

Retention Guidelines for ELLs

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Retention Research and ELLs:

- (1) more likely to be retained
 - (2) being pushed to early transition
 - (3) often placed in a lower grade if they are recent immigrants or newcomers to a school.
- All three scenarios have negative implications for this population.

Retention Research and ELLs cont:

- (4) research indicates that retention is being applied arbitrarily.
- (5) teachers reported that students retained in third and sixth grade started out very far behind and, very quickly, fell even further behind.
- (6) There is no educational intervention that has been shown to be less effective than retention.

Questions to be considered:

1. Is the student's poor performance related to language ability?
2. Is the student's poor performance related to cultural differences or the result of the student's inability to adjust to major changes in lifestyle that are part of the immigrant experience?

Questions to be considered cont:

3. What is the student's educational background? Was school attendance consistent? Was it comparable to the levels/standards established in the Carroll County School System?
4. What interventions has the teacher attempted throughout the year in order to meet this student's needs?

Questions to be considered cont:

5. If the retention takes place, what will occur in the educational program next year that will be SIGNIFICANTLY different from that which was offered this year?
6. What is the attitude of the parents and family?
7. Is there any cultural stigma attached to retention or failure that might cause long term attitudinal problems?

Retention Considerations:

Due to the complexity of learning language and content at the same time considerable caution needs to be used when considering retention for second language learners. Consideration should be given to the following:

Retention Considerations cont:

1. Length of time in English instruction with the guideline being that if less than three years we would not retain.
2. Prior implementation of problem solving interventions and a review of the effectiveness of the interventions.
3. Student attendance data and if the student attends regularly then retention would be less likely to be the chosen intervention.

Retention Considerations cont:

4. Has the student's day been extended through extended day programming and/or summer school? If the time has been extended and the student still is not progressing then retention may be considered.
5. The quantity and quality of English language services.

Retention Considerations cont:

- Generally retention should not be the intervention for English language learners.
- Because research has shown that it takes up to seven years to become fully proficient in an academic environment we should provide for English language services and differentiation to meet the needs of the student.

Retention Considerations cont:

- The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) encourages schools to seek alternatives to retention that more effectively address the specific instructional needs of language minority children.

References

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