An Action Research Project:

Survey results of primary level, loop-experienced practitioners in selected Eastern Washington school districts to investigate their perceptions concerning benefits of the looping management system.

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A Special Project

Presented to

Jack McPherson, Ph.D.

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Deborah A. Jones

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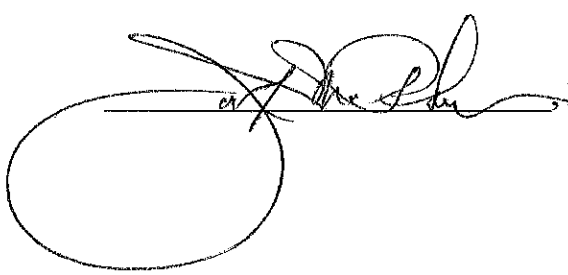
FACULTY APPROVAL

An Action Research Project:

Survey results of primary level, loop-experienced practitioners in selected Eastern Washington school districts to investigate their perceptions concerning benefits of the looping management system.

Approved for the Faculty



Faculty Advisor

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this descriptive survey research study was to determine whether selected loop-experienced practitioners were in agreement with loop teaching as suggested by current research authorities. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted related survey data were obtained analyzed; conclusions and recommendations were formulated. Additionally, to obtain essential baseline data a survey instrument was designed and mailed to selected practitioners (Appendix). Survey results supported the hypothesis that students who participated in a loop teaching experience benefited from this method of classroom management.

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May 6, 2008, Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### Background for the Project

> Ever since the U.S. adopted the Prussian age-grading system, the practice of handing students to a different teacher each year has provoked the age old teachers' complaint about how we lose so much ground with our kids with all the stat-ups and wind-downs that occur.www.schoolredesign.net/sm/printable.php?idx=223

As quoted above from School Redesign Network, the amount of time taken to get to know the students and their capabilities at the beginning of the year along with the amount of time taken to assemble a fair paper representation of each student to pass on to the next teacher has been a continuous frustration for teachers.

According to Grant, et al. (2000) because loop classrooms required less review/getting-to-know you time at the stat of the second year, they ran more efficiently as students were already familiar with classroom routines, procedures and norms.

Marzano and Marzano (2003) were in agreement with the above authorities. According to these researchers, the quality of teacher-student relationships was the keystone for all other aspects of classroom management.

In an article titled "Looping Allows Teachers to Move on Along with Students" (200) McKay also discussed the benefits of looping which included "the sense of stability" (p.2). The fact that the teacher knew students both personally and academically and did not have to start from scratch and lose time by diagnosing each student's knowledge base and learning style.

## Statement of the Problem

Recent research related to looping (i.e., when student and teachers stay together for multiple years) has registered divided opinion. Proponents of this management approach to student learning believed it was beneficial to students in that it provided for building relationships and a higher comfort level for students, parents and teachers. Opponents sited perceived limitations of looping, which have typically provided a dumping site for children with special needs, and poorly matched teacher student relationships.

The present study undertook a survey of primary-level loop-experienced teachers in selected Eastern Washington School Districts, to investigate their perceptions concerning various aspects of the looping management approach. Phrased as a question, the problem which was represented in the focus of the present study may be stated as follows: To what extent did selected looping practitioners agree, disagree with suggested benefits made by current research authorities of the looping management system as listed in the survey instrument (Appendix)?

## Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive survey research study was to determine whether selected loop-experienced practitioners were in agreement with loop teaching as suggested by current research authorities. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted related survey data were obtained analyzed; conclusions and recommendations were formulated. Additionally, to obtain essential baseline data a survey instrument was designed and mailed to selected practitioners (Appendix).

## Delimitations

Data obtained for purposes of the present study were limited to questionnaire surveys

Mailed to twenty-one loop experienced practitioners in four Eastern Washington school districts. The survey instrument was limited to benefits cited by current research authorities which may or may not have been all encompassing. Further, some teachers surveyed had accumulated more loop experience than others.

Assumptions

The researcher (Deborah A. Jones) a veteran loop practitioner, believed that students who participated in a loop teaching experience benefited from this method of classroom management. A further assumption was made that teacher practitioners invited to complete the questionnaire/survey used for data collection were generally familiar with the looping management approach and were therefore able to share generalized perceptions concerning the benefits and/or limitations of looping. Finally, the assumption was made that descriptive statistics obtained from the questionnaire/survey meaningfully described and addressed the problems which was the focus of the present study.

Hypothesis

Students who participated in a loop teaching experience benefited from this method of classroom management.

Significance

During her recent teaching tenure the investigator had been directed by supervising school district administrators to implement a loop-teaching management system in her classroom. Having had no previous experience with loop teaching, the investigator, who had not been specifically trained with this classroom management system, felt the urgent need to explore current research concerning this management system. This need

essentially produced the present study that allowed the investigator to gain a deeper understanding of the advantages/disadvantages of loop teaching as perceived by selected practitioners as well as to gain information through an extensive review of current literature.

Procedure

The descriptive research undertaken in the present study evolved in several stages, including:

1. During the last five years through direct involvement as a K-1 teacher, the researcher had become personally involved in using loop teaching as a classroom management system in the Union Gap School District.
2. The researcher's personal familiarity with the loop-teaching classroom management system afforded the opportunity to undertake an in-depth review of research with regard to the advantages/disadvantages of this classroom management system.
3. Suring spring semester, the researcher obtained formal approval from her Heritage University advisor to undertake the present study.
4. Throughout spring and summer semesters, 2005, a review of related literature was conducted.
5. During summer 2005, a questionnaire/survey (Appendix) was designed and mailed to selected, loop experienced practitioners.
6. During spring 2006, survey results were obtained and analyzed and major study conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Definition of Terms

Significant terms used in the context of the present study have been defined as follows:

Descriptive Statistics: Data analysis techniques enabling the researcher to meaningfully describe many scores with a small number of numerical indices.

Loop Teaching: Looping is an instructional design where students progress to the next grade level with the same teacher(s) for two or more years.

Survey Research: An attempt to collect data from members of a population to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables.

## CHAPTER 2

A Review of Selected Literature and Related Investigation

Introduction

The review of selected literature presented in chapter two has been organized to address the following topics: Current Research on Looping, Looping with Special Populations, Implementing and Evaluating Looping Programs, Information Obtained from the Questionnaire Survey and Summary.

Current research On Looping

Looping has been defined as:

> When students and teachers remain together for multiple years, they do not have to spend all the time re-establishing relationships developing norms and routines instead, teachers can devote much more time to the business of learning. Teachers can come to know their students and families well, and can organize their teaching to take advantages of student strengths and experiences and to address student needs. www.schoolredesign.net/srn/printabel.php?idx=223

With regard to the benefits of looping, Burke (1997) contended, "The essence of looping is the promotion of strong, extended, meaningful. Positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students that foster increased student motivation and, in turn, stimulate improved learning outcomes for students." (p. 3) Ragozzino, et al. (2003) described the benefits of positive interpersonal relationships as social and emotional learning. These authorities contended that social and emotional learning programming also provide student with varied skills that positively affected academic achievement, including: Managing emotions that interfere with learning and concentration, Developing motivation and the ability to persevere even in the face of academic set backs and

challenges, Working cooperatively and effectively in the classroom and in peer learning groups and Setting and working toward academic goals (p.1).

According to Gaustad (1998), teachers who spend several years with a class enable them to accumulate more in depth knowledge of students' personalities, learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses. Additionally, this extended contact with students reduced time spent on diagnosis and facilitates more effective instruction.

Grant, et al (1996) suggested that relationships are what give looping power. Looping allows educators to: Develop a deeper understanding of students' learning styles and needs, both academic and emotional, Better understand students' family dynamics and the children's education, Approach the curriculum in more depth, knowing that there is more time to help students make connections in their learning, Understand the requirements of the teachers coming before and after, and develop a more all-encompassing view of the educational process through which her students will pass (p. 16)

Looping with Special Populations

Grant, et al. contended that, today's educators have been confronted with a student population that comes to school with a wide variety of complex issues. Many children enter school with health problems and developmental delays because of: Low birth weight, Premature or traumatic birth, Untreated health problems, Exposure to toxic substances, like lead paint, Lack of parental care and Drug damage at birth (p. 107).

Additionally, schools have had to deal with children who are homeless or from families in crisis; have attended an inadequate day care program; or, have not been exposed to preschool at all. Further, many students have been emotionally or physically

neglected or abused or showed signs of stress because of harried family existence. Physically disabled children, slow learners, and learning-disabled children have also required a variety of special services in addition to regular classroom teaching. Some problems are a byproduct of poverty; whereas others are symptomatic of increasingly fragmented, fast-paced society. As a result, we have greater numbers of children in school today who have had a great impact on the instructional time required of teachers (Grant et al.).

Bellis (1999) observed that looping can be designed as an educational adaptation to meet the needs of today's children, whereas Chapman (1999) concluded that looping provided another avenue for meeting individual needs of today's students.

Forsten, et al. (1997) explained that looping may optimize time spent in regular classrooms for high-need students who do not qualify for special education services due to the alarming development that some states cap the number of children allowed to receive special education services. These authorities claimed that a teacher who loops with a special-needs child will have greater insight into that child's strengths and weaknesses. McKay (2000) noted that 43 percent fewer retentions and a 55 percent reduction in special-education referrals occurred during their 1991 implementation of loop teaching.

Finally, Kuball (1999) suggested that looping provided children deficient in language skills the opportunity to work in cooperative groups that offered the language experience they needed.

Implementing and Evaluating Looping Programs

According to Grant, et al. the expense of implementing loop teaching was minimal and that because experienced teachers already possessed most of the skills necessary to succeed in a looping situation, minimal curriculum, special training may be needed. Research conducted by Chirichello and Chirichello (2001) produced the following recommendations for those considering implementation of a looping program:

1. Organize integrated study groups with teachers, parents and administrators to Discuss research on loop teaching.
2. Use various evaluation tools to assess looping.
3. Continue study groups once loop teaching begins to provide support for the teachers.
4. Keep parents informed of their student's academic, social and emotional progress.
5. Provide parents the choice to have their student loop or not.
6. Update the board of education on the progress of looping
7. Document and publish information regarding the looping experience.
8. Develop quality surveys for students and parents to complete before, during and after the loop experience.
9. Make the decision as to whether or not to place new student into a looping class.
10. Include an option for parents to change their mind and have studens removed form the looping experience. (p.5)

Gaustad (1998) suggested that class composition should be managed with care to not overload looping classrooms with special-need students. Grant, et al (1997) supported the idea of balance in a looping classroom by stating, "Make sure you balance your student population in terms of gender, race, socioeconomic and social-emotional factors, and cognitive abilities." (p.87) Further, the proportion of special-need students in a looping class should be the same as in the general population of the school. Another important observation by Gaustad alluded to the detrimental nature to the looping experience when too many students were enrolled during the second year. This authority further recommended that parents should have the option to have their children participate in a loop experience as should teachers.

According to Forsten, et al. implementation of looping program should make provision for "A getting to know you' period of time, in the fall of the first year and for new, incoming second-year students, to allow for proactive changes." (p.86) These researchers further suggested an option policy be provided to allow parents to remove their children from an unsatisfactory placement.

Burk (1997) recommended a component be developed to maintain momentum and continuity of instruction provided to the students during the first year going into the second year of a loop experience. Chirichello and Chirichello (2001) supported the practice of surveys to assess parents' students' impressions of social, emotional and academic advantages or disadvantages of looping.

Information Obtained from the Questionnaire/Survey

Four selected school districts from Eastern Washington were contacted and invited to respond to the questionnaire/survey. Specifically, school disticts contacted included:

1. Deer Park
2. Ellensburg
3. Union Gap
4. Zillah

An analysis of information obtained from loop experienced practitioners from the above districts revealed:

1. The average respondent's background was female, with 12.25 years of primary-level teaching experience of which 2.6 were involved with loop teaching experience. 2. From 57-100% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that loop teaching provided students a gain of four to six weeks of instructional time, benefited teachers with improved relationships with students and parents, more efficient instruction, high student attendance rate, reduced retentions, fewer referrals for special education and improved discipline. 3. From 67-100% of respondents agreed: students in the program exhibited substantially higher reading and mathematics achievement scores on assessments; did not send summer packets home at the end of the first year of the loop; did have five or more new students added throughout the loop experience; gave parents, at the beginning of the second year the option to not have their student participate, and, respondents would recommend loop teaching to other school districts.

Summary

The review of selected literature presented in Chapter 2 supported the following research themes:

1. Loop teaching promoted a strong, meaningful, positive interpersonal relationship between teachers and students that fostered and increased student motivation, and stimulated improved learning outcomes.
2. Looping can be designed as an educational adaptation to meet the needs of special student populations.
3. When considering the implementation of a loop program, the primary consideration should be focused on relationships between teacher/student and teacher/parents.

# CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

## Introduction

The purpose of this survey research study was to determine whether selected practitioners were in agreement with loop teaching as suggested by current research authorities. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted, related survey data were obtained and analyzed and a conclusion and recommendations were formulated. To obtain essential baseline data a survey instrument was designed and mailed to selected practitioners.

Chapter 3 contains a description of methodology used in the study. Additionally, the researcher included details concerning participants, design, procedure, treatment of data and summary.

## Methodology

The methodology employed in the present study was influenced by the unique characteristics of the participants, the survey instrument, (Appendix) design, procedure and treatment of data, as detailed below.

## Participants

The investigator surveyed primary-level loop experienced teachers from four selected Eastern Washington School Districts, including: Deer Park, Ellensburg, Union Gap and Zillah. From a total of 21 participants surveyed, responses were received from 4 (19%).

Instruments

The analysis and review of related literature detailed in Chapter 2 served as a resource for developing the conceptual structure for the survey instrument used in the study (Appendix). For example, basic question categories included:

- Teacher background information.
- Identifying possible assets for quality loop teaching programs. Survey sub-categories included: Relationships; instruction; attendance; retentions; referrals; and discipline. A variety of questionnaire formats were selected to elicit participant responses.
- Identifying specific implementation components. Survey sub categories included: Assessment scores; use of summer packets; number of transient students; involvement of a student teacher; and, option for parents to not continue in the second year of a loop experience.
- Teacher opinions. For example, would they recommend loop teaching ; what were considered best aspect(s) of loop teaching; and, their personal thoughts in regard to loop teaching.

Design

The present survey research study sought to assess respondent preferences to determine whether the majority of selected practitioners were in agreement with loop teaching as suggested by current research authorities. A cross-sectional survey instrument (Appendix) was used to determine the potential value of each questionnaire sub-category according to the experience of each survey respondent.

Procedure

During the Fall of 2005, a letter of introduction, accompanied by "Directions for Completing the Survey", and a three-page, 22-item questionnaire instrument was e-mailed by the researcher to primary –level loop- experienced teachers in Deer Park,

Ellensburg, Union Gap and Zillah school districts. Each survey was completed anonymously.

Treatment of Data

Responses used for compilation of numerical data in the present study were hand-tabulated by the writer (Deborah A. Jones). Open-ended questions which would allow a free response from each respondent were hand-tabulated by the investigator and grouped by key wording in each respondent according to frequency (f) and percentage (%).

Resultant data from total responses were then reported and analyzed. These data, presented in Chapter 4, have been supplemented by narrative analyses related to each questionnaire item. The following components were included in these analyses:

1. The frequency (f) of responses for each survey item.
2. The percentage (%) for responses for each survey category.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided: a description of the methodology employed in the study, participants, instruments used, research design and procedure utilized. Details concerning treatment of the data were also presented.

# CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

## Introduction

This survey research study sought to determine the extent to which selected loop-experienced practitioners agreed/disagreed with suggested benefits made by current research authorities of the looping management system as listed in the questionnaire instrument (Appendix).

## Description of the Environment

Data obtained for purposes of the present study were limited to a questionnaire survey mailed to twenty-one selected looping practitioners in four Eastern Washington school districts. The survey instrument was limited to benefits sited by current research authorities which may or may not have been all encompassing. Finally, some teachers surveyed had accumulated more loop experience than others. An analysis of data obtained from the population surveyed has been presented on the following pages.

## Hypothesis

Students who participated in a loop teaching experience benefited from this method of classroom management.

Findings of the Study

Table 1 has provided a list of the first five questions in PART 1 of the survey instrument which sought to identify gender, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, years of looping experience and district of employment for each respondent. These data indicated the average respondent's background was female with 12.25 years of teaching experience at the Primary level in Union Gap school district with 2.6 years of loop teaching experience.

**Table 1**

| Background | Teacher 1 | Teacher 2 | Teacher 3 | Teacher 4 | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female |
| Years Teaching | 11-15 | 16-20 | 6-10 | 16-20 | 11-15 (12.25) |
| Grade Taught | Kinder/ First | Kinder/ First | First/ Second | Fourth/ Fifth | Primary |
| Years Loop Experience | 1 | 2 | 2.5 | 5 | 2.6 |
| District | Zillah | Union Gap | Union Gap | Union Gap | Union Gap |

Table 2 has listed the eight questions in PART 2 of the survey instrument which are concerned with the benefits of loop teaching. One hundred percent of primary-level teachers agreed the benefits of loop teaching were: A gain of four weeks of instructional time at the beginning of the second year; improved relationships with students; improved relationships with parents; more efficient instruction; high attendance rate; and, reduced retentions and improved discipline.

**Table 2**

*Assets of Loop Teaching*

**Table 2** provides a summary of responses of practitioners when asked to respond to 8 questions related to the assets of loop teaching.

Question #6 At the beginning of the second year of a loop, students gain four to six weeks of instructional time.

Responses rated on frequency and in percentages

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 75% | | | | | 1 | 25% | | |
| Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |

Question #7a. Improved relationships with students is a benefit to Loop teaching
Responses rated on frequency and in percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 75% | 1 | 25% | | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |

Question #7b. Improved relationships with parents are a benefit to Loop teaching.
Responses rated on frequency and in Percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 75% | 1 | 25% | | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |

**Table 2 Continued**

Question #7c. More efficient instruction is a benefit to Loop teaching.
Responses rated on frequency and in Percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 25% | 3 | 75% | | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |

Question #7d. High Student attendance rate is a benefit to Loop teaching.
Responses rated on frequency and in Percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 25% | 2 | 50% | 1 | 25% | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |

Question # 7e. Reduced retentions is a benefit to Loop teaching.
Responses rated on frequency and in percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 3 | 75% | 1 | 25% | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |

Question # 7f. Fewer referrals for special education is a benefit to Loop teaching.
Responses rated on frequency and percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 25% | | | 1 | 25% | 2 | 50% | | |
| Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |

Question # 7g. Improved discipline is a benefit to Loop teaching.
Responses rated on frequency and in percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 25% | 3 | 75% | | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |

PART 3 of the survey instrument contained six questions related to the implementation of loop teaching. As indicated in the table: 50% of practitioners agreed that students' reading and math achievement scores were substantially higher; 75% did not send summer packets home for student at the end of the first year; 50% added new students during the loop experience; 50% had student teachers during the loop experience yet did not see an impact; 100% gave parents the options to remove their student from the loop experience at the end of the first year, and, 100% recommended loop teaching.

**Table 3**

*Implementation of Loop Teaching*

**Table 3** provides a summary of responses of the practitioners when asked to respond to 6 questions related to implementation of loop teaching.

Question # 8 Students in the program exhibited substantially higher reading and mathematics achievement scores on assessments.
Responses rated on frequency and in percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 75% | 1 | 25% |
| Yes | | No | |

Question # 9 did you send a summer packet home at the end of the first year of the loop?
Responses rated on frequency and in percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 25% | 3 | 75% |
| Yes | | No | |

**Table 3 Continued**

Question # 10 Were five or more new students added throughout your (two year) loop experience?
Responses rated on frequency and in percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 67% | 1 | 33% |
| Yes | | No | |

Question # 11 Did you have a student teacher at any time during your looping experience?
Responses rated on frequency and in percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 50% | 2 | 50% |
| Yes | | No | |

Question # 12 At the beginning of the second year did you provide the parents the option to not have their student participate in the looping experience?
Responses rated on frequency and in percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 100% | | |
| Yes | | No | |

Question #13 Would you recommend loop teaching to other school districts?
Responses rated on frequency and in percentages.

| *(f)* | *(%)* | *(f)* | *(%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 100% | | |
| Yes | | No | |

PART 4 of the survey instrument included five open-ended questions intended to elicit practitioners' opinions as to the best perceived advantages of loop teaching. These responses included: Questions 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14.

Question # 10 Did you have a student teacher at any time during your looping experience? If yes how do you feel it affected your loop? A combined total of 4 respondents (50%) had a student teacher during their looping experience.

- I can not see that the impact was significant.
- Not much of an effect since as master teacher I kept close tabs on what was happening.

Question # 11 At the beginning of the second year did you provide the parents the option to not have their student participate? A combined total of 4 respondents (100%) provided, at the end of the second year, parents the option to not have their student participate.

Question # 12 Would you recommend loop teaching to other school districts? If yes please explain. A combined total of 4 respondents (100%) would recommend loop teaching to other school districts.

- Love it! My knowledge of students/parents/academic level is so much deeper!
- I had a wonderful loop/multiage experience. I became very close with the students and their families. I saw high attendance rate and improved discipline.
- If the numbers warrant it, and teachers are given the time to familiarize with new curriculum.

PART 4 Continued

- The benefit to students and parent s far out weigh any difficulties to teachers, i.e. learning a new curriculum, changing materials/rooms, working with new colleagues.

Question # 13 In your experience what was the best part of loop/multiage teaching? These responses included:

- The relationships I formed with both student and their families.
- Knowing the students abilities and personalities in advance, and students knowing my expectations.
- The relationships with students and parents and the incredible amount of growth each student made.
- Continued relationships/contact with students and their families.

Question # 14 Additional comment and/or thoughts about loop/multiage teaching? Participants add comments and/or thoughts about loop/multiage teaching. These responses included:

- In order to be highly successful the district needs to make a commitment to multiage teaching.
- I actually taught a 4/5 combination, so I only had a few returning students.

Results of the Study

Analysis of data presented in Tables 1,2 and 3 as discussed in the preceding narrative produced the following major findings:

1. The average respondent's background was female, with 12.25 years of primary-level teaching of which 2.6 were involved with loop teaching.

2. From 57-100% of respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed that loop teaching provided students a gain of four to six weeks of instructional time, benefited teachers with improved relationships with students and parents, more efficient instruction, high student attendance rate, reduced retentions, fewer referrals for special education and improved discipline.
3. From 67-100% of respondents agreed: Students in the program exhibited substantially higher reading and mathematics achievement scores on assessments; did not send summer packets home at the end of the first year of the loop; did have five or more new students added throughout the loop experience; gave parents, at the beginning of the second year the option to not have their student participate, and respondents, would recommend loop teaching to other school districts.

Discussion

These significant findings reported above supported the hypothesis that students who participated in a loop experience benefited from this method of classroom management and represented the focus of the present study by clarifying the extent to which selected looping practitioners agreed/disagreed with suggested benefits made by research authorities of the looping management system as listed in the survey instrument (Appendix).

Summary

Chapter 4 provided essential information concerning a description of the environment employed in the present study,, hypothesis, finding of the study, results and related discussion.

# CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

## Summary

The purpose of this survey research study was to determine whether selected practitioners were in agreement with loop teaching as suggested by current research authorities. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted, related survey data were obtained and analyzed and a conclusion and recommendations were formulated. Additionally, a survey instrument was designed and mailed to selected practitioners.

## Conclusions

Based on a review of selected literature and an analysis of essential baseline data obtained from the survey questionnaire used in the present study (Appendix) the following conclusions have been formulated:

1. Loop teaching promoted a strong meaningful positive interpersonal relationship between teachers and students that fostered and increased student motivation and stimulated improved learning outcomes.
2. Looping can be designed as an educational adaptation to meet the needs of special student populations.
3. When considering the implementation of a loop program, the primary considerations should be focused on relationships between teacher/student and teacher/parents.

An analysis of survey information obtained from loop experienced practitioners revealed:

4. The average respondent's background was female, with 12.25 years of primary-level teaching of which 2.6 were involved with loop teaching.
5. From 57-100% of respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed that loop teaching provided students a gain of four to six weeks of instructional time, benefited teachers with improved relationships with students and parents, more efficient instruction, high student attendance rate, reduced retentions, fewer referrals for special education and improved discipline.
6. From 67-100% of respondents agreed: Students in the program exhibited substantially higher reading and mathematics achievement scores on assessments; did not send summer packets home at the end of the first year of the loop; did have five or more new students added throughout the loop experience; gave parents, at the beginning of the second year the option to not have their student participate, and respondents, would recommend loop teaching to other school districts.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. To help students to gain four to six weeks of instructional time, experience improved teacher/student and teacher/parent relationships, have more efficient

instruction, higher attendance rate, reduced retentions and improved discipline school districts should implement loop experiences.

2. To help students' exhibit substantially higher reading and mathematics achievement scores on assessments their participation in loop teaching as a style of classroom management should be encouraged.
3. To have a positive loop experience summer packets are not necessary at the end of the first year.
4. Five or more additional students and or the presence of a student teacher do not have a negative impact on the students of a loop experience.
5. To continue positive parent interaction school districts need to offer the option for parents to not have their student participate in the second year of a loop experience.
6. Loop teaching practitioners recommended this type of classroom management experience to other school districts.

7. Schools/school districts seeking information concerning loop teaching may wish to utilize data obtained and analyzed in the present study or, undertake further research more suited to their unique needs.

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# APPENIX

## Looping Classroom Management System Questionnaire Instrument

**Looping Classroom Management System Questionnaire Instrument**

**For each of the following items, place an X beside the choice that best describes you.**

1. Gender: Male ___ Female ___
2. Total years teaching: 1-5 ___ 6-10 ___ 11-15 ___ 16-20 ___ 21-25 ___ 26+ ___
3. Grade _____
4. Number of loop/multiage years of experience _____
5. School District you work for _____

**Following are a number of questions about loop/multiage teaching. Read each statement and to the right of the answer that best describes you experience: Strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are uncertain ( ), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD).**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. At the beginning of the second year of a loop, students gain four to six weeks of instructional time. | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** |
| 7. Benefits to loop/multiage teaching were: | | | | |
| Improved relationships with students | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** |
| Improved relationships with parents | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** |
| More efficient instruction | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** |
| High Student attendance rate | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** |
| Reduced retentions | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** |
| Fewer referrals for special education | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** |
| Improved discipline | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** |

**For each of the following items, place an X to the right of the choice that best describes your experience.**

7. Students in the program exhibited substantially higher reading and Mathematics achievement scores on assessments. Yes ___ No ___

8. Did you send a summer packet home at the end of the first year of the loop? Yes ___ No ___

9. Were five or more new students added throughout your (two year) loop experience? Yes ___ No ___

10. Did you have a student teacher at any time during your looping experience? If yes how do you feel it affected your loop experience? Yes ___ No ___

11. At the beginning of the second year did you provide the parents the option to not have their student participate. Yes ___ No ___

12. Would you recommend loop teaching to other school districts? If yes please explain. Yes ___ No ___

13. In your experience what was the best part of loop/multiage teaching?

16. Additional comments and/or thoughts about loop/multiage teaching?