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Teacher Beliefs Regarding Grade Retention in an Urban Elementary School

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TEACHER BELIEFS REGARDING GRADE RETENTION IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

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Toni Gilmore-Hook

The purpose of this study was to determine if exposure to a research-based presentation on grade retention, including the academic, socio-emotional and behavioral outcomes, would yield a change in teacher beliefs regarding retention as an intervention strategy. Teachers from a small urban school district were asked to complete a pre-survey, view a research-based online presentation on grade retention and complete a post-survey. Results from this research revealed that teachers' beliefs regarding grade retention significantly changed after viewing a research-based online presentation on topic. Results also indicated that, not only was there a change of overall participants, but there was a difference between the beliefs of teachers who taught grades K-1 and teachers who taught grades 3-4 according to mixed model ANOVA and ANCOVA results. In addition, this study revealed that, even in a district where retention is not a common practice, there is room to educate on the topic of grade-level retention.

Chapter One: Review of Literature

Despite over one hundred years of having been reported unsuccessful, grade retention is an important and controversial issue that educators, parents and students alike continue to face each year. Grade retention, the practice of requiring a student who has already completed a given grade to repeat that grade in the subsequent school year, has roots in the 1800s with the first known negative effects reported in the 1930s (Ede, 2006). Studies performed by Otto and Goodlad in 1951 and 1954 respectively found that grade retention does not improve academic performance and that gains made by retained students were actually smaller than those made by equally low but promoted students (Ede, 2006). The 1960s marked a shift from retention to social promotion, the practice of promoting students from one grade to the next with their peers even if the academic requirements and performance standards have not been satisfied ("Social Promotion," 2004). Declines in achievement measured by standardized assessments were reported in 1983 by The National Commission on Excellence in Education in an open letter to the American people titled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Hence, the practice of retaining students resurfaced in the form of an intervention strategy.

A Legislative Link

In January, three days after taking office, President George W. Bush announced *No Child Left Behind* with grave concern that "too many of our neediest children are being left behind." (US Department of Education, 2002). By 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was in place with legislative guidelines on how to improve America's schools while guaranteeing that no child is confined to a school that is failing (US Department of Education, 2002). The retention trend continued with No Child Left

Behind (NCLB) by linking standards and accountability to decisions related to promotion and retention ("Social Promotion," 2004). With the weight and accountability of student performance falling on teachers and principals, retention across the country is often viewed as an instrument of school reform.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2003) released a position statement on grade retention and social promotion stating "despite a century of research that fails to support the efficacy of grade retention, the use of grade retention has increased over the past 25 years." According to the United States Department of Education via the National Center for Educational Statistics (2009), 10% of students in the United States in grades kindergarten through eighth grade were retained in 2007 with very similar rates occurring every year since 1996. According to the reported 2007 statistics, retention is most common in kindergarten and first grade followed by second and third grade.

Meta-analyses and systematic reviews over the past century have proven that grade retention is not supported as an intervention option (Jimerson, 2001). However, educational policies and strategies do not always follow what has been proven to be effective. With grade retention rates remaining constant despite adequate research against, Jimerson et al. (2006) say it best with "it's paradoxical that more children have been 'left behind' since No Child Left Behind."

Retention Outcomes

Retention is associated with many adverse consequences, and it is of concern whether educators are taking into account the academic, emotional and behavioral needs of children when making such recommendations. Research examining nineteen studies

in 1990s revealed that retention had a negative impact on all areas of achievement including reading, math and language (NASP, 2003). It was also revealed that retention had a negative effect on the student's socio-emotional adjustments such as peer relationships, self-esteem, problem behaviors and attendance (NASP, 2003).

Achievement. Though initial gains in achievement may occur during the year the student is retained, research reveals that these gains decline within two to three years of retention (NASP, 2003). In fact, research indicates that retained students not only do no better but often worse than similar groups of students who are promoted (NASP, 2003). Jimerson and Ferguson (2007) noted that "simply having a student repeat a grade is unlikely to address the multiple factors influencing the student's poor achievement or adjustment that resulted in the decision to retain the student" (p. 320). As well, academic motivation can be affected by the belief that one's academic performance is outside of one's control. Academic motivation can be affected by the struggle-succeed-struggle sequence in meeting grade-level competencies that is common with retained students (Wu, West, & Hughes, 2010). Research shows that retention not only fails to correct academic difficulties, it also can increase the student's academic problems and can contribute to socio-emotional and behavior problems (Ede, 2006).

Socio-Emotional and Behavior. Regardless of the age of the student or the grade level in which the student is retained, retention has a strong emotional and behavioral impact. Retention alters the whole child by tapping into emotions experienced, social interactions and behaviors exhibited. Children often view retention as a form of punishment in which they are fearful. Ede's (2006) systematic review reveals that children are more fearful of retention than having toileting accidents in class

or being caught stealing. Only going blind or losing a parent were considered more stressful than retention, and retention was considered the most stressful in one study examining sixth-grade students (Ede, 2006). By adolescence, retention practices are predictive of a number of health and emotional risk factors and are associated with detrimental outcomes (NASP, 2003). Jimerson, Woehr, Kaufman and Anderson (2004) indicate that grade retention is predictive of health-comprising behavior such as use of cigarettes, alcohol and drug abuse. Jimerson et al. (2004) also note that retained students have low self-esteem, suicidal intentions, emotional distress, sexual activity at an early age, poor peer relations and violent behaviors. Older students experience feelings of frustration with a disconnection from school often resulting in an increased dropout rate among these students. Systematic reviews performed by Jimerson et al. (2004) revealed that retained students were 5-11 times more likely to drop out of school compared to similar groups of students who were promoted and that grade level retention is one of the greatest predictors of high school dropouts.

The Cost of Retention. Beyond the personal academic and socio-emotional cost to the student, retention carries a heavy financial burden. In order to accommodate the extra year of schooling each retained student requires, over eighteen billion dollars must be spent a year (Xia & Glennie, 2005). Jimerson et al. (2004) revealed that retained students are more likely to live on public assistance, be unemployed or be in prison. All are costs that ultimately are incurred by the taxpayers.

Jimerson, Anderson, & Whipple (2002) used the expression "we've won the battle, but lost the war" as the headline of their article referring to retention and drop out rates. Given the price that the students pay personally and the accrued cost to the general

public on many levels, it is dumbfounding that educators continue to enter into the costly retention practice.

Alternatives to Grade Retention

As previously noted, grade retention is often viewed as an intervention strategy despite research indicating its lack of effectiveness. The National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP, 2003) position statement designed for educators promotes the use of interventions that are evidence-based and effective. More importantly, NASP (2003) discourages the use of practices that are either not beneficial or are harmful to the student's welfare and/or educational attainment and advises educators to seek alternatives to retention that effectively address the specific instructional needs of individual students.

There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to address academic and behavioral concerns within a school. However, there are school-wide strategies and interventions, as well as individual interventions, that are considered best practice that can be adopted and adapted to meet the individual needs of the school and the students within the school. NASP (2003), in their position statement, offers the following guidelines and suggestions:

- Encourage parental involvement that is culturally appropriate
- Provide age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instructional strategies
- Implement systematic assessments including progress monitoring and formative evaluations with ongoing modifications
- Use reading programs that are developmentally appropriate with intensive and direct instruction
- Establish school-based mental health programs

- Identify specific learning and behavioral problems
- Offer tutoring ad mentoring programs that include peer, cross-age and adult participation
- Develop comprehensive school-wide programs that are collaborative in nature and span across regular and special education
- Provide early development programs as well as summer school, extended day and extended year programs

In a study performed by Jimerson and Ferguson (2007) reference is made to Hippocrates' "Primum non nocere" meaning "First, do no harm." They posit that education must focus on interventions that build upon strategies and target the specific needs of the students. Evidence-based interventions are in sharp contrast to the educational practice of retention that fails to prove effective and can arguably be considered harmful. Having strong interventions in place early in education and within the school year is necessary so that educators are not faced with the age-old dilemma of "to retain or not retain."

Teacher Beliefs Regarding Grade Retention

Because research is clear that it is necessary to move beyond "to retain or not retain" why does grade retention continue to happen? More often than not teachers are at the core of the retention process and are instrumental in the retention decisions. According to Kagan (1992) teachers rarely change their attitudes [beliefs] based on research they have read and are more likely to base their attitudes [beliefs] on advice received from their colleagues or from their own personal experiences. Beliefs as defined by Petty and Cacioppo (2006) are pieces of "information that a person has about other

people, objects and issues" (p.7). This information may be based on facts or simply an opinion and could have positive, negative or no evaluative implications (Petty & Cacioppo, 2006). Ede (2006) concludes that beliefs are the result of experiences, culture and environment. Ede (2006) postulates that beliefs are often not rooted in facts or knowledge and are, instead, a result of hunches, inferences, word-of-mouth and/or a significant influence.

Systematic reviews performed by Ede (2006) revealed that teachers believe that retention:

- prevents or corrects academic failure
- corrects lack of readiness and maturity
- corrects poor work and attendance habits including exposure to missed content due to frequent absences
- is perceived by students based on their parents' view
- leads to a negative opinion about the retaining teacher's abilities including low standards, poor teaching abilities or poorly prepared students
- builds a solid foundation in basic skills

It is a common misperception that a gift of an additional year in the same grade will benefit the student with the ability to catch up academically. A study performed in 2006 by Ede supported this notion and found that teachers across all grade levels, both genders, and all experience levels believe that retention provided students an opportunity to raise their current level of academic performance. The majority of teachers believed that grade retention was most effective if it occurred during kindergarten or first grade (Ede, 2006). Ede's (2006) study revealed that half of the participating teachers felt that,

if they promoted students to the next level without mastery of current standards, a low opinion of their teaching abilities would form.

A recent study examining the perceptions of kindergarten through third grade teachers on grade retention as an intervention revealed that teachers' attitudes about grade retention were changed when presented with a research-based article on topic (Pettay, 2010). However, this study also revealed a disconnect between the teachers' additional comments and their survey answers, indicating that, in theory, they agree with retention research but may continue to use retention as an intervention strategy (Pettay, 2010). A similar study performed by Galford (2008) examining perceptions of principals regarding grade level retention also revealed an overall change in attitude when presented with a research-based article on retention.

Ede (2006) concluded in her study that teachers either are unaware of current research as it pertains to retention, they do not believe the current research or they have beliefs that grade retention is a strong pedagogical practice for reasons such as viewing it as the only alternative.

The current study is a quasi-replication study, with a presentation and questionnaire difference, that examines the beliefs of kindergarten through fourth grade teachers regarding retention as an intervention strategy in an urban school district that maintains a non-retention philosophy in Cincinnati, Ohio. The study also examines teacher beliefs on student academics, socio-emotional and behavioral outcomes of retention.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the current study is to determine if exposure to a research and evidence-based presentation on retention, including the academic, socio-emotional and behavioral outcomes, will yield a change in teacher beliefs regarding retention as an intervention strategy. Assessing change in teacher beliefs will provide insight into why retention continues to be widely supported by teachers despite research indicating that it is not a sound pedagogical practice. The research will also provide insight into the beliefs of teachers that will inform those teaching our current and future educators.

Statement of Hypotheses

In this research, the hypotheses are posited as follows: The null hypothesis is that pre- and post-surveys will yield no significant difference in teacher beliefs when provided a research and evidence-based presentation on retention. The research hypothesis is that pre- and post-surveys will yield a significant difference in teacher beliefs when provided a research and evidence-based presentation on retention.

Chapter Two: Method

Participants

Certified teachers in a small urban school district in Cincinnati, Ohio were invited to be participants of this study. The staff included 35 certified teachers, 32 of whom were female and 3 of whom were male, who served as regular education teachers, intervention specialists and special subject teachers. A total of 25 teachers (N=25) elected to participated in this study, 8 were primary (K-1) teachers, 7 were intermediate (3-4) teachers and the remaining were 2nd grade teachers, intervention specialists or special subject teachers. Participation was voluntary and an explanation of the study, including no anticipated risks to participants and information acknowledging the ability to withdraw at any time, was included in the Informed Consent form that was reviewed individually with each potential participant. For those teachers who agreed to participate (N=25), the Informed Consent form was completed, signed and returned to researcher at the time the study was reviewed or at a later date. The form was placed in a provided envelope labeled "Confidential, Attention: Toni Hook" and was placed in the researcher's mailbox. Copies of the signed consent form were provided to the participants within 1-2 working days in a sealed envelope marked "Confidential." Original consent forms remained on file with the researcher. Participants were not paid to participate in the study; however, a completion bonus was awarded in form of a gift certificate (value of $5) to participants who completed the study in its entirety.

Instrument

The Teacher Opinion Survey (TOS) (Ede, 2006), an instrument consisting of 12 belief statements based on literature review, was used as a pre- and post-survey to

determine teacher beliefs on retention. The TOS (Ede, 2006) survey answer form was adjusted from a Likert rating scale to a True/False format to eliminate the participants' ability to remain undecided or non-committal on the topic. A comment section was included following each question to allow the participants to qualify their answer and to provide further qualitative insight into teacher beliefs (See Appendix A).

Design and Procedure

For purposes of this study, a website was created, www.gradelevelretention.com, which served as the online location for this study including the pre-survey, a web-based, narrated powerpoint presentation on grade level retention, and a post-survey.

Participants were provided a packet that included a copy of their signed informed consent form and directions for participation in the study. The directions included the study website address, username and password to access the website, a unique identifier (nine-digit number) and step-by-step instructions for accessing and completing the study. The unique identifier served as a tracker for the researcher to identify participants who received the study completion bonus as well as a means of keeping the individual results of the survey private and confidential.

Once participants accessed the website and entered the username and password for entry, they were greeted with a web landing page briefly explaining the three parts of the survey (pre-survey, presentation and post-survey) and the estimated time for completion (no more than 60 minutes) along with a hyperlink to the secure online pre-survey in order to formally begin the study. The pre-survey allowed the participants to enter their unique identifier, identify grade level taught and provide true/false answers along with comments for each of the twelve belief statements. The pre-survey included

text fields (unique identifiers, comments), a drop-down menu (grade taught) and radio buttons (true/false responses). None of the pre-survey fields were required, meaning that participants could elect to leave answers blank. Once the participants completed the pre-survey and clicked the submit button, results of their survey were emailed directly to the researcher and the participant was advanced to a confirmation screen with a hyperlink to the presentation. The presentation was voice narrated and, therefore, was best viewed with a computer that had sound capabilities. The presentation automatically advanced from slide to slide but required the participant to click the play button to activate. Participants had the ability to pause, move forward and/or move backward using the built-in control panel of the presentation software. The final slide of the online presentation provided a hyperlink to the post-survey and, therefore, required that participants advance through the entire presentation before being able to access the post-survey. The post-survey was identical to the pre-survey in belief statements, the way it was designed or programmed, and how the participants were required to navigate. Once post-survey results were submitted, they were sent directly to the researcher by email and the participants were advanced to a confirmation screen thanking them for their participation. Completion bonuses were awarded 2-3 working days after the pre- and post-survey results were received by the researcher.

It is of note that this study is one of two simultaneous studies conducted using identical methodologies. The difference in the two studies was that this one was conducted with an urban demographic and the other was rural -- which was done intentionally to later compare those two variables.

Chapter Three: Results

Two sets of analyses were conducted to address the research questions of this study. An ANCOVA was conducted to evaluate the effect of primary (grades K-1) and intermediate (grades 3-4) responses while controlling for variance associated with pre-survey responses. A mixed model ANOVA was conducted to further evaluate the effect of primary/intermediate and its interaction with the effectiveness of the presentation with respect to change in beliefs about retention along with evaluating the overall effectiveness of the presentation on pre- and post-survey responses of total participants.

ANCOVA Results

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) at the .05 probability level (p=.05) was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between post-survey responses for primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) teachers, while controlling for pre-survey responses on each of the twelve belief statements. Data were analyzed using PASW Statistics statistical software by SPSS, Inc. (See Table 1).

For belief statement one, "Retention provides children an opportunity to raise their current level of academic achievement," and belief statement two, "Retention provides children an opportunity to prevent future academic failure," pre-survey responses were significantly related to post-survey responses for belief statement one, $F(1,12) = 3.86$, $p = .07$, and belief statement two, $F(1,12) = 3.91$, $p = .07$, however, there was not a significant effect of primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) grade on teacher beliefs expressed after controlling for the pre-presentation response, $F(1,12) = 0.00$, $p = 1.00$ and $F(1,12) = 0.07$, $p = .79$, respectively.

For belief statement three, "If I were to send students with low academic performance to the next grade level, their teachers may form a low opinion of my teaching abilities," pre-survey responses were significantly related to post-survey responses, $F(1,10) = 12.86$, $p = .005$, and there was a significant effect of primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) grade on teacher beliefs expressed after controlling for the pre-presentation survey, $F(1,10) = 2.00$, $p = .19$. The homogeneity of regression was violated but the correction given by the statistics software was employed. Review of the adjusted means revealed that primary (K-1) teachers ($M = .58$, $SD = .11$) felt that to be a truer statement than the intermediate (3-4) teachers ($M = .83$, $SD = .12$) (See Table 2).

Results from belief statement four, "Retention injures children's self-esteem," also indicate that pre-survey responses were significantly related to post-survey responses, $F(1,12) = 1.61$, $p = .23$, and revealed a significant effect of primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) grade on teacher beliefs expressed after controlling for the pre-presentation survey, $F(1,12) = .71$, $p = .42$. Homogeneity of regression was also violated on this statement but, once again, the correction given by the software was employed. Primary (K-1) teachers ($M = .02$, $SD = .09$) agreed with this statement more than intermediate (3-4) teachers ($M = .13$, $SD = .10$).

Results for belief statement five, "Retention is most effective when it takes place in kindergarten or first grade," indicate that there is not a significant effect of primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) grade on teacher beliefs expressed after controlling for the pre-presentation survey, $F(1,12) = 0.00$, $p = 1.00$.

Belief statement six, "Retention is an effective intervention strategy for boys," responses revealed that pre-survey responses were significantly related to post-survey

responses, $F(1,11) = 18.75$, $p = .001$, and there was a significant effect of primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) grade on teacher beliefs expressed after controlling for the pre-presentation survey, $F(1,11) = .57$, $p = .47$. The homogeneity of regression was violated but the correction given by the statistics software was employed. Review of adjusted means for this statement revealed both primary and intermediate teachers leaned more to viewing this statement as false; however, the primary (K-1) teachers ($M = .91$, $SD = .09$) felt it to be more false a statement than their intermediate (3-4) teacher ($M = .81$, $SD = .09$) counterparts.

Results for "Retained students are more likely to exhibit behavior problems than non-retained classmates," which is belief statement seven, indicate that pre-survey responses were significantly related to post-survey responses, $F(1,12) = 1.66$, $p = .22$, but there is not a significant effect of primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) grade on teacher beliefs expressed after controlling for the pre-presentation survey, $F(1,12) = .26$, $p = .62$.

For belief statement eight, "Retention allows English language learners additional opportunities to master language skills and academic material" and belief statement nine, "Retention provides immature children an opportunity to catch up to their peers," pre-survey responses were significantly related to post-survey responses, $F(1,12) = .86$, $p = .37$ and $F(1,12) = 2.59$, $p = .13$, respectively. There were also significant effects of primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) grade on teacher beliefs expressed after controlling for the pre-presentation response for statement eight, $F(1,12) = .50$, $p = .49$ and statement nine, $F(1,12) = 1.52$, $p = .24$. The homogeneity of regression was violated for both statements, but the correction given by the statistics software was employed. On belief statement eight, both primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) teachers found this statement

to be more false, but primary (K-1) teachers (M = .98, SD = .09) found it to be even more so than intermediate (3-4) teachers (M = .88, SD = .10). Review of adjusted means for belief statement nine revealed that primary (K-1) teachers (M = .86, SD = .15) did not agree with this statement more than the intermediate (3-4) teachers (M = .59, SD = .16).

Results for belief statement eleven, "Retained students are more likely to drop out of school before graduation than non-retained students," indicate that while pre-survey responses were significantly related to post-survey responses, $F(1,12) = .53$, $p = .48$, there is not a significant effect of primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) grade on teacher beliefs expressed after controlling for the pre-presentation survey, $F(1,12) = .004$, $p = .95$.

Results for "Retention is an effective intervention strategy for girls," which is belief statement twelve, indicate that pre-survey responses were significantly related to post-survey responses, $F(1,12) = 20.66$, $p = .001$, and there is a significant effect or primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) grade on teacher beliefs expressed after controlling for the pre-presentation survey, $F(1,12) = .57$, $p = .46$. The homogeneity of regression was violated but the correction given by the software was employed. Review of adjusted means indicated that primary (K-1) teachers (M = .91, SD = .08) found this statement to be false on the post-survey more so than the intermediate (3-4) teachers (M = .82, SD = .09).

Results for belief statement ten, "Retention is my only alternative when students do not successfully master grade level material by the end of the school year," were not reported. Item analysis revealed that all participants found this statement to be false, and their position did not change between pre- and post-survey.

Based on these ANCOVA results, there was a difference between primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) teacher responses on the post-survey for six out of eleven (54%) belief statements with primary teachers' post-responses more closely aligned with the grade level research presented as part of the online presentation.

Mixed Model ANOVA Results

A mixed model Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at the .05 probability level (p=.05) was used to evaluate the effect of primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) and its interaction with the effectiveness of the presentation with respect to change in beliefs about retention along with evaluating the overall effectiveness of the presentation on pre- and post-survey responses on each of the twelve belief statements. Data were analyzed using PASW Statistics statistical software by SPSS, Inc. (See Table 3 and Table 4).

For belief statement one, there was a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,13) = 6.41$, $p = .03$. There was not a significant effect of primary/intermediate, $F(1,13) = .36$, $p = .56$, nor was there a significant interaction, $F(1,13) = .12$, $p = .74$, indicating that although there was a pre-presentation ($m = .34$, $SD = .13$) to post-presentation ($M = .67$, $SD = .13$) overall response change there was not a significant effect on or difference between primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) teacher responses.

For belief statement two, there was a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,13) = 6.41$, $p = .03$. There was not an interaction effect on either groups, $F(1,13) = .12$, $p = .74$ and no difference between primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4), $F(1,13) = .002$, $p = .97$. As with belief statement one, this indicated an overall pre- ($M = .40$, $SD = .14$) to post-survey ($M = .73$, $SD = .12$) response change for statement two but there were no differences between primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) responses.

Belief statement three yielded a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,11) = .85$, $p = .38$, as well as a primary/intermediate significant interaction and effect, $F(1,11) = .85$, $p = .38$ and $F(1,11) = 5.92$, $p = .03$, respectively. Further analysis revealed the adjusted mean for pre- and post-responses of intermediate (3-4) teachers did not change ($M = 1.00$, $SD = .16$) but there was a change from pre-presentation response ($M = .57$, $SD = .15$) and post-presentation response ($M = .43$, $SD = .15$) for primary (K-1) teachers. The significant interaction and effect between intermediate and primary may be due to the lack of variance in intermediate teacher responses from pre-to-post.

For belief statement four, there was a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,13) = 4.76$, $p = .05$. There was not a significant interaction, $F(1,13) = .02$, $p = .89$; however, there was a significant effect of primary/intermediate, $F(1,13) = .96$, $p = .35$. Further analysis indicated that both primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) had a pre-post response change and that primary (K-1) teachers ($M = .00$, $SD = .09$) found this statement to be more true than intermediate (3-4) teachers ($M = .14$, $SD = .10$).

Belief statement five yielded a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,13) = 26.35$, $p = <0.001$. There was not a significant effect of primary/intermediate, $F(1,13) = .29$, $p = .60$, nor was there a significant interaction, $F(1,13) = .12$, $p = .74$, indicating that although there was a pre-presentation ($M = .06$, $SD = .07$) to post-presentation ($M = .73$, $SD = .12$) overall response change there was not a significant effect on or difference between primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) teacher responses.

Belief statement six yielded a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,12) = 1.00$, $p = .34$. There was not a significant effect of primary/intermediate, $F(1,12) = .12$, $p = .74$, but was there a significant interaction, $F(1,12) = 1.00$, $p = .34$. Further analysis revealed

the adjusted mean for pre-responses (M = .86, SD = .17) and post-responses (M = .86, SD = .14) of intermediate (3-4) teachers did not change but there was a slight change from pre-presentation response (M = .71, SD = .17) and post-presentation response (M = .86, SD = .14) for primary (K-1) teachers. The significant interaction and lack of effect between intermediate and primary may be due to the lack of variance in intermediate teacher responses from pre-to-post.

There was a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,13) = 12.19$, $p = .004$, for belief statement seven. There was also a significant interaction effect, $F(1,13) = 1.69$, $p = .22$, as well as a significant effect of primary/intermediate, $F(1,13) = .68$, $p = .43$. Review of the adjusted means revealed that, even though both primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) teacher responses changed from pre-post, primary teachers responses were more greatly effected with pre (M = .75, SD = .13) to post (M = .13, SD = .09) responses than their intermediate teacher counterparts' pre- (M = .43, SD = .19) and post-responses (M = .14, SD = .14).

For belief statement eight, there was a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,13) = 6.95$, $p = .02$. There was also a significant effect of primary/intermediate, $F(1,13) = 2.12$, $p = .17$, and there was a significant interaction, $F(1,13) = .48$, $p = .50$. Further analysis of adjusted means revealed that there was a greater change between intermediate (3-4) teachers' pre- (M = .43, SD = .19) and post-responses (M = .86, SD = .10) than the primary (K-1) teachers but primary teachers found this statement to be more false (M = 1.00, SD = .09) than the intermediate teachers (M = .86, SD = .10) on their post-presentation responses.

Belief statement nine yielded a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,13) = 8.74$, $p = .01$. There was also a significant interaction effect, $F(1,13) = .65$, $p = .44$, as well as a significant effect of primary/intermediate, $F(1,13) = .90$, $p = .36$. Further analysis indicated that primary (K-1) pre-post responses were more greatly effected than intermediate (3-4) pre-post responses and that primary teachers ($M = .88$, $SD = .16$) found this statement to be more false than intermediate teachers ($M = .57$, $SD = .17$) on their post-survey responses.

There was a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,13) = .93$, $p = .35$, for belief statement eleven. There was not a significant effect of primary/intermediate, $F(1,13) = .03$, $p = .88$, nor a significant interaction effect, $F(1,13) = .004$, $p = .95$, indicating that, although there was a pre-presentation ($m = .27$, $SD = .12$) to post-presentation ($M = .13$, $SD = .09$) overall response change there was not a significant effect on or difference between primary (K-1) and intermediate (3-4) teacher responses.

For belief statement twelve, there was a significant main effect of pre-post, $F(1,13) = .87$, $p = .37$. There was also a significant interaction effect, $F(1,13) = .87$, $p = .37$, but there was not a significant effect of primary/intermediate, $F(1,13) = .05$, $p = .82$. Further analysis revealed the adjusted mean for pre-responses ($M = .86$, $SD = .16$) and post-responses ($M = .86$, $SD = .14$) of intermediate (3-4) teachers did not change but there was a change from pre-presentation response ($M = .75$, $SD = .15$) and post-presentation response ($M = .88$, $SD = .13$) for primary (K-1) teachers. The significant interaction and effect between intermediate and primary may be due to the lack of variance in intermediate teacher responses from pre-to-post.

These mixed model ANOVA results revealed that overall the online presentation on grade level retention was effective in changing pre- to post-survey responses with significant main effects for eleven out of the twelve belief statements. The only belief statement that did not indicate a significant main effect was belief statement ten, which yielded the same response from all participants on pre and post and was in line with grade level retention research. Results indicated a significant effect of primary (K-1) or intermediate (3-4) on five out of the eleven belief statements. These results indicate that there were true differences between K-1 and 3-4 teacher beliefs on post-survey responses on five out of eleven (45%) statements.

Based on the ANCOVA and mixed model ANOVA results, the research hypothesis that pre- and post-surveys will yield a significant difference in teacher beliefs when provided a research and evidence-based presentation on retention is correct and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Chapter Four: Discussion

Retention and social promotion policies are often determined at the school district or individual school level. In a research brief focused on criteria for grade promotion or retention provided by The Center for Policy Studies, Education Research and Community Development (2010) it was revealed that the State of Ohio elects to leave retention policy decisions at the school district or building level. Ironically, grade-to-grade retention rates are included in the definition of Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in the 2003 State of Ohio's Accountability Workbook (United States Department of Education, 2010) which is used to monitor progress toward No Child Left Behind. It appears that the state does not want to guide school districts in forming retention policies but will hold districts accountable, via AYP, based on the direction of their grade level retention rates.

While the district where the study was conducted does not have a formal written policy on grade level retention, the district does maintain a non-retention philosophy or practice, and have had a promotion rate of >95% over the last five years. Retentions obtained at the district level revealed that in the 2009-2010 school year only 2 out of 723 students (< 1%) in grades K-4 were retained. In school year 2008-2009 only 1 out of 732 students (<1%) in grades K-4 were retained and only 2 out of 740 (<1%) were retained in 2007-2008. All of which fall well below the national retention average of 10%. Based on this data, one might come to the conclusion that the participants, who carry strong weight in the retention decision, beliefs would be closely aligned with research on grade retention.

As previously mentioned, according to Kagan (1992) teachers seldom change their attitudes [beliefs] based on research, and Ede (2006) concluded that teachers are

unaware of current research or simply do not believe it. Results from this research revealed that teachers' beliefs regarding grade level retention significantly changed after viewing a research-based online presentation on grade level retention. Results also indicated that, not only was there a change of overall participants, but there was a difference between the beliefs of teachers who taught grades K-1 and teachers who taught grades 3-4 on 45% to 54% of the belief statements according to mixed model ANOVA and ANCOVA results, respectively.

Additionally, exploratory item analyses were performed for comparison of pre- and post-responses on all twelve belief statements for all 25 participants. This review revealed that sixteen of the twenty-five overall participants (64%) had pre-survey responses that were in line with grade level retention research for 50% or more of the statements yet demonstrated increased alignment on post-survey responses with percentage of change ranging from 17% to 34%. Six of the twenty-five overall participants (24%) had pre-survey responses that were aligned less than 50% with grade retention research and those participants' post-survey response revealed percentage of change ranging from 50% to 75%. This item analysis revealed that 87% of the participants had a pre- to post-survey response change after viewing the online presentation.

Teachers' post-survey comments were reviewed as they serve as the qualitative indicator of whether there was change to teacher beliefs regarding grade level retention. It was found that this data (Appendix B) also supports the quantitative findings and that exposure to a research-based presentation on grade level retention did change the beliefs of teachers. Though there were a few outlying comments, worded in a way to indicate

that the teacher "heard" the research, the majority of the post-survey comments fell in line with grade retention research. For example, comments such as: (1) "Retention seems to work in short term. Gains made seem to wane in 2-3 year," (2) "Gains were short term. Some research stated the students who were passed on fared better than those who were retained;" and (3) "As stated in research, it's difficult to tell who, if anyone, will truly benefit from retention" all support research presented, or at least, teacher interpretation of the research presented. Teachers' post-survey comments included "Retention should NOT be an intervention" and "Retention is always the last resort." Comments also revealed that teachers believe that a system of interventions should be in place and that alternatives to current practices, such as use of a multi-age classroom, may be beneficial. One teacher said it best: "This survey proves that we should pull out all the tools to help each child learn...We lock ourselves into one or two ways due to budget, class size, lack of help, locked into one form of assessment. Let's truly help the child."

Not only did this study reveal that exposure to a research-based presentation on grade level retention could alter the beliefs of teachers, it also revealed that even in a district where retention is not a common practice, there is room to educate on the topic of grade level retention.

Limitations and Delimitations

Research design may have served as a limitation to this study. The study was completed online and, therefore, not only were the teachers required to participate on their own time, but they were required to view the presentation in the absence of the researcher. Without the researcher being present, there is no definite way of knowing if the presentation was viewed in its entirety and/or if the audio portion of the presentation

was in use. Additionally, the pre-survey and post-survey were completed during the same setting and, therefore, may be a reflection of answering to the "test" or to support the research. Delimitations of this study include that the researcher only used one elementary school in a small, urban district and, therefore, the sample size is small and the participants may not fully represent the general population.

Implications for Future Study

This study revealed that, despite a district's position on retention, there is a need to educate teachers on the research associated with grade level retention. Therefore, the current study should be replicated and expanded to include schools with varying policies on retention, various socio-economic statuses, and different regions of the state to gain a more complete and closer representation of the general population. Consideration for alternative methods of delivering the presentation, such as an in-service or a continuing education credit, should be given to increase participation rates.

Table 1
Summary of Analysis of Covariance for Belief Statements One Through Twelve

Belief Statement One

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS1	.804	1	.80	3.86	.07
PrimInt	.000	1	.00	.00	1.00
Error	2.500	12	.21		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Two

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS2	.720	1	.720	3.909	.07
PrimInt	.013	1	.013	.072	.79
Error	2.209	12	.184		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Three

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS3	.964	1	.964	12.857	.005
PrimInt	.150	1	.150	2.000	.188
Error	.750	10	.075		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Four

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS4	.102	1	.102	1.613	.23
PrimInt	.044	1	.044	.706	.42
Error	.756	12	.063		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Five

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS5	.071	1	.071	.300	.594
PrimInt	.000	1	.000	.000	1.000
Error	2.857	12	.238		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Six

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS6	1.080	1	1.080	18.746	.001
PrimInt	.033	1	.033	.568	.467
Error	.634	11	.058		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Seven

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS7	.210	1	.210	1.655	.22
PrimInt	.033	1	.033	.263	.62
Error	1.522	12	.127		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Eight

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS8	.057	1	.057	.857	.373
PrimInt	.033	1	.033	.500	.493
Error	.800	12	.067		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Nine

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS9	.460	1	.460	2.589	.13
PrimInt	.270	1	.270	1.523	.24
Error	2.130	12	.177		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Eleven

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS11	.074	1	.074	.533	.48
PrimInt	.001	1	.001	.004	.95
Error	1.659	12	.138		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Twelve

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PreBS12	1.096	1	1.096	20.663	.001
PrimInt	.030	1	.030	.571	.464
Error	.636	12	.053		

*$p<.05$

Table 2
Adjusted Means for Grades K-1 and Grades 3-4

	K-1		3-4	
Descriptor	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Belief Statement One	.67	.16	.67	.16
Belief Statement Two	.76	.15	.70	.16
Belief Statement Three	.58	.11	.83	.12
Belief Statement Four	.02	.09	.13	.10
Belief Statement Five	.73	.18	.73	.19
Belief Statement Six	.91	.09	.81	.09
Belief Statement Seven	.08	.13	.19	.14
Belief Statement Eight	.98	.09	.88	.10
Belief Statement Nine	.86	.15	.59	.16
Belief Statement Ten	1.00	.00	1.00	.00
Belief Statement Eleven	.13	.13	.14	.14
Belief Statement Twelve	.91	.08	.82	.09

Table 3
Mixed Model Analysis of Variance Test of Within-Subjects Pre-Post

Belief Statement One

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost1	.815	1	.82	6.41	.03
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.015	1	.02	.12	.74
Error	1.652	13	.13		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Two

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost2	.815	1	.82	6.41	.03
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.015	1	.02	.12	.74
Error	1.652	13	.13		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Three

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost3	.033	1	.03	.85	.38
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.033	1	.03	.85	.38
Error	.429	11	.04		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Four

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost4	.536	1	.536	4.76	.05
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.002	1	.002	.02	.89
Error	1.464	13	.113		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Five

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost5	3.348	1	3.35	26.35	.000
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.015	1	.02	.12	.738
Error	1.652	13	.13		

**p<.05*

Belief Statement Six

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost6	.036	1	.04	1.00	.34
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.036	1	.04	1.00	.34
Error	.429	12	.04		

**p<.05*

Belief Statement Seven

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost7	1.548	1	1.55	12.19	.004
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.215	1	.22	1.69	.216
Error	1.652	13	.13		

**p<.05*

Belief Statement Eight

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost8	.860	1	.86	6.95	.02
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.060	1	.06	.48	.50
Error	1.607	13	.12		

**p<.05*

Belief Statement Nine

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost9	1.152	1	1.15	8.74	.01
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.086	1	.09	.65	.44
Error	1.714	13	.13		

**p<.05*

Belief Statement Eleven

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost11	.134	1	.134	.933	.35
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.001	1	.001	.004	.95
Error	1.866	13	.144		

**p<.05*

Belief Statement Twelve

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrePost12	.029	1	.03	.87	.37
PrePost*PrimaryIntermediate	.029	1	.03	.87	.37
Error	.437	13	.03		

**p<.05*

Table 4
Mixed Model Analysis of Variance Test of Between-Subjects Effects

Belief Statement One

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.134	1	.13	.36	.56
Error	4.866	13	.37		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Two

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.001	1	.001	.002	.97
Error	4.866	13	.374		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Three

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	1.615	1	1.62	5.92	.03
Error	3.000	11	.27		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Four

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.193	1	.19	.96	.35
Error	2.607	13	.20		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Five

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.048	1	.05	.29	.60
Error	2.152	13	.17		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Six

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.036	1	.04	.12	.74
Error	3.571	12	.30		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Seven

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.172	1	.17	.68	.43
Error	3.295	13	.25		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Eight

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.402	1	.40	2.12	.17
Error	2.464	13	.19		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Nine

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.288	1	.29	.90	.36
Error	4.179	13	.32		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Eleven

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.005	1	.005	.03	.88
Error	2.795	13	.215		

*$p<.05$

Belief Statement Twelve

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
PrimaryIntermediate	.015	1	.02	.05	.82
Error	3.652	13	.28		

Appendix A

TOS True/False Survey Questions

1. Retention provides children an opportunity to raise their current level of academic achievement.
2. Retention provides children an opportunity to prevent future academic failure.
3. If I were to send students with low academic performance to the next grade level, their teachers may form a low opinion of my teaching abilities.
4. Retention injures children's self-esteem.
5. Retention is most effective when it takes place in kindergarten or first grade.
6. Retention is an effective intervention strategy for boys.
7. Retained students are more likely to exhibit behavior problems than non-retained classmates.
8. Retention allows English language learners additional opportunities to master language skills and academic material.
9. Retention provides immature children an opportunity to catch up to their peers.
10. Retention is my only alternative when students do not successfully master grade level material by the end of the school year.
11. Retained students are more likely to drop out of school before graduation than non-retained students.
12. Retention is an effective intervention strategy for girls.

Appendix B

Pre- and Post-Survey Comments

Please note that comments were not changed to correct spelling or grammatical errors. They are presented just as they were received on the survey forms.

Belief Statement One: Retention provides children an opportunity to raise their current level of academic achievement.

Pre-Survey Comments 1:

"Actually I think it depends on the child. Sometimes when a child enters school at a young age (just turning 5 or still 4) their lack of ability to keep up might be due to maturity. In this case, a year to mature might be a good idea."

"The only time I have successfully retained a student is because for some reason they missed a significant portion of the first grade curriculum the first time (ex. Absences, prior school did not adequately prepare them)."

"Tends to provide more benefit to immature students in grades K-1"

"It CAN be beneficial in some cases if a student is failing due to non-academic issues. Immaturity or unusual disruptions in home-life could be affecting academic progress. A chance to 'catch up' is sometimes beneficial."

"Retention is the last resort after all other preventative and intervention strategies have been tried. If a learning disability is suspected, retention is not likely to be successful."

"It all depends on the circumstances, the disability if there is one."

"A friend whose mother made him repeat a grade said it raised his self confidence as well…he went from the bottom of his class to the top."

"In some cases it does."

"I wanted to mark maybe on this one. Sometimes it depends on the individual situation."

"I marked true because I have knowledge of 2 students that have significantly raised their academic achievement by repeating a grade. However, these 2 incidents were over 26 years of teaching. Both were kindergarten retentions and extensive interventions were put in place. Without the intervention plan, I do not believe simply retaining the grade would have raised academic achievement."

"If interventions are in place and the child is presented the instruction in a new manner."

"One hopes it is an opportunity. From some it may be an opportunity to find a better fit in a zone of proximal development."

"I believe it does. I've been able to keep a few students back during my career. Some students just need that extra time. They don't all start walking at the same age. They don't all starting talking at the same age and…well, you see where I'm going with it, I hope."

Post-Survey Comments 1:

"I only retain students who have missed a significant amount of material the first time around (due to illness, absences, etc.)"

"Retention seems to work in the short term. Gains made seem to wane in 2-3 years. As a first grade teacher, I don't often seem the far reaching effects of retention."

"I've retained only 2 students in twelve years. I don't think it is the solution for most, but for a few it is beneficial. My answers are based on my experience with the two I have retained."

Belief Statement Two: Retention provides children an opportunity to prevent future academic failure.

Pre-Survey Comments 2:

"In some cases this might be true; however, when lack of performance is caused by lack of understanding, retention will not prevent future academic failure."

"Tough question! Children retained in K-1 might have an opportunity to become less naïve students and will be more successful in school as a result."

"This would be in instances where attendance, health, or mobility issues were at fault and have sense been resolved."

"If they are already behind, pushing them forward does not help."

"Not necessarily."

"If caught early on, retention can provide students that extra time they need to grasp a concept."

Post-Survey Comments 2

"Gains were short term. Some research stated that students who were passed on faired better than those who were retained."

"I still feel it gives them more time. It's something many students need."

Belief Statement Three: If I were to send students with low academic performance to the next grade level, their teachers may form a low opinion of my teaching aibilities.

Pre-Survey Comments 3

"I feel as though I haven't done my job if my students are not adequately prepared for the next grade."

"Not my call"

"True – if students did not have a record of modifications or interventions."

"It may be true that others would make judgments of another's teaching based on non-retentions, but it is just as possible that one might think retention itself was due to a lack of teaching ability."

"I don't think they think that of me personally but I get students who should not be in first grade that just aren't ready for it."

Post-Survey Comments 3

"It is a reality that teachers prefer to have students prepared to meet the challenges of their grade level. It's natural for most of our time and attention to go to students who struggle. In some instances, these students are able to do grade level work by the end of the year. It has also happened that some students have to work on skills from the previous year to such an extent that it seemed as though they could have benefitted from more time and practice another year in the previous grade would have afforded them. As stated in the research, it's difficult to tell who, if anyone, will truly benefit from retention. Students, who are passed on, without adequate preparation, should have specific targeted interventions at the very least. Early intervention, in form of the specific targeted interventions, may be preferable to retention in all situations. Districts would need additional staff available to assist with this."

"This is a misconception of teachers. Uninformed teachers may still have this view, however."

"I feel that teacher's understand that the decision is not ours."

Belief Statement Four: Retention injures children's self-esteem.

Pre-Survey Comments 4

"I believe the approach taken and how it is explained to the child will have an effect on the self-esteem piece. If handled properly, the child's self-esteem should remain intact if it was there to start with."

"If retained beyond grade 2."

"There are some exceptions once again. The younger the child – the less his/her self-esteem is injured. If allowed to "shine" the next year – retention could actually improve self-esteem."

"If not handled in a very sensitive manner retention can injure self-esteem, at least in the short term."

"Again it can be true and it can be false. A lot depends on the circumstances and why and when the child is retained."

"I would rather answer this by saying it could injure children's self-esteem with some students because they could be taller than the other students in class and they leave their friends behind as their friends move on and they don't. But students already are developing low self-esteem because they know they are not keeping up academically with their friends. So, giving them another year to catch up can dramatically improve their self-esteem when they see the progress they are making."

"It depends on the situation."

"In upper grades it is more likely."

"I think it could but it doesn't have to. I like to use the factor that some students just need more time."

Post-Survey Comments 4

"I know that children who are retained are questioned by their peers as to why they didn't move to the next grade and it makes them feel uncomfortable. I've also had many parents bring up the fact that they were retained in school. In rare instances, they felt as though it helped them. More often than not, it seemed to be a devastating experience. Often times, these are the parents who are quick to express that they are "not good at math" or some other subject as you are giving them ideas of how to help their child at home. They seem to lack confidence, to this day, in school related matters."

Belief Statement Five: Retention is most effective when it takes place in kindergarten or first grade.

Pre-Survey Comments 5

"Once again, in these lower grades, the child can be retained before the self-esteem can be effected and will allow for the maturity to accept the education being provided."

"Retention would still be a last resort. Preventative and intervention strategies are much more desirable."

"The research stated that this common belief is true."

"Catch them when they are young and get too far behind."

"I believe interventions should be in place during early childhood services and kindergarten."

"I truly believ this. Later is when peer pressure sets in hard."

Post-Survey Comments 5

"Although I answered false, the small percentage of students who retention may help are students who have never been to kindergarten or only had a month of kindergarten."

"It gets them early."

Belief Statement Six: Retention is an effective intervention strategy for boys.

Pre-Survey Comments 6

"I don't view retention as an effective intervention for girls or boys beyond 1st grade."

"This is a case by case basis. I know that many more boys than girls are retained. As always, all factors must be carefully considered."

"All depends on circumstances."

"Wish you had a 'Don't know' on this one!"

"It can be in certain situations. It should be used VERY selectively and only with parental support."

"Why just boys? It could be."

Post-Survey Comments 6

"Retention should NOT be an intervention."

"…however, it occurs more often with boys than girls."

Belief Statement Seven: Retained students are more likely to exhibit behavior problems than non-retained classmates.

Pre-Survey Comments 7

"If retained in older grades."

"This statement is neither true or false at the elementary level. I would say true at the secondary level."

"I know research says that more behavior problems are likely to be exhibited but I feel that the behavior issues are more likely due to characteristics that were present before retention."

"Not if it permits them to fill any missing learning gaps."

Post-Survey Comments 7

"Research stated this to be true."

Belief Statement Eight: Retention allows English language learners additional opportunities to master language skills and academic material.

Pre-Survey Comments 8

"This can be accomplished without retention."

"I don't see this as a valid reason to retain. ESL students would need far longer than 1 year to become proficient in the language. Other supportive measures need to be in place."

"It can be but should not be the only option for additional opportunities."

"It could."

Post-Survey Comments 8

"Regardless of the grade level, non English speakers will be surrounded by English speaking teachers. A 10 year old will have trouble learning 2nd grade skills just the same as 5th grade skills if he/she cannot understand the teacher."

"I don't think my thoughts on this have changed but am open to the intervention process."

Belief Statement Nine: Retention provides immature children an opportunity to catch up to their peers.

Pre-Survey Comments 9

"Maturity is helpful when dealing with other people as well as in the learning environment."

"YES!"

"Once again – in some instances this could be a true statement. Immaturity needs to be defined to answer in a positive manner."

"There are instances when a very young child may benefit from more time. Again, multiple sources of information should drive the decision to retain."

"If maturity is a factor, yes"

"I'm thinking of those kids with summer/early fall birthdays who are very young when they begin school."

"I asked to retain a child that was born prematurely but was age ready for first grade. She would have one strong day out of 10. She didn't have kindergarten skills master. She spent another year with me and became strong in all subject areas."

Post-Survey Comments 9

"I maintain that this may be true in SOME instances!!"

"…another misconception."

"The option of a multiage class is very interesting. I think it could create a scheduling nightmare for schools if a building only has pockets of multiage. However, a multiage class would allow a student to interact with peers on a variety of social level and learn material at their appropriate grade level. The immature child wouldn't stick out as much if the division of ages were not so concrete."

Belief Statement Ten: Retention is my only alternative when students do not successfully master grade level material by the end of the school year.

Pre-Survey Comments 10

"If a student is not mastering grade level material, the student should be evaluated to rule out all possible causes for the lack of ability to retain the information."

"Green folder? Testing? Summer School?"

"Retention should NOT be intervention."

"Retention is always the last resort."

"Extra tutoring, interventions throughout the school year. If there is progress moving ahead would be okay."

"A system of interventions should be in place."

"Interventions often make a difference."

Post-Survey Comments 10

"Other options may be Reading Recovery or Direction Instruction."

Belief Statement Eleven: Retained students are more likely to drop out of school before graduation than non-retained students.

Pre-Survey Comments 11

"Since they can leave school at age 18 if a student is retained it is more likely for them to turn 18 before they graduate and if school is difficult, they might just give up on it."

"Research has shown this to be true."

"Therefore is must be used wisely."

"I really did not have any prior knowledge to base my answer on for this question."

"I think that it could be true, depending on how it's handled by everyone involved."

Post-Survey Comments 11

"…96% of those who have been retained twice"

"Drop out could be because retention didn't really solve the academic problems or social skills negatively affected by such a traumatic experience (retention), or a combination of both – all could lead to dropping out."

Belief Statement Twelve: Retention is an effective intervention strategy for girls.

Pre-Survey Comments 12

"Gender is irrelevant in making decisions as important as retention."

"This is case by case, when all factors are considered."

"All depends on circumstances."

"It can be but again only with parental support and is very situational."

"Retention should be used as a last resort (for girls or boys). The question of 'why' a child is underperforming needs to be investigated. E.g. child misses a year of school due to illness or neglect vs. behavior getting in the way of academic performance."

"It could be."

Post-Survey Comments 12

"This survey proves that we should pull out all the tools to help each child learn. Different ways to teach both auditory and visual. We lock ourselves into one or two ways due to budget, class size, lack of help, locked into one form of assessment. Let's truly help the child."

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Toni M. Hook

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PROFILE

- Ability and experience working with students, families, and school personnel of all backgrounds
- Organized, highly motivated, and detail-directed problem solver
- Experience preparing and maintaining reports founded on empirically-based research
- Experience working with both groups and individuals providing consulting services including psychological evaluations, team building, and behavior and academic intervention
- Experience in RTI process
- Proven ability to work collaboratively with students, staff, and administrators

EDUCATION

Marshall University Graduate College, South Charleston WV
Ed.S., School Psychology Expected graduation 2011

University of Charleston, Charleston WV
B.A., Elementary Education
Graduated 1990

EMPLOYMENT

North College Hill City Schools
Cincinnati*,OH*
School Psychologist Intern October 2010 - Current

- Provide services to Elementary, Middle School and High School
- Individual and group consultative services to staff, parents and students
- Individual and group counseling
- Facilitate Evaluation Team Report Meetings
- Psycho-educational assessments
- RTI consultant

Kolbe Corp
Phoenix,AZ
Internet Marketing Analyst November 1997 - May 2010

- Only employee that has worked full-time off-site and out of state via telecommuting
- Assist in programming and maintenance of company's websites

- Manage/facilitate email marketing campaign initiatives
- Assist Marketing Director in print and web marketing efforts

Star Struck
Bethel, CT
Website Programmer January 2000 - March 2005

- Responsible for design and maintenance of multiple websites including an online version of a print magazine, *At The Yard*, that was started by my husband and I and acquired by Star Struck.

Southwest Human Development
Phoenix, AZ
Mental Health Specialist January 1995 - October 2007

- Provided consultative and counseling services to students, parents and teachers in the Head Start program in Maricopa and surrounding counties
- Performed cognitive evaluations as part of integrated assessments for Kindergarten placement
- Worked with students, parents and teachers from various cultural backgrounds

Fayette County Board of Education
Fayetteville, WV
Teacher October 1990 - June 1994

- Title I Reading and Math – Grades 1-5 – 1 year
- 1st grade – 2 years
- 1st/2nd split – 1 year

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Student Member of National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
- Student Member of West Virginia School Psychologists Association

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

- State of Ohio School Psychologist 1-Year Temporary License #OH3115007
- State of Kentucky Teaching License EPSB ID 201126794; Certificate 2200

REFERENCES

Letters of reference available upon request

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February 10, 2011

Fred Krieg, PhD
Psychology Department, MUGC

RE: IRBNet ID# 207621-1
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Krieg:

Protocol Title:	[207621-1] Teacher Beliefs Regarding Grade Retention	
Expiration Date:	February 10, 2012	
Site Location:	MUGC	
Type of Change:	New Project	APPROVED
Review Type:	Exempt Review	

In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Chair for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire February 10, 2012. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for students Toni Hook and Sarah Terry.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, CIP at (304) 696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.