THE EFFECT OF NONINSTRUCTIONAL WORKLOAD TASKS UPON
INSTRUCTIONAL TIME FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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The workday for classroom teachers is replete with excessive, time-consuming, noninstructional tasks. Researchers have found that in high-achieving schools “school time is used for learning” (Cotton, 2001, p. 16), meaning that school-wide policy and practice are focused on maximizing instructional time through minimizing administrative intrusions, emphasizing timeliness, and generally streamlining noninstructional activities.

Streamlining these noninstructional activities to increase instructional time is a vital factor for teachers and students (English Journal, 1999). Cotton asserted that the length of time students spend engaged in appropriate learning activities is oftentimes affected by these noninstructional tasks and should be limited. Draeger (1995) posited that streamlining these noninstructional activities to increase instructional time is a challenge. This is due to an increase in the responsibilities of teachers as a result of current reform initiatives. As a result of these initiatives, Vargo (2000) said that “efforts are being made across the country to increase student achievement by reorganizing schools, enhancing the curriculum, establishing performance standards, rethinking traditional instructional methods and instructional time” (p. 57). Teachers, therefore, are called upon to improve student outcomes by revisiting and enhancing curriculum and learning new instructional strategies. As such, the instructional time becomes a vital factor for both teacher and student (Weller, 2003).

The idea of managing noninstructional tasks becomes the issue for this research. The purpose of this study is to survey teachers from grades 1 through 12 in randomly selected schools in an urban school district. The study will identify instructional and noninstructional tasks that comprise the workload for classroom teachers. Additionally,
the difference in the time, during the teaching day and beyond, that is devoted to noninstructional tasks and the time devoted to the instruction of students in public schools in an urban school district will be analyzed for significant differences.