AN ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF TWO YEAR CYCLING

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the George Davison School Community. Thank you for your participation and continued unique approach to education.

My special thanks to Esther Meidinger for her support, time, and assistance.

Special thanks to my friends for their support and encouragement.

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PROJECT CRITERION

Introduction

In education many reforms have been proposed over the years but it is questionable whether many of the innovative ideas and so-called reforms have educational value and truly benefit the student. Cycling is one of these innovative ideas that has developed from the thoughts and the writings of many, yet very little research exists to support it as a teaching philosophy.

Cycling is also referred to as multiyear teaching or multiyear placement and is considered to occur when students have the same teacher for two years. For example, a teacher would teach grade one to his students and then move with them to grade two the next year. The students would then move on to a new teacher for the next two grades, while the initial teacher returns to begin with a new group of students in the first grade of the cycle. A continual cycle rotation occurs when cycling is used on an ongoing basis and usually includes two teachers teaching opposite grades; for example. a teacher teaching grade one, while another teacher, on the opposite side of the cycle, is teaching grade two.

George Davison School, in Medicine Hat, Alberta, opened its doors in 1982 as a cycled school. The entire school was on a two year cycle where cycles were arranged in grades of one, two; three, four; and five, six. Kindergarten has not been included in the cycled program due to the nature and organization of its program. To ensure success of a cycled program, the original school administrator hired teachers who supported this philosophy. This

practice has continued until the 1996/97 school year when some changes have occurred due to teacher transfer and the different philosophy of a new administrator.

RATIONALE

Cycling is being used in a limited number of schools in North America, yet very little research has been done to establish its educational value. The rationale of this project is to determine the validity of cycling. Research on the merits of such a program will be presented. This research will include the various perspectives of the school community, including students, parents, teachers and administrators. Ultimately, this research will address the question of whether cycling is a valid philosophy and method of school organization.

Students are directly affected by the concept of cycling because they are with the same teacher and classmates for two years. It needs to be determined how students view cycling, and what students believe the positive and negative qualities of such an educational practice are. A parental view of the philosophy of cycling is very important because it impacts upon how a child will perceive his educational experience. Parent's views on the positive and negative aspects of cycling, as well as their perception of the teacher's expectations for their children, classroom routines, and style of teaching will be included in an effort to show the range of perception and opinion that exists in the George Davison community after more than fifteen years of expertise with cycling.

Cycling has a major impact on teachers. The benefits as well as the costs of such a system will be addressed. Cyclings impact on a teacher's workload,

philosophy and class organization, including student population, retention, and teaching methods, will be addressed in this study.

The choices that an administrator makes in implementing or continuing a cycled program directly affect the school community. The impact of an administrator's leadership, including instructional leadership, concern and support for the needs of such a program, and the promotion of a sense of school community will be examined as well.

The results of this study will provide evidence of the extent to which cycling has been a valid philosophy and method of school organization in the George Davison context.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to determine if cycling is a viable alternative to the traditional philosophy of an elementary school where students have a different teacher for each grade. Cycling in the context of George Davison School will be particularly highlighted.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The most important question governing this research is to determine whether cycling has positive educational value for students. Consideration of the impact of cycling on students as well as parents, teachers and administrators will be explored.

QUESTIONS GUIDING THE STUDY

To determine whether cycling has positive educational value for students, and what value teachers and parents consider it to have, the following questions will be addressed in this study:

1. Is cycling a valid philosophy and method of school organization?

2. How does cycling impact upon students, parents, teachers and administrators?

3. Does cycling have a positive impact on a school and on school climate?

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are three primary limitations to this study:

1. The sample is limited in two respects. Due to time constraints, the questionnaires were administered to the George Davison School family even though there are other schools in Alberta and in the United States who are using this model. Further, students and their parents who participated in this study were from grades 3-6. Grade two students were felt to have limited experience with cycling and were not included in the study.

2. Teachers were relied on to distribute and collect consent forms and parental questionnaires. They also provided accurate lists of which students had been in cycled programs, and administered and collected student questionnaires.

3. The chief researcher is a teacher who has worked in this school for the last ten years and supports the concept of cycling.

ASSUMPTIONS

There were several assumptions made that could affect the results of this study. The first assumption was that teachers would submit lists of students who had spent at least one complete cycle with one teacher. Secondly, teachers were asked to have students complete the questionnaires during class time. It is anticipated that students were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaires without discussing them. Parents and teachers were assumed to have answered the appropriate questionnaires honestly.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Cycling is considered to occur when students are taught by the same teacher for two consecutive grades. It has also been termed multiyear teaching or multiyear placement. Hanson(1995), Goldberg(1990/91), Jacoby(1994), and Mazzuchi and Brooks(1992) agree on this definition for the term "cycling".

The work of Edmunds (1979) on Rudolf Steiner Education, or the Waldorf Schools, provides significant information on cycling. Rudolf Steiner developed a unique form of cycling which is the foundation for the practices that are in most common use today. It was Steiner's practice for students to cycle or be with their respective teachers for up to eight years. During this eight years, however, students had the same teacher for core curriculum only, termed the 'main lesson'. Once the main lesson was taught, after approximately two hours, students were taught by other teachers in their respective specialty area. Cycling, in the George Davison context has taken the basic principle, where students remain with their teacher, and developed a program in which teachers teach most, if not all, subject areas to their class for two consecutive years.

Environment

Edmunds (1979), Harwood (1958), and Mazzuchi and Brooks (1992) state that cycling is a more holistic approach to education. Steiner (Ogletree, 1974) agrees that the approach is holistic, and that education needs to include all three aspects of a man, those of body, soul, and spirit. Ogletree (1974) agrees

with Steiner's belief in the development of these aspects of man. He states that Steiner's Waldorf Schools "...approach the child as a developing being" (p. 345).

I believe a holistic approach is increasingly important in education and I agree that "Multiyear assignment is increasingly vital to the countless children whose lives are riddled with change--change of residence, change in family structure, change of economic status" (Hanson, 1995, p. 43). Cycling brings together a child's world, academically and socially. Achievements of students are acknowledged in a cycled situation -"We take every death in the family seriously, every illness seriously, every celebration--every new wonderful thing that happens--seriously" (Goldberg, 1990/91, p. 27). As a consequence of showing awareness of ongoing societal changes and providing support and acknowledgment of changes at school, the school evolves into a significant place for a child. "The child is not a self-conscious individual, his consciousness extends beyond the sphere of his little body, he actually lives *into* his immediate surroundings in a way incomprehensible to the adult; his life of thought and feeling is not personal, but is intimately bound up with the life, speech and actions of those who surround him" (Harwood, 1958, p. 16). As children consider the actions of those around them, the teachings and environment of a cycled school will enable children to develop feelings of security which, in turn, should enable them to apply what they have learned in class to situations outside of the classroom. Cycling therefore creates an environment of consistency and continuity where anxiety, frustration, and fear are reduced for all those involved in the educational process. As Noddings (1991) states "...caring relations...require continuity—continuity of purpose, place, people and curriculum" (p. 3).

Teachers

In any successful educational program, teachers must be dedicated, professional individuals. In a cycled program, the dedication of teachers is expected, even demanded, in order that they may teach a class for two years and implement curriculum and curriculum changes on an ongoing basis.

One of the primary benefits of cycling is what is termed the 'gift of time'. In a two year cycled program the learning process is interrupted for summer holidays, and, when students and teachers return to school, learning continues from where it left off. The period of "lost" time that typically occurs in a classroom at the beginning of a new school year is eliminated. This period of time includes students learning the classroom routine, the teacher's academic and behavioral expectations, meeting classmates, and even reviewing curriculum. Upon returning to a cycled classroom, teachers will engage in the usual welcomes, perhaps holidays will be discussed and sharing of stories will occur, but then it is down to the business of learning and looking after the concerns of students. When students return to school the second year, they have had most of time they need to develop their academic and social skills in that context, consequently students are more adept at resolving conflicts and problem solving. "Teachers also report that time spent on developing social skills and cooperative group strategies really pays off during the second year of the cycle" (Hanson, 1995, p. 43). In today's classrooms, which are heavily curriculum laden, a true gift of time occurs. Hanson (1995) states that "A bonus for teachers is that they gain almost an extra month of teaching time" (p. 42).

A two year cycled program provides teachers with the opportunity to get to know their students at a deeper level than the usual one year of teaching

allows. Having students for two years better enables teachers to know their student's potentials and difficulties so that individual needs as well as classroom problems are better dealt with. Classroom problems are often associated with "...learning style, temperament, personality, attitude, or some other personal characteristic" (Elkind, 1988, p. 13). Elkind (1988), Gandini (1993), Mazzuchi and Brooks (1992) concur that it is very important that teachers know their student's strengths, weaknesses, learning styles, personalities, interests, and abilities. "Moreover, elementary school children do not yet have a fully consolidated sense of self, and it is important that the adults with whom they interact know them as whole persons and reflect this sense of wholeness back to the child" (Elkind, p. 13). Edmunds (1979) also points out that it does take a questionable amount of time for a teacher to get to know her students. He asks, "...How long does it take an experienced teacher to know thirty children or more--really to *know* them, understand them and be able to enter into their intimate needs" (p. 56). "And the contrary, 'How long does it take children to grow so accustomed to the quality of mind, the temperament, the mannerisms of a teacher that they feel happily anchored, understood and secure?" (p. 56). In a cycled school, students and teachers have the opportunity to know each other on a more intimate level. It is also essential that students new to a second year cycled class are welcomed by the teacher and students and made to feel that they are part of the group. Students do become a closely knit group and must be encouraged in their sensitivity to the needs of new students.

Cycling encourages a concept of carry over that better enables a teacher to make connections through curriculum and student's own experiences. "We're able to help children carry over information and make connections because we know what concepts and skills our children have to build on" (Mazzuchi &

Brooks, 1992, p. 62). A teacher is also better able to make connections between two years of schooling and across disciplines; therefore, a greater coherence of knowledge is fostered through this interconnectedness. Mazzuchi and Brooks (1992) regard this interconnectedness of curriculum as a 'semi-seamless, integrated curriculum' which encourages continuous progress. In such a context, duplication of efforts for students and teachers may be limited. In addition to these concepts and skills, teachers can be more aware of their student's interests and background. These connections are essential in a students learning since "...an educational experience had to be connected to the proper personal experience of students and also to a widening or deepening of future experience" (Noddings, 1991, p. 4). Through connections, students have a better understanding of what they are learning and how to relate to it.

An added benefit of two year cycling is that teachers have two years to reflect on the growth and change of individual students and can tailor the curriculum or teaching methods to the needs of their class. In this way, curriculum is taught, but, more importantly, the needs of students are addressed. Hanson (1995) believes that addressing student's needs encourages a student approach to learning. He states, "And with two years to nurture and reflect upon our students and our instructional objectives, we can be certain that our instruction will be constructivist, or child-centered, rather than curriculum-centered" (p. 43). Jacoby (1994) believes that, by being child-centered, a teacher is better able to build on previous teachings and use student's strengths to a greater degree than can occur in a 'regular, one year classroom'.

In a cycled program the opportunity exists to promote a child onto the next grade even though this child may lack some academic learning. In a cycled

program, the teacher is better able to bridge the curriculum for the two years, and provide for the needs of the child right away. There exists a 'gift of time' within this context because time is used more efficiently toward the needs of the child. "Because each child develops at a unique pace, teachers can experience the joy of seeing even the later bloomer blossom" (Hanson, 1995, p. 43). At the end of a cycle, if retention is necessary, a child may be accommodated by moving laterally to a new teacher and a 'new class', reducing some of the 'stigmatism' of retention.

There are a number of other issues that arise and need to be addressed for the teacher of a cycled program. One of these issues is whether teachers require more training in child development. Teachers need to have reasonable, yet realistic expectations of students in academic as well as social development. Is it therefore necessary for teachers to have a larger variety of instructional strategies to maintain student interest in the classroom? Are there problems of adjustment for the teacher, as well as the students, when students leave their teacher and the teacher returns to the beginning of the cycle? It may be difficult for the teacher and the students to part at the end of a cycle because of the emotional connectedness both have experienced; the teacher and student may experience separation anxiety. Do the demands of an ever changing curriculum and student needs on a more in-depth level add stress to a teacher's workload?. Should sabbatical time be provided for teachers to avoid burnout? Are two years of classroom displays necessary and available, and are there adequate facilities for storage for materials and resources in the typical space allotment of the regular classroom?

Finally, if it is beneficial for teachers to be involved in ongoing collaboration with other teachers in the school, particularly when there is more than one class of any specific grade how can this collaboration be accommodated?

Students

Cycling provides students with a sense of stability and support in an increasingly changing world. In today's society a number of family changes are occurring. These changes include "...change of residence, change in family structure, (and) change of economic status" (p. 43). In addition, "More mothers work outside the home, neighbourhoods are less personal, schools are larger, and recreation is often passive--connected to personal experience only by chance and presented with no consideration of what Dewey called 'growth'" (Noddings, 1991, p. 5). Often children are left alone, the stability they once had eroded in a world that often sees both parents in the work force rather than at home.

Two year cycled schools, however, provide stability and continuity for students. The second year of a cycle is a secure time for returning students. Classroom academic and behavioral expectations are understood, the routine has predictability and is well established, and students know their teacher and each other. Consequently, returning students are at ease, they have feelings of familiarity, and are more confident. Mazzuchi and Brooks (1992) also found that "The opportunities to make personal connections with others and with ideas over time are especially valuable for emotional and intellectual growth" (p. 60).

These findings are in opposition to a traditional one year program. A one year program consists of continual teacher change.

> "The continual changing of teachers is inimical to the growth of that kind of personal relationship on which deeper qualities are based. The teacher needs time to understand the child, the child needs time to appreciate the teacher and grows into a proper respect and affection for him" (Harwood, 1958, p. 77).

Students who are shy or insecure can benefit significantly from cycling. Usually, by the end of a school year, these students feel comfortable in their surroundings and are willing to take risks in the classroom environment. Returning to this same classroom, the next school year, the student briefly reacquaints himself with his teacher and classmates and then continues to progress from where he left school at the end of the last year. Jacoby (1994) also found that the environment that cycling promotes encourages the student to feel much more confident in his abilities, he is encouraged by his peers, and continues to grow during the second year of a cycle.

However, there does need to be some flexibility with a two year cycled program. It is possible that the student population of a class may have an inordinate number of problems that affect the class as a whole. If this does occur, and more than one class of a specific grade exists, then provision should be made to move some of the students so that optimum learning may take place. Hanson (1995) also believes that classes may need to be split up when "...the particular makeup of a class might adversely affect the group's potential to learn" (p. 43). It is also possible that differences in personality may occur between parents, students, or teachers. In this situation, ideally, there will be enough flexibility to move a student to a different room when more than one room of a

grade exists. This same opportunity should be afforded to a teacher if a particularly difficult child has been in a class for a year. Difficult decisions may need to be made for such a student when it is a question of stability and security and what is best for the class as a whole.

Parents

Two-year cycling is a very positive experience for parents. Parents return to school, in September of the second year, with a greater degree of comfort than they experienced at the start of the first year of the cycle. Parents have an understanding of the philosophy of cycling and, most likely, are comfortable with the teachers and their expectations.

A cycled program can foster closer relationships between parents and teachers. The understanding that parents have of teacher's behavioral and academic expectations enables these two parties to have greater communication and understanding of the educational goals teachers have for their students and parents for their children. "A close relationship between teachers and parents thus leads to much more than mutual informational exchange: these exchanges are reciprocally advantageous and often lead to a real improvement in methods" (Piaget, 1973, p. 84/5). In addition, parents "...appreciate the chance to become familiar with a teacher's instructional style and expectations for class work and homework" (Hanson, 1995, p. 43). They also feel more comfortable with parent-teacher meetings which enhances the parent-teacher exchange and, ultimately, the education of the student. This improved communication assists in education

of the whole child, encouraging a "...hoped-for synthesis between the family and the school" (Piaget, p. 85). Mazzuchi and Brooks (1992) found that parents in the second year of a cycle were much more supportive of the teacher and school.

If personality differences occur between parents and teachers, it is beneficial if alternatives can be provided. In a larger school, with more than one classroom of each grade, a student could be moved to another classroom. It is important to provide the best educational choices for students, parents, and teachers.

Summer work is suggested for students, particularly when a student is having difficulties with the curriculum. Hanson (1995) goes as far as to suggest that teachers can provide summer work for all students that involve the family and lead into the next year's initial study or subject.

Administrators

The implementation or continuation of a two year cycled program requires an administrator to be sensitive to the needs of a successful program and to provide support to teachers and school staff. This support, mandated by the Alberta School Act (1988), should be directed at the provision of instructional leadership in the school.

If a cycled program exists in a school, it is essential that an administrator support its organization or the program will be undermined. This support transfers into teacher input into appropriate decision making, such as class population, the purchase of sufficient resources or materials, and preparation time for the high stress that is inherent in a cycle program. In implementing this

type of program, it is also essential that appropriate time frames be considered for the shift in instructional practices. As well, teachers need the guidance of their administrator in making the changes the implementation of this program creates. Psychological support for curriculum changes and for teachers with "high needs" student is also essential for the success of any program, but particularly with a two year program. It is quite apparent that "Innovations often fail because policymakers give teachers insufficient time, training, and psychological support" (ERIC, p. 1).

The administrator is ultimately responsible to maintain the community that exits within a school so that implementation of a cycle program does not diminish the positive aspects of the school, but adds to its educational climate. In implementing a cycle program within a school it is essential that an administrator be aware that "Facilitating this transition requires sophisticated leadership and interpersonal skills, as well as personal characteristics such as patience and empathy" (p. 2). These skills and characteristics are necessary to be able to implement a new program, and to ensure that a positive environment for school teachers and staff exists, one in which learning and variation are encouraged. In summary, the implementation of a cycle program necessitates that administrators "...must create a school culture that supports teacher learning, and environment in which it is safe to risk making mistakes" (p. 2).

Summary

Cycling is an educational philosophy and practice that has been characterized by students being taught by the same teacher for a period of two or more years. This philosophy encourages a more holistic approach through

linkage of student experience, knowledge, and curriculum. It also provides a level of stability and continuity for students that can foster a richer, more positive educational experience.

Teachers experience the benefits and demands of a cycled program on a daily basis. The benefits include increased quality teaching time and the opportunity of having a deeper understanding of students and their needs. Demands on a teacher include preparing curriculum and materials for two grades and possibly working with the same high-needs students for two years.

Cycling is a positive experience for students. They look forward to returning to school to see their teacher and classmates. The ongoing routine and familiarity of the classroom is supportive and students have a sense of security and continuity. This environment encourages confidence in students and enhances a positive learning climate. It does need to be noted that, when more than one classroom of a grade exists, the mix of students in a classroom needs to be carefully thought out so that optimum learning can take place. Alternative classrooms, if available, may need to be considered for students when there are conflicts in the parent-teacher-student relationship.

Parents find cycled programs to be a very positive experience. They are more comfortable with the teacher the second year and have a better understanding of the concept and impact of cycling. Richer communication and relationships between parents, students, and teachers contributes to a positive learning environment.

It is essential that an administrator supports the implementation or continuation of a cycled program. This support occurs in appropriate

implementation of the program, and appropriate teacher input into class population, teaching resources, preparation time, and provisions for high needs students. It must be recognized that an administrator has a responsibility to provide instructional leadership in a school and to provide support to staff both academically and psychologically. Administrators must be aware that their decisions directly affect the educational climate for students, parents, and teachers as well as the success of this program.

The changes and unpredictability in today's society require that schools provide the highest possible degree of continuity and consistency for students. Cycling is a program which does just that. This program brings together the significant stakeholders in a school, namely the students, parents, teachers and administrators. It encourages a holistic approach to education by drawing on students' experiences, knowledge, and curriculum. Use of such a program encourages the development of consistency and continuity in a school, which in turn fosters and develops a school's sense of community.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

General Method

Questionnaires were used as the primary instruments in this study. There were three questionnaires; one questionnaire for each group of students, parents, and teachers respectively. These questionnaires were to:

1. evaluate what each particular group saw as the positive and negative aspects of cycling and
2. to determine the educational value of cycling

Research Population

The research population was from George Davison Elementary School. Students from grades three to six, who had been in a cycled classroom for at least one cycle; their parents; and teachers who had taught cycled classes for at least the last two years were included in the study.

Eleven students in grade three, seventeen in grade four, twenty-five in grade five, and twenty-nine in grade six, for a total of eighty-two students, were included in the research. There were twenty-one parents from grade three, twenty-eight in grade four, thirty-five from grade five, and forty-eight from grade six for a total of one hundred thirty two parents who participated in the study. Fourteen teachers including two from grade one; two from grade two; one from grade three; two from grade four; three from grade five; three from grade six; and one administrator (the vice-principal) filled out the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

Questionnaires were developed for students, parents, and teachers respectively.

The teacher questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale. This questionnaire was presented in two sections. The first section identified how many years of teaching experience teachers had in a cycled program (the grade level was not included); how many years teachers had taught in a regular program and at what level, whether elementary, junior or senior high, and experience in other programs.

The second section of the teacher questionnaire concerned two year cycling. This section was composed of sixteen numbered questions with a total of a possible thirty-two responses. Although it was not noted on the questionnaire, nine areas regarding cycling were contained in this questionnaire. These areas included advantages, disadvantages, teacher needs, school administrator, school continuity, student performance, retention, family changes, and summer work.

The parent questionnaire was also based on a five-point Likert scale. This questionnaire was composed of five sections. In section I, the four questions requested information about how a child felt about returning to school the second year of a cycle. In section II, the two questions asked if the parent felt they knew the teacher's expectations for their child's school work and behavior. In section III, the question requested information about the parents

comfort level with the teacher. Section IV asked the parents if they felt that their child had more stability having had the same teacher for two years and Section V asked if parents felt cycling had improved their child's educational progress.

A larger print questionnaire was presented to students with either a yes or no response. Students filled in their grade to assist in the data analysis portion of this research. The five questions contained a total of seven responses. One question contained three responses about why it was easier having the same teacher; the remaining four questions asked students what their opinion was on having the same teacher, if the first day back at school was easier, and if the second year of a cycle was easier when students know who their teacher and classmates are. The last question addressed whether students felt that having the same teacher and classmates at school was like having a family at school.

Responses for each item were calculated by percentage. A percentage for each of the response categories was also calculated.

The survey questions were developed from bibliography readings and personal experience in a cycled school.

Data Collection

The Teacher Questionnaire

In section I of the teacher questionnaire, teaching experience in terms of years and programs was determined.

Section II was composed of the particular areas that impact upon cycling. Section II, questions one through four determined what were specific advantages of cycling. Questions five, six, and seven addressed the disadvantages of cycling, while questions eight, nine, and ten considered what may be specific teacher needs to this program. The impact that the school administrator would have on this program is addressed in question eleven. School continuity was addressed in question twelve, student performance in question thirteen, grade retention in question fourteen, the impact of family changes in question fifteen and that of summer work in question sixteen.

The Student Questionnaire

The student questionnaire was given to grade three, four, five, and six students. Grade one and two students were not included in this study because of their limited exposure to cycling. Question one asked if students liked having the same teacher for two years; question two, parts a through c, addressed why is was easier to have the same teacher. Question three and four addressed if it was easier to return to school when students knew their teacher and classmates. The school relationship between student, teacher and classmates was addressed in question five. There was a parental consent form for all students who chose to volunteer in this study. Since human subjects were involved, the requirements of the Human Subjects Research Committee were observed.

The Parent Questionnaire

The parent questionnaire considered five areas of a cycled program. Part one, questions one through four addressed what a student looks forward to and knows upon returning to school for the second year of a cycle. Part two, questions one and two, asked if the parent felt they knew the teachers expectations for school work and behavior. Part three addressed parents comfort level the second year of a cycle, part four requested information on whether parents felt their child had more stability in school because of cycling, and question five determined if parents felt cycling improved their child's educational progress at school.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Demographic Summary

Questionnaires were administered to 82 students out of a total student population of 236 (grades three through six).

The percentages of students who responded to this questionnaire were as follows: 22% of students in grade three; 33% of students in grade four; 41% of students in grade five; and 39% of students in grade six.

The percentage of cycled students in each grade was as follows: 47% in grade three; 35% in grade four; 41% in grade five; and 41 % in grade six.

Please note that percentages in the tables have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Questionnaire Response Rates

TABLE 1: RESPONSE RATES OF STUDENTS

Grade	Total Number of Each Group	Total Responses	Response Percentage
3	12	11	92
4	18	17	94
5	25	25	100
6*	31	29	94
Totals	**86**	**82**	**95**

* only one absence was recorded

Note 1:1 Students from grades one and two were not included because of their younger age and limited experience with cycling.

Note 1:2 Teachers were relied on to administer the survey to students who have been in a cycled class for at least one cycle (2 years).

Note 1:3 Total class numbers were higher; one grade five class was not included because it was made up of students new to the school.

TABLE 2: RESPONSE RATES OF PARENTS			
Grade	**Total Number of Each Group**	**Total Responses**	**Response Percentage**
3	22	21	96
4	31	28	90
5	41	35	85
6	52	48	92
Totals	**146**	**132**	**91**

Note 2:1 Parent questionnaires had to be culled for repeat responses (more than one child).

Note 2:2 Duplicate parent questionnaires were pulled before consent forms and questionnaires were separated.

TABLE 3: RESPONSE RATES OF TEACHERS			
Grade	**Total Number of Each Group**	**Total Responses**	**Response Percentage**
1	2	2	100
2	2	2	100
3	1	1	100
4	2	2	100
5	3	3	100
6	3	3	100
Administrator	1	1	100
Totals	**14**	**14**	**100**

Note 3:1 Teachers from grades one, two, and the administrator (vice principal) were included in the teacher survey because they all had experience teaching a two year cycle for more than one cycle.

Note 3:2 A teacher returning to the school after a lengthy absence (longer than 5 years) and the principal (who was in his first year at this school) were not included in the survey due to their lack of exposure to this philosophy.

Note 3:3 A teacher on maternity leave was not included in the survey (grade 3/4).

Student Questionnaire Results

The information presented in Table 4 shows student preferences for having the same teacher for a second year.

TABLE 4: QUESTION 1

Grade	Possible Responses	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
3	11	9	82	2	18
4	17	12*	71	4	24
5	25	23*	92	1	4
6	29	26	90	3	10
Totals	**82**	**70**	**84**	**10**	**14**

* Two responses have not been included because both were circled. One student in grade four added the footnote "For number one - It is ok if you have the right teacher, one that does not yell".

Table 4 shows that 84% of respondents agreed that they liked having the same teacher for two years, while 14% indicated their dislike for this arrangement. The most favourable responses came from students in grades five and six.

Table 5 presents information that shows if returning students believe they know the classroom rules.

TABLE 5: QUESTION 2a

Grade	Possible Responses	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
3	11	10	91	1	9
4	17	17	100	--	--
5	25	25	100	--	--
6	29	28	97	1	3
Totals	**82**	**80**	**97**	**2**	**3**

Table 5-2a reveals resounding agreement that students know the classroom rules. These results are remarkably consistent across all grades.

The information presented in Table 6 shows whether students believe they know what behavior the teacher expects.

TABLE 6: QUESTION 2b					
Grade	**Possible Responses**	**Yes**	**Percentage**	**No**	**Percentage**
3	11	10	91	1	9
4	17	16*	94	--	--
5	25	25	100	--	--
6	29	29	100	--	--
Totals	**82**	**80**	**98**	**1**	**2**

* one - no response

Table 6-2b shows that almost all students knew what behavior the teacher expected with a 98% yes response. There is no variation according to grade level.

Table 7 provides information on whether students believe they know what the homework rules are.

TABLE 7: QUESTION 2c					
Grade	**Possible Responses**	**Yes**	**Percentage**	**No**	**Percentage**
3	11	7	64	4	36
4	17*	15	88	1	6
5	25	24	96	1	4
6	29	29	100	--	--
Totals	**82**	**75**	**92**	**6**	**7**

* one - no response

Student agreement was very high in Table 5-2a. They clearly know the classroom rules. However, when asked if they knew what the homework rules were, responses varied widely. Table 7-2c shows that grade three had the lowest positive response rate, while grade five and six had much higher positive response rates. This raises the question of the impact of homework; grade three is one of the first years in this school in which homework is sent home on a regular basis while grade five and six students have had homework for three and four years.

The information presented in Table 8 shows whether students feel that the first day of school is easier when they know who their teacher is.

TABLE 8: QUESTION 3					
Grade	**Possible Responses**	**Yes**	**Percentage**	**No**	**Percentage**
3	11	10	91	1	9
4	17	14	82	3	18
5	25	22	88	3	12
6	29	27	93	2	7
Totals	**82**	**73**	**89**	**9**	**11**

The results in Table 8 indicate quite clearly that when students know who their teacher is when they return to school they find that the first day of school is easier. There is a sense of familiarity, and stress levels are reduced for students and the teacher alike.

Table 9 provides information on whether students believe that the first day of school is easier when they know their classmates.

TABLE 9: QUESTION 4					
Grade	**Possible Responses**	**Yes**	**Percentage**	**No**	**Percentage**
3	11	10	91	1	9
4	17	17	100	--	-
5	25	23	92	2	8
6	29	28	97	1	3
Totals	**82**	**78**	**95**	**4**	**5**

As with their responses to question three, student responses in Table 9 show they find comfort in the familiarity of knowing not only who their teacher is going to be, but who their classmates are. This, too, reduces tension and stress levels. Returning to school is viewed as a positive experience.

Table 10 considers whether students believe that having the same teacher and classmates for two years is like having a family at school.

TABLE 10: QUESTION 5					
Grade	**Possible Responses**	**Yes**	**Percentage**	**No**	**Percentage**
3	11	7	64	3	27*
4	17	11	65	6	35
5	25	9*	36	13**	52
6	29	10	34	19	66
Totals	**82**	**37**	**45**	**41**	**50**

* one not answered

** both responses were circled on two surveys; they were not included

Although students find familiarity and ease with returning to the same teacher and fellow classmates, as reported in Tables 8 and 9, slightly more than half of the students did not draw a direct comparison between the feelings they have about their family unit and their school experiences. The family is still seen as the primary caregiver and support system for a majority of these students.

In general, students strongly support and reinforce the concept of two year cycling. The majority of students like having the same teacher for two years; they find it easier to return to school to the same teacher and classmates; and they have a very good understanding of the classroom rules and behavioral expectations. On the issue of homework expectations, younger students seem to be uninformed. A small majority of students were able to indicate that they see differences between the kind of relationships that develop at school and those that characterize their family life. This result may suggest that the question was misunderstood by some, or that the question was not appropriate for this survey and this topic.

Parent Questionnaire Results

The information presented in Table 11 shows whether parents believe their children look forward to seeing their respective teachers.

TABLE 11: QUESTION I-1 (N=132)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	**1**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**5**	**%**
3	10	48	8	38	1	5	2	10	--	--
4*	10	36	5	18	9	32	3	11	--	--
5*	15	43	11	31	5	14	3	9	--	--
6	21	44	15	31	10**	21	1	2	--	--
Totals	**56**	**42%**	**39**	**30%**	**25**	**19%**	**9**	**7%**	**--**	**--**

* one not answered

** two responses included the comment that it depends on the teacher; one of these respondents said he agreed (2) to strongly disagreed (5); this response was not included in survey results

Table 11 shows that 91% of parents agreed that their children looked forward to seeing their teachers the second year of a cycle. This information compares favourably with the 84% of students who said they liked having the same teacher for two years. A grade four parent commented that he agreed his child looked forward to seeing his teacher, but agreed only because "...we had a good teacher". This parent stated that "If problems had occurred in the first year with the teacher I would have pulled my child from the class or school, if I was not satisfied". This parent had experienced cycling before and obviously knew there are at least two classes of each grade available for parents in the event of problems.

Table 12 provides the parents perspective on whether they believe that their children know the class routine the second year of a cycle.

TABLE 12: QUESTION I-2 (N=132)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3	14	67	5	24	2	10	--	--	--	--
4	14	50	3	11	10	36	1	4	--	--
5	21	60	7	20	6	17	--	--	1	3
6	27	56	16	33	4	8	1	2	--	--
Totals	**76**	**58%**	**31**	**24%**	**22**	**17%**	**2**	**2%**	**1**	**1%**

The information presented in Table 12 shows that almost all (97%) of the parents felt that students would know the class routines in the second year of a cycle. This figure is exactly the same as the 97% of students who indicated they would know the class rules in the second year.

The information provided in Table 13 shows whether parents felt that their children know the teacher's expectations in classwork the second year of a cycle.

TABLE 13: QUESTION I-3 (Classwork) (N=132)										
	Strongly Agree		%		Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3	12	57	7	33	2	10	--	--	--	--
4	14	50	3	11	10	36	--	--	1	4
5	22	63	9	26	2	6	1	3	1	3
6	26	54	17	35	3	6	2	4	--	--
Totals	**74**	**56%**	**36**	**27%**	**17**	**13%**	**3**	**2%**	**2**	**2%**

Table 13 shows the strength of parents' belief that their children would know what the teacher's expectations in classwork were. More than half were quite sure, while a total of 92% expressed varying degrees of agreement.

Parents were requested for information, in Table 14, about whether they felt their children knew the teachers expectations in homework the second year of a cycle.

TABLE 14: QUESTION I-3 (Homework) (N=132)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3	12	57	7	33	2	10	--	--	--	--
4	14	50	4	14	9	32	1	4	--	--
5	21	60	7	20	5*	14	2	6	--	--
6	27	56	19	40	2	4	--	--	--	--
Totals	**74**	**56%**	**37**	**28%**	**18**	**14%**	**3**	**2%**	**--**	**--**

Table 14 shows that 90% of parents felt that students knew their teachers' homework expectations. These results compare closely with the 91% of students who felt the same way. Parents in grade four did agree, but not as strongly as parents of students in the other three grades. This information varies slightly from student responses in Table 7, showing that students in all grades but grade three felt they knew what the homework rules were.

The information presented in Table 15 shows whether parents believe that their children know the teacher's behavioral expectations.

TABLE 15: QUESTION I-3 (Behaviour) (N=132)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3	15	71	3	14	3	14	--	--	--	--
4	14	50	3	11	10	36	--	--	1	4
5	22	63	9	26	3	9	--	--	1	3
6	31	65	13	27	4	8	--	--	--	--
Totals	**82**	**62%**	**28**	**21%**	**20**	**15%**	**--**	**--**	**2**	**2%**

Table 15 shows the very high degree of confidence shown by parents that their children knew their teachers' behavioral expectations. In a similar way, Table 6 had shown that 98% of students felt they knew what behavior the teacher expected.

Table 16 states whether parents believe that their children know their classmates the second year of a cycle.

TABLE 16: QUESTION I-4 (N=132)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3	15	71	5	24	1	5	--	--	--	--
4	17	61	4	14	6	21	--	--	1	4
5	21	60	9	26	4	11	1	3	--	--
6	33	69	11	23	4	8	--	--	--	--
Totals	**86**	**65%**	**29**	**22%**	**15**	**11%**	**1**	**1%**	**1**	**1%**

Table 16 shows that almost 100% of parents agreed that their children would know their classmates and that would help them in their transition into a new grade. This compares closely with 95% of students' answers on their questionnaires, agreeing that the first day of school is easier when they know their classmates.

Table 17 provides information on whether parents believe that they understand what the teacher's expectations for school work are.

TABLE 17: QUESTION II-1 (N=132)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3	11	52	8	38	1	5	1	5	--	--
4	11	39	7	25	8	29	2	7	--	--
5*	15	43	10	29	7	20	2	6	--	--
6	22	46	19	40	5	10	2	4	--	--
Totals	**59**	**45%**	**44**	**33%**	**21**	**16%**	**7**	**5%**	**--**	**--**

* one - no response

Table 17 shows that almost all (94%) of the parents felt they knew the teachers' expectations for school work.

Table 18 provides information on whether parents believe that they know what behavior teachers expect from their children.

TABLE 18: QUESTION II-2 (N=132)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3	12	57	7	33	1	5	1	5	--	--
4	15	54	2	7	10	36	1	4	--	--
5	20	57	9	26	4	11	2	6	--	--
6	30	63	12	25	4	8	2	4	--	--
Totals	**77**	**58%**	**30**	**23%**	**19**	**15%**	**6**	**5%**	**--**	**--**

The information in Table 18 shows the extent to which parents (96%) believe they know the behavior that teachers expect. Clear communication between parents and teachers may be one of the conditions indicated by these responses.

The information presented in Table 19 provides parents' thoughts on whether they feel more comfortable with teachers the second year of a cycle.

TABLE 19: QUESTION III (N=132)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3*	10	48	7	33	2	10	1	5	--	--
4**	16	57	1	4	6	21	4	14	--	--
5	14	40	10	29	7	20	3	9	1	3
6***	24	50	10	21	8	17	4	8	--	--
Totals	**64**	**48%**	**28**	**21%**	**23**	**17%**	**12**	**9%**	**1**	**1%**

* one grade three response was not provided; the parent stated "I felt comfortable the first year".

** one grade four response was not provided; the parent stated that his response would depend on which teacher his child had at the time

*** one parent who agreed felt that it depended on the parent-teacher relationship; one parent circled the empty space between response 3 and 4 so no response was included for this answer; one parent chose no response

Table 19 appears to suggest a lack of intensity in the responses of many parents, with 10% indicating a strength of disagreement not apparent in the responses recorded on all other questions to this point in the questionnaire.

Parents were asked, in Table 20, whether they believed that their children had more stability in their lives because they had the same teacher for two years.

TABLE 20: QUESTION IV (N=132)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3	7	33	10	48	3	14	1		--	--
4**	9	32	6	21	5	18	6	21	1	4
5	17	49	8	23	3	9	4	11	3	9`
6*	21	44	12	25	7	15	3	6	2	4
Totals	**54**	**40%**	**36**	**29%**	**18**	**14%**	**14**	**10%**	**6**	**4%**

* three responses were not given; one parent stated "don't consider it the teacher's responsibility/role to provide "stability"; one parent did not feel she could answer the question using the scale provided; and one parent stated 'not necessarily'.

** one grade four response was not provided; the parent stated that his response would depend on which teacher his child had at the time

Table 20 shows there may have been some reluctance on the part of some parents even to put forward a response to this question. The information as it is recorded suggests a fair degree of variability in response to the question of the teachers' contributions to students' sense of stability. Nevertheless, 83% of parents did agree that such was the case, with 40% strongly agreeing and 14% showing disagreement.

Table 21 provides information on whether parents believe that cycling improves their children's educational progress at school.

TABLE 21: QUESTION V (N=132)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Grade	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
3	10	48	8	38	2	10	--	--	1	5
4**	7	25	7	25	7	25	5	18	1	4
5	17	49	5	14	6	17	3	9	4	11
6*	16	33	16	33	5	10	6	13	1	2
Totals	**50**	**38%**	**36**	**27%**	**20**	**15%**	**14**	**11%**	**7**	**5%**

* one parent had circled responses 2 and 3; this response was not included. Three other questionnaires had no response.

** one grade four response was not provided.

Table 21 shows that a large majority of parents (83%) felt that cycling improves their children's educational progress.

A few parents made general comments regarding this questionnaire. One grade four parent stated that "Although I agree with the 2 year cycle - I find this questionnaire extremely biased - it's almost impossible to disagree with the way in which it is worded". A grade six parent added the following note: "All or some teachers have strong areas and weak areas of teaching--after 2 years with one teacher they may be behind in that teacher's "weak" area, but strong in that teacher's "strong" area. I personally feel there are good and bad aspects of the 2 year cycle. However, my own children have done well". This parent also made the observation that "...it is unfair to put all the new kids in one classroom". This situation has occurred twice in the last five years. The average level of parental agreement on this survey was 91%. This is a very positive response to a school practice that has been in place since this school opened in 1982.

Teacher Questionnaire Results

The information presented in Table 22 provides an overview of the teaching experience of the staff of George Davison School.

TABLE 22: QUESTION I - TEACHING EXPERIENCE (N=14)

	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE									
	0 - 5	%	6 - 10	%	11 - 15	%	16 - 20	%	21+	%
Cycled Program	--	--	9	64	5	36	--	--	--	--
Regular Program										
- elementary	4	29	4	29	1	7	--	--	--	--
- junior High	3	21	1	7	--	--	--	--	--	--
- senior High	2	14	1	7	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other Programs*	4	29	--	--	--	--	1	7	--	--

* Seconded to university, multigraded, trainable mentally handicapped children, behaviorally challenged students, language delayed children.

Table 22 reveals there was some confusion with the second portion of the questionnaire because I did not clearly define responses for cycled programs versus regular programs.

Advantages Of Cycling

Table 23 provides information on whether teachers believe that having students for two years enables teachers to know their students and student needs better.

TABLE 23: QUESTION II-1 (N=14)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
II-1	12	86	2	14	--	--	--	--	--	--
Totals	12	86%	2	14%	--	--	--	--	--	-

Data in Table 23 show that George Davison teachers strongly believe that having students for two years is positive in part because they know their students and student needs better. This links very positively with the responses of a large majority of students who like having the same teacher and the parental responses indicating that their children look forward to seeing their teacher for a second year.

Table 24 provides information on whether teachers believe that students know their classmates, the class routine, and the teacher's expectations.

TABLE 24: QUESTION II-2 (Students) (N=14)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
II-2a	12	86	2	14	--	--	--	--	--	--
II-2b	12	86	2	14	--	--	--	--	--	--
II-2c	13	93	1	7	--	--	--	--	--	--
Totals	**37**	**88%**	**5**	**12%**	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 24 shows how strongly teachers felt that students know their classmates, the class routine and their teachers' expectations in the second year of the cycle. These results strongly correlate with the responses of students and parents showing each of those groups with over 90% agreement in their responses to this question.

The information presented in Table 25 provides teachers opinions about whether parents know their academic expectations, instructional style, and behavioral and homework expectations respectively.

TABLE 25: QUESTION II-2 (Parents) (N=14)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
II-2a	9	64	5	36	--	--	--	--	--	--
II-2b	9	64	4	29	1	7	--	--	--	--
II-2c	11	79	2	14	1	7	--	--	--	--
II-2d	9	64	4	29	1	7	--	--	--	--
Totals	**38**	**68%**	**15**	**27%**	**3**	**5%**	--	--	--	--

Table 25 shows teachers clearly believed that parents would know about their academic, behavioral, and homework expectations as well as their instructional style. There was virtually no variation between the responses of teachers and those of students and parents to this question except in the previously mentioned matter of homework and the responses of students in grade 3 and parents of grade 4 students.

The information provided by Table 26 shows whether teachers believe that they can condense the amount of time spent on reviewing expected classroom behavior, the previous year's work, and cooperative group strategies.

TABLE 26: QUESTION II-3 (N=14)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	**1**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**5**	**%**
II-3a	9	64	4	29	1	7	--	--	--	--
II-3b	10	71	3	21	1	7	--	--	--	--
II-3c	7	50	5	36	2	14	--	--	--	--
Totals	**26**	**62%**	**12**	**29%**	**4**	**10%**				

Information presented in Table 26 shows the unanimity of teachers' beliefs that the amount of time spent reviewing classroom behavior, cooperative group strategies and the previous year's work can be condensed in a cycled classroom.

Table 27 presents information on whether teachers believe that the second year of cycling enables the teacher to gain 1-2 months of quality teaching time.

TABLE 27: QUESTION II-4 (N=14)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	**1**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**5**	**%**
II-4*	11	79	2	14	1	7	--	--	--	--
Totals	**11**	**79%**	**2**	**14%**	**1**	**7%**	—	—	—	—

Table 27 shows that teachers believe they gain quality teaching time of at <u>least</u> one month in a cycled system. At the low end, one teacher said there was a gain of one month while one other teacher suggested there was a gain in teaching time of even more than two months.

Disadvantages Of Cycling

Table 28 provides information on whether teachers believe that initially planning for two years of curriculum is very demanding on their time and energy.

TABLE 28: QUESTION II-5 (N=14)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
II-5a	7	50	4	29	2	14	--	--	1	
II-5b	6	43	4	29	3	21	--	--	1	
Totals	**13**	**46%**	**8**	**29%**	**5**	**18%**	**--**	**--**	**2**	**7%**

Table 28 shows the strength of teachers' agreement that there were heavy demands placed on their time and energy in planning the first two years of a cycled program. One teacher commented that planning was demanding in subsequent years because of changing curriculums and different student needs. The person who strongly disagreed to both parts of question II-5 is a specialist teacher who appears to have a different perspective on cycling perhaps because she teaches one subject area half-time and one class half-time.

The frequency of curriculum changes is addressed in Table 29.

TABLE 29: QUESTION II-6 (N=14)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
II-6	4	29	9	64	1	7	--	--	--	--
Totals	**4**	**29%**	**9**	**64%**	**1**	**7%**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**

Table 29 shows that all these teachers agree that curriculum changes occur frequently. Responses to both Questions II-5 and II-6 emphasize teachers' perceptions of cycling's demands on time and energy due to such changes. This may suggest a need for linking together available resources and the need for additional planning time for teachers.

The information presented in Table 30 is whether teachers have had the same high needs students, either behavioral or academic, for two years.

TABLE 30: QUESTION II-7 (N=14)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
II-7	6	43	5	36	2	14	1	7	--	--
Totals	6	43%	5	36%	2	14%	1	7%	--	--

Table 30 shows that the majority of teachers have had high needs students (behavioral or academic) for two years. Almost all of these teachers agree that additional support is required for teachers' and students' needs within a cycled system.

Teacher Needs

Table 31 provides teacher feedback on whether they think they need a larger variety of instructional strategies, more training in child development, and additional avenues of support when they have students with high academic or behavioral needs.

TABLE 31: QUESTION II-8 (N-14)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
II-8a	2	14	5	36	2	14	2	14	3	21
II-8b*	1	7	2	14	6	43	2	14	3	21
II-8c	3	21	4	29	4	29	2	14	1	7
Totals	6	14%	11	26%	12	29%	6	14%	7	17%

Table 31 shows that 64% of teachers felt they needed to know about and be able to use a larger variety of instructional strategies, while 35% of teachers did not feel that this was necessary. Similarly, 64% of teachers felt that more training in child development was necessary while 35% disagreed with the need for additional training in child development. Finally, 69% of teachers felt that they needed additional avenues of support, while 21% of teachers felt they did not need additional support. One teacher made the observation that more training in child management/discipline was needed rather than in child development.

The information provided by Table 32 considers whether teachers believe they need multiple resources such as curriculum materials, bulletin board displays, and manipulatives.

TABLE 32: QUESTION II-9 (N=14)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	**1**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**5**	**%**
II-9	6	43	5	36	2	14	1	7	--	--
Totals	**6**	**43%**	**5**	**36%**	**2**	**14%**	**1**	**7%**	**--**	**--**

Table 32 shows that 93% of teachers agreed that multiple resources are required to support a cycled system. Examples of these include manipulatives, curriculum materials and bulletin board displays. Teachers agreed that financial support must be in place for the purchase and replenishing of these resources.

Table 33 shows teachers' opinions on whether more storage room for two years of materials is required, or is adequate.

TABLE 33: QUESTION II-10 (N=14)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	**1**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**5**	**%**
II-10a	6	43	4	29	4	29	--	--	--	--
II-10b*	1	7	2	14	5	36	3	21	1	7
Totals	**7**	**25%**	**6**	**21%**	**9**	**32%**	**3**	**11%**	**1**	**4%**

Table 33 shows that 80% of teachers felt storage facilities were adequate while 15% of teachers felt they were inadequate.

The School Administrators

The information in Table 34 provides teachers' opinions on whether the school administrator needs to give more consideration to teacher input regarding class population, providing sufficient teaching resources, allotting time for teachers to prepare curriculum changes, and making provisions for high needs students respectively.

TABLE 34: QUESTION II-11 (N=14)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	**1**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**5**	**%**
II-11a	6	43	1	7	5	36	1	7	1	7
II-11b	4	29	6	43	3	21	--	--	1	7
II-11c	4	29	4	29	6	43	--	--	--	-
II-11c	6	43	5	36	2	14	1	7	--	--
Totals	**20**	**36%**	**16**	**29%**	**16**	**29%**	**2**	**4%**	**2**	**4%**

The information presented in Table 34 shows that 86% of teachers agreed that they should have input regarding class populations. This is particularly advisable since teachers are working with these students for two years. 93% of the staff agreed that the school administrator needs to give more consideration to providing sufficient teaching resources. All teachers agreed that time needs to be allotted for the preparation of curriculum changes. 93% of teachers agreed that additional provisions for high needs students need to be considered by the school administrator. One teacher felt that consideration of these four areas would not be any different in a cycled school than it would in any other school.

School Continuity

The information provided by Table 35 is whether cycle meetings are necessary to provide continuity in a cycled program.

TABLE 35: QUESTION II-12 (N=14)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	**1**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**5**	**%**
II-12	3	21	9	64	--	--	--	--	2	14
Totals	**3**	**21%**	**9**	**64%**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**2**	**14%**

Table 35 shows that 85% of teachers agreed that cycle meetings are necessary to provide continuity. The size of the school would perhaps impact upon this choice; a larger school may need meetings to address issues of continuity more than a smaller school. Two teachers showed some obvious disagreement with the majority view in their responses to this question.

Student Performance

Table 36 indicates whether teachers believe that cycling improves student performance or not.

TABLE 36: QUESTION II-13 (N=14)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
II-13	9	64	5	36	--	--	--	--	--	--
Totals	**9**	**64%**	**5**	**36%**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**

The responses recorded in Table 36 show the unanimity of teachers' beliefs that cycling improves student performance.

Retention

The information presented in Table 37 shows whether teachers retain students because of a student's lack of maturity, rather than academic proficiency.

TABLE 37: QUESTION II-14 (N=14)										
	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
II-14*	--	--	6	43	5	36	1	7	1	7
Totals	**--**	**--**	**6**	**43%**	**5**	**36%**	**1**	**7%**	**1**	**7%**

* one response not given

Table 37 shows 79% of teachers agreed that retention occurs because of a student's level of maturity, rather than academics while 14% of teachers disagreed with that statement. The absence of strong agreement in this set of responses may be indicative of some confusion generated by the question itself.

Family Changes

Table 38 provides information on whether two year programs give more acknowledgment to family changes, such as illness, celebration, or death, than the traditional one year program.

TABLE 38: QUESTION II-15 (N=14)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	**1**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**5**	**%**
II-15*	4	29	5	36	4	29	--	--	--	--
Totals	**4**	**29%**	**5**	**36%**	**4**	**29%**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**

* one questionnaire had no response

Table 38 shows 100% of teachers agreed that in a two year cycle program more acknowledgment was given to family changes. Teachers believe they are more aware of the changes that occur over a two year period due to the closer association with the families the extra time affords.

Summer Work

Table 39 shows whether teachers acknowledge that they should provide summer work to lead into the next year's initial subject or study and whether this work should be provided to involve the family.

TABLE 39: QUESTION II-16 (N=14)

	Strongly Agree				Agree				Strongly Disagree	
Question	**1**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**5**	**%**
II-16a*	--	--	1	7	6	43	4	29	2	14
II-16b**	1	7	3	21	4	29	4	29	2	14
Totals	**1**	**4%**	**4**	**14%**	**10**	**36%**	**8**	**29%**	**4**	**14%**

Table 39 shows there was a great range of opinion expressed by teachers on the matter of providing students with summer work. A higher number of teachers, 57%, agreed that summer work should be provided to involve the family, while 43% disagreed with providing work. One teacher did not respond to this question, but did add the comment that perhaps summer work would be considered at younger grades while another teacher felt that summer work may be beneficial for a limited number of specific students.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this research was to determine whether cycling is a valid philosophy and method of school organization. The impact of cycling upon the school community of students, parents, teachers and administrators was also considered.

Three questionnaires were administered to students, parents, and teachers respectively. A total of eighty-two students participated in the study. These eighty-two students were from grades three through six out of a population of 236 for these grades. Eleven students from grade three, seventeen students from grade four, twenty-five students from grade five, and twenty-nine students from grade six participated in the study. One hundred thirty-two parents chose to participate in the study. Twenty-one parents from grade three, twenty-eight parents from grade four, thirty-five parents from grade five, and forty-eight parents from grade six volunteered to complete the questionnaire. Fourteen teachers and administrators volunteered to participate in the study. Two teachers each from grades one and two, one teacher from grade three, two from grade four, three from grade five, three from grade six, and one vice-principal were involved in the study. The questionnaires were developed from appropriate literature, noted in the bibliography, and from the primary researcher's own background with cycling.

The questionnaire data provided a wide range of information on whether cycling is a valid philosophy and method of school organization.

Overall the respondents to all three questionnaires were very positive about the cycled program at George Davison School. Parents and students liked having the same teacher for two years and have a very good understanding of the expectations of the teacher. The only two areas where some concern was raised were in regard to homework and, for students, whether having the same teacher and classmates was like having a family at school while their parents were asked the comparative question of whether having the same teacher provided the students with stability at school.

The expectations of homework were understood by parents and students with the exception of one group of students. Parents of students in grade three believed that their children knew the teacher's rules for homework, while the students responses revealed that they were not sure what these rules were. I found it interesting that the grade three classes had the lowest response rate with regards to homework, while the grade five and six classes had the most positive response rate. Is this difference a matter of experience with homework? It would be interesting to follow these grade three students to identify if they felt differently about homework in grade five or six and why this change occurred.

The second area of concern was apparent when students were asked if having the same teacher and classmates was like having a family at school and parents were asked whether teachers in a cycled program provided students with more stability. In review, these questions attempted to identify if there was more predictability and a sense of familiarity with a cycled system. These areas of predictability and familiarity were answered in other portions of the student and parent questionnaire. This question was redundant and did not establish any new information. In fact, it seemed to raise more questions and concerns than provide a clear representation of information. It should have been omitted from the questionnaire.

Teachers strongly agreed with the concept of a two year cycled program. The range of experience of teachers was primarily in the cycled program, although most teachers had a limited amount of experience in other grades or programs from which to draw comparisons with cycling. Teachers did question the need for more training in child development, while raising the interesting point that perhaps more training in child management/discipline was needed. Whether this is a concern exclusive to a cycled school is questionable. Schools in general seem to have more concern about student behaviour and I would think that this is a general concern rather than one specific to cycled schools.

There seems to be some question about retaining students for reasons of immaturity rather than academic knowledge. When I began teaching at George Davison School, my understanding was that two year cycling afforded the opportunity of taking students to the second year of the cycle if they were weak academically. During the second year of the cycle the academic deficiencies would more likely be addressed and the student would be more ready to move on to the next cycle. For the most part, teachers were of the opinion that retention occurs because of a student's level of maturity, and not academics. However, 14% of teachers disagreed and said they would retain students based on their academic ability. Whether there was some confusion with this question, or whether some staff believe that retention within a cycle due to students' academic ability is acceptable, is unknown. I believe that this range of teacher understanding may point out the need for incoming staff to fully understand the concept of two year cycling and the principles that guide this type of program. Similarly, it is necessary that new administrators have a good understanding of the program in order to provide for its continuation.

In conclusion, cycling is a demanding program for teachers to implement in terms of time, energy, and materials. However, it does provide a high level of continuity and a consistent environment for students. This continuity and consistency appears to have an overall positive impact on students' attitudes and, consequently, on the environment of the school. Students like returning to school, are less stressed, and, for the most part, enjoy their teachers. George Davison School has an enrollment of approximately 400 students and relatively few difficulties with students for this size of school. What of new students? They appear to sense the positive environment and, in most cases, their adjustment to the new school seems to be an easy one.

The positive repercussions of cycling affect the interactions of students, parents and teachers. The hallways and playground of the school are positive places, problems are limited, and the general tone is clearly pleasant and warm.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study was conducted using a limited sample of representatives of the community of one school. To achieve a better understanding of this school philosophy and its impact, research on a larger scale, including schools in Canada and the United States, would be desirable. The question of the long term impact of cycling was not addressed in this project. Following students through a cycled elementary school, and then following their progress once they enter a 'regular' junior and senior high school might ascertain some longer term effects of this educational practice.

Recommendations for Implementation

To implement such a program, with its heavier than usual demands on teachers, requires a dedicated staff that strongly believes collectively in such an educational practice. In-house time to implement cycling, necessary resources and access to different kinds of materials are essential to its successful initiation and maintenance. Appropriate processes of shared decision-making will almost certainly involve teachers and administrators in greater contact, greater sharing of expertise and responsibility.

Reflections

I taught at George Davison School, in a cycled program, for ten years. During those ten years the benefits of a cycled program became very evident to me, as did some of its negative effects. Two years with the same students allowed teachers to see them grow and mature socially and academically. Relationships with parents were almost always positive and, together, we really reaped the benefits of cycling. Parents knew what my classroom atmosphere and expectations were, and I knew them better, their hopes, and their expectations for their children. It was a joy to teach entire families with a parent-teacher relationship that might not have been enjoyed in any other educational practice.

There were, however, downfalls - as there are with any practice. Changes to curriculum or to approved teaching resources became more common from year to year. While the first year of a cycle always involved the implementation of new resources or curriculum, the second year of the cycle would often see the same thing occurring as mandated changes had to be

implemented. We did not have in-house time to work on these changes, and, I believe, if this time was provided it would help to alleviate some of the stress teachers experience in a two year program.

It is also very important that the whole school is as committed to a two-year cycled program as possible. If classes are not cycled on an ongoing basis, then the benefits of cycling will not be realized. One year there were three classes of a grade in the first year of a cycle. The second year of that cycle saw these three classes shrink to two. Many returning students found it very frustrating that they were ready to work, knew the rules and the teacher's expectations while the other half of the class did not. It was a difficult two months for returning students and the teachers alike. On that occasion the benefits of the two year cycle were severely reduced.

In closing, I return to my personal conviction that two-year cycled programs are of sound educational value for students. Increased quality use of time, a holistic view that better draws students' experiences and education together, and the opportunity for teachers to know parents and their expectations for their children on a deeper level are major benefits of this approach. While it should not be underestimated that there are increased demands on teachers, support for some additional in-school preparation time, additional resources and materials, and appropriate decision-making practices can help provide for the increased needs of teachers.

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Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

I am doing a project about two-year cycling. These questions are to get some information from you on what you like and dislike about two-year cycling. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous (you do not give your name). Thank you very much for your help.

GRADE _____

1. I like having the same teacher for two years . . . . . Yes No

2. It's easier having the same teacher because

   a. I know the classroom rules . . . . . Yes No

   b. I know what behavior the teacher expects. . Yes No

   c. I know what the homework rules are. . . . . Yes No

3. The first day of school is easier when I know who my teacher is . . . . . Yes No

4. The first day of school is easier when I know my classmates . . . . . Yes No

5. Having the same teacher and classmates for two years is like having a family at school . . . . . Yes No

Appendix B

Parent Questionnaire

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

	strongly agree				strongly disagree
I. When my child returns to school in the second year of a cycle he/she:					
1. looks forward to seeing his/her teacher	1	2	3	4	5
2. knows the class routine	1	2	3	4	5
3. knows the teacher's expectations in:					
-classwork	1	2	3	4	5
-homework	1	2	3	4	5
-behavior	1	2	3	4	5
4. knows his/her classmates	1	2	3	4	5
II. In the second year of a cycle, I know:					
1. the teacher's expectations for school work . .	1	2	3	4	5
2. the behavior the teacher expects	1	2	3	4	5
III. I feel more comfortable with the teacher the second year	1	2	3	4	5
IV. My child has more stability in his/her life because he/she has the teacher for two years	1	2	3	4	5
V. Cycling improves my child's educational progress at school	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C

Teacher Questionnaire

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Please circle how many years of teaching experience you have:

-in a cycled program	0 - 5,	6 - 10,	11 - 15,	16 - 20,	21 +
-in a regular program					
-elementary school	0 - 5,	6 - 10,	11 - 15,	16 - 20,	21+
-junior high	0 - 5,	6 - 10,	11 - 15,	16 - 20,	21+
-senior high	0 - 5,	6 - 10,	11 - 15,	16 - 20,	21+
-in any other program	0 - 5,	6 - 10,	11 - 15,	16 - 20,	21+

Please specify 'other' programs _____.

II. Two year cycled programs.

	strongly agree				strongly disagree
1. Having students for two years enables teachers to know their students and student needs better	1	2	3	4	5
2. In the second year of cycling:					
-- Students know:					
a. their classmates	1	2	3	4	5
b. the class routine	1	2	3	4	5
c. the teacher's expectations	1	2	3	4	5
-- Parents know the teacher's:					
a. academic expectations	1	2	3	4	5
b. instructional style	1	2	3	4	5
c. behavioral expectations	1	2	3	4	5
d. homework expectations	1	2	3	4	5

	strongly agree				strongly disagree
3. Teachers are able to condense the amount of time spent on reviewing:					
a. expected classroom behavior	1	2	3	4	5
b. the previous year's work	1	2	3	4	5
c. cooperative group strategies	1	2	3	4	5
4. The second year of cycling enables the teacher to gain 1-2 months of quality teaching time	1	2	3	4	5
5. Initially planning for two years of curriculum is very demanding on:					
a. time	1	2	3	4	5
b. energy	1	2	3	4	5
6. Curriculum changes occur frequently	1	2	3	4	5
7. I have had the same high needs students (behavioral or academic) for two years	1	2	3	4	5
8. In a two year program, teachers need:					
a. a larger variety of instructional strategies	1	2	3	4	5
b. more training in child development	1	2	3	4	5
c. additional avenues of support when they have high needs students (behaviorally or academically)	1	2	3	4	5
9. Multiple resources are required (curriculum materials, bulletin board displays, manipulatives)	1	2	3	4	5

	strongly agree				strongly disagree
10. Storage room:					
a. for two years of materials, more is required	1	2	3	4	5
b. is adequate	1	2	3	4	5
11. In a two year cycle program the school administrator needs to give more consideration to:					
a. teacher input regarding class population.	1	2	3	4	5
b. providing sufficient teaching resources.	1	2	3	4	5
c. allotting time for teachers to prepare curriculum changes	1	2	3	4	5
d. making provisions for high needs students	1	2	3	4	5
12. Cycle meetings are necessary to provide continuity	1	2	3	4	5
13. Cycling improves student performance	1	2	3	4	5
14. Grade retention occurs because of a student's lack of maturity, rather than academic proficiency	1	2	3	4	5
15. Two year programs give more acknowledgement to family changes (e.g. illness, celebration, death)	1	2	3	4	5
16. In the first year of a cycle, teachers should provide summer work:					
a. to lead into the next year's initial subject or study	1	2	3	4	5
b. to involve the family	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D

Parent Letter and Consent Form

June 16, 1997

Dear Parents:

I am conducting a study of schools using two-year cycling. The purpose of this study is to provide information about cycling to the staffs of these schools. I would really appreciate your help in this study.

As part of this research I would like your son/daughter to complete a questionnaire during class time at school. Please fill in the permission slip, attached, which gives me your permission for your child/children to complete this questionnaire. Only students from grades three to six will be involved in this study. Please note that all information will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. When the study is complete, information will be released in summary form only. No student names will be included in any discussion of the results. You do have the right to withdraw your child from doing the questionnaire without prejudice at any time.

This study considers information from students, parents, and teachers. I am, therefore, requesting your assistance in completing the Parent Questionnaire for this same study. Two questionnaires are attached so that each parent can fill one in. I would really appreciate it if you would complete this questionnaire and return it to the school by Wednesday, June 18th.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this study. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at George Davison School, telephone number 529-1555, or Dr. Storlein, Superintendent of Schools, at 528-6700. You are also welcome to contact the supervisor of my study, Dr. David Townsend. Dr. Townsend may be contacted at the University of Lethbridge, telephone number 329-2731. For additional information please contact Dr. Craig Lowen, Chairperson of the Faculty of Education Human Subject Research Committee at the University of Lethbridge. His telephone number is 329-2455.

Sincerely,

Mrs. N. Wiedemann
Teacher
George Davison School

Two-Year Cycling Questionnaire

I agree to allow my child/children _____,
(please print)
to participate in this questionnaire.

_____ _____
Name Signature

_____
Date