

EFFECTS OF RETENTION VERSUS PROMOTION ON
ACHIEVEMENT IN READING: IMPLICATIONS
FOR COUNSELING

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Does grade retention help students? Grade retention is the practice of requiring a student to remain in the same grade for an additional year. Does this really help the student to progress academically? If not, why do many teachers continue to retain children in the same grade level at a cost for the nation as a whole estimated between 739 and 903 million dollars in 1971-72 (Jackson, 1975)?

If, as a great deal of research indicates (Dobbs & Neville, 1967; Kowitz & Armstrong, 1961; Wallihan, 1956), retention does not help children academically and may harm them psychologically, why are so many schools returning to retention of students in the face of competency based education? Why do so many teachers feel that retention does help children? Are they biased, ignoring the facts, and relying on subjective evaluations? Or perhaps has research not been thorough enough? Jackson (1975), in a thorough analysis of the research on grade retention, concluded that "most of the research has been quite

inadequate for making valid inferences about the effects of grade retention" (p. 614).

In an attempt to answer some of the foregoing questions, this casual-comparative study compared low achieving first-grade students who were retained (independent variable) with low achieving first-grade students who were not retained. The basis for comparison was the reading score on the California Achievement Test (CAT) (dependent variable) four years after promotion (the beginning of fifth grade). The relationship among the subject's IQ scores and retention or promotion was examined in the following ways: (a) low achieving students retained with IQ scores below 90 were compared with low achieving students not retained with IQ scores below 90, (b) low achieving students who were not retained with IQ scores of 90 or above were compared with low achieving students retained with IQ scores of 90 or above.

Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to test the following hypotheses:

1. Fifth graders with IQ scores of 90 or above who were retained will score significantly higher in reading than a matched group of fifth graders who were not retained.

2. Fifth graders with IQ scores below 90 who were retained will score significantly higher in reading than a matched group of fifth graders who were not retained.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, the meanings attached to certain terms are as follows:

Retention. A student repeats the same grade level two years consecutively. Curriculum may or may not have been modified. For the purposes of this study, only repetition of grades one and two was considered.

Low achieving students. Students who scored at the 25th percentile or below on the Metropolitan Readiness Test (MRT) at the beginning of first grade were considered to be low achievers.

Average IQ. An IQ score of 90 or above on the California Achievement Test was considered below average IQ.

Assumptions

In testing the hypotheses stated above, the following assumptions were made:

1. IQ scores are one variable affecting performance in reading achievement.

2. Achievement test scores on the reading sub-test of the California Achievement Test are reliable measures of academic progress.

3. Early retention (grades one and two) is more beneficial than late grade retention.

Limitations

The following limitations apply to this study:

1. The study was limited to a single middle-class, socioeconomic district composed of 98% Anglo and 2% Mexican-American students in a small, suburban community.

2. The students included were limited to those for whom the relevant data was available.

3. Because of the small number of students qualifying, there was no attempt to differentiate by sex.

4. There was no available method to determine past differences in instructional methods utilized with qualifying students (Resource, Title I, etc.), although a team teaching approach is used in all schools and the use of special grouping, materials, etc. is widespread.

5. Only the relationship of achievement and retention were investigated; there was no attempt to study psychological or social-personal aspects of retention.

6. The groups were not randomly selected and because they include only low achieving students, do not represent normally distributed populations.

These limitations were in part mediated by using all of the students for whom the data was available and who fit the

descriptions given. Non-parametric statistical tests were used since the scores do not represent a normally distributed variable.

Significance of the Study

In 11 years of teaching in the Burleson Independent School District, I have observed that a high percentage of first and second graders are retained each year for a number of reasons including immaturity, high absenteeism, low IQ, difficulty in mastering basic reading skills, and low achievement test scores. This retention of students is done at considerable cost to the local school district and the state and involves extensive counseling with the parents by both teachers and school counselors. Teachers generally feel that retention is beneficial for most students who are retained but have no means of objectively determining this. This study was designed to aid teachers in a particular school district to establish criteria for promotion or retention of students and it should not be generalized to other students in other schools without further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Retention is a common practice in elementary schools and an extremely controversial one. Research from the 1930's to 1977 does not agree about the effectiveness of retention on academic achievement, primarily it seems because there are so many variables to be measured and results seem to depend on which variables were measured and how they were measured. For purposes of this study, only that literature written after 1930, dealing with retention no later than second grade, and investigating the results of retention on academic achievement or the relation of IQ to retention and academic achievement was included.

Studies Favoring Promotion

As early as 1936, Farley found that second and third graders who were promoted made significantly greater gains in their reading scores than their peers who were retained. However, the study was conducted over a six month's period and gains could be attributed to the fact that promoted groups were being taught more advanced material. Did the

promoted groups continue to show increased ability over the retained group after a longer period of time? The study covers too short a time span to be reliable.

Further studies (Dobbs & Neville, 1967; Kowitz & Armstrong, 1961; Wallihan, 1956) also suggest that children who repeat a grade do no better academically than children who are promoted. Again, however, there are many questions unanswered in these studies.

Dobbs and Neville (1967) compared slow learners who were promoted with slow learners who were not promoted. All students had IQ scores below 90. After two years there was a significant difference in the reading achievement level in favor of the promoted group. This seems to be a valid study since the time interval was long enough (2 years) and the students were matched for qualities such as race, sex, socioeconomic level, type of classroom assignment, age, mental ability, and reading achievement. However this study does not answer the question for the child with an average or above IQ who is retained due to immaturity, illness, emotional problems, etc.

Kowitz and Armstrong (1961) compared students who were promoted with students who were retained and found that retention did little to help the low achieving pupil. However, the students were not separated according to IQ,

past achievement, or grades, so of course, the promoted pupils did better--had they not already been doing better work, they too would most likely have been retained.

Wallihan (1956) used reading scores in fourth and sixth grades to compare students who had been retained in first grade with those not retained. He matched students on the basis of sex and IQ but gave no information on the criteria for promotion or retention. He reported that the regularly promoted group showed a mean reading age 6 months higher than that of the retained students in grade four and 10 months higher in grade six. However, the promoted group also had a mean higher IQ score than the retained group. He stated that the retention of pupils did not remediate the pupil's reading disabilities but that it did serve to limit the spread of achievement within the grade. There were also no special provisions or help given to the retained pupils and they were placed in regular classes both the first and second time in the grade level.

All but one of the above studies were conducted in the 1950's and 1960's so they may not be relevant to today's students and today's educational practices. Except for Dobbs and Neville (1967), they were very limited in time span and did not differentiate between low intelligence and

average or above intelligence (Farley, 1936; Kowitz & Armstrong, 1961). The problem of the student whose IQ is average or above but who is underachieving was not addressed.

Studies Favoring Retention

On the other side of the issue, studies by Chase (1968), Donofrio (1977), Lobdell (1954), Scott and Ames (1969), and Stringer (1960), favor retention. Lobdell surveyed 94 retained pupils of average intelligence and found that 69% were making good or fair progress and 31% were making poor progress. However, there is no comparison between groups so we do not know what the results might have been had the students been promoted. Stringer (1960) measured changes in academic performance as results on achievement tests. She found that the student's rate of progress was greatly increased following retention. Retained students were making 53% normal progress before retention, 99% normal progress during retention and 75% normal progress after retention. She also found that more lasting results occurred in retentions before grade five.

Chase (1968) found that students were much closer in ability to their peers in visual-motor skills after retention. Actual achievement levels were not measured. Chase also stated that "results showed that those children

who were retained in first grade were, after repeating the grade, in a far better position to compete with their classmates than those who had been moved ahead to the second and third grades before being allowed to repeat" (1968, p. 176).

Donofrio (1977) believes that children who have summer and fall birthdays, hyperkinesis, verbal difficulty, or low IQ greatly benefit by repeating kindergarten, first, or second grade. He believed that this would enable them to be on the same level as their behavioral and maturational peers but he used no research to substantiate this belief.

Again, these studies were conducted in the 1950's and 1960's except for the one by Donofrio (1977). Some of them were short-term studies (Chase, 1968; Donofrio, 1977; Lobdell, 1954) and except for the study by Lobdell, they did not differentiate between above or below average IQ scores.

Studies With Mixed Results

Studies with mixed results include those of Chansky (1964), Ogden (1971), and Worth (1959). Worth's study matched two groups of 66 children in similar schools with respect to sex, IQ, chronological age, and achievement test data. One group of low achievers was promoted to third

grade while another group was retained in third grade. This was a well controlled study and included research on a number of variables such as the teacher's experience and the use of supplementary learning materials. There were no significant differences found in any of the variables researched except for use of supplementary materials which favored the promoted group. The following year in 12 areas of achievement, 3 decisions favored the promoted students, 1 decision favored the non-promoted students, and 8 decisions showed no statistical difference between the two groups. Worth also researched the social-personal development of both groups and found that the non-promoted students ranked higher on desirable personality traits. He suggested that the greater gains in achievement in a few areas for the promoted group may be at the expense of social-personal development. He also reported that the majority of the teachers in this study used few or no supplementary materials in teaching. This study only covered a year, so whether results were temporary or lasting we do not know.

In the study by Chansky (1964), low achieving first graders were pretested for intelligence, academic achievement, and personal and social adjustment. Prior to the testing, a decision had already been made concerning which children to promote and which to retain. The promoted

children were better achievers than the retained children and had higher mental ages. In the year following, the promoted group made significantly greater improvement in vocabulary and reading comprehension but relative to ability were found to be underachieving to a greater degree than the retained children. "The additional year in first grade provided retained children with an opportunity to function at a level consistent with their mental ability" (Chansky, 1964, p. 236).

Ogden (1971) studied high school students who had been retained in elementary school. He compared students who had been retained with those recommended for retention but not retained and students with a history of poor achievement and not retained. Even though factors such as attendance, citizenship, and attitudes were studied, his findings indicated that the key factors differentiating the retained and nonretained students were IQ and age. This is a long term study and concluded that 50% of the students who had been retained in elementary school continued to have difficulty in high school. The remaining 50% who were retained in elementary school and who had experienced academic success in high school scored significantly higher on verbal and non-verbal scales of intelligence. The retained students who were experiencing difficulty at the high school

level had an IQ mean 13 points lower than the retained students who were not experiencing difficulty. Ogden concluded that IQ was the crucial factor in determining the success or failure of non-promotion. His study also concluded that the student who was retained did not become a discipline problem or habitual truant; citizenship and attendance were not significantly different between low achievers who were retained and the general high school population.

Summary

As described above, most of the research on retention was done during the 1950's and 1960's. Ogden's study covered the longest time span of any of the studies located and very effectively studied the relationship between IQ and retention. However, even though this study was conducted in 1971, it involved high school students who were products of retention and instruction in the 1960's. There have been some later experimental studies comparing retention and social adjustment (Finlayson, 1977; White & Howard, 1973) and a search by computer listed a number of sources on retention in the 1970's, but, on investigation, these sources were either "expert opinions" or quoted research conducted in the 1950's and 1960's and were not current

research. The age of the research on retention raises some serious questions about its validity today. Research methods and statistical analysis procedures have changed a great deal in the last ten years. Education has also undergone a great deal of change, thus experiences of students retained in the 1950's and 1960's may or may not be relevant to today's students.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study took place in the Burleson Independent School District in the 1980-81 school year. This school district is composed of four elementary schools with K-6 in each elementary, one middle school, grades seven and eight, and one high school. There is a total enrollment of approximately 5,000 students.

This was a casual-comparative study involving four groups. The independent variable was the retention of students in first or second grade. The dependent variable was the score on the "total-reading" subtest of the California Achievement Test (CAT) at the beginning of fifth grade. In order to make groups as homogenous as possible, only those students who scored 25th percentile or below on the Metropolitan Readiness Test (MRT) at the beginning of first grade were included. This meant that students could not be randomly selected and did not represent a normally distributed population. For this reason, non-parametric statistics were used to analyze data. Another control variable included was IQ with students divided according to low IQ scores (below 90) and average and above IQ scores (90 or above).

RESEARCH DESIGN

GROUP	EXPERIMENTAL/ CONTROL	INDEPENDENT VARIABLE (Retention)	DEPENDENT VARIABLE (CAT Reading Score)
R-1 Retained IQ 90 or >	E	X	0
R-2 Retained IQ < 90	E	X	0
P-1 Promoted IQ 90 or >	C		0
P-2 Promoted IQ < 90	C		0

The following data was collected from student records for those students meeting the necessary criteria:

1. School student attended
2. MRT score, beginning of first grade
3. Promoted or retained in first or second grade
4. CAT "total reading" score, beginning of fifth grade
5. IQ score on CAT

The computer facilities of the Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas were used for statistical analysis. The computer used was a DEC-20; the program was NGROUP.

Subjects

Students who were included in the study are currently enrolled in the Burleson Independent School District. The BISD is a 98% Anglo, 2% Mexican-American, middle-class socioeconomic district. It is located ten miles south of Fort Worth in Burleson, Texas, population approximately 12,000. School records of students in all schools beginning with fifth graders and continuing through eighth graders were utilized to identify those students who were enrolled in the Burleson ISD at the beginning of first grade and who scored 25th percentile or below on the Metropolitan Readiness Test at the beginning of first grade and had available both IQ and "total reading" test scores on the California Achievement Test for the beginning of fifth grade.

Students beyond the eighth grade were not included in this study because they were not administered the California Achievement Test at the beginning of fifth grade. Since existing student records were used, there were no drop-outs in the study. There were a total of 50 students whose records contained the necessary test scores, divided as follows:

1. Group R-1. There were a total of 11 students whose IQ scores were 90 or above, who scored below 25th percentile on the MRT, and who were retained in first or second grade.

2. Group R-2. There were a total of 24 students whose IQ score was below 90, who scored below the 25th percentile on the MRT, and who were retained in first or second grade.

3. Group P-1. There were seven students whose IQ score was 90 or above, who scored below 25th percentile on the MRT, and who were not retained in first or second grade.

4. Group P-2. There were eight students whose IQ score was below 90, who scored below 25th percentile on the MRT, and who were not retained in first or second grade.

The fact that some students were retained and some were not may suggest a difference in the groups originally. This is a problem that has been encountered repeatedly in research on retention versus promotion (Chansky, 1964; Kowitz & Armstrong, 1961; Wallihan, 1956). An attempt was made to overcome this by selecting students with similar low readiness test scores at the beginning of first grade. However, this method was not entirely successful as will be discussed in Chapter IV. Statistical analysis revealed that some groups were homogenous, others were not. The ideal way of course, would be to randomly select students who have

been matched for IQ, achievement test scores, sex, age, and socioeconomic background, randomly assign half to be promoted and half to be retained and then study the results for a five year period. Jackson (1975) strongly advocates this procedure for future research on retention.

It does not seem ethical to do this without parental permission of the students involved, however. Many parents would probably strongly agree, others disagree with the random selection of their child to be in either group and in excluding those students whose parents would not allow them to participate, the sample group would again become biased. (For example, which kinds of parents would allow their children to be used in an experimental study of this kind?)

Since only students who have remained in the Burleson ISD during the entire time span that this study covered were included and since all students who had similar low scores on the MRT at the beginning of first grade were included and since those students involved in the study have been exposed to very similar curriculum and teaching methods (especially since team teaching is used in all Burleson elementary schools), then groups were as homogenous as possible in a casual comparative study.

Instruments

Metropolitan Readiness Test

This is a standardized test used to measure skills needed in beginning reading. This test was used to identify children who were low achievers at the beginning of first grade, i.e., children who were 25th percentile or below in skills deemed necessary for beginning readers. The MRT has a split-half reliability of .94 for pre-reading skills and an alternate form reliability of .87 for pre-reading skills. Predictive validity was demonstrated by showing that scores on the MRT are closely related to achievement test scores at the end of the year. Pupils were tested in the fall on the MRT and in the spring on the Stanford Achievement Test. The correlation between pre-reading skills and reading achievement was .78 and "to the extent that these achievement scores reflect the skills stressed by a given school system, provide evidence for the predictive validity of the MRT" (Murss & McGauvran, 1976).

California Achievement Test

The CAT is a standardized achievement test given to second through fifth graders, seventh, ninth and eleventh graders in the fall of each year in the Burleson ISD. The "total reading" score of the fifth grade test was the score

referred to in this study since we are comparing reading achievement four years after promotion of retained and non-retained students. The alternate form reliability was reported as .82 for the total reading part of the fifth grade test (Level 15) and internal consistency was .94 for the total reading scale using the Kuder-Richardson formula 20. Validity for the CAT must be based on "each district's own objectives and curriculum. Validity was established during the process of test development and does not depend upon correlation with any other test" (Technical Bulletin 1, 1979, p. 18).

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. Fifth graders in the Burleson Independent School District who scored 90 or above on the CAT, were low achievers in first grade, and were retained, do not score significantly higher in reading than fifth graders who scored 90 or above on the CAT, were low achievers in first grade, and were not retained.
2. Fifth graders in the Burleson Independent School District who scores below 90 on the CAT, were low achievers, and were retained, do not score significantly higher in

reading than fifth graders who scored below 90 on the CAT, were low achievers in first grade, and were not retained.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Student records were utilized to collect data and divide students into four groups based on IQ scores and past promotion or retention. Nonparametric statistics were used to analyze data since students were all originally low achievers at the beginning of first grade and did not represent a normally distributed population. The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance by ranks was used to test whether the groups were significantly different or if they could have been drawn from the same population. The Kruskal-Wallis when compared with the most powerful parametric test, the F test, has an efficiency of 95.5 percent (Siegel, 1956) and can be used when the assumptions of the F are not met.

The results of the analysis of variance were as follows:

1. Fifth graders with IQ scores of 90 or above who were retained did not score significantly higher in reading than a matched group of fifth graders who were not retained. This null hypothesis was not rejected.

2. Fifth graders with IQ scores below 90 who were retained did not score significantly higher in reading than a

matched group of fifth graders who were not retained. This null hypothesis was not rejected.

Students were divided into groups as follows:

1. Group R-1. Retained in first or second grade, IQ 90 or greater.
2. Group R-2. Retained in first or second grade, IQ less than 90.
3. Group P-1. Promoted each year, IQ 90 or greater.
4. Group P-2. Promoted each year, IQ less than 90

(See Table 1).

Table 1
Reading Test Scores

Group	Mean	S.D.
R-1	48.18	20.67
R-2	21.04	16.53
P-1	35.57	24.78
P-2	15.13	13.37

Using the Kruskal-Wallis test of significance, the following groups were found to have significantly different scores ($p < .002$) on the CAT:

1. Groups R-1 and P-2. The students who were retained with IQ scores of 90 or greater scored significantly higher

on the CAT than students who were promoted with IQ scores of less than 90.

2. R-1 and R-2. Retained students with IQ scores of 90 or above scored significantly higher on the CAT than retained students with IQ scores of 90 or below.

The following groups did not show a significant difference on the CAT:

1. R-1 and P-1. Students who were retained with IQ scores above 90 did not score significantly higher on the CAT than students who had IQ scores above 90 and were promoted. Thus null hypothesis 1 cannot be rejected.

2. P-1 and P-2. Students who were promoted with IQ scores of 90 or above did not score significantly higher on the CAT than students promoted with IQ scores below 90.

3. P-1 and R-2. Students promoted with IQ scores of 90 or above did not score significantly higher on the CAT than students retained with IQ scores below 90.

4. R-2 and P-2. Students retained with IQ scores of 90 or below did not score significantly higher on the CAT than students promoted with IQ scores of 90 or below. Thus null hypothesis 2 cannot be rejected. (See Table 2).

As would be expected, retained students with IQ scores above 90 scored significantly higher on the CAT than retained students with IQ scores below 90. Retained

Table 2

Comparison of Group Scores on CAT

Groups	<u>Z</u>	<u>Z</u> Critical Value
R-1 to P-2	3.261	2.649
R-1 to R-2	3.289	2.649
R-1 to P-1	1.116	2.649
P-1 to P-2	1.885	2.649
P-1 to R-2	1.532	2.649
R-2 to P-2	0.778	2.649

students with IQ scores above 90 also scored significantly higher than promoted students with IQ scores below 90.

However, some unusual comparisons were observed in that students who were promoted with IQ scores above 90 did not score significantly higher than students promoted with IQ scores below 90. Since this suggested the possibility of an error in research, further analysis was conducted to see if the groups were as homogenous as originally planned.

A Mann-Whitney U was used to analyze whether the retained students whose IQ was 90 or above were from the same population originally, based on the MRT score, as the promoted students whose IQ was 90 or above. The Mann-Whitney U was also used to compare the retained

students whose IQ was below 90 with the promoted students whose IQ was below 90 with the promoted students whose IQ was below 90 using the MRT score. The Mann-Whitney U test is a nonparametric test used to test whether two independent groups have been drawn from the same population. It is one of the most powerful of the nonparametric tests and a useful alternative to the parametric t test when the assumptions of the t test are not met (Siegel, 1956).

The Mann-Whitney U of 121 was not significant for the groups whose IQ scores were below 90, thus indicating that those groups were homogenous. However, for the students with IQ scores above 90, the Mann-Whitney U of 64 (p = .021) indicated that the groups involved were from significantly different populations at the beginning of the study. Since the two groups whose IQ was 90 or greater were significantly different on the initial criteria for inclusion in the study and thus were not homogenous groups, the possibility of a Type II error is increased; that is, failure to reject a null hypothesis that should be rejected. The fact that both of these groups were small and that nonparametric tests were used also affects the power of the study to reject a false null hypothesis (Gay, 1976).

For the two groups found to be homogenous, the possibility of a Type II error is decreased and we can more readily accept the null hypothesis as true: That retained fifth-grade students with IQ scores below 90 will not score significantly higher on the CAT at the beginning of fifth grade than regularly promoted students with IQ scores below 90.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to aid teachers and counselors in the Burleson Independent School District to make decisions regarding retention and promotion of first and second-grade students. The practice of retaining first and second graders is widespread at the present time with approximately 10% of the students being retained in either first or second grade. With the increasing pressure to raise achievement test scores, it is important to determine if retention does in fact serve to increase achievement.

The research hypotheses, that low achieving fifth graders who were retained in first or second grade would score higher on the CAT at the beginning of fifth grade than low achieving students who were not retained, was not supported. These hypotheses were not supported for students with IQ scores of 90 or above nor were they supported for students with IQ scores below 90. However, the two groups whose IQ scores were above 90 were found not to have been homogenous groups at the beginning of the study; their scores on the Metropolitan Readiness Test at the beginning for first grade were significantly different. Therefore,

additional research is indicated with new criteria for selection of groups at the beginning, particularly since other research studies have found significant differences in achievement for students with average or above intelligence who are retained (Ogden, 1971). One way to accomplish this would be by closer matching of students with similar scores on the Metropolitan Readiness Test at the beginning of first grade and with similar IQ scores (90 or above) and then comparing retained with non-retained four years later.

The two groups (retained and non-retained) who scored below 90 IQ were found to be initially homogenous groups. However, there was no significant improvement in reading achievement for the retained students even though they had had an extra year in school to master the same material. Previous studies of low achieving, low IQ students have come to this same conclusion (Dobbs & Neville, 1967; Odgen, 1971; Wallihan, 1956) and this study would reinforce the belief that even with the educational innovations of the 1970's, with emphasis on remedial instruction and increased use of supplementary materials and programs, retention does not significantly increase reading achievement for students whose IQ is below 90. However, this study did not investigate the personal, social or psychological aspects of retention; retention for these reasons would require additional research.

The major findings of this study are:

1. The Burleson Independent School District retains over twice as many students whose IQ score is under 90 as it does students whose IQ score is 90 or above.
2. For students with IQ scores below 90, there is no significant increase in reading achievement for those who have been retained.
3. For students whose IQ scores are 90 or greater, there is no significant increase in reading achievement for those who have been retained. However, groups were not initially homogenous so this finding is subject to question and needs additional research.

Conclusions

Conclusions reached as a result of this study which may be applied in schools of similar nature as the Burleson Independent Schools are as follows:

1. A student whose IQ is below average will probably not significantly improve his achievement level by being retained in a grade even if it is done early in his school life and even if he is given many extra kinds of help during that year. There is no evidence that for students with below average IQ, the extra year in itself is beneficial in raising achievement test scores.

2. For the student with average or above IQ, the research is inconclusive; retention may or may not serve to improve his reading achievement. In light of inconclusive research findings, other factors such as physical size and social and/or emotional maturity should be given increased consideration.

3. This study did not investigate social, emotional or psychological aspects of retention; therefore, no conclusions were reached regarding these areas.

4. The majority of students retained by a school district may be the students for whom research conclusively shows that retention has little benefit: the student with below average intelligence.

Recommendations

In light of the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers and administrators should not rely solely on retention to improve achievement but must find alternate methods especially for students with low IQ scores. Special reading programs, parental involvement, and summer programs should be considered as well as retention. The BISD's summer reading program is limited in scope and requires a

tuition payment by parents at the present time. This program could be broadened, paid for entirely by the district, and even required in lieu of retention.

2. Further research needs to be considered for students with average or above IQ who are low achievers to determine if retention does improve achievement.

3. Personal-social and psychological factors need to be considered and researched. Does early retention help a student socially as suggested by some research (Chase, 1968; Worth, 1959) or does it harm him psychologically? If parents are extremely opposed to retention, then what effect will that have on the student?

In summary, retention should not be recommended as a means for improving reading achievement for students with below average IQ, and alternate methods should be utilized. For those students with average or above IQ, the needs of the entire child (personal, social, and psychological) and his family should be carefully weighed since retention may or may not serve to improve his reading achievement.

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