

Introduction to special education education essay

[Education](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Grade Retention Introduction to Special Education Katherine DeSimone Touro University March 16, 2013 All students in our education system should have a fair opportunity to succeed based on their grade level, ability and performance. Each student is individually unique and therefore can be successful in their own personal ways. Some school districts in America believe all students should be tested and rewarded equally regardless of their adversities. Without considering external factors and learning differences, we are continuing to set up our students for failure." Only 10 states (Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin) will prevent a student from going on to fourth grade if he or she has low test scores" (Wright, 2012). Standardized testing should not be the only determining factor keeping a student from moving forward in their education. These states test all of their students equally and will retain any student who does not meet the score requirements to move onto the next grade level. " Retention in school is also called grade retention, being held back, or repeating a grade. Grade retention is the opposite of social promotion, in which children continue with their age peers regardless of academic performance" (Jose Gelepi). Research shows the U. S. is lagging far behind other countries when it comes to education and primary grade retention" (Stapleton & Robles-Pina, 2009). Grade retention can prevent America's youth from becoming successful and completing future grade levels. With retention, the student will be placed in classes with peers younger than themselves and they will relearn the material in which they previously studied." According to the National Association of School Psychologists, in 2003 as many as 15 percent or more than 2. 4 million American students are held back and repeat a grade each <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-to-special-education-education-essay/>

year" (Jose Gelepi). This should be a large concern for America's future. If we cannot help our students be successful today, how can we ever expect them to be successful in their future." In most cases, teachers recommend retention for one of three reasons: developmental immaturity that has resulted in learning difficulties; emotional immaturity that has resulted in severely disruptive behavior; or failure to pass standardized proficiency or achievement tests at the end of specific year" (Jose Gelepi). These reasons should be determined by the school administrators, teachers and/or counselors and standardized tests should be used as a guideline for grade promotion rather than be the sole reason a student is able to move forward in their educational endeavors." Educators and policymakers have debated for decades whether struggling students benefit more from repeating a grade or from moving ahead with their same-age peers. The argument for retention is that students who have not met grade-level criteria will fall further and further behind as they move through the grades" (David, 2008) There has not been much research completed regarding the performance of students whom have been retained; however, noticeable and significant decreases in a students' performance have been seen by educators." School systems cannot hold back every student who falls behind; too many would pile up in the lower grades. Moreover, it is expensive to add a year of schooling for a substantial number of students. Therefore, in practice, schools set passing criteria at a level that ensures that most students proceed through the grades at the expected rate " (David, 2008).

Considering 15% of student yearly are held back, this could create heavy education costs in school districts and overcrowding in many classrooms. If all states set passing criteria that give more students a chance to be

successful, less students would be retained and their knowledge could be tested in more ways rather than just by a standardized test." Many kids with learning disabilities (LD) really struggle when taking district-adopted and state-adopted achievement tests" (Stump, 2007). Standardized testing forces students to work within a specific time frame, answer questions by scantron or other bubble-like methods, work individually, and read and comprehend specific material which may be difficult to read and understand. Students with disabilities usually struggle with one or all of these testing strategies listed. In special education, it is typical that the educator will assist the student in understanding the material or teach the information in a fashion that is more suitable for the student. Standardized testing fails to show how much the student actually knows and does not allow them to show specific skill sets they may have. These tests instead force the student to answer questions they may not understand or have not learned in their curriculum since each educator has unique information in which they teach their students. " When test scores are used as the only basis for whether a child will be promoted to the next grade, kids with LD can be at a great disadvantage" (Stump, 2007). When deciding if a student should be retained many academic and social and emotional factors should be considered. As education professionals, we should ask ourselves: Which specific subject is the student struggling in? Is the student struggling in all of their classes? Have educators stepped in to try and assist the student in learning the material? Has a specific achievement plan been created? What would be different in the learning environment if the student was to be held back? Will the student be able to pass the requirements for grade promotion in the following year by repeating the current grade? Is the students behavior an

<https://assignbuster.com/introduction-to-special-education-education-essay/>

issue? Has the student's parent(s) been involved? Will the child react well to the idea of grade retention? Will grade retention effect their performance in the repeated grade? Alternative strategies can be used instead of grade retention to help the student succeed. " The research shows that " promotion plus" (i. e. Combining grade promotion and effective evidence-based interventions) is more likely than retention to benefit children with low achievement or behavior problems" (Branstetter, 2012) Trained professionals such as administrators, educators and/or counselors can come together, evaluate the students performance, behaviors and other factors to determine whether a student should be promoted to the next grade level. Another alternative strategy to grade retention would include the parents involvement. Parents can become more involved in the students education through more communication with the educators and working with the student while at home on homework and special projects. If a student's academic habits and lack of learning begins at an early age, there is an opportunity to place the student in developmental programs to assist them prior to starting school." Student support teams with appropriate professionals to assess and identify specific learning or behavior problems, design interventions to address those problems" (Jimerson, Woehr & Kaufman, 2007). A student struggling with academics could be placed in an extended class, year round school or summer school program to keep the student on track and help develop academic skills. Alternative strategies for improving a student's academic skills should be taken prior to retaining a student. Parents should become more involved and professionals should be consulted. These professionals should meet with the student, parent(s) and also the teachers to develop a plan for the student's future education.

<https://assignbuster.com/introduction-to-special-education-education-essay/>

Perhaps exploring the idea of special education should also be considered, if not already discussed and the student should be tested for learning disabilities. Going back to using standardized testing for grade promotion, too many factors play a role in the student's success. It is important to weigh all of the factors pertaining to a student's education prior to grade retention. Using alternative strategies for improving academic skills should be explored first prior to grade retention. Special education is an option for student who need extra assistance or suffer from a learning disability. The Department of Education should focus more on this issue of retention of standardized testing and unify school districts nationwide.

Resources
Branstetter, R. (2012). Does student retention work?. www.teachingmonster.com/counselors/articles/9558-does-student-retention-work
David, J. L. (2008, March). Educational leadership. www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar08/vol65/num06/Grade-Retention.aspx
Jimerson, S. R., Woehr, S. M., & Kaufman, A. M. (2007). www.nasponline.org/resources/handouts/revisedpdfs/graderetention.pdf
Jose Gelepi. Retention in school In National Association of School Psychologists. www.healthofchildren.com/R/Retention-in-School.html
Stapleton, , & Robles-Pina, R. (2009). www.shsu.edu/~piic/Fall2009/Robles-pina.html
Stump, C. (2007). Greatschools. Retrieved from <http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/health/659-repeating-a-grade.gs?page=all>
Wright, R. J. (2012). Introduction to School Counseling. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications