**Arguments Against Social Promotion**

1. Go to \_\_\_ to view the entire lesson. If that does not work, go to the videos below.

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| [Against Social Promotion Pt. 1 xtranormal](http://www.xtranormal.com/watch/7423631) | [Against Social Promotion Pt. 2 xtraormal](http://www.xtranormal.com/watch/7432589) |
| [Against Social Promotion Pt. 1 youtube](%3cobject%20width=%22480%22%20height=%22385%22%3e%3cparam%20name=%22movie%22%20value=%22http:/www.youtube.com/v/pBveK8H3YEY?fs=1&amp;hl=en_US%22%3e%3c/param%3e%3cparam%20name=%22allowFullScreen%22%20value=%22true%22%3e%3c/param%3e%3cparam%20name=%22allowscriptaccess%22%20value=%22always%22%3e%3c/param%3e%3cembed%20src=%22http://www.you) | [Against Social Promotion Pt. 2 youtube](%3cobject%20width=%22480%22%20height=%22385%22%3e%3cparam%20name=%22movie%22%20value=%22http:/www.youtube.com/v/dygbrsm4yOU?fs=1&amp;hl=en_US%22%3e%3c/param%3e%3cparam%20name=%22allowFullScreen%22%20value=%22true%22%3e%3c/param%3e%3cparam%20name=%22allowscriptaccess%22%20value=%22always%22%3e%3c/param%3e%3cembed%20src=%22http://www.you) |

For those that are interested in [Curriki](http://www.curriki.org/xwiki/bin/view/Main/), it is a web 2.0 service that provides a free, Creative-Commons, user-generated resource for and by teachers. Your school can create a group account to deposit quality lesson plans to share with the world. Many of the plans and resources are matched to state and federal standards. Many resources are rated by peers and content experts.

**Against Social Promotion Pt. 1**

Welcome to the Stan King show, our guest tonight is Paula Sailing. She is a published advocate for social promotion in the public schools. Her paper on titled “For Social Promotion” can be found in the link on this site. Paula, welcome.

Thank you Stan!

So Paula what is social promotion, and how is it practiced in the public schools?

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The practice of social promotion was started in the 1930’s as a response to the more traditional practice of grade retention for failing students….

Social promotion differs from the traditional model of retention because the student is allowed to continue their education at the next grade level weather they have passed the academic standards of the previous grade level or not.

Ok, so what are the procedures for social promotion? I have not seen any national policy standards for schools to follow…

Your right Stan that there are no national standards for promotion….

While the procedures for social promotion vary, it generally requires the approval of teachers, school administrators, and parents to promote the student….

It is often difficult to tell if a student is socially promoted, because administrators often make the paperwork look like the student passed the academic requirements.

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I see, so schools are not openly admitting that they promote students… Why is that?

Probably because of accountability standards under the No Child Left behind Act. Also school administrators do not like to admit that they socially promote students that have failed their academic areas.

The taxpayers do not want to hear that a student was socially promoted when they failed there academics. The taxpayers don’t realize that there may be other reasons to promote a student beside academics.

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But is socially promoting students in the best interest of the school then?

Financially it is more cost effective to keep the student with their peers then to just repeat the grade.

Think about it, does repeating a grade with the same teachers that failed the student in the first place make any since? That is paying for failure twice.

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While that is true, are we not passing the buck? With social promotion, are we not sending the student onto a grade that they are not prepared for?

Maybe, but a change in academic setting may also help the struggling student.

And what about the teacher that has to work with the promoted student?

How do you mean?

Won’t the teacher have to catch the promoted student up to par, AND teach the rest of their class?

Bear in mind that classes today average 30 students.

Hummm…. That would make life interesting in the class…

You have to admit, it’s not fair to the teachers and other classmates. The teacher should be able to teach one class of students at the same grade level, not one class with two different grade levels.

Hummm… That would make since…I guess it can be passing the buck to the next grade level teacher.

And I suppose that would create further issues that the students and administration will have to look at.

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Now Paula, in your report, you state that social promotion benefits students that fail high-stakes test.

Yes

But how is it a good thing to promote a student that fails such an important test? Isn’t it important that students show that they are proficient in academics?

Yes it is important. But one test should not be used against the student for such a important matter like going on to the next grade. The student should be judged on the whole of there academic performance.

And what if the student fails in their overall academics?

What?

What if the student fails in their overall academic performance?

Well then…. Hummm…then we need to determine why they failed.

And what then? Do we promote them, hold them back, what?

Ummm…

If the student fails, they should bear the consequences of that failure. They should not be promoted in that case.

Hummmm….(cricket noise)

While you’re thinking on that, let’s take a commercial break.

**Against Social Promotion Pt. 2**

Were back with Paula Sailing. Now let’s table the last question and move on.

Ok Stan, fine by me, that was a hard one.

In your paper, you argue that social promotion benefits the students socially. How is that?

Well think about the students that are held back. They get picked on all the time by younger and older peers. In class they are likely to rebel against the teachers that held them back and make life harder for them.

Ok, but what if their peers were the cause of the students fail? Does keeping them with the same classmates continue the distraction?

Ummm… Perhaps.

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Isn’t that what the main argument social promotion boils down to? Are the schools just babying the student by passing them on?

No, were keeping them with students of their age and academic grade level.

But is that always a good thing? Paula, aren’t we rewarding the failure of the student?

Ummm (Cricket sound)

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Ok Paula, lets’ put that argument away for now. In your paper you also list reasons that students fail.

Yes

Let’s go through them one by one.

Ok

The first is immaturity of the students.

Yes. We should promote students that are not mature enough for their grade.

(CRICKET SOUND)

Let me get this straight. Schools should promote students, that are, not, mature, enough, for their grade.

Yeah, a new class may be just what they need.

Uh, Ok, next point…. Weak curriculum and instruction.

Yes, we should not fail students that are in a class with bad teachers and curriculum.

But if the instruction and teachers are bad, won’t the student have an easier time passing the class? Bear in mind teachers have to meet state and national standards for proficiency in order to teach.

Ummm…

Let’s go on.

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Excessive absenteeism. If a student misses more then, oh let’s say 10 days of school. Should we promote that student?

Yes, we should promote that student.(cricket sound)

Isn’t that rewarding bad behavior. That is unrealistic in the real job world. I know if I missed 10 days of work, I would not have a show.

And the failing student needs to face the consequences of not doing all the class work.

Yeah… um…. But… ummm…

And going along with this, what about a student’s lack of effort…. Does social promotion reward a lack of effort?

Yes,.. I, guess it does (hits head, ring bell)… I did not think about that….

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I see… So it seems that those arguments for social promotion are ludicrous in the real world… We are almost out of time, so let’s look at the last argument of your paper. Now you say that social promotion helps the struggling student psychologically.

Yes, that is the main benefit of social promotion…..

Ok, please explain…

Retaining students, regardless of the grade at which they are retained, increase the likelihood that they will drop out of school….

Students held back are resentful and defiant of teachers in the class they repeat… In class the retained student may be looked up to by their younger peers, but they are also open to ridicule by them.

With social promotion, issues related to age/grade level differences are reduced or eliminated. The student is in a age-appropriate classroom for their age and academic level, with teachers that are competent in working with that age/grade level. These factors all help the struggling student’s self-esteem.

Ok that is nice, but doesn’t that just set the student up for failure later on in life? I’m sure that retention is bad, but lying to them just to keep their feeling from being hurt does not do them any good.

And the student will still be an academic problem in the next grade level. That will also negatively impact the students’ self-esteem when they are behind their peers.

Ummm… BEEPP , I guess that is a good point….

It seems to me, Paula, that the goal of education is to have students learn.

True…

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Were out of time for tonight, thank you Paula Sailing for appearing on the show tonight.

Thank you Stan, I guess you changed my mind… Social promotion is not the best thing for our children.

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(pan to Stan, and look at audience) If you are a teacher and would like to join this discussion, please go to the Class 11 Tab of the On Line 2 class. There you will find discussion questions and responses from other teachers. Thank you, and good night from our studio in Sterling, Colorado.

Discussion questions.

1. Would you as a teacher want to teach a student that has been socially promoted, and why/why not?

2. Do you see anything positive about social promotion?

3. What are some ways that we can help students that are facing retention/promotion?

4. What is a web 2.0 resource that you actually use in your class? Please post a link below.