

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF *THE PARENTING CURRICULUM*: AN EVALUATION OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

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The primary purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of The Parenting Curriculum (1995), developed at Iowa State University by Williams, Brun, Trost, and Wasike in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Studies, and implemented in the family and consumer sciences programs in Iowa high schools. The degree of agreement or disagreement among knowledge statements, attitudes, and future decisions regarding parenting, as reported by high school students who were enrolled in this parenting course were compared with those students who were not enrolled and had never been enrolled in a parenting course. The study involved 162 high school students from five randomly selected Iowa high schools, an experimental group of 107 and a control group of 55. Descriptive statistics were computed on the questionnaire responses, as well as the use of randomized complete five-block designs with two treatments. Although there were no statistically significant differences in this study between the experimental and the control groups, these results indicated students in the experimental group agreed more with the items related to the eight units from The Parenting Curriculum, the four categories of the Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory, and future decisions regarding parenting. This study revealed that The Parenting Curriculum had a positive effect on the experimental groups' perceptions of the knowledge statements, attitudes, and future decisions regarding parenting.

The Need for Parent Education

The following review of literature relates to the need for evaluating parent education because large numbers of adolescents are becoming parents. One in nine of all females aged 15 to 19 become pregnant each year. By the age of 18, 24 percent of adolescent females will become pregnant at least once. Nearly one in five teenagers who experience a pregnancy for the first time become pregnant again within a year (Deaver, 1994).

The above statistics show that understanding how children develop is very important for all parents, but especially for adolescent parents. The reason is some adolescent mothers demonstrate abusive behaviors, such as emotional, physical, and intellectual neglect of their children. For instance, adolescent mothers sometimes are less sensitive, less responsive, provide less verbal and physical stimulation, and demonstrate less acceptance of infant behavior (Raeff, 1994; Spieker & Bensley, 1994; Whiteside-Mansell, Pope, & Bradley 1996). Because parenting skills are learned at such an early age, it is imperative that students are taught childrearing techniques, so that vicious cycles will not continue. Because of their lack of caregiving experience, teenage mothers may not have a realistic understanding of infant development.

Compared to older mothers, researchers have found younger mothers to overestimate their children's developmental progressions (Brooks-Gunn & Chase-Lansdale, 1995). Because newborns are completely dependent upon others to maintain life and healthy development, it is important that parents understand their child's abilities, so that the parents can provide the care and stimulation the child needs (Mawhinney & Petersen, 1990).

Contributing to this lack of knowledge is the fact that many young people grow up in homes where there is little opportunity to observe parenting taking place and to learn parenting skills from their own parents. Their parents are frequently away from the home while at work. Therefore, it is essential that these young parents or future parents develop the knowledge they need about parenting from other sources.

Pehrson and Robinson (1990) believed the key aspect of being a successful parent was preparation.

Effective parenting is no accident. It comes as a matter of hard work and skill in balancing all components of one's life in the process. One's willingness to make significant sacrifices in all areas of human endeavor- physical, psychological, social and spiritual- will determine in large part success as a parent. Throughout our lives, we undertake few more important responsibilities than those which accompany parenthood. However, in few areas of life are we so poorly prepared. No test must be passed or license acquired to become a parent. Yet, the responsibility carries with it requirements that are of monumental significance in our lives and the lives of our children. (p. 232)

Evaluation of Parenting Education

Trost and Williams (1998) conducted a study on the effectiveness of *The Parenting Curriculum* from the teachers' point of view. The curriculum was developed in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Studies at Iowa State University. In this study, questionnaires were administered to 46 teachers in the Iowa school districts who were implementing *The Parenting Curriculum*. There were a total of 35 respondents. The questionnaire items related to the new curriculum. The results indicated positive responses from the teachers regarding the unit outcomes specified in the curriculum. Teachers perceived the outcomes to be highly significant for their students' future lives. The findings also indicated that there was a positive relationship between activities and teachers' understanding of the units, and the implementation of particular activity units.

Other studies have been done on evaluating parent education, and research shows parent programs to be an effective method for parent education (Middlemiss, 1996). For example, Pehrson and Robinson (1990) discovered that even though there were no statistically significant differences found to establish that one model or method of parent education was more effective than another, the significant factor was that parent education has consistently been reported to be a positive issue in influencing the attitudes of parents.

Also, Stobier and Houghton (1993) conducted a study on the relationship of adolescent mothers' parental expectations, child development knowledge, and parental beliefs regarding their young children's coping behavior. The researchers concluded the following: (1) positive parental expectations and more flexible child-rearing beliefs were correlated with mothers with greater levels of knowledge of child development; (2) adolescent mothers who reported more positive, more realistic, and more mature expectations about parenting children and the parent-child relationship had children who were more adaptive, and they had more effective sensori-motor and reactive behavior coping capacities. These findings indicated adolescent mothers' knowledge and beliefs were significantly related to predicting self-initiated child behaviors.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of *The Parenting Curriculum*, from the students' point of view, which was developed at Iowa State University by Williams, Brun, Trost, and Wasike (1995) in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Studies, and implemented in family and consumer sciences programs in Iowa high schools. "*The Parenting Curriculum* combined parenting education, family living, and child development in an eight-unit package" (Trost, B. & Williams, S.K., 1998). The titles of the eight units were 1) Parenting that Enriches Lives; 2) Caring: As a Person . . . As a Parent; 3) Providing a Positive Environment for Development; 4) Providing a Positive Environment for Development: One Year to Eighteen Years; 5) Language, Communication, and Socialization; 6) Families: Structures and Stressors; 7) Challenges of Teen Parenting; and 8) The Total Picture (Trost, B. & Williams, S.K., 1998).

The specific objectives of this research study were to:

- 1) Compare the differences in agreement or disagreement with the knowledge statements, related to the content of the curriculum, between the experimental group (students who were enrolled in the parenting course) with the control group (those students who were not enrolled and had never been enrolled in any parenting course).
- 2) Compare differences in expectations of parenting practices and children's development between the experimental group and the control group.
- 3) Compare the differences in responses between the experimental group and control group concerning future decisions to be made regarding parenting.

Method

In this study two groups of students were compared. The study involved 162 high school students. The experimental group received treatment, which in this study was enrollment in the class where the parenting curriculum was being taught, while the control group had no exposure to the curriculum. The five selected rural Iowa high schools had an approximate average city population of 3,000. The age range was 15-19. The experimental group consisted of 107 respondents who were enrolled in parenting, child development, or a family living class in which *The Parenting Curriculum* was being taught as a nine-week or semester course. The five teachers randomly selected the control group by administering the test to classes where the students had no previous knowledge of parenting. The control group consisted of 55 respondents who were not enrolled and had never been enrolled in a parenting course.

A list of 46 registrants who participated in a two-day, graduate-credit workshop focused on *The Parenting Curriculum* was provided to assist in determining which teachers were implementing the curriculum in their classrooms and how it was being implemented. Names were then selected randomly from the list provided, and phone calls were made to those high school Family and Consumer Sciences teachers to determine which of the individuals taught *The Parenting Curriculum*. After selecting the first five teachers who agreed to administer the 73-item questionnaire to their parenting, child development, or family living classes, and to those students who had not been involved in any type of parenting class, the questionnaires were sent out. The five teachers agreed to assist in the study by administering questionnaires to 133 students in the parenting classes and to 96 students not in a parenting class for a total of 229.

Instrument Development

The first 41 items and the last 7 items out of the 73-item questionnaire were designed by the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of *The Parenting Curriculum* from the students' point of view. The items that came from the curriculum were reviewed and constructed throughout the questionnaire development process by the researcher and one professor. The questions were constructed on the basis of the information provided in the different units and future decisions. The items directly related to each of eight units. For example, from Unit 1, Parenting that Enriches Lives, one of the items stated "The total cost to raise a child from birth to age eighteen is about \$124,000". The students then responded using a Likert-type scale. The goal of Unit 1 was to assess students' knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of parents.

The additional 32 items came from the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI) to assess individual strengths and weaknesses involved in raising children (Bavolek, 1984). The AAPI measures inappropriate parental expectations of the child, lack of empathy towards children's needs, parental value of physical punishment, and parent-child role reversal (Bavolek). The AAPI has been administered to over 2,000 adults, and 6,500 adolescents. Experts from disciplines related to child rearing, parenting education, child abuse, family life, and test construction, analyzing the item pool, established content validity. There was 100% agreement among the experts indicating the items accurately measured what they were intended to measure. In this study the Likert-type scale was used to record the students' responses to items about their perceptions about parenting knowledge and attitudes, and future decisions regarding parenting. The response categories were A = strongly agree, B = agree, C = uncertain, D = disagree, E = strongly disagree. The testing procedures also used a randomized complete five-block design. The five blocks represent the five different schools that were selected. "The randomized block design is the simplest and most popular experimental design . . . In this design, the sample of experimental units are divided into groups or blocks and then treatments are randomly assigned to units in each block" (Freund & Wilson, 1997, p. 464). The statistical analyses used in this study was to compare population means to determine if there was a significant difference between experimental group and the control group by looking at each of the five schools students' responses from both groups. Each school was designated with a number 1 through 5. Then each of the eight units of the curriculum, each of the four categories from the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory, the seven items related to future decisions, and one overall measurement were tested for both experimental group and the control group according to the school they attended.

Data Collection and Procedures

Prior to the data collection, one letter was addressed to each teacher and hand signed by the researchers. A second letter was not personally addressed, but signed and copied for each student. The two letters explained the purpose of the study, the approximate time it would take, the importance of students' participation in the study, directions needed to complete and return the questionnaires, and the confidentiality of their responses. The teachers were instructed to have the students place the questionnaires in the envelope provided to assure confidentiality. A code number was used to classify each questionnaire and answer sheet. A 13-item survey was also administered to the five Family and Consumer Sciences teachers to determine the degree to which each of the units of the curriculum were taught. The teachers' cover letter and questionnaire, the students' questionnaire booklets, answer sheets, and a self-addressed postage paid envelope were mailed to each teacher. The teacher response rate was 100%, and 162 out of

229 (71%) for the total student response. The final response rate was 107 out of 133 usable questionnaires from those studying from *The Parenting Curriculum*, and 57% or 55 out of 96 usable questionnaires from those students who had never taken a parenting course.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed. The researcher also used a statistical analysis program to analyze the data. Statistical analysis including randomized complete five-block design was selected to compare the means of the treatment group and control group, and determine if there were significant differences in the students' responses from each of the two groups from the five different schools. All the questions were analyzed as positive statements. For instance, when a statement was negatively worded the computer reversed the data so that it was analyzed as a positive question.

Findings

Table 1 compares the differences in agreement or disagreement on the knowledge statements between the experimental group (students who were enrolled in the parenting course) and the control group (those students who were not enrolled and had never been enrolled in any parenting course). These results illustrated that the students in the experimental group obtained lower means in Units 1 –7. This table provides evidence that the experimental group had a tendency to agree more with the items or obtained more preferred means related to knowledge.

Table 1

Overall mean performance and standard deviation on the knowledge statements between the experimental and control group

Unit Outcomes	Experimental group		Control group	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Unit 1	1.87	.74	1.94	.83
Unit 2	1.65	.78	1.75	.88
Unit 3	2.18	.97	2.39	1.04
Unit 4	2.04	.88	2.06	.96
Unit 5	2.19	.85	2.35	.94
Unit 6	2.35	.82	2.43	.78
Unit 7	1.92	.87	2.07	.99
Unit 8	2.52	.97	2.51	1.00

A = strongly agree B = agree C = uncertain D = disagree E = strongly disagree

The results of the Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory data are illustrated in Table 2. This table shows a comparison in differences in attitudes toward parenting between students who were enrolled in the parenting course with those students who were not enrolled and had never been enrolled in any parenting course. The experimental group obtained lower means in all four categories of the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory. The most significant difference was the data representing the Parent-Child Role Reversal. These findings suggested that the experimental group were more aware of parenting responsibilities than the control group.

Table 2

Overall mean performance and standard deviation on the attitude statements between the experimental and control group

(AAPI) Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory	Experimental group		Control group	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Inappropriate parental expectations of the child	2.40	1.05	2.53	1.19
Lack of Empathy Towards Children's Needs	2.37	1.03	2.39	1.21
Parental Value on Physical Punishment	2.76	1.18	2.81	1.28
Parent-Child Role Reversal	2.54	1.03	2.69	1.11

A = strongly agree B = agree C = uncertain D = disagree E = strongly disagree

Table 3 compares the experimental and control group concerning future decisions to be made regarding parenting. The students were asked to answer in terms of how they thought they would behave in the future as parents. Students in the experimental group obtained a lower mean indicating a slight tendency to agree more with the items or obtained more preferred means related to future decisions compared to the control group. The difference was not statistically significant.

Table 3

Overall mean performance and standard deviation on the future decisions statements between the experimental and control group

	Experimental group		Control group	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Future Decision regarding parenting	2.06	.91	2.04	1.16

A = strongly agree B = agree C = uncertain D = disagree E = strongly disagree

Teacher questionnaire

Five teachers participated in the study. Most of the teachers taught only selected activities from the curriculum, except for Unit 3, and three of the five respondents taught the entire unit with some revisions, see Table 4.

Table 4

Teacher Questionnaire: The extent to which each of units in the curriculum were taught

Unit Outcomes	Exactly as written	All but with some revisions	Most of the unit	Only selected activities	None	n =
Unit 1	1	1		3		5
Unit 2	1	1		3		5
Unit 3		3	1	1		5
Unit 4	1		1	3		5
Unit 5		2		2	1	5
Unit 6		1		3	1	5
Unit 7			1	1	2	4
Unit 8			1	2	1	4

The teachers were also asked whether the curriculum was taught in an eight-or nine-week course, semester course, full year, or other. One teacher taught from the curriculum in a nine-week course, and the other four used portions of the curriculum in a semester course. The respondents also were asked in which classes the Parenting Curriculum had been utilized: Child Development, Family Living, GRADS, Parenting, or other. Three of the teachers taught the

curriculum in their Child Development classes, three teachers utilized the curriculum in their Parenting classes. One teacher used the curriculum in the Family Living class.

Additional questions were also asked of the teachers. “Does the school you teach at require parent education to be offered to the students?” Five teachers responded “no” to that question. The final question asked, “Is the school requiring parenting education for graduation in the future?” one teacher did not respond and the other four marked “no”.

Findings by Schools

Fourteen tests were conducted using a randomized complete five-block design. Each block represented one of the schools in the study and was designated with a number 1 through 5. The statistical analysis compared population means by looking at the students’ responses from both groups in each of the five schools to determine if there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. Tests were conducted for both groups according to the school they attended for each of the eight units of the curriculum, the four categories from the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory, the seven items related to future decisions, and one overall measurement. Although the overall results showed no statistically significant differences for Units 1- 8, $p = .20$, Table 5 provides evidence that the experimental group had a tendency to agree more with the items or obtain more preferred means when the unit was taught in it’s entirety.

For Unit 1, which related to parents’ responsibilities, children’s rights, and reasons people choose to become parents, the experimental group at schools 1, 3, 5 agreed more with the items than the control group. For Unit 2, Caring as a person . . . as a parent, the experimental group from three out of the five schools (1, 2, 3) obtained more preferred means relating to parents responsibilities as a caregiver, than the control group. Unit 3 results exhibited the students in the experimental group possessed lower means than the control group for four out of the five schools (1, 2, 3, 4) indicating agreement with more of the items relating to development: conception to one year, than students in the control group. The results for Unit 4 illustrated that the students in the experimental group possessed lower means than the control group for four of the five schools (1, 2, 3, 5). These students agreed more with items related to growth and development of children ages 1-6, 6-12, and 12-18. For Unit 5, students in the experimental group obtained lower means than the control group at four out of the five schools (1, 3, 4, 5). The findings demonstrated that the experimental group agreed more with items related to language, communication, and socialization. Unit 6, family stress, exhibited that the experimental group possessed a lower mean than the control group only at school 5. Unit 7 illustrated that the students in the experimental group possessed more preferred means than the control group at schools 2, 3, 4, 5 regarding challenges of teen parenting. The results for Unit 8, you in a parental role, revealed that the students in the experimental group at schools 1, 2, 4, 5 exhibited lower means than the control group.

There were also no statistically significant differences in the means between the experimental group and the control group for the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory: Inappropriate Expectations, Lack of Empathy, Physical Punishment, and Parent-Child Role Reversal, the comparison of means were broken down by each individual school and are represented in Table 6. However, the following data illustrated that the students in the experimental group from schools 1, 4, 5 exhibited lower means for Inappropriate Expectations than their respective control group. This indicated that these students agreed more with the items related to children’s developmental capabilities than the control group. For Lack of Empathy,

the students in the experimental group from three out of the five schools (2, 3, 4), agreed more with the items related to needs of children than the control group. For the questions that related to physical punishment, four out of the five schools (1, 2, 3, 4) agreed more with the items related to what physical punishment entails and the importance of utilizing alternative non-abusive discipline techniques compared to the control group. The students in the experimental

Table 5
Relationship between the experimental group and control group unit outcomes according to school and the extent to which each of the units in the curriculum were taught

School	Exactly as written	All but with some revisions	Most of the unit	Only selected activities	None	A =		B =	
						School # & Means	SD	School # & Mean	SD
Unit 1	School #1	School #2		School #3, #4, #5		#1 = 1.93	#1 = .42	#1 = 2.00	#1 = .35
						#2 = 1.87	#2 = .38	#2 = 1.83	#2 = .35
						#3 = 1.83	#3 = .44	#3 = 2.13	#3 = .35
						#4 = 1.90	#4 = .50	#4 = 1.32	#4 = .35
						#5 = 1.83	#5 = .54	#5 = 2.10	#5 = .40
Unit 2	School #1	School #2		School #3, #4, #5		#1 = 1.70	#1 = .68	#1 = 2.16	#1 = .50
						#2 = 1.66	#2 = .54	#2 = 1.77	#2 = .82
						#3 = 1.40	#3 = .40	#3 = 1.69	#3 = .38
						#4 = 1.62	#4 = .43	#4 = 1.33	#4 = .33
						#5 = 1.76	#5 = .79	#5 = 1.76	#5 = .53
Unit 3		School #1, #2, #3	School #5	School #4		#1 = 2.33	#1 = .38	#1 = 2.69	#1 = .51
						#2 = 2.14	#2 = .22	#2 = 2.41	#2 = .41
						#3 = 2.00	#3 = .40	#3 = 2.39	#3 = .46
						#4 = 2.06	#4 = .33	#4 = 2.11	#4 = .51
						#5 = 2.35	#5 = .32	#5 = 2.35	#5 = .30
Unit 4	School #1		School #2	School #3, #4, #5		#1 = 2.17	#1 = .38	#1 = 2.30	#1 = .39
						#2 = 2.04	#2 = .31	#2 = 2.13	#2 = .64
						#3 = 1.92	#3 = .43	#3 = 2.00	#3 = .42
						#4 = 2.12	#4 = .46	#4 = 2.00	#4 = .44
						#5 = 1.98	#5 = .47	#5 = 2.01	#5 = .38
Unit 5		School #1, #3		School #4, #5	School #2	#1 = 2.32	#1 = .49	#1 = 2.70	#1 = .30
						#2 = 2.22	#2 = .22	#2 = 2.18	#2 = .40
						#3 = 2.02	#3 = .51	#3 = 2.38	#3 = .37
						#4 = 2.23	#4 = .36	#4 = 2.30	#4 = .52
						#5 = 2.16	#5 = .44	#5 = 2.27	#5 = .50
Unit 6		School #1		School #3, #4, #5	School #2	#1 = 2.31	#1 = .53	#1 = 2.25	#1 = .53
						#2 = 2.95	#2 = .72	#2 = 2.38	#2 = .60
						#3 = 2.56	#3 = .65	#3 = 2.53	#3 = .54
						#4 = 2.10	#4 = .62	#4 = 2.07	#4 = .45
						#5 = 2.36	#5 = .54	#5 = 2.58	#5 = .44
Unit 7			School #5	School #4	School #2, #3	#1 = 2.12	#1 = .99	#1 = 2.00	#1 = 1.06
						#2 = 1.50	#2 = .97	#2 = 1.88	#2 = 1.05
						#3 = 1.80	#3 = .77	#3 = 1.92	#3 = 1.00
						#4 = 2.10	#4 = 1.00	#4 = 2.28	#4 = 1.38
						#5 = 1.83	#5 = .65	#5 = 2.23	#5 = .83
Unit 8	School #1			School #4, #5	School #2	#1 = 2.31	#1 = .65	#1 = 2.50	#1 = .53
						#2 = 2.15	#2 = .75	#2 = 2.50	#2 = 1.19
						#3 = 2.80	#3 = .75	#3 = 2.75	#3 = .51
						#4 = 2.52	#4 = .63	#4 = 2.28	#4 = .81
						#5 = 2.54	#5 = .73	#5 = 2.52	#5 = .57

A = experimental group B= control group

A = strongly agree B = agree C = uncertain D = disagree E = strongly disagree

group at four out of the five schools (1, 2, 3, 4) agreed more with the items related to the needs of children and self, and that children should be allowed to be children and not caregivers.

Table 6

Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory: Relationship between the experimental group and control group according to school and AAPI topics

	Experimental Group School # & Ms	Control Group School # & M	Experimental Group= School # & SD	Control Group = School # & SD
Inappropriate Expectations	#1 = 2.58	#1 = 2.59	#1 = .53	#1 = .54
	#2 = 2.88	#2 = 2.58	#2 = .33	#2 = .30
	#3 = 2.22	#3 = 2.20	#3 = .48	#3 = .49
	#4 = 2.36	#4 = 2.83	#4 = .58	#4 = .88
	#5 = 2.32	#5 = 2.41	#5 = .55	#5 = .70
Lack of Empathy	#1 = 2.55	#1 = 2.45	#1 = 1.15	#1 = .58
	#2 = 2.38	#2 = 2.93	#2 = .71	#2 = .70
	#3 = 1.93	#3 = 2.29	#3 = .42	#3 = .58
	#4 = 2.47	#4 = 2.64	#4 = .56	#4 = .78
	#5 = 2.40	#5 = 2.27	#5 = .58	#5 = .58
Physical Punishment	#1 = 2.94	#1 = 3.18	#1 = .95	#1 = .89
	#2 = 2.50	#2 = 2.90	#2 = .66	#2 = .48
	#3 = 2.69	#3 = 2.88	#3 = .55	#3 = .72
	#4 = 2.59	#4 = 3.12	#4 = .60	#4 = .36
	#5 = 3.00	#5 = 2.56	#5 = .57	#5 = .68
Role Reversal	#1 = 2.47	#1 = 2.97	#1 = .53	#1 = .83
	#2 = 2.48	#2 = 3.01	#2 = .64	#2 = .38
	#3 = 2.43	#3 = 2.61	#3 = .50	#3 = .47
	#4 = 2.53	#4 = 2.73	#4 = .69	#4 = .86
	#5 = 2.63	#5 = 2.61	#5 = .61	#5 = .64

A = strongly agree B = agree C = uncertain D = disagree E = strongly disagree

For items related to Future Decisions, the students in the experimental group acquired lower means than the control group for three out of the five schools, as represented in Table 7. These findings illustrated that although there were no significant differences, students in the experimental group at schools 1, 3, and 4 feel that they will be ready to take care of not only their needs, but also the needs of their child.

Table 7

Relationships between control group and treatment group on the Future Decisions outcomes

	Experimental Group School & M	Control Group Schools & M	Experimental Group = SD	Control Group = SD
Future Decisions	#1 = 1.95	#1 = 2.32	#1 = .65	#1 = .75
	#2 = 2.14	#2 = 2.00	#2 = .60	#2 = .57
	#3 = 1.76	#3 = 2.26	#3 = .45	#3 = .51
	#4 = 2.03	#4 = 2.06	#4 = .41	#4 = .70
	#5 = 2.28	#5 = 2.04	#5 = .38	#5 = .63

A = strongly agree B = agree C = uncertain D = disagree E = strongly disagree

The difference in means between the experimental group and the control group, and the *p-value* for the overall study are illustrated in Table 8. Students in the experimental group obtained lower means than the control group for four out of the five schools (1, 2, 3, 4). Although there were no statistically significant differences for the overall data, these findings indicated that *The Parenting Curriculum* had a positive effect on the experimental groups' perceptions of the knowledge statements, attitudes, and future decisions regarding parenting.

Table 8

Relationships between control group and treatment group on overall outcomes.

School	Experimental group		Control group		p value
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
1	2.38	.37	2.57	.08	.20
2	2.30	.20	2.50	.35	
3	2.15	.24	2.37	.36	
4	2.26	.29	2.46	.35	
5	2.35	.24	2.28	.23	

A = strongly agree B = agree C = uncertain D = disagree E = strongly disagree

Summary and Conclusions

Although there were no statistically significant differences found between the control and experimental groups in this study, the results indicated that overall the students in the experimental group who had been exposed to *The Parenting Curriculum*, responded more positively to the eight units from *The Parenting Curriculum*, the four categories from the AAPI, and future decisions regarding parenting than those students who had not been exposed to the curriculum. This study provides evidence that students in the experimental group had a tendency to agree more with the items or obtain more preferred means related to knowledge and realistic expectations of what is involved in parenting compared to the control group, especially when the curriculum was taught in its entirety.

The Parenting Curriculum had some effect on the students taking the courses in which the teachers used it. A strong recommendation would be to ask teachers to use the curriculum in its entirety as written and to repeat the research comparing students in this situation with those never having been involved in a parenting class. Some of the impact of the curriculum is lost when only parts are taught. During curricula development much reflection is given to developing a total document in which the parts related to and build upon each other. When activities are used out of the context of the entire curriculum, the meaning and continuity may be lost and thus the effectiveness of the learning is reduced.

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