

Assessing the link between grit and academic achievement in reading, mathematics, and writing among 4th graders: an explanatory sequential mixed methods inquiry



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Abstract

Building a culture of success in schools has been a goal in Texas public schools since standardized tests were developed in 1979. Many schools have begun instilling grit in the classrooms in hopes of increasing student achievement and teaching students how to push themselves through difficult tasks. The primary purpose of the study was to assess the link between grit and academic achievement on standardized academic achievement in reading, mathematics, and writing in a non-probability sample of 4th graders. The explanatory sequential mixed methods study was conducted in a rural elementary school in South Texas. The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) scores of 78 4th graders were used for the quantitative component of the study. A focus group (n = 4) was conducted to document the perspectives of grade four teachers regarding the academic achievement of students that have grit. Quantitative results showed that the study's 4th graders demonstrated grit; however, it was not statistically associated with academic achievement in reading, mathematics, and writing. Qualitative data resulted in three themes, namely, Student Perspectives, Teacher Presentations, and Understanding Failure, and suggested that grit has the potential to positively impact academic achievement. The study's results have the potential to provide educational leaders and other concerned individuals with the opportunity to learn if non-cognitive skills may play a role in the academic success of students. The results of this study may persuade school administrators and personnel to take a closer look at students and grit. Even though the quantitative and qualitative results did not complement each other, there were reasons to believe that there could be a link between grit and academic achievement and that other factors (e.g., socioeconomic status) must be taken into consideration in designing and conducting interventional programs that may enhance the development of grit. The study's results add to the body of knowledge about mindsets, grit, and academic achievement.

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