

# AP<sup>®</sup> RESEARCH 2016 SCORING GUIDELINES

## AP Research Performance Task Rubric: Academic Paper

Content Area	Performance Levels		
<b>1 Understand and Analyze Context</b>	The paper identifies the topic of inquiry.  2	The paper identifies the topic, and describes the purpose and focus of the inquiry.  4	The paper explains the topic, purpose, and focus of the inquiry and why further investigation of the topic is needed by connecting it to the larger discipline, field, and/or scholarly community.  6
<b>2 Understand and Analyze Argument</b>	The paper identifies or cites previous works and/or summarizes a single perspective on the student’s topic of inquiry.  2	The paper summarizes, individually, previous works representing multiple perspectives about the student’s topic of inquiry.  4	The paper explains the relationships among multiple works representing multiple perspectives, describing the connection to the student’s topic of inquiry.  6
<b>3 Evaluate Sources and Evidence</b>	The paper uses sources/evidence that are unsubstantiated as relevant and/or credible for the purpose of the inquiry.  2	The paper uses credible and relevant sources/evidence suited to the purpose of the inquiry.  4	The paper explains the relevance and significance of the used sources/cited evidence by connecting them to the student’s topic of inquiry.  6
<b>4 Research Design</b>	The paper presents a summary of the approach, method, or process, but the summary is oversimplified.  3	The paper describes in detail the approach, method, or process.  5	The paper provides a logical rationale by explaining the alignment between the chosen approach, method, or process and the research question/project goal.  7
<b>5 Establish Argument</b>	The paper presents an argument, conclusion or understanding, but it is simplistic or inconsistent, and/or it provides unsupported or illogical links between the evidence and the claim(s).  3	The paper presents an argument, conclusion, or new understanding that the paper justifies by explaining the links between evidence with claims.  5	The paper presents an argument, conclusion or new understanding that acknowledges and explains the consequences and implications in context.  7
<b>6 Select and Use Evidence</b>	Evidence is presented, but it is insufficient or sometimes inconsistent in supporting the paper’s conclusion or understanding.  2	The paper supports its conclusion through the compilation of relevant and sufficient evidence.  4	The paper demonstrates a compelling argument through effective interpretation and synthesis of the evidence and through describing its relevance and significance.  6
<b>7 Engage Audience</b>	Organizational and design elements are present, but sometimes distract from communication or are superfluous.  1	Organizational and design elements convey the paper’s message.  2	Organizational and design elements engage the audience, effectively emphasize the paper’s message and demonstrate the credibility of the writer.  3
<b>8 Apply Conventions</b>	The paper cites and attributes the work of others, but does so inconsistently and/or incorrectly.  2	The paper consistently and accurately cites and attributes the work of others.  4	The paper effectively integrates the knowledge and ideas of others and consistently distinguishes between the student’s voice and that of others.  6

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<b>9 Apply Conventions</b>	The paper's use of grammar, style and mechanics convey the student's ideas; however, errors interfere with communication and/or credibility.	The paper's word choice and syntax adheres to established conventions of grammar, usage and mechanics. There may be some errors, but they do not interfere with the author's meaning.	The paper's word choice and syntax enhances communication through variety, emphasis, and precision.
	1	2	3

**NOTE:** To receive the highest performance level presumes that the student also achieved the preceding performance levels in that row.

**ADDITIONAL SCORES:** In addition to the scores represented on the rubric, readers can also assign scores of **0** (zero).

- A score of **0** is assigned to a single row of the rubric when the paper displays a below-minimum level of quality as identified in that row of the rubric.

# AP<sup>®</sup> RESEARCH 2016 SCORING COMMENTARY

## Academic Paper

### Overview

This performance task was intended to assess students' ability to conduct scholarly and responsible research and articulate an evidence-based argument that clearly communicates the conclusion, solution, or answer to their stated research question. More specifically, this performance task was intended to assess students' ability to:

- Generate a focused research question that is situated within or connected to a larger scholarly context or community;
- Explore relationships between and among multiple works representing multiple perspectives within the scholarly literature related to the topic of inquiry;
- Articulate what approach, method, or process they have chosen to use to address their research question, why they have chosen that approach, and how they employed it;
- Develop and present their own argument, conclusion, or new understanding;
- Support their conclusion through the compilation, use, and synthesis of relevant and significant evidence;
- Use organizational and design elements to effectively convey the paper's message;
- Consistently and accurately cite, attribute, and integrate the knowledge and work of others, while distinguishing between the student's voice and that of others;
- Generate a paper in which word choice and syntax enhance communication by adhering to established conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Correlation Between Academic Achievements Among Individualist  
and Collectivist Elementary Students

Word Count: 4736

Correlation Between Academic Achievements Among Individualist  
and Collectivist Elementary Students

**Introduction**

Because children rapidly develop their cognitive thinking at a young age, the education they receive in elementary school is very important (Aizawa, Y., & Whatley, M. A., 2006). To ensure students are learning in the best environment possible, the learning methods that students prefer plays a big role on how much they are learning (Moon, Y. S., & Franke, G. R., 2000). By discovering the relationship between learning styles and academic performance in elementary students in Hong Kong and the United States, teachers will be able to adjust their teaching style based on students' performance in various learning styles. To conduct the research, one needs to address which type of learning style (individualism vs collectivism) is apparent among elementary students in Hong Kong and United States.

The general territories in which the research is placed are in Hong Kong and United States elementary schools. The research question is derived from a study I once read about how "my 'happy' may not be your 'happy' because different cultures have different definitions of happiness. Psychologist Jeanne Tsai conducted a study on the best selling children's books in the U.S and Taiwan and discovered something interesting . While people in American books demonstrated emotional, exaggerated joyful facial features, Taiwanese books appealed to calm and quiet (Cho, B., Kwon, U., Gentry, J. W., Jun, S., & Kropp, F., 1999). This contradicted the popular belief that Eastern countries promote teamwork while Western countries promote independence (Mount 1981). I became interested in why different countries have different learning styles, so I plan to conduct more research on how individualist and collectivist ideas are

being promoted in elementary schools, and whether it has an influence on students' academic performance.

In past research, studies have not proven a solid yes or no answer regarding the correlation between high grades and learning methods in U.S and Hong Kong (Earley, P. C., 1994, Li, F., & Aksoy, L., 2007). Rather than conducting a sample under random sampling, the researchers selected participants in their survey. Researchers should avoid conducting their research on only one testing sample group. The testing subjects had no variation in age or gender, which can create misleading data. The past research used interviews and surveys as their only testing method because it shows results in an efficient and well-organized method. Yet, sometimes participants misread survey questions and either answer the question inaccurately or randomly. Surveys do not guarantee 100% accurate data; even though they are anonymous, many participants would still answer untruthfully because there are no consequences for submitting false data (Zhang, Y., & Gelb, B. D., 1996). In addition to that, many of the research studies are outdated. Therefore, to determine how the new generation teaches elementary students in the United States and Hong Kong, new research must be done (Meyer, E. T. The social work image or self image?, July 1959).

It is significant for conclusions to be drawn upon this matter because the collectivistic and individualistic ideas can be reasons behind the academic achievements among the students in both cultures. If the students in Hong Kong are shown to be collectivistic, then family and school disciplines can be reasons why they stress heavily on good grades. The goal of the research is to find the correlation between academic achievements and learning styles in elementary schools. One reason behind unclear data from previous research includes the fact that the experiment

sample is not selected at random. My research will promote better data due to random sampling from all elementary grade levels. This research should be relevant because teachers, parents, and students should know what kind of learning style help students to learn the most and are the most productive in school. The data of this research will ideally display a comparison of two different countries' learning styles and finalize with a conclusion of which learning technique seems to be in favor of student's outstanding academics.

The primary research question for the research is "Which type of learning style (individualism vs collectivism) is apparent among elementary students in Hong Kong and the United States? My secondary questions are "Do collectivist or individualist ideas influence a student's learning behavior?", "Is there a correlation between collectivist/individualist ideas and academic achievements?" and "Does the collectivist/individualist idea continue as students grow?" My hypothesis is that most students in the United States are individualist and most students in Hong Kong are collectivist because of what they are used to seeing through the media and from the environment in which they grew up. The term "individualism" refers to the theory that favors action for individuals themselves. The term "collectivism" refers to the theory that favors ideas of the people (Zhang, 1996).

Even after looking through the limitations of other similar research studies, my research definitely proposes some limitations too. I understand that my research will not be sufficient enough to answer the question due to the many social factors that play into the topic. It is impossible to measure the social behavior of a whole culture in a short time frame. Though I shrunk down my testing subjects to Hong Kong students and United States students, the testing results can be too misleading to represent the social behavior of a whole culture. Hong Kong

cannot be a complete accurate representation of the whole Eastern culture and neither can the United States for Western culture. One short survey cannot accurately depict if students are individualistic or collectivistic. In addition, the survey questions may be confusing to the elementary students, and therefore, show biased results of the students' opinions. Students also might not necessarily self-report accurate data about themselves since all data are collected anonymously.

In this particular study, I will use one set of data from one elementary school each from the United States and Hong Kong. Then, with the data that I collect from these two elementary schools, I will make assumptions about how Eastern and Western societies teach students and the ways students prefer to learn. Though the data may not be 100% accurate, it will nevertheless present a general idea of the learning trends among elementary schools in countries across the world.

In the next section, I will review the literature pertaining to the previous ideas and definitions of individualistic versus collectivistic beliefs. Three main categories emerged from the literature reflecting Eastern and Western learning styles. In the categories of sample experiments, the society's advertising appeals, and the cultural differences, I will outline the methods of content analysis and controversial topics that were mentioned in the study. This will include my rationale for using a quantitative method before using meta analysis. Following the methods section, I will discuss how learning styles might play a role on the student's academic achievements. In the final section of my paper, I will elaborate on the conclusions of this study, highlighting the significance of learning styles' role on the student's cognitive learning abilities; this section will also include limitations to this study and areas for future research.



### **Literature Review**

This section is separated into three categories. I have researched numerous sample experiments, following with advertising appeals and cultural differences that play in the role of impacting the research results. The sample experiments are previous related experiments that have been conducted, both recent and outdated. The advertising appeals include background research of the targeted advertisements to which students in both countries are exposed. The cultural differences is also background information I collected that analyzed how U.S students and Hong Kong students have been learning for the past decades.

### **Sample Experiments**

Some of my sources included experiments which are similar to the one I will conduct. “Unlike traditional Japanese women who were submissive, the Japanese working women would appear to be less submissive compared to their non-working counterparts. Additionally, the authors provide explanations for the effects claim the cultural climate of United States could be shifting more toward individualism.”(Aizawa, Y., & Whatley, M. A., 2006) (not sure how this quote relates to anything). In a test between U.S. and Hong Kong students, researchers provide explanations that claim Hong Kong subjects scored higher than the U.S. subjects in both studies because of the collectivism idea. The researchers “use social psychology to provide evidence of different decision making by Hong Kong residents and Americans in various socialization processes in families, companies, and other institutions. In another study, the authors provide explanations for the effects claim Korean practitioners are sensitive to ethical issues raised in hypothetical scenarios, an issue that was not examined in the surveys of ethical problems in the U.S.”( Moon, Y. S., & Franke, G. R., 2000). Ralston, Gustafson, etc. use social psychology to

provide evidence that “China might be expected to have a lower power distance than in Hong Kong because China is deemed to have an individualistic society, and because reforms have been implemented to do away with the special privileges enjoyed by some cadres.” These sources are sample experiments of the research that I am going to perform on elementary students in Hong Kong and the United States. I will use these experiments as a guide for conducting survey questions used to collect my data.

### **Advertising Appeals**

Other than sample methods, I looked further into research that focused on the advertising appeal in Eastern and Western cultures. Kokkoris, Kuhnen, and Yan discussed how “perception from exclusive preferences as extrovert by Germans, but as introvert by South/Southeast Asians. The author provides explanations for the effects of choice, instead of being guided by personal attributes, it has to be responsive and properly adjusted to the social context.” Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun and Kropp explained how individualistic and collectivistic cultures coexist in the U.S. and Korea. While individualism and collectivism exist in both cultures, individualism is more dominant in the U.S. Korean commercials stress oneness with nature slightly more than U.S. commercials, and U.S. commercials use more directed approaches. Some authors use the case study to provide evidence that “the more positive participants perceived their social image to be, the higher their life satisfaction. Additionally, the authors provide explanations for the effects of individualistic cultures emphasize independence and uniqueness of self to a greater extent than collectivistic cultures.” (Rodriguez Mosquera, P. M., & Imada, T., 2013) These sources show the importance of social media, and its advertising and brand appeals it has on

people. They explain how the media targets customers in Asian countries and European countries differently based on their collectivist and individualistic ideas.

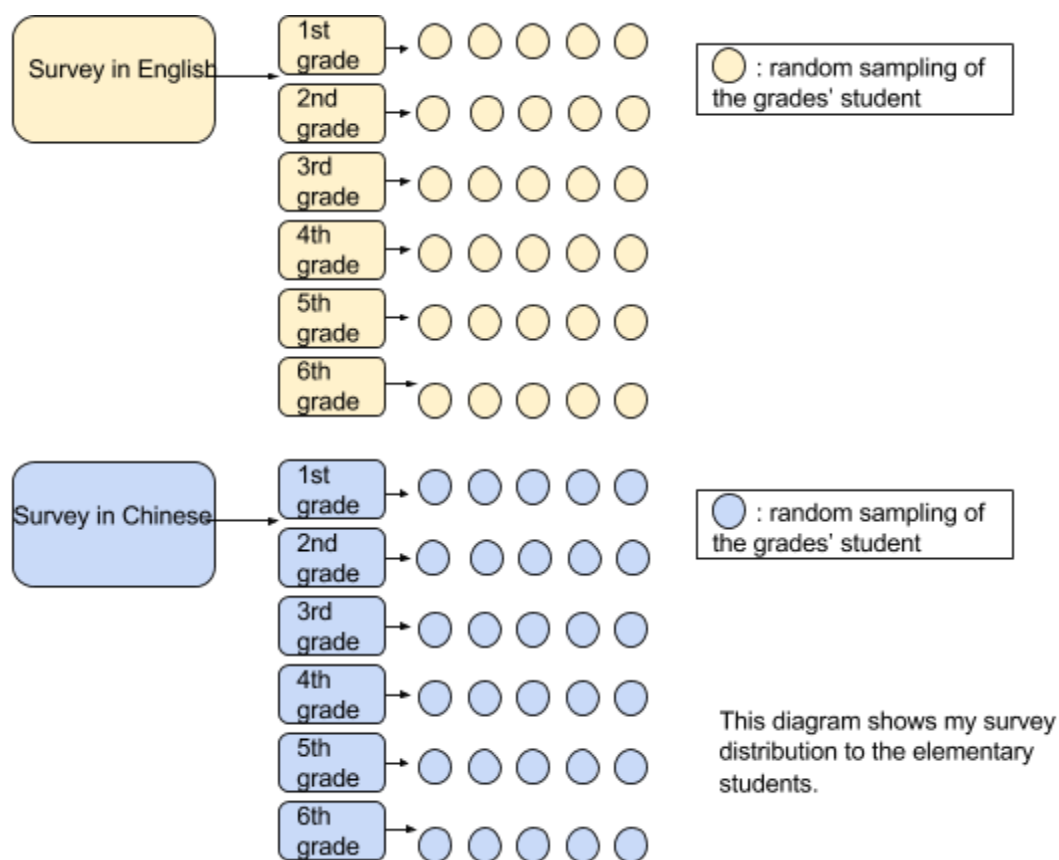
### **Cultural Differences**

Research also included articles that illustrates cultural differences. These authors used social psychology to provide evidence “that performance was higher in the individual focused than in the group focused training condition in the United States, and the opposite was true for groups in Hong Kong and the People’s Republic of China (Earley, P. C., 1994). Rodriguez, Mosquera, Uskul, and Cross presented a clear evaluation of how “shame and embarrassment were found to mediate the threat posed by an ingroup members’ deviant behavior on participants’ readiness to sanction the deviant behavior.” Other researchers focused on “evidence of higher individualistic appeals than with collectivistic appeal for both American subjects and Chinese subjects. For U.S respondents, individualistic appeals would be expected to trail collectivistic appeals in effectiveness” (Zhang, Y., & Gelb, B. D., 1996) These sources collectively connect and relate back to my research problem because they state the cultural differences can be traced back to history. Different ethnic groups have set in different norms, which contributes to why students act the way they do in school. The established literature proved both sides of the argument and does not manifest a uniform testing result.

### **Methods**

The project was conducted with descriptive and quantitative research (survey research) to collect data. I produced a survey that asked elementary students about how they felt towards certain types of behavior with friends, family, and themselves . The primary research question of this research was “Which type of learning style (individualism vs. collectivism) is apparent

among elementary students in Hong Kong and the United States?" The secondary questions were "Do collectivist or individualist ideas influence students' learning behavior?" "Is there a correlation between collectivist/individualist ideas and academic achievements?" "Does the collectivist/individualist idea continue as students grow?" I hypothesize that most students in the United States are individualist and most students in Hong Kong are collectivist because of what they are used to seeing through the media and from the environment in which they grew up. This study investigated the collectivist and individualist ideas in Hong Kong and the United States. It analyzed elementary students' opinions on different school disciplines, social interaction with other classmates and their learning techniques preferences.



A possible threat that hindered the validity of the project included how participants might not have necessarily answered the questions truthfully. Instead of completing the survey question with their own answer, there was a possibility where they might have completed the survey with answers that they think are ideal. Operational definitions were included for a non-biased survey. This study is still valid because the data can clearly demonstrate which learning method corresponds with better grades.

Participants read simply-written questions that can only be interpreted in one way as a way to demonstrate straightforward results. The surveying method was adopted because it was the most efficient way to collect global data in the short amount of time that was given to complete the project. Though an interview may provide more detailed and truthful answers for my project, this research method was impossible to perform since I was not able to contact any Hong Kong elementary students physically. In order to collect sufficient amounts of data from Hong Kong, the least biased method was to conduct an anonymous survey through forms that participants filled out on the internet. The online survey was translated into Chinese for elementary students to understand the questions as much as American students would with the English surveys. This way, a language barrier did not play as a factor contributing to inaccurate results.

The subjects in the research project did not have to provide information that identified their identity. Prior to my survey, participants had to indicate informed consent to participate in the survey. The data identifiable by individuals will not be shared with anyone. These study participants were not offered any incentives to participate. The student participants in this project volunteered to participate in the study. The participants were fully informed about both

benefits and risks that they might encounter. The participants' privacy and personal information were protected. The data from the survey questions were compiled into charts, bar graphs, and statistics before being presented. Lastly, participants were debriefed after completing the project.

The two groups of subjects in this research were Hong Kong elementary students and American (specifically Chicago) elementary students. The Hong Kong students were selected from a small Catholic primary school. As an alumna, I know the school enrolls 100% Asian students, most of whom have lived in Hong Kong and China their entire lives. They have been accustomed to follow Chinese traditions, culture, and discipline. On the other hand, the American students were from a small urban elementary school. Also as an alumna, I know the school enrolls over 80% Asian students, most of whom are Chinese American and have lived in America for almost their entire lives. They have been accustomed to American traditions, customs, and rules.

To ensure I receive the most accurate results from this experiment, I assigned each school's administrative staff to pass out the survey to ten random students from each class. The random sampling provided every student an equal chance of being selected despite their gender, intelligence level or personality. A small random sample was meant to present the most unbiased representation of a group. I was well aware that the rate of return for surveys could have been low. There was a description and reasoning section provided for the non-responders to explain why they were uncomfortable in filling out and submitting the survey.

I used JSTOR, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel programs for survey creation and data tabulation. The JSTOR database was used to constantly research new sources which relates to my research projects. Microsoft Word was used to collect data and briefly take notes on

answers collected from the surveys. The Microsoft Excel program was used to finalize all of my data, and organize them with graphs and charts after detailed analyzation . Not much equipment was needed since an online questionnaire was used to collect data and information on the social behavior of two cultures. I needed to be sure that I had internet access to make and distribute the survey and participants had internet access to complete the survey. Additionally, I needed language teachers to aid me in translating my questionnaire into Chinese. Some participants might not have answered the question the same way if the survey was written in a language in which they are not familiar. In order to have the most accurate results, I translated the surveys into the student's first language.

I produced a survey, asking elementary students about how they felt towards certain types of behavior by the media, family, and teachers. Questions were : “Do your parents’ pressure on school work trigger your motivation?”, “If your peer receives a prize, will you feel proud?” , “Do you prefer to be straightforward when conversing with others?”, and other questions measuring the opinions of students. By having students rate how much they agree with the statement from a scale that ranges from “Completely disagree” to “Completely agree”, I categorized the students into the types of social behavior that best fits them . To see the academic and individualistic/collectivistic idea correlation, I asked for the grade point average from each student. To further separate the data sample in the future, I had the student identify themselves by their gender.

To stratify the sample, I took students from each grade level and created a random study group. Under random sampling, the sample included (~10) students from the small Catholic Chinese speaking primary school (Hong Kong) and (~10) students from a small urban English

speaking elementary school (United States). The students answered anonymous multiple choice questionnaires including questions that asked if they had answered truthfully. Students were given real life and hypothetical situations, and were asked to answer how much they agree with the question on the scale ranging from “completely agree” to “completely disagree.” These questions were written in simple English and simple Chinese, which allowed them to be more convenient for the participant to complete the survey. Based on the answers, I discovered the reason behind different social behaviors using graphs and tables. However, since questionnaires made it difficult to tell the thought process that the respondents had put in, I permitted students to have an additional statement to clarify any special factors that affected them.

### **Findings**

Using percentages, I displayed the survey results by dividing the English and Chinese responses into big categories and three subsections.

The first to sixth graders’ overall letter grades ranged from A to B, from the small Catholic Chinese speaking primary school demonstrated majorily collectivistic traits. Out of ten students, 70% of the first graders agreed to questions such as “I enjoy working in groups rather



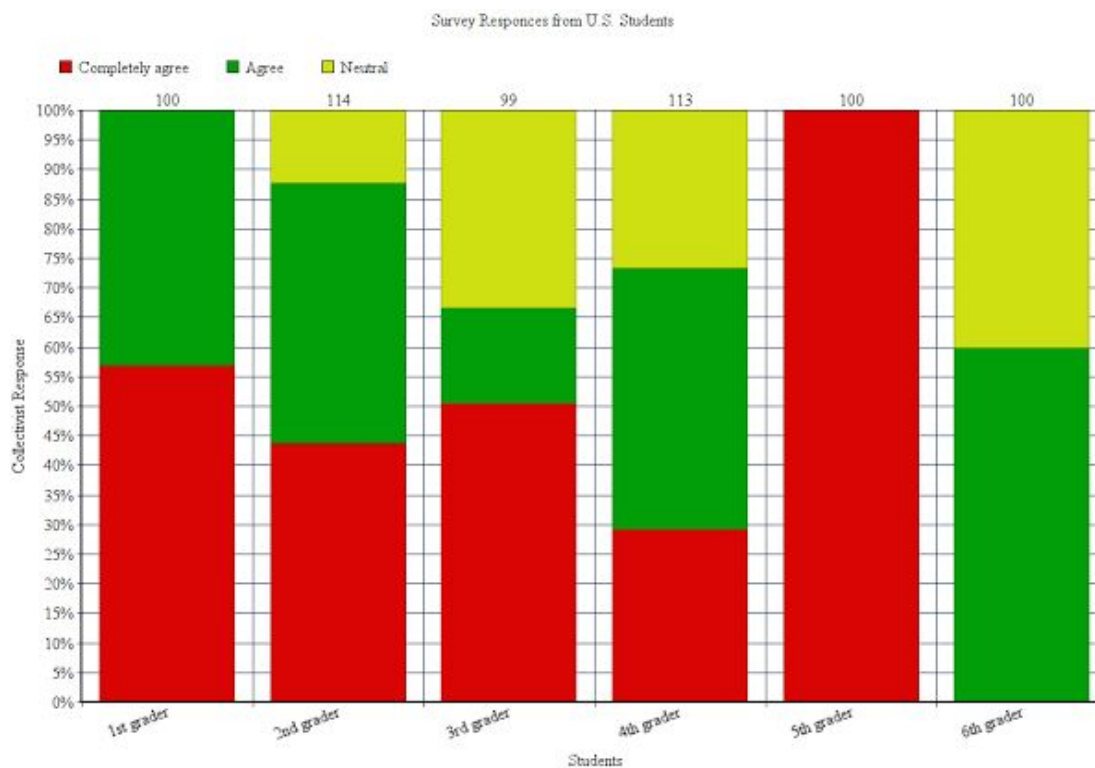
than working alone.” 70% of the second graders answered in favor to the collectivist questions, and the same is shown in the responses from the third graders. The shift began to show in the responses from the fourth graders with a decrease to 60% collectivistic characteristics. Lastly, fifth and sixth graders only showed 50% of collectivistic traits.

Among 70% of the collectivistic first grade Hong Kong students, 57% answered “completely agree” to the collectivistic questions and only 43% answered “agree.” In the 70% collectivist group of second graders, 71% answered “completely agree” and 28% of the sample answered “agree,” with the remaining 14% answering “neutral.” The same results appeared in the survey responses from the third graders. Out of 60% of the collectivists, 66% of the fourth graders answered “completely agree” and 33% answered “agree.” Half of the fifth grade sample who are collectivist, 60% answered “completely agree” and 40% answered “agree” to the questions. In the last sixth grade group, among the 50% of the collectivist students, 60% answered “agree” with 40% of “neutral” responses.

After being informed to their traits, the students were given the option to attempt explaining why their learning behavior is shaped the way it showed in the survey results. The few students who demonstrated individualist traits believe they work better in groups because of the “family [they] grew up in”, “income problems”, “friends”, etc. The collectivist students said the reason why they prefer working in groups can possibly be because “teachers made [them] work in groups since they were young”, “[they] enjoy talking to their friends”, etc.

In my other testing subjects, the majority of the first to fourth graders (with an overall letter grade of a B) from the small urban English speaking elementary school in the United States demonstrated collectivistic traits. The fifth and sixth graders, however, appeared to be

individualists based on the survey responses. Out of the ten students I surveyed in each class, 70% of the first graders, 80% of the second graders, 60% of the third graders, and 60% of the fourth graders are collectivists. In the fifth grade sample, 30% out of the ten students were collectivists. In the sixth grade sample, 40% out of the ten students were collectivists. The fifth grade and sixth grade class majority were individualists.



Among 70% of the collectivistic first grade U.S. students, 57% answered “completely agree” to the collectivistic questions and only 43% answered “agree.” In the 80% of the collectivist second graders, 50% answered “completely agree” and 50% of the sample answered “agree.” From the 60% of collectivist third graders, 50% answered “completely agree”, 16% answered “agree”, and 33% answered “neutral”. Out of 60% of the collectivist, 33% of the fourth graders answered “completely agree” and 50% answered “agree”. 30% of the fifth grade sample who are collectivist, 100% answered “completely agree”. In the last sixth grade group,

among the 40% of the collectivist students, 60% answered agree” with 40% of “neutral” responses.

After being informed of their traits, the U.S. students were also given the option to attempt explaining why their learning behavior is shaped the way it showed in the survey results. Some students who demonstrated individualist traits believe they work better in groups because of “what [their] parents taught them”, “[they] work better alone, “[they] do not like to interact with a group”, etc. The collectivist students said the reason why they prefer working in groups can possibly be because “[they] feel happier”, “[they] can focus better”, etc. The written feedback between the U.S. and Hong Kong students are relatively similar.

### **Discussions**

Again, my hypothesis is that most students in the United States are individualist and most students in Hong Kong are collectivist because of what they are used to seeing through the media and from the environment in which they grew up. The opposite from my predictions were shown in the data since the students in Hong Kong appeared to have more evident individualistic traits than those in America. Also both surveys manifested a variation of responses, and the two survey responses showed a clear trend. From the survey of the U.S. elementary students, the students who showed collectivistic traits showed a gradual decrease as their grade level gets higher. Similarly, the survey of the Hong Kong elementary students also showed the same trend but it is a quicker transition. The first to fourth graders’ responses are mostly collectivistic. Yet fifth and sixth graders took a turn on the surveys by answering the questions with “neutral” responses. This labeled the majority of the experiment group as individualists.

The basis of the results among the U.S students and Hong Kong students might possibly be caused by their adaptation to the current teaching methods. U.S. students are often placed in group work learning settings and environments where work should be evenly distributed (Earley, P. C., 1994, Li, F., & Aksoy, L., 2007). Because of what their teachers are used to assigning , U.S. students might have been desensitized to the other learning method options. Hong Kong students were shown to be slightly individualist possibly because of the same reason. Teachers and students are responsible with their own working and learning material. The majority of the class periods are used for lecture rather than debate (Kokkoris, M. D., Kuhnen, U., & Yan, S., 2013). The environment students are placed in compelled them to solve problems and critically think by themselves.

Since the respondents of both surveys have fairly uniformed grades, the correlation between academic achievements and their learning methods demonstrates a more defined trend. Without being requested, the principals of the schools informed me that the students they selected to take the survey are those who are excelling in their classes. It is possible that the data was skewed, largely because of this news, to show that the majority of the respondents turned out to be collectivists. This, unsurprisingly, shows that collectivistic learning methods have a direct correlation with better academic achievement. My hypothesis that U.S. students are mostly individualists and Hong Kong students are mostly collectivists is proven wrong. However, my prediction that the collectivist learning methods are more beneficial is proven to be accurate.

The trends in the Hong Kong survey responses most likely occurred because the students were already put in an environment where they are compelled to work individually. From the written responses I collected from the students, some students have noted that they were

expected to solve problems on their own. Teachers and parents have put pressure on the student and expected them to solve critical problems on their own.

The trends in the U.S. survey responses most likely occurred because the students were used to a learning environment where group work is emphasized. According to the word written responses from the U.S. elementary students, I learned that many of the teachers expect them to learn in groups. Students are able to rely on one another on parts of a group assignment, and display big projects as a group.

### **Conclusion**

After conducting the research, I realize that the students in Hong Kong appeared to have more evident individualistic traits than those in America. Elementary students in Hong Kong were asked to conduct more individual tasks and are expected to complete assignments on their own, while elementary schools in the U.S. prioritizes the importance of teamwork. This research demonstrated clear correlation between better grades and an collectivistic learning style. With this information, educators are able to execute more group work for students across the globe, not only to improve their grades, but also enhance their cognitive and learning abilities.

For future research, researchers should examine academic achievements in a broader spectrum. After analyzing the data, I realized letter grades are not sufficient enough to prove the students are excelling in school. To create a better survey, researchers should ask for the student's extracurricular activities, family responsibilities, and a brief description of their family income. This strikes up another limitation from my data. There are many factors that influence how students learn, and students consistently learn outside of the classroom setting. The individualist and collectivist traits of the elementary students is largely impacted by the social

settings in their community and at home. Future research should take into account all of the factors that might influence a student's grades and performance in school.

It is recommended for future researchers to survey more survey respondents. If given the opportunity, researchers should request the schools to teach a lesson where teachers only lecture, and on the other hand, teach a lesson where students have the option to work in groups. After the lesson, teachers will then give the students a test. Based on the test results, one can determine which learning method is more effective in a school setting. In addition, if given the time, researchers should also study the students' collectivist and individualist ideas as they grow and mature in their high school lives. This research demonstrates elementary school students' ideas across cultures, but it is the beginning for future researchers to develop a much more collaborative study on a bigger testing group in other countries.

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# AP<sup>®</sup> RESEARCH 2016 SCORING COMMENTARY

## Academic Paper

### Sample: A

**Content Area: Understand and Analyze Context — Row 1 Score: 6**

**Content Area: Understand and Analyze Argument — Row 2 Score: 2**

**Content Area: Evaluate Sources and Evidence — Row 3 Score: 4**

**Content Area: Research Design — Row 4 Score: 5**

**Content Area: Establish Argument — Row 5 Score: 5**

**Content Area: Select and Use Evidence — Row 6 Score: 4**

**Content Area: Engage Audience — Row 7 Score: 1**

**Content Area: Apply Conventions — Row 8 Score: 4**

**Content Area: Apply Conventions — Row 9 Score: 2**

### MEDIUM SAMPLE RESPONSE

"Correlation between Academic Achievements among Individualist and Collectivist Elementary Students"

#### **Content Area: Understand and Analyze Context — Row 1**

The response earned 6 points for this row because it identifies a topic (children's preferred learning styles) and then narrows the focus to individualism v. collectivism in two different student populations, in Hong Kong and the United States (Chicago) respectively (see the Introduction section, p. 1). It then goes on to describe the purpose of learning about different learning styles – namely, helping teachers design effective classroom techniques. The paper then connects the focused inquiry to the pertinent literature (see the top of p. 3), though briefly.

#### **Content Area: Understand and Analyze Argument — Row 2**

The response earned 2 points for this row because it summarizes a single perspective on Hong Kong as collectivist-style learners and the U.S. as individualist-style learners – culminating in the Conclusion section on page 18. It did not earn 4 points on this row because although multiple sources are identified and cited, they do not represent different perspectives. The sources are used mainly to justify the paper's assumption from the outset about Hong Kong and U.S. learning styles.

#### **Content Area: Evaluate Sources and Evidence — Row 3**

The response earned 4 points for this row because although most of the sources are scholarly (see bibliography for many scholarly journals in education and psychology fields), their relevance to this inquiry is not always evident (e.g., sources related to advertising differences in Hong Kong and the U.S.). It did not earn 6 on this row because the linkages between the literature and the student's research are not explicit or clear.

#### **Content Area: Research Design — Row 4**

The response earned 5 points for this row because it describes the approach and describes an intentional plan for conducting the research in order to come to an evidence-based answer about learning styles in U.S. and Hong Kong school populations. The intended survey method is explained in great detail as part of the Method section (beginning on p. 8). The paper did not earn 7 points on this row because it does not explain how the survey connects to disciplinary standards, and it does not explain how the survey will address the research questions.

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**Content Area: Establish Argument — Row 5**

The response earned 5 points for this row because the evidence is described and linked to the claims, even though readers might not find the data convincing (see the Findings section on p. 13). The paper did not earn 7 on this row because the links between the survey evidence and the student's claims are not developed or explained.

**Content Area: Select and Use Evidence — Row 6**

The response earned 4 points for this row because it shows how data support the claim throughout the Findings section (starting on p. 13) and in the Discussion section (p. 16) by linking the survey results to the conclusions drawn about U.S. and Hong Kong learning styles and the participants' achievement and perceived learning preferences. It did not earn 6 because the survey data (from a small sample of students in two schools) is not interpreted to support the conclusion in a credible way, and some of the survey results, as reported, are not consistent with the stated conclusion.

**Content Area: Engage Audience — Row 7**

The response earned 1 point for this row because it includes one graph of the U.S. (p. 15) but not one for Hong Kong, which is confusing to the reader. While there are labeled sections, those headings are not enough to create organization and coherence. It did not earn 2 points on this row because the lack of organizational elements make it difficult to follow the argument about learning-style differences between students in the U.S. and Hong Kong.

**Content Area: Apply Conventions — Row 8**

The response earned 4 points for this row because citations reflect relatively consistent use of APA style. It did not earn 6 because sources are not integrated with the student's own research. Even though the Literature Review concludes with the statement "These sources collectively connect and relate back to my research problem because they state the cultural differences can be traced back to history" (p. 8), the assertion of connectedness (between sources and the student's own inquiry) is not explained beyond that statement.

**Content Area: Apply Conventions — Row 9**

The response earned 2 points for this row because use of style and conventions make it readable. It did not earn 3 points for this row because although the reader can follow the student's meaning, the paper's style does not enhance communication of the argument. See the first paragraph of the Discussion section (p. 16) for a representative example of imprecise syntax.