Looping: An Empirical Evaluation

Peter J. Cistone
Florida International University
&
Barbara A. Nocton
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Abstract: Looping is the practice in which a teacher instructs the same group of students for at least two school years, following them from one grade level to the next. Once a "loop" of two or more years is completed, the teacher may start a new loop teaching a new group of students. This evaluation study of the practice of looping in a large urban school system was intended to explore its effect on student instructional outcomes, attendance, and retention rates, as well as to assess principals' and teachers' reactions to looping. The results indicated that, with respect to academic achievement, the Looping Sample outperformed their counterparts in the Matching Sample. Looping had a positive effect on student attendance and students in the Looping Sample had a significantly greater chance of being promoted to the next grade level. Principals and teachers were in high agreement that looping had a positive effect on student learning in their schools.

Looping: An Empirical Evaluation

Looping is the practice in which a teacher instructs the same group

Address all correspondence to: Peter J. Cistone, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Florida International University, Miami, Florida 33199. E-mail: cistonep@fiu.edu

International Journal of Educational Policy, Research, & Practice, Volume 5, Number 1, Spring 2004. ISSN 1528-3534;

of students for at least two school years, following them from one grade level to the next. Once a "loop" of two or more years is completed, the teacher may start a new loop teaching a new group of students. The practice of looping has been described under various names, including teacher rotation, family-style learning, student-teacher progression, and multiyear instruction.

Looping has been employed in education for some time. Rudolf Steiner founded the Waldorf Schools in Germany in the early 1900s on the notion that students would benefit from a lasting relationship with a teacher. In Waldorf Schools, teachers remained with their students during grades one through eight. This practice continues today in the Waldorf Schools that have expanded to many countries around the world. Currently, in Germany, students and teachers generally stay together in grades one through four (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, 1997). Looping is also practiced in other countries, including Israel, Sweden, and Japan. In these countries, looping is used by many schools in elementary grades. Modified versions of multi-year teacher-student relationships are in place in secondary grades as well (Grant et al. as cited in Little and Little, 2001). Preschools in Italy successfully use a three-year teacher-students assignment model (Palestis, 1994).

In the United States, Deborah Meier, a well-known New York City educator and author, began using looping in 1974. She reasoned that teachers and students needed to become well-acquainted with one another in order to achieve necessary levels of communication that would support learning. Meier considers looping important in providing teachers and students with an opportunity to get to know each other very well (Goldberg, 1991). Deborah Jacoby, another looping practitioner and supporter, describes the time saved on the assessment of skills, increased ability to utilize the children's known strengths and talents in a style consistent over two years, and trusting relationships built with students and parents as some advantages of looping (Jacoby, 1994).

The literature on looping reports many benefits of this practice. Looping allows teachers to save time at the beginning of the second year of the loop by making unnecessary the usual transitional period typically spent on getting acquainted with new students as well as setting classroom rules, expectations, and standards. The time saved is virtually identical to gaining an extra month of teaching/learning time during the second year of the loop (Burke, 1996; Black, 2000).

Moreover, research indicates that looping gives children more time to build relationships essential to learning and aids in the development of social skills (Checkley, 1995), reduces anxiety experienced by students when they go from one grade level to the next (Grant & Johnson, 1995),

and improves student confidence and parent-teacher relationships (Little & Dacus, 1999). Teachers in looping classes develop a closer relationship with students' parents (Rasmussen, 1998) and the practice of looping positively affects parents' attitudes toward the educational environment (Nichols & Nichols, 2002). There is evidence that looping may serve to improve overall elementary school climate (Black, 2000).

Concomitantly, the literature on looping indicates some potential disadvantages of looping. If the teacher is not familiar with the curriculum of the second year of the loop, the valuable instructional time may be lost. There can be a mismatch between teaching style and a child's learning style. Going forward with this mismatch for more than one school year is bad for both the teacher and the student. With looping, a student may have to be taught by an instructor who is not very strong in a particular subject area for more than one year (Vann, 1997). Others who have studied looping suggest that some of these drawbacks of looping may prove to be advantages. Chapman (1999) states that the problems concerning teacher/student mismatch or weak teachers should be addressed by a principal in any case—not just in looping situation. Looping may encourage principals to act more strongly to address these problems.

The findings concerning benefits of looping mostly reflect its social advantages for students. There appears to be a paucity of recent empirical studies targeting the academic effects of looping, especially its effects on student academic achievement. The present study aims to address the academic effects of looping.

Within a large urban school system in the state of Florida, 26 elementary schools used looping in the 1999-2000 school year. In these schools, looping was implemented in a variety of ways. In certain schools, only gifted students or students in the Advanced Academic Placement program participated in looping, while in others, students in regular classes took part in it. In some schools, only one or two classes participated in looping, whereas in others, all classes in particular grade levels took part in it. In addition, looping patterns were organized differently among schools. In certain schools, the looping occurred in first and second grades, and then in third and fourth grades, while in some other schools it was implemented in the second and third grades only.

This evaluation of the practice of looping was intended to explore its effect on student instructional outcomes, attendance, and retention rates, as well as to assess principals' and teachers' reactions to looping.

Method

This study intended to explore the academic effects of looping

regarding general education students (as opposed to gifted or advanced placement students) who completed a two-year "loop." All 26 elementary schools that used looping during the 1999-2000 school year were considered. Of the 26 schools, 11 were in the first year of the loop or had only gifted or Advanced Academic Placement program students participating in looping. Accordingly, these schools were excluded. Then, for the purpose of making necessary comparisons, two student samples were created. These two samples represented students participating in looping and matching peers not participating in it. Clearly, it was necessary to assure that students in the two samples were similar in terms of their demographic characteristics and academic achievement before the looping began—in the 1997-1998 school year.

Looping Sample. Since looping is a multiyear program, only students who were in this program for its entire duration could reap all its benefits. Thus, the Looping Sample included all those students from looping classes of selected schools who were taught by the same teacher during the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years. This sample consisted of 612 students.

Matching Sample. The Matching Sample was created in two stages. First, students in the Looping Sample were matched to those students of non-looping schools in the school system who stayed in the same school during 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years and who matched the students in the Looping Sample in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, status on free/reduced lunch, primary exceptionality, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) level. This procedure created a group of possible "matches" for each student in the Looping Sample. Then, for each student in the Looping Sample, the results in reading comprehension and mathematics applications on the 1998 Stanford Achievement Test, Eighth Edition, were used to choose one person who best matched the student in the Looping Sample in terms of academic achievement. (The closeness of the match was established by minimizing the sum of the squared deviations of mathematics and reading test scores from those of the student in the Looping Sample.) Most of the students in the Matching Sample (410) were matched to their counterparts in the Looping Sample using both the demographic and the achievement criteria above. The remaining 202 students did not participate in the 1998 Stanford Achievement Test due to their grade levels; therefore, they were matched to their peers in the Looping Sample on all of the demographic parameters listed above.

The closeness of the academic achievement match between students in the two samples above is evident from a comparison of the 1998 achievement results (prior to the beginning of a two-year loop). The mean scaled score in mathematics was 611.5 for the students in the Looping Sample, which was very close to 612.1, the mean scaled score for their

counterparts in the Matching Sample. Similarly, the mean scaled score in reading was 606.6 for students in the Looping Sample and 606.7 for their peers in the Matching Sample, an almost identical figure. The demographic characteristics of students in both samples are shown in Table 1.

*Academic Achievement Comparisons***.** The norm-referenced component of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) administered in March 2000 was used to compare the academic achievement of students in the Looping and Matching Samples. (The state of Florida used a special edition of the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, as the norm-referenced component of the FCAT.) Since the mean achievement results in reading and mathematics obtained before the beginning of the loop (in March of 1998) were virtually identical for students in the two samples, no statistical adjustment for prior achievement was necessary. Consequently, the paired-samples t-test was used to statistically compare the reading and mathematics achievement outcomes for students in the Looping and Matching Samples. This test requires the data be available for each student in a matched pair of students. Mathematics applications results were available for 581 matched pairs of students, and reading comprehension results were available for 577 matched student pairs. (The rest of the students either did not participate in the norm-referenced FCAT or their tests were invalidated.) Therefore, 581 and 577 paired achievement scores in mathematics and reading respectively were used for academic comparisons of students in the Looping and Matching Samples.

Attendance and Retention Comparisons. The end-of-year data for the 1999-2000 school year were used to compare the attendance and retention rates of students in the Looping and Matching Samples. These data were available for all 612 students in both samples. The paired-samples t-test was used to compare the differences in the average number of days absent

Table 1
Student Demographic Characteristics

	Race/Ethnicity				Gender	
	White Non-Hisp.	Black Non-Hisp.	Hisp.	Other	Female	Male
Grade 2 (n = 185)	9%	2%	87%	2%	52%	48%
Grade 3 (n = 28)	0%	68%	21%	11%	50%	50%
Grade 4 (n = 296)	9%	12%	77%	2%	55%	45%
Grade 5 (n = 103)	7%	50%	43%	0%	52%	48%
Total (n = 612)	8%	18%	72%	2%	54%	46%

between the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years for students in the two samples. The log odds analysis was conducted to compare the numbers of students not promoted to the next grade level in the two groups.

Principals' Survey. Principals of the elementary schools that used looping in the 1999-2000 school year were surveyed. The Principal Questionnaire consisted of eight true-false questions designed to measure respondents' opinions about the benefits of looping and three open-ended questions asking principals to describe the criteria for selecting teachers to be involved in looping, and the advantages and shortcomings of looping as it was implemented in their schools. The principals of all 26 elementary schools in which looping took place during the 1999-2000 school year were asked to complete the survey. Eighteen of them returned completed questionnaires (69% return rate).

Teachers' Survey. All teachers in the school system who were involved in looping were surveyed. The Teacher Questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part, containing 14 true-false items, was intended to measure respondents' reactions to looping; the second part, which consisted of two open-ended items, asked teachers to describe the advantages and shortcomings of looping as it was implemented in their schools. In all, 96 teachers were asked to participate in the survey; 69 of them returned completed questionnaires (72% return rate). However, only 58 questionnaires were used for the analysis (60% rate), because the remaining 11 teachers were in their first year of the loop and did not participate in the looping in the past. It is generally believed that most of the benefits of looping are realized during the second year of the loop, which implies that these teachers were not in the position to answer most of the questions about the benefits of looping.

It should be noted that it was not possible to select teachers randomly for participation in looping, nor was it possible to assign teachers or students randomly to looping and non-looping classes. Consequently, the findings reported below should be understood accordingly.

Results

The comparison of academic achievement for students in the Looping Sample and their counterparts in the Matching Sample was based on the results of the norm-referenced part of the FCAT administered in March 2000. The outcomes are presented separately for the reading comprehension and mathematics applications sections of the test.

Reading Achievement Results. Since the number of students in each grade level was the same for both samples, it was possible to compare the scaled scores for the two samples across all grade levels. A paired-sample

t-test was performed to determine whether the students in the Looping Sample, as a group, scored significantly higher on the reading comprehension section of the FCAT than did students in the Matching Sample. The results indicated that the mean scaled score for students in the Looping group ($M = 634$, $SD = 42$) was significantly greater than that for students in the Matching group ($M = 628$, $SD = 44$), $t(576) = 3.78$, $p < .001$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference scores was (2.93, 9.29). The standardized effect size index d was .16, a value generally considered small. The magnitude of the effect size index indicates that an average student in the Looping Sample outperformed about 56% of students in the Matching Sample on the reading comprehension part of the FCAT. In terms of the raw scores, an average student in the Looping group answered two to three more multiple-choice questions correctly than did an average student in the Matching group. (The maximum raw score was between 40 and 54 points depending on the grade level.)

Furthermore, the students in the Looping Sample consistently outperformed the students in the Matching Sample on the reading comprehension section of the FCAT across the different grade levels that the samples comprised. The mean reading scaled scores of students in the Looping Sample were higher than those of students in the Matching Sample for all grade levels. The reading achievement results, expressed as percentile ranks corresponding to the mean scaled scores for students in both samples, are presented in Table 2.

It can be seen that students in the Looping Sample on average have substantially higher percentile scores than do their counterparts in the Matching Sample. The difference in percentile ranks that correspond to mean scaled scores for students in the two samples varies from four to

Table 2
Reading Achievement Results on the FCAT (Norm-Referenced Test) by Grade Level

	Percentile Corresponding to the Mean Scaled Score		Difference in Percentile Scores
	Looping Sample	Matching Sample	Looping/ Matching
Grade 2 ($n = 159$)	68	63	+5
Grade 3 ($n = 27$)	61	53	+8
Grade 4 ($n = 293$)	63	58	+5
Grade 5 ($n = 98$)	38	34	+4

Note: Some of the percentiles are interpolated.

eight percentile points, a sizable amount. This effect is consistent across all grade levels included in the samples.

Mathematics Achievement Results. The mathematics applications section of the norm-referenced part of the FCAT was used to make academic achievement comparisons for students in the Looping and Matching Samples. A paired-sample t-test was performed to determine whether the students in the Looping Sample, as a group, scored significantly higher on the mathematics applications section of the FCAT than did students in the Matching Sample. The results indicated that the mean scaled score for students in the Looping group ($\underline{M}$ = 628, $\underline{SD}$ = 39) was significantly greater than that for students in the Matching group ($\underline{M}$ = 620, $\underline{SD}$ = 42), $\underline{t}$ (579) = 4.95, $\underline{p}$ < .001. The 95% confidence interval of the difference scores was (4.68, 10.83). The standardized effect size index $\underline{d}$ was .21, a value generally considered small. The magnitude of the effect size index indicates that an average student in the Looping Sample outperformed about 58% of students in the Matching Sample on the mathematics applications part of the FCAT. An average student in the Looping group answered two to three more multiple-choice questions correctly than did an average student in the Matching group. (The maximum raw score was between 46 and 48 points depending on the grade level.)

Moreover, students in the Looping Sample outperformed their peers in the Matching Sample on the mathematics application section of the FCAT across all grade levels represented in both samples. The mean mathematics scaled scores of students in the Looping Sample were higher than those of students in the Matching Sample across all grade levels. The results of these comparisons, expressed in terms of percentile ranks corresponding to the mean scale scores, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Mathematics Achievement Results on the FCAT (Norm-Referenced Test) by Grade Level

	Percentile Corresponding to the Mean Scaled Score		Difference in Percentile Scores
	Looping Sample	Matching Sample	Looping / Matching
Grade 2 ($\underline{n}$ = 163)	71	64	+7
Grade 3 ($\underline{n}$ = 27)	69	61	+8
Grade 4 ($\underline{n}$ = 292)	66	57	+9
Grade 5 ($\underline{n}$ = 98)	59	53	+6

Note: Some of the percentiles are interpolated.

It can be seen that students in the Looping Sample have substantially higher percentile ranks on the mathematics applications section of the FCAT than do their peers in the Matching Sample. The difference in performance expressed by percentile ranks corresponding to the mean scaled scores for students in the two samples varies from six to nine percentile points—a considerable amount. This effect is consistent for all grade levels that the samples comprise.

Attendance Comparisons. The attendance of students in the Looping and Matching Samples was compared. As mentioned earlier, students in the Looping and Matching Samples were equated on several demographic characteristics and matched on academic performance measured prior to the beginning of the loop. However, students in the two samples were not matched on the absenteeism figures. As shown in Table 4, the average numbers of days absent during the 1998-1999 school year (the first year of the loop) were different: approximately eight for students in the Looping Sample and seven for their matching counterparts. Since students in the two samples had different attendance levels during the first year of the loop, it was necessary to examine the differences (increases or decreases) in the average numbers of days absent between the second and first years of the loop for students in the Looping and Matching Samples. A paired samples t-test was performed to determine whether a decrease in the average number of days absent between the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years for students in the Looping Sample was greater than that for students in the Matching Sample. The results showed that the decrease in the mean number of days absent for students in the Looping group ($\underline{M}$ = .78, $\underline{SD}$ = 5.14) was significantly greater than that for students in the Matching group ($\underline{M}$ = –.18, $\underline{SD}$ = 5.71), $\underline{t}$ (611) = 3.08, $\underline{p}$= .001. The 95 % confidence interval of the difference in the decrease of the number of days absent was (.35, 1.57). The standardized effect size index $\underline{d}$ was .12, a small value.

Students in almost all grade levels represented in the Looping Sample exhibited improved attendance. The average number of days absent decreased by approximately one or two days for students in the second, third, and fifth grades between the two academic years and remained at virtually the same level for the fourth graders. The actual absenteeism figures during the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years for the two student groups are shown in Table 4.

The evidence collected indicate that students in the Looping Sample improved their attendance from one academic year to the next, while the attendance levels of students in the Matching Sample decreased during the same period. This fact suggests that looping had a positive effect on student attendance.

Table 4
Average Number of Days Absent

	Looping Sample			Matching Sample		
	1998-1999 School Year	1999-2000 School Year	Increase/ Decrease	1998-1999 School Year	1999-2000 School Year	Increase/ Decrease
Grade 2 (n = 185)	9.4	8.2	–1.2	9.1	8.3	–.8
GRADE 3 (n = 28)	7.4	5.0	–2.4	5.5	5.4	–.1
Grade 4 (n = 296)	7.2	7.0	–.2	6.5	6.9	+.4
Grade 5 (n = 103)	8.0	6.7	–1.3	6.5	7.8	+1.3
Total (n = 612)	8.0	7.2	–.8	7.2	7.4	+.2

Note: The grade levels shown are for the 1999-2000 school year.

Student Retention Comparisons. The retention figures for students in the Looping Sample in the 1999-2000 school year (the second year of the loop) and that of their counterparts in the Matching Sample were compared. The overall retention figures show that only two students in the Looping Sample were retained as compared to seven students in the Matching Sample (see Table 5). A log odds analysis was conducted to determine whether the number of students in the Looping group who were held back at the end of 1999-2000 school year was smaller than the corresponding figure for students in the Matching group. The two variables were group with two levels (Looping or Matching) and student status with two levels (promoted to the next grade level or held back). The results showed that the odds ratio was 3.53, indicating that a student in the Looping group was 3.53 times more likely to be promoted to the next grade level than a student in the Matching group. When the log odds test of significance was performed, it was found that at the common .05 level of significance there was not sufficient evidence to say that the students in the Looping Sample had a significantly different chance of being promoted to the next grade level than students in the Matching Sample

Table 5
Retention Results of the 1999-2000 School Year by Grade Level

	Promoted to the Next Grade	Held Back	Odds of Promotion	Odds Ratio
Looping Sample	610	2	305	3.53
Matching Sample	605	7	86.43	

(p = .06). Of course, the same result would be considered significant at a less stringent .1 level.

Teacher and School Principal Surveys. Eighteen principals and 60 teachers of looping classes were surveyed. The results show that most participants believed that looping had a positive effect on students' learning in their schools.

Proponents of looping usually state that teachers in looping classes gain some learning time at the beginning of the second year of the loop, because they do not need to learn their students' names, personalities, and learning styles. In our survey, almost all principals (94%) and most teachers (91%) agreed with this statement and indicated that looping increased the time available to teachers at the beginning of the second year of the loop (see Table 6). Another advantage of looping asserted by its supporters is that it increases the time available to slower students to learn the basic skills. Most of the principals (89%) and the majority of the teachers surveyed (71%) agreed with his assertion. In addition, most principals (89%) and the majority of teachers surveyed (72%) stated that looping enhanced the working relationship between teachers and students. Finally, most principals (94%) and nearly all teachers (95%) indicated that overall, looping increased the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

There was one area, however, where the teachers' opinions differed

Table 6
Opinions about Looping

	Percent in Agreement	
	Principals (n = 18)	Teachers (n = 60)
Looping increases the instructional time available to teachers at the beginning of the second year of the loop.	94%	91%
With looping, slower students have more time to learn the basic skills.	89%	71%
Looping enhances the quality of the working relationships between teachers and students.	89%	72%
Looping increases parental involvement in education.	72%	46%
Overall, looping enhances the effectiveness of classroom instruction.	94%	95%

from principals'. More than half of the principals (72%) stated that looping raised parental involvement in education, but only 46% of the teachers agreed with this statement.

In addition to the questions that were posed to both the principals and teachers and presented in Table 6, there were some questions that only principals or teachers were asked. The replies to the questions directed to principals revealed that most principals (89%) believed that looping decreases the number of disciplinary problems in schools. A small number of principals (11%) thought that only experienced teachers should teach looping classes. Only 11% of principals surveyed stated that they often had to deal with student-teacher or parent-teacher personality conflicts.

When teachers were asked a similar question, 37% of them indicated that looping increases the chance of student-teacher personality conflict. The majority of teachers (75%) were concerned that, with looping, teachers sometimes have to deal with an unreasonable parent for a long time, but at the same time, 83% of teachers stated that parents of students in looping classes usually have good working relationships with teachers. All teachers stated that looping enables teachers to accumulate detailed knowledge about their students, and most teachers (93%) indicated that looping helps them to individualize instruction. The majority of teachers (88%) believed that looping increases time available to slower students to learn the basic skills. Nearly all teachers (98%) indicated that students in looping classes feel less apprehensive at the beginning of the second year of the loop. Teachers also strongly believed that they should be allowed to choose whether to participate in looping. All teachers surveyed expressed this opinion. However, this conviction does not imply that the majority of the teachers had reservations about participating in looping. In fact, just the opposite was the case: the majority of the teachers surveyed (81%) stated that, given a choice, they would like to teach a looping class again.

In addition to responding to the true/false questions, most principals (89%) and the majority of teachers (75%) provided comments about looping as it was implemented in their schools. Most of the comments described advantages of looping. Remarkably, all 16 principals who commented on looping stated that they did not see any drawbacks to this practice. A number of teachers who commented on the program expressed the same opinion. Very few comments from teachers addressed the disadvantages of looping. Only four teachers voiced concerns about possible student-teacher personality conflict, and three teachers pointed out parent-teacher misunderstanding as a detriment to looping. By contrast, 25 teachers indicated that looping allowed them to gain in-depth knowledge about their students' academic strengths and weaknesses,

personalities, and learning styles. This knowledge, in turn, allowed teachers to start instructional activities immediately at the beginning of the second year of the loop; no time was spent getting acquainted with students. One teacher wrote, "I really like the head start looping allows one to have during the course of the new school year. Personalities are known and personal relationships have been established. As a result, time on task is increased and behavior problems are minimized."

Several principals surveyed commented on the way teachers are selected to work with looping classes. The majority of the principals who provided these comments indicated that they selected teachers based on their requests. In two elementary schools all classes in grades one and two, and then three and four participated in looping.

The principals' and teachers' survey results indicate that the majority of participants in both groups had positive attitudes toward looping. The majority of respondents in both groups stated that looping provided more time to slower students to learn basic skills. Most respondents indicated that looping allowed teachers to gain learning time at the beginning of the second year of the loop, and nearly all principals and teachers surveyed stated that looping enhanced the effectiveness of the classroom instruction. In addition, although all teachers believed that they should be given a choice on whether to participate in looping, most teachers surveyed indicated that, given a choice, they would like to participate in looping again.

Conclusions

Findings based on analyses of student academic performance, retention and absenteeism figures, and teacher and principal surveys indicate that looping has a beneficial educational effect on students, and that it is viewed positively by school personnel.

The results of the analyses of student academic achievement demonstrate that students in the Looping Sample, as a group, exhibited significantly higher academic performance on the reading comprehension and mathematics applications sections of the FCAT than did students in the Matching Sample. Furthermore, students in the Looping Sample substantially outperformed their matched counterparts in both areas across all grade levels included in the samples. These facts suggest that participation in looping increased student academic achievement.

The result of the analysis of student's absenteeism figures shows that students in the Looping Sample, as a group, improved their attendance between the first and second years of the loop. The average attendance of Matching Sample students declined during the same period. This

finding suggests that participation in looping improved student attendance.

The results of the student retention figures demonstrated that the number of students in the Looping Sample retained after the 1999-2000 school year was significantly lower than the corresponding figure for the Matching Sample. This suggests that participation in looping reduced student retention.

Most principals and teachers surveyed had positive opinions about looping. The majority of respondents agreed that looping enhanced a working relationship between teachers and their students. Furthermore, most teachers and principals surveyed stated that looping provided more time for slower students to learn basic skills. Moreover, almost all respondents indicated that, with looping, teachers can gain learning time at the beginning of the second year of the loop, and nearly all respondents stated that looping had a positive impact on learning in their schools. Most teachers surveyed were enthusiastic about looping. Although all teachers surveyed believed that teachers should be allowed to decide whether to participate in looping, most of them stated that they would like to participate in looping again. Finally, principals' and teachers' replies to the questionnaires indicated that, in their opinion, the benefits of looping greatly outweighed its drawbacks.

These findings suggest that looping can become a feasible school restructuring choice providing valuable educational benefits without significantly increasing operational costs.

References

Black, S. (2000). Together again. *The American school board journal, 187(6),* 40-43.

Burke, D. L. (1996). Multi-year teacher/student relationships are a long-overdue arrangement. *Phi Delta Kappan, 77(5),* 360-361.

Chapman, J. (1999). A looping journey. *Young children, 54(3),* 80-83.

Checkley, K. (1995). Multiyear education: Reaping the benefits of "looping." *ASCD Education Update, 37(8),* 1-6.

Goldberg, M. F. (1991). Portrait of Deborah Meier. *Educational Leadership, 48,* 26-28.

Grant, J. & Johnson, B. (1995). Looping, the two-grade cycle: A good starting place. In *A Common Sense Guide to Multiage Practices, Primary Level* (pp. 33-36). Columbus, OH: Teacher's Publishing Group.

Jacoby, D. (1994). Twice the learning and twice the love. *Teaching Pre K-8, 24(6),* 58-59.

Little, T. S. & Dacus, N. (1999). Looping: moving up with the class. *Educational Leadership, 57(1),* 42-45.

Little, T. S., & Little, L. P. (2001). Looping: creating elementary school commu-

nities. *Phi Delta Kappa Fastbacks, 478,* 7-39

Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University. (1997, November). *Looping: Supporting Student Learning Through Long-Term Relationships*. Providence, RI.

Nichols, J. D. & Nichols, G. W. (2002). The impact of looping classroom environments on parental attitudes. *Preventing School Failure, 47(1),* 18-22.

Palestis, E. (1994). Lessons from Reggio Emilia. *Principal, 73(5),* 16-19.

Rasmussen, K. (1998). Looping—discovering the benefits of multiyear teaching. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 40(2),* 2-4.

Vann, A. S. (1997) Looping: looking beyond the hype. *NAESP—Principal Magazine,* from http://www.naesp.org/comm/p0597c.htm