

Schools for Hope: An Observation and Comparison of Studies Conducted in the United States

and Suriname, South America

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The Schools for Hope Program was introduced and implemented for the first time in classrooms in both the United States and Suriname during the 2014-2015 school year. This report is a summary of the research findings found among each population and comparing the results provided from each study. Individual reports are available for both the United States and Suriname. Each participating population received the same ten curriculum lessons on hope.

Findings in both studies suggest the hope curriculum is effective, and shows comprehension and better understanding of hope concepts among students. Student and instructor feedback has been positive in both countries with reports of overall satisfaction, support, and a desire to continue forward with the program. With this supporting evidence, it is highly recommended that further studies be conducted to explore the impact of hope on various adolescent populations.

In the U.S., a significant difference was found between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test data ( $p < .05$ ) for 5 out of the 10 questions in the Fall curriculum (Questions 1, 2, 3, 6, and 10). In Suriname, 1 question out of 10 showed a significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test data ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Question 2). For the Spring curriculum, the U.S. results indicate a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test data ( $p < .05$ ) for 6 out of 10 questions. Suriname report shows a significant difference for 3 out of 10 questions.

It is important to note and discuss the existing limitations reported among both studies that potentially impacted the results shown. First, the sample size was much smaller in Suriname than in the United States. Suriname had a total of 74 total participants, whereas the United States had 251 participants. It is recommended that future studies in both countries employ larger sample sizes allowing data to generalize to larger populations. There was also a difference in the age of the participants involved within each study. The Schools for Hope Curriculum was

developed and written targeting ten year old children. The U.S. implemented the program with 10 and 11 year old students at the fifth grade level in school. In the U.S., the report shows a significant difference is observed on more questions when comparing pre-test and post-test scores than seen in the Suriname population. Suriname had three schools teach the program with 12 to 18 year old students. Variation in age and implementing with older students could have been a factor and what potentially contributed to the absence of a statistical difference seen in as many answer responses among pre-test and post-test questions in Suriname. Curriculum specifically written to meet the developmental needs for each age group may be needed. Further studies should be conducted on receiving instruction at an earlier age and how this may impact hope. Additionally, the curriculum was translated from English to Dutch. Attention should be given to any potential variables affecting comprehension due to translation of material. Finally, the curriculum was taught in Suriname within a shorter time frame than in the U.S. The U.S. had one week of Fall lessons during the fall semester and one week of Spring lessons during the spring semester. In Suriname, students received both the Fall and Spring lessons within a three week range with a one week break in between sets of curriculum. It may be that students need more time to fully absorb the lessons to change their perspectives on hope.

The U.S. report noted some existing limitations within its study as well. Only one control group out of two initial groups had returned the necessary consent forms to participate and have data utilized. However, due to missing/incomplete information on collected surveys, no viable data could be used for the control group. Therefore, only experimental group surveys were statistically analyzed. Missing or incomplete student information on all surveys made it impossible to compare answer choices on all pre-test and post-tests for all participating individuals. It is important in future studies that all participants note down their participant ID

numbers in order to ensure accuracy in matching up pre-test and post-test scores. Administrators of the survey should place emphasis on correctly and completely filling out the required information located on each survey. Additionally, changes to the survey questions should be considered. Future studies should employ answer choices that are concise and appropriate to the reading level of the participants. It was determined one of the survey questions could be interpreted multiple ways and must be revised for future data collection.

Despite the limitations noted, both the U.S. and Suriname reports suggest Schools for Hope is effective in teaching adolescents hope concepts. It is highly recommended that further research be done to explore the impact of hope on adolescents. Preliminary information obtained from the above studies can be used to reduce/eliminate existing limitations and expand and further develop the hope curriculum.

Table 1: Fall Experimental Group Table for Suriname Students

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pre-Test Mean	2.60	1.83	2.69	3.45	3.00	2.95	3.48	3.12	2.56	3.17
Post-Test Mean	2.88	1.37	2.74	3.29	3.10	3.29	3.56	3.12	2.90	3.38
Difference	0.28	-0.46	0.05	-0.16	0.10	0.34	0.08	0.00	0.34	0.21
T-Statistic	-1.60	3.12	-0.22	1.02	0	-1.55	-0.43	0	-1.62	-1.35
Degrees of Freedom	41	40	41	41	40	41	41	41	41	41
p-value	0.0580	0.0016*	0.4130	0.1565	0.5	0.0641	0.3335	0.5	0.0564	0.0914

\* p&lt;0.05

Table 2: Fall Control Group Table for Suriname Students

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pre-Test Mean	2.68	1.83	2.60	3.44	2.96	2.63	3.07	2.89	3.02	3.35
Post-Test Mean	2.73	2.41	2.58	3.27	2.83	2.70	3.10	2.89	2.76	3.23
Difference	0.05	0.58	-0.02	-0.17	-0.13	0.07	0.03	0	-0.36	-0.12
Degrees of Freedom	40	40	39	40	39	39	40	40	40	39
p-value	0.4131	0.0035*	0.4161	0.1103	0.4142	0.2374	0.4418	0.3238	0.1214	0.3266

\*p&lt;0.05

Table 1: Spring Experimental Group Table for Suriname Students

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pre-Test Mean	2.79	3.21	3.15	3.30	2.62	3.09	2.84	2.88	3.12	2.88
Post-Test Mean	3.06	3.53	3.47	3.48	2.91	3.45	3.00	3.09	3.27	3.21
Difference	0.27	0.32	0.32	0.18	0.29	0.36	0.16	0.31	0.15	0.43
T-Statistic	-1.16	-1.54	-1.93	-0.28	-1.54	-2.46	-0.30	-0.63	-1.07	-1.87
Degrees of Freedom	33	33	33	32	33	32	32	32	32	33
p-value	0.1276	0.0663	0.0309*	0.3911	0.0668	0.0098*	0.3814	0.2652	0.1460	0.0349*

\* p&lt;0.05

Table 2: Spring Control Group Table for Suriname Students

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pre-Test Mean	2.64	3.26	3.31	3.09	3.00	3.15	3.05	2.65	2.71	2.91
Post-Test Mean	2.85	3.24	3.12	3.07	3.06	2.94	3.12	2.41	2.59	3.14
Difference	0.21	-0.02	-0.19	-0.02	0.06	-0.21	0.07	-0.24	-0.12	0.23
Degrees of Freedom	33	33	31	33	33	32	33	33	33	33
p-value	0.1623	0.4393	0.0522	0.4476	0.4046	0.2898	0.3986	0.1661	0.2969	0.1544

\*p&lt;0.05

Table 1: Fall Experimental Group Table Woodland Intermediate School Students (United States)

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pre-Test Mean	4.491	2.63	3.528	4.935	4.815	3.648	5.194	4.861	4.694	4.463
Post-Test Mean	4.815	2.306	3.991	5.056	4.824	4.815	5.185	4.972	4.685	4.787
Difference	0.324	-0.324	0.463	0.121	0.009	1.167	-0.009	0.111	-0.009	0.324
T-Statistic	-2.585	2.106	-2.42	-0.774	-0.0586	-6.935	0.068	-0.811	0.0618	-1.967
Degrees of Freedom	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107
p-value	0.011*	0.0375*	0.0172*	0.441	0.953	3.21E-10*	0.946	0.419	0.951	0.052*

\* p&lt;0.05

Table 2: Spring Experimental Group Table Woodland Intermediate School Students (United States)

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pre-Test Average	3.136	3.295	3.496	3.182	2.931	3.229	3.237	2.946	3.039	3.109
Post-Test Average	3.439	3.561	3.656	3.244	3.053	3.382	3.282	3.084	3.209	3.341
Difference	0.303	0.266	0.16	0.062	0.122	0.153	0.045	0.138	0.17	0.232
Degrees of Freedom	128	128	128	128	128	128	128	128	128	128
p-value	0.00015*	0.00029*	0.027*	0.48	0.102	0.039*	0.52	0.069	0.02*	0.0024*

\*p&lt;0.05

Table 3: Spring Control Group Table Woodland Intermediate School Students (United States)

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pre-Test Average	3.158	3.105	3.368	3.158	3.118	3.647
Post-Test Average	3.526	3.052	3.368	3.316	3.353	3.411
Difference	0.368	-0.053	0	0.158	0.235	-0.236
Degrees of Freedom	16	16	16	16	16	16
p-value	0.069	0.749	1	0.48	0.216	0.104

\*p&lt;0.05