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School retention and academic self-efficacy with elementary students

Cheryl Anne Spiro
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SCHOOL RETENTION AND ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY
WITH ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Cheryl Anne Spiro
Karen Monique Frazier
June 2001
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ABSTRACT

There has been a cyclical pattern in support of retention as an effective intervention for students who have not met grade level standards. The blame for students' failures has alternated between the individual and the educational system. School curriculum has increasingly centered on academics with little time for extracurricular activities, self-concepts or motivational interventions. Research has noted a relationship between enhancing students' self-efficacy and improvement in grades. In addition, positive outcomes have been attained when psychological interventions were incorporated into the school programs. This project used academically designed group interventions for a class of eighteen first and second grade retained students. The intervention program was operationalized by utilizing components of Albert Bandura's motivational model for the enhancement of the students' academic self-efficacy. The focus included Bandura's concepts of performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and psychological states. Successful qualitative results were realized as evidenced from the students' improved grades, supportive teacher comments and student self-evaluations.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We owe a great deal of gratitude to Dr. Matt Riggs, our research advisor, for his continued leadership in assisting us in developing this project through its completion. We would like to offer further thanks to Dr. McCaslin for giving us guidance through the initial phases of our research.

In addition, we are truly indebted to the Perris Elementary School District for allowing us to bring our program into their district. The principal, the teacher, the students and secretarial staff were immensely helpful, welcoming and accommodating. We could not have accomplished our research objectives without this relationship.

Last, we would like to thank Chani Beeman and her staff for their assistance and technical support.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to my family and friends. A special thank you to my husband, Michael, for five long years of patience through my educational pursuits. I love and appreciate you. Thanks for the surveying lesson you gave to the kids.

To my sons and daughter-in-laws, thank you for your support and devotion. I always felt your pride in my accomplishments. To my grandson for giving me pure joy. Each of you offered me strength in your personal way.

My extended family, what can I say? You are all so special and wonderful. To my mom and sisters for coming to the classroom and my brother-in-law for his help with statistics. What would I have done without you? You were my cheerleaders and support. Thanks for all your help and dedication.

My friends, your cards, e-mails and phones calls kept me going. Thanks for rearranging plans to accommodate my busy schedule.

To my partner, Karen. We did it!! Did we ever think it would be this much work? Thanks for hanging in there with me.

Finally, I would like to offer a special dedication to my sister, Rebekah. You would have gotten your Master's first. So, this one's for us sis. Love Cheryl
Dedication

I would like to thank my mother for her unconditional love and support during my educational experience. You have been a wonderful role model during all the periods of my life. Without you I would not be who I am today. Your wisdom and guidance has directed me well.

To Stevey and Chaz, thanks for being good children while mommy studied. My wish for the two of you is that you both have a wonderful life filled with successes and all your heart's desires. Always remember, "Mommy loves Stevey and Chaz this I know, because my heart tells me so..."

To my family, thanks for listening and being in my corner.

Thanks to all my professors for your encouragement when I needed a push.

To my research partner Cheryl; when times were tough for me, you were there. Thanks for taking the lead on this project, being a friend, and a confidant.

Smile,

KMF
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Project

Despite the research on the negative outcomes of retention, California schools were required to implement new retention laws in January 1999. Across the state, plans for the impact of increased numbers of retained students were frantically considered at each district and school site. In the fury created by the new laws, there were numerous articles published about the benefits and dangers of retaining a child.

A significant concern that educators, the public and the politicians have agreed upon is that too many of California's students have not been properly prepared for middle and high school. Proponents of school retention have contended that a substantial number of pupils have not even mastered their grade-level curriculum.

Some children have struggled to meet the basic standards for reading, language, and math. In addition, California students have had difficulty passing required statewide tests. Therefore, the practice of social promotion (advancing students from one grade to the next based on their age and peer relationships, not their academic achievement) has recently been challenged.
However, in the face of the ambitious efforts of educators to help students attain higher-grade level standards, an important component had been overlooked, the psychological effects on the learners. Research has determined that students viewed retention as a personal failure (Sherwood, 1993). In interviews, retained students stated they felt their school deficiencies had been emotionally damaging (Setencich, 1994).

Research also reported that when children's mental health issues have been untreated, the results produced life-long problems such as teen pregnancy, violence, higher school dropout rates, substance abuse, teen suicide and dependence on the welfare system (Adelman, Howard & Taylor, 1998).

Therefore, it has been noted that children's academic successes are greatly impacted by their overall well-being. Yet, the new retention laws have primarily targeted academic interventions with little consideration to creating methods of combating the negative psychological or emotional effects of nonpromotion.

It has been proven that if psychological interventions are provided for children, positive school outcomes are realized (Rawls, 1994). The benefits of programs designed to build on students' self-concepts have resulted in a manifestation of better student
functioning (Adelman, Howard & Taylor, 1998). Thus, it was postulated by this research that opportunities could be created to provide preventative and corrective interventions for struggling students. In addition, assistance was particularly important to children lacking familial support such as those in foster care, students who have been dependents of the court, and others involved with Child Protective Services.

During the 1999-2000 school year, two Master of Social Work (MSW) interns heard major concerns from elementary school students about their fears of being retained. These students were in doubt about how the new California laws might personally impact them. Further probing suggested that the children were uncertain whether or not they were in danger of failing, which in turn contributed to their heightened levels of anxiety.

As a result of the students' apprehensions, the social workers understood how important a collaborative effort with the teachers could be in working with this targeted population. In addition, schools have continued to struggle with funding for support staff and appropriate interventions that could help them with the emotional well-being and academic self-efficacy of their pupils. The interns believed that by effectively and efficiently providing interventions for children's
academic problems within the school setting, the students' self-efficacy could be boosted.

A school district in the western section of Riverside County was approached to participate in the research project. The Director of Pupil Personnel, Mr. Sig Sigerson, of the Perris Elementary School District, expressed enthusiasm about the proposal. Due to the new California retention laws, Mr. Sigerson estimated that approximately 350 students from his district in grades K-6 would be retained at the end of the 1999-2000 school year (Sig Sigerson, personal interview, June 2000). At a July, 2000 meeting, Mr. Sigerson presented the research project to the school principals within his district.

Mr. Sigerson conveyed to the principals the ideas contained in the research proposal. He explained that the graduate students had identified ways in which the project could offer support to their retained students. The interns intended to provide the students with academic interventions, meditations, and positive affirmations designed to encourage more successful, supported and capable classroom performances.

The significance of this project was to incorporate specific tasks into a classroom setting that would be used to enhance retained student's self-regulatory efficacy. The interns hypothesized that group
interventions could help children who were retained to increase their belief in themselves and their abilities.

**Scope of the Project**

This research was designed to utilize academic self-efficacy enhancement interventions for a class of retained first and second grade students. The children were from a predominately low-income area in western Riverside County. The interventions included ten one-hour sessions over a five-week period.

The sessions were created to be enjoyable for the students, however with an academic base. Each session was designed to address components from a Science, English, Social Studies, Math or Health discipline. For example, one exercise taught the children to distinguish objects that floated from those that did not. The students were divided into four groups. The groups were provided buckets of water and several items that either floated or sank. After the students completed the exercise, each group gave an oral presentation of their results.

With repeated successful completions of academic activities, it was postulated that the students would begin to believe in their ability to succeed. Research has supported the fact that it takes more than academic services to prepare students for classroom success.
("Comprehensive Approaches," 1997). For this reason, the project was designed to provide academic self-efficacy interventions for retained primary level students and to enhance their belief in their academic performance ability.

Significance of the Project

It was noted that the social promotion versus retention debate had once again been at the forefront in politics and education. Policies surrounding this highly controversial issue had been fluctuating with the political climate. The press was frequently reporting declining national test scores and students' non-mastery of curriculum. There had been cries from school reformers to get back to basics and require stricter standards to ensure students' academic success. Consequently, the pendulum had once again swung in favor of retention and placing the responsibility for failure on the student's deficiencies.

Unfortunately, retention had resurfaced as an effective solution to remediate students' academic difficulties. However, research had shown that retention alone has not proven to be an effective intervention (Dennebaum & Kulberg, 1994). In fact, failing a grade has had negative effects on children's self-efficacy. Thus, it was theorized that children's belief in their
self-worth and ability to achieve has been destroyed through their negative learning experiences (Setencičh, 1994).

In addition, studies such as one conducted by UCLA School Mental Health Project have concluded that a major contributing factor in student's learning, behavior, and emotional problems was society's failure to address external barriers and learner differences ("Addressing Barriers," 2000). Many children have faced overwhelming environmental problems that have affected their school performances. They may have experienced social, emotional, or physical problems that have created obstacles in their learning.

Therefore, in addition to self-influences, it was strongly suggested that educators examine sociodemographic and psychological obstacles (Adelman, Howard & Taylor, 1998). For example, restructuring schools, providing appropriate therapeutic interventions and maximizing parental involvement had been proven paramount to minimizing retention rates. It was also recommended that schools develop intensive early interventions through a variety of approaches that would boost low-achieving students ("Denying Social," 1998).

Albert Bandura devoted years to studying the way in which students' ability to think, behave, feel and
motivate themselves affected their confidence in their capabilities. Bandura (1993) believed that in order to enhance children's sense of academic efficacy, they also needed supplemental social influences that "...included verbal modeling of cognitive strategies, proximal goal setting, ability and effort attributional feedback, positive incentives, and self-verbalization of task strategies" (p. 135).

Schools have struggled to find satisfactory answers to low academic achievement. It has been very difficult for children with repeated scholastic failures to maintain an emotionally healthy outlook. Bandura (1993) found that children with low efficacy have experienced more aggression, less popularity and greater rejection by peers than those students who have believed strongly in their ability. Therefore, this instructional project was created to provide retained students with hands-on activities that targeted positive academic and behavioral outcomes. It was further hoped that the students would begin to have more confidence and belief in their own abilities to succeed.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Until the mid 1800's, American students had not received grades for their academic work. Students were simply advanced when they mastered their educational material. Due to German influence on American scholars studying in Europe, the idea of grading elementary school students was introduced to the United States (Balow & Schwager, 1990). At the time, these scholars felt that grading students would enhance achievement and increase comprehension.

After the Civil War, most schools placed students in classes by chronological age and appropriate grade-level curriculum (Setencich, 1994, p.3). In the early 1900's, retention was offered as a solution to the achievement problem. Balow & Schwager (1990) pointed out that "...as soon as gradedness was introduced, it became obvious that some pupils mastered the curriculum with relative ease, and other pupils learned only with difficulty and failed to master any significant portion of the curriculum" (p. 2).

The contention at that time, as well as more recently, was that all students should be required to attain a level of educational mastery defined by standards presented through teacher grades and/or tests.
Later, concern over the possible negative effects of nonpromotion was expressed in the 1930's and since then the debate over whether retention is harmful or helpful for children has become the topic of many research articles (Setencich, 1994, p. 4). During the years of the Great Depression, there was a heightened interest in child psychology. Retention was deemed harmful to children's social and psychological well-being (Sherwood, 1993). Thus, the idea of social promotion, passing students to the next grade because of chronological age not ability, was initiated.

In spite of the research, many parents and educators have remained convinced of the merits in school retention. A 1991 survey by Dawson and Rafoth found that 74% of school administers, 65% of teachers, and 59% of parents supported retention (Sherwood, 1993). A parent was quoted in a 1992 issue of the Wall Street Journal, "Forget the research, you should use your common sense [and retain children]" (Sherwood, 1993, p. 6). In addition, the voting public has shown that they are convinced that retention holds students accountable for mastering learning requirements.

"On a national level, retention in grade affects approximately 2.6 million children each year, and is growing by about 20% each year" (Sherwood, 1993, p. 2).
Research has suggested that the long-term and short-term effects of repeating a grade must be considered. Some concerns that have occurred because of student retention are negative academic self-efficacy and increased dropout rates. Setencich (1994) stated that researchers have reported that 30% of students retained were more likely to drop out of school. If students were held back twice, there was considerable evidence indicating that most of those students would unequivocally quit school.

Furthermore, students who have been held back have often exhibited negative attitudes toward teachers and school. These learners have displayed social and mental health problems with increased anxiety and depression ("Denying Social," 1998). In a large sample of retained children who were interviewed, Byrnes reported that 87% of them felt "sad, bad, upset, or embarrassed" (Sherwood, 1993, p. 6). In other studies, middle and high school students compared failing to feeling worse than if they were caught stealing, losing a parent, or going blind (Sherwood, 1993).

Due to the negative messages that have unconsciously been translated through retention, students with academic problems have believed that they could not produce effectively enough to be promoted to the next grade. Retained students think they are not as smart as other
students. According to Darling-Hammond & Falk (1997), "No matter how sensitively and carefully educators and parents handle the matter, students appear to interpret retention as proof of their personal inadequacy" (p. 191). In addition, the students have been blamed, almost exclusively, for their learning deficiency.

In spite of questionable outcomes, California has responded to low-test scores and poor student achievement by enacting several new retention laws. On September 22, 1998, Governor Gray Davis required that each school district and each county board of education approve a policy regarding the promotion and retention of pupils ("Pupil Promotion," 2000). Assembly Bill (AB) 1626 (Wayne), Chapter 742, Statutes of 1998, required each school district to approve a policy regarding the promotion and retention of pupils.

AB 1639 was a new mandatory summer school and supplemental instructional program policy for students in grades two through nine who have been retained. Senate Bill (SB) 1370 appropriated funding for instructional summer programs. The bill also provided funds for students at risk of retention or those with low Standardized Testing And Recording (STAR) scores in reading, language and mathematics ("Pupil Promotion," 2000).
However, most schools have not been prepared academically, psychologically or financially to accommodate all the needs of an increased population of retained students. The negative impact on the retained students' mental health has been an additional component that needs to be addressed. For students to learn and perform in the classroom, schools have to "... recognize that social, emotional and physical health problems, and other major barriers to learning must be addressed if schools are to function satisfactorily and students are to learn and perform effectively" (Adelman, Howard & Taylor, 1998, p. 1).

Albert Bandura (1997) found that, "The greater [students] foresight, proficiency, and means of self-influence, all of which are acquirable skills, the more successful they are in achieving what they seek" (p. 8). With this conclusion having been determined, it must be understood that many retained students' have experienced low academic self-efficacy, delayed emotional development or negative environmental factors that has adversely affected their academic successes.

In addition, this deficiency had often led to an even deeper-rooted sense of failure, vulnerability, stress and depression (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996). Increasing, evidence has shown that
students' academic self-efficacy is a strong predictor of their academic performances and a major component of expectancy (McMillan, 1995). "...once children have begun (sic) to develop more confidence in their academic ability there was a concomitant increase in persistence and performance" (McMillan, 1995, p. 14).

Studies have proven that academic self-efficacy is shaped in the formative years and stays with children throughout their lives, ultimately playing a role in their career aspirations and pursuits (Bandura, et al., 1996). However, if self-efficacy techniques had been incorporated into retained students' academic curriculum during their primary grades, then the students may have developed stronger beliefs in their abilities to master difficult learning requirements.

Albert Bandura (1993) stated that "People who have a low sense of efficacy in a given domain shy away from difficult tasks, which they perceive as personal threats" (p. 144). It is believed that challenged learners have had a difficult time focusing on their capabilities and have spent far too much time dwelling on their deficiencies. However, when students have been involved in academic boosting activities and taught behaviors that challenged their intimidating beliefs, they have begun to
perceive themselves as capable of handling situations they might otherwise have avoided.

Children's confidence in their academic efficacy to adjust their own learning behavior and to challenge difficult subject matters has affected their academic motivation, appeal, and learning achievement (Bandura, et al., 1996). Individuals who have seen themselves as having high self-efficacy, have viewed tasks as challenges rather than obstacles. Therefore, aiding retained students through corrective experiences aimed at enhancing their academic self-efficacy expectations could lead learners to exert more effort when challenged by the school curriculum (Bandura, 1977).

There has been a significant number of learning models designed to empower students to strive for higher levels of academic accomplishment. One such model was developed by Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky contended that the best way to educate children was through their zone of proximal development (Wakefield, 1996). Vygotsky defined this area of learning capacity as, "The zone of proximal development is the difference between a child's unaided leveling of thinking and his or her potential level if aided by a more expert peer or adult" (Wakefield, 1996, p. 187). However, the importance of this concept to the struggling learner was that they could be taught to reach
greater potential, if they were assisted by experts and more learned peers.

Vygotsky's methods for teaching included scaffolding instruction. He described this technique as the process of learning through the help of others who have had a greater level of expertise and development (Wakefield, 1996). In addition, Vygotsky stated that children also learned through internalization of their social experience. Therefore, with continued support, children can maximize their learning ability (Wakefield, 1996).

Bandura (1977) believed that with persistence in activities that are subjectively threatening but relatively safe, students have experienced proficiency and enhancement of their self-efficacy. Thus, it is theorized that when cognitive-behavioral techniques are incorporated into the classroom curriculum, positive psychological changes in retained children can be realized.

Bandura identified a motivational model to enhance self-efficacy that consisted of four areas: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological states (Bandura, 1977). First, Bandura (1977) concluded that personal accomplishments were the best agent for change in behaviors.
Second, Bandura (1977) proposed that by observing the modeling of others' efforts, individuals could vicariously derive new levels of expectation. The third concept Bandura supported was the importance of providing corrective persuasion to the child's experiential base.

Finally, the understanding that in order to increase levels of self-efficacy, the individual's anxiety arousal and fears must have been reduced through problem-solving and modeling proficient ways of coping (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, it has been hypothesized that by providing interventions that focus on cognitive processing and altering behaviors, students can change their negative learning perceptions. Bandura (1977) found that by participating in groups, individuals were provided opportunities to experience a successful "...mastery [of academic subjects] arising from effective performance" (p. 191). Bandura (1977) believed that an individual's accomplishments raised his mastery expectations, whereas his repeated failures lowered his faith in ability.

So what are some of the solutions believed to assist these at-risk children and enhance their learning experiences? Hill suggested that in order to change the current criteria, "teachers and administrators must realize that education should not be a selective process where curriculum, tests, behavioral objectives and
retention policies are developed for the purpose of screening people out of the system" (Sherwood, 1993, p. 6). Research has shown that education should be a positive experience that supports the child, not only with his/her academic accomplishments, but with social skills and emotional growth, as well.

Three types of programs have been recommended to help low achieving students; 1) providing direct services with instruction, 2) collaboration between schools and mental health programs, and 3) linking students and their families with community resources (Adelman, Howard & Taylor, 1998). Reforms that have addressed barriers to learning should not exclusively focus on the educational components, but should also examine the child from a broader perspective to include his social, emotional, and physical health problems.

One such program was developed and utilized by a school in Louisiana. The school used a program called Free The Horses, a Self-Esteem Adventure. Although self-esteem has been a harder concept than self-efficacy to define, the value of the program was the successes noted from the ten-week interventions. The ten-week curriculum utilized problem solving, positive affirmations, cognitive restructuring, poetry and puppetry (Rawls, 1994). The school reported increased positive attitudes.
in their students, a transformation in the targeted students' work efforts, greater determination and ultimately increased classroom achievements (Rawls, 1994).

However, even with knowing about successes such as this program, educators have not had the time to devote to programs that exclusively target self-concept. Students have primarily been provided educational tools to boost their academic achievement. Statistics have shown an increase the number of retentions, learning problems, and emotional difficulties.

Therefore, an essential question that has been asked is whether or not teachers have been able to provide appropriate support for student academic achievement and emotional improvement. What was recognized is that teachers cannot possibly meet the needs of all their students. It has been recommended that collaborative efforts be made between schools and mental health professionals.

Also noted was that students must find value in the choices they are provided and participation in the decisions made in their lives. In addition, soliciting parental support has been a key component to student success. Finally, in order for the pendulum to stop swinging back and forth between social promotion and
retention, there must be lobbying for innovative programs and increased funding, not only for students' educational growth, but for programs designed to enhance the academic self-efficacy of all students.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The purpose of this research project was to determine if providing group interventions for retained students could improve their academic and self-regulatory efficacy. A quantitative assessment using a one-group pretest-intermediary-posttest research design was utilized. The study also used a quasi-experimental design because there was no control group and the sample was not randomly selected. A risk to the results may have been a regression to the mean within this small sample of retained students.

It has been postulated that it takes more than academic services to prepare students for classroom success. "...by helping a person selectively attend to personal strengths and opportunities rather than to limitations and obstacles, motivational patterns can be altered..." (Ford, 1992, p. 23). Therefore, the research project hypothesized that by offering academic self-efficacy and motivational exercises to retained elementary school children, the students' belief in their ability to challenge and succeed with their school curriculum would be enhanced.
Sampling

This study was conducted at a predominately low-income elementary school in the western section of Riverside County in Southern California. The research project was given agency approval from the school district, the principal and the teacher. The California State University of San Bernardino Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the project for human subject participation.

A nonprobability purposive sample of students participated in ten-session group interventions that provided academic self-efficacy enhancement exercises. The retained students were in a self-contained combination classroom. The class consisted of fifteen first grade and three second grade students. There were eleven boys and seven girls. No physical or health limitations were predetermined. None of the students were in special education programs. In order to prevent biases, ethnic and sociodemographic background information was not collected until the group interventions were completed.

Once the files were reviewed and classroom statistics were compiled, it was determined that the ethnic breakdown of the children included four African American, thirteen Hispanic students, and one pupil from
Pakistan. The children ranged in age from six to nine with a mean age of seven years seven months or 92.7 months. Seven of the children's primary language was Spanish.

It should be noted that due to the fact that the sample size (n=18) was so small, the research could not be generalized to other populations of retained students. However, this sample of school age students represented the special qualities necessary for this study and was used to determine the relationship between therapeutic interventions and improved academic self-efficacy.

Instrument and Data Collection

An instrument was specifically designed to measure the level of self-efficacy of primary grade students. Included in the considerations was the knowledge that the targeted students had limited reading skills. The cognitive level for children of this age was also taken into account. In addition, the design was mindful of the fact that seven of the students' primary language was Spanish.

Therefore, the instrument was designed utilizing intelligible language for the students' level of cognitive development. An initial five-point Likert scale with a thirty-five-question survey was pre-tested by twelve children at a home pizza party. The parents
were present, thereby giving permission to test their children. The children ranged in age from five to thirteen. These children were instrumental in the elimination of the questions that were inappropriate or too difficult for their cognitive and developmental levels.

As a result, it was determined that the five-point scale was too difficult, so a three-point Likert Scale was then designed. Due to the fact that the instrument was developed specifically for this project, it had not previously been tested for reliability or validity. The three-point scale included, yes, sometimes, and no answers with a visual option of selecting three different happy faces that corresponded with the written responses (see Appendix A).

The instrument was administered three times during the ten sessions. It was given during the first session as a baseline measure, then again in the six and tenth sessions as comparative measurements. The tests were given on the three separate occasions in order to provide reference points for any notable changes in the students' self-reported efficacy.

A Principle Component Analysis was run on the instrument to search for the fewest significant underlying factors. The resulting Pattern Matrix showed
three significant factors (see Appendix K). A review of the clustered questions led the authors to classify the factors as Educational, Self-Confidence, and Physiological efficacy.

Another baseline measurement utilized in this research was the subjects' grades prior to the ten-session interventions. The subjects included Reading, Math, Social Studies Science and Health. The research also incorporated sociodemographics as a univariate measuring students' age (measured as a continuous variable); dichotomous variables such as gender, grade level (grade one and two) and a nominal variable, ethnicity.

However, due to the small sample size (n=18) these variables could not be considered as co-variates. These variables were used to provide explanatory information for the results found in the statistical analysis. Dependent variables were classroom grades, attendance (measured on an ordinal level) and improved self-efficacy (measured on a three-point Likert Scale) as they were affected by the constant variable of the therapeutic intervention.

At the end of the five weeks, the post Reading, Math, Social Studies, Science and Health grades were also collected and recorded. In addition, attendance records
were examined to determine the number of cumulative absences each child had during the 2000-2001 school year. The data was then used to determine the relationship between the interventions and increased academic self-efficacy.

Procedures

A parental consent letter was sent home to all families in the study. The informed consent was translated into Spanish for the Spanish-speaking parents. In addition, phone calls were made to the parents who did not immediately respond. A Spanish speaking aid was also utilized to make calls to the non-English speaking parents. The subjects and their parents were advised of confidentiality and the freedom to drop out of the study at any time. Consequently, the entire class received permission to participate in the research.

From the first week in March 2001, through the first week in April 2001, the ten-session program was conducted in the children's classroom for approximately one hour twice a week. The teacher remained in the room, however had limited participation the study.

All of the group sessions began with a brief meditation designed specifically for primary age children and ended with the students reciting academic-based affirmations. During the sessions, the children
participated in academic exercises and learned cognitive retraining skills. In addition, an incentive was given to each child for his/her participation in the activities.

A data file was set-up to organize all the variables collected. The data file was then utilized to determine relationships. After the program was completed, a comparison was made from the three test instrument outcomes. The results were then analyzed to determine if there were any notable changes in the children's responses.

**Academic Interventions**

1) During the first session, introductions were made and the oral consent was read to the students explaining their right to determine participation in the research project (Attachment B). The student consent was then signed and the self-efficacy instrument was administered. All materials were sealed in an envelope and kept in a file until the ten interventions were completed. The session ended with a Mother-May-I type activity created to enhance problem-solving and listening skills.
2) The second session was a science experiment. In this group endeavor, the children were given a variety of objects to place in buckets of water. Each group determined which objects floated and which sank. The objects included fruits, a candle, coins, and a golf tee. At the end, each group reported their results to the class.

3) For the third session, a Lingo Bingo game was created by employing the students' spelling words. The activity assisted students in their memorization and reinforcement of difficult sight words.

4) The fourth session utilized 26 small Chinese take-out cartons with a different letter of the alphabet written on the outside of each carton. A variety of miniature objects were provided to each child. The students phonetically sounded out each object's name and placed it in the appropriately lettered carton. The object of the activity was to promote phonics, problem-solving and word comprehension.

5) The fifth activity was designed to teach the children the use of mathematics through
measurement. Three surveyors set up equipment on the school's baseball diamond. The students took turns wearing hard hats and vests while assisting the surveyors to measure the distance from home plate to first base. The surveyors provided excellent role modeling for the class.

6) The sixth session began by administering the self-efficacy instrument. The children then created a spring flower using colored petals. On each petal was printed an affirmation. A polaroid picture was taken of each child and glued in the center of the flower. The students then read one of their affirmations, such as "I am a good student," to the class. This exercise was designed to instill positive thinking about oneself.

7) The seventh session started with a video prepared by a local physician, dentist and optometrist. Three nurses came to the classroom to work with the children on health issues. The children had the opportunity to listen to their heartbeats, check their reflexes, and measure their height and weight. The goal of this exercise was to teach the
importance of maintaining a healthy body. It also demonstrated positive role modeling.

8) The eighth activity was called the Pretzel. It was designed after the game Twister. The game mats were created with four different shapes and colors that had been previously learned by the students. The mats had red circles, yellow stars, green squares, and blue triangles. The objective was to have the students identify primary shapes and colors.

9) The ninth session provided the students with a California history lesson. The children were divided into three teams and given a treasure map. Each team followed the directions given on their map. There were clues hidden around the playground that led to their treasures. The three treasures consisted of pictures and information on the state bird, flag and flower. Each team then gave an oral presentation about their group's state symbol.

10) The final session included the post-administration of the self-efficacy instrument and a thank-you celebration. The students also presented the researchers with thank-you
drawings and letters, an affirmation poster and a chart of their favorite activities.

Protection of Human Subjects

Students were informed of the importance of confidentiality and their right to determine participation. Although the student's names were used for parent permission and review of school records, each child was assigned a coding number to protect their anonymity. The parents signed an informed consent giving permission for their child to participate in the group activities (see Appendix C and D). The forms were kept in a locked cabinet.

The students were provided an opportunity to verbally approve of their participation and the option to withdraw from the study at any time. At the end of the ten-week program, a debriefing statement was read and given to each of the students (see Appendix E). A separate statement was sent home to the parents (see Appendix F and G). Last, a debriefing statement was provided to the teacher (see Appendix H).

A final copy of the research project will be provided to the school district and the participating school. A bound copy of the research will also be available in the Pfau Library at California State University San Bernardino.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Sociodemographic Characteristics

The students were given a code to provide identification and anonymity. Each of the variables was assigned a numerical value. A Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program was used for statistical analysis. Frequency distributions were prepared for the sociodemographic categories of gender, age, ethnicity, grade and primary language. Other inferential statistics were computed to determine if the ten-session intervention program was effective in the enhancement of the students' academic self-efficacy.

The sample included fifteen first grade and three second grade retained children from the Perris Elementary School District in Riverside County. Eleven of the selected students were male and seven were female (see Table 1). The average age of the students was seven years, seven months. It should be noted that after the sixth session, one of the male students transferred to another school.
Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 showed a distribution of the grade level by gender of the students in the program (see Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ethnic breakdown of the participants in the study was recorded in Table 3. Of the three ethnic groups, Hispanic, African American and Pakistani, the Hispanic participants represented the highest ethnic category at 72.2%. There were no Caucasian students (see Table 3).
Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the children communicated in English. However, English was not the primary language for almost half of the class. Table 4 showed the distribution of primary languages (see Table 4).

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Primary Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Language</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-Efficacy Instrument

A Principle Component analysis was utilized to identify and refine the initial self-efficacy instrument (see Appendix K). Three reliable scales resulted from this analysis. As a set, these scales provided a
reliable measurement with the following results. The first scale identified seven items that measured the student's academic self-efficacy. The alpha coefficient was $\alpha = .83$. The second scale grouped questions that measured students' self-confidence. This scale had a reliability coefficient $\alpha = .69$. The third scale identified questions pertaining to children's physiological states. This scale's coefficient was $\alpha = .77$.

A One-Way Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance was used to compare the results of each of the three scales over the ten-session intervention period. The instrument was given prior to the beginning of the intervention (pre-test), after the first five interventions (mid-test), and at the end of the tenth intervention (post-test) (see Table 5).

Table 5. Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results For Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficacy Component</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Efficacy</td>
<td>.677</td>
<td>.515</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>.585</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological States</td>
<td>.520</td>
<td>.599</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparison of Grades Before and After Interventions

The average grades for all students increased from 3.2 to 3.8. Paired t-tests were utilized to compare student's grades before and after the intervention. \( t = -3.57, p < .001 \). Table 6 provided a summary of the Paired t-Test results for the grades from the four subject categories that were evaluated. Each comparison showed a significant improvement in GPA \( p < .05 \). Health grades did not change so were eliminated from the analysis (see Table 6).

Table 6. Tests of Association in Pre and Post Program Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre/Post Paired Subjects</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Science Post Science</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Reading Post Reading</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>4.189</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies Post Social Studies</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.204</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Math Post Math</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>5.102</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to determine if providing academic self-efficacy interventions to primary school students could improve their grades. Contrary to the expected outcomes, in the analysis of the changes across the three administrations of the self-efficacy instruments, no statistical insignificance was found. The paired t-tests showed that the difference in students' grades was statistically significant.

Due to the fact that the research results concluded a moderate reliability in the self-efficacy instrument and improved students' grades, it was important to identify the deficiencies with the instrument or its administration. For further understanding, the data was also examined to determine possible reasons for the weak associations in the measurements from the analysis.

The individual variables considered were student attendance, grade and language. Other factors weighed were cultural understanding and student developmental levels. In addition, qualitative information was provided through direct observation, teacher interviews of the students, and teacher comments (see Appendix L).
A possible factor that may have influenced the results of the test was that almost half of the students' primary language was Spanish. During the study, it was observed that many of the children had difficulty with new concepts because of their language barriers. In addition, the teacher reported that the students' limited language competence affected their ability to describe and process what they had learned. For example, the California State flower is the poppy. The limited English-speaking children consistently called it a puppy. Research has found that a strong relationship exists between language development, cognitive growth and academic achievement, especially in second language learners (Nissani, 1993).

A case-by-case analysis showed that low attendance had a negative effect on the children's academic success. In most cases, the more absences the child had the lower his grades were. Other variables considered were students' ethnicity and socioeconomic levels. Studies have indicated that poor and minority children make up a disproportionate number of the retained children (Foster, 1993).

Furthermore, males were more likely to be retained than females. Statistics have also shown higher rates of retention for African American and Hispanic males.
(Foster, 1993). This research study supported the findings in that there were eleven male students, four of them African American and seven of them Hispanic. There were no Caucasian children in the class.

The students' socioeconomic status was difficult to evaluate because the district considered this confidential information. However, the Perris Elementary School District reported that approximately 83% of their students received free breakfast and lunch. This percentage indicated that a high number of students in the class had come from impoverished environments.

The results from the instrument seemed to cloud the research results, however there was a noted increase in the students' grades. Although no cause and effect was determined, it was postulated that the students' academic success supported the hypothesis that providing interventions would enhance children's self-efficacy. Therefore, it was theorized that a relationship existed between increased confidence and belief in ability, and the students' academic performance.

Helen Nissani (1993) from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, reported that in order to effectively teach children, their whole development (social, emotional, physical and cognitive) must be taken into consideration. In addition, a cognitive-
developmental approach through personally meaningful hands-on learning activities was shown to be beneficial for young children (Nissani, 1993).

This research study was designed to incorporate academic activities that would provide successful accomplishments for retained elementary students. The intervention program was operationalized by utilizing components from Bandura's model for enhancement of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) concluded that the best agent for change in behavior was performance accomplishments. Therefore, the students were provided hands-on activities that rendered opportunities for academic successes.

Second, vicarious experiences were provided from professional surveyors and nurses in the community. The success in this collaborative effort was realized when a student raised his hand and said that he wanted to learn math because he now wanted to become a surveyor. In addition, the students received role-modeling from the researchers.

The third critical component in Bandura's model was the importance of the individual's psychological state. This intervention program incorporated relaxation techniques to provide a vital, inner component to enhance self-efficacy. It was noted in the student interviews,
that several of the children were now generalizing the meditation and relaxation techniques to other situations.

The fourth and final component that Bandura (1993) included was verbal persuasion. As Bandura stated, offering supportive messages is easy to do; however this concept is harder for children to believe in and integrate. The research project addressed this component through positive affirmations.

At the end of each session, the students selected an affirmation from a container and read it aloud to the class. The teacher reinforced this activity by creating a student-designed affirmation chart. From the teacher comments, it was noted that this exercise had helped the students personalize newly learned attributes and more readily apply them.

Last, the students were provided small rewards at the end of each session. Bandura (1993) felt that positive incentives were an important strategy to increase students' self-concepts. The rewards were also utilized as motivators to keep the students on task.

The self-efficacy interventions were believed to have been a positive cognitive and tactile experience for this class of retained students. As Wakefield (1996) suggested, small group activities provided intrinsic motivation, social reinforcement, and group rewards. In
addition, the collaborative nature of the project enhanced the students' knowledge base.

According to Erik Erikson, challenges have produced both positive and negative outcomes (Wakefield, 1996). In addition, individuals can change their negative thought patterns into positives (Wakefield, 1996). Retention may have already had a negative impact on these children. However, at the end of the program it was realized that by having providing the class with rewarding opportunities, positive changes had occurred.

Although there were barriers to the success of this program, the teacher reported that the students experienced accomplishments in different ways. Some enjoyed the relaxation techniques, many benefited from the hands-on activities and some appreciated the contact with the professionals. The goal of providing opportunities for enhancement of self-efficacy was provided.

Limitations of the Study

The instrument was created for the project and had not been previously tested for reliability or validity. Due to the children's low levels of reading and language acquisition, they had difficulty answering the instrument questions. The administration was slow by virtue of the fact that a number of the questions had to be repeated.
and clarified for understanding. Some students lost interest and became distracted by others around them.

Ten of the children's primary language was non-English. It was noted that some of them had difficulty with language translation. Some children were dependent on others to help with word usage. Due to variations in interpretation, the meaning of the questions may have been distorted.

Another limitation was that there was a small sample size (n=18) and no control group. A comparative analysis between groups was not utilized. All of students were in a self-contained classroom. There was no comparison between this group and other retained children who had been mainstreamed in a regular classroom environment. Therefore, this study could not be generalized to other retained students.

Research has shown that the sooner interventions are initiated after the child is retained, the more successful the results ("Denying Social," 1998). Therefore, another limitation to this study was that the necessary approval for the project was not granted until the last trimester of the students' school year. A further limitation was that the project was conducted over a brief five-week period. Successful mastery of material comes with repetition, which suggested that
these children may have required more time than what was allotted to optimally internalization their newly acquired skills.

Finally, unpredicted changes in the subject's self-efficacy may have resulted from teacher initiation, parent participation, student maturation or other unforeseen variables.

Conclusions

Research has indicated that students will continue to experience setbacks in learning if academic strategies are the only means of assisting struggling learners. In addition, if children have been left alone with their internal self defeating thoughts, the same negative outcomes will continue to follow them throughout their lives (Popkins, 1980).

Mackin (1979) voiced the opinion that educators must realize that retained students have not learned the same as other students. Therefore, it was postulated that developing comprehensive integrative interventions, could produce desirable student outcomes (Pittman, 1996).

Pittman (1996) also asserted that students' potentials are as important to address as their problems. In fact, he stated that efforts must be made to highlight students' strengths in order to ensure that they are successful in school.
Recommendations

In light of the increased numbers of retained children, it was apparent that educators have not found a successful answer for children who are not achieving at their expected grade level. This research concluded that schools must continue to explore a wide variety of methods to tackle the academic problems their students' experience. Therefore, it was concluded the goal should be to provide ample opportunities for pupils to discover the skills, knowledge, and commitments that they need to transition into successful learners.

Studies have shown that students' self-efficacy can be bolstered by providing them with group counseling, encouragement, and social skills training ("Addressing Barriers," 2000). Therefore, innovative and creative educational tools must be implemented to bridge the learning gap for academically challenged students. In addition, the interventions must then be initiated as early in the child's education as possible.

It is also recommended that further research should be conducted that would utilize a control group. Due to the lack of comparative analysis, it was difficult to generalize this study to other retained student populations. Furthermore, long-term follow-up studies
could be important to determine the success of intervention programs such as this one.

Last, if lawmakers continue to pass bills that expect California educators to improve students' test scores and advance toward higher learning standards, then every school needs to implement a comprehensive and multifaceted set of interventions ("Denying Social," 1998). It would be beneficial to have practitioners such as social workers available in the schools in order to link therapeutic programs with educational curriculums.

The collaborative efforts should include a spectrum of disciplines that are not confined to educational aspects, but inclusive of children's psychological and social needs as well.
APPENDIX A:

SELF-EFFICACY INSTRUMENT
# Self-Efficacy Scale for Children

3 Point Likert Scale

1. I like learning.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I finish my work in class.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I ask questions when I need help.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I do my homework.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. I eat breakfast before class.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. My schoolwork is important to me.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I have good attendance at school.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. I follow the classroom rules.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. When I try, I do well in school.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. My classmates tease me when I make a mistake.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. I am smart.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. I worry about taking tests.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. I am shy when I go in front of the class.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. The other students are smarter than I am.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

16. I am afraid I will do badly in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

17. I like math.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

18. I like to read.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

19. I feel sick before a test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

20. I get nervous on the way to school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

50
APPENDIX B:
ORAL CONSENT SCRIPT FOR STUDENTS
Oral Consent Script for Students

Boys and girls, we would like to introduce ourselves. Our names are Mrs. Spiro and Mrs. Frazier. We are both students just like you. We want to invite you to be a part of our research project. We have contacted each of your parents, your teacher and the principal. They have all said we can work with you in your classroom doing some fun activities to help you to feel better about school. We are going to start by asking you some questions. We will ask you the same questions in a few weeks.

This is not a test and there are no wrong answers. If you do not want to participate, we will understand. If you start and then decide you no longer want to be in our program, you can drop out at any time. At the bottom of this paper there is a place to sign if you would like to work with us on this project or not. You can ask questions. Is there anything you do not understand at this time?

[ ] [ ]

Child's signature ____________ Yes No
Informed Consent (English Version)

This study in which your child is being asked to participate is designed to offer him/her fun group activities that will help with problem-solving and building belief in his/her ability to do well in school. Cheryl Spiro and Karen Frazier are graduate students in the Masters of Social Work (MSW) Program at California State University San Bernardino. They are conducting the study under the supervision of Dr. Matt Riggs with the guidance of Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, California State University San Bernardino. The Institutional Review Board at California State University San Bernardino has approved this study. This study also complies with the California & Education Code 51513.

As part of the study, your child will participate in ten one-hour sessions between the dates of March 6, 2001 thru April 5, 2001. The sessions will be conducted two days a week during the last hour of the school day. They will take place in your child’s classroom with their teacher present.

Before the first group session, your child will be asked a few questions about his/her belief in his/her ability to succeed in school. After the final group session, he/she will once again be asked the same questions. We will also be accessing your child’s records for grades and attendance. This information will be used to measure your student’s responses in the study.

Your approval for your child to participate in this study is totally voluntary. Your child will also be given the opportunity to verbally declare whether or not he/she wishes to participate in the study and will have the option to withdraw at any time. If you have any questions about the study, you may call Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at (909) 880-5507.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and that I understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to my child’s participation.

Sincerely,

Karen Frazier
Cheryl Spiro

______________________________  ________________________________
Child’s Name                      Parent’s Approval and Date
APPENDIX D:

INFORMED CONSENT SPANISH VERSION
Información de Consentimiento (Spanish Version)

Este estudio en el cual le estamos pidiendo a su hijo/a que participe está diseñado a ofrecerle actividades de grupo divertidas que le ayudarán a resolver problemas y de que se sienta seguro de sus habilidades para salir bien en la escuela. Cheryl Spiro y Karen Frazier son estudiantes graduados en el programa de la Maestría de Trabajo Social en la Universidad de San Bernardino del Estado de California. Están haciendo unos estudios bajo la supervisión del Dr. Matt Riggs aconsejadas por la Dra. Rosemary McCaslin, Universidad de San Bernardino del Estado de California. La Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad de San Bernardino del Estado de California ha aprobado este estudio. Este estudio está de acuerdo al Código de California y Educación 51513.

Como parte del estudio, su hijo/a participarán en diez sesiones de una hora entre las fechas del 6 de marzo del 2001 hasta el 5 de abril del 2001. Las sesiones serán dos días a la semana durante la última hora del día escolar. Serán en el salón de su hijo/a estando el maestro presente.

Antes de la primera sesión de grupo, se le harán algunas preguntas a su hijo/a sobre su confianza que siente para tener éxito en la escuela. Después de la sesión de grupo final, se le hará la misma pregunta. También tendremos acceso al archivo del estudiante para ver sus grados y asistencia. Esta información será usada para medir las respuestas del estudiante en el estudio.

Su aprobación para que su hijo/a participe en este estudio es totalmente voluntario. Su hijo/a también se le dará la oportunidad de verbalmente decir si quiere o no participar en el estudio y se le dará la opción de salirse en cualquier momento. Si tiene preguntas sobre el estudio, puede hablarle a la Dra. Rosemary McCaslin al (909) 880-5507.

Atentamente,

Karen Frazier
Cheryl Spiro

Al firmar, reconozco que se me ha informado sobre, y que comprendo, la naturaleza y el propósito del estudio, y doy libremente mi consentimiento para que participe mi hijo/a.

Nombre del Estudiante ___________________________ Aprobación del Padre y Fecha ___________________________
APPENDIX E:

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT (CHILD)
Debriefing Statement (Child)

Thank you for working with us in this program. We could not have done it without your help. We hope you learned some new and fun projects that helped you feel better about being able to do your schoolwork. We enjoyed working with you. Keep up the good work. We also hope that you will continue to enjoy school and do well in your classes.

If you have any questions about the time we spent with you, please have your parents call the school principal for more information. A copy of the study will be in the principal's office this summer.
APPENDIX F:

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT (PARENT-ENGLISH)
Debriefing Statement (Parent-English)

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in this research project. The study was designed to determine if providing your child with self-esteem exercises would help him/her to increase the belief in his/her ability to perform well in school. Ultimately, we hoped that your child could improve his/her grades and enhance his/her interest in school.

If your child is at all negatively affected by this study, a counseling referral list can be obtained from the school office. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school principal. If you wish to obtain or review a copy of the project, it will be available in the principal's office this summer.
APPENDIX G:
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT (PARENT-SPANISH)
Declaración (Padres- Español)

Gracias por permitir que su hijo participe en este proyecto de investigación. El estudio fue diseñado para determinar que si al proporcionarle a su hijo ejercicios de auto-estimación le ayudarían a aumentar su confianza en sus habilidades de trabajar mejor en la escuela. Fundamentalmente, esperamos que su hijo mejore sus calificaciones y aumente su interés en la escuela.

Si a su hijo le afecta negativamente este estudio, puede obtener una lista de consejeros en la oficina de la escuela. Si tiene preguntas, por favor comuníquese con el director de la escuela. Si desea obtener o revisar una copia del proyecto, estará disponible en la oficina del director este verano.
APPENDIX H:

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT (TEACHER)
Debriefing Statement (Teacher)

Thank you for allowing your class to participate in this research project. The study was designed to determine if providing your students with academic enhancement exercises and cognitive retraining skills would help them to increase the belief in their ability to perform well in school. Ultimately, it was hoped that your students could improve their grades and enhance their interest in school.

If you or your students are at all negatively affected by this study, a counseling referral list can be obtained from the school office. A copy of the study will be given to your school principal this summer.
APPENDIX I:

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER
Ms. Cheryl Spiro and Ms. Karen Frazier  
c/o Professor Matt L. Riggs (Loma Linda Univ.)  
Department of Social Work  
California State University  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino, California 92407  

Dear Ms. Sprio and Ms. Frazier:

Your renewal application to use human subjects, titled, "School Retention and Academic Self-Efficacy with Elementary Students" has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Your informed consent statement should contain a statement that reads, "This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino."

Please notify the IRB if any substantive changes are made in your research prospectus and/or any unanticipated risks to subjects arise. If your project lasts longer than one year, you must reapply for approval at the end of each year. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, IRB Secretary. Mr. Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 880-5027, by fax at (909) 880-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application identification number (above) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Joseph Love/Chair  
Institutional Review Board

cc: Matt L. Riggs (Loma Linda Univ.)
APPENDIX J:

SIGNED AGENCY APPROVAL LETTER FROM

PERRIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT
August 28, 2000

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
California State University, San Bernardino

Dear Sirs,

This letter is a statement that the Perris Elementary School District will cooperate in a study to be conducted by Ms. Cheryl Spiro and Mrs. Karen Frazier as part of their requirement for fulfillment of the Masters in Social Work Degree from CSUSB.

The district has proceeded to enlist the assistance of individual school site Principals and both my staff and I will provide oversight of the investigator's activities throughout the project.

If I can provide any further information, please contact me at (909) 657-3118 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully,

Sig Sigerson,
Director of Special Education and Student Services
APPENDIX K:

PATTERN MATRIX
## Pattern Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grouped Questions</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I like learning</td>
<td>.962</td>
<td>-7.758E-02</td>
<td>1.703E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) I ask questions when I need help</td>
<td>.484</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>-.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) I follow classroom rules</td>
<td>.784</td>
<td>-.217</td>
<td>-4.549E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) When I try, I do well in school</td>
<td>.962</td>
<td>-7.758E-02</td>
<td>1.703E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 I am smart</td>
<td>.616</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>1.990E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) I worry about taking tests</td>
<td>.609</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>-9.135E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14R) I hate school</td>
<td>-.706</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>-6.414E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Classmates tease me when I make a mistake</td>
<td>-.376</td>
<td>.667</td>
<td>-.408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) I am shy when I go in front of the class</td>
<td>.440</td>
<td>.608</td>
<td>-.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) I am afraid I will do badly in school</td>
<td>-.183</td>
<td>.762</td>
<td>-.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) I get nervous on the way to school</td>
<td>.274</td>
<td>.561</td>
<td>9.484E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) I eat breakfast before class</td>
<td>-.126</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) My schoolwork is important to me</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>1.772E-02</td>
<td>.821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15R) Other students are smarter than I am</td>
<td>7.314E-02</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>-.644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19R) I feel sick before a test</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>-.790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Questions 7, 2, 18 were eliminated due to lack of associations.
APPENDIX L:
STUDENT AND TEACHER EVALUATIONS OF PROGRAM
Student ID 1 JG

Student Response from Program

1) "About the music"
2) "We played squares."
3) "We look for the eggs."

Teacher Narrative

This student was unable to explain any of the activities without saying "thingy." He would frown and then try to respond using his hands. When asked about using the affirmations, he said he really liked them. I inquired as to his favorite and he said what was that, I forgot.

When I observed him during the presentations, he seldom was on task. The activities involving movement were most beneficial, in my opinion, for this student. With more exposure, he will be successful.
Student ID 2 JJ

Student Response from Program
1) "They gave us cake."
2) "My spelling test" (When asked what this meant, she said she learned that)
3) "We played games."
4) "We had fun."

Teacher Narrative

This student is limited in English. She was unable to connect concepts to the activities. The hands-on activities were beneficial for experiences and the teams helped her as well. However, she needs vocabulary or more language experiences to verbalize.
Student ID 3 EL

Student Response from Program

1) "Finding the eggs"
2) "We - doctor"
3) "We learned things that like what kind yes no sometimes."

Teacher Narrative

This student is very limited in language and previous hands-on experiences. He truly did benefit form the small groups. While discussing the activities, he included other classroom activities that he enjoyed.

A clearer vocabulary presentation would help this student. He was not comfortable with the relaxation activities. He said he didn't like some of the eggs. It was not clear what he was referring to so he changed the subject (useful technique).
Student ID 4 RZ

Student Response from Program

1) "The treasure hunt."
2) "The health when Mrs. Spiro's mother came."
3) "The sink or float."
4) "The animals you stick on your back."

Teacher Narrative

This student wrote daily in her journal about the activities. She said the relaxation helped her be good in class. She said when she is shy it helps her at home and when she goes to visit someone she would take a deep breath, hold it in her brain and count to three and let it out.

While limited in English, she was able to verbalize concepts such as in sink and float, "if some things were light even when you held them down, they would come up because the water is heavier." This interview gave this student an opportunity to ask questions.
Student ID 5 KG

Student Response from Program

1) "They played with us."

2) "They helped us be a worker."

3) "They helped us learn to read."

Teacher Narrative

This student showed little interest during activities, however he can discuss all the activities fully. He expressed an interest in the "workers" because now he knows what they are doing on the street.

This student said he did not like the "yes no thing" because it took too long. I did observe he was very verbal during the first questionnaire, however he didn't seem to be quite so verbal during the second and third sessions.
Student ID 6 RN

Student Response from Program

1) "The spinners I don't know how to call it."
2) "The doctors came."
3) "The exercise"

Teacher Narrative

This student is very limited in English. When asked about the activities, she said several times, "I don't know how to call it." She would benefit from many more language experiences with follow-up discussions to clarify terms as well as pronunciations. The hands-on activities were wonderful for her!
Student ID 7 DB

Student Response from Program

1) "We can float things."
2) "We can go on a Easter egg hunt."
3) "Relaxing"

Teacher Narrative

It was surprising to me that this student who participated in all activities did not look forward to them. He was rescheduled for a special class and perhaps that was a contributing factor. It was explained to him that he wouldn't miss anything, however he consistently asked if he could go to his class instead of participating. He verbalized that he did not like some of the activities and yet he said he would like to do them again.
Student ID 8 KA

Student Response from Program

1) "They gave us prizes."
2) "They showed us how to work on the street."
3) "They were fun."

Teacher Narrative

This student shared with her family all the activities. She said, "you could pretend to have what you'd like and to not be scared." The format of the classes was beneficial, as I believe they help show her leadership ability. She became a strong more confident individual.
Student ID 9 AP

Student Response from Program

1) "They put water in a bucket to see if they float or sink."
2) "They did the doctor thing."
3) "They put the animals on our back to guess them."

Teacher Narrative

This student had difficulty staying on task during some of the activities. He said they were here "to make us laugh and be happy." The affirmations were "to make us intelligent" according to this student. He enjoyed the various activities. He is willing to attempt more new activities now that he has experienced success. He is trying to use the relaxation techniques when he feels most active.
Student ID 10 YF

Student Response from Program

1) "The flowers"
2) "The games"
3) "The doctor"
4) "The paint"
5) "How do you call the square game?"
6) "The looking things the man brought"

Teacher Narrative

This student is very limited in English. The variety of activities was most beneficial with hands-on activities. However, she was unable to explain any of the activities. She can draw a picture and with a follow-up of vocabulary I do believe she could report successfully.
Student ID 11 RT

Student Response from Program
1) "They did treasure eggs."
2) "They did doctor."
3) "They did squares."

Teacher Narrative

This student enjoyed the activities, however he could not tell me anything he learned except "being nice." This student is not very verbal and does lack from experiences. While the hands-on activities were beneficial and sparked his interest, he would have benefited from more language experiences about each activity so he could report on them. He could draw a picture illustrating the activities.
Student ID 12 ZC

Student Response from Program

1) "We learn about animals." "We have to try what animal we have on our back."

2) "We have fun with a girl because they play a lot with us

3) "They bung presents and they give pencil too."

Teacher Narrative

While this student struggles with language activities, she is very willing to take a risk. She has become much more verbal, however she needs many more language experiences. She has written about the activities in her journal, which has allowed me to follow-up with her on various concepts.
Student ID 13 PV

Student Response from Program

1) "I liked the games."

2) "We did activities."

3) "We played games and got toys."

Teacher Narrative

This student said when he feels stressed he can use the relaxation techniques. Since this student can not read, he felt successful with the activities. He was proud to share his knowledge about the state bird, flower and flag. The hands-on activities gave him a beneficial way to participate. He was able to attain information and report in a successful manner.
Student ID 14 AS

Student Response from Program

1) "When we played the shape game, my group put their hands and feets on different shapes."

2) "The ABC game gave us little toys like a spider and we put it on a little box and they timed us."

3) "I learned how to play the game."

Teacher Narrative

While this student missed parts of the presentations due to her scheduling of other pullout classes, she did benefit. She mentioned the shape game, however she could not name the shapes. I found that interesting!

When I interviewed her, she seemed very nervous. How did she benefit? She can lead the class in a relaxing manner!
Student ID 15 AG

Student Response from Program
1) "I liked the treasure hunt."
2) "How to float"
3) "health- how to hear your heart"

Teacher Narrative

When I asked this student what he learned about the floating activity, he could not respond although he mentioned it as something he liked.

He discussed he had heard his heartbeat before as his brother shared, "the machine" that his uncle gave him. He did not retain the vocabulary nor can he respond in full sentences to explain any of the activities fully or logically without "teacher" probing.

When I asked if he would like them to come again, he said yes but he didn't like having to sit out. He did verbalize he was bad and had to sit out and he didn't think that was fair.
Student ID 17 DW

Student Response from Program

1) "We got prizes."
2) "We played games."
3) "We played lingo bingo."
4) "We did tests."

Teacher Narrative

This student truly did benefit from the activities that allowed for movement. Since he has great difficulty just sitting in a desk. He looked forward to the presenters' visits. He had difficulty with the relaxation tape, however he would ask if we could try it before spelling tests. I felt he hesitated to close his eyes, as he was always so busy watching and reporting on others. If continued, I believe this relaxation would be most beneficial.
Student ID 21 JM

Student Response from Program
1) "I like when they play with the eggs."
2) "When we play a lot of games."
3) "The bingo game."

Teacher Narrative

This student was unable to connect concepts to the activities. He is limited in English and said, "like the water thing and egg." He looked at the graph for clues, however had difficulty verbalizing full sentences. "When the doctors came." "No, when her mom came and they hit us and my leg came up."

When I asked him about the bingo game he said, "We took rocks and put it on the squares."
APPENDIX M:

STUDENT CHART OF ACTIVITIES
STUDENT CHART OF ACTIVITIES

Note: Activity children liked the best depicted by pictures they drew of themselves
REFERENCES


Comprehensive approaches and mental health in schools. (1997, Winter). Addressing Barriers to Learning 2 (1) 1-8 (Available from UCLA School Mental Health Project/ Center for Mental Health in Schools, Department of Psychology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563)


Denying social promotion obligates schools to do more to address barriers to learning. (1998, Fall). Addressing Barriers to Learning 3 (4) 1-12 (Available from UCLA School Mental Health Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools, Department of Psychology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563)


ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

This was a two-person project where author's collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:
   Assigned leader Karen Monique Frazier
   Assisted by Cheryl Anne Spiro

2. Data Entry and Analysis
   Assigned leader Cheryl Anne Spiro
   Assisted by Karen Monique Frazier

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:
   a. Introduction and Literature
      Assigned leader Karen Monique Frazier
      Assisted by Cheryl Anne Spiro
   b. Methods
      Assigned leader Karen Monique Frazier
      Assisted by Cheryl Anne Spiro
   c. Results
      Assigned leader Cheryl Anne Spiro
      Assisted by Karen Monique Frazier
   d. Discussion
      Assigned leader Cheryl Anne Spiro
      Assigned by Karen Monique Frazier