

# THE ROLE OF HOPE IN STUDENTS

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the role of hope in student academic achievement and failure. While hope has been studied from a variety of perceptions and works have been published reflecting various fields such as social science and health care, little has been done to further understand how hope functions in student academic success through school counselors' perceptions.

This qualitative-exploratory research study seeks to understand the following research question: How is hope generated in students from the perceptions of school counselors? Using grounded theory method of analysis, three major themes were found: (a) communication, (b) interactions, and (c) connection. Three dominant categories were identified under the communication theme: (a) listening, (b) observing, and (c) discussing. Moreover, three dominant categories were identified under the interactions theme: (a) practicing, (b) reflecting, and (c) planning. Finally, three dominant categories were identified under the connection theme: (a) sharing, (b) feeling, and (c) grasping/recreating.

Participants' stories reflected that effective communication, genuine interactions, and real-life connection were needed for students to generate and keep hope alive in their academic world. This study suggests that hope can be generated in students when students are willing to listen to new information, observe hopeful behaviors and positive events, and discuss or talk about their emotions and dreams. Moreover, results suggest that hope can be kept alive through ongoing interactions where students practice hopeful attitudes and behaviors, reflect on past experiences, learn from the past negative and positive events, and develop plans for themselves. Findings also suggest that hope can be maintained when students find connections between their inner and outer world. Finally, findings suggest that for students to generate new hope and continue to be hopeful in their lives, they need to have the interest and opportunity to share their own stories with someone, the feeling of ongoing support, and the sense of control where they believe they have the ability to recreate their own meanings toward their academic world.

This research recommends to parents, educators, leaders, and school counselors that it is crucial to explicitly impart hope to students. Educational leaders and policymakers should consider implementing a hope curriculum based on the findings, particularly to high school students who feel hopeless. However, helping students build a hopeful mind should start as early as the elementary level.

**Dr. Kany Joa** moved to the United States in 1996. Coming to this country with a very limited English language background, Dr. Joa has overcome many academic challenges as well as struggles that come with being a new immigrant. In 2000, she was selected as one of the Gates Millennium Scholars. Dr. Joa has been an ESL (English as a Second Language) instructor for over 7 years. She has taught in elementary schools and colleges. Currently, Dr. Joa and her family live in Seattle, WA.

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DR. KANY JOA

# A DISSERTATION STUDY

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AS PERCEIVED BY HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS

DR. KANY JOA