

SHARE TEACHING IN THE  
PRIMARY GRADES

by

Elaine Anderson

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## APPROVAL

Name: Beatrice Elaine Anderson  
Degree: Master of Arts (Education)  
Title of Thesis: Share Teaching in the Primary Grades  
Examining Committee  
Chairperson: R. W. Marx

---

J. R. Kendall  
Senior Supervisor

---

T. O'Shea  
Assistant Professor

---

P. Coleman  
Associate Professor  
Faculty of Education  
Simon Fraser University  
External Examiner

Date approved 21 March, 1985

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Author: \_\_\_\_\_

(signature)

Beatrice Elaine Anderson

(name)

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(date)

## ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to determine if share teaching in the primary grades is educationally effective. Job sharing in the classroom is a relatively new concept, and many administrators have questions about its appropriateness. They have concerns about increased administrative work load, communication between the teaching partners and the administration, and continuity of the educational program.

A three stage study was designed in which principals, teachers, and students were interviewed by this investigator using structured interview protocols. In stage one, the principals were interviewed using a schedule designed from an analysis of the literature. Structured interview schedules were then designed for the teachers and students using information collected from the principals' interviews and the review of the literature.

Subjects were principals, teachers and students in School District #39 (Vancouver). Twenty-six shared classrooms in 22 schools were identified that met the specified criteria of 1) sharing time on a 50/50 or 60/40 basis; 2) teaching grade one, two, or three; and 3) sharing the language arts program. Interviews were conducted with 18 pairs of sharing teachers, 7

principals and 26 students from 14 of the 22 schools.

Analysis of the principals' perceptions indicated that five principals did not think that the quality of education suffered when two teachers shared one full-time position. Two principals were apprehensive about some sharing situations and most would like some input into the formation and design of partnerships in their schools. All principals agreed that sharing added somewhat to their administrative load because reports had to be written on more teachers.

Analysis of the teachers' perceptions indicated strong support for share teaching. Except for one teacher, all teachers perceived their partnerships as viable, stimulating and educationally sound.

Analysis of students' perceptions indicated that the majority were positive about having sharing teachers.

The findings suggest that two teachers sharing classroom responsibilities is educationally as effective as a single classroom teacher. Concerns regarding communication breakdown and continuity were more perceived than real.

To Barney, Sandra, and Bradley, with whom  
I share my life.

When two do the same thing,  
it is not the same thing after all.

--Syrus Publius  
(Roman author, ca.42 B.C.)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER |  | PAGE |
|---------|--|------|
|         | ABSTRACT   | iii  |
|         | DEDICATION   | v    |
|         | QUOTATION  | vi   |
|         | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS   | vii  |
|         | TABLE OF CONTENTS  | viii |
|         | LIST OF TABLES   | xi   |
| I       | INTRODUCTION   | 1    |
|         | Background   | 1    |
|         | Purpose of the Study                                       | 2    |
|         | Importance of the Study                                    | 3    |
|         | Definition of Terms  | 5    |
|         | Delimitations  | 6    |
|         | Limitations of the Study                                   | 7    |
| II      | REVIEW OF LITERATURE                                       | 8    |
|         | Overview of General Literature<br>on Job Sharing           | 8    |
|         | Advantages and Disadvantages of<br>Job Sharing in Teaching | 19   |
|         | Job Sharing Research in Education                          | 21   |
|         | Criteria for Successful Share<br>Teaching Partnerships     | 34   |
| III     | METHODOLOGY  | 40   |
|         | Criteria for Selection of Subjects                         | 40   |
|         | Selection of Teachers                                      | 41   |

|    |                                     |     |
|----|-------------------------------------|-----|
|    | Selection of Principals             | 42  |
|    | Selection of Students               | 44  |
|    | Instruments                         | 44  |
|    | Procedure                           | 46  |
| IV | RESULTS                             | 49  |
|    | Principals                          | 50  |
|    | Advantages                          | 51  |
|    | Disadvantages                       | 53  |
|    | Administrative Problems             | 56  |
|    | Organization                        | 57  |
|    | Instructional Process               | 58  |
|    | Parental Reaction                   | 60  |
|    | Students' Reaction                  | 62  |
|    | Compatibility                       | 63  |
|    | Staff Reaction                      | 64  |
|    | Future Employment                   | 64  |
|    | Criteria for Selection of Partners  | 66  |
|    | Teachers                            | 67  |
|    | Background                          | 67  |
|    | Compatibility                       | 70  |
|    | Criteria for Selection of a Partner | 74  |
|    | Communication                       | 77  |
|    | Continuity                          | 82  |
|    | Instructional Process               | 93  |
|    | Children                            | 98  |
|    | Parents                             | 99  |
|    | Teacher Satisfaction                | 100 |

|   |                                   |     |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----|
|   | Students                          | 105 |
| V | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS        | 113 |
|   | Results                           | 113 |
|   | Discussion and Recommendations    | 114 |
|   | Recommendations for further study | 120 |
|   | Conclusion                        | 121 |
|   | APPENDICES                        | 122 |
|   | Appendix I                        | 122 |
|   | Appendix II                       | 124 |
|   | Appendix III                      | 130 |
|   | Appendix IV                       | 132 |
|   | REFERENCE NOTES                   | 133 |
|   | REFERENCE LIST                    | 134 |

## LIST OF TABLES

| TABLE  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 1 Characteristics of Partnerships  | 43   |
| 2 Procedural Chart   | 48   |
| 3 Experience and Attitude of Principals  | 51   |
| 4 Perceived Disadvantages of Share Teaching  | 54   |
| 5 Preparation of Parents Before Placement of Students and Reaction of Parents to Placement of Students in a Shared Classroom | 61   |
| 6 Principals' Willingness to Employ Sharing Teachers in the Future   | 65   |
| 7 Teaching Experience of Sharing Teachers  | 68   |
| 8 Length of Partnerships in Years and Method of Selection of Partner   | 71   |
| 9 Importance of Compatible Partner   | 77   |
| 10 Quality of Intra-Classroom Communication  | 79   |
| 11 Quality of Communication Between the Principal and the Sharing Team   | 81   |
| 12 Integration of Both Teachers' Programs  | 87   |
| 13 Importance of Integration   | 88   |
| 14 Substitute Arrangements   | 92   |
| 15 Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Achievement in Shared Classrooms   | 97   |
| 16 Teachers' Perceptions of Effectiveness of Sharing Teams   | 104  |
| 17 Students' Feelings About Sharing Teachers   | 106  |
| 18 Help Received was Sufficient for Students' Needs  | 107  |
| 19 Students' Perceptions of Workload: One Teacher Classroom vs. Shared Classroom   | 108  |

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 20 | Students' Willingness to be in a Shared Classroom Again      | 108 |
| 21 | Students' Perception of Difficulty in Changing Teachers      | 109 |
| 22 | Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Communication             | 110 |
| 23 | Students' Perceptions of Consistency of Instructions         | 111 |
| 24 | Students' Perceptions of Parental Support for Shared Classes | 112 |

CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

Background

Teacher shortages of the 1960s led some administrators to look for methods of attracting former teachers back into the school systems. Motherhood had meant that many women teachers had left the profession. Job sharing was an innovative way of encouraging these women to return to the classroom.

In 1965, the Women's Educational and Industrial Union established a program involving 120 paired teams of teachers who were placed in classrooms of school districts in and around Framingham, Massachusetts. Evaluation of the program by Catalyst, a research and educational service organization, revealed enthusiastic reactions from principals and parents (Dapper and Murphy, 1968).

The relationship between teacher supply and demand has greatly changed since the 1960s. Declining enrollment and budget restraints have eliminated many staff positions, and job sharing has come to be viewed as a possible means of lessening reductions in staffs. As staffs decrease in size it will become more difficult to maintain a variety of talents and interests in any one school. McLean, an enthusiastic proponent of job sharing writes,

The concept of job sharing is, of course, a very exciting one. I find it especially attractive, during these times when jobs are difficult to locate, and we in the public schools find it necessary to retrench rather than expand facilities (cited in Moorman, Smith, & Ruggels, 1980, p. 5).

### Purpose of the Study

Teachers sharing the responsibility of a class is a relatively new phenomenon. Teachers have shared classroom duties in the past but this has usually involved one senior teacher and one part-time relieving teacher who took direction from the senior teacher (e.g., an annex head teacher or a vice-principal). More and more teachers, for health or personal reasons, are electing to work part-time. For many teachers the preferred method of time sharing is two or three full days a week. In contrast, administrators appear to favour daily morning/afternoon divisions of time (Watson, Note 1). Although classes that are taught by two teachers who share equal responsibility have greater acceptance now than in previous years, many administrators are not enthusiastic about these arrangements, particularly at the primary level (Watson, Note 1). Concerns regarding increased administrative work load, communication between the teaching partners and the administration, and continuity of the educational program need to be addressed. Other areas that need to be assessed are classroom management techniques, personal compatibility, instructional

style, the effect of the division of subject and program responsibility, subject responsibility and skill sequencing, substitute arrangements, and school and parental acceptance (Watson, Note 1).

There does not appear to be much research regarding the educational effectiveness and operational efficiency of teachers who share the responsibility of a class, and administrators' concerns are often based on opinion and administrative ease. There are few districts that will guarantee teachers permanent part-time employment which is transferable from one school to another within the district.

This study was undertaken in order to investigate four aspects of share-time teaching:

1. principals' concerns regarding the employment of share-time teachers,
2. how share-time teachers in the primary grades view these concerns and how they strive to allay these concerns,
3. teaching and organizational strategies employed by share-time teachers, and
4. pupils' views regarding share-time teachers.

#### Importance of the Study

According to Eli Ginzburg, Chairman of the National Commission for Manpower Policy (U.S.A.), the demand by women for equal participation in the labour force is "the single most outstanding phenomenon of this century" (in Meier, 1976, p.5). Carol S. Greenwald,



Massachusetts' Commissioner of Banks, an articulate proponent of part-time work for professionals, states, "Full time work is defined as the amount of time men ordinarily work" (in Meier, 1978, p.6). Women who are raising a family are often caught trying to balance the need for two earners in a family, the need for a sense of esteem and an identification of one's place in society, and a need to provide for the upbringing of their children. Many who are employed full-time feel the stress of continuing full-time work. Stress studies of "intact" families indicate that stress is highest for mothers who work full time, less for mothers not working at all, and least for mothers working part time (Meier, 1978, p.7).

Teaching has traditionally been a profession in which large numbers of practitioners are women. For many teachers the choice is not between working half time and not working at all; the choice is between working half time and working full time. These teachers want or need to work, but feel that on a full-time basis they cannot do as good a job as they want to do, and as well do a good job at home. They have opted for half-time work as a means of fulfilling their need to work, their need to perform well in their jobs, and their needs at home. They are asking that work schedules be flexible enough to meet their needs.

Education has greater numbers of job-sharers than other professions particularly at the elementary level,

but only a few districts in British Columbia actively promote this option. Because there is a resistance among some principals and administrators to the concept of job-sharing in the classroom it is important to examine whether job-sharing in the classroom is an effective alternative to one full-time classroom teacher. Do share-teachers add stress to the operation and organization of a school? Do share-teachers add stress to interpersonal relationships in the school? Do pupils benefit or suffer from exposure to two teachers in a shared classroom? McLean states,

It seems obvious to me that students...benefit very directly from having two individuals who are enthusiastically working with them rather than one individual who is carrying a very heavy load (McLean, cited in Moorman et al., p. 6).

### Definition of Terms

Share teaching is the division of one full-time teaching position by two teachers. It implies the restructuring of one full-time teaching position into two part-time positions. It is a horizontal division which implies that the responsibilities of the classroom teacher are shared equally by both partners.

Part-time teaching allows a teacher to work less than full-time. It does not imply that one full-time position was restructured into two or more part-time positions.

Partnership teaching is the term used before 1973 to describe share teaching.

Work sharing involves the temporary reapportionment of work time for all employees as an alternative to layoff for some of the employees (Meier, 1978).

Job sharing is a restructuring of the traditional work week. It allows two or more workers to share a job that was (or could be) filled by one full-time worker. It is a horizontal division where both employees are equally responsible for total job requirements.

Job splitting is a restructuring of the traditional work week. It allows two or more workers to share a job that was (or could be) filled by one full-time worker. It is a vertical division where each employee is responsible for a distinct half of the total job requirements.

### Delimitations

This study includes teachers who:

1. share class responsibility on a 60/40 or 50/50 basis,
2. teach in the primary grades, and
3. share responsibility for the total language arts program.

This study does not include teachers who:

1. share a class on a basis other than 60/40 or 50/50,
2. split their teaching assignment on a morning/afternoon basis,
3. split their teaching assignment on a semester on/semester off basis, or

4. are relieving teachers for a full time teacher/administrator.

#### Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of this study.

1. The selection of the sample was limited because not all the Vancouver School District schools which employed sharing teachers in the primary grades agreed to participate in the study.

2. The subjective nature of the responses to the instruments and the lack of any objective measure of effectiveness made it difficult to assess the effects of job sharing on the quality of education.

3. Not all schools involved in the study had students represented in the student sample.

4. The students may not have understood the questions that they were asked. Their age may have influenced their ability to formulate reliable opinions, and it is questionable whether grade three students are able to discern changes in the quality of education.

5. The investigator is employed by the Vancouver School Board as a sharing teacher. She has taught for nine years with the same partner. This study does not include the investigator's or her partner's experiences. Neither does it include the opinions of students taught by this partnership.

## CHAPTER 2

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a society like ours, where so many people have no work at all, it makes economic and political sense to allow people who do not want or need full-time work to reduce their work time and share a job (Olmsted and Smith, 1983, p. 170).

This chapter will describe the literature that has contributed to the design of the interview schedules used in conducting this research. First, an overview of the general literature on job sharing will be given; the relationship between work sharing, job sharing, and part-time work will be described and the impetus for these employment practices will be considered. A summary of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of job sharing in general will also be included. Second, the more specific advantages and disadvantages of job sharing as they relate to the classroom teacher will be discussed. Third, the literature relating to specific job sharing research in education will be reviewed. Finally some of the criteria necessary for establishing a successful share teaching partnership will be specified.

#### Overview of General Literature on Job Sharing

Because job sharing is a relatively recent phenomenon which is not widely practised, there is very little literature which relates directly to this employment practice. Job sharing is seen as a variation

of part-time work, but it is part-time work with all the fringe benefits and advantages of full-time work (Meier, 1978). Job sharing can also be viewed as a variation of work sharing and as such has its origins in a movement which has seen industrial societies apply policies to reduce and ration worktime as a means of combatting joblessness. Reducing and rationing worktime has been a concern of the labour movement since the 18th century (Best, 1981). Samuel Gompers, the President of the American Federation of Labour, declared in 1887, "As long as we have one person seeking work who cannot find it, the hours of work are too long" (Best, 1981, p.2). This position has been the major justification for efforts to reduce the work week from the late 19th century until the 1930s. As productivity increased faster than demand for products, the hours of work were gradually shortened. During the depression there was the first widespread effort to reduce worktime in order to spread employment, and eventually the standard work week was defined as 40 hours (Best, 1981)

According to Meltz, Reid, and Swartz (1981) job sharing and regular part-time work are related to work sharing. The distinction between them is that job sharing and regular part-time employment are intended to accommodate persons who prefer to work less than full-time, whereas work sharing is designed to protect workers' jobs when the demand for labour is deficient.

Work sharing is an attempt to combat unemployment by reducing the number of hours that each employee works rather than laying off any employees because of a reduction in the demand for labour. Job sharing differs from regular part-time employment because it allows two or more workers to share a job that was (or could be) filled by one full-time worker. Regular part-time employment is work that for technical or cost reasons cannot easily be converted to a full-time job. Meltz et al. (1981) point out that according to this definition persons who are working part-time involuntarily are involved in work sharing rather than regular part-time employment.

Although job sharing is one alternative among a number of policies that are proposed as practical responses to the problems of layoffs and unemployment, the impetus for job sharing and part-time work is different than that for work sharing. Job sharing comes from an increasing awareness of the need to fit work to the worker. According to Meltz et al. (1981), job sharing is most heavily favoured by persons who are overemployed at their current jobs. Also, the numerous job sharing experiments involve almost exclusively married women in occupations such as librarian, teacher, and nurse. Meier (1978) found job sharing to be practised mainly among teachers, administrators, secretaries, counselors, and researchers. She also

found job sharing editors, ministers, physicians, bank tellers, therapists, museum designers, and food service workers. According to Meier (1978) job sharing is an effort to balance the quality of life for those who feel economically and socially able to venture into new choices. It comes from efforts in the late sixties to develop new career level opportunities in part-time jobs by restructuring full-time, 40 hour per week positions. Whether job sharing, part-time, or work sharing is the method preferred, Best (1981) points out that there is an important labour market trend towards an increase in the proportion of the working age population who seek employment, but who work less than what we have traditionally called "full-time".

According to Harriman (1982) the vast majority of complex organizations operate under a standard work week, a fixed schedule, and a common package of fringe benefits for the employees. This fixed career path assumes a linear pattern of full-time uninterrupted work. These standard fixed procedures originate in an earlier age and an earlier economy and assume a family pattern of male breadwinner with dependent wife and children. However, for many the post industrial society has arrived. Changes have occurred in families and family life and now, a majority of North American families are not represented by this pattern. The



dual-earner family or the single parent family now represents a large percentage of families.

Pressures to allow more flexible work schedules have arisen because of a number of conditions. According to Best (1981), Meier (1978), and Meltz et al. (1981) these conditions are:

- 1) an increased number of women in the work force,
- 2) a concern of society as a whole to provide dual-wage earner families the opportunity to raise their children,
- 3) young workers' inability to find meaningful jobs coupled with a heightened expectation of work due to higher educational attainment, and
- 4) life cycle changes; often older workers would prefer a lightened work load or a later retirement.

The increase in women in the workforce will not only intensify the labour market competition but will also alter worktime preferences. What are considered standard work patterns today have not always been standard. There has been an historical evolution in order to meet changing needs. Meltz et al. (1981) report that it is their impression that a substantial number of persons desire to share a job but lack the opportunity. Meier (1978) suggests that governments should take the lead in promoting job-sharing. In fact, legislation has been passed at the Federal level (USA)

and in two or three states to encourage opening up opportunities for job sharing (Olmstead, 1977). Meier (1978) feels there is a widespread lack of appreciation for the advantages of job sharing to management and a traditional resistance to administrative complications.

Grenwald and Liss (1973) suggest that although women are a major source of part time employment, men are also asking for less rigid work hours. Harriman (1982) states that male acceptance is essential if the concept of job sharing is to take hold. As long as only women participate they will be perceived as an "elite" group. She also points out that to some the idea may seem bizarre but not long ago the idea of careers for women, especially married women with children, was considered aberrant.

Most arrangements for job sharing are initiated by the workers and the organization responds to their needs (Meier, 1978). Organizations are more likely to permit sharing if both employees are already in their employ and if both partners are capable of handling the job alone. The combining of the talents of two people brings a greater range of expertise to the job. Job sharing makes more attractive those jobs which are prone to high turnover rates.

Meier (1978) sets out four basic criteria for job sharing: 1) voluntary choice of employee, 2) deliberate

conversion of one full-time position, 3) existence of a partner or other half, and 4) provision of fringe benefits.

Olmstead (1977) adds these criteria: 5) acceptance by the supervisor of the concept of job sharing, and 6) support from the institution for the concept of job sharing and treatment of the job sharer in the same manner as other employees.

Part-time work is traditionally associated with low paid, unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. Job sharing is an innovative work pattern that allows professional personnel the opportunity to pursue a career on a part-time basis. The aim of job sharing is to increase the number and quality of part-time opportunities (Meier, 1978). It is a method of restructuring full-time work so that all the duties and responsibilities of a high level position are covered by two individuals who earn a professional salary and benefits (Block, 1980). Current regulations often inhibit change but "much of the difficulty comes from the still pervasive feeling that only certain jobs are suitable and from the perception that the person unable or unwilling to work the standard work week is a less valuable worker" (Meier, 1978, p.32).

According to Block (1980) job sharing requires communication between partners and responsibility to each other. It does not presuppose that only one person will be on the job at any one time. Collaboration is

more likely to be a requisite of job sharing than any other work arrangement. The level of communication and cooperation necessary to share a job makes job sharing quite distinct from job splitting which apportions out specific tasks to each partner. The most successful job sharers have unwritten contracts to cooperate extensively and to become interchangeable whenever possible.

There are many advantages and disadvantages inherent in the concept of job sharing, and the task of assessing these advantages and disadvantages is complicated by a lack of past experience and research on the subject. Much of what has been written are assumptions based on the performance of part-time workers in general. The advantages and disadvantages can be broken down into four categories: advantages to employer, advantages to employee, disadvantages to employer, and disadvantages to employee.

Studies indicate that one advantage to the employer is that productivity often rises because job sharing employees bring more energy and enthusiasm to the job (Meltz et al., 1981). As well, the employer gains workers who are committed to the job because they feel that the company is cognizant of their needs. The workers' performance reflects their perception of the company's attitude toward them. Also they can keep up a much faster pace for shorter periods of time (Grenwald

and Liss, 1973). Related to productivity levels is a lower rate of absenteeism and turnover (Olmstead, 1977).

Olmstead (1977) lists several other advantages. Serious disruption can be avoided because partners cover for each other during vacation, illness, or normal turnover. There is increased flexibility of peak hours. New jobs are opened up. New options are available for older and/or handicapped workers. Overtime costs can be eliminated. Meier (1978) reports that there is greater expertise due to the combining of complementary skills, and positions which are prone to a high turn-over rate are made more attractive by job-sharing. Meltz et al. (1981) state that work sharing in general can avoid an increase in average wage costs because in time of layoff it is the junior employees who must leave.

For the employer the first and most important disadvantage of job sharing and of work sharing in general is that it increases administrative costs related to Unemployment Insurance, health insurance, Canada Pension Plan, and Workmen's Compensation, since these costs, especially at higher income levels, are directly related to the number of employees (Meltz et al. 1981). These costs may be offset by increased productivity and reduced absenteeism but such factors are often very difficult to assess. Meltz et al. (1981) point out that there are some analogies between the current discussion about job sharing and that which took place a decade ago on the subject of flexible working

hours. They say that it is now generally accepted that flexible working hours have proved cost effective by reducing absenteeism, overtime, staff turnover and non-productive time as well as producing increased productivity and enhanced morale and labour relations. The answer to this problem of the cost of fringe benefits may be to institute government policies which base costs on the total number of hours worked by all the employees in the company. As it is now, at the higher income levels, it is to the company's advantage to have full-time workers rather than part-time workers. ✓

A second disadvantage is that job sharing increases the number of staff. Hiring and training costs are likely to increase. Supervision may be doubled but Olmstead (1977) says that in actuality double supervision has not materialized because job sharers are more committed to work and are committed to communicate with each other.

The primary benefit to the employee is more time off work to pursue other activities and commitments (Block, 1980). It allows one to balance time and responsibilities. Job sharers are generally mothers with school age children who use this time off to raise their families. As well Meier (1978) found that job sharers use their time off to pursue other jobs or to improve their education.

Meier (1978) points out several secondary benefits to the job sharer. A tedious job is less tedious; a

stressful job is less draining. Partners bolster each other and consult each other and there is a sense of interdependence. Partners cover for each other. There is an added self-awareness of your job because partners communicate. There is a sense of effectiveness because you are better prepared. Job sharers have a greater sense of competency and esteem. There is a sense of choice and autonomy over tasks and time.

The most obvious disadvantage for the employee is that wages are not as high. As well, fringe benefits may not be as comprehensive for job sharers, especially if they are prorated to match the hours of employment (Block, 1980). Another important disadvantage is that promotion is limited by virtue of putting in less time on the job. According to Meier (1978), secondary disadvantages may develop. There may be a problem of maintaining equitable division of time and fringe benefits, an uncertainty as to whether tenure depends on team or individual evaluation, a loss of personal identity in the partnership, difficulty in accomplishing as much as you would like on the job, a possibility of a feeling of jealousy from other staff or irritating adjustments to make to a partner. As well job sharers often work extra in order to keep up employer confidence in sharing. ✓

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Job Sharing in Teaching

According to Meier (1978) the professional field in which job sharing is most readily found is teaching. Block (1980) cites many advantages of job sharing that are particular to the teaching profession. Teacher fatigue is lessened. There is an uplifting of spirits due to the interactive support of job sharers. There is more time to prepare lessons. Teaching is easier. There is an opportunity to compare one's assessment of pupils with those of a second professional. As well there maybe an amelioration of a disharmonious relationship between a pupil and a teacher because of reduced contact.

As well, different types of share teaching result in different types of benefits. If the pair is composed of one experienced and one novice teacher, the experienced teacher may be infused with the enthusiasm of the novice and the novice may absorb some of the expertise of the experienced teacher. If the split is on a morning/afternoon basis, the children gain a fresh teacher twice a day. If the schedule is split on a half weekly or alternate weekly basis, the teachers have large blocks of time in which to schedule their non-school activities.

Students will benefit from the tendency of sharing teachers to teach those areas with which they feel most comfortable and adept. Two different points of view about the students plus the existence of a second person



who expresses an interest in the students has further potential advantages for the students (Block, 1980).

Job sharing can be a useful tool for administrators as an alternative to layoffs, as a way of introducing new teachers to the system and infusing new energies and ideas into the system, as a useful tool in combatting teacher burnout, and as a method of maintaining older valued teachers who might otherwise retire. Other benefits to the school system can be reduced disruption through the use of the partner rather than a substitute, reduced cost if the second partner is a novice teacher, higher employee morale, and added flexibility in personnel scheduling (Block, 1980).

According to Block (1980) there are many disadvantages of job sharing that are of particular concern to teaching. There is the potential for a breakdown in communication. There is the potential for a breakdown of continuity of instruction if work is divided on a split week or alternate week schedule. The cost of fringe benefits for the school system may be increased. There is the problem of the proper amount of compensation to be paid to share teachers who substitute for their partner (full-time teacher rate versus substitute rate). As well, there may be the problem of one of the partners resigning or of a serious incompatibility arising between the partners. Teachers who work morning/afternoon splits tend to find themselves putting in longer days than they are

scheduled to work because they come in early and leave late. On the other hand, some administrators believe that part-time teachers will be less committed than full-time staff. As well, professional organizations fear that the reduction of an instructor's hours would prohibit the raising of teaching to "its appropriate professional stature" and also weaken the bargaining position. There are also concerns that part-time teachers will be less dedicated than full-time teachers.

#### Job Sharing Research in Education

Dapper and Murphy (1968) were the first to address themselves to share teaching. Their study was conducted for Catalyst, an American research organization formed to find ways to make the most productive use of college educated women. Catalyst is concerned with the possibilities of women combining rewarding work with family responsibilities to both their own and society's advantage. In 1968 the United States was troubled by a persistent shortage of first rate teachers but the country abounded with well-educated women who would have liked to enter or resume teaching for part of the day or week. Their study involved five school districts or areas that employed part time teachers. Part of the study included fifteen districts around Framingham, Massachusetts, that employed 120 pairs of sharing teachers. As share teaching is a specialized form of part-time teaching, a number of their findings regarding part-time teachers in general, as well as their findings

regarding share teachers in particular, are applicable to this review.

According to Dapper and Murphy (1968) many of the problems anticipated in the employment of part-time teachers never arose. Where part-time teachers were used prejudices against them tended to vanish. Part-time teachers were frequently less prone to absenteeism and certainly were never more prone to absenteeism than full-time teachers. They showed no tendency to dilute the economic power of organized teachers and were more apt to stay put than teachers generally, because maternity was the commonest reason for teachers to leave the profession and the typical part-time teacher had already had her children.

Only those problems associated with communication proved to be substantial, and then principals found that with a little creative arranging of faculty and departmental needs these difficulties could be overcome. The flexibility of part-timers aided scheduling. Also administrators felt that they were getting more than their money's worth. Dapper and Murphy concluded that the best school systems tended to be open-minded and innovative.

The typical part-timer was married, in her late thirties, or early forties, with one or more children. She was a former full-time, fully certified teacher with an average five years experience and was busily improving her qualifications. Self-fulfilment in a

socially significant job, rather than money, seemed to motivate the typical part-time teacher. She conducted herself in the classroom with competence and enthusiasm while continuing to assign home and family top priority (Dapper and Murphy, 1968).

Partnership teaching (share teaching) was introduced in Framingham in 1965. One teacher taught mornings, one teacher taught afternoons. There was close dovetailing of all aspects of the job including planning, curriculum innovation, assessment, appropriate handling of individual pupils, dealing with parents, professional responsibility, and extra-curricular activities. The partners met frequently, conferred on the phone and usually substituted for each other. Their "success depended on thoughtful, comprehensive preparation, to anticipate, and if possible to avoid difficulties" (Dapper and Murphy, 1968, p.9).

There was no teacher shortage in Framingham, and teacher shortage was not the motivation for experimenting with partnership teaching. The idea originated with Mrs. Nona Porter of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in Boston, and the Framingham school districts were asked to implement the program (Dapper and Murphy, 1968).

In 1967, Catalyst assessed Framingham's partnership teaching program (Dapper and Murphy, 1968). At first many principals were apprehensive but most were soon won over to support the new program. Although in general

neither praise nor blame came back to the administrators, teachers reported that parents volunteered favourable comments. One principal phoned a number of his parents whom he chose at random, and solicited their opinions. He found, that they too, had at first been apprehensive, but were pleased with the way the partnership worked in their child's classroom. One parent in particular praised the diversity, the superb educational experience, and the outstanding social and academic results. One principal commented that the partners were part-time only on pay day and that each spent as much time preparing as a full-time teacher. He also felt that the parents benefitted by receiving two different points of view on their child. Another's impression was that academic achievement was high. One sceptical principal said that because of the length of the school day and the length of the school year a lot of people in the public already think that teaching is a part-time job without proving it. In general, concerns about communication were not supported by the performance of the teachers.

The teachers said it worked because they made it work. The children did not get under their skin as much and they were constantly challenged to do as much work as possible.

The pupils reported that it was nice to have a new chance in the afternoon if the morning teacher "was down on you".

Generally principals who had not tried partnership teaching felt:

- a) it would confuse the children,
- b) partners would not get along--"two women in one kitchen", and
- c) parents would object.

In practice none of these objections held up.

Dapper and Murphy (1968) concluded that objections to the use of share-time teachers were institutional rather than performance related.

New Ways to Work (Moorman et al., 1980) is a non-profit work resource organization founded in 1972 in the belief that society does not meet all of people's work needs. In 1974 it developed a program to promote job sharing, and in 1978 its Job Sharing in the Schools Project was founded. A random selection of California School Districts was made by selecting every tenth school district listed in the "California Public School Directory" 1979 Edition. Data was collected in the 1979-1980 school year. Their report focused on teachers who were sharing, but many other school personnel--principals, counselors, librarians, custodians, secretaries and receptionists--also were sharing. Their survey found that some form of job sharing was used in 27.6% of California school districts but that it was mainly centered in the San Francisco Bay area. Forty-three districts that replied that they had

experience with job sharing were selected to fill out a seventeen page questionnaire about their experience.

Moorman et al. (1980) included in their introduction to this study a letter from Dr. Robert E. McLean, Assistant Superintendent, Personnel Services, Palo Alto Unified School District, in which he stated that to him job sharing meant that two individuals actually shared a position. It might mean both individuals were on the job at one time, or that one was there one time, and the other at another time. In his experience job sharing required more time than a simple part-time job but the results were also greater. He also said that teaching could be a lonely endeavor but with job sharing there was not the opportunity ever to be lonely. His experience was that job sharers excited and enthused each other. He went on to say that teaching was a tremendously demanding profession--more than it should be if one tried to have any kind of life outside of the profession.

The New Ways to Work Project found that, in 74% of the school districts, job sharing was initiated because two full-time teachers had requested it. Teachers' reasons for initiating sharing were:

- a) sick or elderly parents who needed care,
- b) small children at home,
- c) a way of phasing into retirement,
- d) a need for more time to do things they enjoyed doing, or

e) they were tired of teaching full-time and were not enjoying it as much any more.

School districts that initiated sharing reported that their reasons were:

a) they did not want to lose good and valued teachers,

b) it was an alternative to layoffs,

c) it allowed a new teacher to be hired,

d) it was a method of phased retirement, or

e) it was a response to a special need of the district.

The answer to the question, "Does job sharing cost a school district more money?" varied and depended on the district's implementation of the arrangement. Some districts reported that job sharing saved money in two areas. First, they did not need to hire as many substitutes. Second, the districts realized savings because sharing was more prevalent at the higher end of the salary scale. This enabled the district to hire teachers at the lower end of the scale to fill the positions that remained. A few reported their costs increased because of fringe benefit costs. Some said there was no impact on costs (Moorman et al., 1980).

According to Moorman et al. (1980) all 43 administrators who were asked to cite advantages and disadvantages of job sharing agreed that the education of the students had not suffered. In fact, thirteen administrators listed "improved" education in the



classroom as an advantage of job sharing. The sharers themselves also perceived improved education in the classroom. Administrators cited many advantages to job sharing. Forty-four percent of school districts surveyed listed no disadvantages, and only three disadvantages were mentioned by more than one school district: cost, supervisory time, and increased administrative work.

Several school districts surveyed the parents of children in job sharing classrooms. The responses were overwhelmingly positive.

Reaction from Teachers' Associations was mixed. Some had taken the lead in negotiating job sharing for their members. Others felt that only full-time workers could be committed professionals.

Moorman et al. (p. 59) concluded their report with this statement:

Initial skepticism about job sharing has now given way to increased acceptance of its use and enthusiasm for its benefits. Teachers value the freedom it grants, administrators the problem-solving it provides. Students welcome the change in their classroom routine, and parents boast of their children's improved education and attitude toward school. Job sharing is indeed a phenomenon that is here to stay.

In 1978, Meier conducted a study of job sharing for the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. Meier (1978) and her staff sent questionnaires to several hundred previously identified job sharers. Responses were received from 238 individuals or 65 percent of the

total number of questionnaires that were sent. Teachers represented a greater number of the respondents (26%) than the other professional groups. Sharing among teachers was most prevalent at the elementary school level and was usually on an individual basis as only a few districts actively promoted this option. Sharing was more frequently found on the west coast than elsewhere.

Meier also quoted from a preliminary study done by her for New Ways to Work in 1976. This study found that administrators who had allowed sharing were generally extremely favourable. Issues confronting administrators concerned who should be eligible for this option, the numbers that should be permitted, and the criteria for returning to full-time teaching. The advantages to the district were the high quality of shared teaching which was a result of the great skill diversity within a single position and the increased energy and enthusiasm of sharing teachers. Issues confronting teachers were task division, time scheduling, unified teaching philosophy and the need for communication.

Most respondents to Meier's questionnaire felt strongly that the organization benefitted from the sharing as much as they did. There was better coverage with two on the job. Many sharers felt that they were at least as effective and often more effective than their full-time counterparts yet they were not accorded equal treatment in terms of job tenure.

In 1978, the Hawaii State Legislature authorized the establishment of a three-year job sharing pilot project in the Department of Education (DOE) by the passage of Act 150. The act provided for the conversion of a maximum of 100 full-time classroom teaching positions to job sharing positions. It allowed the voluntary sharing of one tenured teacher's position with a newly hired teacher. In the 1980-1981 school year there were 66 job sharing teams, 30 in grades 1 to 6 and 36 in grades 7 to 12. Although four tenured male teachers participated in the program, most tenured teachers who opted to share their positions were females in the thirty to thirty-nine year age group. Very few tenured teachers near retirement opted to participate in the program (Evaluation of the Job Sharing Pilot Project, 1981).

The program had four objectives.

To offer an alternative employment option to teachers.

To provide more employment opportunities for the disproportionate numbers of unemployed teachers in the state.

To create more stimulating environments for tenured teachers in their professional capacities.

To provide additional educational stimulus for students.

Participation in the job sharing project was strictly voluntary. Most tenured teachers stated their motivation was to increase the amount of time that they could spend with their families. Although there were

some "new hires" who were specifically looking for part-time positions (33%) most "new hires" chose to work this way because it was the only way to obtain a regular teaching position. The tenured teachers felt that they were better teachers because of a decrease in teaching responsibilities and a corresponding lessening of stress and pressures. They reported that they were more refreshed and energetic in the classroom. The report stated that there was an overall feeling of improved and enthusiastic attitude towards teaching. The "new hires" were slightly less enthusiastic because most would have rather had a full-time position.

Most principals based their feelings about the desirability of job sharing on the success or failure of the job sharing teams at their schools. They stressed that the advantages gained were attributable to the dedication, strength, and professionalism of the individual job sharers. Ninety-two percent of the principals involved rated job sharing as being either an "excellent" or "good" employment option, but many cautioned that not all teachers are suited to job sharing. The success or failure of the job sharing team depended on selecting a partner who was compatible.

Ninety-seven percent of the tenured teachers reported good work relationship (compatibility) with their partners. Eighty-two percent of both tenured and newly hired teachers reported that school administrators and colleagues had positive attitudes about their job

sharing. Eight percent reported that their principals were less than enthusiastic about the pilot project. Ninety percent of the tenured teachers reported an increase in job satisfaction. Ninety-two percent felt that they were more productive under job sharing while 8% reported no change. Sixty-seven percent of the principals thought that job sharing contributed to a more stimulating environment for the tenured teacher while 11% thought it had a negative impact on the tenured teacher's environment.

The lack of any direct and objective measures of effectiveness made it difficult to determine accurately the effects of job sharing on the quality of education. A random sampling of 89 students revealed that 96% said that they liked having two teachers. The parents or guardians of these students were also surveyed. Seventy-six percent of the parents said that the quality of their children's education either remained the same or improved, 16% were uncertain, and 8% felt the quality of education worsened under the pilot project. Most job sharers felt they were able to provide more for their students.

Although 33% of the principals reported improved educational quality at the end of the year, most felt that there was no impact on the quality of education and only one felt in one particular case that the effects were adverse. Many principals were quick to point out that any increase or decrease of educational stimulus

for the students was probably due to the individuals involved rather than the program itself.

Direct operating costs of the pilot project which included salaries, contributions to retirement fund, social security, health fund, and unemployment compensation fund were computed for the year 1979-1980 and estimated for the year 1980-1981. There was found to be a total reduction of \$496,000 which would accrue to the state (Evaluation of the Job Sharing Pilot Project, 1981, p.30). The reduction in salary was directly related to the difference between salary level of the tenured and newly hired teachers. As well reduced costs were reported for retirement contributions and social security. Only medical, dental, and group life plan contributions increased. Administrative costs of the program were minimal and were mainly related to the non-recurring costs of initial development and implementation of the program.

The project was evaluated in March 1981. The evaluation found the project to be generally effective in achieving the program's objectives. The conclusions were (Evaluation of the Job Sharing Pilot Project, 1981, p.9):

Job sharing continues to be a feasible and desired employment option for teachers.

Job sharing continues to increase the number of available teaching positions for unemployed teachers as well as provide them with more meaningful employment opportunities. However its actual impact in reducing the large number of teaching applicants seeking positions in

the Department of Education continues to be minimal.

Job sharing continues to create a more stimulating environment for tenured teachers in their professional capacities. Tenured teachers consistently report an increase in job satisfaction, work productivity, and quality of work.

Although conclusive evidence is lacking to support the expectations that job sharing would provide additional education stimulus for students, the pilot project appears to have a positive effect on the quality of education provided. Parents, job sharers, and principals generally remain satisfied with the quality of education provided under the pilot project.

The report recommended that the State establish job sharing as a permanent employment option and identified a number of issues that needed to be resolved before the program was made permanent. One of these issues was extending the option so that two tenured teachers could share a position.

#### Criteria for Successful Share Teaching Partnerships

In 1980, Moorman et al. specified certain criteria for setting up a partnership. Compatibility of the two sharing teachers was the single most important ingredient of a successful partnership. One teacher said, "Job sharing is like a marriage. You should choose your partner carefully" (Moorman et al., 1980, p. 30). Because compatibility was so important, most school districts required teachers to find their own partners. One school district experienced difficulty when the superintendent matched the partners. When choosing a partner the obvious criterion was someone who

wanted the same grade and schedule. Other criteria that had to be considered were:

1. Teaching philosophy and educational goals; partners had to be unified in their approach when dealing with parents and children.
2. Opinion on discipline.
3. Personal habits (orderly vs. disorderly).
4. Amount of effort to be put into the job.
5. Liking for each other.

Most sharers said that they sat in each other's classes in order to decide if they were compatible. Teachers also could assess compatibility by sitting down together and making plans for the year. One principal said that he assumed the teachers were compatible if they could agree enough to write out a comprehensive and well-designed plan for the school year.

Communicating was the biggest challenge that the sharers mentioned. Much time was spent at the beginning of the year discussing plans, classroom procedures, and rules of behaviour. Some of the sharers spent time together in the classroom at the beginning of the year in order to establish consistency. A few districts required that both partners be present for the first couple of days. As the year progressed sharers used telephone calls, daily logs, information boxes, and paraprofessionals to communicate information. Many sharers made agreements with their principals to be treated as one teacher in order to reduce the



principal's need to communicate with both partners. The principal would tell one sharer, and that partner was responsible for telling the other partner. Sharing teachers had to be careful to let their principal know of any schedule changes. Also, methods of communicating with colleagues and parents had to be decided on.

Most districts allowed the teachers to choose any schedule upon which they and their immediate supervisor could agree. A few districts limited the choice of schedules to split day (morning/afternoon) or alternate semesters (fall/spring) because they feared that other schedules would be disruptive to the continuity of instruction. Those districts that allowed other schedules did not report any problems with them. Although some districts required each teacher to work a half day each day, some chose this schedule because they liked the regular daily routine for their own families and because the subjects were easier to divide up. Two teachers who initially chose a split day schedule abandoned it because of the problems they encountered such as discipline carry over, lack of continuity with staff, a feeling that the space was never their own, no big blocks of time for themselves, potential free time was eaten up commuting each day, and difficulty communicating over lunch hour because the rest of the staff wanted to talk to them as well.

Split week was a common schedule, with teachers overlapping, sharing, or alternating Wednesdays. Most

of these teachers felt this schedule gave them more time to plan lessons, more flexibility to plan their activities outside of school and a larger block of free time. None of these teachers felt that there were any disadvantages to the system, although some school districts maintained that the arrangement jeopardized continuity of instruction.

Many other teachers chose to teach alternate weeks starting on a Wednesday and working through to Tuesday because it gave them a continuous week of instruction and they still never had to work more than three days in any one week. Although those who chose alternate weeks were pleased with it, some principals expressed concern over this schedule. Because the sharers did not have fixed days at school they felt communication was more difficult.

Although some beginning of the year planning was necessary, an alternate semester schedule minimized sharing. It worked best for teachers who preferred to work alone but did not want full-time work. Many of the aspects of sharing discussed under advantages and disadvantages would not apply to this type of sharing. While many principals and administrators liked this because they always knew who was there and who was not, other principals and administrators said that the school lost the "two heads are better than one" benefit.

Teachers working either split day or split week generally divided the curriculum into spheres of

responsibility. They often divided the lesson preparation and responsibility but both taught all subjects. The advantage was that they had more time for planning lessons because they concentrated on half of the subjects. Those who alternated weeks or semesters usually prepared and taught their own blocks but got together for overall planning so that there was a smooth transition period.

Peripheral details like faculty meetings, parent teacher conferences, open house, and field trips also had to be agreed on mutually by all sharing teachers. Many teachers had written into their job sharing proposal some kind of substitute arrangement. Most teachers substituted for each other with some kind of swapping of days going on to balance out the days owed back to them. The rest used the districts' regular substitutes.

"The principal's support was the key" (Moorman et al. 1980, p. 29). School districts rarely allowed sharing in schools in which the principal was opposed. Although initial reluctance on the part of some principals to the concept of job sharing was reported by Catalyst, the DOE (Hawaii State), and New Ways to Work, most principals who had experience with job sharing supported the concept (Dapper and Murphy, 1968; Evaluation of the Job Sharing Pilot Project, 1981; Moorman et al., 1980). The teachers had an investment in making sharing work and through careful planning were

able to reduce any additional burden that sharing might impose on the principal.

### CHAPTER 3

#### METHODOLOGY

This study was undertaken in order to assess the educational effectiveness and operational efficiency of share time teachers in the primary grades. A three stage study was designed in which principals, teachers, and students were interviewed using structured interview protocols designed by this investigator.

#### Criteria for Selection of Subjects

In 1983-1984 the Vancouver School Board had 64 shared full-time positions in its elementary schools, grades K-7, including English Language Center and Learning Assistance Center teachers (Tomsich, Note 2). There were approximately 1450 full-time elementary teaching positions in the 93 elementary schools and annexes in the district. The shared positions were divided in one of three ways: 1) morning/afternoon split; 2) split week with each teacher working from one to four full days a week; or 3) alternate weeks with each teacher's week starting on a Wednesday or Thursday and running until the following Tuesday or Wednesday. The division of time in these sharing situations ranged from 80/20 splits to 50/50 splits.

Because language arts is the largest and most important block of time scheduled in the primary grades it was deemed important to select teachers who shared the responsibility of teaching this subject. As well, in order to evaluate programs where both teachers really

shared responsibility for the language arts program, it was deemed important to select partners who assumed equal or nearly equal responsibility for the classroom program. For these reasons, it was decided to select from this available pool of 64 sharing partnerships those partnerships based on a 60/40 split or a 50/50 split who taught grades one to three and shared the language arts program.

#### Selection of Teachers

Because of the large number of requests for permission to conduct research within the Vancouver School District, it is the Board's policy to ask researchers to select those schools within the district which the researchers would like to use in their research. The principal of each school selected is then asked for permission to conduct research within his or her school. The ultimate decision to grant this permission rests with the individual principals.

The Vancouver School Board also maintains a file of Form 2002. This file lists alphabetically every school within the district and alphabetically every teacher employed at each school. It also lists the subject areas taught by each teacher and the number of minutes each week that each teacher spends in the classroom. This file was studied in November, 1983, in order to ascertain which schools employed sharing teachers who met the criteria specified above.

Twenty-two schools were identified as having teachers who shared the teaching of primary classes (grades 1, 2, and 3) on a 60/40 or 50/50 basis. Twenty-six shared classrooms within these 22 schools met the specified criteria. In December, the Program Resources department of the Board sent letters to the principals of these schools requesting permission for this investigator to conduct interviews within their school. Only eight of these twenty-two schools (9 sharing teams) replied positively to the query. Because of the poor response to this first request for co-operation, permission was granted to approach principals or teachers personally. In this manner nine additional teams, in six schools, were located who agreed to participate in this study. Three teams who agreed to be interviewed did so without their principals' knowledge or consent. Table 1 shows the grades taught by the 18 share-teaching teams, and the method of time-sharing of each team.

#### Selection of Principals

Consenting schools were listed alphabetically and in January, 1984, the 11 principals who consented to this study were approached about being interviewed. Six or seven principals had been decided on as a reasonable sample. The first seven who could be contacted agreed to participate. One principal had no sharing teams at his school because of a change in staffing between

Table 1

## Characteristics of Partnerships

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| Team | Grade Level | Percentage of Time Taught by Each partner | Method of Time Sharing |
|------|-------------|---|------------------------|
| A    | 3           | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF (a)          |
| B    | 2/3         | 40/60                                     | MT-WTF (b)             |
| C    | K/1         | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| D    | 2           | 50/50                                     | TFMTW (c)              |
| E    | 2/3         | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| F    | 3/4         | 50/50                                     | WTFMT (c)              |
| G    | 2/3         | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| H    | 2/3         | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| I    | 1           | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| J    | 3           | 40/60                                     | MT-WTF                 |
| K    | 2           | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| L    | K/1         | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| M    | 3/4         | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| N    | 2           | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| O    | 3           | 40/60                                     | MT-WTF                 |
| P    | 1           | 50/50                                     | TFMTW                  |
| Q    | 1/2         | 50/50                                     | MT-(W)-TF              |
| R    | 1           | 40/60                                     | MTW-TF (d)             |

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a) MT-(W)-TF. Monday, Tuesday, and alternate Wednesdays taught by one partner; Thursday, Friday and alternate Wednesdays taught by the other partner.

b) MT-WTF. Monday and Tuesday taught by first partner; Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday taught by second partner.

c) WTFMT/TFMTW. Alternate weeks starting on Wednesday or Thursday and ending on the following Tuesday or Wednesday.

d) MTW-TF. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday taught by one partner; Thursday, and Friday taught by the other partner.



September and December but he agreed to discuss his past experiences.

### Selection of Students

The names of all the grade three students from the seven schools that had grade three students who met the criteria and whose principals had granted permission to participate in the study were assigned a number. Thirty children were selected randomly. Fifteen were chosen who were at that time enrolled in classes taught by sharing teachers (1983-84). Fifteen were chosen who in 1982-83 were enrolled in grade two classes that were taught by sharing teachers. None of the schools had grade three students who had been in shared classes in grade one. The parents of these children were asked for permission to interview their children. One school declined to send these permission slips home. Interviews were conducted with 11 students currently enrolled in shared grade three classrooms (School A, 2 students; School B, 3 students; School C, 2 students; and School D, 4 students) and 15 students who were enrolled in shared grade two classrooms in 1982-83 (School E, 5 students; School F, 2 students; School B, 5 students; and School C, 3 students).

### Instruments

In stage one of the study, the investigator designed an interview schedule composed of eleven very general questions designed to elicit a wide range of opinions that principals might have regarding share time

teachers (see Appendix I). The schedule was designed after reading previous research regarding share teaching (Block, 1980; Dapper and Murphy, 1968; Moorman et al., 1980). Ten general areas of concern were selected: advantages, disadvantages, administrative problems, organization, educational effectiveness, parent reactions, student reactions, compatibility, communication, and staff relationships. The eleventh question was to allow each principal an opportunity to describe his own personal experience with sharing teachers.

Using information collected from the principals' interviews and the review of the literature, a structured interview schedule was designed for the teachers (see Appendix II). Eight general areas of interest were selected: background, compatibility, communication, continuity, instructional process, parents' reactions, students' reactions, and personal reactions. Forty-five specific questions were listed under these eight general areas in order to insure that teachers addressed all areas of specific concern. Eighteen of these questions addressed specific concerns regarding the mechanics of share teaching.

Using information collected from the review of the literature and the principals' interviews, a structured interview schedule of nine specific questions was designed for the students (see Appendix III).

## Procedure

Table 2 shows the time line involved in this investigation. In late January and early February, 1984, the investigator interviewed the seven principals selected. These interviews took place in each principal's office and were approximately thirty to forty minutes in length. The interviews were recorded on tape and later transcribed, and the information was categorized according to each of the eleven general questions.

From late February through late April, 1984, the investigator interviewed the thirty-six teachers (eighteen pairs) who had agreed to participate in the study. These interviews took place in the schools or homes of the teachers involved and were approximately forty-five minutes in length. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed, and all information was categorized under the forty-five specific questions.

In late March, 1984, the investigator conducted a pilot study with grade two, three, and four students enrolled in her school who had previous or present experience with share-teaching classrooms. This study was conducted in order to determine if the students were able to understand the wording of the student questionnaire. As no problems were encountered it was decided to use the questionnaire in this study. In late May, 1984, the 26 students whose parents granted permission were interviewed in a quiet, private room

## Table 2

## Procedural Chart

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| October 1983                  | Letter written to Vancouver School Board requesting permission to conduct study.   |
| November 1983                 | Search of Form 2002 for schools that employed sharing teachers in the primary grades.  |
| December 1983                 | Letter sent by Program Resources department of the School Board to the principals requesting permission to conduct the study within their schools. |
| January 1984                  | Contacts made through friends and acquaintances with schools that had replied negatively to the December letter.                                   |
| January 26--February 10, 1984 | Principals' interviews conducted.  |
| February 24--April 25, 1984   | Teachers' Interviews conducted.  |
| May 23,- June 12, 1984        | Pupil Interviews conducted.  |
| July, 1984                    | Interview with Maureen Tomsich.  |

selected by the principal in each school. The interviews were approximately five minutes in length. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and reorganized under the nine questions.

In July, 1984, an interview was obtained with Maureen Tomsich who is responsible for the placement of elementary teaching personnel. This interview was obtained in order to assess the Board's policy regarding the placement of share teaching teams and the use of substitutes by teams, topics that had been raised by the teachers during their interviews.

## CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS

As this study was not experimental, no statistical hypotheses were tested. It was, however, the intention of this study to discover what could be learned about job sharing in the classroom from the perceptions of the principals, teachers, and students who have had experience with this practice. The findings are presented in three sections. The first section deals with the experience and perceptions of the principals, the second section deals with the experience and perceptions of the teachers, and the third section deals with the experience and perceptions of the students.

For the purpose of anonymity each principal has been randomly assigned a letter from "A" to "G" and each sharing partnership has been randomly assigned a letter from "A" to "R". It is important to note that not all the sharing teams assigned to each principal's school were interviewed, and some sharing teams were interviewed whose principals were not.

### Principals

The perceptions of the seven principals interviewed were based on their experiences with sharing teachers at all grade levels from kindergarten to grade seven. Although all had experience with 60/40 and 50/50 splits some of their experience was based on teaching situations that involved sharing that was not based on 60/40 or 50/50 splits. Table 3 shows how the principals acquired share-teaching teams and if they had any previous experience with share teaching in another school. It also shows their attitude towards sharing as perceived by this investigator. Two principals who were perceived as being apprehensive have allowed teams to be initiated in their present schools. These principals could point to specific areas of concern regarding one or two of their teams but were happy with the performance of the other teams under their administration. One principal could pinpoint no specific areas of weakness with his teams but could see the potential for problems. Except for one principal who adamantly stated that 80/20 splits should not be allowed, no principal stated that he was categorically against the concept of share teaching. Generally all of the principals were more positive than negative, although four felt that it was necessary to lay down certain guidelines for sharing.

Table 3

## Experience and Attitude of Principals

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| Prin. | Experience         |                    |                    | Attitude      |                   |
|-------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|
|       | Previous<br>Exper. | Inherited<br>Teams | Initiated<br>Teams | Posi-<br>tive | Appre-<br>hensive |
| A     |                    | Yes                | Yes                | Yes           |                   |
| B     | Yes                | Yes                | Yes                |               | Yes               |
| C     |                    |                    | Yes                | Yes           |                   |
| D     |                    | Yes                |                    |               | Yes *             |
| E     | Yes                |                    | Yes                | Yes           |                   |
| F     | Yes                | Yes                |                    | Yes           |                   |
| G     | Yes                | Yes                | Yes                |               | Yes               |

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\*potential for problems exists

### Advantages

The advantages of share teaching can be broken down into four components: for the teacher, for the children, for the principal, and for the board.

For the teacher. All the principals felt that the teachers gained personally by having an employment alternative that allowed them to pursue their profession and to satisfy their personal needs. One principal felt that sharing was only for the teachers' convenience, and therefore one had to look carefully to say it was better than one teacher in a classroom. Another principal stated that meeting the needs of two people meant that



they were happier and that they would probably work with more enthusiasm. Also, in some cases, sharing provided an opportunity for somebody new to gain a teaching position. In this case a new teacher had the opportunity to learn from the expertise of the more senior partner.

For the children. All principals felt that the primary criterion in share teaching was that the children did not suffer. Four of the seven were very enthusiastic about the energy level of their teachers and felt that the children could only benefit from the extra effort and enthusiasm that their share teachers put forth. One principal commented that this would be especially important in a classroom that had a difficult combination of children. Five principals also commented that share teachers, like most part-time teachers, tended to work more than their share of time, and they felt that the school and the students were the recipients of this extra effort. The qualifying condition was that the share teachers must communicate frequently and thoroughly in order to take full advantage of this extra effort and enthusiasm. If the teachers complemented each other's strengths, another benefit accrued to the children in the way of extra and more varied expertise. Two of the principals felt it was questionable if the students benefitted at all from share teaching situations.

For the principal. No principal stated an advantage that accrued to him personally other than the advantage of having teachers on staff who were fresh and full of enthusiasm. One stated that the energy level of his share teachers was "wonderful".

For the board. Three of the principals commented that the board got value for its money with part-time assignments, and share teachers would be included in this category. As one principal stated "the only thing part-time about these assignments is the salary, the job is more". Another principal pointed out that the board gained access to the services of very experienced and capable teachers who probably would not teach if they had to teach full-time.

### Disadvantages

As Table 4 shows, the most often mentioned disadvantage of share teaching was the potential for a breakdown in communication. Five levels of communication were discussed:

Between partners and the administration. The principals interviewed felt that sharing teachers could miss a lot of the information passed on at staff meetings and in morning bulletins. Each stressed that it was the responsibility of the partners to keep each other informed about school issues. Because it was possible for one teacher to miss all of the staff meetings she would not be privy to the discussions that preceded decision making. Most principals stated that

Table 4  
Perceived Disadvantages of Share Teaching

|   | Principal |     |         |         |     |         |     |
|---|-----------|-----|---------|---------|-----|---------|-----|
|   | A         | B   | C       | D       | E   | F       | G   |
| Communication<br>with admin-<br>istration | Yes       | Yes | Yes (a) | Yes (b) | Yes | Yes     | Yes |
| with partner                              |           | Yes |         |         |     |         | Yes |
| with parents                              | Yes (b)   |     | Yes     | Yes (b) |     |         |     |
| with students                             |           |     |         | Yes (b) |     |         |     |
| with staff                                |           |     |         | Yes (b) |     |         |     |
| Continuity                                | Yes       | Yes |         |         |     | Yes (b) |     |
| Evaluation of<br>Students                 |           |     |         |         |     |         | Yes |
| Substitutes                               |           | Yes |         |         |     |         |     |
| Morale                                    |           |     |         | Yes (b) |     |         |     |
| Accountability                            |           |     |         | Yes (b) |     |         |     |
| Compatibility                             |           |     |         |         | Yes |         |     |

(a) Only one of the seven principals said that he asked both teachers to attend important staff meetings. Several of the others said that they would feel better if both teachers were at staff meetings but they had not asked both teachers to attend them.

(b) These were discussed as potential disadvantages. These principals had not experienced any problems in these areas but were cognizant of the potential for difficulties under certain conditions.

they worked under the assumption that if one of the partners was present at staff meetings that the other was informed by the attending partner. They did not take responsibility for talking to both partners.

Between the partners. The two principals who expressed a concern about communication within the classroom felt that it was not enough just to pick up the phone and tell your partner what you had been doing. Both felt that there was a lack of continuity and compatibility in one of the shared classrooms in their schools. One of these two principals expressed a concern for continuity in the total school program and felt that sharing compounded the issue. He felt it was counterproductive to split up reading and mathematics.

Between the school and the parents. One of the principals who expressed a concern about communication with parents believed there might be some potential for a problem to arise if parents wished to speak to a specific teacher. The other two expressed concerns about getting parents to understand the concept of share teaching.

Between the partners and the student. Only one principal felt that it might be difficult for some younger children to relate to two different teachers.

Between the partners and the other staff members. One principal felt that there was a potential for problems on projects requiring cooperation with other staff members.

Although all principals expressed concerns about a breakdown in communication, five of the seven principals felt that communication was adequate between the partners, and between the partners and the administration, and that no problems had arisen because of a breakdown in communication.

One principal said that all too frequently he was getting three teachers in a class in a week because of the presence of a substitute. His teachers did not substitute for each other. The other principals all stated that the use of substitutes was not a problem.

#### Administrative Problems

The most frequently mentioned administrative problem was the supervision of extra staff. Four principals felt that shared positions added somewhat to their administrative load. The severity of the problem depended on the number of shared positions in the school. Two of these four felt that any additional work required in the way of writing reports on additional teachers was outweighed by the benefits to the school and the children. One principal pointed out that in some schools the number of support staff was so large that sharing teachers would only compound an already onerous task of supervision. He suggested that some principals feel that remuneration should be based on the number of staff rather than the number of students.

## Organization

Two principals expressed a preference for a split week schedule of three days one week and two the next week with the teachers alternating Wednesdays. One other principal had teams which worked this pattern but he did not like it and would have preferred some schedule which lengthened the term to monthly or even half yearly blocks of time. He felt that the split week schedule was only for the convenience of the teachers and that the constant switching was bad for the students. Another principal had this scheduling arrangement and said that it appeared to work but that he would have preferred a morning/afternoon split so that there were daily communication periods. Even five minutes a day was better than nothing in his view. He had had experience with three teachers sharing two classrooms in an open area and he felt that this experience had been his most satisfactory sharing experience because of the overlap of teaching time which gave the teachers time for communication. One principal stated that the teachers decided on their own schedule and that he had had no input on this matter. It appeared that several different schedules were operating in his school. One principal had imposed a condition of overlap on his teachers by asking them to teach two and a half days a week. On Wednesdays they would overlap by being in the classroom during each other's teaching time for a short while and then they would eat lunch

together. In this way he insured that they had a feel for how the other teacher handled the class as well as what the other teacher's program was. In the seventh school, teachers worked alternating weeks starting on Wednesdays. The principal felt it worked well. Two other principals were concerned that this schedule would result in the teacher getting out of touch with the school and, as well, in problems of continuity.

### Instructional Process

Four principals stated categorically that in their experience there was no evidence of the subject areas being fractionated and becoming too compartmentalized. One principal felt in fact that the language arts and mathematics programs may have been even better because of shared expertise and enthusiasm. The fifth principal could see no problem in his school but could visualize that it might be a problem in the intermediate grades where the demands of inter-class scheduling might impose restrictions on the share teaching load. Again communication was the key element in order to maintain continuity. The sixth and seventh principals were both concerned with this problem and felt that there was evidence of too much compartmentalizing in one of the shared classrooms in their schools. They both felt that, in these classrooms, little effort was being made to provide continuity, and that teaching styles were dissimilar.

Three of the principals were very impressed with the energy level and enthusiasm of their sharing teachers. They felt that they stimulated each other and, because they had extra time to plan, they were better prepared and fresher at school. There were no Friday afternoon doldrums in the sharing classrooms that they knew. A fourth felt that the interaction of two teachers could be environmentally stimulating. The fifth principal felt that because one of his teachers was not in good health there was no effective higher energy level in that classroom. He stated that those who give more in a sharing classroom would probably do so in a single teacher situation. In another of his shared classrooms he could see evidence of the weaker teacher being stimulated by her partner and as a result the overall program had improved.

It was difficult for the principals to assess the effect of share teaching of the achievement level of the students. One principal could see that achievement could be better if the pair had expertise in different areas that complemented each other. Four principals felt that their teachers knew exactly where the children were and that achievement levels in these classrooms were probably about the same as in single teacher classrooms. Definitely the children were not suffering in their shared classrooms. Two principals were concerned about achievement levels, and one of these two saw problems arising in evaluation techniques. He felt



that it would be difficult to evaluate and keep track of the children's individual needs in a shared classroom.

Two principals expressed dismay over a mismatch of teaching style, while another said it was not important as long as the sharing teachers were similar in personality. None of the other four principals commented on style of teaching. They felt that their partnerships were composed of compatible teachers.

#### Parental Reaction

Table 5 summarizes the principals' experience with the parents of students in shared classrooms. One principal reported that he had experienced difficulties with the parents over the setting up of one of his share-teaching classrooms. Although he personally could find no fault with the concept of share teaching, his experience with the parents in this situation had been wearing and time consuming. One parent had instigated the complaint and had managed to "stir-up" the other parents. He felt that in a community like the one surrounding his school the parents perceived that the teachers had too much power and that they, the teachers, were always organizing things to suit themselves. The feeling he received was that the parents felt that the school was compromising the children's education just to meet the whims of the staff. One spokesman for the group had written letters to the school board complaining of the principal's "duplicity". The principal felt that in fact the problem was that the

Table 5  
Preparation of Parents Before Placement  
of Students and Reaction of Parents  
to Placement of Students in a  
Shared Classroom

|   | Principal |     |     |     |     |     |    |
|---|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
|   | A         | B   | C   | D   | E   | F   | G  |
| Parents are informed before placement       | No        | No  | Yes | No  | No  | No  | No |
| Problems with parents                       | No        | No  | Yes | No  | No  | No  | No |
| Questions from parents                      | Yes       | No  | Yes | Yes | Yes | --  | -- |
| Shared classrooms are typical in the school | Yes       | Yes | No  | Yes | No  | Yes | No |

main instigator of the complaint did not like one of the teachers involved and that the shared-teaching situation was a scapegoat. One other principal expressed the opinion that this type of situation could arise if parents were concerned about their child's education; they probably would pick on the issue of sharing rather than ineffectual teaching.

The only principal who experienced problems with parents was the principal who gave the parents prior notice of their children's placement in a shared classroom. He sent a letter home explaining why the change was necessary, and assured the parents that there

was compatibility of philosophy, instruction, and student management. He assured them that the teachers would provide continuity of instruction through planning for the transitional period and substituting for each other if the need arose. One principal stated adamantly that placement of students was not a parental decision. The parents were not cognizant of enough information to make an intelligent decision. They did not decide to which classes or teachers their children were assigned. Another felt that split classes were more of a concern to parents than shared classes. In four of the schools sharing had been in effect for years, so the parents had come to accept the fact that at a certain grade level there was a shared classroom.

Two teachers added depth to the parent teacher conferences. Four principals felt that two opinions about the child were appreciated by the parents. They also felt that two teachers at conferences helped the parents understand that the teachers were united in their approaches. Only three principals said that both their teachers did in fact attend the parent teacher conferences.

#### Students' Reaction

Six of the seven principals reported no problem with children adjusting to two teachers. They felt that the children were glad to see each teacher and that the teaching approaches of the partners were similar. One principal said he did not notice any difference in the

classes because they had shared teachers, and the reason was that his share teachers spent a great deal of time communicating. One principal had one child that had had difficulty adjusting to two teachers and was now no problem in a single teacher classroom. He did not know if it was one of the teachers or the sharing situation that had bothered the child.

### Compatibility

Six of the seven principals found no problems of incompatibility between partners. One of these six said that similar teaching style was not important as long as the teachers had similar personalities and similar standards of achievement. These principals felt their teachers had had input into their choice of partners and had an investment in making the partnership work. A willingness to work and to make time available for the interchange of ideas was a criterion for a successful partnership. Other criteria mentioned for a successful partnership were: complementary rather than competing strengths, similar methods of handling children, similar philosophical approach to education, and similar academic expectations. As one principal put it, "The teachers should be in harmony."

Only one principal expressed concern over the compatibility of one of the partnerships in his school. He felt that the teachers were too different in personality and that there was a lack of communication

between them. He was concerned that the children were not getting the same treatment from both teachers.

#### Staff Reaction

None of the principals reported any problems with staff acceptance of sharing teachers. All of them felt that sharing teachers were given status as equal members of the staff and that if the staff had any feelings they were more positive than negative.

#### Future Employment

All the principals indicated a willingness to employ sharing teachers in the future, but some put limiting conditions on the number and some expressed a need for prior knowledge of the teachers. Table 6 summarizes their responses.

Table 6  
Principals' Willingness to Employ Sharing  
Teachers in the Future

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1. Would you have sharing teachers again?

- Principal A Yes.  
Principal B Yes, if I could lay down hard and fast guidelines at the beginning  
Principal C Yes  
Principal D Yes  
Principal E Yes, but I'd like to choose them myself.  
Principal F Oh Yes, I'm not afraid of sharing teachers. My experiences have all been positive  
Principal G Yes, but if I had a choice I'd probably choose a full-time teacher over a team.

2. How many sharing teams would you have on staff at any one time?

- Principal A 2 or 3  
Principal B 1  
Principal C 1  
Principal D 2  
Principal E no response  
Principal F 1 or 2  
Principal G 2 or 3

3. Would you want previous knowledge of, or experience with, all or part of the team?

- Principal A no response  
Principal B Yes, but not essential.  
Principal C Yes, I'd feel better. It would probably be best if they both were from within the school.  
Principal D I'd like to know one. At least one should be experienced.  
Principal E No, I'd interview them and see what they had to offer the school.  
Principal F No, if they had worked together in the past I'd assume that they could do so in the future.  
Principal G Yes
-

### Criteria for Selection of Partners

The principals suggested that the following criteria be used when initiating share teaching partnerships.

- a) Complementary rather than competing strengths.
- b) Compatibility
- c) The team should come together on its own. One half-time teacher should not go looking for a partner. Two principals disagreed with this. They had had successful partnerships formed in this manner.
- d) Similar academic expectations.
- e) Similar style.
- f) The team should be prepared to make time available for the interchange of ideas.
- g) The principal should have some input regarding guidelines for communication and compatibility.

### Teachers

The teachers who were interviewed all taught in the primary grades and split their time on a 60/40 or 50/50 basis. The principals' perceptions were based on their experiences with sharing teachers at all grade levels from kindergarten to grade seven. Although all principals had had experience with 60/40 and 50/50 splits some of their experience was based on teaching situations that involved sharing that was not based on 60/40 or 50/50 splits.

### Background

Table 7 indicates the years of teaching experience of the thirty-six teachers involved in this study. The median was twelve years of experience in the teaching profession. The range of experience ran from two teachers who were first year teachers to two teachers who estimated that they had twenty years of teaching experience minus some leaves of absence.

Thirty-two teachers (89%) held continuing contracts with the VSB. Two (6%) of the other four were hired as long term substitutes for the 1983-1984 school year and two (6%) had been on temporary contracts for a number of years.

Twenty-six teachers (72%) stated that their principals were positive about and supportive of the concept of share teaching. These teachers believed their principals were positive because their principals were easy-going, open-minded, and appreciative of the



Table 9

## Teaching Experience of Sharing Teachers

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| Years of Experience (a) | Teachers (b) |    |
|-------------------------|--------------|----|
|                         | Number       | %  |
| 0-5                     | 3            | 8  |
| 6-10                    | 13           | 36 |
| 11-15                   | 15           | 42 |
| 16-20                   | 4            | 11 |

---

(a) Years of teaching--full or part-time years, including 1983-1984 school year.

(b) There are only 35 teachers listed because it was impossible to hear one answer on the tape.

extra time and energy that the teachers were able to devote to the job. Some teachers said that their principals had initially been apprehensive about the concept but they had changed their minds when the teams had proved to be effective. Several of the teams had experienced difficulty getting other principals to interview them and were most appreciative of their principals' open-minded attitude towards the concept of sharing. One teacher was particularly angry that principals would refuse to interview them for available positions. She felt that a principal should at least allow the partnership the same access to interviews that full-time teachers received. If the principal did not

like the partnership's plans and programs then he/she could say that the team did not fit the school's needs, but how could the principal possibly know if the team could do the job if he/she did not interview the applicants. She felt that the principals should at least give them some credit for acting professionally and in the students' best interests. Other teachers also indicated that access to interviews had been limited.

Three teachers (8%) were uncertain of the principals' attitude towards sharing. Both teachers of one partnership felt that their principal was ambivalent about sharing. He had discouraged new applicants from outside the school but allowed two teachers within the school to form a partnership. The third teacher reported that she felt her principal was changing his mind from negative to positive because he could see it was working.

Seven teachers (19%) reported a negative attitude towards sharing on the part of their principals. Four felt that their principal was generally against any non-traditional concept and that he felt that the Board was not supportive of job sharing because it entailed too many problems dividing up jobs.

One partnership reported negative support on the grounds that their principal had been instrumental in breaking up their partnership.

The seventh teacher qualified her answer by saying that her principal's reaction could be described as sceptical rather than negative. Because there wasn't any set Board policy, he was "fence sitting".

All the teachers felt that their staffs were positive about, and supportive of, share teaching although some felt that initially there may have been some reservations. One teacher very wisely commented that it was important for sharing teachers never to plead ignorance about some issue if the ignorance was due to a slip in communication between the partners. It was important not to annoy the staff by always saying, "I didn't know about that because I wasn't here when that happened."

#### Compatibility

Table B shows how long the teams had taught together and describes how the teachers selected their partners. The median length was 2.5 years. In general, those teams which were composed of teachers who knew each other either professionally or socially were of longer duration than those formed through the auspices of the board. Ten teams (56%) were formed by teachers who had previous knowledge of their partners. Eight of these ten teams (80%) planned to continue teaching together in 1984-1985. Eight other teams (44%) were formed through the auspices of the board, and only two of these eight (25%) planned to teach together in 1984-1985. One other team was desirous of continuing

Table 8  
Length of Partnerships in Years and  
Method of Selection of Partner

| Team | Previous Knowledge                     |           | No Previous Knowledge               |                                 |                              | Cont-<br>inuing<br>in<br>84-85 | Length<br>in<br>Years |
|------|--|-----------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
|      | Friends Taught<br>in<br>same<br>School |           | Inter-<br>viewed<br>Appli-<br>cants | Meet-<br>ing<br>at the<br>Board | Placed<br>by<br>the<br>Board |                                |                       |
| A    | Yes                                    | Yes       |                                     |                                 |                              | Yes                            | 4                     |
| B    | Yes                                    | Yes       |                                     |                                 |                              | Yes                            | 4                     |
| C    |  | Yes       |                                     |                                 |                              | Yes                            | 1                     |
| D    |  |           | Yes                                 |                                 |                              | No                             | 1                     |
| E    |  |           |                                     | Yes                             |                              | Yes                            | 2                     |
| F    |  | Yes       |                                     |                                 |                              | Yes                            | 5                     |
| G    |  |           | Yes                                 |                                 |                              | ?                              | 2                     |
| H    | Yes                                    | Yes       |                                     |                                 |                              | Yes                            | 3                     |
| I    |  | Yes (sub) |                                     |                                 |                              | No                             | 0.5                   |
| J    |  |           |                                     |                                 | Yes                          | No                             | 2                     |
| K    |  |           | Yes                                 |                                 |                              | No                             | 6                     |
| L    |  |           |                                     | Yes                             |                              | Yes                            | 2                     |
| M    |  | Yes       |                                     |                                 |                              | Yes                            | 4                     |
| N    |  |           | Yes                                 |                                 |                              | No                             | 2                     |
| O    |  | Yes (sub) |                                     |                                 |                              | No                             | 0.5                   |
| P    |  |           |                                     |                                 | Yes                          | No                             | 3.5                   |
| Q    | Yes                                    |           |                                     |                                 |                              | Yes                            | 4.5                   |
| R    | Yes                                    |           |                                     |                                 |                              | Yes                            | 3.                    |

their partnership but because one of the team was on temporary contract their partnership was dependent on district staffing needs. The other five teams indicated that because of pregnancy, declining enrollment, incompatibility, a desire to change jobs and/or pressure from the administration their partnerships would end at the end of the 1983-1984 school year.

Twenty of the teachers (56%) reported that they had previous experience at sharing. Eight of these had worked in two or three other share teaching partnerships. Altogether there had been thirty previous partnerships.

All but one of the thirty-six teachers (97%) felt that their partnership was compatible. They did not feel that they were identical in style with their partners but they did not see this as very important. Several used the word complementary to describe their relationship with their partner. They felt that their partner's style gave added depth and strength to the partnership. One teacher felt that there was a better chance of each of the children finding a "soulmate" because there were two teachers with which to identify. One teacher stated that she had been apprehensive about the difference in personality between her partner and herself and that she had been concerned that the children would compare them. This had not happened. She felt that she had learned a lot from her partner. Her partner said that between them they filled a whole

spectrum of skills rather than just part. "We are different personalities but our philosophies are similar," she said. Another teacher commented that her approach to teaching had been modified by her partner's approach and together they were developing a common ground between their two styles. Several said they were flexible and had adapted to their partner's style.

Most of the teachers agreed that academic standards and discipline standards had to be very similar in order not to confuse the children. These were two areas where it was important to communicate. One teacher said that she and her partner had arrived at a consensus about standards and now they saw "eye to eye" about what they expected from the children. She said, "It astonishes us how similar our opinions are about the children." Several partners taught together for the first week of school in order to establish classroom standards that were acceptable to both teachers.

One teacher found herself in an intolerable share-teaching situation. Although she felt that she knew what to look for and what she wanted from a partnership, she found that in actual fact her new partner appeared to say one thing and to do another. She felt that she should have asked more questions about the specifics of how things would be done by her partner rather than accepting generalities. The partnership was poor and the students were not getting enough consistency to meet their needs. Her partner, in her

estimation, was not effective and she found it difficult to respect what she did.

#### Criteria for Selection of a Partner

Teachers agreed that it was really important to get to know your partner before hand. Sharing was like a marriage. It was not easy just because the teachers were only there half time. They were not nearly as independent as when they worked full-time. If at all possible they recommended seeing your potential partner teach and observing how the children reacted to her.

The most important criteria of any good partnership was the ability to communicate with your partner openly, freely and often. If you had good rapport the other things would follow. As one teacher said, friendship was not important but respect was. You had to be able to talk honestly and straightforwardly with your partner. It was important to be willing to accept your partner's ideas and to be willing to change. Praising your partner's accomplishments was important because it made her feel appreciated.

Sharing teachers should have similar opinions about discipline. Standards needed to be set early in the year. Although they do not need to be identical there should be a thread of consistency; one partner could not be lenient and the other strict.

Sharing teachers need to decide on a basic philosophy. This should include basic goals, basic approaches to teaching reading and mathematics, whether

centers will or will not be used, whether the class will be structured or open, and what you are going to teach and when.

Classroom routines such as where children will line up, when they will sharpen pencils, and how they will organize a page in their exercise books need to be established and agreed upon. As well, decisions have to be made about neatness standards in the room, in children's exercise books, on the teachers' desk, about how detentions and punishments will be handled, about how exercise books will be marked, and even about little things like how the children will be asked to form their printed or written letters.

Although several teachers felt that the teaching style of partners should be similar only four (two partnerships) felt that it was essential. These four teachers felt that the program and presentation should be so similar that only the teacher changed from day to day. In their estimation the children should be working on the same things, in the same way, regardless of whose day it was to teach. Most of teachers felt that some diversity was a plus.

Several teachers said that the personality of the partner was important. One teacher said she needed a partner who was cheery and out-going and loved children. Others said a partner had to be flexible and adaptable.

If possible, partners should have similar teaching experience and background. Two teachers said that both



partners should bring equal expertise to the job so that each was able to contribute equally to the job-load. It was important to find a partner who would contribute as much time and energy to the job as you would so that the load was evenly balanced.

Some teachers felt that a similar lifestyle was important because you would be more sympathetic about your partner's personal problems especially if they had any bearing on her performance in the classroom. One experienced teacher who was sharing with a novice complained that her partner's whole life centered on the job. She said, "I have to keep reminding her that we are a team. She does too much for me."

Several teachers said that they had to work hard because they did not want their partners to come in and say that nothing had been accomplished.

As Table 9 shows, the great majority of the teachers thought that compatibility was extremely important. Teachers who rated compatibility as very important said that there had to be some accommodations made between partners. Although compatibility was important it was not the only criterion to consider.

Table 9  
Importance of Compatible Partner

|                         | No. | %  |
|-------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Extremely important  | 27  | 75 |
| 2. Very important       | 8   | 22 |
| 3. Fairly important     | 1   | 3  |
| 4. Not very important   | -   | -  |
| 5. Of little importance | -   | -  |

#### Communication

Fourteen partnerships (78%) stated that their most common means of communication were long telephone conversations about twice a week. One other team communicated on the phone once a week, another once a day, and a third partnership talked on the phone only about once every two weeks. One partnership said that they saw each other personally every day and did not use the phone often. Eleven teams (61%) kept some sort of daily diary or left systematic notes for their partners.

Fifteen teams (83%) met together frequently during the year. One team met every day. Generally meetings were held at the beginning of each term and for report cards and parent-teacher conferences. As well, informal meetings were often held as the need arose. The number of these more informal meetings depended on

the proximity of the team members' homes. A large number of the sharing teachers lived in the suburbs some distance from the city. Partners who lived close together met as often as once a week. Three teams (17%) did not report any meetings after the initial planning sessions in late August or early September. Most teams indicated more frequent communication in September and October than later in the year.

Eight teams (44%) reported that it was their regular practice to drop in at school while their partner was teaching. Eight teams (44%) reported that they socialized with their partners. Three teams (17%) indicated that they started the first few days of the year off together. Several teachers indicated that they did not find it necessary to meet together as much as they did the first year that they taught together as a team.

As Table 10 shows the great majority of the teachers thought that communication between the partners was extremely satisfactory or very satisfactory. Improving personal contact seemed to be the main suggestion for improving communication, but those who felt communication could be improved said that because they lived so far from their partner it was unlikely that they would, or could, get together more frequently than they did already. A second suggestion was to be in

Table 10  
Quality of  
Intra-Classroom Communication

|                             | No.   | %  |
|-----------------------------|-------|----|
| 1. Extremely satisfactory   | 20    | 56 |
| 2. Very satisfactory        | 13    | 36 |
| 3. Fairly satisfactory      | 3 (a) | 8  |
| 4. Sometimes Unsatisfactory |       |    |
| 5. Unsatisfactory           | 1 (a) |    |

(a) There are 37 responses because one teacher who rated the oral communication as unsatisfactory and the written communication as fairly satisfactory is represented twice.

the classroom together more often. A third suggestion was that the use of a tape recorder might improve communication. The one teacher who rated her team's communication unsatisfactory said that increasing contact would probably not improve communication because she and her partner did not "speak the same language".

In all cases only one team member attended staff meetings. The attending team member was responsible for taking notes and passing on pertinent information. Other types of communication were handled similarly. Morning bulletins and personal communication that were pertinent to the job were relayed to the absent partner.

Several teachers resented that their principals checked up on them to see if they did in fact relay information. One teacher complained that her partner and she got conflicting information from the principal. One teacher said that her principal had given his sharing teachers the responsibility that they deserved as professionals to keep their partners informed. She said that at one school she was treated like a child and not even trusted to keep track of her own days at work. She respected her present principal because he gave them the freedom and responsibility to organize their own schedule. Although he did not communicate much she sensed his unspoken support.

Several teachers stated that they were very careful to pass on all information about school activities to their partner. One teacher said that because she and her partner had opted for part-time teaching it was their responsibility to make sure that their position worked as smoothly as if one teacher were in the class full-time. Another teacher said that she probably paid closer attention at staff meetings now than when she worked full-time because she did not want to be accused of not relaying information. She said that she was "paranoid" about passing on information because communication seemed to be a major concern of her principal. Her partner also stated that she was very conscious of passing on all information from the principal.

Tables 10 and 11 show that the teachers did not rate communication with the principal as highly as they rated communication with each other. Generally most sharing teachers thought that their communication with the principal was as good as the communication between the full-time staff and the principal. Any problems that they had encountered were experienced by the full-time staff as well. Three of the four pairs of teachers who taught in annexes rated their communication with the principal and the annex head teacher separately because they felt that although they had good communication with one they had poor communication with the other.

Table 11

Quality of Communication Between the  
Principal and the Sharing Team

| Head                        | Principal |      | Annex |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|-------|
|                             | No.       | %    | No.   |
| 1. Extremely satisfactory   | 5         | 14.0 | 1     |
| 2. Very satisfactory        | 20        | 55.5 | 2     |
| 3. Fairly satisfactory      | 8         | 22.0 | 1     |
| 4. Sometimes Unsatisfactory | 2         | 5.5  | 2     |
| 5. Unsatisfactory           | 1         | 3.0  |       |

### Continuity

As Table 1 (page 43) indicates none of the teachers interviewed shared on a morning/afternoon basis. The travel time involved made this a less desirable alternative. Only three indicated that they would consider half-yearly semesters and then only temporarily when their families were grown-up or because they might like to travel.

Those who chose to split the week did so for personal reasons. They liked to have regular days at home so that they could organize their family's activities. One teacher said that there were certain positive advantages which accrued to the students because they got a new fresh teacher in the middle of the week. Another pointed out that follow-up on discipline problems or unfinished morning work was easier when the teacher stayed all day.

The three teams that chose to alternate weeks did so because they felt it was less disruptive for the students. They gained a reasonable period of time in which to complete activities. They like being able to develop some mini-units each week. They felt it gave them more autonomy without jeopardizing continuity of instruction. One team had adopted the habit of communicating one day before the end of each weekly shift as well as at the end of each shift. Each partner then had a full day in which to prepare for her week in school.

The methods of maintaining continuity of instruction were as varied as the teachers involved, but certain patterns were apparent. As well, some teams used different methods in different subject areas.

Alternating units. Some grade three teams had devised a method of alternating reading stories or reading units. As well, spelling units could be alternated if the teachers' schedule was alternate weeks.

Complementary units. One teacher would teach a unit like number theory and the other would concentrate on number facts. Both units would be going on concurrently.

Compartmentalizing the subject areas. Some partnerships broke the large subject areas like language arts and mathematics up into smaller sub-areas. Each teacher would take responsibility for half the sub-areas. Language arts could be broken up into smaller areas like reading comprehension, spelling, story writing, phonics, printing, journals, and grammar or language skills. Mathematics could be broken up into problem solving, geometry, measurement, number facts, and number theory.

Centers. A number of the teams, especially at the grade one level, used learning or teaching centers which were continuous regardless of which teacher was present. Skills might be introduced by one teacher but the written work was the responsibility of both teachers.



The partners would agree on what was an acceptable level of response expectation. These centers could either be developed jointly or by one teacher.

Alternate planning. One teacher planned a unit and organized all the materials necessary and both teachers taught the unit. The partners would alternate unit preparation and agree on what was an acceptable standard of work.

Following a text. Some teams had decided to follow through a specific text. Each partner would indicate what she had accomplished so that the other knew where to begin. Generally a teacher could estimate what her partner might accomplish and in that way was able to prepare for her own return. This worked well in phonics, language skills, and reading, as well as in mathematics. Some teams indicated that they were able to switch partners in the middle of a story or activity without any apparent disruption.

Joint planning of units. Some teams discussed and planned the units together that they wished to teach. This method required a lot of cooperation. Several of the teams used a language experience approach and jointly decided on themes and ideas to be developed.

Separate subjects. Some teams divided up the smaller subject areas between them. One would teach music, the other art; one would teach science, the other social studies.

Three teams (17%) reported that outside of long range plans made at the beginning of the year they did not do much planning together. They divided up the subject areas and skills to be taught in September and their programs ran rather independently after that. The only other planning would take place over the phone during their weekly or twice weekly communication session.

Eleven teams (61%) reported that they sat down together frequently (every six weeks to two months) and planned large blocks of time together. Large master units would be planned in this way.

One team met every Thursday at school to make plans. Another team had taught together six years and felt that their program did not require too much long term planning. They knew where they were going and what to expect from each other. Another was dominated by an experienced teacher who had established a program that the other followed.

The majority of teams used the same daybook for both partners. Nine teams completely made up their partner's daybook before they left school on their last day. They organized all the seatwork and materials that their partner needed for her first day back in the classroom, and the partner came in early on her first day back to see what had been organized for her.

Five other teams made up the dayplan for the day that they would return to school as thoroughly as they could and then made pertinent entries in their partner's dayplan for those subjects for which they shared teaching responsibility. Their partners would complete the dayplan for them before they came back to school. All the teachers who left the dayplan ready for their partners said that their partner was under no obligation to follow the dayplan exactly.

Two teams left an outline in the daybook for their own return but made no entries in the daybook for their partners.

Two teams who used separate daybooks took their daybooks home with them. They felt that they had fresher ideas after a few days away from school.

As Table 12 indicates the majority of the partnerships integrated their program in mathematics and language arts. The degree of integration had a direct relationship on the amount of joint planning that was undertaken. Integration forced them to make sure that the work was accomplished. One teacher who now integrated her program with her partner's said that she had not done this her first year of sharing and that both systems worked fine.

Those who did not integrate felt that they were freer to stress activities and ideas that interested

Table 12  
Integration of Both Teachers'  
Programs

|                        | Number of Teams |    |             |   |     |    |
|------------------------|-----------------|----|-------------|---|-----|----|
|                        | Yes             |    | Coordinated |   | No  |    |
|                        | No.             | %  | No.         | % | No. | %  |
| Language Arts          | 14              | 78 |             |   | 4   | 22 |
| Mathematics            | 15              | 83 | 1           | 6 | 2   | 11 |
| Other Subject<br>Areas | 11              | 61 |             |   | 7   | 39 |

them. Integration made them feel inhibited. It was more important, they felt, that the teacher feel comfortable with the program.

Table 13 indicates that the great majority of teachers felt that integrating the programs in language arts and mathematics was very important or extremely important.

Evaluation. Most of the sharing teachers did not feel that evaluation was any more difficult than when working full-time. As one teacher said, "Between the two of us we come up with a full week of evaluation." Some said that it did take longer in the beginning but two pairs of eyes took into consideration more facets of the child's abilities and personality. One teacher said that when you teach part-time your time is very intense

Table 13  
Importance of Integration

|                         | No. of Teachers |    |      |    |                |    |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----|------|----|----------------|----|
|                         | Language Arts   |    | Math |    | Other Subjects |    |
|                         | No.             | %  | No.  | %  | No.            | %  |
| 1. Extremely Important  | 14              | 39 | 16   | 45 | 6              | 17 |
| 2. Very Important       | 15              | 42 | 12   | 33 | 7              | 20 |
| 3. Fairly Important     | 4               | 11 | 5    | 14 | 8              | 22 |
| 4. Not Very Important   | 3               | 8  | 3    | 8  | 11             | 30 |
| 5. Of Little Importance | -               | -  | -    | -  | 4              | 11 |

because you know that you have to find out as much as you can about the children in half the time. Within a couple of weeks she felt that her partner and she had formed a consensus about each child. Those teachers who communicated frequently found that they missed very little. In fact, because they talked about the children frequently they were constantly aware of any little problems. Vocalizing with a partner helped to keep things in mind. When a problem was mentioned by one of the partners there were two people to brainstorm ways to deal with the situation. At report card time it was necessary to come up with a consensus. Sharing teachers said that it was easier to write report cards because

there was input from two teachers. They felt the children received a fairer evaluation. With two teachers in a classroom it was less likely that one child's problems would be overlooked. Most partners felt that they generally agreed about the children. They might have more positive or less positive opinions than their partner about an individual child's attitude but they usually agreed on the child's achievement.

Only five of the sharing teachers (14%) indicated that it was a little harder to evaluate the children in a sharing situation because it was necessary to communicate often and to keep good records and notes. One teacher who taught in a poor socio-economic area said that communication about the children was constant. There were difficult families in the neighbourhood and the children's lives often changed dramatically overnight. It was necessary for both partners to keep up to date on all these changes.

The method of record keeping varied due to grade level, type of program, subject area, and teacher preference but certain patterns were evident. All the teams communicated on a regular basis either on the phone or in person. Most teams kept a common mark book. Nine teams (50%) reported that they kept a loose-leaf notebook or file card system that was arranged alphabetically by the child's name. The uses of such a notebook or system varied. Some used it only as a reading conference record. Others wrote down

information about work habits, behaviour, test results, work accomplished or not accomplished, and difficulties encountered. These teachers found it particularly useful to have documentation relating to the child's strengths and weaknesses for parent-teacher conferences and report cards. One team kept only information relating to parent meetings, discipline and health problems, screening committees, and social workers in this notebook.

Nine teams (50%) kept an "incidents" or "from me to you" book which was organized chronologically by date. Information as to who needed help, who did well, homework assigned, and work to be completed was written in this book. Two teams said that they had a system of writing on the bottom or back of the dayplan about any difficulties encountered. It was easy to look back in the daybook to see how frequently something was happening. Ten teams (56%) reported leaving informal notes for their partners. As well, the teachers used tests, checklists, and file folders of the children's work to assist them in their evaluation.

Several teachers said that they did a lot of record keeping, more than when they worked full-time. It was necessary to be well-organized in order to deal effectively with the children, the parents, and your partner.

Substitutes. Although most teachers would have preferred to switch days when one or the other was sick

only one team indicated that it was their regular practise to do this. They had never used a substitute because of illness. Two teams said that it had been their practise to switch days previous to the 1983-1984 school year but they had changed over to exclusive use of the substitute office in the 1983-1984 school year. One of these teams reported that the impetus for changing had come from the Board because of the lengthy absence of one of the team members. It appears that it is not the Board's policy to allow partners to switch days for long periods of time because an imbalance can develop in the payment of salaries. According to Maureen Tomsich, Personnel Administrator, Elementary Staffing, teachers who wish to alter their schedule should contact the Board and change their contract for the month involved. Although most teachers refused to work for substitute pay in their own classes, two teachers were on the substitute list for their partners; these two had never had a substitute for themselves. Five teams (28%) reported that they switched if they could but did use substitutes if their partner was unavailable on short notice. Eight teams (44%) used the substitute office exclusively and did not switch days with their partner. Most who called in substitutes did so because their partners had family commitments on their off days.

As Table 14 indicates the majority of the teachers thought that their substitute arrangements were very or



extremely satisfactory. It is interesting to note that sharing teachers tried to minimize their absences. Eighteen sharing teachers (50%) said that they were seldom or never absent and for this reason the substitute arrangement were very satisfactory. Several expressed some concerns over the use of substitutes because it was feasible that both partners could be sick in one week and two different substitutes could be in the classroom in the same week. As well substitutes often left work unmarked, and work was not left prepared for the next partner. One teacher who lived close to her school and whose partner was often sick said that she came in every day that a substitute was in the class to plan for the substitute and to see if things were done. The children were her children even if she was not supposed to be there.

Table 14

## Substitute Arrangements

|                             | No. of<br>Teachers (a) | %  |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|----|
| 1. Extremely satisfactory   | 9                      | 26 |
| 2. Very satisfactory        | 15                     | 44 |
| 3. Fairly satisfactory      | 9                      | 26 |
| 4. Sometimes unsatisfactory | -                      | -  |
| 5. Unsatisfactory           | 1                      | 3  |

(a) Two teachers did not rate the substitute arrangements.

### Instructional Process

No trends were evident in the language arts programs used by sharing teachers. Teachers had adapted and modified programs that they had used as full-time teachers to suit the needs of their classroom situation. All but two classes (89%) had groups for reading instruction. One class had no special reading groups. In this class skills were taught in large or small group situations but reading and language activities were on individual cards. The children selected their own activity cards from the selection made available by the teacher. Another class was timetabled into an inter-class grouping schedule for reading instruction. Ten teams (56%) ran the same program in language arts regardless of who was present. The other teams (44%) broke all or part of the language arts program up into component parts (e.g., reading comprehension, spelling, story writing, phonics) with each teacher assuming responsibility for some parts.

All the grade one teachers (6 teams) indicated that they consulted and planned together the skills to be taught. The grade one programs were generally more open than the programs of the other grades and therefore close consultation about the skills to be taught was imperative.

In grade two (7 teams) the program was more formal. Only two grade two teams said that they did not split up the language arts program in any way but planned

everything together. Because the grade two teachers more frequently divided language arts up into mini-subject areas (e.g., reading comprehension, spelling, story writing, phonics) they were able to run their programs more independently.

All the grade three or three/four classes (5 teams) indicated that they met together at the beginning of the year and set out a basic skills sequencing plan for the year. Two indicated that separate spheres of responsibility were allotted to each teacher.

Ten teams (56%) said that both teachers were equally responsible for all aspects of the language arts program. Seven teams (39%) indicated that they divided the program up into specific spheres of responsibility. One teacher said that there was no accountability; she assumed that her partner didn't teach anything and she made up her own program based on her own assessment of the children's needs.

Sixteen teams (89%) used the same exercise books for both teachers for language arts and mathematics in order to maintain continuity of work habits. They liked it because they could see readily what their partners had done and what kind of standards their partners had. Also they could finish work that their partners had not been able to finish. One team said that each teacher initialled the work that she had marked. Only one teacher did not like using the same exercise books as

her partner because she was unhappy with her partner's standards.

Strengths of Sharing. Although there was a variety of ways of sharing, each team perceived some strengths in its own system. Those teachers who had split their curriculum responsibilities up into small sections felt that they gained the freedom to plan as far ahead as they wanted to plan. As well, they basically knew what their partners were doing. They felt that because they concentrated on certain aspects of the curriculum they were more thorough and better planned than when they worked full-time. The children gained more variety.

Those who planned everything together said that they were so integrated in the classroom that the children had as unified a program as if one teacher was there all the time. One teacher said, "We do not consider ourselves two people."

The amount of work accomplished was a strength. Most teams felt that they accomplished more because of their added energy. One said there was very little busy work in their class. Another said that you had to be careful that the full-time teachers were not jealous of all that you did.

Several teams had devised excellent record keeping systems so that information was readily and easily available for themselves and their partners.

Another strength was flexibility. Sharing teachers were constantly changing and adapting their program and

learning new skills from each other. One teacher said that a strength of sharing was that the children learned to deal with two personalities. It was like having two parents. The teachers did not necessarily have to do things in the same way but they were a united front who were there to help the children. The children were not working to meet any specific teacher's requirements but to improve themselves.

Weaknesses of Sharing. Several teachers perceived some weaknesses in sharing. They said that there was not enough time to do special things because they were in the classroom for such a short period of time or because activities carried on over too long a period when they were only in the classroom half time. Some found it difficult tying up loose ends every two or three days.

One team originally had left a dayplan for each other but one partner felt frustrated because she had had to wait until her partner had finished her turn in the class to know what she was going to do. She said, "I felt like a substitute in my own class."

Two teams said that any weaknesses were with the system. There was not sufficient material or space in their estimation.

Achievement. It was difficult to estimate the pupils' achievement, but as Table 15 indicates the majority of the teachers felt that the achievement level was the same or somewhat better than if they alone were teaching the class. The teachers felt that the children were getting a better deal because the two teachers often had complementary strengths. As well, they tried to accomplish so much in a few days. The children were getting twice the best ideas that any one teacher could bring to the classroom. Only one teacher said that the achievement level was worse because she could do a better job on her own.

Table 15

Teachers' Perceptions of Students'  
Achievement in Shared Classrooms

|                    | No. of<br>Teachers (a) | %  |
|--------------------|------------------------|----|
| 1. Much better     | -                      | -  |
| 2. Somewhat better | 11                     | 31 |
| 3. The same        | 23                     | 66 |
| 4. Not as good     | -                      | -  |
| 5. Much worse      | 1                      | 3  |

(a) one teacher had no previous experience

## Children

Eighteen of the teachers (50%) said that share teaching influenced their perspective on the children in some way or other. They had someone with whom they could discuss the children, someone who was dealing with the children in the same situation and time frame as they were dealing with them. The way some children reacted could vary from teacher to teacher and it was beneficial to have two views. If a child was a problem it was valuable to have a partner's opinion. Sometimes it was necessary for one or both teachers to re-evaluate their opinion of the child.

The teachers felt that the children gained because they got an enthusiastic teacher for every subject. As well the children had two adults who were excited about the things that they had accomplished. When a teacher returned to class the children loved to show that teacher what they had done in her absence.

Those who had difficult children in their classes felt that the children benefitted because they had a fresh start twice a week. One child had been transferred into a sharing class from a single teacher classroom because he was a troubled child and he was coping much better because he was able to make a fresh start in the middle of the week.

Although the teachers generally agreed that there were probably some children who should not be in shared classrooms, most teachers could not identify any. Only

one teacher felt there was a child in her room who would do better in a classroom taught by a single full-time teacher. Even those teachers who taught in areas with a high incidence of problem children concurred. One teacher expressed dismay because her partner and she ran such disparate programs but she said that the children adjusted better than she did. One teacher had experience with a child who was intractable with one teacher but not with the other teacher. Most teachers felt that the children did not care who was teaching and often used both teachers names interchangeably. One teacher said that only one child in five years had shown a definite preference for one teacher over the other. Occasionally some teachers noticed that some children tried to say that the other teacher had given them permission to do something when she had not. Sometimes they tried to pretend that they were not informed about something. Once the children were aware that the teachers communicated about everything, this stopped.

### Parents

Eleven teachers (31%) said that parents had asked questions and expressed some apprehensions about sharing at the beginning of the year but that most had accepted their explanations and were now supportive. Three teachers said that parents who had at first been apprehensive had come back after a few months to say how pleased they were with the way things worked. One teacher said that the only negative reactions that she



had encountered were from parents who were concerned about the whole concept of open area and the centers approach to education that was prevalent in her school. As well, parents who were looking for someone or something outside the child to blame for the child's problems had tried to blame sharing.

Twenty-five teachers (69%) said that they had never had any negative comments from parents. Eleven (31%) said that in their estimation the parents were indifferent about sharing. One teacher who had been sharing for a long time said that the parents over the years had commented that the children loved coming to school because they really enjoyed the different things that they did. She felt that the parents and the children did not compare the two teachers but were pleased with all that each had to offer.

Nine teams (50%) indicated that both partners attended parent-teacher conferences. Seven said that they both attended the first conference but later conferences were split between them. Two teams said that only one teacher at a time attended parent-teacher conferences.

#### Teacher Satisfaction

The sharing teachers felt that it helped to have someone to talk to who was able to sympathize with their problems, someone who knew the students and cared. Two teachers gave support to each other when dealing with parents and with the administration.

Several teachers said that they were inspired by their partners. Their partners had strengths that they lacked and added a dimension to their work by sharing ideas and approaches, coming up with solutions to problems, acting like a sounding board, teaching them to be organized, and giving them insights into children. One teacher said that she was really aware of what she was doing because she knew that her partner was to some extent evaluating what she did. She felt a slight sense of competition at a professional level to do as well as her partner did.

Several teachers felt that sharing was less stressful than full-time teaching because they had a rest and were able to forget about school for a few days. As well, because they were exposed to problem children for a shorter period of time they were able to be more patient and caring with these children. One team had had a particularly difficult combination of children in their class the previous year. The teachers felt that they had drawn strength from each other to cope with the situation. One teacher said that she had more energy to help the children after school. When she worked full-time she was often too tired to work with the children after school. One teacher who taught in a particularly poor socio-economic area said that the whole school was very stressful. The children were transient and low in skills. She said, "I love them.

They need someone who cares, but I couldn't take it full time."

The teachers said they looked forward to going to school. They enjoyed school and were very positive about sharing because they were happier at school than they had been when they were teaching full-time. Several said that they worked all the time that they were at school, that they did not have periods when they slacked off.

Twenty-six teachers (72%) felt that they worked proportionally more than they did as full-time teachers. They spent more time preparing because they had more time to prepare. They were more efficient in the classroom because they did not have time to waste. They came to school for special occasions and field trips, taught together for the first week of school, and spent hours communicating and planning together.

Seven (19%) who estimated that they worked proportionally about the same time said that they always had put in long hours. One teacher said that if you count every hour you cannot share teach. One said that her partner and she together worked longer hours than the full-time teachers on her staff. Another said that she could not handle minimum standards and effort. She wanted to do quality work and she could not handle that on a full-time basis when she had a family. Only one teacher said that she made a point of not working longer hours than when she was a full-time teacher.

One teacher said that she worked less because her partner did too much for her and she resented it. If she left any work it was finished before she returned. Her partner took care of any copying, housekeeping, and bulletin boards that needed attending. As well she left work prepared and wrote the report cards.

Twenty-one (58%) teachers said that they found all aspects of sharing satisfying. The other teachers had various reasons for feeling some frustration. One said that she was probably more contented in the classroom when she was teaching by herself but now her whole life was better ordered. Three said that occasionally they would like to be able to finish activities that they had started. One said that there was never enough time with a kindergarten/grade one class to find time for social studies and science because you were only in the classroom half-time. Another said that because of home commitments she missed not taking advantage of all the professional development activities. One teacher said her partner frustrated her because school was her partner's whole life. Another said that the kids gave her satisfaction but her partner upset her emotionally.

As Table 16 indicates, the majority of teachers thought that their partnership was very or extremely effective. The two teachers who did not were partners in a very unhappy relationship.

Table 16  
Teachers' Perceptions of Effectiveness  
of Sharing Teams

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|                        | No. of<br>Teachers | %  |
|------------------------|--------------------|----|
| 1. Extremely effective | 19                 | 53 |
| 2. Very effective      | 15                 | 41 |
| 3. Fairly effective    | 1                  | 3  |
| 4. Not very effective  | -                  | -  |
| 5. Unsatisfactory      | 1                  | 3  |

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### Students

The students sample consisted of 26 grade three students from six schools. Eleven were in shared grade three classes in the 1983-1984 school year. Fifteen had been in shared grade two classes the previous year. Table 17 indicates that the majority of students liked having two teachers.

This year. Ten of the eleven students were positive about their teachers. They used words like "fine", "happy", "fun", and "nice" to describe their reactions. One said that although she liked both teachers it was nice to get a change when she was tired of one. Another said it was fun because they did different things with each teacher. They got to do more things. One child was too shy to answer. The teacher said that usually she did not answer spontaneously.

Last Year. Twelve of the fifteen students who had sharing teachers in grade two were positive about the experience. They also used words like "happy", "fine", and "okay" to describe their reactions. The three that answered negatively were asked why it was confusing. Two complained that it was hard and one said that it was confusing. It was confusing because his teachers were teaming as well with one full-time teacher; the presence of two teachers in the classroom at one time was confusing for him.

Table 17

## Students' Feelings About Sharing Teachers

---

| This year |    |   | Last year |    |
|-----------|----|---|-----------|----|
| No.       | %  |   | No.       | %  |
| 9         | 82 | I like/d having two teachers.   | 9         | 60 |
| 2         | 18 | I like/d having two teachers but sometimes I am/was confused because there are/were two teachers. | 4         | 27 |
|           |    | I am/was confused by having two teachers.   | 2         | 13 |
|           |    | I do/did not like it at all.  |           |    |

---

This Year. One of the two students who indicated that they found sharing sometimes confusing said that he did not know which teacher was coming to school and that the class did not do the same work with both teachers. The other said that sometimes he did not know how to do the work.

Last Year. One of the two students who said that he was confused said that the teachers were mean and made him do his work over again. The other was an E.S.L. Student and spent a good portion of the day at the English Language Center. He was confused because he missed so much of the classroom work.

As Table 18 indicates most students felt that they received the help they needed.

Table 18  
 Help Received was Sufficient  
 for Students' Needs

| This Year |    |           |    |     |   | Last Year |    |           |    |     |   |
|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----|---|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----|---|
| Yes       |    | Sometimes |    | No  |   | Yes       |    | Sometimes |    | No  |   |
| No.       | %  | No.       | %  | No. | % | No.       | %  | No.       | %  | No. | % |
| 9         | 82 | 2         | 18 | -   | - | 11        | 73 | 3         | 20 | 1   | 7 |

One child said that the teachers could have explained things more. Another said that he (the child) was not good at mathematics.

Table 19 indicates most students felt that the work load was the same in single-teacher classrooms as in shared classrooms.

Table 20 indicates that the majority of the students would choose a two teacher (shared) classroom again. One child said that he did not want to be in a shared classroom again because one teacher was real nice and one was not. The other children offered no reason for saying "no".



Table 19

Students' Perceptions of Workload  
One Teacher Classroom vs. Shared Classroom

---

| Same      |    | Different |    | Don't Know |   |
|-----------|----|-----------|----|------------|---|
| No.       | %  | No.       | %  | No.        | % |
| This year |    |           |    |            |   |
| 8         | 73 | 2 (a)     | 18 | 1          | 9 |
| Last year |    |           |    |            |   |
| 10        | 66 | 5 (b)     | 33 | -          | - |

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(a) Two children said that they did more work this year with sharing teachers.

(b) Three children said that they did more work last year with sharing teachers. Two said that they did more this year with one teacher.

Table 20

Students' Willingness to be in a Shared  
Classroom Again

---

| This Year |    |     |    | Last Year |    |     |    |
|-----------|----|-----|----|-----------|----|-----|----|
| Yes       |    | No  |    | Yes       |    | No  |    |
| No.       | %  | No. | %  | No.       | %  | No. | %  |
| 9         | 82 | 2   | 18 | 10        | 67 | 5   | 33 |

---

Table 21 shows that the majority of students did not find it difficult to change teachers in mid-week. Generally the students felt that it was easy to keep track of which teacher was coming in. One child said that it was difficult because one teacher let them into the class more promptly than the other did. One said that it was hard because he liked both of his teachers. One found it difficult if he had brought homework home to bring it back on the right day. One child said that sometimes he did not get his work finished for one teacher and then he was not able to finish it when the other teacher came in.

Table 21  
Students' Perception of Difficulty in  
Changing Teachers

---

| Difficult |    | Not<br>Difficult |    | Sometimes<br>Difficult |    |
|-----------|----|------------------|----|------------------------|----|
| No.       | %  | No.              | %  | No.                    | %  |
| This Year |    |                  |    |                        |    |
| 1         | 9  | 9                | 73 | 2                      | 18 |
| Last Year |    |                  |    |                        |    |
| 2         | 13 | 12               | 80 | 1                      | 7  |

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Table 22 indicates the majority of the students were aware that the teachers were communicating with each about the students.

Table 22  
Students' Perceptions of Teachers'  
Communication

| I do not Know |    | Did Communicate |    | Did not Communicate |    | Sometimes Communicated |    |
|---------------|----|-----------------|----|---------------------|----|------------------------|----|
| No.           | %  | No.             | %  | No.                 | %  | No.                    | %  |
| -----         |    |                 |    |                     |    |                        |    |
| This Year     |    |                 |    |                     |    |                        |    |
| 2             | 18 | 6               | 55 | 1                   | 9  | 2                      | 18 |
| Last Year     |    |                 |    |                     |    |                        |    |
| 2             | 13 | 11              | 74 | 2                   | 13 | -                      | -  |
| -----         |    |                 |    |                     |    |                        |    |

Table 23 shows that the majority of the students perceived that they received consistent instructions from both teachers. Those children who said that they did not do their work the same way for both teachers appeared to interpret the question as, "Did you do the same kind of work for both teachers?" Only two of those who said "no" were able to say that in fact there were different standards for the same kind of work. Most children said that the teachers did different kinds of things.

Table 23  
Students' Perceptions of Consistency  
of Instructions

| This Year  |    |                |    | Last Year  |    |                |    |                      |   |
|------------|----|----------------|----|------------|----|----------------|----|----------------------|---|
| Consistent |    | Not Consistent |    | Consistent |    | Not Consistent |    | Sometimes Consistent |   |
| No.        | %  | No.            | %  | No.        | %  | No.            | %  | No.                  | % |
| 7          | 64 | 4              | 36 | 9          | 60 | 5              | 33 | 1                    | 7 |

As Table 24 indicates the majority of the students perceived their parents as being positive about share teaching. Six children were able to say that they had heard their parents say that they liked their children to be in share classrooms. They felt that the children worked harder and learned more. The other children said that they had never heard their parents complain and the children felt that their parents approved. One child said her mother did not like split classes but that she liked the idea of two teachers.

One child who said his parents did not like two teachers said it was because it was "too hard on my head." One said his parents did not like it because he told them he did not like it.

It appears that if the children are happy with the teachers that the parents are happy also.

Table 24  
 Students' Perceptions of Parental  
 Support for Shared Classes

| Positive  |    | Negative |    | Don't Know |    |
|-----------|----|----------|----|------------|----|
| No.       | %  | No.      | %  | No.        | %  |
| This year |    |          |    |            |    |
| 5         | 45 | -        | -  | 6          | 55 |
| Last year |    |          |    |            |    |
| 11        | 73 | 3        | 20 | 1          | 7  |

## CHAPTER 5

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken to determine if share teaching is educationally effective in the primary grades. Job sharing in the classroom is a relatively new concept and many administrators have questions about its appropriateness. The initiative for share teaching comes from the teachers. More and more teachers are beginning to be dissatisfied with full-time teaching positions because it leaves too little time for family, friends, and leisure time activities. As well, current economic and social trends appear to be to allow workers more options. Administrators who refuse sharing teachers are fighting this trend. As the number of share teachers grows, fellow teachers who do not share, begin to think about share teaching as a an employment option. The Vancouver School Board has reacted positively to the idea of share teaching and has allowed this arrangement in its classrooms since the mid 1970s. Other school boards have viewed sharing as administratively inconvenient and educationally unsound. This study is important because certain criteria for continued implementation can be suggested, and questions can be formulated for further examination in order to determine whether share teaching offers a valid employment alternative for the future. The value of the study will be, I hope, in its capacity to stimulate

thought and discussion about a satisfying and innovative way of working in the classroom.

### Results

The results of this study confirm the results of previous studies (Dapper and Murphy, 1968; DOE, Hawaii, 1981). Although there was some reluctance on the part of some administrators to endorse sharing whole-heartedly, job sharing in the classroom has been generally effective. Five principals felt that the quality of education did not suffer when two teachers shared one full-time position. In fact, three of the seven principals felt that the school benefitted from the presence of share teachers. Two principals had specific concerns about specific partnerships. With the exception of one teacher, all the teachers perceived their partnerships as viable, stimulating and educationally sound. They perceived themselves to be more productive than when they worked as a single full-time classroom teacher. The majority of students were overwhelmingly positive about being in a shared classroom and indicated a willingness to be enrolled in a shared classroom again.

### Discussion and Recommendations

Job sharing teachers should not have to demonstrate that they are more effective than the single teacher in the classroom. They should only have to demonstrate that they are as effective. The experiences of the principals and teachers who were interviewed suggests

that the effectiveness of job-sharing teachers like all teachers, is a reflection of the individuals involved. Two less than adequate teachers do not make a good team. Two good teachers cannot fail to make it work. Teachers were aware of their principals' concerns and tried to ameliorate any anxieties the principals might have. In some cases teachers felt that personality conflict or philosophical conflict was the basis of the principal's concern, and sharing was only one aspect of the total picture.

There is no doubt that principals perceive that sharing adds to their workload. A real disadvantage for them is the writing of additional teachers' reports. In order to offset this additional workload they would like to perceive that the school gains in some way. Sharing teachers, themselves, must assume the responsibility for proving that their presence is not a detriment to the school. They must make sure that communication is maintained with the children, the parents, the staff and the principal. They must make sure that the instructional process is effective and that the children are receiving the best education that they can give them. They must make a commitment to spend time outside of school to co-ordinate and integrate their programs, especially in language arts and mathematics. Any teacher who is only willing to put in her exact share of time will not make a good sharing teacher or a good full-time teacher.



Compatible partners appears to be the most important ingredient of a successful share-teaching situation. Only one principal felt that one of his sharing teams was composed of incompatible partners. Although principals and teachers both recognized the need for compatible partners, they did not always have the same criteria for compatibility. Teachers did not worry as much about differing styles as the principals did. As long as the basic approach and philosophy were similar and as long as there was evidence of a willingness and an ability to adapt, teachers felt that a common teaching program could be developed which was a blend of the best that both teachers had to offer. Some teachers saw their differences as strengths which added variety to the program. The one failed partnership failed because meaningful communication was not existent, discipline standards were not consistent, philosophies were incompatible, classroom routines were not established ahead of time and prior knowledge of the teaching partners was not present. Although many good partnerships were formed through the auspices of the board those partnerships formed by friends and teaching acquaintances were more durable. Under no condition should a teacher be paired with another teacher with whom she/he is not positive about working.

Communication at all levels was a major concern of principals. Although they were apprehensive, none could actually identify specific occasions of communication

breakdown. It appeared that most disadvantages associated with communication were perceived rather than real. One reason why no specific problems had arisen was that teachers were aware that principals were concerned and tried to make sure that no grounds for complaint arose. They were very conscious of the importance of communicating to their partners all pertinent information from the principal, staff, parents, and children. Teachers saw frequent communication as a necessary condition of share teaching. It appeared, in many cases, that the weakest link in communication was between the principal and the teachers and that teachers themselves could do much to allay their principal's apprehensions. One way of easing their principal's concerns would be to hand in a preview which outlined the program and how it was to be shared and integrated. As well, teachers should take the initiative and let their principals know that they have received information and are cognizant of events that have transpired in their absence from the school. Many teachers complained that their principal checked up on whether or not information had been communicated. They felt that they were not trusted to be responsible enough to pass on information. If sharing teachers took the initiative and spoke to their principals first then the principals would be aware that the lines of communication were open.

Maintaining continuity of instruction was a third important aspect of share teaching. Five of the principals felt that there was no evidence of disharmony and lack of continuity in their shared classrooms. The teachers recognized the need for continuity and had found various ways of ensuring that continuity was not suffering. Communication and planning were the basic ingredients necessary to ensure that continuity was maintained. The use of substitutes in shared classrooms was a problem that was raised because of its effect on classroom continuity. Although most sharing teachers said that they were not absent often it appears that the use of substitutes in a shared classroom has the potential for being the weakest link in the concept of share teaching. There were concerns expressed by some teachers and principals about the disruptive influence of too many teachers in the classroom when one or both of the sharing teachers was absent often. There was also some ambiguity about how the School Board, the principals, and the teachers would like to handle the situation. Although administrative issues related to credited sick days and repaying the time owed may arise, it is my opinion that it would be in the Board's best interest to encourage sharing teachers to cover for each other in the event of absence from school. A more continuous education is provided for the students and the district saves money because of the need to hire fewer substitutes. Teachers who switch days with their

partners because of absence from school should not lose any sick leave if they work the days back. As well, sharing teachers should be made aware of the option of altering their contracts monthly in the event of lengthy absences which are covered by one partner or the other.

Some principals expressed the concern that the students would have difficulty adjusting to two teachers. This opinion was not supported by the evidence. Although there were a few negative responses, most students, particularly those students who were enrolled in shared classes in the 1983-1984 school year (year of the study), were positive about sharing. As well, the teachers and principals could cite little evidence of students' inability to adjust to the sharing situation.

Several teachers suggested that the Board is not totally supportive of sharing. The School Board should make a statement of support or non-support for the idea of share teaching so that principals, teachers, and parents know what the Board's policy is.

Another issue that needs clarification is the number of sharing teachers that the Board feels that it can effectively employ. The principals who were interviewed suggested that their schools could operate effectively with from one to three shared teaching situations. This suggests that the Vancouver School Board has the capacity for at least twice its present number of sharing situations if share teaching is spread

out evenly in all its elementary schools. Sharing could help to minimize layoffs, but many teachers are apprehensive to try sharing if they are not guaranteed a return to full-time teaching if they so desire. In times of restraint and declining enrollment this may not be possible immediately but if the Board wishes to encourage teachers to share they could guarantee that sharing teachers on continuing contract would be assigned to full-time positions for which they are qualified before temporary or newly-hired teachers are assigned. Present seniority provisions discriminate against teachers who share and discourage teachers from sharing. Sharing teachers should be granted seniority rights equivalent to those accorded full-time teachers.

Teachers who share have an investment in a successful partnership. The district should provide some protection against the partnership being broken up without the partners' permission. Teachers who share would like equal access to job interviews. Many felt that they were discriminated against.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

The present study was not designed to examine the cost effectiveness of sharing. Future research into this area would add greatly to the body of knowledge about sharing and help to answer the question of whether job sharing fills the needs of the School Board. Since teachers who share generally have many years of teaching experience, and in times of declining enrollment junior

teachers who are often at the lower end of the salary scale are the first to be dismissed, it may be cost effective to encourage senior teachers to share. Also, job sharing may substantially reduce the need to hire substitutes. As well future research into the achievement level of students in shared classrooms may be warranted.

### Conclusions

Share teaching in the primary grades is an effective and desirable employment alternative which offers rich rewards for the teachers involved. There is no evidence for significant disadvantages to the children or the school. It increases employment opportunities and creates a stimulating, satisfying teaching environment. It fills the needs of many teachers who want to balance their work lives with the other parts of their lives--family, friends, and education. Although the needs of the School Board are not so easy to measure it seems obvious that the schools benefit because the combined talents of two teachers is greater than those of a single teacher and because two teachers have more energy than one full-time teacher. Sharing works because the teachers are committed to each other and have an investment in making it work.

## APPENDIX I

## PRINCIPAL'S INTERVIEW

1. What has been your experience with share time teachers? Have you had previous experience or is this your first year? Did you inherit them from the previous administrator?
2. Are there any advantages for or benefits to the school?
3. Are there any disadvantages?
4. Have you had any administrative problems regarding teacher contact and communication, supervision of additional staff members, accountability of partners, or staff meetings?
5. What types of organization choices have been influenced by having share time teachers on staff?
6. How does job sharing affect the instructional process in regards to compartmentalization of subject matter, time worked, energy level, pupil achievement, environmental stimulation and/or style of teaching?
7. How do parents react to having their children in share time classrooms? Are they informed before hand? How are parent-teacher conferences held?
8. How do the children react to having share time teachers?
9. What are your perceptions of the compatibility of the teaching partnerships in your school?

- 10 How is communication handled between the teaching partners and between them and you, the principal? Is it adequate in your estimation?
- 11 How does the rest of the staff respond to share time teachers?



## APPENDIX II

## TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

I am doing this study because it has become apparent to me that some administrators are apprehensive about the concept of share teaching. Also the school board has expressed an interest in how teachers who share classrooms handle the mechanics of day to day organization and curriculum continuity.

Background

1. How long have you been teaching school?
2. Are you on continuing or temporary staff?
3. Is your principal generally positive or negative about share teaching? Why, or why not?
4. Does your staff generally accept share time teachers?

Compatibility

1. How long have you been teaching with your present partner?
2. How did you select your partner? Did you have any previous experience teaching with your partner?
3. Have you share taught with another partner?
4. How were previous partners selected?
5. What are your perceptions of the compatibility of you and your teaching partner in regards to
  - a) teaching style,
  - b) academic expectations,
  - c) discipline, and
  - d) learning opportunities?

6. What criteria do you think should be used in selecting a partner?
7. How important do you think it is to have a compatible partner?
  1. Extremely important
  2. Very important
  3. Fairly important
  4. Not very important
  5. Of little importance

### Communication

1. How is communication handled between partners?
2. How frequently do you and your partner communicate?
3. Is intra-classroom communication satisfactory?
  1. Extremely satisfactory
  2. Very satisfactory
  3. Fairly satisfactory
  4. Sometimes unsatisfactory
  5. Unsatisfactory
4. How could communication be improved?
5. How is communication handled between the administration and the teaching pair? What is the policy regarding attendance at staff meetings?
6. Is this level of communication satisfactory in your estimation?
  1. Extremely satisfactory
  2. Very satisfactory
  3. Fairly satisfactory

4. Sometimes unsatisfactory

5. Unsatisfactory

Continuity

1. What are your days in the classroom?  
How is your schedule organized?
2. Why was this arrangement chosen?
3. How is continuity within subject areas maintained?
4. How are your plans made?

--long term

--short term

5. Is your program integrated with your partners or do both of you operate separate programs in:

- a) language arts,
- b) mathematics, and
- c) other subject areas?

6. Is it important to integrate your programs and maintain continuity of instruction in:

- a) language arts,
- b) mathematics, and
- c) other subject areas?

Please rate the above on the following rating scale.

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Fairly important
4. Not very important
5. Of little importance

7. How do you get a good evaluation of the children's

individual needs when you are only in school two or three days a week?

8. How do you keep track of these individual needs?
9. What are your substitute arrangements? Do you cover for your partner when she is sick or does she make arrangements for a substitute?
10. Are these substitute arrangements satisfactory in your estimation?
  1. Extremely satisfactory
  2. Very satisfactory
  3. Fairly satisfactory
  4. Sometimes unsatisfactory
  5. Unsatisfactory

#### Instructional Process

1. I would like you to describe your language arts program with reference to these six areas
  - a) type or types of program(s) used,
  - b) organization,
  - c) skills taught by each teacher and sequencing of skills instruction,
  - d) accountability for subject matter,
  - e) evaluation processes, and
  - f) integration with other subject areas.
2. Do you keep separate daybooks?
3. Do children use the same exercise book for both teachers? Why was this choice made?
4. Are there any strengths in your system of organization that you could share with others?

5. Are there any weaknesses in your system that you could share with others?
6. Do you think your teaching is enhanced by interaction with a partner, in regards to insight into pupils, someone to share problems with, feedback regarding teaching units, or another viewpoint? Can you be specific?
7. Do you feel that your energy level, and patience with difficult children are enhanced by share time teaching? If no, why? If yes, how?
8. How do you rate your pupils' achievement as compared to if you alone ran the classroom?
  1. Much better
  2. Somewhat better
  3. The same
  4. Not as good
  5. Much worse
9. How effective do you feel your teaching partnership is? (the team)
  1. Extremely effective
  2. Very effective
  3. Fairly effective
  4. Not very effective
  5. Unsatisfactory

### Parents

1. How do parents react? Have you had any definite positive or negative reactions or are they indifferent?

2. Do both teachers attend parent teacher conferences?

### Children

1. Do the children seem to adjust to the swing between two teachers?
2. Are there any problems with some?  
What kind of problems?
3. Do they appear to favour one teacher or play one against the other?
4. Are they confused or over powered by two teachers?

### Personal

1. How do you perceive the time that you devote to the job as compared to the time that you worked as a full time teacher?
2. Do you find any problems with your own personal satisfaction in teaching in a share situation?
3. Should other teachers who are planning to share teach be on the look out for any potential problems that you can see arising in share teaching situations?

## APPENDIX III

## STUDENT'S INTERVIEW

1. How do/did you feel about having two teachers?

2. (Ask the child if he/she knows what confused means?)

Please tell me which of the following best describes how you feel/felt about having two teachers?

\_\_\_ I like/d having two teachers.

\_\_\_ I like/d having two teachers but sometimes I am/was confused because there are/were two teachers.

\_\_\_ I am/was confused by having two teachers sharing.

\_\_\_ I do/did not like it at all.

Why was it confusing? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do/did you find that you get/got help when you need/needed it?

4. (Ask the child if he/she knows what amount means? Explain if necessary.)

Do/did you do about the same amount of work in a two teacher classroom as you do/did in a one teacher classroom?

5. If you had the choice of having two teachers again would you want to be in a two-teacher classroom again?

6. Do/did you find it difficult to change from one teacher to the other teacher every week?

7. Do/did you feel that the teachers tell/told each other about what you do/did in school when one of the teachers is/was not in the classroom?
8. Do/did your teachers ask you to do your work the same way for both of them?
9. Do/did your parents like you to have two teachers?



## APPENDIX IV

April 26, 1984.

Dear Parent:

I am planning to carry out a research study in your child's classroom. I am a certified teacher with the Vancouver School Board, currently working as a graduate student at Simon Fraser University, and will be conducting this research. I am writing to explain this study to you and to ask you to give permission for your child to participate.

The intent of the study is to gather information about how Primary teachers who share a class plan their Language Arts program in order to maintain a continuous program throughout the year. As part of the study I would like to find out how children who have had or who now have two teachers sharing one class feel about having two teachers instead of one. The study will take approximately fifteen minutes of your child's time. He/she will be asked questions regarding classroom organization and procedure and how he/she feels about having two teachers.

This study has been given approval by Simon Fraser University, the school district, and your child's principal and teacher. I hope that you will permit your child to participate in this study. Please indicate your consent below and have your child return this letter to his/her teacher tomorrow.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

B. Elaine Anderson  
929 - 3306 (home)

My child \_\_\_\_\_ may participate  
in this study.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

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