

Title:

So If Retention Is So Harmful, What Should We Do? Teach!

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1943

Summary:

Heading Toward a Long-term, Systemic Solution

A Boston Globe editorial stated that for "40 years, study after study on grade retention has r

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Article Body:

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According to research (Anderson, Jimerson and Whipple, 2002; NASP, 2003; Jimerson, Anderson and

- Most children do not "catch up" when held back.
- Although some retained students do better at first, these children often fall behind again i
- Retention is one of the most powerful predictors of high school dropout; holding a child bac
- In 2001, 6th grade students ranked grade retention as the most stressful life event, followe
- Students who are held back tend to get into trouble, dislike school, and feel badly about th
- The weakened self-esteem that usually accompanies retention plays a role in how well the chi

Far too many students simply give up on school, largely because they feel that their schools h

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY.

So What Can We Do?

Many advocate for early identification of student needs in order to apply appropriate instruct

But not all teachers are effective at identifying student needs and applying instructional str

The study was based on Tennessee's "value-added" testing system that maintained year-to-year t

What We Now Know

What action can we take to ensure that all teachers are functioning at a level that optimizes

Scientific research from multiple fields is allowing us to understand how learning takes place

Yet this new knowledge is not being utilized by every district, every school, and every teache

Transferring and translating the knowledge gained in studies into scientifically based classro

If we know that teacher quality makes a decided difference in the quality of student learning,

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) has developed and revised a set of standards for

The NSDC standards move away from workshop "sit and get" staff development models and into several options for follow-up support include coaching, modeling and demonstration lessons, peer visits, and coaching. The differences in the three levels of impact in the chart below, as they apply to a training model, are as follows: Paul Pastorek, former president of the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Dennis Sparks, NSDC's executive director, issued a challenge in 2002: Within five years, all teachers should be effective. But we cannot stop there. In order to be successful, and in order to sustain and institutionalize these changes, Michael Fullan argues that this will require that school principals reach beyond instructional leadership. Fullan (2002b) also cautions that school leadership must become change leaders, and clarifies that this means: It seems, then, that in order to dramatically reduce grade retention, remedial services, referrals, and suspensions, we must:

- Identify and put into place all critical contextual conditions necessary to implement research-based practices.
- Develop, implement, test and refine models that will guide both preservice education and training.
- Develop, implement, test and refine models for building educational leaders at the university level.

Time is ticking. With children's lives at stake, and especially our most vulnerable children, we must act. Teachers and school leaders need, want and deserve to have the support and tools they need to succeed. References are available at http://www.cdl.org/resource-library/articles/retention_solution.php

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