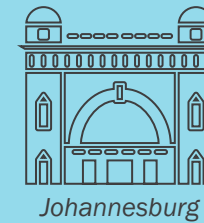




Scripps Spelling Bee Focus Group Research

South Africa



WHO THEY ARE

Helping Kids to Reach Full Potential is Key

Open communication, and fostering love and trust emerged as central to most parenting styles. However, a strong focus on education, and teaching children correct values was also evident. For teachers, they work to make children feel loved, cared for and supported at school, in order to instill confidence and encourage learning.

"I would like to spend more time reading to my kids. It is such an important basis. It extends vocabulary and creates a depth to someone that you do not get from TV."

"I believe that teaching academics without teaching them morals, values and empathy leaves the child incomplete. Children need to be taught how to be forgiving, how to share, how to have compassion for the next person."



Strong connection to family and community

South Africans value their own unique culture and customs. Living in a multi-cultural society it is important to know and respect the customs of others.

Their experience of US culture is largely determined by what they see in the movies. They admire the success of the US, but feel that American values of lack of discipline and lack of respect are eroding South African values in children (through watching American behavior on TV).



POSITIVES

- Provides a sense of identity in the modern world
- Provides a connection to family
- Provides a sense of community



They admire the US education system and would like their own children to have the perceived success of American children.

NEGATIVES

- Strict and conservative
- Some cultures are paternalistic
- Stereotypes that don't reflect the reality of the community

"South African cultures have deep roots, so the cultures remain strong. America has become the melting pot. All cultures become the same...The negative of that is (feelings of) superiority. They think of Africa as behind the moon. All of us are naked and undeveloped."

"We also have freedom, but they have financial freedom and more opportunities."



EDUCATION

Central to successful development, but falls short

Due to overcrowding, lack of resources, overworked teachers, etc. many children are not getting the support they need, and are falling behind as a result. While there are some good schools, they are not accessible to the majority of the population due to cost and accessibility concerns.

Issues to be addressed

Not enough
reading/writing

Inequality

Too much
homework

Lack of
Resources

Overcrowding

Not enough discipline
(from teachers)

"Teaching methods change too often; it's frustrating, there is no consistency. And parental involvement is an issue; they are not interested and then expect miracles."

"Kids do not read enough; it negatively affects their spelling. Reading helps with vocabulary, imagination and spelling."



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The Road to Scripps



START HERE

CREATE A VALUE PROPOSITION

Reward winners with scholarships and aides to participate in advanced levels >> greater participation

Blending the competition with the regular curriculum seamlessly by introducing a volume of practice materials suited to each class >> perceive the format not like a competition only, but a basic foundation that needs to be practiced (and having fun while doing so)

Provide the option of applying through online modes and taking the test online >> more participation and ease of doing so from anywhere

INCREASE AWARENESS

Create exciting, colorful messaging and media to create hype and interest from children

The program should be broadcast on one of the terrestrial television channels in order to create greater awareness and reach a larger market

Organize Q&A discussions with parents and teachers as a way to bring clarity to each aspect of the competition, benefits, costs, etc.

Collaborate with student newspapers like 'Times NIE', 'The Telegraph in Schools', etc. to spread awareness among students. Could consider publishing preliminary contests in local newspapers and children's magazines to make the brand's presence felt among students

Putting forth a proposition like strengthening the basics of language through a fun, yet educational competition which lays the foundation for all other courses

Organize a school visit by the mascot (like the Scripps 'Bee') to conduct impromptu spelling bees and hand over goody bags

Consider introduction of the spelling bee from Grade 1 to generate appeal

EARLY EXPOSURE

Provide tangible prizes for children at each level; keep them motivated and interested

Introduce the competition in phases – start with a friendly event within the classroom to assess the capabilities of students with a fun-filled activity that wouldn't create any stress or pressure on students

Consider separating levels by spelling aptitude rather than age/grade (children performing at different levels; do not want to expose less strong spellers to ridicule, nor bore stronger spellers)

SUPPORT NEEDED

Strong need to invest and put boots on the ground initially before trusting others to roll it out. Establishing a local office with country director reporting, as well as trainers and promotional staff will help people establish sustainable traditions, and ultimately help with long term success and become a strong model for other nations

Consider distributing promo booklets with mini test series to generate interest and excitement around the brand

Provide clear manuals and guidelines for parents and teachers to follow so students have the support they need and teaching/study materials to schools or introduce an app which children can use to practice (for those with smart phones)

Conduct mock spelling bee competitions among teachers and parents – a fun activity that gives clarity about the way they are conducted and is useful for understanding and explaining the activity to the child and getting them comfortable

