

For our final project, we decided to focus on looping. We decided to do this since we are both special education teachers at the middle school level and we both practice looping in our classrooms. Looping is the concept of a teacher following students for at least two consecutive school years teaching them in multiple grade levels (Burke, 1999). Looping is not a new concept. The history of looping dates back to the early 1900's and was customary in the one room schoolhouse (Krogmann & Van Sant, 2000). There are many great benefits with looping but there are also drawbacks. We believe that looping is a positive practice that greatly benefits students, especially the students who need the most help.

At the beginning of each school year, teachers spend a great deal of time working with their new students getting to know them, setting up classroom rules, and communicating their expectations (Kenney, 2007). This is time that is taken away from instruction. This process repeats itself at the start of every school year. If this process can be eliminated (or reduced to only every two years) then more time will be devoted towards instructional time. Most educators will agree that having more instructional time with their students can greatly benefit the students.

Looping teachers devote more time to instruction, and reduce the time 'wasted' at the start of every school year when teachers and students are getting to know one another (Burke). Rather than going through the same routine each year, teachers will simply be able to pick up from the previous year and start teaching almost immediately (Burke). Not only will looping create more educational time, it can be very beneficial for teachers, parents, and students. Teachers can build rapport with their students and their parents (Krogmann & Van Sant). Parents can feel comfortable with their child's teacher, and they can build a strong positive relationship with them. Teachers have the opportunity to build a strong relationship with

students and have the chance to try different strategies in order to help their students succeed before any type of label is placed on the student (Krogmann & Van Sant). Teachers calling other teachers that their students had previously to find strategies that may help the student can be greatly reduced by looping as well. With looping, there is little anxiety for students and teachers at the beginning of the school year since they already know who their teacher/students will be (Kenney). Looping can create an environment to produce learning from the very beginning of the school year.

Although there are many positives with looping, there are drawbacks to it as well. One drawback is what if the student/parent and/or teacher do not have a good relationship? Then they will be working with each other for multiple years rather than just one school year (Shneyderman, 2000). The students and teacher can build a strong relationship which can have a very emotional ending to that relationship when the student moves on to the next grade level (Gaustad). Some teachers may not be open to the idea of looping since they will need to master two different grade levels standards and curriculum (Ullman, 2005). Although these are drawbacks to looping, we feel that looping in many cases would be in the best interest of students, parents, and teachers.

Although there are obvious drawbacks, we feel that the positives of looping greatly outweigh the negatives. Looping can help students' growth and can aide in parent/teacher relationships and can create more instructional time for students (Krogmann & Van Sant). Looping has been practices for nearly 100 years. We have both used looping for a few years, and we can state firsthand that it can be very beneficial for all the reasons listed above. We feel

that looping is something the teachers should look into implementing if they have not done so already.

We have created a Powerpoint presentation that provides information regarding looping. We have also created forms that would be useful in a school that is using or is considering using looping. The forms include both a pre and post looping survey for teachers, a looping permission slip for parents, and a post-looping survey for parents.

References

- Burke, D. (1999). Looping: Adding time, strengthening relationships. *Of Primary Interest*, Winter, Vol. 7, No. 1. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 447922).
- Gaustad, J. (1998). *Implementing looping*. (Report No. 123). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED429330).
- Kenney, M. (2007). *Social and academic benefits of looping primary grade students*. (Dissertation, Dominican University of California, 2000). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 496341).
- Krogmann, J., & Van Sant, R. (2000). *Enhancing relationships and improving academics in the elementary school setting by implementing looping*. (Dissertation, Saint Xavier University, 2000). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED443557).
- Shneyderman, A. (2000). *Evaluation of Looping*. Miami, FL: Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of Evaluation and Research. Retrieved on July 24, 2008 from <http://oer.dadeschools.net/looping.pdf>.
- Ullman, E. (2005). Familiarity breeds content: The benefits of looping. *Edutopia*, Nov. Retrieved on July 24, 2008 from <http://www.edutopia.org/familiarity-breeds-content>.