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Teachers' Beliefs Towards Grade Retention in a Rural Elementary School

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TEACHERS' BELIEFS TOWARDS GRADE RETENTION

IN A RURAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Proposal submitted to

Marshall University Graduate College

In partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree of

Educational Specialist in

School Psychology

by

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Abstract

This study examined the beliefs of kindergarten through fourth grade teachers regarding effects of retention on academic, emotional, and social areas, as well as alternative interventions to retention. The teachers were asked to take a web-based pre-survey on grade retention. After completing the initial survey they were then asked to watch a web-based PowerPoint presentation on research-based evidence regarding retention before taking a web-based post-survey.

The results of this study revealed that teacher's beliefs towards grade retention were not significantly changed when presented with a research-based PowerPoint presentation regarding the negative effects of retention practices, as measured by the pre and post-survey. The comments on the surveys backed up the statistics stating that there were no significant changes in opinion.

Chapter One: Review of Literature

Grade retention is a practice that despite many years of research remains one of the most controversial and highly debated topics in the educational field. Teachers, principals, parents, and other school faculty continue to have a wide-range of beliefs on the subject, and the practice of retention varies from teacher to teacher, district to district, and state to state. Retention can occur for several reasons, but the two most often used are: when students fail to meet the requirements of their specific grade and therefore do not pass on to the next grade, or when students are deemed "immature" for their grade. Supposedly an additional year is intended to help students reach the goals of the particular curriculum for that grade (Bonvin, Bless, & Schuepback, 2008). However, according to Bonvin et. al. (2008), rarely are the instructional methods or learning objectives changed to meet the retained child's needs so retention is mainly just a repetition of the same grade and material.

According to Jimerson and Kaufman (2003), despite conclusions that retention causes negative effects on students, retention has continued to increase over the past 25 years. They also stated that evidence indicated that nationally 30% to 50% of students are retained at least once by the ninth grade and that current estimates indicated that 7% to 9% of children in the United States or 2.4 million children are retained every year (Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003). According to the National Association of School Psychologists (1998) position statement on retention, the highest rates are among poor, minority, inner-city students.

Teacher Attitudes Toward Grade Retention

Attitudes and beliefs are formed by people in several different ways. Two types of knowledge are propositional and practical (Shepard & Smith, 1988). Propositional knowledge is

knowledge of research findings, while practical knowledge is knowledge gained from personal experiences (Shepard & Smith, 1988). This difference in knowledge is supported by Calderhead's (1996) efforts to differentiate among the different kinds of teacher knowledge. Calderhead says that questions about research results require teachers' theoretical knowledge and situational questions require them to access their personal practices or case knowledge. Research has shown that teachers tend to rely more on practical knowledge than on propositional or formal knowledge when making decisions about retention (Shepard & Smith, 1989). In addition to this finding, it has been seen that teachers rarely change their beliefs based on research and are more likely to make changes based on their own personal experiences or those of other teachers/school faculty (Kagan, 1992).

Witmer, Hoffman, and Nottis, conducted a study in 2004 using a Teacher Retention Beliefs and Knowledge Questionnaire and found that 77% of respondents believed retention was an effective practice for preventing failure in later grades. Tomchin & Impara (1992) found that teachers in grades Kindergarten through third grade had different opinions than teachers in grades four through seven. They found that teachers in earlier grades tend to agree that students need to master basic skills before moving on to the next grade, and that they believe retention to be the most effective in Kindergarten and first grade. Witmer, et. al. (2004) also found that 94% of respondents disagreed with the statement, "Children should never be retained." The data that they obtained from this study was consistent with other research (Byrnes & Yamamoto, 1986; Enters, 1994; and Tomchin & Impara, 1992). All of these studies indicate that beliefs towards retention change very little through the years despite more and more research against the practice (Witmer et. al., 2004). Sakowicz (1996) has stated that, "[Of] all the major issues in education,

grade retention represents one of the clearest examples of non-communication between research and practice."

Legislation and Retention

Within the last several years there has been an increased pressure to improve students' performance in school, and legislation and policies have been developed at all levels: national, state, and district. The result of these policies has been a widespread push to "end social promotion (NASP, 2003)." Some research suggests that initiatives to enhance student performance, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, have called for a wide range of academic standards which have been used as indicators of whether students show proper proficiency and should be promoted to the next grade. Since NCLB was put into practice, the number of students retained each year has actually risen. This data could possibly be attributed to the fact that often there is a discrepancy between what research shows and the actual policies put into practice. This means that educational policies and the instructional strategies we use do not necessarily follow what research has shown to be effective (Jimerson, et al., 2006).

Effects of Retention

Jimerson, et al.,(2006) conducted a meta-analysis of twenty studies from 1990-1999 and combined these with studies conducted from 1925 to 1999 that had been previously printed in three previous meta-analyses to provide the most recent systematic literature review on the effects of retention. According to the mata-analysis, longitudinal studies that followed retained students through age 21 have shown that retained students are more likely to drop out of school when comparing them to a group of equally low but socially promoted students (Jimerson, et. al., 2006). The same studies found that the retained groups had lower levels of academic adjustment at the end of Grade 11, were less likely to enroll in postsecondary school, received lower

education/employment status ratings, were paid less per hour, and received poorer employment-competence ratings.

In addition to this research, Jimerson, Woehr, Kaufman, & Anderson (2004) listed many effects of retention in a publication for NASP:

Temporary Gains: Research shows that initial academic improvements may actually occur during the first year the student is retained, but that these gains decline with 2-3 years of retention and most students never catch back up.

Negative Impact on Achievement and Adjustment: Retention is associated with all areas of student achievement; as well as social and emotional adjustment.

Negative Long-Term Effects: There is no known evidence that retention has a positive effect on long-term achievement or adjustment. By adolescence, retention is predictive of "health-compromising behaviors" like emotional distress, low self-esteem, poor peer relations, use of cigarettes, alcohol and drug abuse, suicidal intentions and violence, and early sexual activity.

Retention and Drop Out: Retained students are 5 to 11 times more likely to drop out of school

Consequences as an adult: More likely to live on public assistance, be unemployed, or be in prison

Scientifically-Based Alternatives to Retention

It is important, when looking at the ineffectiveness of retention, to discuss what the proven effective alternatives actually are. The National Association of School Psychologists gives a list of alternatives in their position statement (2003) on retention. They recommend that those in the educational system:

- Encourage parental involvement through frequent contact with teachers, supervision of homework, etc.

- Adopt age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instructional strategies.

- Emphasize how important early developmental and preschool programs are in enhancing language and social skills before beginning school.

- Use consistent assessments that include continuous progress monitoring and formative evaluation in order to modify instruction.

- Use effective early reading programs and include mental health programs in the school system.

- Incorporate student support teams

- Reduce behavior problems in the classroom by implementing effective behavior management and cognitive behavior modification.

- Provide appropriate services for students with educational disabilities using collaboration between individuals in the regular, remedial, and special education settings.

- Offer extended year/ day or summer school programs and use tutoring and mentoring programs

- Implement school-wide programs that promote the psychosocial and academic skills of all students.

- Establish community-based relationships and services in order to provide for a wide array of needs occurring in at-risk students.

   In addition to these it is important to use interventions that accelerate the learning process such as using a three-tier model like RTI and extended learning time to allow the student more access to the curriculum as well as different instructional strategies to learn the

information (Protheroe, 2007). It is also helpful to attempt to increase teacher effectiveness by providing professional development that will help them to understand what approaches are most appropriate for their lowest-performing students (Protheroe, 2007).

In 2010, Brittany Petay conducted research and completed her thesis on, "Grade Retention as Perceived by Kindergarten through Third Grade Teachers." In this study she determined that teachers in one West Virginia county significantly changed their beliefs on a pre/post survey after reviewing an article on research about grade retention. When Petay completed the study originally she gave both the pre and post surveys to the teachers at the same time, therefore it was recommended that another study be done to improve her methodology. The current study is a follow-up study using a different design, presentation of research, and survey.

The current study examined the perceptions of kindergarten through fourth grade teachers regarding student academics, emotional and social effects, in addition to alternative interventions to grade retention in the rural district in Ohio with no policy or philosophy regarding limiting the use of retention in the district. According to the Ohio Department of Education User Reports, this district has had promotion rates greater than 95% of all students grades Kindergarten through Fourth Grade from 2005-2010, with the exceptions of 2007 in which they promoted 92.1% of kindergarteners and 2008 in which they promoted 92.8% of kindergarteners (Ohio Department of Education, 2011). According to reports from the district the majority of the students retained in this district are done so in grades kindergarten or first grade for maturity reasons. There are two research hypotheses—the first is that there will be a significant difference in pre and post-attitude scores concerning retention for teachers who read and listened to the presentation on grade retention and the second is that there will be a significant difference between changes in Kindergarten/first grade vs. third and fourth grade. The null hypotheses are that there will not be

a significant difference in pre and post-attitude scores concerning retention for teachers who read

and listened to the presentation on grade retention nor a significant difference between grades.

Chapter 2: Methods

Participants

The participants of this study included all certified teachers in a rural school district in Ohio, while a simultaneous study using identical methodology was being done by another graduate student in an urban setting. The staff included (38) certified teachers, (37) female and (1) male, serving as regular education teachers and intervention specialists for grades Kindergarten through fourth grade. A total of 38 informed consents and instruction sheets for participating in the online survey/presentation were handed out and discussed at the school. A total of 13 participants returned consents and participated in the pre-survey, PowerPoint presentation intervention, and post-survey.

Instrument

The Teacher Opinion Survey (TOS), 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 (See Appendix B). The 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 also included following each question to allow the participant to qualify his/her answer and to provide further qualitative insight into the teachers' beliefs. The survey covered general teacher beliefs on grade retention including questions pertaining to effects of grade retention on future academics, self-esteem, alternative interventions, etc.

Design and Procedure

Two simultaneous studies were conducted using identical methodologies. The difference in the two studies was one was urban and one was rural which was done intentionally to compare those two variables. These studies were given joint IRB approval (see Appendix A).

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

Participants were each provided an informed consent in their individual mailboxes explaining what the study was about and how it would work. Teachers who chose to participate signed the consent and returned it to an envelope in the researcher's mailbox. Those who returned consent were then provided a packet including a copy of their signed informed consent and directions for participation in the study including the website address and a unique, nine-digit identifier (for privacy and confidentiality purposes) that the participant entered on the pre- and post-survey. Once participants accessed the website, they were directed to a web page explaining that the study consisted of 3 parts (pre-survey, presentation, post- survey) and the estimated time for completion along with a link to the secure online pre-survey. Upon completion of the pre-survey, participants were advanced to a confirmation page providing a link to the secure online presentation. After viewing the web-based presentation, participants were then advanced to the secure online post-survey. Results of the pre- and post-survey were automatically sent by email to the researcher only.

Chapter Three: Results

The survey data was analyzed using an Paired Samples T-Test, for test for the first

hypothesis, overall change in the pre and post surveys (See Table 1). The second hypothesis was

intended to be analyzed using an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to test for significance

between group one of kindergarten and first grade(K/1) and group two of third and fourth

grade(3/4); however, due to a small *n* it was not possible to obtain accurate statistics. Results

from the teachers' surveys revealed that after watching the presentation between pre- and post-

surveys the teacher's attitudes toward grade retention showed change on five out of the twelve

belief statements. Although there were significant changes on five of the statements, due to the

majority showing no change the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis.

"Retention provides children an opportunity to raise their current level of academic

achievement" was the first statement on the survey and a significant difference was found overall

(T(13)=-2.309, p ,.05). This result showed that teachers are less likely to believe that retention

provides an opportunity to raise level of academic achievement after watching the presentation

whether they taught K/1 or 3/4. "Retention provides children an opportunity to prevent future

academic failure" was the second statement on the survey and a significant difference was found

overall (T(13)=-2.309, p ,.05). This indicates that teachers were more likely to change their belief

that retention prevents future academic failure no matter what grade they taught.

Analysis of the third statement, "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" could not be completed because the standard error of the difference was 0. The fourth

statement, "Retention injures children's self-esteem" showed no significant change overall

(T(13)=.000, p >.05) indicating that teachers were just as likely to believe that retention does not

injure self-esteem as they were before watching the presentation. The fifth statement, "Retention is most effective when it takes place in kindergarten or first grade" showed no significant change overall (T(13)=-.000, p >.05), indicating that teachers were just as likely to believe that retention is most effective in kindergarten or first grade as they were before watching the presentation.

"Retention is an effective intervention strategy for boys," the sixth belief statement, showed no significant change overall (T(13)=-1.915, p > .05). These numbers indicate that the teachers in this district already agreed with the research before they watched the presentation, one comment in the comments section stating: "I don't think of gender when considering options." The seventh belief statement, "Retained students are more likely to exhibit behavior problems than non-retained students" showed a significant change overall (T(13)=2.309, p < .05). This result indicates that the teachers were more likely to believe that retained students are more likely to exhibit behavior problems after they view the research presentation; however, when review the qualitative results several teachers stated that even though this is true they do not believe that the behaviors are related to retention but that they were already poorly behaved students.

Belief statement eight, "Retention allows English language learners an opportunity to master language skills and academic material" showed no significant change overall (T(13)=-1.393, p >.05), indicating no change of opinion concern ELL students after watching the presentation. Belief statement nine, "Retention provides immature children an opportunity to catch up to their peers" showed a significant difference overall (T(13)=-2.739, p > .05). When looking at this question, teacher opinion actually changed against the research indicating that teachers believed that retaining immature children does give them an opportunity to catch up to peers. Statement ten, "Retention is my only alternative when students do no successfully master

grade level material by the end of the school year" showed no significant change overall (T(13)=.000, p >.05). In response to this question, the results indicate that teachers already believed that there are other alternatives to intervention prior to viewing the presentation. "Retained students are more likely to drop out of school before graduation than non-retained students," statement eleven, did not show a significant change overall (T(13)=1.477, p >.05) or by grade level. This result indicates that teachers were just as likely to believe that retained students do not drop out more than non-retained students consistent with their belief prior to reviewing the research. Finally, statement twelve, "Retention is an effective intervention for girls" showed a significant change overall (T(13)=-2.345, p <.05). This result indicates that teachers were more likely to believe that retention is ineffective for girls after viewing the presentation overall.

Qualitative results from the teachers' comments revealed that after reading the article teachers still felt that grade retention is an appropriate intervention in some cases and for some students and that retention has very little negative effect on a student's future socially or academically (See Appendix B).

Chapter Four: Discussion

Research continues to show that retention is a failed intervention. It does not work in allowing students to "catch up" academically or mature emotionally or socially before moving to the next grade level, and it can in fact have serious negative consequences on a child's self-esteem, whether or not they continue through to graduation, etc. Despite all the research against retention we continue to see students retained in schools year after year. The question continues to be why do schools retain students despite all of the research-based evidence to the contrary, especially when we are at a time in education when research-based practices and interventions are being promoted in schools? This study examined the beliefs of teachers, grades kindergarten through fourth grade, on retention as an intervention.

Results from this research study indicated that teacher's beliefs towards grade retention changed on four out of the twelve belief statements, and one changed against the research that was presented to the teachers. When looking at the survey results there were more changes by question in the older grades (three and four) than in the earlier grades (Kindergarten and first). This result could be attributed to the literature regarding teachers generally believing that retention is most effective in the earlier grades, if the K/1 teachers were only focusing on the grades they teach and not retention overall it would indicate that they would be more in favor of retention than the later grades. Belief statement ten, regarding alternatives to retention had a significant change *against* the research presented. This result could be an indication of the teachers' true beliefs toward retention and may show that initially they gave an answer that they deemed appropriate, but when they took the post-survey their true attitudes were expressed and they actually used the research presented to them to support an irrational belief.

The qualitative results from the comments sections after each belief statement show that the teachers did not let the research-based information from the presentation change their beliefs regarding retention. Six of the thirteen respondents left comment feedback for some questions on the surveys. Of the six there were two kindergarten teachers, two first grade teachers, one third grade teacher, and one fourth grade teacher indicating that those who teach earlier grades were more likely to leave feedback. All of the comments indicated that the younger the student, the more beneficial retention can be, and that despite evidence to the contrary they continued to believe that retention does not damage self-esteem but in fact enhances self-esteem. None of the six teachers who left comments changed their beliefs on the first two questions regarding retention giving students the opportunity to raise their achievement level and prevent future academic failure, and all six of them were against the research presented to them. Three of the respondents in the K/1 category and both of the respondents in the 3/4 category left comments indicating that they did not change their opinions on these questions because they "still believe" that this is true in some cases.

In looking at the comments made by teachers, in both the earlier and later grade levels, teachers indicated that their opinions come from their own personal experiences and from the students they have worked with in the past, and not from the research that was presented to them. This result is consistent with Kagan's (1992) claim that teachers seldom change their attitudes based on research, and instead change their attitudes based on personal experiences and advice from others--this may indicate why we still see many schools and teachers still using retention, and why their opinions on this survey did not change.

When looking at Toni Gilmore-Hooks study (2011), which was this exact study done in an urban setting, there were several differences between her study and this one. In the urban

study there was significantly more participation and a much higher *n* than in this study. This result could be attributed to either teachers in the urban setting being more willing to participate or to the fact that in her study a completion bonus of a gift card was rewarded after the taking surveys. In this study, in the rural environment, it was requested by school administration that the researcher not give a completion bonus for participation in the study. The lack of completion bonus could have had a detrimental effect on teacher participation. Her study also had a significantly higher amount of change among the teachers in the urban setting who participated. This could indicate that there is a difference in urban and rural environments and that teachers in the urban setting are more likely to listen to research and change their opinions based on what they learn and that teachers in the rural setting are more likely to disregard research and change their opinions based on their own personal experiences. The difference between urban and rural settings could also be attributed to the difference in participation, and may not indicate that there is a real difference among teachers in the urban and rural setting.

Limitations and Delimitations

One factor that may have influenced the research findings could be the research design, where teachers were provided an online survey/presentation/survey format. Teachers may have grown impatient with the website or have had more distracters than there would be with a paper format and not have caught all of the information that they needed--with the researcher not present at the time of the survey it is difficult to know how they long they actually took to process the information or to take the surveys. Another limitation may be that the survey instructions were placed in each teacher's mailbox and not handed directly to the teacher. This could mean that teachers ignored the surveys and may have thrown them away accidentally with other papers in their boxes.

Delimitations of this study include that there was only one elementary school in this district and the teachers vary in range in ages and years teaching. There is no way of knowing that teachers from all ranges or years teaching participated in the survey and the results many not fully represent the entire population. An age factor and possibly a tenure factor may affect outcome—younger and less experienced teachers may rely on research more than older and more experienced teachers to guide their behavior. This factor needs further research.

Implications for Future Study

It is recommended that the current study be replicated with the following changes in design: Have the researcher provide the presentation to the teachers in person rather than via the internet so that you know for sure that the teachers were paying attention and were focused on the research. Another area of research may be to look at elementary versus middle school teachers to see if there is a more significant difference in change between older and younger grades. It recommended that further research be done to rule whether there was an urban/rural dynamic or whether the change among urban and rural settings was due to other variables.

Resources

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Witmer, S.M., Hoffman, L.M., & Nottis, K.E. (2004). Elementary teachers' beliefs and

    knowledge about grade retention: How do we know what they know? *Education, 125,*

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Table 1: Paired Samples T-Test

Pair	T-Test	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre/Post 1	-2.309	.040
Pre/Post 2	-2.309	.040
Pre/Post 3	N/A	N/A
Pre/Post 4	.000	1.000
Pre/Post 5	.000	1.000
Pre/Post 6	-1.915	.082
Pre/Post 7	2.309	.040
Pre/Post 8	-1.393	.191
Pre/Post 9	-2.739	.018
Pre/Post 10	.000	1.000
Pre/Post 11	1.477	.165
Pre/Post 12	-2.345	.039

**Significance p $< .05$

Appendix A

IRB Approval

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Office of Research Integrity   FWA 00002704
Institutional Review Board
401 11th St., Suite 1300   IRB1 #00002205
Huntington, WV 25701   IRB2 #00003206

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.

Appendix B

Grade Level Retention Survey

Please enter the IDENTIFIER provided within your instructions package:

What grade do you teach?

1. Retention provides children an opportunity to raise their current level of academic achievement.

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

2. Retention provides children an opportunity to prevent future academic failure.

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

**3. If I were to send students with low academic performance to the next grade level, their teachers may f
a
low opinion of my teaching abilities.**

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

4. Retention injures children's self-esteem.

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

5. Retention is most effective when it takes place in kindergarten or first grade.

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

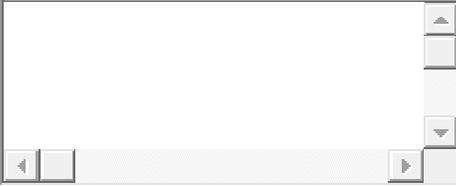**6. Retention is an effective intervention strategy for boys.**

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

7. Retained students are more likely to exhibit behavior problems than non-retained classmates.

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

[text box]

8. Retention allows English language learners additional opportunities to master language skills and academic material.

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

[text box]

9. Retention provides immature children an opportunity to catch up to their peers.

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

[text box]

10. Retention is my only alternative when students do not successfully master grade level material by th end of the school year.

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

[text box]

11. Retained students are more likely to drop out of school before gradutation than non-retained studen

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

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[                    ]
```

12. Retention is an effective intervention strategy for girls.

○ True   ○ False

Comment:

```
[                    ]
```

Send | Clear the form

Appendix C

Comments from all surveys returned

1. **Retention provides children an opportunity to raise their current level of academic achievement.**

   Pre-survey:

   "I believe this is true for kindergarten retentions."

   "I was retained in the first grade and I currently have a Master's Degree and have excelled my entire school career."

   "In some cases it does. If a child is immature, started early, has been absent a lot, or has moved schools a lot then I would say yes."

   Post-survey:

   "The opportunity is there but does not guarantee a raise in academic achievement."

   "In a few cases."

   "I still think that there are instances where it is beneficial. I think it should only be used as a last resort and very sparingly."

2. **Retention provides children an opportunity to prevent future academic failure.**

   Pre-survey:

   "I believe this true for kindergarten retentions."

   "Once again, in some cases it does. If a child is immature, started early, has been absent a lot, or has moved schools a lot then I would say yes."

   "I know that it goes against some research, however, I believe that in certain instances retention can be beneficial. I think that retention can be critical in 1st grade."

Post-survey:

"The opportunity is there but does not guarantee prevention against future academic failure."

"I believe that retention could prevent future academic failures for some students. It should not be used as punishment.

"In a few cases."

"In some cases it does, but I have retained VERY few children in my career. If they don't have strong support at home, retention will not help. If they do, I have seen it help!"

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.**

   Pre-survey:

   "May not be my fault, but that definitely happens."

   Post-survey:

4. **Retention injures children's self-esteem.**

   Pre-survey:

   "I have found that if the main reason for retention is immaturity that the child generally improves to greater heights academically and their self-esteem improves as well."

   "Some it does, but with some it can boost their self-confidence."

   "This is neither true nor false. It depends on the age of the child who is retained and the attitude and interaction of the parents with that child."

   "It depends on what age. If they are kindergarten or first grade-no if any older-yes."

"Only if they are older, in my opinion. I used to have my kindergarten students say Yah!
I get to stay back with Mrs. M and others would say—not fair!! Older kids get it,
though."

"Yes retention is hard on a student's self-esteem but so if failing day after day, year after
year."

Post-survey:

"Research claims it does but I have witnessed a few cases that have boosted the child's
self-esteem (one that I know for certain has had a lasting effect).

"I think that with some it could injure self-esteem, but with others it could boost their
confidence."

"If the student is older or the or the parents say the child has failed."

"Depends on age and grade."

5. **Retention is most effective when it takes place in kindergarten or first grade.**

Pre-survey:

"I know research points that way, but having taught KG for 16 years and now moved to
fourth grade for three years, I have my doubts."

Post-survey:

"The research says it's not effective anywhere."

"I'm very on the fence on this question. I've seen both sides and down in the trenches,
it's really tough."

6. **Retention is an effective intervention strategy for boys.**

   Pre-survey:

   "I don't think of gender when considering options. The effectiveness of retention should be considered case by case not with a general rule of thumb."

   "Neither true nor false. Again it depends on the situation."

   "Only if needed."

   Post-survey:

   "I don't believe gender has anything to do with it.

   "Reading Recovery is the most effective intervention strategy."

   "I don't think sex of the child matters. It's just that most girls are 'pleasers'; who want to make the teacher happy it seems like. They also have longer attention spans in many cases. But I don't think it is gender specific one way or the other."

7. **Retained students are more likely to exhibit behavior problems than non-retained students.**

   Pre-survey:

   "Behavior depends on the child."

   "In my experience, they already did in the first place most of the time to compensate for being frustrated or upset."

   Post-survey:

   "I think this is true but not because the student was retained. Poor performance in school is often a result of lack of opportunity and discipline at home."

8. **Retention allows English language learners an opportunity to master language skills and academic material.**

   Pre-survey:

   "I'm not sure because I don't have any experience with ESL."

   Post-survey:

   "Not sure"

9. **Retention provides immature children an opportunity to catch up to their peers.**

   Pre-survey:

   Post-survey:

   "In some cases."

10. **Retention is my only alternative when students do no successfully master grade level material by the end of the school year.**

    Pre-survey:

    "Reading Recovery before failure will prevent retention in nearly all cases."

    "You can provide tutoring."

    Post-survey:

    "Reading Recovery was discontinued in our district leaving less options for struggling students and teachers."

    "Tutoring."

11. **Retained students are more likely to drop out of school before graduation than non-retained students.**

    Pre-survey:

    "This may be true but that doesn't show that retention was the cause."

"I know that research shows this to be true, but how do we know that those same students would not have dropped out if they had continued on the same path?"

Post-survey:

"Low SES students are more likely to drop out."

"If the research cited in the powerpoint was valid then yes."

12. **Retention is an effective intervention strategy for girls.**

Pre-survey:

"Neither true nor false. Again it depends on the situation."

Post-survey:

"Reading Recovery is the most effective intervention strategy."