

INTRODUCTION

- It has been suggested that learning about heroism might provide growth in student's social-emotional learning. Interventions about heroism are understudied.
- Study piloted a five-session curriculum delivered weekly for five weeks over the summer in a Title I elementary school.
- Zimbardo (2007) suggests that in society, good will ultimately triumph over evil, therefore it is important to teach children about heroism to foster good behavior and actions by making sacrifices and taking risks. Zimbardo coined the phrase "inspiring heroic imagination" in children.
- Children as young as kindergartners possess the concept of what and who a hero is (White & O'Brien, 1999).
- The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of a five-session heroism themed curriculum in elementary school children. This study is important because students who go to Title I schools will have the opportunity to interact with college students and learn about college attendance as an option for them.

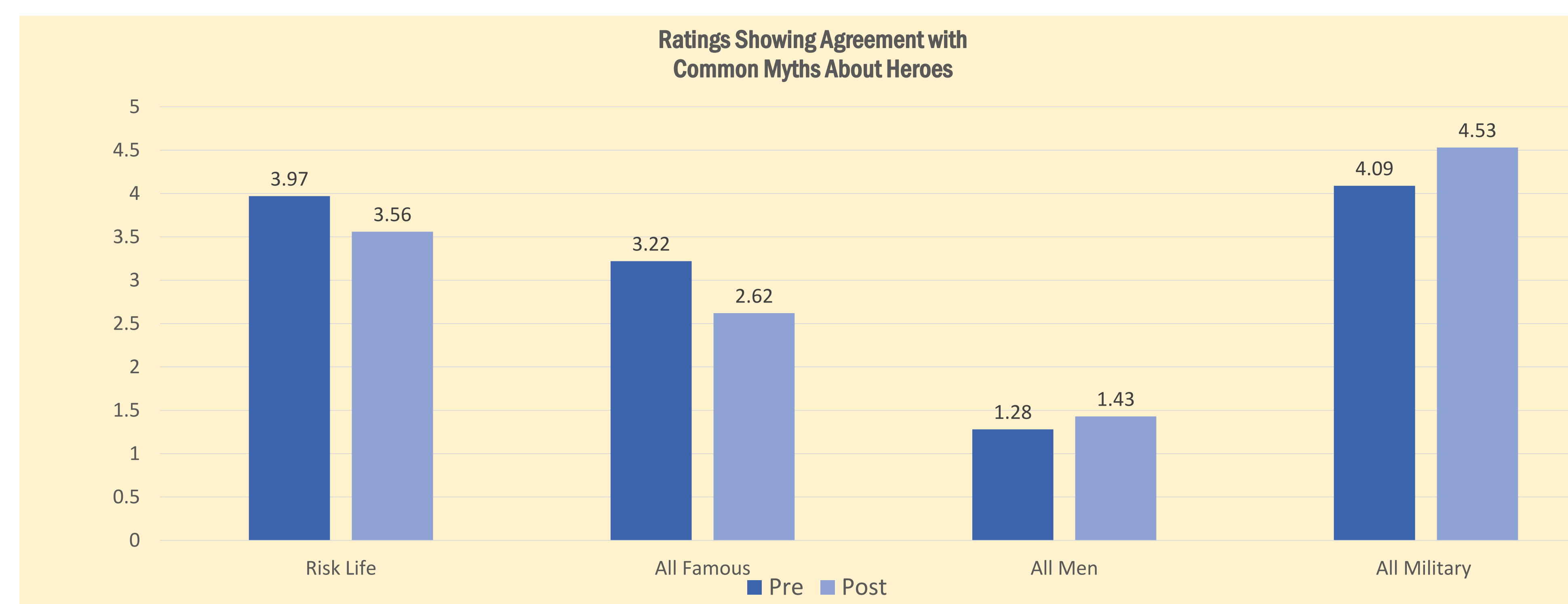
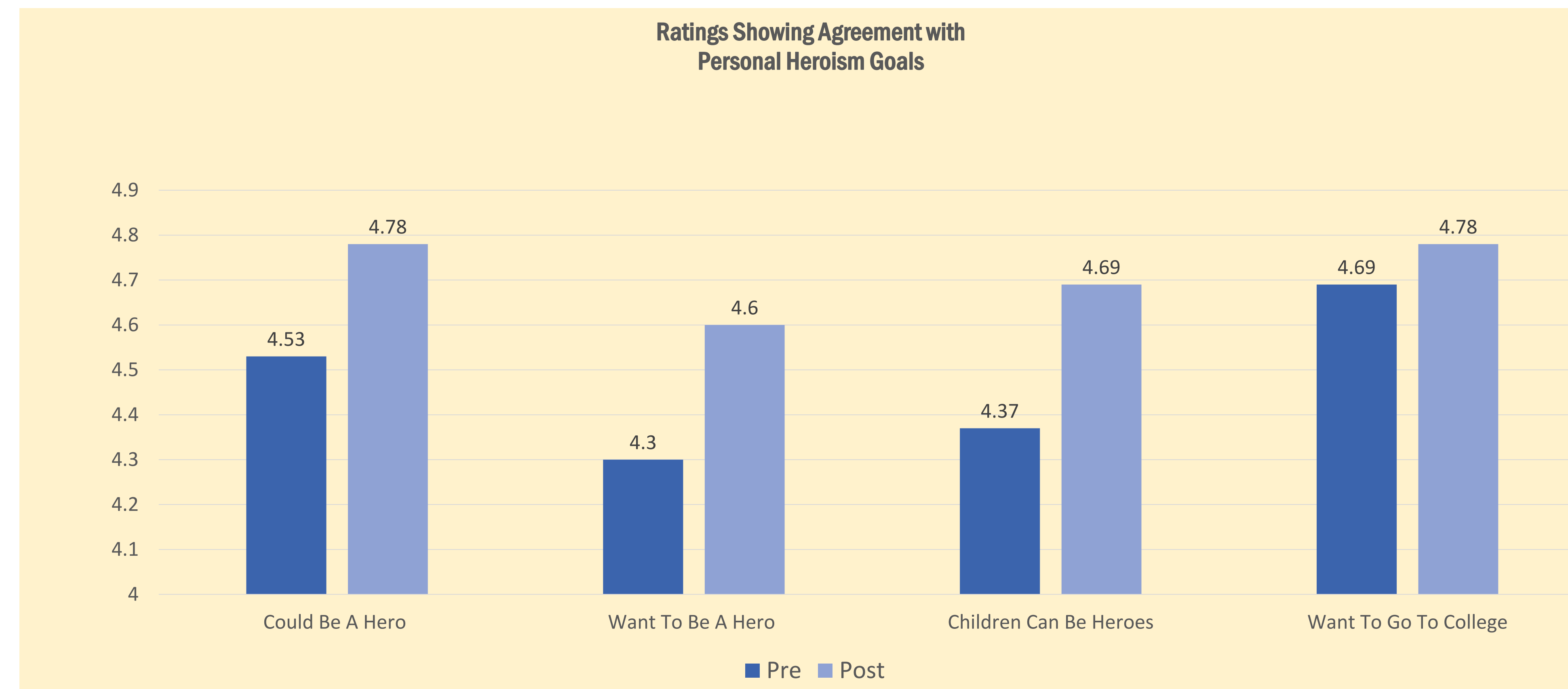
METHODS

Subjects

- Participants were 31 elementary school students who participated in the intervention and elected to complete both pre- and post-surveys. This was out of a total of 57 students who participated in the intervention.
- Participants reported being between the ages of seven and eleven and grade level ranged from first to sixth grade.

Measures & Procedures

- First author and graduate level research assistants collected survey data before and after curriculum was taught. Survey consisted of 18 items asking about heroism perceptions.
- Data were collected from the students in the same classroom where they were taught the curriculum. Graduate level research assistants helped the second and third graders complete the survey by recording their answers individually. The fourth and fifth graders were seated individually at desks and worked individually on the survey.
- The intervention was expected to help children to understand the definition of a "hero" and generate common characteristics of heroes, as well as helping to increase student's interest in attending college.
- Per IRB approved protocol, a parent opt out form was signed by the students' parents and received by researchers. Parents had opportunity to read about study and ask questions before submitting signed consent.



FINDINGS

- Paired t-tests were used to compare pre- and post- intervention item scores. Results showed a significant increase in participants' believing that family members can be heroes; $t(31) = -2.16, p < .04$
- Students also reported an upward trend on stating that children can be heroes; $t(31) = -1.78, p < .09$.
- Students were being taught heroism curriculum by students from a military school. An upward trend was also reported on "all people in the military are heroes", $t(31) = -1.88, p < .07$.
- While the mean scores on all items trended in the predicted directions, there were no other significant pre/post differences.

DISCUSSION

- Heroism themed interventions may be effective in expanding perceptions and beliefs in elementary school students in Title I schools.
- There is a positive relationship between students being taught a heroism curriculum and how their opinions change about who they consider to be a hero.
- By college students teaching elementary school students about heroes, the elementary school students had to chance to imagine themselves as being able to go to college one day.
- In this study, some limitations that occurred included the size of the sample and the fact that that not every student was in attendance on the allotted data collection days.
- Future research will continue to examine the parameters of the Heroism curriculum intervention.

REFERENCES

- White, S., & O'Brien, J. (1999) What is a hero? An exploratory study of students' conceptions of heroes. *Journal of Moral Education*, 28, 81-95.
- Zimbardo, P. G. (2007). *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*. New York: Random House.

