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Developing Cultural Competence Among Sixth-Grade Students Through Indigenous Knowledge and Place-Based Education

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DEVELOPING CULTURAL COMPETENCE AMONG SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS
THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND PLACE-BASED EDUCATION

by

Tyus Roanhorse

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

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2022
ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING CULTURAL COMPETENCE AMONG SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS
THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND PLACE-BASED EDUCATION

by

Tyus Roanhorse, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2022

Major Advisor: Dr. Maryellen McClain Verdoes
Department: Psychology

There is a need to develop cultural competence in educational settings. While there is a focus on training K-12 educators to be culturally competent, there is little focus on developing and examining the impact of student cultural competence training. Integrating Indigenous knowledge in an education setting is a unique way to start developing cultural competency by recognizing cross-cultural worldviews and perspectives. This can be done while using place-based education, which links the classroom to the cultural environment that has significant meaning to Indigenous peoples while enriching the learning experience for all students. The current study examines and measures the development of cultural competence among students from a culturally disruptive pedagogy that uses Indigenous knowledge and a diverse place-based field experience. Participants were sixth-grade students (N= 39) from an elementary school in northern Utah. The students participated in a field experience to the San Juan region located on the boarder of the Navajo Nation and participated in Indigenous knowledge lessons. A repeated measures ANOVA was used to examine the development of cultural competency across three time points throughout the school year. Findings showed significant differences in student
perspective-taking, but no significant differences in other domains of cultural competence. The current study brings awareness to the development of cultural competence among youth through Indigenous knowledge and a place-based learning field experience.
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Tyus Roanhorse
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is a need to develop cultural competence in educational settings. While there is a focus on training K-12 educators to be culturally competent and teach in a culturally responsive manner (Taylor, 2010), there is little focus on developing and examining the impact of student cultural competence. Doppen and An (2014) further establish this issue by noting that students in the United States lack cross-cultural experiences from which students from other countries benefit. In addition, students from a culturally and linguistically minoritized (CLM) background are more likely to be harassed while at school (Peguero & Williams, 2013), which may indicate underdeveloped student cultural competence. For these reasons, there is much needed discussions around developing cultural competence among youth in educational contexts.

The need for teachers to teach culturally responsive continues to be more pressing than ever before, especially when taking into consideration the demographic gaps between educators and students (Muniz, 2019). Due to these demographic gaps, there is a “culture divide” that is currently impacting educational settings. Griner and Stewart (2012) mention that one in three students who are currently enrolled in elementary school is of a CLM background while 87% of educators are White females. Therefore, there may be a student-teacher disconnect and culture divide, thus highlighting a need for culturally responsive teaching in schools to aid in developing culturally competent students. While there is a surge in research that discusses culturally responsive teaching, teachers and other educational professionals lack clear examples and tools for best instructional practices (Griner & Stewart, 2012). Without appropriate and needed training and support,
educators may be providing instructional practices that are irrelevant and ineffective for students (Muniz, 2019). Hence, there is much needed research regarding best practices for culturally responsive teaching that utilizes cross-cultural knowledge and perspectives.

Including Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing is a unique way to start teaching culturally responsive and may aid in developing cultural competence. Battiste (2000) writes that Indigenous knowledge restores values, ecologies and languages by creating a collaborative connection between Indigenous and Westernized, Eurocentric knowledge. In the United States, learning experiences often place a focus on Westernized perspectives and disregards other forms and methods of learning and denies that Eurocentric notions of learning are cultural (Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007). Furthermore, Barnhardt and Kawagley (2008) discuss that previous literature in regard to Indigenous education and knowledge were written by non-Indigenous individuals and focused on how to get Indigenous students to assimilate to Western worldviews. In addition, there is very little research that addresses how to get Western educators to understand Indigenous peoples’ worldviews and ways of knowing (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008). Indigenous students may need to have an understanding of Western society and learning, but non-Indigenous educators need to also recognize the existence of cross-cultural worldviews, perspectives, and knowledge systems.

In addition, Indigenous knowledge can be applied to place-based learning. Tobias and Richmond (2014) discuss that Indigenous knowledge can be integral to the land. This links the classroom and students to the cultural environment that has significant meaning to Indigenous peoples while enriching the learning experience for all students. Furthermore, place-based learning may highlight an important critique and assessment of
colonization in the United States and other countries that have negatively impacted Indigenous peoples and communities (Furman & Gruenewald, 2004). Experiences of place-based learning have a range of benefits for students, one of which is developing a deeper connection with communities (Deringer, 2017). While there is research that promotes the benefits of place-based learning and their outcomes, there is much needed research to examine the development of cultural competence utilizing a place-based learning approach.

This study aims to examine the development of cultural competence among sixth-grade students from culturally responsive teaching that utilizes Indigenous knowledge and a cross-cultural, place-based field experience. The educational settings are increasing becoming more diverse, so there is a significant need to diversity existing knowledge systems taught in K-12 education to help develop youth’s cultural identity and competence. This leads to the current research question: will implementing cultural knowledge around a cross-cultural field experience be associated with growth in cultural competence among sixth-grade students?
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is a theoretical framework that poses individuals should recognize and appreciate cultural groups outside their own, creating effective interactions (Sue, 1998). In addition, cultural competence includes individuals having the ability to effectively work with members of any cultural group by building knowledge and skills for cross-cultural interactions (Tehee et al., 2020). Sue’s (1982) landmark paper divides cultural competences into three components: (a) attitudes and beliefs, which is having an understanding of one’s own cultural beliefs, values, and attitude; (b) knowledge, which is the having knowledge of worldviews different from one’s own; and (c) skills, which is the use of culturally appropriate communication skills.

In addition to attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills, Sue (1998) describes three characteristics that are critical in cultural competency: (a) being scientifically minded, (b) possessing skills in dynamic sizing, and (c) being proficient with a particular cultural group. Scientific mindedness is having the ability to form a hypothesis as opposed to making a premature conclusion. In this case, people may make premature conclusions about CLM individuals, which may lead to many mistakes in cross-cultural relationships such as negative stereotyping. These premature conclusions are primarily based on the erroneous concept ‘myth of sameness’ that posits the inaccurate beliefs that one’s individual dynamic is the same across all cultures (Sue, 1998; Wilson et al., 1995). Therefore, to develop cultural competence, individuals who are unaware of a specific cultural phenomenon should engage in hypothesis testing, a concept that is taught in
primary education. This may allow for individuals to avoid biases and premature conclusions of culturally different populations.

Dynamic sizing is defined as knowing when to generalize and when to be inclusive as well as knowing when to individualize and be exclusive (Sue, 1998). One potential difficulty that arise within interracial relationships is stereotyping members of a group (Sue, 1998), which may be visible within schools. Peguro and Williams (2013) discuss that within schools, CLM differences may foster stereotypes about the behavior and social norms for students from a different cultural background. Furthermore, CLM students are subjected to verbal harassment and derogatory treatment when they do not adhere to certain CLM stereotypes (Peguro & Williams, 2013). Therefore, dynamic sizing is a critical part of cultural competency as it allows individuals to avoid making harmful stereotypes of CLM groups while appreciating the importance of culture (Sue, 1998).

Culture-specific expertise is having proficient knowledge on a cultural group (Sue, 1998). In order to have culture-specific expertise, there needs to be foundational knowledge and understanding of the differing cultures’ world views and specific skills to work with different cultural groups (Sue, 1998). Developing “expertise” includes having knowledge of one’s cultural heritage and how it effects perceptions and knowledge about cultural identity development (Sue, 2001). Gaining culture-specific expertise can be implemented in the classrooms for youth in a variety of different ways. This may include utilizing culture responsive teaching that exposes students to different knowledge systems other than the traditional Westernized teaching. The aforementioned strategy aligns with Sue’s (2001) recommendation in developing skills which seeks out educational,
multicultural training experiences. Implementing such strategies may have youth develop skills in scientific-mindedness, not generalizing to all CLM groups, and building culture-specific expertise.

The three critical characteristics of cultural competency mentioned are independent from one another. In other words, one can be scientifically minded but oblivious of culture-specific elements (Sue, 1998). While it is desirable to possess the three critical characteristics of cultural competency, it may be difficult for those who lack experience to achieve. For instance, developing these skills may be difficult for youth who have limited exposure to cultures outside their own. Therefore, educating youth on cultures outside their own may aid in developing these three characteristics. Cultural competence is a lifelong learning experience and implementing competencies can be taken into action by incorporating the skills across multiple settings and situations (Tehee et al., 2020).

While there are varying and changing definitions of cultural competence, there continues to be support of building cultural competence in a variety of workplaces (Gallardo et al., 2012). This is especially true for work fields such as nursing, medicine, social work, psychology, as well as in education (Tehee et al., 2020). Educational professionals must have an understanding of cultural competence to be effective educators and know what is culturally appropriate when working with students (Anderson & Fees, 2018). When educational professionals, such as teachers and administrators, develop knowledge and understanding of cultural competence, they are better suited to provide culturally sensitive, respectful, and meaningful work for students and their families who are from a CLM background (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2009).
While there is an emphasis and focus on developing and building cultural competence among K-12 teachers (Pratt-Johnson, 2006; Taylor, 2010), as well as culturally responsive instruction (Barnes, 2006; Gay, 2002), there is little emphasis on building cultural competence among K-12 students. Educational professionals can adapt skills that they have acquired from cross-cultural competence trainings into classrooms to promote cultural competency in students. Implementing such teachings or programs may be beneficial for students to help create and build awareness of different cultural backgrounds. Not only will students become more aware of cultures outside their own, they might start to become familiar with their own culture, which is also a component of cultural competence (Tehee et al., 2018). This is beneficial for K-12 students because they are then starting to become familiar with and developing their own sense of cultural identity.

**Cultural Identity**

The formation of one’s identity is a key milestone in youth development, especially among youth in upper elementary and middle school grades, as they are beginning to explore their own identity. The formation of cultural identity as well as identifying what religion, gender, and socioeconomic status they resonate with are practices youth experience (Yetter & Foutch, 2013). Adolescence is a paramount time to begin to intentionally develop and explore one’s own cultural identity (Erikson, 1994; Spencer, 1999). Forming a cultural identity involves individuals to adopt certain beliefs and practices of one or more cultures (Jensen et al., 2011). This entails decision making in which culture one identifies with and with which cultural community they belong.

Cultural identity includes fundamental concepts that Erikson (1968) highlighted
regarding adolescent identity formation. These key concepts of identity formation focus on ideology (or beliefs and values) and relationships; which the adolescent must make decisions to arrive at a sense of self and cultural identity (Erikson, 1968; Jensen et al., 2011).

Teaching elements of cultural competence includes recognizing the self as a cultural being and appreciating other worldviews (Sue, 1998), thus possibly helping individuals form a sense of cultural identity. By implementing cultural competency programs in schools, youth will have the ability to start recognizing and developing their own cultural identity and learn and appreciate others as well. Implications of programs may include exposure to CLM youth and adults who potentially have differing worldviews. Research has showed that contact with CLM populations is a key component in possibly reducing prejudice and aiding in understanding other worldviews (Zhou et al., 2018). This idea can be seen in Allport’s (1954) Contact Hypothesis. Contact Hypothesis states that under certain conditions, interpersonal contact is an optimal and effective way to reduce prejudice between majority and minoritized group members (Schippa et al., 2005). These conditions of the Contact Hypothesis include that group members: (1) feel an equal status, (2) share common goals, (3) have intergroup cooperation, and (4) support authorities (e.g., teachers). Therefore, youth being in-contact with individuals who are culturally different from them have benefits in prejudice reduction and exposing them to differing worldviews that they themselves may value, building cultural identity and competence.
**Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Developing both cultural competence and identity can be applied in classrooms and schools by educators teaching culturally responsive. Gloria Ladson-Billings developed the term culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) to improve the way teachers can appreciate students’ backgrounds. This allows educators to be connected to their students, families, communities, and as well as their daily lives (Ladson-Billings, 1994). From here, educators may start to teach culturally responsive, which expresses that one must use cultural knowledge and previous experiences to make learning relevant and effective for students (Gay, 2018). Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges cultural knowledge of different CLM groups and that cultural knowledge approaches can be applied to learning that is taught in formal curriculum (Griner & Stewart, 2012). This is done by utilizing a wide range of instructional practices that have connections to different learning approaches and teaches students to recognize and praise their own and others’ cultural heritage (Griner & Stewart, 2012). Educators can incorporate multicultural information as well as resources and materials to aid in the development of skills that is frequently taught in classrooms.

Scholar Django Paris further expanded the framework on culturally responsive teaching by developing *culturally sustaining pedagogy*. Paris and Alim (2014) highlights that culturally sustaining educational professionals do not only draw from students’ culture but sustains their culture as well as their evolving culture. Explicit goals include developing positive cultural identity among students and preparing students to live in an increasingly diverse world (Muniz, 2019). Implementing such responsive teaching equips students with knowledge and skills to function in “mainstream” culture and helps them
maintain, and possibly develop, their own sense of cultural identity (Siwatu, 2007).

Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) further mention that the point of culturally sustaining and responsive teaching is to respond to students in ways that build and sustain meaningful and positive relationships.

With the United States becoming increasing more diverse, educational settings and schools are now becoming diverse. Therefore, there is a need for culturally responsive teaching. Anderson and Fees (2018) highlight that in order to be effective service providers, educators must have cultural competence. This may begin with educators teaching culturally responsive. Culturally responsive teaching often begins with teachers’ baseline knowledge of culture, the teachers’ understanding of their own cultural identity, and being aware of others’ culture (Larson et al., 2018). Strategies for teachers to teach culturally responsive may include integrating cultural artifacts and using “real-world” examples and problems to solve during instruction in order to help students connect to their community and identities (Bouillion & Gomez, 2001; Larson et al., 2018). Other strategies include teachers providing the opportunity for students to teach or facilitate lessons, allowing for students to demonstrate knowledge (Larson et al., 2018).

Prior research has shown benefits of culturally responsive teaching with connections to cultural identity and cultural competence. Studies that have evaluated the effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching interventions discovered positive outcomes among students including academic persistence, improved attendance, and greater interest in schoolwork (Morrison et al., 2008; Muniz, 2019). This supported Phinney et al.’s (1997) findings that when students develop a strong sense of cultural identity, it is often linked to higher self-esteem, academic performance, well-being, and
their competency to navigate discrimination (Muniz, 2019). In addition, students who are developing a sense of cultural identity through culturally responsive teaching are more inclined to befriend individuals from a different background than their own (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). While there is a need for larger studies that are more rigorous (Muniz, 2018), existing research supports the need for educators to implement culturally responsive teaching in their classrooms.

Furthermore, educators can also utilize a culturally disruptive pedagogy framework. Paris (2012) argued for a pedagogy that is both culturally responsive and relevant and that “dismantles Eurocentric paradigms” (San Pedro, 2018, p. 1219). This led to the term culturally disruptive pedagogy being coined. Culturally disruptive pedagogy creates a rupture in educational settings that combats the normalization of White/Eurocentric values only (San Pedro, 2018). The idea is to teach and challenge youth’s ideas and aid in their understanding of themselves in larger systems (San Pedro, 2018). Culturally disruptive pedagogy challenges dominant, White practices by making privilege visible all while raising awareness of other cultural backgrounds and creating a sense of cultural identity (Litts et al., 2020), which aligns with the key components of cultural competence. With the use of culturally disruptive pedagogy, educators can now develop a sense of cultural competence in their students by utilizing diverse perspectives, such as Indigenous knowledge.

**Indigenous Knowledge**

Indigenous knowledge is a theoretical concept that expands on the knowledge gaps seen in Western education and research (Battiste, 2002). It reconceptualizes the importance of Indigenous people’s philosophy and educational processes (Battiste, 2002).
and highlights that there are different ways of learning. Barnhardt and Kawagley (2008) discuss that Indigenous peoples have their own methods of analyzing and relating to the world. This has been done by acquiring their knowledge through direct experiences of the land and natural world. Indigenous core values, beliefs, and practices that have survived over centuries are now beginning to be recognized and valid for today’s generation like they were in previous generations (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008).

However, learning experiences seen in United States schools today solely focus on Westernized perspectives, which disregard other forms and methods of learning (Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007). In addition, Datta (2018) writes that Western knowledge systems have either “tokenized” Indigenous ways of knowing or have inferred Indigenous knowledge as Western knowledge without taking into perspective Indigenous values, beliefs, culture, and knowledge. Kawagley et al. (1998) also mentions that school curriculum and teaching methods is rooted in worldviews that do not recognize Indigenous perceptions of learning and place in society. However, implementing Indigenous knowledge may offer lessons that can benefit everyone including educators, scientist (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008), and students by experiencing other methods and techniques of learning. For instance, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has recognized that there is potential that Indigenous people and Indigenous knowledge can help have an understanding of the world (Lambert, 2003). Non-Indigenous educators and researchers need to recognize that there are multiple worldviews and knowledge systems that can be applied and be used to understand different worldviews.
These other worldviews and methods of learning can be implemented in the classroom and curricula. Styres and colleagues (2013) discuss that Indigenous perspectives are just as relevant and applicable in mainstream education and can be applied in elementary curriculum and classrooms. This is important because it begins to deepen students’ worldviews regarding decolonization and relationship with culture (Datta, 2016) and CLM communities, therefore developing cultural competence among youth. Implementing culturally responsive teaching by utilizing Indigenous knowledge systems in the schools can be applied in a variety of practices. One specific way is adopting a place-based learning pedagogy and apply school curriculum in a culturally diverse environment.

**Place-based Learning**

The term place-based learning is often interchangeable with similar terminology such as community-based learning, environmental education, and experiential learning. For the current study, we will be using the term place-based learning. Place-based learning is often characterized by focusing on knowledge, issues and phenomena of local communities (Smith & Sobel, 2010) and can be applied to educational purposes that are potentially relevant to all subject areas in school curricula. Sobel (2004) establishes that place-based learning involves using local communities and different environments as a foundational pinpoint to teach educational concepts such as language arts, science, mathematics, social studies, as well as other subjects across a school’s curriculum.

In addition, place-based learning emphasizes hands-on and real-world learning experiences. Implementing such an approach to an educational setting increases community involvement, enhances the student’s appreciation for learning and the natural
world, and may create commitment among students to be active and contributing citizens (Sobel, 2004). In other words, place-based learning can engage students in projects or learning that requires the students to apply their knowledge and skills (components of cultural competence), and energy to community issues or problems (Smith & Sobel, 2010). This may lead to youth and adolescents valuing their efforts, this cultivating cultural competency through civic participation. Place-based learning is beneficial to both students and teachers’ educational experiences. Teachers and other educational professionals can develop culturally responsive teaching by serving as instructors and mentors as well as establishing relationships between community members and their schools (Smith & Sobel, 2010). Establishing these relationships between communities and schools can help students be exposed to cultures outside their own. In addition, educational professionals can utilize cultural knowledge to make new information and learning easily accessible for students (Deringer, 2017).

There are existing evaluations of programs that show promising results in improving students’ learning and community engagement (Powers, 2004), as well as increasing self-esteem and interpersonal relationships (Ritchie et al., 2014). An emergent discovery Powers (2004) found was place-based learning affects student motivation and improved engagement in learning. Teachers that have implemented place-based pedagogies discuss that their students pay more attention to their studies and try harder with their schoolwork due to their community involvement (Powers, 2004). In addition, interviews with students found that they perceived their learning was more meaningful which leads to changes in their behavior, attitude, and engagement (Powers, 2004).
Overall, the findings suggest that there are improved changes in academic engagement when students are working outside.

While the research suggest that place-based learning may be successful in improving student learning and motivation, it may also contribute in building cultural competency through culturally responsive and disruptive teaching. Gruenewald (2003) mentions that place-based pedagogies are needed to educate individuals who may have an impact on the ecological and social places that people inhabit. In addition, place-based learning and pedagogies highlight the students’ involvement in a critical analysis of socio-ecological community issues (Gruenewald, 2003) that promotes students’ action to take aim and change the current situation of those issues. Place-based learning strengthens the connection with the natural world and supports deeper connections with diverse cultural values, especially of Indigenous communities. Implementing an Indigenous knowledge approach to placed-based learning connects understanding, awareness, and education to the land (Battiste, 2009). Therefore, implementing place-based field experiences may be an effective method to build cultural competency among youth.

The Current Study

Given the lack of exposure regarding cultural competence and cross-cultural education among youth (Taylor, 2010), the education system will benefit from integrating diverse and different ways of learning in the curriculum that is not solely focused on Westernized perspectives. There is a need to diversify existing knowledge systems taught in K-12 education to help develop youth and adolescents’ cultural identity and competence. There are a variety of ways to implement such lessons into curriculum to
foster learning of different cultural perspectives. This may include a diverse field experience for students. The overarching goal of the current study is to measure cultural competence in sixth-grade students. Moreover, the goal is to measure whether cross-cultural activities, such as a field experience, impacts or develops cultural competence in the youth. This leads to the current research question: will implementing cultural knowledge around a cross-cultural field experience be associated with growth in cultural competence among sixth-grade students?
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

Participants were sixth-grade students from an elementary school in northern Utah. Students ages ranged from 10 to 12 years. A majority of the participants reported that they identified as White (60%). Additionally, 14.5% identified as multiracial, 5.5% identified as Latinx, and 1.8% identified as Asian American. The elementary school has two sixth-grade classes with a total of 55 students. Although all 55 students were invited, a total of 39 students assented and their parents/guardians consented to participate in the current study. The two sixth-grade classes participate in a field experience to the San Juan region located on the boarder of the Navajo Nation every year. The current study utilizes quantitative data that is part of a larger mixed-method study. The larger study was examining how to redesign curriculum to better connect across academic disciplines and cultures with the aim to develop cultural competence among sixth grade students. The overarching research question is how we can collaboratively redesign a cross-cultural field experience for sixth-grade students to effectively develop culturally competent students. The study was approved through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Utah State University.

Materials and Measurements

To assess cultural competence, the following quantitative measures were used during different timepoints of the current study. The measures were validated with high school aged adolescents and assess potential changes in students’ cultural identity.
**Perspective-Taking.** The Interpersonal Reactivity Index – Perspective Taking Scale (IRI-PTS) comprises of four empathy scales: fantasy, perspective-taking, empathic concern, and personal distress (Davis, 1980). The current study utilized the perspective-taking scale, which includes 7 items that present perspective-taking statements when dealing with other individuals. Examples include “I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement before I make a decision” and “I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the ‘other guy’s’ point of view”. Participants rated the statements using a Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Davis (1980) developed and investigated psychometric properties among 427 college students. Findings showed alpha coefficients for both males (α = .71) and females (α = .75). This scale was used due to perspective taking being a foundational component of building cultural competence. Resnicow and colleagues (1999) discussed that culturally competence individual need to have the ability to incorporate as well as appreciate perspectives from multiple minoritized groups. Therefore, having cultural understanding requires the need to take the perspective from others.

**Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure.** Ethnic and cultural identity was captured using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). The MEIM utilizes a 4-point Likert scale that presents 14 scenarios that revolve around the participants’ ethnic identity. The MEIM also asks information about the participant’s race/ethnicity. Items include statements such as “I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to” and “I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group”. Participants use the Likert-Scale to indicate how well they agree or disagree with the statement. Statement response options ranges from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly
agree. A sample of 1,349 diverse high school and college students participated in the study. The measure findings shown scores to be fairly internally consistent with alpha coefficients ranging from $\alpha = .71$ to .92 across racial and ethnic groups (Avery et al., 2007). The MEIM was utilized as racial/ethnic identity is a major component of cultural competence. D.W. Sue (2001) states that an individual must have knowledge of one’s own racial/cultural heritage and possess knowledge about one’s ethnic identity development. Thus, having an understanding of one’s cultural and racial/ethnic identity is a foundational component of cultural competence.

**Youth Diversity Acceptance Scale.** The Youth Diversity Acceptance Scale (YoDA) is designed to measure youth’s intergroup relations as well as inclusive attitudes and behaviors (Beck et. al., 2017). Participants rated six statements using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Examples of statements include “I spend time with people from different ethnic backgrounds” and “I eat lunch with different races and cultures than mine”. Beck et al. (2018) examined the validity of the YoDA across 238 high school students. A Cronbach’s alpha was calculated and showed that internal consistency to be adequate, $\alpha = .71$. In addition, all items showed loadings greater than .5 on a single factor, which suggests that the YoDA represents diversity acceptance (Beck et al., 2018). Diversity acceptance, as measured by the YoDA, is a critical feature of building cultural competence. For instance, a component of cultural competence is being comfortable with differences that may exist between oneself and others and being involved with individual from a different group (D.W. Sue, 2001). Therefore, measuring intergroup relations, inclusive attitudes, and behaviors is important to capture when assessing cultural competence.
Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire. The Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire (AFQ-Y) is a measure to assess youth’s experiential avoidance, which are behaviors regarding negative thoughts and feelings and the unwillingness to experience them (Schmalz & Murrell, 2010). The AFQ-Y utilizes a four-point Likert scale which ranges from 0 = not at all true to 4 = very true. Sample statements of the AFQ-Y includes and “My life won’t be good until I feel happy” and “I say things to make me sound cool”. The development and evaluation of the AFQ-Y showed strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$) among youth in grades 5-10 (Greco et al., 2008). The AFQ-Y was used due to being aware of behaviors regarding negative thoughts and feelings is also a component of cultural competence. For example, D.W. Sue (2001) mentions that an individual needs to be in touch with negative emotional reactions and be able to acknowledge one’s own attitudes and feelings.

Basic Empathy Scale. Empathy was measured using the Basic Empathy Scale (BES; Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006). BES items were derived from basic emotions which include fear, sadness, anger, and happiness (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006). To complete the measure, participants rate 18 statements using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Sample statements include “I often get swept in my friend’s feelings” and “My friend’s emotions do not affect me much”. Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) investigated the validity of the BES among 357 adolescents. Findings shown strong reliability with internal consistency coefficients ranging from $\alpha = .79$ to $\alpha = 85$ (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). In addition, the researchers ran a Pearson Correlation between the BES and the IRI’s perspective-taking scale for males ($r = .53$) and females ($r = .43$). These findings suggest similarities between the two measures, but also suggest
that the measures are not “redundant” (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). The BES was utilized since demonstrating empathy has connections to developing cultural competence. For instance, Wilson et al. (2013) mention that individuals should empathize with feelings, thoughts, and beliefs of people from a different cultural background as this allows one to see from their perspective.

**Procedures**

Prior to the study, the research team established a partnership with the elementary school. The investigators collaborated with relevant school personnel on Indigenous knowledge lesson plans that fit within the schools’ curriculum, as well as outlined a time frame for data collection. Once this relationship was established, parental consent was e-mailed via a Qualtrics link to all parents of students in the two sixth-grade classes. A hardcopy of the consent was also given to students. In addition to informed consent, youth assent was also obtained during this time. Parents and students who did not want to participate in the study were not asked to complete the surveys. However, all students participated in Indigenous knowledge lessons as they were incorporated into the schools’ curriculum.

**Timepoint One.** Following parental informed consent and youth assent, participants completed the aforementioned measures via Qualtrics two weeks before the field experience. Participants completed all measures independently with the research team in the room to answer any questions. After participants completed the surveys, all students engaged in two interactive Indigenous knowledge lesson plans over a period of two days.
Indigenous Knowledge Lessons. Indigenous knowledge was implemented in lesson plans and curriculum to build awareness and knowledge, major components of cultural competence. Indigenous knowledge lesson plans were cultivated by the research team along with the two sixth-grade teachers to fit the schools’ curriculum. The Indigenous knowledge lessons took place over 2 days. The overarching goal of the lessons were to bring awareness to cultural backgrounds and histories in which students were less familiar. The first lesson implemented was a science component. The research team taught students sacred Native American plants (i.e., Juniper and Sage) that they may encounter while on the field experience. Students were taught the significance of the plants as well as what they are used for by Native American populations. Students were placed into groups based on their teacher’s seating arrangement and were given a plant that they researched via their iPads. Once the students were finished researching, they created a presentation on their assigned plant and presented it to the class.

The second lesson implemented was a history component, fitting the social studies curriculum. This lesson consisted of exploring tribal nations within the state of Utah. The lesson discussed tribal and land history, as well as sovereign governments within tribes. Students were again divided into groups and were assigned a tribal nation within Utah (i.e., Navajo, Shoshone Bannock) and researched topics such as tribal government and language. Students created a presentation on the tribe assigned to them and presented it to the class.

Field Experience. Next, students participated in the field experience. As stated above, every year the two sixth-grade classes participated in two separate 5-day field experience in the southern region of Utah during the month of September. During the
first day of the trip, students spent a day at an observatory where they learned about the ecosystem of the Colorado Plateau, a component of the schools’ science curriculum. Next, the students spend the following 4-days camping and rafting the currents of the San Juan River from Bluff to Mexican Hat, Utah. Along the river, students were exposed to and were able to explore the ancestral Native American ruins and pictographs. This allowed the students to develop cultural and Indigenous knowledge as well as Native American history all while utilizing place-based learning to enrich cultural competency within students. Since there were two sixth-grade classes, one class went the third week of September, and the other class went the following week.

**Timepoint Two.** One week after the students returned from their field experience, the research team went to the classes to interview students and have them complete the post-field experience survey online via Qualtrics. The post-surveys consisted of the same measures as the pretest measures. This spanned 2 weeks since the two classes returned at two different timepoints.

**Indigenous Knowledge Lesson.** After the posttest surveys were established, another Indigenous knowledge lesson plan was implemented. This time, it was targeted on persuasive and argumentative writing. The third lesson revolved around the Bears Ears land dispute and perspective-taking. Students were randomly divided into groups and were assigned a perspective on the Bears Ears land dispute: tribal peoples, ranchers, and miners. Students spent 1 week researching their perspective to prepare for a debate on who has the rights to the land. One week later, students engaged in a debate on their perspective. After the debate was over, students used persuasive and argumentative writing to construct a letter to Utah’s governor about the Bears Ears monument.
**Timepoint Three.** Thirty-one weeks after the field experience, and 22 weeks after the Bears Ears debate, students completed the follow-up survey. The survey was distributed via Qualtrics and consisted of the same measures as the baseline and post-survey. An authenticator was placed in Qualtrics so that students who were not given consent could not access the survey. The purpose of this timepoint was to capture student growth in cultural competence throughout the academic year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students were home from March to the end of their school year in June 2020. For these reasons, there is a chance of missing data or not receiving full participation in the follow-up surveys.

**Research Design and Analytic Plan**

The statistical research design that was used was a pretest-posttest design with the same measures implemented pre-field experience, post-field experience, and a follow-up 33 weeks after the field experience in addition to the redesigned curriculum.

Data were collected over three timepoints (pre-field experience, 1-week post-field experience, 33-weeks post-field experience). To answer the primary research question, a one-way repeated measure analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the multiple means at the different timepoints to see changes in cultural competence over time following the field experience and intervention. This method of analysis was chosen over additional data analysis, such as a multiple paired t-test, in order to avoid inflation of Type I error. The independent variables are the Indigenous knowledge lessons and the field experience. The dependent variables are the measures of cultural competence within the sixth-grade students. A p-value cutoff of 0.01 was used over 0.05 due to the limited sample size and it being more stringent than 0.05. Additionally, a paired samples t-test
was also conducted to assess differences across the different timepoints. This was done to see if there were any differences between two variables for the same subject. All data analysis was ran using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28, IBM Corp., 2021).

**Positionality Statement**

Positionality is important when it comes to a researcher and their research. I am passionate about this work because there is a need for cultural competence and cultural humility within primary education settings. A way schools and educational professional can do this is by implementing curriculum that is seen across cultures, such as with Indigenous knowledge. This research connects to current social and political events that are happening in the world. For instance, data were being collected and analyzed during the Black Lives Matter movement and the controversy that surrounds Critical Race Theory in schools. Due to such social and political events, it is important to start building cultural competence/humility in youth at a young age so that they know how to navigate a diverse world.

Furthermore, my overall interest in the study relates to my background and upbringing. I identify as Native American/Indigenous and I am a member of the Navajo (Diné) Nation tribe. Additionally, I was born and raised on the Navajo Nation, which is where the sixth-grade class visited during their field experience. For these reasons, it felt important for me to contribute to the Indigenous knowledge lessons and the student’s learning because it is home to me. Moreover, the research team consisted of both Native and non-native researchers. The overall team represents a diversity of experiences and knowledge that shared a goal of building cultural competence among sixth-grade students through an Indigenous knowledge systems lens.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

To assess cultural competence growth for students, we conducted repeated measures ANOVAs for each of the measures. We first assessed for the five necessary assumptions for a repeated measures ANOVA with the requisite variables in our dataset: (1) the dependent variable was continuous, (2) the independent variable was categorical, (3) there were no significant outliers, (4) the distribution of the dependent variable was normally distributed, and (5) the differences between groups were equal. Means and standard deviations for the measures across the three timepoints are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Scale and Timepoints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurements</th>
<th>Timepoint 1</th>
<th>Timepoint 2</th>
<th>Timepoint 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI-PTS</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEIM</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YoDA</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFQ-Y</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perspective-Taking

Cronbach’s alpha for the IRI-PTS ranged from $\alpha = 0.80$ to $\alpha = 0.88$ across timepoints demonstrating strong internal consistency. A repeated measures ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference in IRI-PTS mean scores between timepoints, $F(1.985, 35.727) = 2.702, d = .40, p = .081$. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that perspective taking scores were not significantly different from timepoint 1 to timepoint 2 ($p = 1.00$) and timepoint 2 to timepoint 3 ($p = 0.53$). However, perspective
taking scores for timepoint 3 ($M = 2.85$) were significantly higher than scores at timepoint 1 ($M = 2.62, p = .085$). Due to our limited sample size across the three timepoints, we also ran paired samples t-tests. The paired samples t-test revealed the same pattern, that only timepoint 1 and timepoint 3 scores were significantly different ($p = .028$).

**Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure**

The MEIM Cronbach’s alpha ranged between $\alpha = 0.85$ and $\alpha = 0.92$ across timepoints, establishing strong internal consistency for this scale. A repeated measures ANOVA determined that mean ethnic identity scores were not statistically significant between timepoints, $F(1.739, 38.254) = 2.469, p = .11$. A paired samples t-test also revealed the same pattern, that ethnic identity scores were not statistically significant between timepoints.

The exploration subscale of the MEIM were also analyzed. A repeated measures ANOVA determined that exploration of ethnic identity scores were not statistically significant across timepoints, $F(1.929, 42.226) = 2.159, p = .130$. In addition, a paired samples t-test also determined that the MEIM’s exploration subscale were not significant.

Furthermore, the affirmation/belonging subscale of the MEIM were also analyzed. A repeated measures ANOVA determined that affirmation and belonging of the participants ethnic identity were not statistically significant between timepoints, $F(1.563, 34.386) = 1.774, p = .190$. A paired samples t-test revealed also revealed the same pattern, that ethnic identity scores were not statistically significant between timepoints.

**Youth Diversity Acceptance Scale**
The YoDA Cronbach’s alpha ranged between $\alpha = 0.80$ and $\alpha = 0.83$ across timepoints, demonstrating strong internal consistency. A repeated measures ANOVA determined that mean diversity acceptance scores were not statistically significant between timepoints, $F(1.916, 34.487) = 2.295, p = .118$. In addition, a paired samples t-test also revealed the same pattern, that diversity acceptance scores were not statistically significant across the three timepoints.

**Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire**

The AFQ Cronbach’s alpha ranged between $\alpha = 0.80$ and $\alpha = 0.88$ across timepoints, demonstrating strong internal consistency. A repeated measures ANOVA determined that mean AFQ scores were not statistically significant between any timepoints, $F(1.470, 30.877) = 0.762, p = .47$. Additionally, a paired samples t-test also determined that the AFQ were not statistically significant across the three timepoints.

**Basic Empathy Scale**

The BES Cronbach’s alpha ranged between $\alpha = 0.104$ and $\alpha = 0.341$ across timepoints. Due to the reliability scores being poor, we did not run further analyses as the BES were not a reliable measure for our study.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Overall, there is a need to develop cultural competence in educational settings and classrooms. While there has been consistent research on developing K-12 teachers and educators to be culturally competent (Taylor, 2010), there is still a lack of exposure on cultural competence and youth. Since the United States and the education system is increasingly becoming more diverse, it is important to start integrating diverse and different perspectives in school’s curriculum. This may start to help develop and shape youth and adolescents’ cultural identity and cultural competence. Additionally, the utilization of a place-based learning approach may also start to help shape students’ cultural competence and their appreciation of other cultures. For instance, previous findings suggest that a place-based approach has helped in improving students’ learning, community engagement (Powers, 2004), and has further increased students’ self-esteem and interpersonal relationships (Ritchie et al., 2014).

This study examined and measured the development of cultural competence in sixth-grade students over three timepoints. The students were involved in Indigenous knowledge lessons that placed a focus on science, history, and perspective-taking through argumentative writing. Additionally, the students participated in a field experience where they traveled to the Navajo Nation and learned about the ecosystem and explore Ancestral Native American ruins and pictographs. This may have allowed the students to develop a sense of cultural competence on Indigenous peoples. The goal was to measure whether cross-cultural activities, such as a field experience and the use of Indigenous
knowledge lessons, impacts or develops cultural competence in the youth over the school year.

Findings from the study suggest that there are significant differences in perspective taking as scores for timepoint 3 were significantly higher than scores from timepoint 1. This may have been due to the one of the Indigenous lesson plans that were implemented during the school year. The last lesson that was implemented placed a focus on persuasive and argumentative writing as well as perspective-taking. The students were placed into three different perspectives: tribal peoples, ranchers, and miners, and engaged in a debate based on their perspective. The purpose of this lesson was to allow students to take a different perspective. Therefore, this may have allowed the students to start developing a sense of perspective-taking on perspectives that are different from their own. Additionally, this finding may suggest that perspective-taking activities, like the one implemented, can benefit students’ overall cultural competence as it allows them to take see a different perspective that they are not familiar with.

While there were significant differences for perspective-taking, there were no significant differences in ethnic identity across the three timepoints as measured by the MEIM. Furthermore, there were no significant differences in youth diversity acceptance as measured by the YoDA and avoidance and fusion as measured by the AFQ across the three different timepoints. Lastly, the empathy was not able to be measured due to poor reliability in the BES among the sixth-grade students.

Implications

While there were limited significant findings, the current study still contributes to the literature on cultural competence, Indigenous knowledge, and place-based learning.
The findings highlight that implementing lessons and curriculum that takes a diverse approach may have changes in students’ perspective taking. Educators should consider implementing lessons that are diverse in their learning as it may broaden student’s views and gives them a different perspective on learning. The current study may give ideas to educators on the variety of ways diverse perspectives can be implemented in curriculum. Additionally, if it is possible for the school, the use of a diverse field experience may aide in the contribution of students receiving a different perspective from what they are used to. Educators and other educational professionals may consider using a diverse lens, such as Indigenous knowledge, and the use of place-based learning to help their students develop cultural competence.

**Limitations**

Like with most research, there are notable limitations with the current study. First, the study had a relatively small sample size and comes only from two sixth-grade classes in northern Utah. Therefore, findings may not be generalized to the general population. In addition to the small sample size, the current study also did not have a control group to compare to the students who went on the field experience. While a repeated-measures ANOVA means that each student will be their own control (Singh et al., 2013), it does not address maturation, practice effect, and other threats to validity. Another limitation is retest effects with the measures. While retesting is standard in research, it is indicated that results improve upon retesting due to familiarity (Arendasy & Sommer, 2017). There is a significant chance student may be familiar with the test since they have taken the same measure. In addition, since the psychological scales are self-reported, social desirability bias, or presenting oneself in the best way possible, is also a threat to internal validity.
Lastly, data collection was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there were no in-person classes during the months of March through the end of the school semester in June. Timepoint 3 measures were electronically distributed and thus, students could not ask questions about items while completing the survey during the third timepoint. In addition, reports on some of the measures most likely did not change because students no longer had social interactions with one another. For instance, the YoDA examines youth diversity acceptance and has the students report on statements such as “I eat lunch with people from different races and cultures than mine.” Reports on this statement may not have been applicable due to social distancing protocols and schools being closed for students to report their experience during this time period. Similarly, measures such as the YoDA may have not been applicable to the students since most of their class identified as White.

**Conclusion**

This study examined the development of cultural competence in sixth-grade students through Indigenous knowledge lessons and a diverse field experience. The study found that perspective taking increased over the school year in the sixth-grade students. While no other measures were significant, the current study still brings awareness to developing cultural competence of youth. There is a need for attention on cultural competence in primary education and targeted lessons and curriculum can make that impact on one’s own culture. Following this study, future research should continue to explore building cultural competence among youth in an effective manner and in a school setting. This includes building cultural competence with youth without a field experience as most students or schools may not have funding to participate.
References

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Interpersonal Reactivity Index – Perspective Taking Scale
Interpersonal Reactivity Index – Perspective Taking Scale

**Directions:** Circle the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the “other guy’s” point of view.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I try to look at everybody’s side of disagreement before I make a decision.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

If I’m sure I’m right about something, I don’t waste much time listening to other people’s arguments.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

When I’m upset at someone, I usually try to “put myself in his shoes” for a while.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree
APPENDIX B

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure
**Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure:**

**Directions:** Circle the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree
I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

(4) Strongly agree    (3) Agree    (2) Disagree    (1) Strongly disagree
APPENDIX C

Youth Diversity Acceptance Scale
Youth Diversity Acceptance Scale

**Directions:** Circle the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

I have contact with people (outside my family) who speak more than one language.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I spend time with people from different ethnic backgrounds.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

During my free time, I join in activities that allow me to meet new people.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I have friends whose backgrounds (ability, race, culture, sexual orientation, etc.) are different from mine.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I make a special effort to make new students with backgrounds different from mine feel welcome.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I eat lunch with people from different races and cultures than mine.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree
APPENDIX D

AVODIANCE AND FUSION QUESTIONNAIRE
Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire

**Directions:** Circle the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

My life won’t be good until I feel happy.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

My thoughts and feelings mess up my life.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

The bad things I think about myself must be true.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I don’t try out new things if I’m afraid of messing up.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I do all I can to make sure I don’t look dumb in front of other people.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

If my hear beats fast, there must be something wring with me.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I push away thoughts and feelings that I don’t like.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I stop doing things that are important to me whenever I feel bad.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I do worse in school when I have thoughts that make me feel sad.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I say things to make me sound cool.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I am afraid of my feelings.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I can’t be a good friend when I feel upset.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree
APPENDIX E

BASIC EMPATHY SCALE
Basic Empathy Scale

**Directions:** Circle the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

My friend’s emotions don’t affect me much.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

After being with a friend who is sad about something, I usually feel sad.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I get frightened when I watch characters in a good scary movie.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I get caught up in other people’s feelings easily.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I don’t become sad when I see other people crying.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

Other people’s feelings don’t bother me at all.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I often become sad when watching sad things on TV or in films.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

Seeing a person who has been angered has no effect on my feelings.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I tend to feel scared when I am with friends who are afraid.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I often get swept up in my friend’s feelings.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

My friend’s unhappiness doesn’t make me feel anything.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree

I can understand my friend’s happiness when s/he does well at something.

(4) Strongly agree  (3) Agree  (2) Disagree  (1) Strongly disagree
When someone is feeling ‘down’ I can usually understand how s/he feels.
(4) Strongly agree     (3) Agree     (2) Disagree     (1) Strongly disagree

I can often understand how people are feeling even before they tell me.
(4) Strongly agree     (3) Agree     (2) Disagree     (1) Strongly disagree

I can usually figure out when people are cheerful.
(4) Strongly agree     (3) Agree     (2) Disagree     (1) Strongly disagree

I can usually realize quickly when a friend is angry.
(4) Strongly agree     (3) Agree     (2) Disagree     (1) Strongly disagree

I am not usually aware of my friend’s feelings.
(4) Strongly agree     (3) Agree     (2) Disagree     (1) Strongly disagree

I have trouble figuring out when my friends are happy.
(4) Strongly agree     (3) Agree     (2) Disagree     (1) Strongly disagree