

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF EVALUATION AND RESEARCH
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EVALUATION OF LOOPING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Looping is the practice of advancing a teacher to the next grade level along with his or her class. Proponents of looping usually state that this practice allows teachers to accumulate a more detailed knowledge of students, which permits teachers to instruct their students more efficiently resulting in improved student achievement and decreased retention. In addition, looping is thought to save some valuable teaching time at the beginning of the second year of the loop. This is the time usually spent on learning new names and personalities, establishing rules and expectations. Looping was used in 26 elementary schools within Miami-Dade County Public Schools during the 1999-2000 school year.

To explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of looping, two groups of 612 students each, attending grades two through five, the Looping and Matching Samples, were considered. Students in the Looping Sample participated in looping during the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years, while their counterparts in the Matching Sample did not. The students in these samples were matched on the 1997-1998 achievement results and demographic characteristics including race/ethnicity, gender, free/reduced lunch status, primary exceptionality, and ESOL level. Subsequently, student achievement results in the 1999-2000 school year for students in the two samples were compared. In addition, the attendance and retention figures for students in the two groups were compared. Furthermore, to assess the participants' opinions about looping, 18 principals and 60 teachers directly involved in looping were surveyed.

The evaluation questions and results are presented below.

Evaluation Question 1. Does participation in looping increase student academic achievement? Students in the Looping Sample, as a group, performed significantly higher on the reading comprehension and mathematics application sections of the 2000 FCAT than did students in the Matching Sample. Moreover, students in the Looping Sample outperformed their matching counterparts in reading and mathematics across all grade levels represented in the two student groups. These findings indicate that looping improves student academic achievement.

Evaluation Question 2. Does participation in looping improve student attendance? Students in the Looping Sample, as a group, reduced the average number of days absent between the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years while students in the Matching Sample, as a group, increased the average number of days absent during that period. This finding appears to indicate that looping has a positive effect on student attendance.

Evaluation question 3. Does participation in looping decrease student retention? The number of students in the Looping Sample retained after the 1999-2000 school year was substantially lower than that for their peers in the Matching Sample. This result suggests that looping reduces student retention.

Evaluation Question 4. How do principals and teachers perceive the practice of looping? Most principals and teachers surveyed had positive opinions about looping. The majority of respondents indicated that looping improved the working relationship between teachers and students, provided more time to slower students to learn basic skills, increased the amount of instructional time available to teachers at the beginning of the second year of the loop, and raised the overall effectiveness of the classroom instruction. Teachers strongly believed that they should be allowed to decide whether to participate in looping. All teachers surveyed expressed this opinion. At the same time, most teachers indicated that, given that choice, they would like to teach a looping class again.

Based on these findings the following recommendations are offered:

1. Continue the practice of looping in elementary schools.
2. Consider expanding the practice of looping to other elementary schools in the District.

INTRODUCTION

Looping is the practice of advancing a teacher to the next grade level along with his or her class. At the end of a “loop” of two or more years, the teacher starts a new cycle with a new group of students. This practice is not new. In 1913, the U.S. Department of Education described this practice of classroom organization under the name *teacher rotation*. Other terms for it include *family-style learning*, *student-teacher progression*, and *multiyear instruction*. The literature on looping (Burke, 1996; Checkley, 1995; Grant & Johnson, 1995) reports many benefits of this practice, including the following:

- Teachers and students in looping classes do not need to start every school year by learning new names/personalities, and establishing classroom rules and expectations. Consequently, teachers can gain valuable instructional time at the beginning of the second year of the loop.
- Spending several years with the same group of students enables teachers in looping classes to accrue a more detailed knowledge of students’ personalities, learning styles, strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge permits teachers to instruct students more efficiently resulting in enhanced student achievement and decreased retention.
- Having the same teacher for several years provides students with stability, increases confidence, and improves attendance.

Within Miami-Dade County Public Schools, twenty-six 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. More specifically, this evaluation attempted to answer the following questions:

1. *Does participation in looping increase student academic achievement?*
2. *Does participation in looping improve student attendance?*
3. *Does participation in looping decrease student retention?*
4. *How do principals and teachers perceive the practice of looping?*

METHOD OF EVALUATION

To address the evaluation questions, 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 were created to represent students participating in looping and matching peers not participating in looping respectively. 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. The procedure for creating the samples is described below:

The Looping Sample. Since looping is a multi-year 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.

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 District 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 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 can be seen by comparing 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.

TABLE 1
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	RACE/ETHNICITY				GENDER	
	WHITE NON- HISPANIC	BLACK NON- HISPANIC	HISPANIC	OTHER	FEMALE	MALE
Grade 2 (<u>n</u> = 185)	9%	2%	87%	2%	52%	48%
Grade 3 (<u>n</u> = 28)	0%	68%	21%	11%	50%	50%
Grade 4 (<u>n</u> = 296)	9%	12%	77%	2%	55%	45%
Grade 5 (<u>n</u> = 103)	7%	50%	43%	0%	52%	48%
Total (<u>n</u> = 612)	8%	18%	72%	2%	54%	46%

Academic Achievement Comparisons. The norm-referenced component of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) administered in March of 2000 was used to compare the academic achievement of students in the Looping and Matching Samples. (The State of Florida used the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, as the norm-referenced component of the FCAT.) The paired-samples t-test was used to statistically compare the achievement results in reading and mathematics for students in the two samples. This test requires the data be available for each student in a matched pair of students. Mathematics applications results were available for only 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.

Principals' Survey. Principals of the elementary schools that used looping in the 1999-2000 school year were surveyed. The Principal Questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to assess principals' reactions to looping. This questionnaire consisted of eight true-false questions that were designed to measure respondents' opinions about the benefits of looping and three open-ended questions asking principals to describe the selection of

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. Teachers involved in looping were surveyed. The Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendix B) was used to evaluate teachers' opinions about looping. This questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first 14 true-false items were intended to measure respondents' reactions to looping; the last two open-ended items asked teachers to describe the advantages and shortcoming 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 thought 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.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

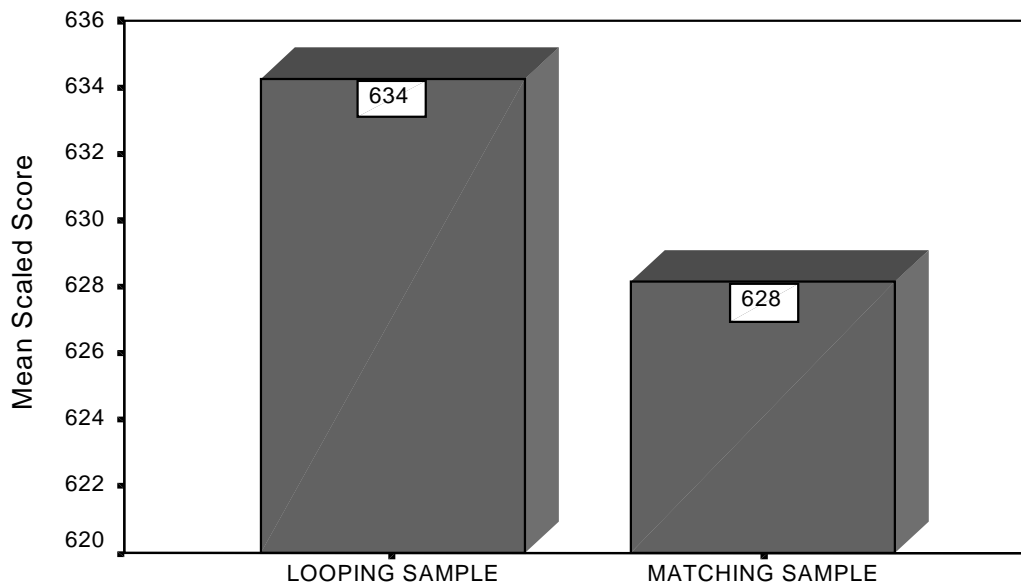
This section presents the findings for each evaluation question individually and discusses their ramifications.

Evaluation question 1. Does participation in looping increase student academic achievement?

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 of 2000. The outcomes are presented separately for reading comprehension and for mathematics applications sections of the test.

Reading Achievement Results. The results of the comparison of scores on the reading comprehension section of the FCAT indicate that, as a group, students in the Looping Sample scored significantly higher (at the .01 level) than did the students in the Matching Sample: the average scaled score for students in the Looping Sample was 634 as compared to the average scaled score of 628 for students in the Matching Sample. (The number of students who participated in the March 2000 FCAT was 577 for each sample.) 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. These results are presented in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
FCAT 2000 READING RESULTS



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 comprehension scaled scores of students in the Looping Sample were significantly higher (at the 0.1 level) than those of students in the Matching Sample for all grade levels. The reading achievement results for students in both samples are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
READING ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS ON THE FCAT
(NORM-REFERENCED TEST)
BY GRADE LEVEL

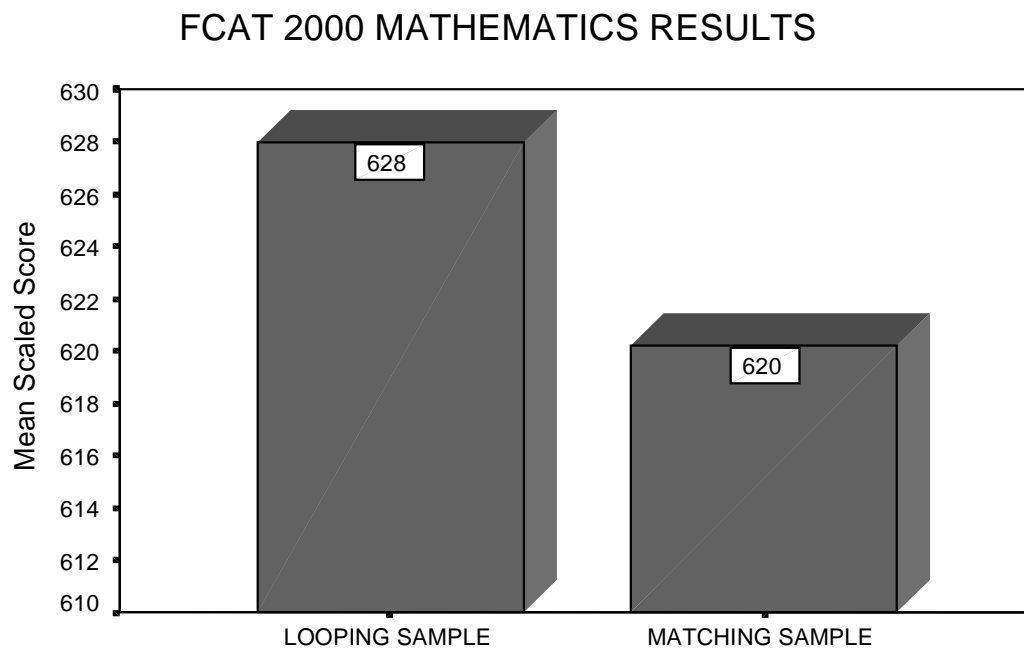
	PERCENTILE CORRESPONDING TO THE MEAN SCALED SCORE		DIFFERENCE IN PERCENTILE SCORES
	LOOPING SAMPLE	MATCHING SAMPLE	LOOPING – MATCHING
Grade 2 (<u>n</u> = 159)	68	63	+5
Grade 3 (<u>n</u> = 27)	61	53	+8
Grade 4 (<u>n</u> = 293)	63	58	+5
Grade 5 (<u>n</u> = 98)	38	34	+4

Note: Some of the percentiles are interpolated.

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 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. The results show that, as a group, the students in the Looping Sample scored significantly higher (at the .01 level) on the mathematics applications section of the FCAT than did the students in the Matching Sample. The mean mathematics application scaled score for students in the Looping Sample was 628, whereas the corresponding figure for students in the Matching Sample was 620. (The number of students who participated in the March 2000 FCAT was 581 for both samples.) 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 grade levels. The results of the mathematics achievement comparison are presented in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2



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 application scaled scores of students in the Looping Sample were significantly higher (at the 0.1 level) than those of students in the Matching Sample across all grade levels. These results 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 (<u>n</u> = 163)	71	64	+7
Grade 3 (<u>n</u> = 27)	69	61	+8
Grade 4 (<u>n</u> = 292)	66	57	+9
Grade 5 (<u>n</u> = 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 application 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.

Summary for Evaluation Question 1. Overall, students in the Looping Sample outperformed students in the Matching Sample in the areas of reading comprehension and mathematics applications. Furthermore, students in the Looping Sample exhibited consistently higher academic performance across all grade levels represented in the samples in both reading and mathematics. These two findings suggest that looping had a positive effect on student academic achievement.

It should be noted that students in both samples had higher performance levels in reading and mathematics than students in the District as a whole. The ethnic composition of both samples was somewhat different from that in the District in general. Therefore, the finding of a positive effect of looping on student academic achievement is slightly limited by these facts.

Evaluation question 2. Does participation in looping improve student attendance?

To answer this question, 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. The results showed that the average numbers of days absent by students in the Looping Sample decreased by .8 days between the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years. By comparison, students in the Matching Sample, as a group, increased the mean number of days absent by .2 days from one academic year to the next. A statistical comparison of these figures showed that they were significantly different (at the .01 level).

In addition, 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.

TABLE 4

THE 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 (<u>n</u> = 185)	9.4	8.2	-1.2	9.1	8.3	-.8
Grade 3 (<u>n</u> = 28)	7.4	5.0	-2.4	5.5	5.4	-.1
Grade 4 (<u>n</u> = 296)	7.2	7.0	-.2	6.5	6.9	+.4
Grade 5 (<u>n</u> = 103)	8.0	6.7	-1.3	6.5	7.8	+1.3
Total (<u>n</u> = 612)	8.0	7.2	-.8	7.2	7.4	+.2

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

Summary for Evaluation Question 2. 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.

Evaluation Question 3. Does participation in looping decrease student retention?

To answer this question, 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). The statistical analysis of these figures demonstrated that the number of students retained in the Looping Sample was significantly lower (at the 0.1 level) than that for students in the Matching Sample.

In addition, grade level comparisons of the student retention figures show that only one second grade member of the Looping Sample was retained, which compares favorably with five second grade members of the Matching Sample who were retained. Similarly, one fourth grader who was in the Looping Sample was retained, as compared to two fourth grade members of the Matching Sample who were retained.

The numbers of students retained at various grade levels are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
RETENTION RESULTS OF THE 1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR
BY GRADE LEVEL

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS RETAINED	
	LOOPING SAMPLE	MATCHING SAMPLE
Grade 2 (<u>n</u> = 185)	1	5
Grade 3 (<u>n</u> = 28)	0	0
Grade 4 (<u>n</u> = 296)	1	2
Grade 5 (<u>n</u> = 103)	0	0
TOTAL (<u>N</u> = 612)	2	7

Summary for Evaluation Question 3. The evidence collected indicates that the number of students in the Looping Sample who were retained is significantly lower than that for students in the Matching Sample. This fact appears to indicate that looping had a positive effect on student retention.

Evaluation Question 4. How do principals and teachers perceive the practice of looping?

To answer this question, 18 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 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.

TABLE 6
OPINIONS ABOUT LOOPING

	PERCENT IN AGREEMENT	
	PRINCIPALS (<u>n</u> = 18)	TEACHERS (<u>n</u> = 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%

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 percent 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 percent 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 percent 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 provided described advantages of looping. Very few comments from teachers depicted its shortcomings. 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 to get 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 teachers' requests. In two elementary schools all classes in grades one and two, and then three and four participated in looping.

Summary for Evaluation question 4. The results of survey of principals and teachers 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 appear to indicate 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 appears to indicate 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 seems to indicate 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.

It should be noted that schools employing looping, from which the Looping Sample was drawn, have differences, both in terms of student achievement and ethnic distributions, from the District as a whole. Looping schools, as a group, have higher achieving students and somewhat different ethnic distributions (Hispanics are over-represented; Blacks are underrepresented) from the District as a whole. Therefore, care must be taken to avoid generalizing the favorable results that have been presented to schools with different achievement levels and/or ethnic representations.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Continue the practice of looping in elementary schools.
2. Consider expanding the practice of looping to other elementary schools in the District.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF EVALUATION AND RESEARCH
LOOPING EVALUATION
PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: the purpose of this questionnaire is to assess your reactions to looping. Please complete the questionnaire; for multiple-choice items put an "X" in the appropriate box.

1. The name and mail code of your school.

-
- | | | |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| | AGREE | DISAGREE |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
2. Looping increases the instructional time available to teachers during the second year of the loop.
 3. Looping increases the time available to slower students to learn the basic skills.
 4. Teachers in looping classes generally have better working relationships with their students than teachers in non-looping classes do.
 5. Looping increases parental involvement in education.
 6. Looping decreases the number of disciplinary problems in a school.
 7. With looping, principals often have to deal with student-teacher, or parent-teacher personality conflicts.
 8. Only experienced teachers should teach looping classes.
 9. Overall, looping enhances the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

	YES	NO
--	------------	-----------

10. Are ALL classes in your school involved in looping?
If YES, skip to item #12, otherwise proceed to item #11.

11. How are the teachers working with looping classes selected?

Please continue on the other side of this paper.

APPENDIX B

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF EVALUATION AND RESEARCH
LOOPING EVALUATION
TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE**

INSTRUCTIONS: the purpose of this questionnaire is to assess your reactions to looping. Please complete the questionnaire by putting an “X” in the appropriate box.

- | | YES | NO |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Are you currently teaching a looping class that is in a second or the third year of the loop? | | |
| 2. Did you teach a looping class for the entire duration of the loop in the past? | | |
| 3. Have you ever taught a non-looping class? | | |
| 4. How many years of teaching experience do you have? | | |
| | AGREE | DISAGREE |
| 5. Looping increases the time available to teachers at the beginning of the second year of the loop. | | |
| 6. Looping enables teachers to accumulate detailed knowledge about students’ personalities and learning styles. | | |
| 7. Looping helps teachers to individualize their instruction during the second year of the loop. | | |
| 8. Students in looping classes feel less apprehensive at the beginning of the second year of the loop. | | |
| 9. With looping, slower students have more time to learn the basic skills. | | |
| 10. Looping increases the time available to students to build positive peer relationships. | | |
| 11. Teachers in looping classes generally have better working relationships with their students than teachers in non-looping classes do. | | |

Please continue on the other side of this paper.

AGREE DISAGREE

- 12. Parents of students in looping classes are more involved in their children's education than parents of students in non-looping classes are.
- 13. Parents of students in looping classes usually have good working relationships with teachers.
- 14. Looping increases chances of student-teacher personality conflict.
- 15. With looping, teachers sometimes have to deal with an unreasonable parent for a long time.
- 16. Teachers should be allowed to choose whether to participate in looping.
- 17. Overall, looping enhances the effectiveness of classroom instruction.
- 18. Given a choice, you would wish to teach a looping class again during the next school year.

19. What are the major benefits of looping as it is implemented in your school?

20. What are the major shortcomings of looping as it is implemented in your school?
What should be done differently?

Thank you! Please return this questionnaire to: 9020, Alex Shneyderman

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