The employees shall, in order of seniority, be given the right of refusal of the former shared position, THEREAFTER,

30.82 The employees will be placed in accordance with Article 33.81 (return from leave of absence).

30.90 BENEFITS

Benefits will be established as in Article 8.40.

APPENDIX B

Flexible Job Sharing Policy

| | | |
|--|---------------|-----------|
| [REDACTED] SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. [REDACTED] POLICY MANUAL - | Control Code: | 7000 |
| | Category: | 7020.17.e |

SHARED TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY (JOB SHARING)

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees to encourage and facilitate job sharing arrangements.

The School Board views the concept of Shared Teaching Responsibility as involving situations in which two teachers during the course of a full school year assume, between them, the duties normally assigned to a single full-time teacher. Example patterns of such sharing might be:

- a. alternate semesters;
- b. morning/afternoon combinations;
- c. split linear year, and
- d. within a rotating timetable pattern. (split week)

The Board of Trustees feels that such shared teaching arrangements should be mutually acceptable to both the School District and the teachers applying and in the best educational interests of the students affected.

APPENDIX C

Restrictive Job Sharing Policy

POLICY

Adopted: 1980-07-14
Revised: 1989-07-10

Pol. 6450

PART-TIME TEACHERS**Preamble**

Some teachers prefer to work on a part-time basis, and it is recognized that these teachers provide a valuable service to the children of the District.

While students may benefit from exposure to more than one teacher, they must also adjust each time there is a change of teachers. This adjustment is less noticeable if it coincides with a change in subject area, but it is very difficult for two teachers to share the same subject area (especially at the elementary level) and provide a smooth, coherent program.

Policy

At the elementary level, all part-time teachers' assignments shall be considered as part of a day and not part of a week. That is, each teacher shall work each day in approximate proportion to the total assignment. In secondary and middle schools, a part-time assignment shall refer to the number of timetable blocks in the weekly schedule and the days or part days worked shall be as specified in the timetable rotation.

Administrative Regulation :

While arranging teacher assignments within their schools, principals shall ensure that part-time sharing one assignment will so do on a portion-of-the day basis, and that each individual subject will be taught, so far as possible, by only one teacher.

Policy Objectives

1. To permit access to part-time assignments to those teachers who prefer them.
2. To minimize any disruptions in the continuity of instruction.

APPENDIX D
Interview Guide

What are your reasons/motivations for job sharing?

Why is job sharing important to you?

Schedule

What is your job sharing schedule?

Who made up your job sharing schedule?

Were restrictions (if any) were placed on your scheduling practises? (and by who?)

What are the advantages/disadvantages to your schedule?

Do you vary your schedule sometimes for special circumstances?

Compatability

How did you find your job sharing partner?

What criteria do you think should be used in selecting a partner?

Communication

What communication techniques do you and your partner use?

- with each other
- with other staff
- with the principal
- with parents
- with students

How could communication be improved?

Responsibility Sharing

How do you plan your program?

Do you and your partner 'share' instructional duties or split them?

How do you ensure you meet your students individual needs when you are only at school 2 or 3x a week?

How do you write report cards?

How do you represent yourselves at:

- parent teacher conferences
- staff meetings
- in-service and pro d days

Success

Do you feel you provide continuity in instruction for your students?

Do you consider your job sharing arrangement as professionally and personally satisfying?

Do you consider compatability, communication, scheduling, and responsibility sharing key areas for the success of job sharing?

Are there any areas you consider important to the success of job sharing?

Recommendations

What recommendations do you have regarding scheduling for other job sharers?

What other recommendations do you have regarding job sharing in general?

APPENDIX E

Letter of Informed Consent

Letter of Informed Consent for Research Project Entitled:

Perspectives on Scheduling for Job Sharing Teachers:
Practices, Problems, and Possibilities

I understand that this research project is studying job sharing in B.C. elementary schools. I understand that this job sharing study is focused on the perceptions of women, their job sharing schedules, and their methods of providing continuity in instruction. I understand that I will be asked about my perceptions of my job sharing experiences in an interview.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without explanation.

I understand that any data collected in the study will remain confidential; interview results will be kept in a locked room. Furthermore, I understand that my name will not be attached to any published results, and that my anonymity will be protected by using code names to identify the results obtained from individual subjects.

I understand that my interview will be audiotaped and that the tape will be erased immediately after the thoughts/feelings/experiences that I talk about are coded in written form. I also understand that if I do not wish to have my interview taped, I can refuse to do so.

I understand that whether I participate or choose not to participate will have no bearing on my employment status.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Researcher: _____

APPENDIX F

Face Sheet

Code Name _____

Date _____

Type of Interview: face to face _____ telephone _____

Place of interview _____

Time: Start _____ Finish _____

Number of Contacts

in person _____

telephone _____

letter _____

Why Chosen? _____

Experience teaching _____ (years)

TQS category 3, 4, 5, 6

Grade level of current class _____

Experience job sharing _____

Length of current partnership _____

Marital status _____

Dual income family _____

Children _____

Age _____

VITA

Surname: Heard

Given Names: Jillian Anne

Place of Birth: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Capilano College | 1976 to 1977 |
| Langara College | 1977 to 1978 |
| University of British Columbia | 1979 to 1982 |
| University of Victoria | 1988 to 1995 |

Degrees Awarded:

B.Ed., University of British Columbia 1982


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Title of Thesis:

Perspectives on Scheduling for Job Sharing Teachers:
Practices, Problems, and Possibilities

Author:


Jillian Anne Heard

Date: April 4 1995