TEACHING KIDS TO CARE: A NEEDS-BASED INTERVENTION TO INCREASE ETHICAL SENSITIVITY IN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Character education programming is gaining popularity in America’s schools as one possible way to raise an intelligent and caring generation of students. However, many schools fail to allocate time, money, and resources to such initiatives. The present study examined the impact of an ethical sensitivity intervention in a religiously affiliated independent school. A self-report Likert scale and analytic rubric were used to measure development of different sub-skills of ethical sensitivity in fourth and fifth grade students \( (N = 25) \) before and after the intervention over a two-month period. Results suggest that degree of ethical sensitivity increased over the course of the intervention. More specifically, significant growth was noted in students’ abilities to read and express emotion and control social bias, while not as much growth was detected in perspective-taking skills. In addition, written communication skills developed more over the course of the intervention than oral communication. Implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: character education, ethical sensitivity, ethical development, emotion, perspective, bias, communication
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DEDICATION

To my husband, Josh: An idea is shared in the Torah that not even a blade of grass would grow were it not for its own special angel hovering over it, whispering “Grow! – Grow!” You are my own special angel. I aspire to be yours.
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CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Problem of Practice

Many American schools today prioritize character development in their efforts to educate an intelligent and caring generation of students (Ohler, 2012). At a religiously affiliated independent school (RAIS) in Baltimore, Maryland that serves students in grades Pre-K – 5, the board and administration determined that development of ethical sensitivity, an awareness of how one’s actions affect others (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009), should be a foundational tenet of the school mission. RAIS’s mission statement contains the phrase “[w]e aim to produce ethically sensitive young men and women.” However, no time, money, or resources have been allocated to ensure that students develop the ability to understand and address ethical issues. There is, therefore, a discrepancy between the RAIS’s mission statement and what is currently being implemented.

Theoretical Background

Numerous tests that measure ethical sensitivity have been developed, though most pertain to practice in the professions or to cultural and gender intolerance, and are not easily adapted for a classroom setting (Bebeau, Rest, & Yamoor, 1985; Brabeck et al., 2000). Narvaez and Endicott (2009) saw the need to define ethical sensitivity in a manner that was relevant, appropriate, and more generally applicable. Based on their research, they identified seven skills that appear to be closely associated with ethical sensitivity: (a) reading and expressing emotion; (b) taking the perspective of others; (c) connecting to others; (d) responding to diversity; (e) controlling social bias; (f) interpreting situations; and (g) communicating well (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). When students were given the
opportunity to develop these social skills, they were better equipped to connect positively with others (Horner, R. H., & McIntosh, 2016). Such development is central to ethical thinking (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009).

**Theoretical Rationale for the Study**

Ethical development is necessary for positive social interactions, which, in turn, promote the common good and benefit society as a whole (Staub, 2013). Ethical sensitivity develops upon interacting with others in a social and cultural environment (Piaget, 1932; Kohlberg, 1971; Vygotsky, 1978). Ethical sensitivity is also the first of four sequential components of ethical behavior, laying the foundation for subsequent development in ethical judgement, ethical motivation, and eventually ethical action (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999).

If development of ethical sensitivity is a first and necessary step in the sequence leading to ethical action, education oriented towards this goal cannot remain part of schools’ hidden curricula (Lapsley, Holter, & Narvaez, 2013). It must be explicitly taught utilizing the best available evidence-based practices (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004).

**Empirical Rationale for the Study**

Seventy-seven RAIS stakeholders and decision makers (parents, teachers, administrators and board members) responded to a questionnaire aiming to determine the need and rationale for an ethical sensitivity intervention (ESI). Additionally, one member of the administrative team and three teachers engaged in semi-structured interviews. Even though the majority of the questionnaire respondents and interviewees noted only minor degrees of unethical conduct among the students, they expressed the need for explicit
ethical sensitivity training for the students because (a) it is in the school’s mission statement; (b) it aligns with religious values; and (c) it is important for maintaining positive school culture. Additionally, the overwhelming majority of respondents and interviewees felt that, regardless of whether or not the students exhibited unethical conduct, it was important that they further develop ethical sensitivity.

While the reported instances of misbehavior at RAIS may not seem extreme, it is incumbent on educators to be aware of possible problems that can result from ethical insensitivity. The more pressing issue identified at RAIS, from the needs assessment survey and semi-structured interviews I conducted, was that (1) members of the RAIS community believe that skills supporting ethical sensitivity should be developed in the students, and (2) many stakeholders perceive that teaching of ethical sensitivity is not a part of the current curriculum.

If this element of education is missing at RAIS, then the school is failing to live up to its mission. While this disconnect potentially threatens RAIS’s good standing with existing stakeholders, recent studies suggest it is the students and future society who suffer the consequences. Multiple research findings indicate that significant improvements are noted in students’ emotional and social skills, behavior, attitudes, and academic performance when ethical sensitivity is developed (Dahlberg & Moss, 2004; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2014; Noddings, 2013).

**Potential Solution**

Four of the seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) were used as a framework to develop the ESI at RAIS. The first three were a) reading and expressing emotion (REE); b) taking the perspective of others
(TPO); and c) controlling social bias (CSB). Each was developed through a corresponding unit in the intervention. Communicating well (CW), the fourth sub-skill, was embedded within each of the three units.

The ESI utilized research-based methods such as analyzing photographs and video clips, cooperative learning opportunities, and class discussion. The decision to utilize or avoid other researchers’ methods was partially based on the perceived strengths, weaknesses, and efficacy of such interventions as applied to RAIS. Other considerations included access to resources, relevance to the RAIS’s context and population, and time constraints of the study.

**Description of the Process of Implementation**

The research question that aimed to assess this intervention asked: To what extent does participation in the ESI lead to increased student ethical sensitivity as measured by the Ethical Sensitivity Scale (ESS; Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012) and the Communicating Well Rubric (CWR)? My hypothesis was that students would score higher on the ESS and CWR upon completion of the ESI.

Twenty-five fourth and fifth grade students participated in this study. The students, researcher, and research assistants met for eight one-hour sessions over the course of two months.

In an effort to develop the ability to read and express emotion (REE), in the first unit students engaged in group discussion while analyzing film clips that portrayed fear, anger, and sadness (Blasco et al., 2011; Woelders, 2007).

In an effort to develop the ability to take others’ perspectives (TPO), in the second unit students engaged in role-playing and cooperative learning opportunities (Tsay &
Brady, 2012; Turiel, 1983), by playing a game called *Should I or Shouldn’t I?* The object of the game was to become aware of one’s own thoughts and behaviors and those of others, in various situations.

In the third unit intended to explore controlling social bias (CSB), students engaged in group discussion while analyzing photographs that depicted social differences the students were likely to encounter on a daily basis: different kinds of disabilities, religions, and socioeconomic statuses.

Opportunities to demonstrate communication skills (CW) were embedded within each of the three sub-skill units. Students demonstrated ability to communicate orally (CWO) when speaking in small groups and in a whole-class setting. Students demonstrated ability to communicate using written language (CWW) through written responses to prompts at the conclusion of every session.

**Results and Observations**

Quantitative and qualitative data indicated an increase in students’ scores on the ESS and CWR, which suggests that the degree of ethical sensitivity increased after engaging in the ESI. Further investigation of skill-specific sub-sections of the ESS revealed significant increases in the REE and CSB sub-skills, but not in the TPO. Additionally, the ESI may have improved students’ abilities to communicate using written language, but not oral language.

It is possible that these effects vary with age and gender. Before participating in this study, females were significantly better able to communicate through written communication (CWW) than their male counterparts. After participating in this study,
fifth grade students perceived their own ability to take others’ perspectives (TPO) as significantly higher than their fourth grade counterparts.

This study provided evidence that, given appropriate time and resources, ethical sensitivity interventions have the potential to help fourth and fifth grade students develop ethical sensitivity in a religiously-affiliated school setting. According to Rest’s (1983) Four Component Model ethical sensitivity is a necessary condition for development of ethical judgment, ethical motivation, and finally ethical action. Well-designed ethical sensitivity programs and interventions might truly be able to teach kids to care.

**Implications**

An original ethical sensitivity intervention, based on research-based methods developed in comparable settings, was designed and applied for the first time at RAIS with a group of fourth and fifth graders. Constraints on the design and implementation were discussed. Limitations of the study design, instrumentation, and data analysis were identified, and recommendations for improvement were offered for those variables that can be controlled. It was concluded that given the interest in character education in schools across America, there is room for utilization of the ESI at other religiously affiliated independent schools and other schools committed to raising ethical sensitivity of their students. Future research possibilities in ethical sensitivity were also identified.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Relevance of Ethical Sensitivity

Today’s societies often grapple with how to integrate and better understand the fundamental character of the rational versus the ethical nature of man (Lickona & Davidson, 2005). However, in an age of increasing crime, corruption, materialism, and social isolation, the ethics that have served to hold society together have become fragmented and fragile. According to Rothstein and Uslaner (2005) it is within this context of ethical decline that a return to intentional character education of youth and adolescents becomes critical.

Character education, a movement that is mandated or encouraged in most U.S. states, supports students’ social, emotional, and ethical development in an effort to make school and the greater community a place where all feel comfortable and safe (Damon, 2013; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2014). It aims to teach children how to make wise decisions and act on them, which educational experts have deemed as integral to success both in and out of school (Lockwood, 2015). The majority of schools in America are facing the need for character education as they respond to an increase in negative childhood behavior such as bullying and school violence (Damon, 2013). Schools are implementing character education in an effort to teach universal values that create more academically successful students and, in time, more socially productive citizens (Lockwood, 2015). As part of the program, teachers cultivate citizenship and civic engagement in students, among other traits (Narvaez, 2006; see Figure 1).
Several researchers in the field agree with Rothstein and Uslaner (2005) that there is a critical need for character education, which includes but is not limited to ethical sensitivity development (Durkheim, 2012; Freeman, 2014; Noddings, 2013; Thompson & Pumpa; 2011). Not everyone feels this way, however. Most teachers feel that the primary responsibility for building character rests within the home (Mathison, 1999).

Despite disagreement between researchers and practitioners as to where the responsibility lies, most agree on the defining characteristics of ethical sensitivity. Ethical sensitivity, a component of character education, includes the sympathetic interpretation of a situation in determining what actions to take and what outcomes are likely to follow (Callahan, 1980; Chan & Leung, 2006; Clarkeburn, 2002; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Rest, 1983). Another important aspect of ethical sensitivity is awareness of all people who may be affected by a given circumstance, and an understanding of how they might be affected (Callahan, 1980; Chan & Leung, 2006; Clarkeburn, 2002; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Rest, 1983).

Crucial to awareness of others is empathy, a component of one’s emotional make up that can be defined as the ability to identify and appreciate emotions that are being experienced by others (Baron-Cohen, 2012). Baron-Cohen (2012) found that when youth and adolescents lack empathy, the possibility of social incompetence and cruelty towards others emerges. Additionally, Christle et al. (2010) found that an inability to connect with others and appropriately communicate are strongly related to academic failure, suspension, and school drop-out at elementary, middle, and high-school levels. Finally, a strong correlation is noted between emotional intelligence and ethical sensitivity (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009; Nucci, Krettenauer, & Narvaez, 2008).
Development of Ethical Sensitivity in Individuals

Understanding the factors that contribute to the development of ethical sensitivity is crucial if we are to attempt to increase it in the student population.

Research in the emerging and multidimensional field of neuroethics helps us understand why some people develop ethical sensitivity to a greater degree or lesser degree (Gray & Thompson, 2004; Hauser, 2006; Levy, 2007; Narvaez, 2014). People’s self-perception guides their sensitivity to potential ethical dilemmas as well as their eventual behavior in social situations; however, they also often consider the expected reactions of others (Ugazio, Majdandzic, & Lamm, 2014).

Many neuroscientists argue that ethical sensitivity and ability to behave in an ethical manner have neurobiological roots, and that neurobiological sensitivity is directly related to emotional development (Hauser, 2006; Levy, 2007; Narvaez, 2014). Such development has its foundations early in life. Freud (1925) first heightened our consciousness to the impact of early childhood experiences, and Narvaez (2014) expressed the value of such experiences that can powerfully shape mental and moral landscapes. Hardiman (2012) specifically argued that emotion and cognition, once thought to be separate systems, interact in several important ways. For example, emotional arousal, both positive and negative, affects memory, attention, and higher-order thinking. A combination of environmental and neurobiological factors contributes to one’s development of ethical sensitivity (Gray & Thompson, 2004; Narvaez, 2014). Therefore, the connection between morality and affective neuroscience helps to explain individual differences in ethical sensitivity development.
Ethical Sensitivity Theoretical Framework

In research, the terms moral and ethical are often used interchangeably (Bebeau, 2002; Brabeck, 2016; Noddings, 2013; Vaughn, 2015). Ethical sensitivity is a concept within the field of moral psychology (Rest, 1983). The term moral development is used interchangeably with ethical development, and ethical sensitivity is a construct within ethical development (Rest, 1983; see Figure 1).

Piaget (1932) was the first to research children’s understanding of rules, moral responsibility and justice, in addition to his vast contributions to cognitive theory in general. Lawrence Kohlberg (1971) built on Piaget’s (1932) ideas and developed the field of descriptive ethics. He found that children’s reasoning regarding rules, moral responsibility and justice usually evolve as they get older. Younger children tend to follow an absolute rule structure established by an authority figure, which ultimately evolves into a more fluid rule structure adopted by adults in which motivation behind an action is taken into consideration. Kohlberg (1971) used Piaget’s (1932) story-telling technique to gauge an individual’s current standing and progression within the six Stages of Moral Development that he identified (Obedience and Punishment, Individualism and Exchange, Good Interpersonal Relationships, Maintaining the Social Order, Social Contract and Individual Rights, and Universal Principles).

Rest (1983) also conceptualized moral judgement through a lens emphasizing cognition. He built upon Kohlberg’s (1971) research and focused on the individual’s attempt to make sense of his/her own social experience (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 2000). Rest developed the Four Component Model of moral development and
the Defining Issues Test, an attempt to provide an objective measure of moral development (Rest, 1983).

According to Rest’s (1983) Four Component Model, ethical sensitivity is the first of four components of ethical behavior. It lays the foundation for subsequent development in the other three: ethical judgment, ethical motivation, and eventually ethical action (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999).

Rest (1983) maintained that these four components must be developed in order for a person to behave in a morally mature manner. He used these components to develop the Four Component Model, an empirically-derived process model describing the psychological processes that must take place for ethical behavior to ensue (Narvaez, Bock, Endicott, & Lies, 2004). With proper implementation, this model encourages people to identify concerns surrounding ethical behavior, draw thoughtful conclusions, take action, and maintain good moral standing. The Four Component Model explicitly recognizes ethical sensitivity as a foundation for character education.
Influenced by Rest (1983), Narvaez and Endicott (2009) saw the need to operationalize the ethical sensitivity construct in a manner that was relevant, appropriate, and applicable to all. Upon conducting an extensive literature review, they identified seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity intended to serve as a sampling of possibilities: (a) reading and expressing emotion; (b) taking the perspective of others; (c) connecting to others; (d) responding to diversity; (e) controlling social bias; (f) interpreting situations; and (g) communicating well (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). These seven sub-skills were identified and analyzed with the understanding that ethical sensitivity can be improved with training and experience (Treviño, Weaver & Reynolds, 2006). A final crucial component is the sharing of social experiences, which promotes development of empathy, connection, and communication conducive to ethical thinking (Noddings,
The constructivist premise that learning is an active process, whereby individuals construct understanding by integrating new information into what they already know, lays the foundation for the idea that ethical sensitivity can be taught. Social experiences may occur in safe educational environments where students are encouraged to communicate their moral views to others in a way that fosters sensitivity to potential social dilemmas (Michelson, Sugai, Wood, & Kazdin, 2013).

The research that trickled down from Piaget (1932) to Kohlberg (1971) to Rest (1983) to Narvaez and Endicott (2009) provided the framework for the development of the provisional general measure of ethical sensitivity used in the present study. Key components of each theory are illustrated and further explained throughout this chapter.

**Constructivism**

Piaget was the first child psychologist to suggest a theory of ethical development with constructivist implications (Nucci & Turiel, 2009). According to Piaget, development emerges from action, and people create and reconstruct their understanding of the world as a result of multiple interactions with their surroundings. Constructivists believe that what human beings know comes from their own perception of their experiences (Neo & Neo, 2009).

Kohlberg, an American psychologist, also viewed ethical sensitivity through a constructivist lens and believed that proper ethical standing cannot be impressed upon by others, but instead must be developed from within (Halverson, 2004). Constructivists believe that learners do not acquire meaning; instead, they create their own interpretations based on their relationship with a given experience (Neo & Neo, 2009).
Social Constructivism

Like Piaget (1932), Vygotsky (1978) believed that social interactions deeply influence thought and action (McGlonn-Nelson, 2005). His social constructivist theory proposed that students improve their ethical reasoning capabilities as a result of their interactions with others. Vygotsky (1978) explained that social conversation is essential for individual development, to the extent that students are capable of solving problems with the support of others (McGlonn-Nelson, 2005).

Vygotsky (1978), like Piaget (1932), believed that cultural development first appears on the social level, followed by development on the individual level. The social constructivist view of ethical reasoning is that if students are to develop a disposition toward ethical reasoning, i.e., ethical sensitivity, they must engage and interact with their surroundings (Ernest, 2010; Scheer, Noweski & Meinel, 2012). Such surroundings include school, home, and the larger community.

Social Cognitive Theory

While social constructivist theory focuses on external engagement and interaction in relation to ethical development, aspects of the social cognitive theory focus on internal self-regulation. Social cognitive theory was developed by Bandura (1977), who proposed that ethical sensitivity and reasoning are linked to ethical action. He noted that when people choose to act in a non-ethical manner, they must disengage their self-regulating efficacy for ethical conduct, and cognitively restructure their thoughts and actions. He noted a specific cognitive process that people go through in order to justify performing an inhumane act: they first modify their word choice, then disregard social standards, ignore
their personal responsibility, internally diminish the harmful effects of their actions, and finally dehumanize their victim(s).

When people act in an ethical manner, however, they consciously choose to engage their ability to self-regulate. They are mindful of social standards and are careful to take responsibility for their words and actions. They remember that the people they interact with also have wants, needs, and feelings. This process of engagement and disengagement is one of many aspects of ethical sensitivity addressed within social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2002).

The common theme running throughout the theories and philosophies of Piaget (1932), Kohlberg (1971), and Vygotsky (1978) is social interaction. All three theorists suggest, using slightly different language, that ethical sensitivity is developed as a result of one’s interactions with one’s social and cultural environment.

**Facets of Ethical Sensitivity**

This investigation is conducted within the framework of seven sub-skills identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) which, together, promote the development of ethical sensitivity. In an effort to gain a deep understanding of how ethical sensitivity is best developed, Narvaez and Endicott (2009) identified seven sub-skills that combine to include a subtle interaction between both conscious and subconscious processing. They conducted an extensive literature review on ethical sensitivity and identified seven sub-skills that appeared most often. It is important to note, however, that the seven sub-skills are not absolute; the researchers allowed for future inclusion of additional skills. The seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) are thus
intended to be a sampling of possibilities that are associated with, or often present in, people with a high level of ethical sensitivity (Narvaez, Bock, Endicott, & Lies, 2004).

The Narvaez and Endicott framework (2009) recognizes the importance of emotional intelligence, understanding someone else’s point of view, and understanding one’s relationship with other people as critical to forming ethical opinions. Additionally, the model deems important an ability to control tendencies to judge or devalue members of groups different from one’s own, and an ability to understand the structure and dynamics of a particular social situation. Finally, connected to all of these is the notion that attaining proficiency in these skills is partially dependent on developing proficiency in verbal and non-verbal communication skills. This follows from social constructivist theory.

The individual sub-skills were defined and named by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) as: (a) reading and expressing emotion; (b) taking the perspective of others; (c) connecting to others; (d) responding to diversity; (e) controlling social bias; (f) interpreting situations; and (g) communicating well. Each sub-skill is important for the development of ethical sensitivity and can be considered independently of each other. Several of these were deemed appropriate to include in the present study and are henceforth referred to using the Narvaez and Endicott’s (2009) terminology.

While this selection of skills informs the design of my study, the sub-skills that Narvaez and Endicott (2009) claim are important for ethical sensitivity development are not unique to their model. Other researchers have identified additional skills that may be important for ethical sensitivity development. They, however, can be viewed as near equivalents to or even subcategories of the seven sub-skills identified by Narvaez and
Endicott (2009). For example, Noddings (2013) identified “caring” as an important manifestation of ethical sensitivity, while Narvaez and Endicott (2009) identified “connecting to others”. Both are expressions of ethical sensitivity that involve expanding the sense of self-concern to include others. In fact, when describing this sub-skill, Narvaez and Endicott (2009) stated that when people connect to others, they make decisions that reflect care and concern for others.

Rest (1983) also described ethical sensitivity to include several sub-skills. He believed that perception, emotional response, and the consideration of how others are affected in various social conflicts combine to make up ethical sensitivity (Rest, 1983). Clarkeburn (2002) also acknowledged several of the sub-skills identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) as operational components of ethical sensitivity. She argued that ethical sensitivity is a combination of one’s ability to perceive a moral point of view, foresee moral consequences of actions, and recognize the value of moral aspects in various situations (Callahan, 1980; Clarkeburn, 2002).

Chan and Leung (2006) referenced some of the sub-skills identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) in their description of ethical sensitivity. They argued that a person is considered ethically sensitive when they have an awareness of how their actions affect others (Chan & Leung, 2006). This involves imagining possible scenarios, understanding possible consequences, empathizing, role-taking, and evaluating alternative action (Chan & Leung, 2006).

Finally, several, if not all, of the sub-skills of ethical sensitivity identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) are noted in the descriptions of ethical sensitivity by several
other researchers in the field (Callahan, 1980; Chan & Leung, 2006; Clarkeburn, 2002; Rest, 1983).

Review of a multitude of surveys, reports, and research findings indicate that significant improvements are noted in students’ emotional and social skills, behavior, attitudes, and academic performance when ethical sensitivity is developed (Narvaez, 2001; Narvaez, 2005; Narvaez, 2006; Narvaez, 2013; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Narvaez & Hill, 2010; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2014; Narvaez & Vaydich, 2008).

However, when ethical sensitivity is not developed among youth and adolescents, serious consequences are noted on an individual level as well as on a communal level. On an individual basis, deliberate self-harm, cruelty towards others, and academic failure have been reported (Baron-Cohen, 2012; Christle et al., 2010; Gratz & Roemer, 2006). On a community level, social disharmony may ensue when people choose to ignore each other when in need and when people fail to take responsibility for their actions. These behaviors and occurrences are complex and are likely a consequence of multiple factors, one of which may be lack of ethical sensitivity. While a strong association likely exists between such occurrences and lack of ethical sensitivity, these are not the object of the present study.

**Reading and Expressing Emotion**

Reading and expressing emotion is one of the seven sub-skills identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009). Understanding emotions involves recognizing one’s own feelings as well as others’. Learning when and how to appropriately express emotion or control its expression are important in getting along well with others (Narvaez, 2013; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). Lack of this ability might be observed in a student who
cannot control angry outbursts or in one who laughs at inappropriate times. Also important is an individual’s ability to detect signs of sadness, fear, or anger in a friend or colleague.

Negative consequences have been noted when youth and adolescents fail to acquire basic emotional intelligence. Gottman (2011) and Striegel-Moore, Ruth, and Bulik (2007) discovered that girls who are unable to differentiate between feelings of anxiety and hunger are at high risk for eating disorders. For all youth and teenagers, failure to learn how to express anxiety and depression increases the probability of drug or alcohol abuse (Gottman, 2011; Johnston, 2010). In the absence of proactive interventions in the school setting that focus on developing emotional intelligence, such consequences may become reality.

The ability to read and express emotion influences ethical decision making as well as the development and direction of personal and professional relationships (Connelly, 1990). Gaudine and Thorne (2001) analyzed and integrated research findings to develop a model that illustrates how emotion affects ethical decision-making. It suggests that individuals who are better able to read and express emotion resolve ethical dilemmas in a more effective and efficient manner than those less able to do so. Such ability requires a certain degree of awareness of self and others, as does the ability to see a social situation from another’s point of view as discussed in the following section, Taking the Perspective of Others.

**Taking the Perspectives of Others**

When taking another’s perspective, one suspends one’s own outlook in an effort to understand a situation as someone else might (Epley & Caruso, 2008; Moore, 2005).
Perspective-taking is another of the seven sub-skills identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009), and involves the realization of various viewpoints (Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, & White, 2008). This process has a positive effect on social interactions for many reasons. It facilitates exchanges between people who identify with different social groups (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Todd, Bodenhausen, & Galinsky, 2012; Wang, Tai, Ku, & Galinsky, 2014). Also, taking another outlook helps to develop compassion and tolerance, and encourages one to make changes to help others (Narvaez, 2013; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009).

Cojuharenco & Sguera (2014) conducted a study that examined the relationship between ethical sensitivity and perspective-taking. They found that the more one developed perspective-taking ability, the more empathic concern they had for others and the less acceptable they viewed lying to be.

The converse also applies. Children with behavioral problems exhibit a far greater inability to take others’ perspectives than children without behavioral problems (Chadler, 1973). A strong correlation exists between lack of perspective-taking ability and youth delinquency (Burack et al., 2006). Furthermore, Chadler (1973) found that young delinquent males have the perspective-taking competency of law-abiding children practically half their age.

Narvaez and Endicott (2009) noted a direct relationship between ability to take others’ perspectives and ethical sensitivity development. As ability to take others’ perspectives declines, degree of ethical sensitivity also declines. This logic also applies to the relationship between the other sub-skills and ethical sensitivity.
Connecting to Others

Connecting to others involves expressing concern towards other people as well as a sense of involvement with others and attachment to others, both globally and locally. People’s actions reflect their feelings. When two people positively connect with each other on a mental and social basis, their actions reflect care, concern, and a mutual understanding of a relationship between them (Narvaez, 2006; Narvaez, 2013; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009).

School connectedness is the students’ belief that adults and peers in the school care about them and their learning (Klem & Connell, 2004). Students who experience school connectedness enjoy school, feel they belong, understand the value of education, have friends and acquaintances at school, and are able to participate in extracurricular activities if they so choose (Blum, 2005). By high school, however, as many as 40 to 60 percent of students, regardless of socioeconomic status, are chronically disconnected from school (Klem & Connell, 2004). It would be logical to assume that one reason for this lack of connectedness is the absence of caring and supportive interpersonal relationships in the school setting.

This statistic suggests that approximately half of all high school students feel that adults and peers do not care about them or their learning. This is unfortunate because research suggests that teenagers who do feel connected to their schools are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior (Klem & Connell, 2004). Furthermore, when students feel connected with their school, their attendance improves significantly and they perform considerably better academically. In addition to feeling connected to a particular community, today’s world also demands that students develop proficiency in
understanding and accepting diversity in the school community, the broader society, and even within their own families.

**Responding to Diversity**

Responding to diversity, the fourth of seven sub-skills identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009), is the ability to understand how cultural groups differ and how such differences can potentially lead to misunderstandings. It is also the understanding that a culture is a system of shared values, behaviors, and expectations. Examples are “business cultures,” “school cultures,” and “soccer cultures.” Students who learn how to live in a culturally diverse fashion come to accept and engage with a variety of cultures in a positive way. (Narvaez, 2006; Narvaez, 2013; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Nieto, 1992).

When students lack the ability to respond to diversity in a positive way, they lack the ability to understand, empathize, and accept people from a variety of cultures (DeWall & Baumeister, 2006). This lack of tolerance is usually manifested by students taking either an active or a passive stance towards students from other cultures.

If students take a passive stance, they might reject, ignore, or dismiss fellow students of other cultures (DeWall & Baumeister, 2006). This can create a social problem within a school because the students who are rejected may become hostile toward other students and are then less able to self-regulate their behavior, further alienating the students who failed to engage with them by passive disregard (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002; Buckley et al., 2004; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001; Twenge & Campbell, 2003).

When students take an active stance against members of different cultures, acts of prejudice and harassment can result, for example bullying (Devoe et al., 2004;
Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Research shows that bullying has serious long-term negative effects on all involved parties (Sanders & Phye, 2004; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Longitudinal studies have noted a strong association between juvenile bullying and adult mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse (Griffiths, Wolke, Page, & Horwood, 2006; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). All these harmful acts and negative effects could potentially be reduced if students were taught how to properly respond to diversity within the school setting.

**Controlling Social Bias**

Social bias is a preference or inclination that inhibits impartiality (Morris, 1969). The skill is tested when a coach picks athletes for a team, an employer chooses applicants for a position, or a teacher assigns grades for student projects. Unless checked, a natural tendency will be to favor those individuals who are most like oneself (Pope, Price, & Wolfers, 2013). While social bias can come in many forms anything biased is, by definition, one-sided (Rowland, Schwartz, Nedelec, & Beaver, 2012).

Controlling social bias is described by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) as an effort to refrain from thinking and/or acting in a prejudicial manner towards another individual or group of individuals. Controlling social bias requires one to recognize, appreciate, and actively counter prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination towards an individual or a group. Tolerance is one possible outcome that is promoted as a result of such actions. When people develop tolerance, they essentially strive to form fair and objective attitudes towards those whose opinions, practices, or ethnic origins differ from their own (Williams, 2013). Reevaluating actions and words, and reflecting on prejudice and factors leading to it, have been recognized as effective first steps in controlling social bias.
Successfully engaging students in such practices can promote a more courteous and open-minded society (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Tileagă, 2015).

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) youth are frequently victims of prejudice and social bias (Moradi, Van den Berg & Epting, 2006). Multiple worldwide studies have found that as a consequence of experiencing social bias against them, GLBT youth are at considerably higher risk for suicidal ideation and attempts than their heterosexual counterparts (Eisenberg & Resnick, 2006; Saewyc et al., 2008). A suggested reason for the direct relationship between GLBT youth and suicidality is the extreme social shame, discrimination, and harassment these youth experience.

African American students who identify as academically-oriented form another subculture, which experiences prejudice from others (Osborne & Walker, 2006; Perry & Steele, 2003). Osborne and Walker (2006) gathered data from a racially diverse inner-city high school in the Midwest USA, and found that studious African American students often suffer hostility from their peers simply because they strongly identify with intellect and academic ability. The negative effects often result in the withdrawal of these students from school. This outcome highlights the importance of providing a safe and understanding school social environment that aims to eliminate negative emotions and actions associated with stereotype bias.

Stereotype threat is the unconscious confirmation of a stereotype, which is why it is a negative self-fulfilling prophecy (Inzlicht, 2011). Stereotype threat can undermine intellectual performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995) and is a possible contributing factor to racial and gender gaps in academia. Victims of stereotype threat also include students of low socio-economic status (SES). Désert, Préaux and Jund (2009) conducted a study that
aimed to verify whether or not children of low SES are victims of stereotype threat in school settings. The results indicated that students as young as six believed that children from a higher SES are smarter than children from lower SES (Désert et al., 2009; Malecki, K., & Demaray, 2006). This form of stereotype threat is especially concerning given that Désert et al. (2009) noted declining performance on standardized intelligence tests among elementary-age students of lower SES after discussing their SES with them. This outcome suggests a negative self-fulfilling prophecy among students of lower SES (Désert et al., 2009; Sirin, 2005).

GLBT youth, African Americans who identify with academics, and students of low SES are just a few of the subcultures in schools that often experience social bias and stereotype threat. The consequences of such prejudice include but are not limited to suicide, withdrawal from school, and poor academic performance (Désert et al., 2009; Moradi et al., 2006; Osborne & Walker, 2006; Perry & Steele, 2003).

**Interpreting Situations**

The ability to refrain from thinking and acting in a prejudicial manner towards others requires a certain degree of mindfulness, as does the ability to think about alternative ways to respond to conflicts. Interpreting situations is central to both skills.

Social skills are generally regarded as a set of multifaceted interpersonal behaviors (Michelson et al., 2013). Such skills are interactive by nature and include effective and appropriate responses (Michelson, Sugai, Wood, & Kazdin, 1983). They are challenging to define because they include a variety of traits and behaviors (Merrell & Gimpel, 2014). The interpretation of social situations is the ability to understand and respond to other people’s traits and behaviors even though they may vary by culture.
In the Narvaez and Endicott framework (2009), interpreting social situations is an important step in problem-solving because it requires that people think about alternative ways to respond to conflicts. Before acting, they must consider multiple ways to behave, as well as possible consequences of their behavior. The ability to interpret conflict situations is not only beneficial in major problem solving, but is also valuable in responding to ordinary social disputes (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Siegal, 2013). For example, one can respond to teasing by ignoring or changing the subject. One can walk away from peers when upset to avoid hitting. One can also politely refuse requests of others. Lastly, one can express anger with nonaggressive words rather than with physical action or other expressions of aggression. These are just a few of the examples suggested by Merrell and Gimpel (2014).

Ability to interpret social situations is directly correlated with degree of ethical sensitivity. As Michelson et al. (2013) note, many investigations have consistently found a strong relationship between social competence in childhood and subsequent psychological functioning. While exceptions are always possible, it is generally understood that as one develops the ability to interpret social situations, there is simultaneous development of the ability to understand how one’s actions affect others, an important element of ethical sensitivity.

When students are unable to interpret situations properly, they are likely to fail to think about the consequences of their behavior before speaking or acting. A direct correlation is noted between such behavior and impulsivity, which carries many negative implications (Bekker, van de Meerendonk, & Mollerus, 2004; Eisenberg et al., 2009). Bekker et al. (2004) found that high impulsivity increased levels of emotional eating.
Another negative consequence is the lack of temperamental control (Eisenberg et al., 2009). Eisenberg et al. (2009) found that when impulsivity among youth and adolescents increased, temperamental control decreased. Emotional eating and a lack of temperamental control are two examples of consequences that youth could possibly experience when they lack the ability to appropriately interpret situations.

**Communicating Well**

All of the preceding sub-skills are developed in the context of being able to communicate in some form. Listening, speaking, writing, and/or non-verbal communication are the primary methods with which all skills, including the sub-skills of ethical sensitivity, are developed and maintained. Vygotsky (1978) proposed a theory of language based on social constructivism, which contends that children acquire knowledge and skill-sets as result of communicating with others.

Communicating well requires the ability to listen, speak, write, and non-verbally engage in conversation (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). The skills needed at any given time vary depending on the context of communication (private, small crowd, large crowd, colleagues, authority figures, guests) and cultural setting (gender, school/work/home; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Nippold, 2014).

Lind and Rarick (1994), who based their research on Rest’s Four-Component Model, argued that an individual who communicates well is more likely to be ethically sensitive. They reasoned that those who are able to comprehend and understand various nuances of different situations are able to identify possible ethical issues and understand that participants have rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, they argued that those who communicate well are able to foresee possible consequences of ethical choices.
Wood (2010) identified five abilities that aid in analyzing the importance of developing interpersonal communication abilities. They are related to the following sub-skills of communicative competence: (a) developing a range of skills; (b) adapting; (c) understanding others’ perspectives; (d) monitoring; and (e) effectiveness and ethics.

**Developing a range of skills.** There are a variety of ways to communicate depending on the circumstance, the setting, and the people (West & Turner, 2010). Soothing and compassionate communication used when comforting a friend is ineffective when haggling and negotiating for the best price on an antique item at a crowded open-air market. Likewise, a conversation with one’s supervisor would look and sound very different from a conversation with a young child. One must develop a range of communication skills so that effective communication can take place under many different circumstances (Hargie, 2010; Wood, 2010).

**Adapting.** Merely developing a range of communication skills does not indicate competence in effective communication unless one also understands how and when to use such communication (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). This, in part, refers to understanding the importance of timing. It is appropriate to discuss personal symptoms of a condition with one’s doctor during an office visit; however, such interaction may be considered inappropriate if one sees their doctor in public. Likewise, if one is having a conversation with a friend who is upset, it might not be the most appropriate time to make a critical remark (West & Turner, 2010).

**Understanding others’ perspectives.** Engaging in dual perspective means that one understands their own and others’ viewpoints (Wood, 2010). This is important because people who are unable to take others’ perspectives are self-centered and often
inconsiderate (Hargie, 2010). This sub-skill of communicative competence, as identified by Wood (2010), is consistent with taking the perspective of others, the sub-skill of ethical sensitivity identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009).

**Monitoring.** Monitoring is the ability to notice and control one’s own communication (Wood, 2010). When students do not monitor their communication, they may unintentionally offend others or regard themselves in an undesirable way. Some people have poorly developed monitoring skills in which they are slightly or completely unaware of how others perceive them. For these people, it is especially important to develop this sub-skill (Hargie, 2010).

**Effectiveness and ethics.** People who communicate in an effective and ethical manner respect themselves and others (Wood, 2010). They have the ability to agree to disagree when viewpoints collide, instead of dismissing the others’ feelings as mistaken or irrelevant. This sub-skill of communicative competence, as identified by Wood (2010), is consistent with controlling social bias and interpreting situations, sub-skills of ethical sensitivity identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009). All three skills aim to achieve the same goals of actively countering unfairness, and thinking consciously about alternative solutions in social conflict situations.

Effective communication and the five abilities it is based on (Wood, 2010) are common to most, if not all, of the sub-skills of ethical sensitivity identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009). Developing a range of skills, adapting, and monitoring, as identified by Wood (2010), are generally applicable concepts in the development of all of the sub-skills of ethical sensitivity. Developing a range of skills speaks to one’s ability to understand how to act in a variety of circumstances depending on the context; adapting
speaks to one’s ability to apply such knowledge; and monitoring speaks to one’s ability to reevaluate his/her behavior. Such communication abilities are not only pertinent, but beneficial when considering the development of ethical sensitivity within the context of the seven sub-skills as identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009).

**Conclusion**

This literature review examined historical and theoretical underpinnings of ethical sensitivity as they pertain to the present study, all the while begging the questions: What are the detriments of being ethically insensitive? Why is it a problem if youth and adolescents, specifically, do not develop ethical sensitivity? What are the consequences and various implications?

The absence of ethical sensitivity leads to social disharmony and social strife. It was suggested within a historical perspective that ethical sensitivity is a basis for sustaining a healthy social structure both within the educational system and within the community at large. It supports and benefits all involved parties in an effort to establish and maintain social harmony (Baron-Cohen, 2012; Christle et al., 2010; Gratz & Roemer, 2006).

The constructivist theory of ethical sensitivity referred to a construct where people develop their own understanding of the sub-skills based on perceptions of their experiences (Neo & Neo, 2009). The social constructivist theory supports the notion that students interact with and support each other in an effort to develop in their abilities as they relate to the seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity (McGlonn-Nelson, 2005). Furthermore, social cognitive theory, as developed by Bandura (1977) suggests that people can choose to engage or disengage their self-regulating efficacy for ethical
conduct. All three theories shed light on different aspects and ways of interpreting and acquiring ethical sensitivity.

This chapter also presented a framework on which the present study is based. Detailed descriptions of the seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity, as identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009), were discussed. They are: (a) reading and expressing emotion; (b) taking the perspective of others; (c) connecting to others; (d) responding to diversity; (e) controlling social bias; (f) interpreting situations; and (g) communicating well. These are key elements of the ability to be ethically sensitive, and were systematically examined either as apparent benefits or indistinct detriments. Narvaez and Endicott (2009) chose to identify these seven sub-skills because a common and universal way to measure ethical sensitivity was previously non-existent, and they proceeded to analyze field research in an effort to develop an accurate representation of ethical sensitivity.

The theory and background content detailed in this literature review allows for a better understanding of the benefits youth and adolescents may gain when ethical sensitivity and associated skills are cultivated, while recognizing the possible detriments that may accrue when these skills are not acquired.

In an effort to explore how to go about increasing ethical sensitivity among the students at RAIS, the subsequent chapters turn to a means of addressing that problem and focus on the development of an ethical sensitivity intervention designed for students in grades four and five that could practically be carried out in within a reasonable time frame. My aim is to align the results of the needs assessment with an effective solution and, finally, to discuss the implications of my results for the educational community beyond RAIS.
CHAPTER 3

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

In Chapter 2: Literature Review, a critical need for character education was described (Durkheim, 2012; Freeman, 2014; Noddings, 2013; Thompson & Pumba; 2011) as was the common theme of social interaction that ran throughout the theories and philosophies of Piaget (1932), Kohlberg (1971), Bandura (1977), Vygotsky (1978), and Rest (1983). Ethical development, a construct within character education, was detailed within the context of seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity, as identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009). These sub-skills were examined against the backdrop of what occurs when such skills are, and are not, developed within youth and adolescents.

When ethical sensitivity is developed within children, significant emotional, behavioral, social, and academic gains are noted (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). For this reason, schools all over the nation, both private and public, are eager to implement innovative character education initiatives.

The object of this study was RAIS, a religiously-affiliated independent school located in Baltimore City serving students in grades Pre-K – 5. RAIS also aspired to promote character education, including but not limited to the development of ethical behavior. RAIS’s implementation of character education focused on ethical sensitivity, expressed as a clear value in the RAIS mission statement, “[w]e aim to produce ethically sensitive young men and women”. However, no time, money, or resources were allocated in an effort to ensure that students develop such sensitivity. There were no specific areas of the curriculum where it was addressed. No assessment tools were being utilized to
determine whether or not, and to what degree, students were developing ethical sensitivity.

A mission statement serves a very important role for a private school. It helps to ensure that vision and practice are aligned. It also ensures that a standard is maintained, and encourages accountability (Bebell & Stemler, 2013). Curricula are created based on the components of the mission statement. If ethical sensitivity or character education is noted within a school’s mission statement, its administration must ensure that a corresponding curriculum is actualized (Boerema, 2006). Such actualization is a multi-dimensional process that requires, at a minimum, time, buy-in from stakeholders, professional development, and follow-up to ensure appropriate implementation. Actualization of such a curriculum could also potentially require additional funding and personnel depending on the unique needs of the students and the school.

In an effort to determine the need for an intervention aiming to implement RAIS’s mission, this chapter focuses on determining whether or not, and to what degree, ethical sensitivity was fostered within RAIS. To this end I conducted a mixed-methods needs assessment guided by three research questions, described below.

**Goals and Objectives**

The purpose of the needs assessment was to determine if students at RAIS were given the opportunity to develop ethical sensitivity and, if not, to what extent this represented a problem to be addressed. In addition to determining the extent of the problem, the needs assessment gathered data from the RAIS community regarding whether RAIS should commit itself to the development of ethical sensitivity, and if so, why. Administrators, teachers, parents, and board members responded to a cross-
sectional survey that helped to determine the need for, and the possible format of, a school-wide ethical sensitivity intervention. All respondents answered the same survey.

Research Questions

RQ1: Why is producing ethically sensitive young men and women important at RAIS?

RQ2: How are teachers at RAIS supporting the mission to produce ethically sensitive young men and women?

RQ3: How are teachers assessing the development of ethical sensitivity in young men and women in their classrooms?

Methodology

Study Respondents

All respondents were directly affiliated with RAIS. They were teachers, administrators, board members, and parents of students. The majority of the respondents were of middle or high socioeconomic status. All respondents were Caucasian.

My role at RAIS was unique and complex because I wore many hats at RAIS. I, along with my husband, was one of the original co-founders. We were eager to establish a school that our young children could attend, reflecting our educational philosophy and religious beliefs. I served on the board during the planning stages of the school’s inception, and resigned from the board when I accepted a position as a teacher to avoid the inherent conflict of interest. I taught fifth grade at RAIS for the first several years of the school’s existence. At the time of this study I was a parent of RAIS students. It is appropriate to assume that during the course of this study I was personally invested in
RAIS, and that I desired to see the school succeed and thrive for the sake of my children’s education as well as for other children attending the school.

Operationalization of the Problem

A concept like ethical sensitivity is fairly abstract and can be difficult to define operationally. For the purposes of the present study ethical sensitivity was defined as the empathic interpretation of a situation requiring determination of who is involved, what actions to take, and what possible reactions and outcomes might ensue (Narvaez, 2006; Narvaez, 2013; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Sparks & Hunt, 1998).

The three research questions, along with the seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009), (a) reading and expressing emotion; (b) taking the perspective of others; (c) connecting to others; (d) responding to diversity; (e) controlling social bias; (f) interpreting situations; and (g) communicating well, serve as a framework for the questions that were asked in the needs assessment survey.

As shown in Table 1, parts of the needs assessment survey (Q2) were designed to assess the degree to which the respondents considered each of the seven sub-skills to be important elements of the education at RAIS.

Table 1
The Needs Assessment Survey

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<th>Questions</th>
<th>Possible Answers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1. I am a:</td>
<td>• Parent&lt;br&gt;• Teacher&lt;br&gt;• Administrator&lt;br&gt;• Board Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2. RAIS is responsible for actively assessing the following skills among its students:</td>
<td>• Understanding Emotional Expression&lt;br&gt;• Taking the Perspective of Others&lt;br&gt;• Connecting to Others&lt;br&gt;• Responding to Diversity</td>
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### Questions

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<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Possible Answers</th>
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</table>
| **Q3. Teachers at RAIS are actively developing the following skills among students:** | - Understanding Emotional Expression  
- Taking the Perspective of Others  
- Connecting to Others  
- Responding to Diversity  
- Controlling Social Bias  
- Interpreting Situations  
- Communicating Well |
| **Q4. RAIS’s commitment to developing ethical sensitivity is illustrated by:** | - Training faculty to run ethical sensitivity programming  
- Funding ethical sensitivity programming  
- Allotting time in the school day for ethical sensitivity programming  
- Assessing the need for ethical sensitivity programming  
- Assessing the interest for ethical sensitivity programming |
| **Q5. It is important for RAIS to take an active stance in the development of ethical sensitivity within our students because:** | - Our students exhibit passive minor unethical conduct (i.e. not picking up litter)  
- Our students exhibit severe unethical conduct (i.e. bullying, lying, stealing)  
- Our students don’t necessarily exhibit unethical conduct, but it is important to me that they develop ethical sensitivity  
- It is stated in the school’s mission statement  
- Of religious reasons  
- Of the importance of improving school culture |

The first research question (Table 2), “Why is producing ethically sensitive young men and women important at RAIS?” corresponded to (Q5) in the needs assessment survey,
which asked respondents why they considered it important for RAIS to take an active stance in the developing ethical sensitivity in the students.

Six possible reasons were provided, formulated in consultation with RAIS administration based on what they heard parents, teachers, board members, and administration express. They were: students were exhibiting minor unethical conduct, students were exhibiting severe unethical conduct, students were not exhibiting unethical conduct but ethical sensitivity development was a priority to the respondent, the fact that ethical sensitivity was mentioned in the school’s mission statement, religious reasons, and improving school culture. Respondents were asked to indicate, using a Likert scale, how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each possibility.

Table 2
Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Possible Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>Why is producing ethically sensitive young men and women important at RAIS?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>How are teachers at RAIS supporting the mission to produce ethically sensitive young men and women?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>How are teachers assessing the development of ethical sensitivity in young men and women in their classrooms?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second and third research questions, shown in Table 2, focused on how teachers at RAIS were supporting the school’s mission to produce ethically sensitive students, and how progress in that area was being measured. The corresponding needs assessment question (Q3 in Table 1) asked how well teachers were actively developing each of the seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity among students.
Two additional questions posed in the needs assessment survey were asked in an effort to better understand the problem at RAIS. The first one (Q2 in Table 1) inquired about which sub-skills of ethical sensitivity, if any, RAIS was responsible for actively assessing among its students. Responses provided insight to which sub-skills of ethical sensitivity the respondents ideally held the school accountable for.

The second question (Q4 in Table 1) addressed the ways in which RAIS was currently illustrating its commitment to developing ethical sensitivity among the students. Responses provided insight of the stakeholders’ perception of the current status of RAIS’ commitment. The possible answers, also rated using the Likert scale, were created in collaboration with school leadership. The choices were created based on what the administration believed they would do if they had more time and resources. These included: training faculty to run ethical sensitivity programming, funding, allotting time in the school day, assessing the need, and assessing the interest for such programming.

**Variables Used in the Analyses**

The seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity served simultaneously as variables for this needs assessment and as a means of operationalizing an intervention on ethical sensitivity. A detailed explanation of each sub-skill was shared with the respondents at the beginning of the needs assessment survey, in an effort to ensure that each respondent understood the questions being asked of them. Explanations of sub-skills associated with ethical sensitivity were provided to each respondent as follows:

**Reading and expressing emotion.** Reading emotions involves identifying the needs and feelings of the self as well as of others (intrapersonal and interpersonal skills). Learning how and when to appropriately express emotion and manage aggression is
important for getting along well with others. (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009)

**Taking the perspectives of others.** Perspective-taking involves exploring and understanding the different viewpoints different people may have of situations or events. Acquiring this skill requires extensive practice and experience. Perspective-taking skill development focuses on taking the perspective of someone in one’s own cultural group, people outside of one’s cultural group, and people who are more or less fortunate. Taking another perspective builds empathy and motivates one to make changes to benefit others. (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009)

**Connecting to others.** Connecting to others involves expanding the sense of self-concern to include others. It also involves developing a sense of connectedness to other people/groups, both globally and locally. Connectedness might be reflected in concern for the wellbeing of others, having good relationships with fellow students and teachers, and actively trying to maintain good personal relationships in conflict situations (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012). A person who feels a sense of connection to others is more likely to make decisions and take actions that reflect care and concern for others. (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009)

**Responding to diversity.** Working well in a social environment in which interpersonal and group differences exists involves understanding how cultural groups differ and how differences can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings. Culture in its broadest sense is understood to be any system of shared values, behaviors and expectations. Some examples are “business culture,” “school culture” and “soccer culture”. (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009)
**Controlling social bias.** Controlling social bias involves actively countering bias. To be able to reduce or suppress bias, one must reflect on how it arises. Most people prefer to associate with familiarity. Bias is a part of human nature. Therefore, conscious effort is required to rethink such habits of acting and speaking. Doing so is imperative in an effort to promote a more respectful and fair society. (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009)

**Interpreting situations.** The ability to interpret situations depends on development of the creative skills needed to generate multiple interpretations of a situation and multiple alternatives for dealing with such situations. It also requires possession of skills to counter normal pitfalls in inter-social interpretation. This is a critical step in any kind of problem solving. People often repeat the same mistakes because they respond automatically without considering another way to behave. (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009)

**Communicating well.** The ability to engage in effective communication requires listening closely, speaking clearly, and writing effectively. A good communicator is also able to use non-verbal communication as a means of expressing ideas and feelings. The particular communication skills needed for a specific social interaction may vary according to the social context of communication format (one-on-one, small group, large group, peers, adults and authorities, strangers, younger children) and according to the cultural context. (culture, male/female, school/work/home; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009)

**Data Collection Methods**

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the form of a survey and interviews, for the collective purpose of determining the need for an ethical sensitivity intervention at RAIS.
Survey. The quantitative data for this needs assessment was collected using cloud-based data-analysis software (SurveyMonkey) to create and distribute an online cross-sectional, explanatory computer-based questionnaire. The online method of survey delivery was chosen because it allowed responses to be gathered automatically, accurately, and at no cost, while maintaining anonymity of the respondents. As shown in Table 1, the instrumentation consisted of five closed-ended questions. The cross-sectional method, which involves data collection from a population at one specific point in time, was used because the study was descriptive in nature. Additionally, the explanatory method, which allowed for open-ended comments, was used in an effort to expand my understanding of the people I surveyed. These methods were appropriate given that I was interested in learning about prevailing opinions regarding ethical sensitivity among RAIS stakeholders and decision makers.

The data collected allowed me to investigate whether or not ethical sensitivity programming is perceived to exist at RAIS, and if not, why that was a problem. Additionally, the needs assessment served to help determine the severity of, and reasoning behind, the problem at RAIS.

Interview. A qualitative semi-structured research interview is a way of generating information through direct interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Semi-structured interviews consist of key questions and allow for follow-up questions (Barriball & While, 1994). For example, when children in a recent health study were interviewed about their food choices, a key finding emerged surrounding the significance of peer-pressure (Stewart, Gill, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2006). Follow-up questioning in this interview process allowed the
researchers to engage with the participants in a way that a quantitative survey would not have. In addition to the benefit of such follow-up questioning within semi-structured interviews, this qualitative research method allows concepts to be described and understood before being theorized and explained (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

I was the interviewer. Further protocol methodology discusses potential biases on the part of the interviewer and interviewee (Bailar, Bailey, & Stevens, 1977). Keeping in mind that the most qualified candidates provide the most credible information for a study (Turner, 2010), four interviewees were selected in the case of this study. They were three teachers and a lead administrator. Similarly, the reliability of the study requires that the interviewer refrain from interviewing someone who he or she has power over in the professional domain (Turner, 2010). Professional relationships can potentially lead to biases that affect results of a study; therefore, maintaining objectivity and establishing the purpose of the interview prior to the start of the interview is essential. In the case of this needs assessment, the interviewer and interviewees established appropriate and professional objectivity and purpose at the beginning of the interviews (see Appendixes B, E, F, and G for transcripts of interviews).

The interviews took place after the needs assessment questionnaire was administered, in an effort to reduce outside influence for interviewees responding to the questionnaire. The purpose of the interviews, like that of the survey, was to gather more detail on whether RAIS actively produces ethically sensitive students, and if not, why.

In the interview with the administrator, the interviewer outright asked whether or not RAIS actively produces ethically sensitive students. This was followed by seven
follow-up questions. The follow-up questions attempted to uncover the reasoning behind the lack of ethical sensitivity development at the school and how such implementation could be possible.

In the interviews with the teachers, the interviewer asked targeted questions in an attempt to uncover whether or not teachers address ethical issues in their classroom, whether or not they saw a need for formal ethical sensitivity programming, and whether or not they had time for such programming (see Appendixes A and D for interview questions). The interviews were private, semi-structured, and took approximately ten minutes each. Most importantly, they achieved the goal of better understanding the current status of ethical sensitivity development among the students at RAIS.

Qualitative data collection further extended to the process of transcribing the interview, which potentially created some challenges. The omission of sound between words, unfinished sentences, overlapping dialogue, and background noises are just a few of the issues that arise when transcribing an interview (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). In this study, precaution was taken to ensure the accuracy of the data collected, as the transcripts were proofread several times by both the interviewer and the interviewees.

**Summary of Results**

Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered in an effort to answer the three research questions that guided this needs assessment (see Table 2). The quantitative data suggests that producing ethically sensitive students at RAIS is important for a variety of reasons that include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) students’ currently exhibit minor and major instances of unethical conduct; (b) the importance of upholding the mission statement; (c) consistency with religious values; and (d) the improvement of
school culture. Furthermore, the quantitative and qualitative data suggests that teachers, administration, and the board are currently failing to appropriately develop and assess ethical sensitivity in the majority of the students at RAIS. Any development and assessment that is presently taking place is informal and unaccounted for. The basis of this claim stems from data collected both from the needs assessment survey and the semi-structured interviews (see Appendixes B, C, E, F, and G).

**Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data was gathered in the form of interviews with three faculty members at RAIS and a key decision-maker on the administrative team. Triangulation of sources, examining the consistency of different data sources within the same method, was used to ensure that this account was comprehensive and well-developed (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 2001). The data gathered during the interviews is organized according to five different factors that potentially affected ethical sensitivity at RAIS. They were: (a) historical factors; (b) political factors; (c) economic factors; (d) educational factors; and (e) sociological factors. All information in the following sections is supported by evidence from the interviews (see Appendixes A, B, D, E, F, and G).

**Historical factors.** Several factors impede RAIS’s ability to actualize the goal of producing ethically sensitive students. This private school opened five years ago to fill a void among religious families with children who wished to attend a school that promoted morals, values, and traditions consistent with those taught and celebrated both at home and within the community. A similar school that addressed the needs of this student population had recently closed. Due to the relatively recent and rapid inception of the school, the board and administration prioritized crucial decisions affecting the school’s
existence. According to a key decision-maker on the administrative team, they viewed the teaching of ethical sensitivity as desirable but not essential despite the explicit reference to this concept in the school’s mission statement (see Appendix B).

**Political factors.** Since the school did not receive federal or state government funding, the administration and board had the ability to make independent decisions, not subject to external regulation by the local school district. This sometimes meant that important considerations were not addressed. Due to the frequent change of board and administrative leadership (2 board presidents in 3 years and 4 principals in 3 years), there was a disconnect between those who drafted the mission statement and those charged with actualizing it. The founding principal of RAIS was deeply involved with the formation of the mission statement, whereas the current principal had been merely briefly informed of its content. At the time of the study there was no vice-principal, and according to the semi-structured interview with the lead administrator, the RAIS administration was understaffed. Given the situation, character development in the student body was simply not a high priority. The current principal claimed to be overworked and felt as though he was forced to prioritize. Consequently, important school goals were either not implemented in a timely manner or were implemented ineffectively (see Appendix B).

**Economic factors.** The understaffing issue was directly related to lack of funding at RAIS. School funds were not available for hiring additional personnel or obtaining further administrative resources. The financial committee had advised the principal that there was no funding to devote to the teaching of ethical sensitivity at that time (see Appendix B).
**Educational factors.** RAIS was a religious school providing its students with an academically rigorous, dual curriculum. For half the day students were learning secular studies consisting of math, language arts, science, and social studies. For the other half of the day, students were engaging in religious studies, which included history, culture and language. Additionally, students were engaged in extra-curricular programming during the school day, such as physical education, art, music and computers.

As a result teachers felt as though they did not have sufficient class time to teach important curriculum elements. Teachers also lacked important planning time because the school couldn’t afford to give them much, if any, time to plan their coursework. Faculty viewed ethical sensitivity programming as an extra-curricular subject that would utilize precious class time and require additional preparatory work (see Appendixes E, F, and G).

One of the research questions (RQ2 as shown in Table 2), aimed to discern whether or not teachers actively develop ethical sensitivity among their students. All three teachers who were interviewed indicated that they would be more likely to actively develop ethical sensitivity among their students if they had more time.

However, in an interview with a lead administrator, additional information was gleaned. Even if the faculty was given the time to plan and execute ethical sensitivity programming, most did not have the professional background necessary to research and execute such opportunities. Furthermore, even though RAIS prided itself on hiring highly qualified staff, it had no additional funds for additional training and professional development in this domain, which was yet another obstacle to the implementation of an ethical sensitivity program at RAIS (see Appendix B).
This information shed light on some of the reasons why teachers were not able to support the mission to produce ethically sensitive young men and women.

**Sociological factors.** The first research question, as shown in Table 2, aimed to ascertain why producing ethically sensitive young men and women was important at RAIS. Data gleaned from the needs assessment survey shed insight on this domain from the parents’ perspective. Parent support of RAIS was strong, and parents were considered by the board and administration to be among the main stakeholders of the school (see Appendix B). Parents chose to enroll their children at RAIS because its educational philosophy and curriculum aligned with their religious beliefs (see Q5 in Appendix C). According to a key decision-maker on the administrative team, RAIS was proud to be a specific niche school promoting morals and values consistent across most, if not all, the RAIS parent households (see Appendix B). Among these morals and values was having a strong sense of what it means to be ethical, hence its inclusion in the school’s mission statement. In fact, many RAIS parents stated that they were initially interested in sending their children to RAIS specifically because ethical sensitivity was mentioned in the mission statement (see Appendix C).

**Quantitative Data**

The quantitative data shed light on how RAIS stakeholders and decision makers viewed ethical sensitivity as it related to the school’s mission statement and student body (see Appendix C for tables of quantitative data). The needs assessment survey was distributed to 104 people associated with RAIS. Of the 77 respondents, 55 (73%) were parents of students, 14 (19%) were teachers, 2 (3%) were administration, and 4 (5%) were board members.
Respondents were given the opportunity to read descriptions of the seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity before beginning the survey. The descriptions appeared on a SurveyMonkey preview page, which could be referenced throughout the questionnaire. The majority of all parents, teachers, and board members (75% - 88% depending on which sub-skill was under consideration) either agreed or strongly agreed that RAIS was responsible for actively assessing the sub-skills of ethical sensitivity among its students (see Q2 in Table 1). The administrator who responded was largely undecided. The specific percentages are noted in Appendix C.

After the portion of the survey in which respondents were asked questions about whether or not RAIS should assess ethical sensitivity among its students, they were asked why they considered it important that RAIS take an active stance in the development of ethical sensitivity (see Q5 in Table 1). An overwhelming majority, seventy-four percent of respondents, felt that such development is important because some students were exhibiting minor instances of passive unethical conduct. (For the purpose of minimizing misinterpretation, respondents were given the general example of not picking up litter. This tangible example allowed for all respondents to imagine a similar type of unethical conduct while answering the question.) Seven respondents were parents, four were teachers, and one was an administrator.

Thirty-five percent of respondents stated it was important to develop ethical sensitivity because some students were exhibiting severe unethical behavior. The majority (almost forty-seven percent, all of whom were parents), however, felt that the students at RAIS did not exhibit unethical behavior such as bullying, lying, and stealing.
Lastly, over eighty percent of respondents felt that, regardless of whether students exhibited unethical conduct, they considered it important that students develop a disposition toward ethical sensitivity. Of these respondents, twenty were parents, three were teachers, and one was a board member.

Eighty percent of respondents felt that the mention of ethical sensitivity in the school’s mission statement was reason enough for the school to take an active stance in its development among the students. Of these respondents, eight were parents, four were teachers, one was an administrator, and one was a board member.

The two most popular answers to Q5 were almost unanimous. Ninety-six percent of respondents stated that the school should actively develop ethical sensitivity among students for religious reasons. This finding was consistent with the religious nature of the school. Of these respondents, nineteen were parents, five were teachers, one was an administrator, and two were board members. The remaining four percent represented parents who were undecided.

Ninety-six percent of respondents stated that improving school culture was reason enough for the school to take an active stance in developing ethical sensitivity among the student body. Of these respondents, nineteen were parents, five were teachers, one was an administrator, and one was a board member. Just as the above finding showed, the remaining four percent of respondents represented parents who were undecided on this issue.

In sum, respondents answered in an overwhelming positive fashion with regard to the responsibility of the school to develop ethical sensitivity among its students, with only a small number feeling uncertain.
After respondents had a chance to think theoretically about the need for development of ethical sensitivity, they were asked about the reality of achieving this goal (Q4, Table 1). A small number of respondents stated that teachers at RAIS were not actively developing any of the seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity among their students. The majority of the respondents who felt this way were parents. Notably, however, thirty-nine percent of respondents were undecided about their answer to this question. Specific percentages and subcategories are noted in Appendix C.

Just over thirteen percent of respondents (100% of whom were parents) were undecided about whether or not teachers at RAIS were actively developing communication skills (the last of the seven sub-skills) among students.

At the other end of this range, just over thirty-eight percent of respondents were undecided on whether or not teachers at RAIS were actively developing control of social bias (the fifth of the seven sub-skills) among students. The breakdown of respondents to this question was sixteen parents, two teachers, and two board members. It is noteworthy to mention that sixteen parents, three teachers, one administrator, and two board members skipped this question.

With the aim of further revealing how RAIS was perceived to show commitment to developing ethical sensitivity, a minority of respondents (twelve to twenty four percent) felt that RAIS did not: (a) train faculty to run ethical sensitivity programming; (b) fund ethical sensitivity programming; (c) allot time in the school day for ethical sensitivity programming; or (d) assess the need for and interest in such programming. Forty-one percent of respondents were undecided. The ranges reflected in the subcategories of this question are shown in Appendix C. Over twenty seven percent of
respondents were undecided about whether or not RAIS’s commitment to developing ethical sensitivity was illustrated by assessing the interest for ethical sensitivity programming. Of these respondents, eleven were parents and three were teachers. Over forty one percent of respondents were undecided on whether or not RAIS’s commitment to developing ethical sensitivity is reflected by the amount of time during the school day allotted to ethical sensitivity programming. Of these respondents, seventeen were parents and four were teachers.

In sum, the majority of respondents felt that RAIS should be responsible for actively developing and assessing the sub-skills of ethical sensitivity among all students. Respondents, however, were unable to reach a consensus as to whether or not teachers were currently doing so. Almost half of the respondents skipped this question while approximately half of the parents, teachers, administrators, and board members agreed with a statement declaring that teachers were actively developing the sub-skills among their students. However, at twelve to fourteen percent respectively, some respondents (who exclusively represented parents) felt that controlling social bias and responding to diversity were two skills that teachers at RAIS were not actively developing in students.

At least half of the respondents chose not to answer the two remaining questions, which inquired about RAIS’s commitment to developing ethical sensitivity and reasons why such commitment was important. Of the respondents who did weigh in, however, the strongest opinions expressed indicated that RAIS should take an active stance in the development of ethical sensitivity in students because it would foster positive school culture, is aligned with religious values, and is specified in the school mission statement. Furthermore, a clear majority of respondents felt that, although the current student body
did not exhibit unethical conduct, development of ethical sensitivity was an important and desirable goal.

**Discussion**

**Implications of Findings**

The damaging consequences of ethical insensitivity on a societal scale, and more narrowly among youth and adolescents within the school setting, were reviewed in Chapter 2. Students have difficulty understanding notions of social justice and empathy, and schools are not fostering such understanding (Theoharis, 2009). These are desirable constructs for youth and adolescents to acquire because they promote prosocial behavior (Schonert-Reichl, Smith, Zaidman-Zait, & Hertzman, 2012).

The needs assessment described in this chapter aimed to confirm that the potential for behavioral problems similar to those observed in the literature could be present at RAIS, though to a lesser degree. While the problems at RAIS were not extreme, it is incumbent on educators to be aware of possible issues that can result from ethical insensitivity. The more important issue identified is that members of the RAIS community were of the opinion that skills supporting ethical sensitivity should be developed in the school, and that many stakeholders perceived that this was not a part of their current curriculum.

The RAIS mission statement declared, “we aim to produce ethically sensitive young men and women who will possess the skills they need to contribute to the community in which they live” (Ohr Chadash Academy). However, as the quantitative and qualitative data indicates, the stakeholders’ perception was that there were no active measures being taken to foster the development of these skills. The fact that not all
components of the mission statement were being addressed and implemented may have added to the perception that some students were exhibiting minor instances of unethical conduct (see Appendix C).

Three research questions (RQ) guided the needs assessment study. The first research question (RQ1, Table 2) asked why producing ethically sensitive young men and women is important at RAIS. That this aspect of the mission statement is not being implemented is only a problem if administration, teachers, parents, and board members view it as an important issue worthy of implementation. Data collected from stakeholders and decision makers implies that it is an important issue, worth of implementation because of (a) upholding the mission statement; (b) consistency with religious values; (c) improving school culture; and (d) some students were exhibiting instances of minor unethical conduct.

The second and third research questions (RQ2 and RQ3, Table 2) respectively asked how teachers at RAIS supported the school’s mission to produce ethically sensitive students, and how teachers were assessing said development of ethical sensitivity. The quantitative data suggested that the majority of respondents believed that RAIS had addressed the need for ethical sensitivity programming within the context of the seven sub-skills, but most respondents were undecided as to whether or not RAIS had generally trained faculty, allocated funding, and allotted time in the school day for such ethical development. The interview data shed some light on these results: it suggested that the board, administration, and faculty are overburdened, understaffed, and had not made ethical sensitivity a priority. Limitations on time and resources were considered barriers
to development and assessment of ethical character, in spite of wide recognition of its importance.

When analyzing results from the surveys, the potential bias of the respondents was taken into consideration. As stakeholders external to the day-to-day operations of the school, parents and board members may not be familiar with details of curriculum content. Conversely, teachers and administration represent stakeholders who are internal to the organization, are physically present in school every day, and are thus potentially more aware of details regarding curriculum and instruction. Such circumstances undoubtedly shaped the respondents’ perceptions as they considered their viewpoints and offered their opinions. The breakdown of how different respondents responded to the questionnaire is noted in Appendix C.

Limitations

All survey questions were asked across each of the respondent categories: parents, teachers, administrators, and board members, but each group’s vision is limited in different ways.

Many respondents were undecided on several questions. The majority of the respondents were parents of students, who are likely to be unaware of the details of the curriculum, and of in-school student behavior and social interactions. Though teachers were present on a daily basis in the school building, their vision may be geared mostly toward activities transpiring within their own classrooms. While respondents may have been undecided for a number of reasons, it is possible that they, particularly the board members, were hesitant to shed negative light on a new and fragile school and, therefore,
that they may not have been willing to reveal how they truly felt about what teachers were doing in their classrooms (Galdi, Arcuri, & Gawronski, 2008).

Data from respondents who were undecided about an item is not helpful in determining the overall strength of respondents’ opinions. In an effort to glean insight and more detail, a comments section was included with each survey question. Notably, thirty-nine percent of respondents were undecided on this item: “RAIS is responsible for actively assessing the following skills among its students.” Some respondents noted that they were undecided on this point because of the phrase “actively assessing.” They expressed the understanding that this seemed to be different from the daily interactions between teachers and students. Rather, they understood this phrase to indicate a more formal effort and were, therefore, undecided as to the appropriate response.

Eliminating the option to indicate an undecided stance would have forced participants to side with agreement or disagreement, which would have strengthened the data in numbers, but would not have accurately reflected the community’s perceptions. That so many respondents were undecided on their answers to this question is interesting because it was one of the few questions that sought a respondent’s personal opinion, rather than asking the respondent to assess the current status of the school. There was no objective right or wrong answer, yet a high percentage of respondents were undecided.

In addition to many respondents’ undecided stances on certain items, another limitation of this study was noted within the first few days of data collection: some respondents skipped questions. Because seventy-three percent of respondents were parents, they represented the majority of respondents who skipped questions, though some questions were skipped by members of each of the respondent categories (e.g.,
board members, teachers, parents and administrators). Two specific patterns of non-response were noted. (1) About half of the respondents who skipped questions tended to do so more frequently as they progressed to later portions of the questionnaire, while only two respondents skipped the first question. The number of questions skipped increased as the ordinal position of the questions increased; the last question was skipped by twenty-seven respondents. This could indicate a declining interest in participating in the survey. (2) The other half of the respondents who skipped questions answered the first question, which noted their general identity; however, they proceeded to skip the remaining four questions which were the substance of the questionnaire. The non-response bias may indicate that respondents either lost interest in answering the questions or never committed themselves to answering the questions in the first place. This can be the result of a variety of factors, such as respondents’ lack of time to dedicate to the survey; or it could be due to controllable factors such as the timing of the questionnaire distribution, its length, or how it was presented.

It goes without saying that, ideally, every recipient of the survey would have responded and answered every question. Given that no set of survey results is perfect, I will assume that these limitations did not affect the findings in a way that impacted data interpretation, or my intervention plan. Also, respondents were specifically asked to answer as honestly as possible; thus, all answers were assumed to be truthful and to contain useful information.

Conclusion

Interpretation of the literature on ethical sensitivity discussed in Chapter 2 indicated the benefits of introducing ethical sensitivity development into school curricula
generally. In particular for RAIS, the data collected in the needs assessment survey and interviews indicate that stakeholders feel that RAIS is responsible for developing ethical sensitivity in its student population. Thus, if this element of education is missing at RAIS there is clearly the need for a carefully designed ethical sensitivity intervention.

This chapter explored the relevance, need for, and importance of ethical sensitivity development as a potential curriculum component at RAIS. Implications of the potential success of an intervention addressing this need are much broader than those which affect the RAIS community alone. The results of this needs assessment and problem identification may have relevance for schools with similar mission statements, or with similar goals for character development in students.

Thus, my decision to address RAIS’s lack of a curriculum in ethical thinking by piloting a small ethical sensitivity intervention at RAIS for fourth and fifth grade students may suggest a framework for a similar program in other schools, and may provide the broad outline of a professional development workshop that would provide training in how to incorporate elements of this intervention into curriculum. In the chapters that follow, I note how such an ethical sensitivity intervention might be useful to other schools that value character development.

Of the thirty religiously affiliated independent schools’ mission statements that I reviewed, one hundred percent of them referenced the importance of developing ethical or moral thinking among their students. This commonality between RAIS and other independent schools is noteworthy, as it potentially allows for widespread acceptance of the ethical sensitivity intervention developed and implemented at RAIS.
The three research questions for the needs assessment discussed in this chapter, the literature, and the needs assessment data equally contributed to the rationale for the rest of this study, and informed the implementation and direction of ethical sensitivity programming at RAIS. Several considerations and concerns surround the context of this intervention, and led to the general research questions that guided the next stage of this study: RQ1 – What methodologies are most effective in developing various aspects of ethical sensitivity? RQ2 - How should ethical sensitivity be developed and assessed among the students at RAIS? The answers to these questions are discussed and analyzed in the following chapters.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Many schools prioritize character education in order to raise a kind and considerate generation of students (Ohler, 2012). While administration and faculty within the private sector are subject to decisions made by the school board, public school educators answer to district-level decisions regarding mission statements and curriculum guidelines. At RAIS, a religiously affiliated independent school, the board and administration jointly determined that development of ethical sensitivity in students was a priority. However, appropriate resources – in the form of time allocated within the curriculum, time dedicated to professional development of staff, and money to implement such programs – have not been allocated to actualize this priority. This chapter explores research literature for an ethical sensitivity intervention (ESI) aiming to promote ethical sensitivity development in fourth and fifth grade students at RAIS.

RAIS is a non-profit religiously affiliated independent school in Baltimore, Maryland serving students in grades Pre-K- 5. RAIS’s mission statement contains the phrase “[w]e aim to produce ethically sensitive young men and women,” explicitly emphasizing the importance of developing ethical sensitivity among its students. There were, however, no measures currently in effect even to assess whether or not students were making progress toward that goal. A clear discrepancy existed between the school’s stated mission and its implementation.

This literature review explores interventions that aim to develop ethical sensitivity among children and adolescents. Analysis of these reports includes information about study methodology and results, and their relevance for this intervention.
Background

Ethical sensitivity is an awareness of how our actions affect others. It is a sympathetic understanding of a situation in determining who is affected, what actions to take, and what consequences might result (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). Before ethical action or behavior can occur, an individual must first recognize the existence of an ethical dilemma. That recognition requires, at a minimum, that they understand basic underpinnings of emotion, engage in perspective-taking, have an awareness of potential bias, and be able to communicate.

Until Narvaez and Endicott more generally defined ethical sensitivity in 2009, most measures of this construct specifically pertained to medical and dental education (Bebeau, Rest, & Yamoor, 1985) or cultural and gender intolerance (Braebeck et al., 2000). Bebeau et al. (1985) and Braebeck et al. (2000) developed measures inspired by the work of Rest (1979). In particular, Bebeau et al. (1985) adapted Rest’s (1979) test of moral reasoning, otherwise referred to as the Defining Issues Test (DIT), which was originally an alternative to Kohlberg’s (1969) semi-structured interview measure of moral judgment development.

Bebeau et al. (1985) adapted the DIT to measure ethical sensitivity development among medical and dental students. Additionally, they developed stimulus materials and scoring procedures to measure ability to recognize ethical issues often hidden within dentists’ professional problems (Bebeau et al., 1985).

Braebeck et al. (2000), attempting to develop a measure of ethical sensitivity within the context of racial and gender intolerance in schools, also looked to Rest’s (1979) contributions to the field. The semi-structured interview they developed was
called the Racial Ethical Sensitivity Test (REST), and was based both on Rest’s (1983) 4-component model of moral development and the professional codes of ethics from school-based professions (Sirin, Brabeck, Satiani, & Rogers-Serin, 2003). Prior to responding to the semi-structured interview in the REST, participants engaged in discussion and viewed videotaped scenarios that portrayed acts of racial intolerance and ethical insensitivity.

In each of these studies, researchers found that ethical sensitivity training resulted in improved ethical sensitivity as measured by adaptations of Rest’s (1979) work. Tirri and Nokelainen (2012) and Kuusisto, Tirri, & Rissanen (2012) noted similar findings when they conducted ethical sensitivity interventions among Finnish teachers and students using research that stemmed from Rest (1979). The present study, too, looked to Rest’s (1979) 4-component model to inform the complexities of ethical sensitivity within a unique context.

**Needs Assessment Findings and Implications**

In some student populations, negative personal and social consequences have been noted in children and adolescents who lack ethical sensitivity skills (Baron-Cohen, 2012; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2010; Gratz & Roemer, 2006). The needs assessment described in Chapter 3 included a question asking if examples of negative social behaviors were prevalent at RAIS. Answers could potentially provide concrete reasons to warrant an ethical sensitivity intervention, beyond the directive of the mission statement, to implement ethical sensitivity in the curriculum.

The majority of RAIS stakeholders and decision makers (parents, teachers, administrators and board members) noted minor degrees of unethical conduct among the
students. More importantly, however, they expressed the need to develop ethical sensitivity among the students because (a) it is an important part of the school’s mission statement and may represent a factor in parents’ decision to enroll their children in the school; (b) it aligns with the stakeholders’ religious values; and (c) it is important for maintaining positive school culture.

The recognized importance of character development education and its absence in the curriculum of RAIS, by itself, could have justified the need for implementation of an ethical sensitivity intervention. The concerns uncovered in the needs assessment, paired with the lack of an ethics-based curriculum, led to an investigation of existing methodologies that might be suitable for adaptation and application at RAIS.

**Literature Review of Methodological Approaches**

Data on implementation of ethical sensitivity initiatives is quite promising (Blasco, Blasco, Levites, Moreto, and Tysinger, 2011; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Woelders, 2007). Teachers who implemented ethical sensitivity programming noted increases in students’ scores on prosocial responsibility, ethical identity, and pro-social risk taking, while comparison groups did not (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Wheeler & Richey, 2014). These findings are not surprising given the research conducted by Schumann, Zaki, and Dweck (2014). They found that empathy and comparable feelings are not fixed attributes; such feelings are malleable and can be entrained with appropriate intervention.

Work by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) was also based on the premise that attitudes and viewpoints about ethical behavior develop over time and are subject to change. Their work was inspired by Rest’s theoretical Four Stage Component Model of
Moral Behavior (1979). Rest’s four stages are psychological processes that include ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical motivation, and ethical action. The stages are presumed to be linear and progressive: one can only behave in an ethical manner upon first developing sensitivity, judgment, and motivation.

Of particular interest is the first stage postulated by Rest, ethical sensitivity. The present study focuses on how to develop ethical sensitivity in students, which led us to examine possible components of that construct.

Upon conducting an extensive literature review, Narvaez and Endicott (2009) identified seven sub-skills that they consider fundamental to ethical sensitivity development and that can potentially be taught in a classroom setting. They were careful to select sub-skills that were not prejudiced in favor of any particular cause. Lastly, each sub-skill was selected in accordance with what they believed would enable individuals to live cooperatively with others and actualize individual potential (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2014).

Narvaez and Endicott (2009) operationalized ethical sensitivity and developed a curriculum that could be appropriately adapted in an educational setting like RAIS. The sub-skills lent themselves to the creation of a framework for the ESI as they each represented unique skill-sets to be developed through various pedagogical practices.

The skills that repeatedly surfaced in their research and fit this criteria were (a) reading and expressing emotion; (b) taking the perspective of others; (c) connecting to others; (d) responding to diversity; (e) controlling social bias; (f) interpreting situations; and (g) communicating well (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). These seven sub-skills were meant to be a sampling of possibilities and the researchers do not exclude the possibility of
incorporating additional ones upon further research (D. Narvaez, personal communication, March 16, 2016).

As shown in Figure 2, Narvaez and Endicott (2009) were additionally mindful to ensure that each of the sub-skills facilitated one of three main functions that allow for ethical sensitivity as a cognitive process to systematically be taught in the classroom. The three functions are: 1) *acquiring information* about the ethical situation, 2) *organizing information*, and 3) *interpreting information*. “Information” means perceived or experienced events, relationships, and emotions.

![Figure 2. Functions and Sub-skills of Ethical Sensitivity. A schematic highlighting the relationship between the ethical sensitivity construct, the three functions, and the seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity as set forth by Narvaez and Endicott (2009).](image)

*Acquiring information* is the process of actively developing awareness and inference. The two sub-skills important for developing this function are reading and expressing emotion and taking the perspective of others.
Organizing information focuses on critical thinking and reflection. The three sub-skills within this function are connecting to others, responding to diversity, and controlling social bias.

Interpreting information is the last function that ethical sensitivity skills facilitate; it actively develops the ability to think analytically and to make predictions. The two sub-skills connected to this function are interpreting situations and communicating well (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009).

Development of the seven sub-skills within the framework of the three functions is also in alignment with the educational mission at RAIS. The RAIS mission statement notes the value of ethical sensitivity and was explained in Chapter 2.

Each of the sub-skills identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009) is described in the sections below with particular emphasis on those chosen to be incorporated into the present study. Methodological approaches to developing and measuring them are explained and discussed with respect to studies documented in the literature and their relevance to the ESI.

Reading and Expressing Emotion

Both the ability to recognize and interpret emotional expression in others and the ability to express one’s own emotions are necessary for understanding social situations. After all, emotions play an important role in all social interactions. Understanding emotions involves recognizing one’s own feelings as well as others’ (Dael, Mortillaro, & Scherer, 2012; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). Additionally, emotional responses to social dilemmas can influence a one’s thoughts and subsequent actions.
As shown in Figure 2, Narvaez and Endicott (2009), proposed that reading and expressing emotion is a sub-skill that supports the ability to be ethically sensitive, and which actively contributes to awareness and inferential thinking (i.e. acquiring *information function*).

The development of interpersonal emotional skills also helps people empathize and respond appropriately to the emotional cues of others. The ability to read and express emotion is necessary for communication and conflict resolution (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009, Noddings, 2013).

In order to develop this ability, several studies have effectively used film viewing as a means of exploring children’s abilities to interpret their own emotions as well as those of others’ (Blasco et al., 2011; Blasco, Mónaco, Benedetto, Moreto, & Levites, 2010; Blasco, Moreto, Roncoletta, Levites, & Janaudis, 2006; Woelders, 2007).

A movie can have a powerful influence on one’s awareness and emotions (Berk, 2009). Analysis of film clips for emotional content can help students identify emotions in others and express their own (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012). Typically elicited emotions, such as happiness, irritation, or love, observed in identified in film clips encourage the development of emotional identification and expression (Berk, 2009). These emotions are often prompted by the mood created by specific graphics, actors’ body language, and/or background music (Knoblock-Westerwick, 2006). Emotions evoked in the viewer play a crucial role in learning and changing outlooks (Blasco et al., 2010; Blasco et al., 2006).

Studies by Blasco et al. (2011) and Woelders (2007) gathered qualitative data to document the use of film as an educational tool. Both interventions utilized realistic fictional movies in which positive role models were portrayed. By using movies to teach
how to read and express emotion, both researchers successfully encouraged student reflection and offered them a forum for dialogue. Students in both studies significantly improved in their abilities to read and express emotion.

Blasco et al. (2011) used realistic fictional films in their teaching for eight years and across a wide variety of ages, disciplines and countries. Their findings were based on field notes, session evaluations, interviews, and written assignments. They discovered that some knowledge and skills can be learned with little to no reflection; however, refining outlooks, gaining virtues, and integrating ethics require reflection. Such outlooks, virtues, and ethics are learned, in part, by observing role models. They concluded that teaching students how to read and express emotion, through the use of movies in which positive role models are portrayed, stimulates learner reflection and exposes them to role models to whom they may not have otherwise been exposed.

Using an action research model in an eighth grade suburban social studies classroom, Woelders (2007) also studied film as a pedagogical tool to teach emotional understanding. He explicitly explored how films can be utilized in the middle school classroom to help students read and express emotion (Barton & Levstik, 2001). Data was collected in the form of student surveys, focus group discussions, assignments, and classroom observations (Woelders, 2007). He found that students benefit from activities that help them interact with and analyze films in a collaborative fashion. Most students found it challenging but enjoyed the opportunity to construct their own understandings from the films as they engaged in inquiry-based learning.

Both interventions stimulated learner reflection by triggering critical emotions that, in turn, led to questioning and rethinking of expectations and dilemmas (Blasco et
al., 2011; Woelders, 2007). Perhaps most importantly, these movies provided stories grounded in familiar settings, while introducing and building upon new emotions and experiences (Blasco et al., 2011). A learner was able to relate to the familiar idea of the storyline while gaining exposure to new thoughts, ideas, and attitudes (Ochsner, 2010).

Movies can allow instructors to focus on specific scenes that reveal important ethical conflicts (Blasco et al., 2010). The brevity and emotional intensity of the movie clips allowed for dialogue and opportunities for reflection (Berk, 2009). Also, showing movie clips with simultaneous commentary is most likely to develop, challenge, or strengthen perceptions while fostering student reflection.

The studies by Blasco et al., (2010) and Woelders (2007) provide justification for the methods chosen and rejected for the ESI at RAIS. The small class size in the fourth and fifth grade (25 students combined) at RAIS was conducive to generating dialogue among the students. The small teacher-to-student ratio at RAIS (roughly 1:10) offered students increased opportunities to participate in conversation.

Teaching with movies not only increases reflection but also encourages empathy, another contributor to ethical sensitivity (Berk, 2009; Blasco et al., 2010). This technique is complementary to the media-infused culture in which most students are immersed, including those at RAIS. Video clips were presumed to work well because exposure to feelings would lead students to reflect about their own lives and those of others. They could potentially identify with characters and realities within the movies, and reflect on the scenes in connection to their own reality (Blasco et al., 2010; Wedding, Boyd, & Niemiec, 2005).
While both studies mentioned noted significant findings, they also encountered unique limitations. Blasco et al. (2011) often utilized film as a tool during isolated workshops for people from different cultural, educational and socio-economic backgrounds. In such settings concerns regarding language barriers, number of participants and teaching time available may limit the efficacy of this methodology (Rifkin, 2005). Ideally, the number of participants should be fewer than 30 and share a common language.

These factors are not a concern at RAIS because the 25 participating students were all native English speakers. Though at least two hours of teaching time is recommended to allow sufficient opportunity for group discussion (Rogers, 2015), at RAIS each workshop was limited to one hour to accommodate the shorter attention spans of the younger students (Barnes, Marateo, & Ferris, 2007). Participants in the Blasco et al. (2011) study represented a variety of ages, and the intervention occurred in the form of isolated workshops. These factors also differentiate the two interventions, as the ESI will be comprised of several related workshops with fourth and fifth grade students.

On several occasions, Blasco at al. (2011) had to adapt his workshop to a larger audience and shorter time periods by giving shorter presentations and using fewer movie clips. An assumption on my part is that this less-than-ideal setting may have negatively affected the researchers’ ability to gather sufficiently useful qualitative data in the form of field notes, session evaluations, interviews and written assignments. Studying fewer subjects in an inclusive and comprehensive manner may offer far more useful data than a superficial study with more subjects (Patton, 2005).
While Woelders (2007) was not faced with language barriers, too large an audience, or lack of teaching time, he did (despite the positive outcome) encounter student resistance to his inquiry-based teaching style. He speculated that this may have been the case because his students were accustomed to, and possibly preferred, recording, memorizing, and recalling information with little scaffolding. The students at RAIS were accustomed to inquiry-based teaching styles, and, therefore, were not likely to resist an ESI that incorporated this particular technique. Though RAIS students were occasionally required to memorize and recall information in math and science class, this was not the primary teaching method at the school.

Action research presents a limitation in that research subjects are sometimes simultaneous subordinates within the institution (Herr & Anderson, 2005). The complex dynamic of influence and control is potentially further problematic when the investigator also holds a position of power within the same organization. Furthermore, action research often allows the scholar to reflect on the development and outcomes, which can rarely be honestly expressed as objective knowledge. Woelder’s (2007) research participants were students in the school, and Woelders (2007) was the action researcher as well as a member of the school community. It is possible that these factors may have resulted in unintentional bias and skewed data obtained.

To avoid such bias in this ESI, objective quantitative measurement tools were utilized, and research assistants who did not have a relationship with the students were employed to gather data. I did not hold a position of power within the school; therefore, I was hopeful that the effect of my influence was limited.
Finally, video clips had the advantage that participants, fourth and fifth grade students at RAIS, often had the opportunity to earn movie-viewing time as a reward for positive behavior. It was therefore anticipated that the students would view this educational opportunity in a favorable manner.

**Taking the Perspective of Others**

Perspective-taking has been described as the ability to determine and differentiate the thoughts and feelings of others (Gehlbach, Brinkworth, & Wang, 2012). Ownership of this skill is reflected in one’s ability to recognize and understand various viewpoints within a given set of circumstances. As shown in Figure 2, Narvaez and Endicott (2009) proposed perspective-taking as a component of the *acquiring information* function and as a valuable sub-skill of ethical sensitivity. The ability to take someone else’s perspective is linked to desirable outcomes in schools (Gehlbach et al., 2012); in particular, students’ improved capacity to develop compassion and tolerance (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Sawyers, 2013). Walker (1980) and Selman (1971) proposed that perspective-taking is an important component of ethical development. They recommended that perspective-taking development be included as part of ethical education programming.

An intervention that aims to encourage students to engage in role-taking and cooperative learning opportunities may help them develop the ability to tolerate others despite differences of opinion (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012). Cooperative learning and role-taking have been cited as two successful teaching techniques to help students become more aware of others’ perspectives (Tsay and Brady, 2012; Turiel, 1983). Cooperative learning techniques in the classroom improve students’ ability to empathize with peers.
(Slavin, 1991). Consequently, stereotyping tendencies are reduced, prejudice is decreased, and academic outcomes are improved.

Cooperative learning and role-taking have also been recommended as solutions for a remarkable range of educational issues including, but not limited to (a) low level of student confidence; (b) poor inter-social communication skills; (c) lack of acceptance of students with differences; (d) poor academic attitudes; and (e) limited ability to work cooperatively (Slavin, 1991). The studies discussed below utilize such pedagogical techniques in an effort to develop perspective-taking among students of all ages and backgrounds.

Role-taking is the ability to understand how an outside party might view interactions between oneself and others, and is an effective method for developing students’ abilities to see another’s point of view (Flavell, 1968; Slavin, 1991).

Turiiel (1983) conducted a study on role-taking development with ninety-six children of middle-class backgrounds. They were each individually interviewed seeking to determine how the ability to take another’s perspective develops throughout childhood and adolescence. Several ethical dilemmas were described to the children, after which they were asked how the different parties might view the situations. Students analyzed why characters in various scenarios did or did not engage in certain behaviors. The students’ abilities to take someone else’s perspective improved after participating in role-taking activities.

In Turiel’s study (1983), children were interviewed to measure the effect of role-taking on empathy. Using individual interviews as their instrument, Turiel (1983) and his team were able to clarify or paraphrase questions, should an interviewee be confused or
need further explanation. This technique gives the interviewer team the flexibility to explore complex or abstract topics and to gather additional information that may not be revealed when using a typical survey instrument (Chapin, & Rugeley, 2009, Finn & Jacobson, 2008; Jacobson et al., 2009; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001).

The individual interview technique used by Turiel (1983) helped to link role-taking practice and ability to take another’s perspective. Two weaknesses of this method are the potential for interviewer bias and the possibility that the respondent perceives the interview as intrusive (Finn & Jacobson, 2008; Jacobson et al., 2009; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001). These weaknesses in the method of study could lead to skewed data, thus distorting the findings.

Cooperative learning is another teaching strategy that aids in the development of perspective-taking (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Cooperative learning encourages students to work in small groups to help each other learn material or complete a task. All cooperative learning methods are built on the notion that students are responsible for each other’s learning as well as their own (Slavin, 1991). Slavin (2011) believes this method of learning is effective because students care about the group members and derive self-identity benefits from their affiliation with the group. Over 70 research studies have assessed various cooperative learning techniques in elementary and secondary schools.

Tsay and Brady (2012) conducted a study that explored the relationship between cooperative learning and ability to take another’s perspective. The students’ involvement in a cooperative learning opportunity, as measured by a 13-item survey that utilized a Likert-percentage scale, was the independent variable in this study (Slavin, 1991; Tsay & Brady, 2012). The dependent variable was students’ ability to take others’ perspectives,
and was measured by scoring a self-report survey (Slavin, 1991). Results from the study support the notion that cooperative learning has a positive relationship with ability to take others’ perspectives.

Furthermore, the investigators found that group incentives and individual accountability are necessary to produce improved ability to take others’ perspective (Slavin, 1991; Willer, 2009). It is insufficient to simply request that students work together. They need motivation to take each another’s progress seriously (Slavin, 1991; Willer, 2009).

Turiel (1983) and Tsay and Brady’s (2012) studies informed decisions about methods chosen for the ESI at RAIS. Turiel (1983) used individual interviews as a data collection tool. While this method potentially yields rich and detailed data, it is time-consuming and expensive when compared to alternative methods of study. Given the scope of the present study and the resources available at RAIS, using individual interviews as a means of assessing perspective-taking skills in students was deemed impractical.

Tsay and Brady (2012) measured the relationship between cooperative learning and the ability to understand another person’s point of view. A self-report tool was administered to 24 students before and after engaging in the intervention. The advantages of this method are that most respondents are familiar with self-report scales, and are more at ease than when participating in interviews.

As a result of reviewing Tsay and Brady’s (2012) work, an ESS self-report tool developed by Tirri and Nokelainen (2012) was chosen as the primary method of gathering data within the ESI.
The nature of cooperative learning is to pair academically heterogeneous students together; therefore, teachers often face struggle and conflict because some students may feel as though they are being held back by less capable team members (Shimazoe and Aldrich, 2010; Slavin, 1991). Similarly, negative feelings may also arise on the other end of the spectrum if less self-assured students feel they are being dismissed or ignored by more proficient students (Tsay & Brady, 2012). Such perceptions may be severely limiting as negative emotions often hinder students’ ability to perform at their best academically (Hardiman, 2012; Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009). Undesirable feelings that could potentially stem from poor group dynamic could be, ironically, detrimental to students’ development of perspective-taking and, consequently, of ethical sensitivity.

Despite limitations inherent in each of the methods discussed, cooperative learning and role-taking are two techniques that have been successfully applied in an effort to help students become more aware of the views of others (Tsay & Brady, 2012; Turiel, 1983). Cooperative learning techniques in the classroom improve students’ ability to empathize with peers (Tsay & Brady, 2012). Consequently, stereotyping tendencies are reduced, prejudice is decreased, and academic outcomes are improved. Both of these pedagogical methods were chosen as potentially effective ways of fostering perspective-taking skills at RAIS.

Responding to Diversity and Controlling Social Bias

Responding to diversity is the ability to understand how cultural groups differ and how differences between groups can potentially lead to misunderstandings. Furthermore, one who is able to appropriately respond to diversity is able to understand that any cultural group consists of individuals who share values, behaviors, and expectations
Social bias usually presents itself against individuals outside one’s own cultural group. Controlling social bias is typically demonstrated within social dilemmas through the recognition, appreciation, and active countering of one’s own tendency towards unfairness against outsiders (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009).

As shown in Figure 2, Narvaez and Endicott (2009) identified responding to diversity and controlling social bias as components of the organizing information function and as sub-skills of ethical sensitivity. Due to the fact that these sub-skills closely resemble each other in definition and are similar with respect to the attitudes and behaviors elicited among students, they will be examined together in the following discussion.

Several intervention methods may be used to help students develop their abilities to control social bias and/or respond appropriately to diversity in social settings. One possibility is to provide an opportunity for students to explore and interact with multicultural, multi-physical, and multi-economic stories and photographs. Another possibility included activities that aimed to help students develop their abilities to consider others’ points of view and the impact of their decisions on others. Both were considered valuable and appropriate for the RAIS setting, given that such recognition and control result in the promotion of tolerance (Rowland, Schwartz, Nedelec, & Beaver, 2012). Many students experience at least some degree of social bias at school (Killen, Mulvey, & Hitti, 2013). This may be especially true at an independent school with limited diversity and a relatively narrow socio-economic spectrum, such as RAIS.
Reading fiction and non-fiction stories has also been used as a pedagogical tool with all ages and ability levels in the school setting to enhance ethical sensitivity (Demircioglu, 2008). In a qualitative study that investigated ways in which eighth-grade students responded to a story that was intended to teach them about diversity and social bias, Demircioglu (2008) noted that 100 percent of the students understood that people of different religions, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds could live together in peace. At RAIS, students were already familiar and comfortable with class discussions about books they had all read, so this didactic technique could be applied effectively.

Although there are many initiatives to encourage tolerance education and social mindfulness (Alavi, 2001; Harris, 2002; McFerran 2003; Walker, 2002), interventions using photographs to accomplish this goal are rare (Lintner, 2005). Lintner (2005) conducted a qualitative study where he used photographs to teach a lesson on accentuating and understanding differences. His study involved 175 elementary school students from two rural, high-need schools, over a four-month period. Lintner (2005) shared photographs that demonstrated differences from his participants in cultural, physical, and economic ways. He was careful, however, to show images of children engaged in activities common to elementary students. His rationale was that the students would come to understand that commonalities exist in addition to differences.

In the first part of the lesson, Lintner (2005) asked students what they thought about people who were different from them. Several students reported feeling uneasy about, and detached from, those who are different from them. In the second part of the lesson, students were shown three photos. As the pictures were revealed, students recorded their emotions. The first photograph was of two boys in wheelchairs playing
basketball. The second photograph was of a young Muslim girl wearing a head scarf. The third photograph depicted children living in poverty throwing a ball in front of loosely assembled shacks. After showing each photograph for about a minute and gathering the students’ thoughts, the investigator continued the lesson by describing the physical, ethnic, and financial differences between the students and the children in the photos. He also emphasized simple and fundamental similarities within and among the children.

The supporting narratives generated as the students viewed the photographs, were deemed essential by Lintner (2005) in helping the students connect their lives and understandings to those of the children in the photos. Students commented that they knew people in wheelchairs, had a family friend who was Muslim, knew people (or even themselves) who did not have enough clothing to wear, or were in other ways similar to the children in the photos. The students were able to see past the apparent dissimilarities and began to form mental connections with the children portrayed. The supporting narratives enhanced the students’ sensitivities and, though only superficially and temporarily, linked drastically different lives.

The time frame for Lintner’s (2005) study could be easily adapted to the ESI at RAIS and implemented in a similar manner. The RAIS students would likely appreciate the visual representations, and be open to discussing similarities and differences between them and the children in the photographs. As compared to Demircioglu’s (2008) stories, Lintner’s (2005) visual springboard for class discussion would give students a more concrete common basis with which to envisage and understand similarities and differences between themselves and others, as well as more easily provide scenarios and contexts.
Both Demircioglu (2008) and Lintner (2005) gathered qualitative data in the form of semi-structured interviews while engaging with a large group of students. These methods are effective because respondents were able to describe issues that are important to them and could build on each other’s knowledge (Finn & Jacobson, 2008; Jacobson et al., 2009; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001).

One important caveat regarding the collection of this type of qualitative data is the need to be mindful of issues pertaining to the authenticity of respondents’ remarks. Some students may make comments in the group setting that are not accurate representations of their viewpoints and opinions. Since the ESI would measure a student’s individual thoughts and opinions, careful consideration had to be given to this potential limitation. In the present study, I decided to make collection of qualitative data secondary to the quantitative methods employed. The main purpose of the qualitative information was to support and supplement the quantitative results obtained in the ESS and CWR.

Lintner’s (2005) intervention demonstrated that when prompted, and given the opportunity, photographs can be used to help students recognize differences as nonthreatening. When this occurs, students are less likely to harbor false impressions, narrow-mindedness and bias (McGowan, 2005). Lintner (2005) used the photographs to develop empathy, consideration, acceptance, and ethical sensitivity among elementary students. The findings from that study demonstrate what can potentially result when educators establish environments that encourage the recognition and appreciation of differences.

However, in Lintner’s study (2005) some students responded negatively to photographs of children whose experiences were outside their own frame of reference.
While the point of the activity was for the teacher to work through those reservations and prejudiced views, and try to transform them into positive outcomes, students might have benefited more if they had engaged in a more substantial prior activity or discussion. Prior discussion could have better prepared them for their experience with the photographs (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). Perhaps a warm-up activity where students explored minor differences among themselves, or a discussion that aimed to accentuate the similarities inherent in diversity, would have better prepared them for the photograph analysis and discussion component of Lintner’s (2005) study (Weinstein et al., 2004).

Photographs were adopted in the ESI to develop students’ abilities to control social bias. Prior activity and discussion were included as part of the ESI in the form of students being given the opportunity to think and discuss relevant warm-up prompts.

**Communicating Well**

Skillful communication requires the ability to listen, speak, write, and non-verbally exchange and interpret information contained in conversation. The specific skills needed at a given time vary depending on the context of communication (private, small crowd, large crowd, colleagues, authority figures, guests) and cultural setting (gender, school/work/home; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Siegman & Feldstein, 2014). As shown in Figure 2, Narvaez and Endicott (2009) identified communication as an element of the *interpreting information* function and as a sub-skill of ethical sensitivity.

Interventions that reinforce positive communication and facilitate the development of self-control, positive self-esteem, emotional awareness, and interpersonal problem-solving techniques were considered for implementation. Effort was made to
develop such qualities among the students at RAIS as a way to help students recognize ethical problems in human interaction (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012).

The intervention reviewed below (Kelly, Longbottom, Potts, & Williamson, 2004) relates to nuanced differences of communicating well. The notion of developing interpersonal problem-solving techniques is aligned with one of the goals of the ESI: to help students develop the ability to communicate effectively (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, & Vo, 2009).

Kelly et al. (2004) conducted an exploratory qualitative study that focused on the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum. Through this curriculum, young students were shown how to understand their emotions and utilize self-discipline strategies, leading to noteworthy development in coping mechanisms, classroom conduct, and oral self-expression. Their findings suggest that PATHS has the potential to influence emotional and communication skills in fundamental ways. Despite positive results, many teachers raised reservations about the amount of time and energy required to initially learn and establish the program.

The circumstances of the present study demanded a time-constrained, focused, intervention that required straightforward activities with clear short-term goals. Due to the potential for complicated or confusing material (as alluded to by teachers’ feedback on the PATHS curriculum) paired with contextual time constraints, implementation of the PATHS curriculum at RAIS was rejected on the basis of not being sufficiently aligned with the scope and objectives of the present study, which was designed to be small scale, limited in time, and focused more on ethical sensitivity.
Instead of including in the ESI a specific unit to promote the skill of communication, the choice was made to incorporate oral and written communication into the other sub-skill units addressed in the classroom setting. Teachers and students would typically engage with each other through class discussion and written language, as they shared thoughts, ideas, and opinions pertaining to ethical sensitivity. Therefore, it made sense to consider embedding the communicating well sub-skill within the development of the other sub-skills.

In spite of being subsumed into the other sub-skills with regard to ESI activities, development in the communicating well sub-skill was separately evaluated. The assessment instruments adopted, separately measured oral and written communication.

**Connecting to Others**

The ability to form social connections with others promotes ethical sensitivity (Narvaez & Endicott). As shown in Figure 2, this skill is a component of Narvaez and Endicott’s (2009) *organizing information* function that aims to develop critical thinking and reflection. Interpersonal connection encourages active development of attachment to others as well as concern for others. People are only able to feel and show concern, however, when they are able to perceive others as being connected to them (Williams, O’Driscoll, & Moore, 2014). This relates to the ability to empathize, which, in turn, encourages students to meet others’ needs and nurture relationships (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Sonkin, 2013).

People can connect with others against the backdrop of many different contexts and relationships. One may connect with some people as colleagues, and with others as friends or intimates. On the other end of the spectrum, one may connect, ever so slightly,
with others as tolerated strangers. Strength of connection may vary across these varied relationships; however, the common denominator is that concern and empathy are at the heart of all interpersonal connections (Williams et al., 2014).

Interventions such as Check & Connect in elementary and middle schools (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, & Lehr, 2004) and Child Development project (Osterman, 2000) are cited as two initiatives that have successfully resulted in students’ increased ability to connect to others. These interventions, which provide opportunities for students to better connect with peers, teachers, and community members, were considered for the ESI, though eliminated for practical reasons pertaining to the professional context. The rationale is further explained at the end of this chapter.

**Interpreting Situations**

The ability to interpret social situations serves as an important step in problem solving because it requires people to think about alternative ways to respond to conflicts. When responding to such situations, one must consider multiple ways to behave, and subsequent consequences (Landry, Nixon, Raman, Taylor, & Tepper, 2012; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). As shown in Figure 2, Narvaez and Endicott (2009) identified interpreting situations as component of the *interpreting information* function and as a sub-skill of ethical sensitivity.

Interventions in elementary school settings that address students’ abilities to interpret situations are scarce. Those that do exist are designed for professional contexts, populations, and time frames that do not align with the RAIS context, student population, or ESI time frame. Thus, the studies reviewed in this section represent interventions that
are generally applicable as a means to improve any curricular goal across several disciplines and grade levels.

Sadik (2008) and Palmer and Wehmeyer (2003) conducted studies that have aspects that can be generally applied to the ESI. The interventions analyzed in these studies provided students with opportunities to create digital stories and engage in problem-solving activities that were aimed to develop ability to interpret situations. Students were encouraged to contemplate the consequences of their actions when making ethical decisions and to ponder alternatives when solving ethical problems (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012).

Sadik (2008) implemented a digital storytelling intervention that utilized constructivist strategies such as collaborative and cooperative learning methods as forty-five teenage participants demonstrated increased understanding of curricular content.

Within the ESI, developed content knowledge was not the focus. Instead, the purpose of this ESI was to expose the students to unique experiences where they analyzed scenarios and grappled with ethical dilemmas, encouraging them to develop ethically sensitive thoughts and ideas. Despite the fact that the digital storytelling intervention did not measure what the ESI attempted to measure, its utilized method of data collection may be valuable in its own right. The recording and transcription of data as well as the performance of qualitative content analysis were processes that directly informed the qualitative data collection and analysis process within the ESI.

Palmer and Wehmeyer (2003) conducted a study in the early elementary school setting that aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction, a model based on autonomous problem-solving and student-directed learning.
(Wehmeyer, 1999). It enabled educators to show students how to become self-sufficient problem solvers, set goals, and assess progress towards their goals (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003). The results from the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction intervention suggested that opportunities to self-regulate problem solving are valuable for elementary age students. Students as young as five can set goals and work through questions with little assistance (Kiresuk et al., 1994).

Palmer and Wehmeyer (2003) asked the students open-ended questions during and after the gathering of quantitative data. The researchers also gathered qualitative data to explain numerical outcomes and to support further analysis (Gibson & Duncan, 2002). A similar data collection technique, qualitative content analysis, was used in the ESI: students were asked open-ended questions to enable the gathering of supporting qualitative data.

The sub-skill, interpreting situations, was entirely excluded from the ESI, per the explanation at the end of this chapter. Thus, Sadik’s (2008) and Palmer and Wehmeyer’s (2003) interventions were not adapted for use within the ESI. Their work did, however, inspire the adoption of qualitative data collection methods and qualitative content analysis, which were incorporated into the present study. Throughout the ESI, qualitative data was gathered, in part, through open-ended inquiry (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003). Additionally, content analysis, a widely used qualitative research technique was utilized (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Both of these methodologies informed the data collection and analysis processes employed in the ESI at RAIS.
Summary

The strengths and weaknesses of each intervention considered in this literature review, as well as its application to the context and population at RAIS, were important considerations as the ESI was developed. Best practices as well as study designs were examined. Some interventions and methods were relatively more valuable than others when compared with alternatives. Some were also more or less practical for the students at RAIS and the mission of RAIS’s program.

Table 3 summarizes and organizes the information discussed in this section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Skill of Ethical Sensitivity</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perspective Taking</td>
<td>Role-Taking (Turiel, 1983)</td>
<td>Mat have positive effect on students’ abilities to cooperate with people who do not share their opinions on ethical matters.</td>
<td>(In reference to method of evaluating intervention: individual interviews) Potential for interviewer bias. Possibility of interview seeming intrusive to respondent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective Taking</td>
<td>Cooperative Learning (Tsay &amp; Brady, 2012)</td>
<td>Students may have improved ability to empathize with peers. Students help each other complete tasks.</td>
<td>Some students feel held back by less capable team members and other students feel ignored by more proficient students. These negative emotions potentially hinder students’ ability to perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting to Others</td>
<td>Child Development Project (Osterman, 2000)</td>
<td>Students learn in student-centered manner. Students connect through community involvement.</td>
<td>External factors were not ruled out in effort to strengthen causal relationship between intervention and outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Skill of Ethical Sensitivity</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>Weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Diversity</td>
<td>Analyzing Stories (Demircioglu, 2008)</td>
<td>Teaching with stories may promote students’ knowledge, is engaging, and amusing.</td>
<td>Students didn’t engage in enough higher-level critical thinking skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling Social Bias</td>
<td>Analyzing Photographs (Lintner, 2005)</td>
<td>Photographs can help students recognize differences as nonthreatening.</td>
<td>Students didn’t engage in substantial prior activity that could have better prepared them for reflection and discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting Situations</td>
<td>Digital Storytelling (Sadik, 2008)</td>
<td>Students reflected on the meaning of their stories and took pride in developing and sharing stories. Students built knowledge as opposed to being passive recipients.</td>
<td>Lack of guidance possibly resulting in distorted voice/images and products of poor quality. Teachers felt ill-prepared to explain technical procedures to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting Situations</td>
<td>Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (Palmer &amp; Wehmeyer, 2003)</td>
<td>Students self-directed their own learning which is associated with improvement in students’ academic success and attitudes.</td>
<td>Teachers didn’t feel like they had enough support in their efforts to learn and implement the new material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating Well</td>
<td>PATHS (Kelly et al., 2004)</td>
<td>Improved student behavior, reduced classroom disruptions, and promoted greater academic engagement and achievement. Curriculum is age-appropriate and widely applicable.</td>
<td>Too much time needed to initially learn the program and properly implement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

An ethical sensitivity framework and a set of associated sub-skills (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009) can be promoted via various methods designed to develop different aspects of each sensitivity. Each sub-skill represents an element of the framework that facilitates an individual’s ability to thrive in social settings and get along with others. When taught in a developmentally appropriate manner, students feel empowered with the understanding that they are creating their own character (Agarwal, Motwani, & Shrimali, 2014; Narvaez, 2001; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Noddings, 2013; Wheeler & Richey, 2014).

Due to time and funding constraints within my professional context, I decided to focus on developing four out of seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity among the fourth and fifth grade students at RAIS: reading and expressing emotion, taking the perspective of others, controlling social bias, and communicating well. These four sub-skills were the ones I considered most relevant to develop ethical sensitivity, and the ones I had the most confidence in being able to effectively develop with this group of students. For each of them, the specific methods chosen were those that were best supported by the existing literature.

Three sub-skills that were considered least applicable, redundant, or impractical with respect to the time constraints and scale of the intervention (and therefore were excluded from the ESI) were connecting to others, interpreting situations, and responding to diversity. Justification for the inclusion and exclusion of such sub-skills is further detailed towards the end of this section.
The decision to exclude some of the sub-skills led to a plan that was narrower in scope and preferable to a more complex design, which might have compromised my ability to adequately address the sub-skills. The scope of my study was limited in order to more effectively address the sub-skills I selected, within the given time frame.

Different researchers developed ethical sensitivity among their students using various methodologies. In developing the ESI at RAIS, my decision to utilize or avoid particular strategies and methods was partially based on the strengths, weaknesses, and efficacy of the reviewed interventions. Other considerations included access to resources, relevance to the RAIS context and population, and time constraints of the intervention.

In my attempt to design a valid and reliable study, I incorporated the strengths of interventions and methods of study considered most effective. I also tried to learn from, and avoid the weaknesses and limitations of interventions and methods.

The final design of the ESI included lesson units on 1) reading and expressing emotion, 2) taking the perspectives of others, and 3) controlling social bias. Skill development pertaining to communicating was distributed across all units.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the sub-skills of ethical sensitivity facilitate three main cognitive functions: acquiring information about the ethical situation, organizing that information, and interpreting the information (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). These processes are specifically identified as cognitive constructs that can be taught in the classroom.

In the present study, at least one sub-skill from each function was addressed in the intervention at RAIS. As shown in Figure 3, the first two included in the ESI are reading and expressing emotions and perspective-taking. They are both representative of the
acquiring information function which includes processes of perception and inference (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). These two sub-skills align with the most basic aspect of ethical sensitivity which is awareness of an ethical situation. Controlling social bias is another sub-skill included in the ESI, and it represents the organizing information function which includes processes of critical thinking and reflection (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). This sub-skill aligns with an awareness of how others may be affected by various situations. The last sub-skill developed among the students in the present study is communicating well, which is representative of the interpreting information function. This function includes processes of divergent thinking, and this sub-skill supports the use of communication skills needed for encounters within various social contexts (Narvaez, 2013; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009).

**Figure 3.** Ethical Sensitivity Intervention. This figure illustrates the functions to which each sub-skill of ethical sensitivity belong, and the overall composition of the Ethical Sensitivity Intervention.
Reading and Expressing Emotions is a sub-skill within the *acquiring information* function that was included in the ESI. The students’ abilities to read and express emotions may prime them for more effective perspective-taking. Furthermore, studies that used film viewing as a means for developing this sub-skill had practical and favorable implications for applicability to the ESI (Blasco et al., 2011; Woelders, 2007).

Viewing films is a reward that RAIS students sometimes earn for positive behavior. Consequently, it was likely that the students would respond to such an educational opportunity in an enthusiastic manner. This is a key factor since student engagement in the ESI would more likely lead to development of ethical sensitivity. Additionally, RAIS students were accustomed to learning in an inquiry-based manner, as described in the previously mentioned interventions. Consequently, the students were likely to be comfortable participating in an ESI that incorporated a familiar teaching technique.

Taking the perspective of others is a second sub-skill within the *acquiring information* function included in the ESI. Perspective-taking opportunities are important in cognitive-development approaches where teachers act as facilitators of student development of ethical sensitivity (Narvaez, 2006). Turiel (1983) and Tsay and Brady (2012) utilized role-taking and cooperative learning techniques to develop perspective-taking skills among students in their respective studies. Santoro et al. (2008) cited these teaching techniques as successful ways to help students develop awareness of how others view similar situations. Likewise, these teaching techniques were helpful in promoting an understanding of how those with different points of view might act. Following their successful examples, I incorporated role-taking and cooperative learning techniques in the ESI.
The cognitive function referred to as organizing information includes the sub-skill controlling social bias. Learning to limit the degree to which differences in class and social standing influence decision-making is an important skill for students to acquire. Doing so encourages students to identify, appreciate, and actively fight instances of injustice they may be confronted with (Conroy et al., 2009; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009; Siegman & Feldstein, 2014). Interventions that have aimed to develop this sub-skill have done so through the use of stories and photographs (Demircioglu, 2008; Lintner, 2005). Lintner’s study (2005) used photographs in a visual and experiential manner to effectively develop compassion and respect among students. Based on these favorable results, I predicted this methodology to be effective at RAIS, in part because students were likely to appreciate the visual springboard for class discussion. Analyzing the same image while merely reading an explanation or listening to a verbal description would likely not provide the students with the same rich basis for understanding (Schmeck, 2013).

The ability to communicate well in a variety of ways is connected to the cognitive function referred to as interpreting information and is necessary for acquisition of several of the skills discussed in this chapter. Researchers have found that communication with others is potentially an effective way of developing ethical sensitivity (Lepper, 1996). The basis of this research is the idea that social interaction influences cognitive moral development. This sub-skill was not included in the ESI as a stand-alone sub-skill, but was embedded within sessions addressing other sub-skills in the form of class discussion and written responses to prompts. The students’ oral and written communication abilities were quantified and analyzed.
Certain sub-skills of ethical sensitivity were eliminated in order to focus on others. I prioritized depth over breadth of coverage with respect to the number of sub-skills targeted, and thus was able to constrain the intervention to a two month period.

Furthermore, certain sub-skills not addressed in this intervention were redundant with skills taught in other programs within the school. For example, skills identical or similar to the connecting to others and interpreting situations sub-skills were already fostered at RAIS. As it pertained to the connecting to others sub-skill, students already engaged in programming that focused on developing concern for others and maintaining good personal relationships (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012). Additionally, as it pertained to the interpreting situations sub-skill, RAIS recently implemented an intervention that focused on teaching students about alternative ways to respond to conflicts. Teachers and administration at RAIS worked hard in recent years to develop students’ understanding of consequences of various behaviors (Landry et al., 2012; Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). Further development of these two sub-skills would not have reflected the best use of time given the already ongoing development of such skills, and possible confounding effects of one program on another.

Similarly, I chose not to include the responding to diversity sub-skill in the ESI because it closely resembles the controlling social bias sub-skill, which was incorporated. Both elicit similar ways of thinking among the students as they pertain to consideration for others’ opinions and recognition of their own prejudices (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012). The time frame allotted for the intervention was approximately two months; the intervention would have required additional time to effectively develop skills based on understanding diversity issues in addition to controlling for social bias. Given more time
for the intervention and the importance of this skill-set in the current social climate, I would have considered incorporating this sub-skill in my ESI. In order to avoid potential redundancy and work with the given time constraint, however, it was more feasible to focus on the other sub-skills.

In addition to informing intervention strategies, some of the studies referenced in this review contributed to the manner in which ethical sensitivity development was measured in the present study.

Tsay and Brady (2012) reported significant findings upon administering a self-report scale to their students. They measured the impact of cooperative-learning opportunities on the development of perspective-taking. A self-report scale was conveniently applied in Tsay and Brady’s (2012) study as a straightforward data collection tool.

The Ethical Sensitivity Scale (ESS; see Figure 4), developed by Tirri and Nokelainen (2012), served as the self-report tool used in the ESI. The ESS was chosen as the most appropriate measurement tool for the ESI because it is based on the work of Narvaez and Endicott (2009) and measures each of the ethical sensitivity sub-skills. Within each sub-skill, Tirri and Nokelainen (2012) carefully developed four statements that describe issues and values potentially considered to be personally important to respondents. The respondent rates how personally important such concerns and beliefs are and a corresponding number quantifies attainment of a given skill.

Relevance to the given sub-skill and general applicability to the respondents were of utmost importance to Tirri and Nokelainen (2012) when they developed the individual ESS statements. They conducted an extensive literature review of detailed aspects of each
sub-skill that guided the design of individual statements. Additionally, a main consideration was to ensure that each statement was applicable to people of varying backgrounds and cultures. Consequently, this design allows for use of the ESS in cross-cultural studies as well as in multicultural society.

Even though the ESS offers a quantitative measure of students’ orientation on ethical issues, and can be applied to various learning contexts, it is important to keep in mind that the corresponding sub-skills are not equated with a holistic measure of ethical sensitivity. They are skills that people who are ethically sensitive tend to possess. Similarly, the individual statements in the ESS are not complete measures of the sub-skills. They represent the principles and opinions of those who are potentially actualized in a given domain.

**Conclusion**

This literature review presented a variety of interventions aimed to develop skills associated with ethical sensitivity in students of all ages and settings. General background information for each intervention, strengths and weaknesses of best practices, and methods of study were included. The interventions identified have informed pedagogical practices as well as data collection and data analysis methods within the ESI.

The ESI addresses a very specific question, which will hopefully contribute to research in the more general field of character education. My intervention aimed to discover the extent to which participation in an ESI leads to increased student ethical sensitivity among fourth and fifth grade students at a religiously-affiliated independent school as measured by the ESS and analytic rubric used to assess communication skills (CWR; Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012).
This question is important both on the local and broader scale. With respect to the current situation at RAIS, the ESI addressed a problem identified by my needs assessment. Ethical sensitivity was not being actively developed or assessed among the student body even though all stakeholders and decision makers deemed it important. On a somewhat more global scale, the ESI may help to frame a new curriculum that could be useful to the faculty at RAIS as well as to those in other religiously affiliated independent schools. Lastly, the ESI sought to address fundamental skills in character education that form the basis for more sophisticated analysis of ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical motivation, and ethical action.
CHAPTER 5
INTERVENTION PROCEDURE

In Chapter 4: Methodological Approaches, I analyzed several possible intervention methodologies reported to be positively associated with ethical sensitivity. Upon reviewing their strengths and weaknesses, as well as practical aspects of these methods and contextual considerations, I planned an ethical sensitivity intervention (ESI) designed to develop four sub-skills that promote ethical sensitivity.

Method

The ESI aimed to increase ethical sensitivity in fourth and fifth grade students at RAIS. Four sub-skills that support the acquisition of ethical sensitivity (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009) were selected and served as the framework for this intervention: (a) reading and expressing emotion, (b) taking the perspective of others, (c) controlling social bias, and (d) communicating well. Communicating well was embedded within the other three sub-skills. Research-based methods corresponding to each sub-skill, as discussed in Chapter 4, guided decisions regarding specific activities and their content.

Participants

Twenty-five fourth and fifth grade RAIS students participated in this study. Of the twelve fourth graders, seven were girls and five were boys. Of the thirteen fifth graders, five were girls and eight were boys. Most came from families of a middle or high socioeconomic status, and all were Caucasian. The students who participated in this study were typically developing, both cognitively and academically.

Upon inquiring with the participants’ teachers at RAIS, it was determined that all participants have attained sufficient cognitive development to benefit from the
intervention. The basis for this determination was made upon noting that, despite being evaluated, no fourth or fifth grade students at RAIS qualified for individualized educational plans resulting in modifications or accommodations within the classroom. It was therefore assumed that the participants were able to understand and engage in an intervention that aimed to develop sub-skills of ethical sensitivity.

Younger students (i.e. kindergarten through third grade) were not included in this study because of concerns surrounding their presumed stages of cognitive development. These younger students may not have been able to adequately express attitudinal change (Whitted, 2011), as assessed by the ESS (see Figure 4). Therefore, including students younger than fourth grade in the ESI may have compromised the legitimacy of the data. On average, fourth and fifth grade students have better literacy skills and understand complex social issues better than typical students in younger grades (Gest, Rulison, Davidson, & Welsh, 2008; Moore, 2014; Nagy, Berninger, & Abbott, 2006). Typical cognitive development of fourth and fifth grade students allowed for authentic and legitimate participation in the ESI.
| 1. In conflict situations, I am able to identify other persons’ feelings. | Totally Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Totally Agree |
| 2. I am able to express my different feelings to other people. |  |
| 3. I notice if someone working with me is offended by me. |  |
| 4. I am able to express to other people if I am offended or hurt because of them. |  |
| 5. I am able to cooperate with people who do not share my opinions on what is right and what is wrong. |  |
| 6. I tolerate different ethical views in my surroundings. |  |
| 7. I think it is good that my closest friends think in different ways. |  |
| 8. I also get along with people who do not agree with me. |  |
| 9. I recognize my own bias when I take a stand on ethical issues. |  |
| 10. I realize that I am tied to certain prejudices when I assess ethical issues. |  |
| 11. I try to control my own prejudices when making ethical evaluations. |  |
| 12. When I am resolving ethical problems, I try to take a position evolving out of my own social status. |  |


**ESI Setting**

The students met for ESI sessions on a weekly basis from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

The intervention encompassed the period between Wednesday, October 14, 2015 and
Wednesday, December 23, 2015. The students and researcher met for eight one-hour sessions between these dates. The ESI took place at RAIS in a multipurpose room. The room was equipped with the necessary technology and was large enough to accommodate all 25 students. The students did not have assigned seats.

**ESI Design**

As shown in Figure 5, the ESI consisted of a double pretest, eight weekly intervention sessions, and one posttest. The first pretest, the ESS, was administered five weeks before the start of the ESI. At this time, the BSDS was also distributed in an effort to gauge social desirability. On the first day of the ESI, the ESS was issued again as the second pretest. Additionally, in order to gather data on students’ oral and written communication, the CWR was used to collect data on the first day of the ESI.

Throughout the eight weekly sessions, data on students’ participation was gathered through the use of the ECP. Furthermore, the CWR was used to gauge students’ communication, and qualitative data was gathered using students’ written responses to prompts and observations documented as anecdotal evidence. Research assistants were teachers of younger students at RAIS, and assisted the researcher in documenting anecdotal evidence and in gathering data through the use of the ECP and CWR. The researcher gathered data using the BSDS, ESS, and written prompts.

The eight ESI sessions were broken down according to sub-skill. Three sessions focused on reading and expressing emotion, two sessions on taking others’ perspectives, and three sessions on controlling social bias. The posttest data was collected on the last day of the ESI, and consisted of re-administering the ESS and using the CWR to gather data.
Reading and Expressing Emotion

In an effort to develop the ability to read and express emotion, students engaged in class discussion, analyzed film clips, and responded in written format to corresponding prompts (Blasco et al., 2011; Woelders, 2007; see Figures 6, 7, and 8). The three emotions targeted were fear, anger, and sadness. These negative emotions were chosen because identifying and deeply understanding feelings in conflict situations is far more challenging than reading and understanding positive emotions.

Before viewing the film clips, students engaged in whole-class discussion that was intended to help them reflect on personal experiences that could elicit various negative emotions. Questions asked included, “Think about a time when you were in a new place or you were unsure about your surroundings. How did you feel?”; “Think
about a time when you didn’t get what you wanted. How did you feel?” and “Think about a time when you were not included in a game or activity that your friends were playing. How did this make you feel?”

The film clips chosen, pre-approved by the RAIS administration, portrayed characters that felt fear, anger, or sadness. They included scenes from *Beauty and the Beast, Toy Story, The Lion King, Rugrats,* and *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid.* After viewing the film clips, the characters (and the feelings they expressed) served as a frame of reference for class discussion. Upon discussing, in a whole-group setting, what happened and how the characters felt, the students engaged in small-group discussion. Small heterogeneous groups consisted of three to four students of differing grade-levels and genders. The researcher facilitated discussion in these new groups with follow-up questions surrounding themes from the film clips, after which students responded to written prompts on an individual basis (see Figures 6, 7, and 8). Three one-hour long sessions were devoted to the development of this sub-skill.
Name:
Why is it important to notice how other people feel? Why is it important to share my feelings with others?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Figure 6.** Reading and Expressing Emotion BCR Prompt 1. Students responded to this prompt in written format upon engaging in a session on reading and expressing fear.

Name:
Why is it important to notice if someone I am talking to is offended? Why is it important to express to other people if I am offended or hurt?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Figure 7.** Reading and Expressing Emotion BCR Prompt 2. Students responded to this prompt in written format upon engaging in a session on reading and expressing anger.

Name:
What are some ways I would be able to tell if someone was feeling lonely? What could I do or say if I was the one feeling lonely? OR What are some ways I would be able to tell if someone was feeling embarrassed? What could I do or say if I was the one feeling embarrassed?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Figure 8.** Reading and Expressing Emotion BCR Prompt 3. Students responded to this prompt in written format upon engaging in a session on reading and expressing sadness.

**Taking the Perspective of Others**

In an effort to develop the ability to understand alternative views in social situations, the students engaged in role-taking and cooperative learning opportunities (Tsay & Brady, 2012; Turiel, 1983). They played a game called *Should I or Shouldn’t I?* The object of the game was for students to reflect on their own thoughts and behaviors,
and those of other people in various situations. The game was designed to provide students with a fun and motivating tool to improve their awareness of others and discuss relevant issues in a nonjudgmental, public setting. The students used a scale (see Table 4) to rate a particular behavior in a specific context, depending on whether or not they felt the behavior was appropriate and how it makes others feel. Some examples of behaviors that students were expected to rate were: (a) You are at a drive-thru restaurant. You keep changing your mind about what to order, (b) You didn’t study for the weekly science quiz, so you try to copy answers from the person next to you, (c) Your dad is napping. You use headphones while listening to your music so you don’t wake him up. Students were divided into small groups of three or four participants of differing grade-levels and genders as they collaborated to rate the behaviors. After playing the game, they debriefed in a whole-class setting as they discussed their experiences rating the behaviors. Some students shared personal anecdotes while others recapped their rationale for choosing a particular number on the scale. After debriefing, the students individually responded to written prompts (see Figures 9 and 10). Two one-hour sessions were devoted to the development of this sub-skill.
Table 4

Should I or Shouldn’t I? Behavior Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description of Rating</th>
<th>Description of Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5      | Behaviors that are against the rules. | These behaviors  
  • are not allowed  
  • make others feel angry toward you  
  • will get you in trouble |
| 4      | Behaviors that make others feel annoyed. | These behaviors  
  • make others feel annoyed with you  
  • make others not want to play or work with you  
  • make people not want to help you |
| 3      | Behaviors that make others have weird thoughts. | These behaviors  
  • make others have weird thoughts about you  
  • make others want to move away from you  
  • can cause others to tease or bully you |
| 2      | Behaviors that are fine or okay. | These behaviors  
  • make others feel calm when they are around you  
  • make others have neutral or good thoughts about you  
  • make others want to work with you |
| 1      | Behaviors that make others have good thoughts. | These behaviors  
  • make others feel good when they are around you  
  • make others want to play and work with you  
  • make adults have a proud feeling about you |
Figure 9. Taking the Perspective of Others BCR Prompt 1. Students responded to this prompt in written format upon engaging in a session on taking others’ perspectives.

Name:
Why is it important to think about situations from others’ point of view?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Figure 10. Taking the Perspective of Others BCR Prompt 2. Students responded to this prompt in written format upon engaging in a session on taking others’ perspectives.

Name:
Is it ok if my friends and I have different opinions sometimes? How could this actually be a good thing?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Controlling Social Bias

In an effort to develop the ability to control social bias, the students engaged in class discussion, analyzed photographs, and responded to written prompts (Lintner, 2005; see Figures 11, 12, and 13). The photographs highlighted social differences that students may encounter on a daily basis, such as disability, religion, and socioeconomic status.

One criticism of Lintner’s (2005) study is that he did not engage students in substantial prior activity. Perhaps doing so could have better prepared his students for reflection, discussion, and ultimately development. Thus, careful consideration was given to prior activity in the ESI. Students in the present study participated in whole-class discussion that began with the following questions, “What are some differences between people? What do you think about people who are different from you?”, “What are some
other religions? What do you think of people who observe other religions?” “Imagine
that your family didn’t have very much money. How would your life be different? What
might you have to do without?” and “What does it mean to show bias?”

Upon engaging in discussion triggered by these questions, the students analyzed
photographs that visually represented people of varying religious beliefs and disabilities
as well as a wide range of socioeconomic statuses. Included in the photos of people with
disabilities were photos of children with obesity and other such potential targets for
bullying.

After analyzing the photographs in a whole-class setting, the researcher used
themes derived from the photographs to facilitate small-group discussion. Groups
consisted of three to four students of mixed grade-levels and mixed genders. Lastly,
students individually responded, in written format to prompts as shown in Figures 11, 12,
and 13. Three one-hour sessions were devoted to the development of this sub-skill.

| Name: ____________________________ |
| Why is it important to recognize our own biases towards others? If we do feel bias
towards someone or a group of people, how should we be mindful of our words and
actions?
| _____________________________________________________________________________ |
| _____________________________________________________________________________ |
| _____________________________________________________________________________ |
| _____________________________________________________________________________ |

*Figure 11. Controlling Social Bias BCR Prompt 1. Students responded to this prompt in
written format upon engaging in a session on better understanding disability.*
Name:__________________________________________________________

What harm could result from being mean to people who are different? What good could result from being nice to people who are different?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Figure 12. Controlling Social Bias BCR Prompt 2. Students responded to this prompt in written format upon engaging in a session on better understanding religion.

Name:__________________________________________________________

What made sense to me today that I hadn’t thought of before? What am I going to do differently with my new thoughts?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Figure 13. Controlling Social Bias BCR Prompt 3. Students responded to this prompt in written format upon engaging in a session on better understanding socioeconomic status.

Communicating Well

The effort to develop better communication skills was carried out within the implementation of the previously mentioned three sub-skills. Students demonstrated ability to communicate orally while speaking in small groups and in a whole-class setting. Observations were documented surrounding such communication. Likewise, students demonstrated ability to communicate using written language through written responses to prompts at the conclusion of every session.

Research Question

The fundamental research question asked: To what extent did participation in the ESI lead to increased student ethical sensitivity as measured by the Ethical Sensitivity
Scale (ESS; Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012; see Figure 4) and Communicating Well Rubric (CWR; see Figure 14)?

<p>| Name: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Communication</th>
<th>0 Absent</th>
<th>1 Minimal</th>
<th>2 Average</th>
<th>3 Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>The student does not engage in oral communication.</td>
<td>The student uses oral communication to demonstrate a minimal understanding of the lesson content.</td>
<td>The student uses oral communication to demonstrate a moderate understanding of the lesson content.</td>
<td>The student uses oral communication to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the lesson content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>The student does not display written communication.</td>
<td>The student uses written communication to demonstrate a minimal understanding of the lesson content.</td>
<td>The student uses written communication to demonstrate a moderate understanding of the lesson content.</td>
<td>The student uses written communication to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the lesson content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments:

(Consider indicating quality and frequency of communication. Also, consider commenting on non-verbal communication.)

Figure 14. Communicating Well Rubric. This data collection tool was used to gauge students’ oral and written communication.

I hypothesized that the degree of ethical sensitivity, as measured by the ESS and CWR, would increase after participation in the ESI. Participation in the ESI was measured using a variation of an Evaluation Class Participation tool (ECP; see Figure 15).
Name:__________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of points</th>
<th>Description of Students’ Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 points</td>
<td>The student made several significant contributions to the class discussion. The student was fully participating and on-task the entire time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>The student made a couple significant contributions to the class discussion. The student was mostly participating and mostly on-task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>The student participated a moderate amount and was on-task half the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>The student participated a little, but mostly just smiled and agreed with others, possibly hoping to share credit for their contributions. The student was on-task for a small portion of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 point</td>
<td>The student did not participate and was off-task the entire time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>The student didn’t show up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional comments:


Data Collection

See Table 5 for a list of variables and outcome measures of the Ethical Sensitivity Intervention.
Table 5
Variables and Outcome Measures of the ESI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Role of Indicator</th>
<th>Data Source(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in ESI (Scores on variation of ECP tool)</td>
<td>Moderating Variable</td>
<td>A variation of the Evaluation of Class Participation tool (ECP; Fig. 1; Daggett, 1996)</td>
<td>Once a week (During each session)</td>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Desirability (Scores on BSDFS)</td>
<td>Moderating Variable</td>
<td>Brief Social Desirability Scale (BSDS; Haghighat, 2007)</td>
<td>Once before the ESI</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Ethical Sensitivity (Self-report scores on ESS)</td>
<td>Outcome Measure</td>
<td>Variation of the Ethical Sensitivity Scale (ESS; Tirri &amp; Nokelainen, 2011).</td>
<td>Once before the ESI, once at the start and once afterward</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Ethical Sensitivity (Oral and Written Communication Scores on CWR)</td>
<td>Outcome Measure</td>
<td>Self-Constructed</td>
<td>Once a week (During each session)</td>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Ethical Sensitivity (Supporting qualitative data)</td>
<td>Outcome Measure</td>
<td>Brief constructed responses to written prompts and observations gathered as anecdotal evidence</td>
<td>Once a week (During each session)</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-skills of ethical sensitivity to be included in ESI (Reading/ Expressing Emotions, Perspective-Taking, Controlling Social Bias, Communicating Well)</td>
<td>Control Variable</td>
<td>Narvaez and Endicott (2009)</td>
<td>Once a week (During each session)</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in ESI (Scores on variation of ECP tool)</td>
<td>Moderating Variable</td>
<td>A variation of the Evaluation of Class Participation tool (ECP; Fig. 1; Daggett, 1996)</td>
<td>Once a week (During each session)</td>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Role of Indicator</td>
<td>Data Source(s)</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
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<td>Social Desirability</td>
<td>Moderating Variable</td>
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<td>Once a week (During each session)</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Scores on BSDS)

(Self-report scores on ESS)

(Oral and Written Communication Scores on CWR)

(Supporting qualitative data)
Below I expand and explain details of data collection represented in the ESI flowchart (see Figure 5).

The outcome of the ESI was measured, in part, through the use of a pre-constructed, reliable, and validated Ethical Sensitivity Scale (ESS; Tirri, Nokelainen, & Holm, 2008; see Figure 4). The ESS is a quantitative tool specifically designed to measure seven sub-skills that support ethical sensitivity (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009). It gauges students’ orientation on ethical issues; however, it can also be applied to various learning contexts. The scale asked four questions per sub-skill and utilized a five-point Likert scale for responses.

The ESS was referenced in a logic model (see Figure 16) which detailed the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the ESI, as well as the method of evaluation, surrounding assumptions, and external factors.
Figure 16. Logic Model of Ethical Sensitivity Intervention. This logic model illustrates the inputs, outputs, outcomes, some of the assumptions and external factors, and methods of evaluation within the Ethical Sensitivity Intervention.
A within-participants version of a one-group pretest-posttest evaluation design was employed to determine the extent to which participation in the ESI leads to increased student ethical sensitivity as measured by the ESS (see Figure 4) and CWR (see Figure 14). This quasi-experimental design consisted of two pretests, followed by treatment, followed by a posttest (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

The Brief Social Desirability Scale (BSDS; Haghighat, 2007; see Figure 17), ESS and CWR served as pretests in an effort to gauge social desirability bias (Nederhof, 1985) and establish an ethical sensitivity baseline. The BSDS was issued along with the first ESS five weeks before the start of the intervention. On the first day of the intervention, the second ESS was distributed and the CWR was used to gather data on students’ communication abilities.

| Name: _______________________________ |
| Date: _______________________________ |
| 1) Would you smile at people every time you meet them? |
|   Yes______ No__________ |
| 2) Do you always practice what you preach to people? |
|   Yes______ No__________ |
| 3) If you say to people that you will do something, do you always keep your promise no matter how inconvenient it might be? |
|   Yes______ No__________ |
| 4) Would you ever lie to people? |
|   Yes______ No__________ |
| 5) Would you ever laugh at an inappropriate joke that people may make? |
|   Yes______ No__________ |


The treatment consisted of implementation of activities related to the four sub-skills of ethical sensitivity, as described above: (a) reading and expressing emotion; (b)
taking the perspective of others; (c) controlling social bias; and (g) communicating well (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009).

Throughout the treatment, a variation of the ECP tool (see Figure 15) was utilized to quantify participation, and the CWR (see Figure 14) was used to gather data as it related to students’ oral and written communication. Additionally, students’ brief responses to ethical dilemma prompts (see Figures 6-13) and observations recorded in anecdotal fashion served as supportive qualitative data.

The posttest utilized the ESS and CWR to gather data on students’ development of the four sub-skills of ethical sensitivity.

While a larger sample size would have allowed a between group comparison and addition of a control group, the within-participants study design was chosen, in part, due to the sample size at my disposal (25 students in the fourth and fifth grades combined). This design was structured to allow the same participants to take part in both the pretests and posttest. Consequently, the same students’ scores were compared before and after taking part in the intervention (Trafimow, Kiekel, & Clason, 2004).

In addition to the study design limitation imposed by the small number of subjects at RAIS, a control group was not practical due to the unique religious background of the participants. Students of comparable religious background within a reasonably proximate geographical area were not available to serve as study participants. Furthermore, per the school’s mission statement, which declares the importance of ethical sensitivity development for all students, and per the wishes of my executive sponsor, it would have been unethical to leave some students out of the treatment group (RAIS). Such political,
logistical, and ethical considerations were constraints considered in designing the ESI evaluation.

The one-group pretest-posttest design was chosen to accommodate another constraint that limited the time frame of the ESI; only two months were available to implement the intervention. Other designs, such as the repeated-treatment design, would require significantly more time since treatment is introduced, removed, and reintroduced (Shadish et al., 2002). Alternative designs were simply not practical given the time constraints and professional context of this study.

The inclusion of a double pretest reduced the probability of maturation and regression threats (Sørlie & Ogden, 2014). Results from the two pretests could have potentially revealed biases that could exist in calculating the effect of treatment as measured from the second pretest to the posttest (Coryn & Hobson, 2011). For example, students who already had a relatively high degree of ethical sensitivity may not have improved much as a result of the intervention. Conversely, students who initially scored low would have improved to a far greater degree.

**Effect size.** Effect size is a way of representing the magnitude of differences between groups (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). It is a quantitative measure of the strength of a phenomenon (Kelley & Preacher, 2012).

Leviton and Lipsey (2007) noted that to accurately determine effect size, it is best to develop new interventions on the basis of prior pilot studies. Several studies were considered and dismissed based on their context, student population, and/or relevance to what the ESI attempts to achieve.
For example, similar to the ESI, *Caring School Community™* (CSC; Sherblom, Marshall, & Sherblom, 2006) focused on students in grades K-6. It was a multiyear program, however, and focused on school-wide feelings of community as opposed to individual accountability for ethical sensitivity. Similarly, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC; Hansen & Rieper, 2009) review of *Character Education Interventions* focused on elementary, middle, and high school students. However, the interventions were too general, broadly addressing influences on positive character development.

*Building Decision Skills*, on the other hand, was an intervention that utilized small-group activities and class discussion, in a manner comparable to the ESI, to give high school students tools to understand and work through ethical dilemmas (Leming, 2001). The *Building Decision Skills* program and the ESI had similar projected outcomes, and utilized methodologies that closely resembled each other. Both quasi-experimental studies took place in suburban schools and students in both contexts were described to be middle class and exclusively or mainly Caucasian. For these reasons, the effect size was expected to be comparable between the two interventions. While students in the *Building Decision Skills* program were older than the fourth and fifth grade students who participated in the ESI, some trade-offs were unavoidable. The nature of the two programs was similar enough to allow me to derive useful information from a closer look at their outcome measures.

One outcome measure that the *Building Decision Skills* program addressed was “ethical perspective.” This outcome measure had a statistically significant effect size of 0.84 (with a sample size of 283 and achieved power of 1). Therefore, the effect size of 0.84 was adapted to the ESI in an effort to calculate the number of participants necessary
to avoid a Type II error, the acceptance of the null hypothesis when the intervention had an effect. A priori power analysis revealed that the ESI needed to utilize a minimum of 17 participants to ensure that the ESI had sufficient power (.95) to reject the null hypothesis (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). Twenty-five students participated in this study. Even if the sample size was reduced to as low as 17, it was presumed that the power would still remain relatively high (.95). Had my sample size fallen short by as many as eight participants, the a priori power analysis showed that the study was still feasible as planned.

**Instrumentation**

All instrumentation is referenced in Table 5. The BSDS, ESS, ECP, and CWR served as quantitative data collection tools. Supporting qualitative data was gathered in the form of students’ written responses to prompts and anecdotal observations.

Social desirability is a factor that potentially affects the validity of attitudinal questionnaires (Krumpal, 2013). The BSDS (see Figure 17) is a valid and reliable instrument to assess social desirability (Haghighat, 2007). The self-report scale instrument was administered to students at the beginning of the ESI. In an effort to ensure that the questions were age-appropriate, the word “dirty” was substituted for the word “inappropriate” in the final question.

The students responded to each of the five questions with either a “yes” or a “no” to indicate what they would do in a given social circumstance. The “yes” or “no” answers corresponded to a score of zero or one. Each time a student answered “no” to any one of the first three questions on the scale, they earned zero points because such behavior was considered to be low on the scale of social desirability. Each time a student answered
“yes” to any one of the first three questions, they earned one point because such behavior was aligned with social desirability. The reverse applied to the last two questions.

The analysis is further described in the following section. The main advantage of the BSDS as a method of gauging social desirability was that it was simple, brief, and efficient. Time was limited, and elementary-age students typically have a low tolerance for lengthy questionnaires.

The ESS (see Figure 4) is based on a theoretical model of Narvaez and Endicott’s operationalization of ethical sensitivity (Kuusisto, Tirri, & Rissanen, 2012). It was used to measure self-perceived ethical sensitivity growth in several recent studies. Kuusisto et al. (2012) confirmed the construct validity of the ESS, as well as concurrent and convergent validities, since results were in line with studies that utilized other ethical sensitivity instruments.

The ESS was administered three times throughout the ESI; once five weeks before the ESI to establish an ethical sensitivity baseline, again at the start of the ESI and finally at the conclusion of the ESI to quantify ethical sensitivity development. The questions asked of the students corresponded with three sub-skills of ethical sensitivity. Four questions per sub-skill were asked, and students answered using the Likert scale, ranging from one (totally disagree) to five (totally agree).

As explained previously, development of communication skills was embedded within the other isolated sub-skill activities. Oral communication and written communication were primary methods through which students were taught how to read and express emotion, take others’ perspectives, and control social bias. Instead of using the ESS, development within the communicating well sub-skill was measured using a
self-constructed analytic scoring rubric referred to as the communicating well rubric (CWR; see Figure 15). The CWR quantified oral and written communication using a four-point scale with three being proficient and zero being non-existent.

To ensure intra-rater and inter-rater reliability of the CWR, clear descriptions of score levels were used to guide the rating process. Additionally, the research assistants frequently revisited the established criteria. These practices increased the likelihood that consistency was maintained. To ensure validity of this data collection tool, the components, oral and written communication, were designed to directly align with the dimensions described in the definition of communicating well (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009).

Class participation in the ESI was quantified through the use of a variation of the ECP tool, during each weekly session (Daggett, 1996; see Figure 15). This tool was previously developed to quantify expectations of student participation as used in a study by Daggett (1996). A numerical score of zero through five was given to each student. Zero indicated that a student was absent while five indicated that a student was fully participatory.

Qualitative data was gathered through written responses to the ethical dilemma prompts (See Figures 6-13). Additionally, anecdotal evidence was gathered through documented observations while students engaged in meaningful discussion. Both forms of qualitative data served to support the quantitative data, and illustrate students’ cognitive development throughout the ESI.
Data Analysis

Analysis of qualitative data. Both forms of qualitative data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, a research method introduced in the previous chapter within the context of Sadik’s (2008) digital storytelling intervention. Qualitative content analysis is a flexible method for analyzing data that is essentially used to extract relevant information from text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Its goal is to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study (Schreier, 2014). This method of data analysis allowed the qualitative data to play a supporting role in the overall analysis of the ESI, a primarily quantitative study with a relatively small number of participants ($N = 25$).

Analysis of quantitative data. Each of the remaining instruments described in the previous section (BSDS, ECP, ESS, CWR) were used to measure a different factor that could potentially influence ethical sensitivity development (see Table 5). A score of four or five out of five total points on the BSDS (see Figure 17) indicated high social desirability. Similarly, a score of four or five out of five total points on the ECP (see Figure 15) indicated a high level of participation per session in the ESI.

Lastly, the higher the number on the ESS (see Figure 4) out of a total possible 60 points, the higher the degree of self-perceived ethical sensitivity. The 60 point ESS scale is comprised of three sub-skills, each of which contains four self-report questions measured on a five-point Likert scale. The ESS scores on the individual sub-skills were combined to create a comprehensive score reflecting the degree of self-perceived ethical sensitivity, which was analyzed with parametric analysis.
The ESS (see Figure 4) was examined more closely to gather specific data on three of the four sub-skills that comprised the ESI as individual constructs. Scores reported for sets of questions pertaining to each of the three sub-skills were analyzed separately.

Communication development, the fourth sub-skill embedded within the ESI, was measured using the CWR. The CWR (see Figure 14), which allotted six points for each session, was comprised of three points for oral communication and three points for written communication. This rubric was used to gather data during each of the eight sessions; however, only the data from the first and last sessions were used in the analysis.

Several methods of data analysis were utilized to assess the students’ development of ethical sensitivity. Relationships between multiple variables were examined with regression analysis, ANOVA, and $t$ tests. The data distribution was mostly assumed to be normal, therefore Pearson’s correlation and simple linear regression were used to identify and describe relationships between quantitative variables.

Following this first stage of analysis, the means of related and unrelated groups (that each measured degree of ethical sensitivity) were compared using ANOVA, paired-sample and independent-sample $t$-tests. All significance tests were two-tailed and were conducted at a .05 level of significance.

Research of the data analysis indicated how much the participant cared about social desirability, the degree of their participation in the ESI, and their degree of self-perceived ethical sensitivity development. The interpretation of such results answered the research question that aimed to find out whether or not participation in the ESI affected
ethical sensitivity development as measured by the ESS and CWR. The inputs, outputs, and outcomes as well method of evaluation are detailed in a logic model (see Figure 16).

**Strengths and Limitations**

**Strengths.** The one-group pretest-posttest design was preferred over the one-group posttest-only design because it provided participant baseline scores prior to administration of the treatment condition (Shadish et al., 2002). The pretest component of this design allowed the researcher to obtain an ethical sensitivity score prior to participating in the ESI so that it could be compared to post-intervention scores. The analysis accounted for the change in score for individual students rather than change in average group score only. In an effort to strengthen the design’s ability to generate valid inferences about the effect of the ESI on students’ ethical sensitivity, a double pretest was utilized and a within-participants design was incorporated. The double pretest is a strong quasi-experimental design that was applied to ensure internal validity (Trochim & Donnelly, 2001). The two measures were obtained prior to treatment to control for selection-maturation threats. Double pretests simulate what would happen in the null case which is why the design is sometimes referred to as a “dry run” quasi-experimental design.

The within-participants version of the one-group pretest-posttest design was preferred over the between-participants version because every student was subjected to every aspect of the treatment. This was a design strength because the students essentially acted as their own control, and therefore reduced the amount of error that would otherwise arise from inconsistencies between students (Greenwald, 1992). An additional advantage of the within-participants aspect of this evaluation design is that it allowed for
fewer students as compared to the between-participants version (Bordens & Abbott, 2002). The result was a simplified study that was less expensive, more self-contained, and utilized fewer resources. This strength is particularly noteworthy as it applied to the ESI due to limited funding and time at RAIS.

Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered in a parallel manner. The component design was used to inform the method in which data was collected independently and then combined after the present study for interpretation. The triangulation method of data collection was a design strength because results from qualitative data were used to verify, reject, and better understand results from quantitative data (Greene, 2007).

**Limitations.** The main limitation of the one-group pretest-posttest design was that it did not control for the influence of many confounding variables. Potential influences, which were out of the researcher’s control, included but were not limited to time of day, other academic assignments and programs, influence of others (e.g., the teacher, family members, peers), or a higher than normal absentee rate (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). The double pretest component helped to potentially account for selection- maturation threats; however, other such threats to internal validity are still of concern.

History and testing are two threats to internal validity that remained as potentially confounding extraneous variables, since my evaluation design could not control for them (Shadish et al., 2002). The history effect states that it was possible for an event to occur between the beginning of the treatment and the posttest that could have produced an increase in ethical sensitivity in the absence of the ESI. The testing effect notes the
possibility that student scores on the second pretest or the posttest could have been influenced by the practice or familiarity from having previously taken the test. Validity threats such as history and testing can operate simultaneously or separately. While it is impossible to estimate the size of the net bias, the existence of such threats makes it difficult to exclusively attribute gains in students’ ethical sensitivity to the ESI. Rossi et al. (2004) confirms this by noting that changes in outcomes cannot always be construed as program effects because outcomes are sometimes affected by occasions and practices that are independent of the program.

The one-group pretest-posttest evaluation design helped the researcher gain insight on whether or not students developed ethical sensitivity post-treatment, and to what degree. However, it cannot tell us whether or not those students would have developed ethical sensitivity to the same degree without the intervention. It also cannot tell us if another approach would have been more effective. Adding a control group would have been helpful in making such determinations (Shadish et al., 2002). In the absence of a control group, it is difficult to reach causal conclusions.

**Summary**

Research points to a need for the development of ethical sensitivity in elementary, middle, and high school students (Baron-Cohen, 2012; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2010; Gratz & Roemer, 2006). As noted in Chapter 3, of the 30 religiously affiliated independent schools reviewed, all (100%) of them claim to value the development of ethical sensitivity as noted in their mission statements. Therefore, upon completion of this study, I plan to further develop and expand an ethical sensitivity professional development workshop for RAIS and other schools that reference ethical sensitivity in
their mission statements or otherwise prioritize social and emotional development.

Further details pertaining to this plan are described in the following chapter, as the ESI serves to provide broader implications than those simply within the RAIS context.
CHAPTER 6
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to determine if a short-term intervention (ESI), designed to target skills associated with ethical sensitivity, could increase ethical sensitivity in fourth and fifth grade students at RAIS. Before and after measurements of ethical sensitivity were obtained using a previously validated self-report survey instrument (ESS; Tirri & Nokelainen, 2012) and a self-constructed analytic rubric (CWR). The ESI consisted of research-based classroom activities aiming to increase four sub-skills of ethical sensitivity: Reading and Expressing Emotion (REE), Taking the Perspective of Others (TPO), Controlling Social Bias (CSB), and Communicating Well (CW). Research has shown that film, photographs, role-taking and cooperative learning opportunities can be successfully utilized in an effort to affect such change (Blasco et al., 2011; Lintner, 2005; Tsay & Brady, 2012; Turiel, 1983; Woelders, 2007).

The research question aimed to assess the extent to which participation in the intervention led to increased ethical sensitivity as measured by the ESS and CWR. I hypothesized that degree of ethical sensitivity, as measured by the ESS and CWR, would increase after participating in the ESI. The participants consisted of fourth ($n = 12, 48\%$) and fifth ($n = 13, 52\%$) grade students of which 12 (48%) were females and 13 (52%) were males.

Each respondent completed a paper and pencil version of a questionnaire on three separate occasions (two pretests and one posttest). Participants self-reported their social desirability and self-evaluated their attitude towards statements designed to assess ethical sensitivity. Students’ participation in the ESI as well as their ability to communicate was
measured using an analytic rubric. Ability to communicate was assessed outside of the ESS because it was a component of each sub-skill of the ESI. In addition to students’ brief written responses, research assistants recorded anecdotal notes that served as supporting qualitative data.

Correlations between multiple variables were examined, and regression analysis, ANOVA, and t tests were conducted in an effort to accurately assess the degree of ethical sensitivity before and after the ESI. Since the data distribution was assumed to be normal, Pearson’s correlation and simple linear regression were used in order to find and summarize linear relationships between two quantitative variables. Following the correlation and regression analysis, ANOVA, paired-sample and independent-sample t-tests were performed in order to compare the means between related and unrelated groups with degree of ethical sensitivity. All significance tests were two-tailed and were conducted at a .05 level of significance.

The presence of outliers can lead to substantial distortions of parameter and statistic estimates when using either parametric or nonparametric tests (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). Therefore, outliers resulting from mis-reporting must be identified and removed. Some researchers identify outliers as data points three or more standard deviations from the mean, while others prefer visual inspection of the data (Judd & McClelland, 1989). Regardless, researchers use their training, intuition, reasoned argument, and thoughtful consideration (Osborne & Overbay, 2004).

Two students in this study self-reported perfect scores (60) on the first pretest, hereafter referred to as ESSdryrun. Upon consultation with the research assistants who administered the data collection tool, it was determined that the students rapidly checked
off response boxes without apparently reading the survey questions. It was decided that these scores were outliers and are not accurate representations of self-perceived ethical sensitivity through this measure. Therefore, these data points were removed from the ESSdryrun data set.

A paired-samples t test was conducted to compare responses for self-reported ethical sensitivity on ESSdryrun and the second pretest, referred to in this study as ESSpre. This test was conducted to determine whether the mean difference between paired observations on degree of ethical sensitivity was significantly different from zero. There was no statistically significant difference between the scores for ESSdryrun (M = 43.3, SD = 5.5) and ESSpre (M = 42.2, SD = 6.2); t (22) = 1.765, p = .091. Therefore, ESSdryrun was not used for the remaining statistical analyses. Instead, ESSpre was the pretest compared to ESSpost for statistical analysis purposes.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics including range, mean, and standard deviation are shown in Table 6. Cronbach’s alpha, a common measure of reliability that can be used to evaluate the extent to which a group of items are related (Cronbach, 1951), was calculated in an effort to assess internal consistency of the ESS. Cronbach’s alpha was .76 for this study, which indicates an acceptable internal consistency between survey items within the ESS (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Corresponding means and standard deviations of individual indicators from ESSpre are shown in Table 7.
Table 6

Measures of Central Tendency of Ethical Sensitivity and Related Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESSdryrun</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSpre</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSpost</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWpre</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWpost</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSDS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECP</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

Measures of Central Tendency of Survey Items on the ESS Pretest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>REE1</th>
<th>REE2</th>
<th>REE3</th>
<th>REE4</th>
<th>TPO1</th>
<th>TPO2</th>
<th>TPO3</th>
<th>TPO4</th>
<th>CSB1</th>
<th>CSB2</th>
<th>CSB3</th>
<th>CSB4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Distribution.** The ESS data gathered after the ESI is referred to in this study as ESSpost. Similarly, data gathered using the CWR at the start and end of the ESI are referred to as CWpre and CWpost respectively. The distribution shape of ESSpre and ESSpost scores as well as CWpre and CWpost scores were examined to determine the extent to which the assumption of normality was met. Skewness (-.831, SE = .464), kurtosis (.508, SE = .902), and the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality (S-W = .935, df = 25, p = .113) for ESSpre and skewness (.798, SE = .464), kurtosis (1.223, SE = .902), and the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality (S-W = .939, df = 25, p = .138) for ESSpost suggest that normality is a reasonable assumption. However, skewness (-.911, SE = .464), kurtosis (.185, SE = .902), and the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality (S-W = .881, df = 25, p = .007) for CWpre and skewness (-1.065, SE = .464), kurtosis (.433, SE = .902), and the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality (S-W = .826, df = 25, p = .001) for CWpost does not assume
normality. This is confirmed by a visual inspection of the histograms of the data shown in Figures 18a, 18b, 19a and 19b.

*Figures 18a & 18b. Ethical Sensitivity Scale Histograms. Normal distribution of Ethical Sensitivity Scale scores before and after the Ethical Sensitivity Intervention with normal curves plotted.*
Figures 19a and 19b. Communicating Well Histograms. Abnormal distribution of Communicating Well scores before and after the Ethical Sensitivity Intervention with normal curves plotted.
Despite the fact that the distributional shape of CWpre and post scores does not assume normality, parametric tests were still used for statistical analysis because the assumption was minimally violated (Lix, Keselman, & Kesselman, 1996). Additionally, parametric tests are not very sensitive to deviations from normality.

**Correlation and Linear Regression**

Correlation and regression analysis were conducted to examine the relationship between ethical sensitivity and various potential predictors, such as participation in the ESI and social desirability. After reviewing descriptive statistics and distribution of the data, a correlation matrix of seven individual variables was created. This matrix served as one of the first steps in answering the question of whether or not student ethical sensitivity increased after participating in this study. Pearson’s R-values and levels of significance displayed in Table 8 show that moderately strong and statistically significant relationships exist among several pairs of variables.

Table 8
Pearson Correlation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ESSdryrun (n = 23)</th>
<th>ESSpre (n = 25)</th>
<th>ESSpost (n = 25)</th>
<th>BSDS (n = 25)</th>
<th>ECP (n = 25)</th>
<th>CWpre (n = 25)</th>
<th>CWpost (n = 25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESSdryrun</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSpre</td>
<td>.881**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSpost</td>
<td>.505*</td>
<td>.449*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSDS</td>
<td>.537**</td>
<td>.476*</td>
<td>.283</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECP</td>
<td>.442*</td>
<td>.489*</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWpre</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>.362</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.648**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWpost</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>.610**</td>
<td>.657**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The Pearson’s test was used because the relationships between the variables are presumed to be linear. One of the strongest correlations \((r = .610 - .648)\) exists between
participation in the ESI and ability to communicate indicating that, in this sample, students who participated more in the ESI tended to display a superior ability to communicate, both orally and in written format (see Figure 20). Participation in the ESI was quantified through the use of a variation of the ECP tool during each weekly session (Daggett, 1996), while ability to communicate, both orally and in written format, was quantified through the use of a self-constructed analytic rubric (CWR) during each weekly session. Even though the CW data did not assume normality, the deviance was minimal; therefore, the Pearson’s test was used to measure the strength of this correlation.

A simple linear regression was carried out to examine the extent to which participation in the ESI (ECP) could predict ability to communicate (CWpre/CWpost). CWpre and CWpost were combined in order to compare the total communication score with the total participation score. A moderately strong positive correlation was found between ECP and CWpre/CWpost scores ($R = .648$) and the regression model predicted 42% of the variance. The model was a good fit for the data ($F (1, 23) = 16.652, p < .001$) (see Figure 20 and Table 9).
Figure 20. Correlation between Participation in ESI and Ability to Communicate. Scatterplot and linear fit showing a positive linear correlation between participation in the intervention and communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.434</td>
<td>1.294</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECP score</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.648</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are several possible explanations for the relationship found between these variables. One explanation is that more participation in the ESI may have influenced students’ increased ability to communicate. Perhaps students who were more engaged in the class discussion felt more confident in their ability to express themselves either orally or in written format. Another explanation is that the students’ ability to communicate was not influenced by the ESI, but that students who were better able to communicate also happened to be the same students who were more likely to participate during the intervention. Further studies would be needed to tease these factors apart.
Social desirability was scored, before beginning the ESI, using a BSDS (Figure 17). The BSDS is a brief, reliable, and valid five-item social desirability scale (Haghighat, 2007). A score of a zero or one on the BSDS indicated low concern for social desirability. A score of a two or three indicated moderate concern, and a score of a four or five indicated high concern.

Table 10 displays the results, with corresponding indicators for three ranges of scores. According to the data, the majority of participants showed a moderate degree of concern for social desirability, and the minority were either highly concerned or not concerned about social desirability.

Table 10

<p>| BSDS Scores of 4th and 5th Grade Students |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many students ($N = 25$)</th>
<th>Low Social Desirability</th>
<th>Moderate Social Desirability</th>
<th>High Social Desirability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is possible that these respondents are</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more willing than most to respond to tests truthfully, even when their answers might meet with social disapproval (Crowne &amp; Marlowe, 1960).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These respondents tend to show an average degree of concern for the social desirability of their responses, and their general behavior may also represent an average degree of conformity to social rules and conventions (Crowne &amp; Marlowe, 1960).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These respondents may be highly concerned about their social approval and respond to test items in a way that aligns with their desire to avoid the disapproval of people who may read their responses. Additionally, their general behavior may show high conformity to social rules and conventions (Crowne &amp; Marlowe, 1960).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When survey respondents have high concern for social desirability, they are typically inclined to give socially desirable responses instead of choosing responses that accurately reflect their true feelings (Grimm, 2010). While certain measures, such as anonymity, were taken to reduce the presence of such bias, additional consideration was given to data analysis. Van de Mortel (2008) suggested using one of three strategies to consider social desirability when conducting data analysis. They are 1) reject the data of subjects with high social desirability scores, 2) register the social desirability but do not control for it, or 3) correct the data of subjects with high social desirability scores.

My sample size is relatively small; therefore, it was not practical to reject data of subjects with high social desirability scores. Additionally, the data is multi-dimensional (including ESS scores and data from the CWR). Therefore, correcting or eliminating the data of subjects with high social desirability might have affected interactions between other factors. In this case, I chose to register social desirability using the Pearson’s test to determine the correlation between students’ social desirability and scores on the ESS.

A moderate positive correlation (R = .476) existed between BSDS scores and ESSpre scores (see Figure 21). However, no statistical significance was noted between social desirability and scores on ESSpost. In this sample, the failure to achieve significance for correlation between BSDS and ESSpost may suggest that social desirability did not play a large role in the outcome of the intervention. There was a tendency, however, for students with high social desirability to have higher scores on the ESS, before the intervention began, when compared to their peers. This was also borne out by the results of linear regression analysis of the same data.
A simple linear regression was carried out to ascertain the extent to which social desirability can predict ethical sensitivity. As Figure 21 and Table 11 show, a moderate positive correlation was found between BSDS and ESSpre scores (R = .476) and the regression model predicted 23% of the variance. The model was a good fit for the data (F (1, 23) = 6.745, p < .05).

![Correlation Between Social Desirability and ESSpre](image)

*Figure 21. Correlation between Social Desirability and ESSpre. Scatterplot showing a positive linear correlation between social desirability and scores on the ethical sensitivity scale before the intervention.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11</th>
<th>Regression Model Data for BSDS and ESS Pretest Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>37.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSDS score</td>
<td>2.144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overview of Total ESS Scores**

The *t* test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) both compare group means; however, the *t* test is limited to comparing means of two groups, while the one-way ANOVA can compare more than two groups (Mandel, 2012). A one-way ANOVA was
used to examine whether participants developed ethical sensitivity after participating in the ESI, as measured by the ESS. The independent variable was the three different times the ESS was administered: 1) ESSdryrun; 2) ESSpre; and 3) ESSpost. The dependent variable was the participants’ scores on the ESS. See Table 6, above, for the means and standard deviations for each of the three groups.

There was a significant difference, at an alpha level of .05, among the ESS surveys that were administered at three time points \( F(2,45) = 6.92, p = .002 \). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the ESSpre (M = 42.2, SD = 6) was significantly different than the ESSpost (M = 45.7, SD = 4.7). However, the ESSdryrun (M = 43.3, SD = 5.5) did not significantly differ from the ESSpre. Taken together, these results suggest that participants’ degree of ethical sensitivity, as reported using the ESS, did not change significantly between the two pretests. However, the ESI may have influenced an increase in the degree of ethical sensitivity, as measured after the ESI using the ESS.

A paired-sample \( t \) test was also conducted to evaluate whether students’ ethical sensitivity levels increased after participating in the ESI, the null hypothesis being that the level of ethical sensitivity would not differ after engaging in the intervention. As depicted in Table 6, above, the mean score was 42.2 on the ESSpre, with a standard deviation of 6. When compared against the ESSpost mean score of 45.7 and standard deviation of 4.7, the paired-sample \( t \) test result was shown to be statistically significant (\( t = 3.067, df = 24, p < .005 \)). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and I can conclude that administering the intervention was associated with a rise in ESS scores.
The maximum possible score on the ESS was 60. Of 25 participants, eighteen students’ scores increased from the pretest (ESSpre) to the posttest (ESSpost). The largest increase was 21 points. Eleven students’ scores increased by four points or more.

As Figure 22 depicts, and as the t test provides evidence to suggest, the average ESSpre score was significantly lower than the average ESSpost score. In the following section this relationship is analyzed more closely. As the ESS was comprised of three sub-skills, each can be looked at individually.

Figure 22. Boxplots of ethical sensitivity scale pre and posttest scores.

Breakdown by Sub-Skill

The three sub-skills measured using the ESS were: Reading and Expressing Emotion (REE), Taking the Perspective of Others (TPO), and Controlling Social Bias (CSB). It is important to keep in mind that these individual sub-skills do not represent an overarching measurement of ethical sensitivity, but instead are skills that people who are ethically sensitive typically possess. By the same token, the individual ESS statements
within each sub-skill (see Figure 4) are not measures of the broader sub-skills. They merely represent values that people who are actualized within a given sub-skill are likely to identify with.

The students scored their opinions on the ESS statements using a five-point Likert scale as they responded to four questions per sub-skill. As shown in Figure 4, questions #1 – 4 corresponded with the REE sub-skill, questions #5 – 8 corresponded with the TPO sub-skill, and questions #9 - 12 corresponded with the CSB sub-skill. A response of “1” indicated the lowest level associated with a particular skill while a “5” indicated the highest degree. Table 12 displays the means and standard deviations. The means are out of 20 points.

Table 12
Means and Standard Deviations for Three Subskills Before and After the ESI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ESSpre Mean</th>
<th>ESSpre Std Dev</th>
<th>ESSpost Mean</th>
<th>ESSpost Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REE</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPO</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSB</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reading and expressing emotion.** A paired-sample t test was conducted, at an alpha level of .05 (as all tests were unless noted otherwise), to learn whether the scores indicated significant development in ability to read and express emotion upon participating in this study. As Table 12 showed, there was a small, but significant difference in the REEpre scores (M = 13.6, SD = 2.3) as compared to REEpost scores (M = 14.5, SD = 2.1); t (24) = 2.35, p = .027. These results suggest that the ESI had an effect on students’ awareness of their ability to read and express emotion.
The REE scores served as a quantitative reflection of students’ subjective self-perception. Additional information gained from qualitative data tested alignment of what students said and wrote throughout the ESI with their self-reported responses on the ESS before and after the ESI.

After viewing and discussing several film clips, studentsdrafted brief responses to related prompts. The first of three lessons within the REE unit focused on reading and expressing fear. After viewing and discussing the emotion of fear displayed in film clips from *Finding Nemo*, *The Lion King*, and *Toy Story*, students responded to a prompt that asked why it is important to notice how other people feel (see Figure 6 in Chapter 5).

Several students shared that noticing how others feel is important because if they notice that someone is sad, they can try to make them happy. Students used different language to express this idea as Table 13 demonstrates.

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Student B</th>
<th>Student C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is it important to notice how other people feel? Why is it important to share my feelings with others?</td>
<td>It’s important to know how people feel because you can help him if he is sad and you can make them feel happy and not sad. It can make you guys be in stronger relationships.</td>
<td>I think I should notice other people’s feelings because it is important to be someone else’s friend and make them happy, not just selfish and worry about yourself.</td>
<td>It is important to notice other people feelings because you will be able to make them feel better and make more friends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After viewing and discussing the emotion of anger displayed in film clips from *Beauty and the Beast* and *Rugrats*, students responded to a prompt that specifically asked why it is important to notice if someone they are talking to is offended (see Figure 7 in
Chapter 5). Several students shared, using different language, that it is important to notice offense so they can help others and make them feel better (see Table 14).

Table 14

Excerpts from Students’ Responses to a Prompt on Reading & Expressing Anger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Student D</th>
<th>Student E</th>
<th>Student F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is it important to notice if someone I am talking to is offended? Why is it important to express to other people if I am offended or hurt?</td>
<td>To make them feel better and to help them so they know to not say that. For example, if Bob tells George he is offended, George should stop. Another example is if anyone sees that another person is offended, they should help them feel better.</td>
<td>The more that you don’t notice that the other person is offended, the more uncomfortable the other person will feel.</td>
<td>It is important to notice if someone I am talking to is offended because I can say that I didn’t mean it and that I’m sorry and I’ll try in the future not to do it again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last lesson in the REE unit focused on better understanding sadness, with its related subcategories, loneliness and embarrassment (Zimmermann & Iwanski, 2014).

After students viewed and discussed this emotion with respect to film clips from *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, they responded to a prompt that asked how one would notice if another person was feeling lonely or embarrassed (see Figure 8 in Chapter 5). All students referenced body language in their responses. As shown in Table 15, some students shared that they would be able to tell if someone was feeling lonely because they might be looking down and might not be talking to anyone. Several students referenced similar body language when sharing that someone might be feeling embarrassed if their head is down or if they are blushing or crying.
Table 15

Excerpts from Students’ Responses to a Prompt on Reading & Expressing Sadness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Student G</th>
<th>Student H</th>
<th>Student I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are some ways I would be able to tell if someone was feeling lonely? What are some ways I would be able to tell if someone was feeling embarrassed?</td>
<td>I would probably be able to tell if somebody was embarrassed if they were blushing or if their head was down.</td>
<td>I would be able to tell if someone was feeling embarrassed because they would blush and start crying.</td>
<td>I could tell if someone is feeling lonely by where they were and their facial expressions. [sic] If someone was by themselves looking down and and [sic] maybe not talking to anyone, there [sic] probably very lonely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research assistants recorded anecdotal evidence while students discussed ideas presented in the film clips. Several students deliberately connected their own personal experiences to the fear, anger, and sadness portrayed by characters, while other students shared predictions concerning what might happen in the next scene. With reference to the film clips that portrayed fear, several students shared that they were afraid on their first day of school while other students shared that they were afraid when they got lost on an outing with their family. After viewing film clips in which the main character displayed anger, several students related instances in which they did not get what they wanted. They expressed feeling angry and were able to empathize with the characters in the clips. With reference to the film clips that portrayed sadness, many students discussed times when they were not included in a game that their friends were playing. Several students also shared moments when they felt embarrassed, and what happened to make them feel that way. These authentic reports about students’ own lives support the quantitative results, which suggest development in their ability to read and express emotion.
**Taking the perspective of others.** A paired-sample t test determined there was no significant difference between TPO pretest scores (M = 14.8, SD = 2.6) and TPO posttest scores (M = 15.6, SD = 2.2); t (24) = 1.512, p = .144. Therefore, it is suggested that the ESI did not have a significant effect on students’ belief that they are able to take the perspective of others.

After playing *Should I or Shouldn’t I?*, a collaborative perspective-taking game, students debriefed as they discussed their experiences with the game and drafted written responses to related prompts. The first prompt asked why it is important to think about situations from others’ point of view (see Figure 9 in Chapter 5). Most answered with reference to considering how other people might feel in a given situation. However, some students thought about themselves in such situations and commented that if they fail to think about situations from others’ point of view, others may not want to associate with them (see Table 16). After playing the game for a second time, students responded to another prompt that asked whether or not it is fine with them if friends occasionally have different opinions (see Figure 10 in Chapter 5). Most students referenced positive outcomes that are possible when friends have different opinions. For example, as shown in Table 17, one student wrote about getting a good grade on a math test upon learning about an alternate method of studying from a friend. Other students wrote about learning to play a new game or tasting a new ice cream flavor upon learning to be receptive to friends’ differing opinions.
Table 16
Excerpts from Students’ Responses to a Prompt on Opposing Viewpoints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Student J</th>
<th>Student K</th>
<th>Student L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is it important to think about situations from others’ point of view?</td>
<td>If they are upset then you can try to comfort them.</td>
<td>If you don’t see things at different points of view, then people will think you don’t care about them and they won’t want to play with you.</td>
<td>It is important to think about situations from other people’s point of view because then you might have a better idea of how they feel and how to act.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17
Excerpts from Students’ Responses to a Prompt on Friends with Different Opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Student M</th>
<th>Student N</th>
<th>Student O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it ok if my friends and I have different opinions sometimes?</td>
<td>It is ok because you might look at a situation differently. For example, you may think that you should study for a math test by looking over the study guide but your friend thinks it is better to make flashcards and study them and your friend gets a higher grade so you try it and you get a good grade.</td>
<td>Yes. Because it may make you look at life in a different perspective. For example, if you and your friend are arguing about what kind of ice cream flavor is the best, and you disagree with them, and you try the ice cream flavor that they like then that might become your new favorite ice cream flavor.</td>
<td>It is ok because if we don’t we might do a lot of things the same that can be boring. For example, if you liked the same game it can get boring but if you liked something else it can give other people a chance to try new things.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research assistants recorded anecdotal evidence while students interacted with each other. It was noted that students did not always agree with their teammates when collaborating to produce a single answer to the perspective-taking questions, and this often warranted further discussion. One such incident occurred when a team of four
students analyzed a prompt that stated, “You are playing basketball with your team. You decide to shoot the ball every time you get it, instead of passing the ball, because you’re the best player on the team.” On a five-item behavior scale (see Table 4 in Chapter 5), where “1” indicates behaviors that make others have good thoughts and “5” indicates behaviors that are against the rules, two of the students felt this prompt should be categorized as a “5” and two of the students felt this prompt should be categorized as a “4” (which indicates behaviors that make others feel annoyed). Both sets of students gave their rationale in a calm and respectful manner. After a five-minute discussion between the four students, the team decided to rate the prompt as a “4”.

Another comparable incident occurred when a team of five students analyzed a prompt that stated, “You are at a drive-thru restaurant. You keep changing your mind about what to order.” Two of the students felt this prompt should be categorized as a “2” (which indicates behaviors that are fine or okay), two of the students felt this prompt should be categorized as a “3” (which indicates behaviors that make others have weird thoughts), and one student felt this prompt should be categorized as a “4”. After much deliberation, and facilitation from one of the research assistants, the team decided to rate the prompt as a “4”. The research assistant facilitated by encouraging the students to pretend they were working at the drive-thru window. The students were encouraged to think about how the employee may have felt.

This qualitative data does not confirm or reject the difference between TPO pre and posttest scores. It merely serves to illustrate the students’ abilities to process and discuss perspective taking when observed directly, rather than assessed via a survey instrument. Implications are discussed in the Discussion section below.
**Controlling social bias.** A paired-sample *t* test was conducted in an effort to determine if participating in this study increased students’ perceived ability to control social bias as measured by the CSB questions of the ESS. As Table 11 shows, there was a significant difference in the CSB pretest scores (M =13.8, SD = 2.7) and CSB posttest scores (M = 15.6, SD = 2.0); *t* (24) = 2.644, *p* = .014. These results suggest that the ESI had a significant effect on students’ belief that they are able to control social bias.

Upon analyzing several photographs, students drafted brief constructed responses to related prompts. The first of three lessons within the CSB unit focused on disability as a social difference. After viewing and discussing various physical disabilities and/or social differences such as visual impairments, hearing impairments, obesity, Down syndrome, and paraplegia, students responded to a prompt that asked why it is important to recognize our own biases towards others and how we should be mindful of our words and actions (see Figure 11 in Chapter 5). Most students responded by writing about being mindful of their words for fear of hurting others’ feelings. As shown in Table 18, they illustrated their points with examples of social differences surrounding people who cannot read, play hopscotch or play basketball.
Table 18

Excerpts from Students’ Responses to a Prompt on Bias Recognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Student P</th>
<th>Student Q</th>
<th>Student R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is it important to recognize our own bias towards others? If we do feel bias towards someone or a group of people, how should we be mindful of our words and actions?</td>
<td>You should be mindful about making a bias towards someone because you can hurt their feelings. For example, you can say “People with no legs can’t play basketball” and someone hears you that doesn’t have legs and they would be sad.</td>
<td>If I feel bias towards someone I should be mindful of my words because it might hurt their feeling. [sic] or might start a rumor for example [sic] if you tell your friend people with red hair can’t read, they might believe it and spread the rumor.</td>
<td>For example you say to a friend, like that could play hopscotch, and the person hears you it can really hurt someones [sic] feelings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second lesson within the CSB unit focused on religion. Upon viewing and discussing three religions different from their own: Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, students responded to a prompt that asked about what harm could result from being mean to people who are different and what good could result from being nice to people who are different (see Figure 12 in Chapter 5). Most students indicated in their written response that being mean to people who are different could result in hurt feelings and dirty looks, while being nice to people who are different could result in feelings of approval and acceptance (see Table 19). The last lesson within the CSB unit focused on socioeconomic status. Students viewed and discussed photographs representing a wide range of socioeconomic statuses; however, they did not draft a written response to a prompt because they responded to the ESS posttest on that day. Qualitative data was still gathered on this lesson in the form of anecdotal evidence.
Excerpts from Students’ Responses to a Prompt on People Who are Different

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Student S</th>
<th>Student T</th>
<th>Student U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What harm could result from being mean to people who are different?</td>
<td>Some harm that could result from being mean to people that are different, for example that person might think oh, because I’m different nobody likes me. I’m weird and not normal.</td>
<td>They won’t like you. Example – hey, your [sic] so stupid. He’s going to be offended. Another example if nice – hey, you want my snack? There [sic] going to go like he’s giving me his snack! He is so nice!</td>
<td>People will give you dirty look if mean. People will like you and think your [sic] nice if your [sic] nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What good could result from being nice to people who are different?</td>
<td>A good result that can come from being nice to people who are different they may think oh, it doesn’t matter that I’m different. People still like me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lintner (2005) used supporting narratives while the students in his study viewed photographs of peers representing social differences, and determined that they were crucial in helping the students in that study to find common ground with the children portrayed. Upon introducing each photo in the present study, I too shared fictitious narratives aiming to humanize the subjects, in the form of background information such as favorite foods, favorite colors, number of siblings, chores around the house, hobbies, and interests.

Research assistants recorded anecdotal evidence while students interacted with each other. When students were asked to share differences between themselves and the children in the photographs, most of them discussed differences that were external, superficial, and obvious. Such differences included but were not limited to skin color, facial features, appearance of wealth, and appearance of hygiene. However, when students were asked to share similarities between themselves and the children in the photographs, the majority shared similarities that were heard from the introductory
narrative or otherwise based on inferences. Some students shared that they had the same number of siblings as the children in the photographs; while other students shared that they are responsible for the same chores at home. Still, other students shared that they had a favorite food or favorite color in common with the children representing varying disabilities, religions, and socioeconomic statuses.

Upon engaging in class discussion before and after viewing the photographs, students shared thoughts related to what a disability is and what some other religions are. Some students shared that a disability is limiting and prevents people from engaging in activities that others can engage in. Several students countered this idea, however, and shared that perhaps people with disabilities can do the things that other people do, they just need help from people and from special tools.

Some students also shared their thoughts on other religions. Several students shared that they believe some examples of other religions are Christianity and Muslim. Some students countered and respectfully shared that being Muslim is not a religion, but Islam is.

In an additional conversation about socioeconomic status, students were asked to imagine how their life would be different if their family had less money than they currently have. Several students shared that they would have fewer material possessions; however, many students also shared that they would probably have a bigger appreciation of what they own. There were no comments about feelings of loss or desire. Next, students were asked to imagine how their life would be different if their family had more money than they currently have. Several students shared that they would have more
material possessions, and many students agreed that their personality might change as they would probably act snobby and arrogant.

**Discussion.** The results of the ESS, when analyzed by individual sub-skill, together with supporting qualitative data analysis, provided evidence to suggest that REE and CSB pre and posttest scores significantly changed. TPO scores, however, did not increase sufficiently to achieve statistical significance, although the trend of the change was in the positive direction. The failure to achieve significance in this case may be due to the small number of participants in the study. Additionally, there are many ways to attempt to develop self-perceived perspective taking skills in students. Different methodology may have achieved different results. Lastly, the possibility always exists that the measurement tool didn’t accurately measure self-perceived perspective taking ability. Further research is necessary to differentiate between possible factors.

**Communicating well.** For each of the sub-skills discussed thus far, language was the medium through which participants expressed their thoughts, feelings, and reasoned opinions. This brings us to the final sub-skill evaluated, communicating well.

Of the four sub-skills of ethical sensitivity that comprised the ESI, communication was the only sub-skill not measured through the use of the ESS. This sub-skill was embedded within each sub-skill unit. Ability to communicate was compartmentalized into oral and written communication, and was assessed using a self-constructed analytic rubric (CWR; See Figure 14) on a scale of zero to three. A score of zero indicated that the student did not engage in oral communication or display written communication; a score of three indicated the use of oral or written communication to demonstrate an in-depth
understanding of the lesson content. On the first and last days of the ESI, the oral and written communication scores were combined to generate CWpre and CWpost.

A paired-sample t test was conducted to determine whether students developed their ability to communicate over the course of this study. As Table 20 shows, a significant difference was noted between CWpre (M = 3.7, SD = 1.8) and CWpost (M = 4.8, SD = 1.2); t (24) = 3.995, p = .001. These results suggest that the ESI had a significant effect on students’ ability to communicate.

Subsequent paired-sample t tests distinguished between written communication skills before and after the study, and oral communication skills before and after the study. As Table 20 shows, a significant difference was noted between CWWpre (M = 1.6, SD = .9) and CWWpost (M = 2.8, SD = .5); t(24) = 6.354, p < .005. No significant difference was noted between CWOpre and CWOpost scores. These results suggest that the ESI had a significant effect on students’ ability to communicate using written language, but not oral language. While dynamic small-group and whole-class discussions took place throughout the ESI, on an individual student basis the findings from the CWO scores are corroborated by general observations. It was recorded as anecdotal evidence that individual students were sometimes not engaged at all, or engaged minimally, in oral communication with peers. Students were sometimes observed either refraining from fully participating or performing off-task behavior.
Table 20

CW, CWW, and CWO Scores Before and After the ESI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Pre ESI Mean</th>
<th>Pre ESI Std Dev</th>
<th>Post ESI Mean</th>
<th>Post ESI Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CW</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWW</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWO</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Female versus Male**

Preliminary examination of writing samples suggested that girls and boys in the study may differ with respect to their writing skills. An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to compare CW_pre scores on the basis of gender. As Table 21 shows, there was a significant difference in the scores for CW_pre female (M = 4.7, SD = 1.6) and CW_pre male (M = 2.8, SD = 1.5); t (23) = 2.905, p = .008. These results suggest that males and females differed significantly in their respective abilities to communicate before participating in this study. Similar tests compared mean scores on BSDS, ECP, ESS_pre, ESS_post, and CW_post between males and females; however, no statistically significant differences were noted.

To further analyze the difference between CW_pre scores among males and females, CW scores were grouped into oral (CWO) and written (CWW) communication. No significant difference was noted between the male and female CWO_pre scores; however, as Table 21 shows, scores for CWW_pre female (M = 2.3, SD = .9) exceeded those for CWW_pre male (M = 1.1, SD = .8); t (23) = 3.608, p = .001. These results suggest that before participating in this study, the girls were better able communicate in written form than their male counterparts.
Table 21

CW and CWW Scores by Gender Before and After the ESI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre ESI Mean</th>
<th>Pre ESI Std Dev</th>
<th>Post ESI Mean</th>
<th>Post ESI Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CWFemale</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWWFemale</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWMale</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWWMale</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourth Grade Students versus Fifth Grade Students

Post-hoc analysis was also used to examine possible differences in ESS scores across grade levels. An independent-samples t test was conducted to compare ESSpost scores between fourth and fifth grade students. As Table 22 shows, there was a significant difference in the scores for ESSpost fourth grade (M = 43.4, SD = 3.9) and ESSpost fifth grade (M = 47.8, SD = 4.6); t (23) = 2.600, p = .016. These results suggest that fifth grade students reported higher levels of ethical sensitivity on the ESS than their fourth grade counterparts after participating in this study. Independent-samples t tests were conducted with several other variables to compare the mean scores on BSDS, ECP, ESSpre, CWpre and CWpost between fourth grade students and fifth grade students; however, differences were not statistically significant.

Subsequent analyses were conducted to discover where, within the ESS posttest, the differences between fourth grade and fifth grade students were noted. As Table 22 shows, there was a significant difference between the scores of fourth grade students’ TPO ESS posttest (M = 14.3, SD = 2.0) and fifth grade students’ TPO ESS posttest (M = 16.8, SD = 1.7); t (23) = 3.523, p = .002. These results suggest that fifth grade students self-perceived their ability to take others’ perspectives significantly higher than their fourth grade counterparts after participating in this study. The relatively low alpha value
obtained (p = .002) suggests that the differences in scores between fourth and fifth grade students are real. Post-hoc tests were conducted with the other two sub-skills, REE and CSB, to compare the mean scores between fourth grade students and fifth grade students; however differences were not statistically significant.

Table 22
ESS and TPO Scores for 4th and 5th Grade Students Before and After the ESI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre ESI Mean</th>
<th>Pre ESI Std Dev</th>
<th>Post ESI Mean</th>
<th>Post ESI Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESS 4th Grade</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS 5th Grade</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPO 4th Grade</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPO 5th Grade</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Correlation and regression analysis were used to quantify the associations between several variables. Moderately strong positive correlations were noted between participation in the ESI and ability to communicate, social desirability, and self-perceived ethical sensitivity.

Scores on the ESS before and after the ESI were significantly different. Upon further investigation it was discovered that two of the three components of the ESS had increased between the pretest and posttest. REE and CSB scores were higher on the posttest, while such differences in TPO scores were not found. Qualitative data supports these results, suggesting that the ESI had a significant effect on students’ abilities to read and express emotions and control social bias.
Student growth in communication ability was assessed as well. CWpost scores were higher than CWpre scores, and closer examination showed that the higher scores in the communication skill component were associated with improvement in written communication scores, but not with oral communication scores. These results, paired with the supporting qualitative data, suggest that the ESI may have influenced students’ written communication skills or, perhaps, their willingness to express their thoughts and opinions in writing.

Lastly, results obtained were compared across gender and grade level. Girls were better able to communicate in writing as compared to boys prior to the start of the intervention. Differences were also noted when data collected for fourth and fifth grade students was compared. When ESSpost scores were compared, fifth grade students’ scores were significantly higher than fourth grade students’ scores, though the difference was attributable to perspective-taking skills only.

**Discussion**

In this study, I investigated the extent to which participation in the ESI led to increased student ethical sensitivity, as measured by the ESS and the CWR, and as reflected in qualitative data collected. My results show that, after engaging in this study, students’ self-reported levels of ethical sensitivity significantly increased in two out of three sub-skills that served as the framework for this intervention (communication was not self-reported). Students did not develop significantly in perspective-taking ability; however, they did develop significantly in their abilities to read and express emotion, control social bias, and communicate in written language.
That students developed significantly in their reported ability to read and express emotion is supported by qualitative data and results from one-way ANOVA and paired-samples t tests. Previous studies also found an association between school-based interventions and students’ development of this skill. Blasco et al. (2011) and Woelders (2007) showed that film clips can be utilized to help students develop their abilities to better understand emotion. The students in this study were particularly enthusiastic about the opportunity to view film clips during class time. They viewed it as a special reward and were excited to be involved in the decision making process of which film clips would be chosen. The contagious enthusiasm among the students was not measured, but may have aided in the development of this sub-skill. After all, teachers must not underestimate the degree to which emotions influence learning (Hardiman, 2012).

The students seemed to enjoy discussing what they saw in the film clips and relating the content to their past experiences. According to Ellis & Gauvain (2013), prior experiences are pivotal in helping students connect to content. They are able to comprehend new ideas more deeply if they can relate to them (Ellis & Gauvain, 2013). Additionally, it likely felt validating for the students in this study to learn that film characters and fellow students experienced similar emotions (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012). According to Hardiman (2012), this dynamic of emotion and student conversation likely contributed to the cognitive development reflected in my results.

Through the REE brief constructed responses (see Figures 6 – 8), students not only shared indicators of emotion through body language and facial expressions, but also shared suggested action upon noticing how others feel. Students described the process of reading another person’s body language (i.e. their head is down), interpreting what that
body language meant (i.e. they are sad), and attempting to make that person feel better. This thought process not only suggests a developed awareness of and sensitivity to emotion, but because of the proposed course of action, also suggests a commitment to the well-being of others (Noddings, 2015). Concern for the well-being of others is a foundational aspect of ethical sensitivity (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009).

My second finding, that students developed significantly in their ability to control social bias, is also supported by qualitative data and results from the statistical analyses. Lintner (2005) showed that photographs can help students recognize social differences as nonthreatening. A valuable contributing factor to the students’ development may have been the emphasis on similarities among children as opposed to differences. Additionally, students’ social development is an important consideration. Students in upper elementary grades are easily influenced and may initially notice differences between themselves and peers, but are often eager to find common ground (Merrell & Gimpel, 2014).

At the beginning of the CSB unit, students were easily able to identify the differences between themselves and the children in the photographs that represented social differences. Such differences were mostly external. As the unit progressed, however, I encouraged the students to also think about and discuss the similarities between themselves and the children portrayed. Some students shared similarities that were obvious, but most speculated on inferred similarities. According to Billington (2012), it is natural for children to immediately notice physical differences between themselves and others. Noticing similarities, physical or otherwise, does not always come as naturally and needs to be outright stated and encouraged by others. This is especially
the case when relating to children with undeniable physical differences (Stone et al., 2013).

By the end of the CSB unit, all students were able to articulate some point of similarity between them and children of a similar age in the photographs. Students were given a great deal of autonomy throughout this unit as they held weekly discussions with minimal facilitation from the researcher. According to Perrott (2014), this empowerment likely encouraged the students’ cognitive development as they attempted to recognize social differences as nonthreatening.

Students foreshadowed possible outcomes, both negative and positive, in an attempt to think about the consequences of their actions when interacting with those who are different. This valuable exercise, that likely encouraged growth within the realm of better understanding social bias, occurred during opportunities to engage in oral and written communication. According to Merrell and Gimpel (2014), this conscious practice of articulating predictions in theoretical social settings helps students interact with each other in a way that suggests greater acceptance of social differences.

My third finding, that students developed significantly in their abilities to communicate in written format, is also supported by qualitative data and results from paired-samples t tests. Throughout the study students were encouraged to brainstorm before responding to the written prompts. Students were shown examples of exceptional work and were encouraged to include detail in an effort to illustrate their points. Additionally, students were encouraged to relate past experiences in their writing as a way of showing an in-depth understanding of the material. As shown in Table 23, about
halfway through the intervention most students started including examples to illustrate their points as well as generally including more detail in their writing.

Table 23

Excerpts from Students’ Responses to a Prompt on Bias Recognition of Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Student V</th>
<th>Student W</th>
<th>Student X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is it important to recognize our own biases towards others?</td>
<td>We shouldn’t be mean or say something that would hurt their feelings. For example, if a person doesn’t have legs and she’s using crutches you shouldn’t say she is so horrible.</td>
<td>We should let anyone realize from our body language that we have a bias toward them. For example, if you think someone in your class is really smelly don’t move away from them. Just try to withstand it. We should not tell our friend about it while the person is around or any time.</td>
<td>You should make sure that someone that you are talking about is not listening - you can hurt there [sic] feelings. For example, if you were talking about how someone is in a wheelchair is weird but then your sister in a wheelchair overheard you, you can hurt her feelings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I also offered similar support and guidance to the students with regard to oral communication. I encouraged students to share examples and past experiences during class discussion, and students were shown video clips of exceptional examples of verbal dialogue. Why then, did students significantly improve in one domain but not the other? The work of Nash, Crimmins, & Oprescu (2015) suggests the students in this study may have not developed significantly within the realm of oral communication because it is much easier to share thoughts, ideas, and opinions privately, on paper, rather than publicly. Such social anxiety could occur because of fear of being perceived as strange or different (Leary, 2013).
Students in the elementary setting are cognizant of social differences, and will often try to avoid being perceived as different at all costs. Therefore, students may be more willing to share ideas privately on paper, but may hesitate to share ideas orally. The lack of as much practice in the realm of oral communication as compared to written may explain the limited change in the former as compared to the latter.

The students’ written communication scores also demonstrated a significant difference between males and females. Before the ESI, females were better written communicators than males, as measured by the CWR. By the end of the ESI, however, all students demonstrated improvement in this capacity, and the distinction between girls and boys was no longer apparent. The gender difference noted before the ESI may reflect social learning rather than inherent gender traits (Booth & Nolen, 2012). Research controversy exists regarding whether boys or girls are stronger writers. Booth and Nolen (2012) suggest that both genders are equally capable of being receptive to intervention, and equally capable of improvement. That both genders are equally capable of improvement is confirmed by the results of this study.

Fifth grade students scored significantly higher than fourth grade students on the TPO sub-skill of the ESS posttest. Could one year, at this age, really be a contributing factor to the development of social competency? Merrell and Gimpel (2014) would argue that it could. In one year, elementary-aged students can mature significantly with regard to social skills and perspective-taking ability. However, self-reported perspective-taking ability may require more than a couple of months to significantly change. Michelson, Sugai, Wood, and Kazdin (2013) found that, depending on the population and context, it
may actually take several years to note such developmental change. Their finding may be a possible explanation of why the students in this study did not develop significantly in the perspective-taking sub-skill from pretest to posttest: the intervention did not last long enough.

Alternatively, it is possible that significant development in the students’ perspective taking ability did not occur due to an already developed ability prior to ESI. After all, the average pretest score for this sub-skill (M = 14.8) was higher than the average pretest score for the REE (M = 13.6) and CSB (M = 13.8) sub-skills. Students’ responses to the written prompts and anecdotal evidence from the TPO unit support the notion that students were able to adequately express ability to take others’ perspectives, leaving room for the possibility that students were already well developed in this area prior to the start of the ESI. As the anecdotal evidence stated, when playing Should I or Shouldn’t I? students enthusiastically collaborated in an effort to rate a given prompt on the behavior scale. Students not only shared their opinions, but also tried to understand where their teammates were coming from when sharing conflicting opinions. It is possible that there was less room for improvement here when compared to the other sub-skills. This phenomenon is quite common in social science research (Morris, 2007). The students’ developmental needs and cognitive capabilities were key factors in the significance of the findings for each sub-skill (Spodek & Saracho, 2014).

In addition to developmental and cognitive capabilities, prior experiences are not to be downplayed. According to Thompson (2014), prior experiences both at home and at school shape students’ perceptions of the world around them. This is likely why students sometimes disagreed when trying to categorize prompts during the Should I or Shouldn’t
For example, when discussing the behavior of changing one’s mind when placing an order at a restaurant, some students felt this behavior was okay while other students felt this behavior annoyed others. Those who come from homes with patient family members may have felt this behavior was acceptable while those who come from homes with impatient family members may have perceived this behavior to be annoying. Students were likely drawing on past experiences when analyzing such scenarios, and thus expressed a variety of opinions.

The results of this study confirmed the convergent validity of the ESS since the results are in line with studies that have utilized comparable instruments (Blasco et al., 2011; Kuusisto & Rissanen, 2012; Lintner, 2005; Tsay & Brady, 2012; Turiel, 1983; Woelders, 2007). The results of this study not only confirmed a narrow association between research-based practice and development in corresponding sub-skills of ethical sensitivity, but also showed that development in multiple sub-skills can occur in a classroom setting designed to develop facets of ethical sensitivity.

**Limitations**

Several limitations that could not have been controlled constrained the methodology and the scope of potential conclusions that may be drawn from this study. These limitations may be explained within the contexts of study design and data analysis.

**Study design.** Intervention fidelity, the extent to which delivery of an intervention adheres to the model originally developed, needs to be verified, and variations from the design need to be assessed (O’Donnell, 2008). Infidelity can also result due to external factors rather than study design. Implementation and evaluation of the ESI went according to plan with regard to resources at my disposal, availability of
participants, duration of the intervention, and appropriate utilization of data collection instruments; however, it is noteworthy to recall that the ESI only measured four of the seven sub-skills of ethical sensitivity as identified by Narvaez and Endicott (2009). Though the ESI was only ever intended to serve as a pilot, no control group should be noted as a limitation of this study.

Duration of the intervention went according to plan, but the possibility exists that the plan was faulty. Above it was mentioned that a longer-lasting intervention could potentially have improved TPO results, so that this study’s duration was a limiting factor. Another potential limitation of this study may have been insufficient frequency of the sessions. Higher frequencies of activities have shown greater effects in different intervention programs (Ramey & Ramey, 2003). It is therefore possible that the implemented schedule of one session per week may have been a plan of insufficient intensity. Even though increasing the number of sessions would have presented a challenge due to competing school programming, it is important for future studies to explore optimal duration and frequency of sessions (Hermida et al., 2015). Doing so can potentially generate a more substantial impact.

There was no control group, which is another limitation of this study. A control group establishes a baseline, serves as a point of comparison for the experimental group, and helps researchers isolate the independent variable (Hinkelman, Kemplthorne, & Kshivsagar, 1996). Utilizing a control group was not possible because dividing the already relatively small sample size ($N = 25$) would have further reduced the statistical power of the design, and because my executive sponsor requested the involvement of all fourth and fifth grade students in the pilot intervention. Considering students in nearby
schools was not an option because the students in this study were representative of a specific religious demographic that was only present in this particular school in Baltimore. Traveling to other major cities, where students of comparable demographic might be located, was not practical for my small-scale research purposes. However, reproducing these results in a similar setting in the future, with or without a control group, could lend support to the present study and strengthen conclusions drawn from these data.

The internal reliability of the ESS (made up of individual statements) was analyzed using Cronbach’s alpha. Although Cronbach’s alpha is widely used, obtaining a high value for Cronbach’s alpha (indicating good internal consistency of the items in the scale) does not mean the scale is unidimensional (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Factor analysis is a method used to determine the dimensionality of a scale; however, partially due to the high risk of incorrect and misleading diagnoses of items, this is beyond the scope of this study (Cattell, 2012).

Another generally applicable limitation of self-report questionnaires such as those used in this study is the reliability of responses. The integrity of responses depends on the respondents’ level of honesty. Even if a participant is trying to be honest, however, he or she may lack the introspective ability to provide accurate information (Ganellen, 2007). Moreover, because the ESS utilized rating scales to offer respondents a variety of ways to respond, the downside of that design is that respondents may interpret the scale points differently (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015; Ganellen, 2007). Response bias is an additional flaw of self-report scales. It refers to individual’s inclination to respond a certain way, despite actual evidence. For example, some individuals consistently respond in a more
conservative manner than others. Some of the problems listed above were countered through careful design and application. For example, in an attempt to discourage dishonest reporting, anonymity and confidentiality of responses were ensured.

While it is important to consider the multitude of problems associated with self-report questionnaires, the main reason the ESS was used as a data collection tool in this study was because attitudinal change was the dependent variable. A self-report survey was the most effective and efficient way to gather data on the students’ self-perception. Interviews and focus groups, alternative ways to gather such data, are not cost-effective, compromise anonymity, and may limit objectivity.

Response bias can occur when an individual intentionally (or unintentionally) chooses the same answer repeatedly without even reading the question. In future research, the issue of response bias could be addressed by reversing half of the questions on the questionnaire, so that the variable is scored by higher-numbered responses on half the questions and lower-numbered responses on the other half, as was the case with the BSDS in the present study (Wilcox, 2012).

Survey fatigue occurs when individuals involved in research grow bored, tired, or uninterested with the task and begin to respond at a substandard level (Porter, Whitcomb, & Weitzer, 2004). It is possible that the participants of this study experienced survey fatigue upon responding to the 12-question ESS on three separate occasions. Also, if such fatigue occurred, it may even have occurred as a result of classwork students were engaged in prior to the ESI. Students may have responded to the ESS one way if they sat in a math class for the hour before the ESI, and they may have responded in a completely different manner if they experienced a thirty-minute recess prior to the start of the ESI.
Neither of these circumstances could have been controlled for in this study. Regardless, if survey fatigue had occurred, it could have produced measurement error (Egleston, Miller, & Meropol, 2011). While lower response rates and survey abandonment may not have been major factors affecting these results, it is possible that the quality of responses might have been affected by fatigue, though care was taken to reduce the chances of survey fatigue. The ESS was administered three times, and was limited to 10 minutes each time.

In future research, I would design the questionnaire to be completed in three to five minutes and allow respondents the freedom to skip a question in order to minimize frustration (Nair, Adams, & Mertova, 2008). Additionally, I would tell the respondents why their input is important, what I plan to do with the information, and provide an opportunity to include free-form comments (Nair et al., 2008).

The Hawthorne effect refers to the tendency of some people to perform better when they are aware of their involvement with a study (Fernald, Coombs, DeAlleaume, West, & Parnes, 2012). This phenomenon could have been a factor in the students’ oral participation as well as their written communication throughout the ESI. Students might have made comments in the group setting or in their written brief constructed response that were not accurate representations of their viewpoints and opinions. Possibly, students could have participated more or less in this intervention than they would have otherwise because they were aware of being under observation. To minimize factors connected to the Hawthorne effect, participants’ responses to the written prompts were anonymous and confidential.

Ideally, in future research, participants would be observed using the naturalistic observation technique, which would help support its external validity. Even though the
ESI was implemented in a relaxed and relatively typical setting at RAIS, two grades that didn’t normally interact with each other were grouped together for an hour per week. Additionally, students were relocated to a multipurpose room and a researcher conducted the sessions. In future research at RAIS, the naturalistic observation technique would include aspects such as ensuring that students are participating in the intervention with their own grade, in their own classroom, with their own teacher.

According to the needs assessment, stakeholders at RAIS cited religion, improved school culture, students’ minor unethical conduct, and upholding the mission statement as some of the important reasons to implement an Ethical Sensitivity Intervention. Despite the fact that the needs assessment showed a need for the intervention, a potential limitation of this study is the little room for ethical sensitivity development among the participants. The students in this study are mostly exposed to positive examples of ethical decisions at home, school, and in their community. Therefore, they might have less room for development than less-fortunate counterparts who regularly observe negative examples of ethical decisions.

The design of this study involved a double pretest and a posttest. It is possible that the very exposure to the pretests, not participation in the ESI, affected how the participants responded to the posttest questionnaire. This is called a testing threat and could be eliminated in future research if the pretests are eliminated and a control group was used for comparison (Woodman, 2014).

**Data analysis.** Pearson’s correlation coefficient (Pearson’s r) was used in this study to determine the degree to which one variable covaried with another. This test assumes a linear relationship between variables even though it may not be there (Bishara
& Hittner, 2012). Additionally, it is liable to misinterpretation because a high degree of correlation does not necessarily indicate a close relationship between the variables. As is the case with any test of correlation, causation cannot be inferred from correlation (Kazdin, 2011).

The t test was used in this study to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences between the students’ CW and ESS scores before and after the intervention. Additionally, this test was used to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the scores of males, females, fourth grade students, and fifth grade students. Every time I conducted a t test, there was a chance I made a Type 1 error which is usually 5%. By running multiple t tests on the same data, I increased the possibility that any significant results were due to chance. Additionally, parametric tests are not valid on very small data sets and they require that the populations being studied have the same variance (Murray, 2013). Ideally, in future research, an ANOVA would control for the Type 1 errors so that it remains at 5%.

**Recommendations**

Statistical analysis of the data from this study found that students’ abilities to read and express emotion and to control social bias, as measured by the ESS, were higher after engaging in the ESI. Their ability to communicate in a written manner also increased. Thus, if teachers, administration, board members and parents want students to develop ethical sensitivity, then such stakeholders and decision makers need to make it possible for teachers to spend class time implementing various ethical sensitivity interventions in which students are exposed to and can practice ethical thinking. Students rarely
understand and internalize concepts of ethical sensitivity without explicit instruction (Baron-Cohen, 2012; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2010; Gratz & Roemer, 2006).

Given the interest in character education in America at this time (See Chapter 2), the question becomes: What should such interventions consist of? How should various components be implemented? What should the intervention’s duration be?

A strong correlation was found between participation in the intervention and ability to communicate, one of the sub-skills of ethical sensitivity. This correlation suggests that one of the most important components of any comparable intervention is student engagement. Such engagement, if not obtained through intrinsic motivation, can sometimes be obtained through verbal praise or extrinsic motivation (Gillet, Vallerand, & Lafrenière, 2012). For elementary-aged students, such external reward can be in the form of candy, stickers, or even raffle tickets (Lemos & Verissimo, 2014).

During the course of this pilot study, the researcher and participants met on a weekly basis for about two months. This was the maximum amount of time allotted within the professional context. Research suggests that comparable interventions, aimed to deeply affect attitudinal change, last for several months, if not years, with sessions taking place on a weekly basis at a minimum (Cohen, 2006; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Though attempting to develop students’ ethical thoughts is potentially time-consuming and may not always prove to be successful, several researchers note that it is essential to successful education (Lapsley, Holter, & Narvaez, 2013).

Lapsley et al. (2013) argued that such values are immanent to school life and that instruction in this domain is inescapable and inevitable. Character education must not remain part of a school’s hidden curriculum, especially since teaching and learning are
value-laden activities. It is not a question of whether or not character education should be taught in the classroom, but rather “how consciously and by what methods” (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004, p.210).

**Future Implementations of ESI**

In Chapter 3 it was noted that thirty religiously affiliated independent schools’ mission statements were reviewed, and 100% of them referenced the importance of developing ethics or morals among their students. Upon completion of this study, I plan to further develop and expand an ethical sensitivity professional development workshop for RAIS and other schools that value the development of ethics and morals among their students. Schools that value such development, but have yet to find the time or resources to put a plan into action, could benefit from this professional development opportunity.

The intended audience would be teachers and administration. Prior to conducting the workshop, I would meet with administration in an effort to learn about the school and tailor the workshop to meet their needs. In an effort to avoid redundancy, it would be important for me to find out about any existing school programming that might already aid in the development of one or more of the sub-skills of ethical sensitivity within the student body.

The first half of the teacher training workshop would be informational, where the participants would learn about the benefits of actively developing ethical sensitivity among their students. The ESI that was piloted at RAIS would be referenced and used as a sample program, and participants would experience some of the activities used at RAIS and their ensuing group discussions. The second half of the workshop would be interactive; participants would create their own plans for implementation should they
choose to incorporate the information. As Dahlberg and Moss (2004) note, ethics education can help our students act more responsibly. While such intervention will not ensure moral action, ignorance almost certainly increases the chances of immoral behavior (Noddings, 2013).

**Future Research**

Ethical sensitivity is a complex construct, influenced by a large array of factors. Although this study measured development of some sub-skills of ethical sensitivity through the use of an already validated ethical sensitivity scale, it is not a perfect assessment of how children think. Educational researchers need to keep this in mind as they conduct future research in order to refine measurement of this construct. A great deal is known about the benefits of developing ethical thinking; however, what that looks like in the classroom is open to discussion.

First, researchers should intimately know their audience and the respective context so they can identify which sub-skills of ethical sensitivity should be prioritized. Second, researchers should aim to implement activities that reliably predict development of the given sub-skills. To this end, experimental research should be conducted to test which methods of ethical sensitivity development are most effective, especially given that many of them are likely to be context specific.

An intriguing question that remains was why TPO was the least successfully developed of the sub-skills in the ESI. Above, the work by Michelson, Sugai, Wood, and Kazdin (2013) was mentioned, indicating that TPO may take years to develop. To what extent can this skill be really taught?
Perspective-taking and oral communication, the two domains that did not see significant growth in this study, serve as topics for future research in an even wider context. Are students from certain demographics, ages, genders, or academic abilities more or less likely to develop within these areas? Given the context, what are the best methods for developing such skills? The school environment is sometimes overlooked, but Wang and Eccles (2013) argue that it is often a determining factor in the success or failure of many interventions that focus on academic, social, and behavioral improvement.

The professional context of this study, a religiously affiliated independent school, undoubtedly influenced the findings. The Needs Assessment, discussed in Chapter 3, showed that consistency with religious values at home was an important reason why parents wanted RAIS to focus on developing ethical sensitivity within their children. Furthermore, although not measured in this study, RAIS students engage in religious studies for a portion of their school day. Future research can attempt to pinpoint how such influences affect ethical sensitivity development, especially when compared with students from different contexts. Are some students primed for such moral development, whereas others may be fighting an uphill battle? In a similar vein, would this ESI, or a variation of it, work similarly in a non-religious school?

The ESS was designed to apply to people from different backgrounds and cultures (Kuusisto, Tirri, & Rissanen, 2012). However, the method of intervention may vary depending on context. Religious schools with similar missions may be able to use this study as a model to implement their own comparable interventions, while non-religious schools in different settings with different student-populations may be unable to adapt as
much from this study. Implications, applications, and recommendations from future research could potentially help tailor future ethical sensitivity interventions as well as other pursuits in various school settings and contexts.

**Conclusion**

A direct correlation was noted between students’ ethical sensitivity and academic performance (Oaten & Cheng, 2006). The more students develop ethical sensitivity, the better they perform academically. Furthermore, the development of ethical sensitivity lays the foundation for subsequent development in ethical judgment, ethical motivation, and eventually ethical action (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). Despite this research, and despite mention of ethics in the school’s mission statement, RAIS did not prioritize ethical sensitivity development among its students.

This study provided evidence that, given appropriate time and resources, ethical sensitivity interventions have the potential to help fourth and fifth grade students develop ethical sensitivity in a religiously-affiliated school setting. According to Rest’s (1983) Four Component Model, ethical sensitivity is a necessary condition for development of ethical judgment, ethical motivation, and finally ethical action. Well-designed ethical sensitivity programs and interventions might truly be able to teach kids to care.
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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW WITH ADMINISTRATOR

- Do you think RAIS actively produces ethically sensitive students?
- Given that producing ethically sensitive students is mentioned in the school’s mission statement, why do you think this isn’t being actualized?
- You said there are many reasons why the school doesn’t actively develop ethical sensitivity among the students. Are there any others that you haven’t mentioned yet? (follow-up question, developed on-site)
- What would it take to create more continuity between the goals of the school and the people carrying them out? (follow-up question, developed on-site)
- Can you talk with me about funding at RAIS as it relates to the development of ethical sensitivity among our students? (follow-up question, developed on-site)
- Can you talk with me about time devoted for developing ethical sensitivity among students? (follow-up question, developed on-site)
- What if we could magically create an extra hour in the school-day for teachers to plan for and teach ethical sensitivity? Do you think the teachers would be capable? (follow-up question, developed on-site)
- Why do you think parents send their children to RAIS in the first place?
APPENDIX B

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH ADMINISTRATOR

Rebecca: Thank you very much for taking the time to sit down with me. The purpose of our conversation today is to discuss ethical sensitivity at RAIS. Do you feel familiar enough with this topic, the school, and all involved parties to discuss this?

Administrator: Yes, I do.

Rebecca: Great. Thank you. Do you also feel that you and I are both capable of being as objective as possible in an effort to accurately and honestly discuss ethical sensitivity at RAIS?

Administrator: Yes, I do.

Rebecca: Wonderful. Thank you. So, let’s get started. Do you think RAIS actively produces ethically sensitive students?

Administrator: I think there are individual teachers who informally touch on ethics from time to time, but there is definitely no official standard for all of the students to develop such skills.

Rebecca: Interesting. Given that producing ethically sensitive students is mentioned in the school’s mission statement, why do you think this isn’t being actualized?

Administrator: Well, I think we pride ourselves as a school that promotes morals and values that are consistent between school and most, if not all, homes. However, I think there are many answers to your question. First off, our school is brand new. We are only 3 years old, and we opened in a very rushed and frantic fashion to fill a void in our community. We were and still are focused on crucial decisions that affect the school’s
survival. We don’t feel we have the luxury to develop ethical sensitivity among our students. We hope that it happens organically but we don’t have the time or the resources to focus on it any more than that at the current time. We are just starting to really improve our academics and once we feel like we have a good foundation, we can focus on other things.

Rebecca: Interesting. You said there are many reasons why the school doesn’t actively develop ethical sensitivity among the students. Are there any others that you haven’t mentioned yet?

Administrator: Yes, but these reasons aren’t only why we don’t have an ethical sensitivity program. They are the reasons we don’t have a lot of things we should have. The fact that we are private means we don’t receive government funding. This means we set our own standards and priorities. Also, there was very little consistency in the board and administration up until recently. In the first 3 years of the school, we had two board presidents and four principals. The first two principals were the ones who helped to draft the mission statement, but it is the current principal who is enforcing it. What if there is a disconnect?

Rebecca: Wow. What would it take to create more continuity between the goals of the school and the people carrying them out?

Administrator: Well, a stronger administrative team would be key. A vice principal would make a world of difference at the very least. If not a vice principal, perhaps an educational expert who could take over many responsibilities that directly relate to special programming, academic and otherwise. As principal, there is currently
way more on my plate than I can handle. I am not intentionally ignoring important goals like ethical sensitivity; I am just not able to get around to them at the moment.

**Rebecca:** Understandable. You are doing a wonderful job of running the school, and I don’t underestimate all that must be on your plate! Can you talk with me about funding at RAIS as it relates to the development of ethical sensitivity among our students?

**Administrator:** Of course. Well, plain and simple, if we had more money we could hire personal and purchase resources that would aid in the development of ethical sensitivity among our students. Hiring a part-time specialist would probably solve that problem, but we don’t have that sort of funding at this time. Likewise, organizing professional development opportunities to train our current teachers would be amazing, but it all comes down to money. The financial committee, on our school board, has made it very clear that we don’t have any money to support such programming at this time.

**Rebecca:** When I think of money, I also often think of time. I think these are two important factors to consider from an administrative standpoint. Can you talk with me about time devoted for developing ethical sensitivity among students?

**Administrator:** Of course. Well, as you know, our students have a rigorous dual curriculum comprised of secular and religious studies. Students are also involved in extra-curricular programming during the school day. Teachers are totally pressed for time, and rarely teach everything that they plan to cover. In addition to not having enough time to teach, teachers also lack time to plan. Our school simply can’t afford to pay them for this time even though I would love to. I doubt our faculty would jump to add more
programming on their plate. They really don’t have the time to plan for or teach ethical sensitivity given the current financial and time constraints.

**Rebecca:** Wow. Thank you for sharing. That certainly makes sense. What if we could magically create an extra hour in the school-day for teachers to plan for and teach ethical sensitivity? Do you think the teachers would be capable?

**Administrator:** Good question. While I would love to answer yes to this question based on the teachers’ natural talents and based on the fact that we pride ourselves on hiring highly qualified staff, I have to answer in the negative. We haven’t provided training or professional development in this domain and I don’t know if the teachers have the background to research and implement this type of programming.

**Rebecca:** Ok. Thank you. We opened this interview with my asking you if you feel comfortable not only with the school, but with all involved parties. As our last topic, can you speak with me about the parents at OCA?

**Administrator:** Of course. Please.

**Rebecca:** Well, first of all, why do you think parents send their children to RAIS in the first place?

**Administrator:** Well, just like myself, I think that most if not all parents believe in consistency between home and school in all areas but especially concerning religion. Our school focuses on morals and values. I am pretty sure that one of reasons many parents even bothered pursuing our school was because of the mention of ethical sensitivity in the mission statement. This is – or should be- a focus of our school and a focus of our families as well. We work hard to please our parents because of the support
they offer our school. The board and administrative team considers them to be among the main stakeholders of the school. We have a mutually beneficial relationship.

Rebecca: Wow. Thank you very much for your time. I learned a lot about the inner workings of RAIS as it relates to the development of ethical sensitivity among our students. Thank you.
APPENDIX C

TABLES OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

Q1. I am a:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>(55 respondents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>(14 respondents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>(2 respondents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>(4 respondents)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. There were 77 respondents altogether.

Q2. RAIS is responsible for actively assessing the following skills among its students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Emotional Expression</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking the Perspective of Others</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting to Others</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Diversity</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling Social Bias</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting Situations</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating Well</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breakdown of Q2. RAIS is responsible for actively assessing the following skills among its students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Emotional Expression</td>
<td>19 parents</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5 parents</td>
<td>1 teacher</td>
<td>1 teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 teachers</td>
<td>1 teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 board members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking the Perspective of Others</td>
<td>17 parents 2 teachers</td>
<td>20 parents 8 teachers 1 board member</td>
<td>8 parents 1 teacher 1 administrator 1 board member</td>
<td>1 teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting to Others</td>
<td>18 parents 3 teachers</td>
<td>21 parents 8 teachers 2 board members</td>
<td>5 parents 1 administrator</td>
<td>1 parent 1 teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Diversity</td>
<td>15 parents 2 teachers</td>
<td>20 parents 7 teachers 1 board member</td>
<td>9 parents 1 teacher</td>
<td>1 teacher 1 administrator 1 board member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling Social Bias</td>
<td>22 parents 2 teachers</td>
<td>12 parents 7 teachers 2 board members</td>
<td>10 parents 2 teachers</td>
<td>2 parents 2 teachers 1 administrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting Situations</td>
<td>19 parents 3 teachers</td>
<td>22 parents 6 teachers 2 board member</td>
<td>4 parents 2 teachers</td>
<td>1 teacher 1 administrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating Well</td>
<td>25 parents 3 teachers 1 board member</td>
<td>16 parents 7 teachers 1 board member</td>
<td>2 parents 1 teacher 1 administrator</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 10 parents, 2 teachers, 1 administrator, and 2 board members skipped this question.

Q3. Teachers at RAIS are actively developing the following skills among students:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Emotional Expression</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking the Perspective of Others</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting to Others</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Diversity</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling Social Bias</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting Situations</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating Well</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
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Breakdown of Q3. Teachers at RAIS are actively developing the following skills among students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Emotional</td>
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<td>1 teacher</td>
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<td>1 board member</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking the Perspective of</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecting to Others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8 parents</td>
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<td>1 administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responding to Diversity</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1 teacher</td>
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<td>2 board members</td>
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219
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controlling Social Bias</td>
<td>7 teachers</td>
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<td>2 board members</td>
<td>1 teacher</td>
<td>1 administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting Situations</td>
<td>8 parents</td>
<td>19 parents</td>
<td>10 parents</td>
<td>2 parents</td>
<td>1 teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating Well</td>
<td>2 teachers</td>
<td>19 parents</td>
<td>7 parents</td>
<td>1 parent</td>
<td>1 teacher</td>
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Note. 16 parents, 3 teachers, 1 administrator, and 2 board members skipped this question.

Q4. RAIS’s commitment to developing ethical sensitivity is illustrated by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training faculty to run ethical sensitivity</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding ethical sensitivity programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allotting time in the school day for ethical</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Breakdown of Q4. RAIS’s commitment to developing ethical sensitivity is illustrated by:

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>16 parents</td>
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<td>1 teacher</td>
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<td>Funding ethical sensitivity programming</td>
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<td>Agree</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<td>4 parents</td>
<td>11 parents</td>
<td>17 parents</td>
<td>3 parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 teacher</td>
<td>2 teachers</td>
<td>3 teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 boardmember</td>
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<td>1 boardmember</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 parents</td>
<td>11 parents</td>
<td>17 parents</td>
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<td>3 teachers</td>
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<td>3 teachers</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td>1 boardmember</td>
<td>1 boardmember</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessing the need for ethical sensitivity programming</th>
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<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 parents</td>
<td>17 parents</td>
<td>11 parents</td>
<td>1 parent</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 teacher</td>
<td>3 teachers</td>
<td>3 teachers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td>1 boardmember</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessing the interest for ethical sensitivity programming</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 parents</td>
<td>15 parents</td>
<td>11 parents</td>
<td>4 parents</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td>1 boardmember</td>
<td>1 boardmember</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 18 parents, 3 teachers, 1 administrator, and 2 board members skipped this question.

Q5. It is important for RAIS to take an active stance in the development of ethical sensitivity in our students because:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our students exhibit passive minor unethical conduct</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our students exhibit severe unethical conduct</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our students don’t necessarily exhibit unethical conduct, but it is important to me that they develop ethical sensitivity</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is stated in the school’s mission statement</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Breakdown of Q5. It is important for RAIS to take an active stance in the development of ethical sensitivity within our students because:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of religious reasons</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of the importance of improving school culture</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our students exhibit passive minor unethical conduct</td>
<td>7 parents</td>
<td>19 parents</td>
<td>1 parent</td>
<td>9 parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 teachers</td>
<td>5 teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td>1 board member</td>
<td>1 board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our students exhibit severe unethical conduct</td>
<td>5 parents</td>
<td>6 parents</td>
<td>3 parents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 board member</td>
<td>1 board member</td>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td>2 board members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our students don’t necessarily exhibit unethical conduct, but it is important to me that they develop ethical sensitivity</td>
<td>20 parents</td>
<td>11 parents</td>
<td>3 parents</td>
<td>1 parent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 teachers</td>
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<td>1 teacher</td>
<td>2 parents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 board member</td>
<td>1 board member</td>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is stated in the school’s mission statement</td>
<td>8 parents</td>
<td>21 parents</td>
<td>8 parents</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 teachers</td>
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<td>2 teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td>1 board member</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Of religious reasons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td>2 board members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of the importance of improving school culture</td>
<td>19 parents</td>
<td>15 parents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 administrator</td>
<td>1 board member</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note. 19 parents, 3 teachers, 1 administrator, and 2 board members skipped this question.
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR 4TH AND 5TH GRADE FACULTY

• Do you informally address ethical issues in your classroom?
• Do you have time for a formal ethical sensitivity program?
• Do you see a need for such a program?
• Have you had training in ethical sensitivity programming?
• Do you think faculty should have such training?
Rebecca: Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. I really appreciate it. I want to begin by letting you know that everything said here today is 100% confidential. Our conversation will only be used for the purposes of my research and data collection. Nothing we say will be shared with faculty or administration at RAIS.

Teacher A: Thank you. That’s good to know. I appreciate it.

Rebecca: Ok, great. So let’s get started.

Teacher A: Sounds good.

Rebecca: We’re talking about ethical sensitivity today. Do you informally address ethical issues in your classroom?

Teacher A: Let me think for a minute. When I see students fighting or if I notice an issue, we have a class meeting that I call “peace table”. During “peace table”, students are encouraged to share their opinions in a controlled environment. Students are not allowed to interrupt each other. They take turns answering the questions I pose, and they are allowed to say “pass” if they so desire.

Rebecca: Wow. Thank you for sharing. That’s very interesting. What else can you share with me about how ethical issues might be informally addressed in your classroom?

Teacher A: Other than “peace table”, I think I just try to correct behavior throughout the year with small side comments. I rarely tell students why something was wrong in a social/emotional situation. I try to pull them aside and ask them why they think what they did was wrong and what choices they will make next time.
**Rebecca:** Thank you for sharing that very helpful information. Do you think there is a need for a more formal ethical sensitivity program?

**Teacher A:** Interesting question. I’m not so sure. The reason I am waffling is because my students are relatively good students. At least, they seem to be pretty well behaved for me in the classroom setting. I heard they do not act the same way outside of school. One reason I would say we do need a more formal ethical sensitivity program is because morals and values are the building blocks of our school. We are a religious school and our leadership often talks about the importance of raising upstanding citizens who understand how to contribute to their community. In my opinion, teaching ethics is the basis for that. It’s unfortunate though, because even though I think it is important, we really don’t have time for it. Teachers rarely get planning periods because of the dual curriculum and the students’ schedule is already jam packed.

**Rebecca:** That’s so funny. My follow-up question was going to ask you about whether or not you have time for a formal ethical sensitivity program.

**Teacher A:** Yeah. That’s the life of a teacher. Very little time for anything other than planning and grading.

**Rebecca:** Of course. It’s far from a 9-5! Well, I’d love to end with a quick question or two about training.

**Teacher A:** Sure.

**Rebecca:** Did you have any formal training when it comes to ethical sensitivity? Anything that would ensure that all faculty are on the same page when it comes to morals, values, ethics?
**Teacher A:** No. Not at all. We are majorly pressed for time, and hardly covered the academic training at the beginning of the year - which most people feel takes priority. It’s a shame because I think the academics and the social/emotional are equally important. I think teachers should be trained. At the very least we should be trained in how to manage conflicts so we are all on the same page, but we aren’t.

**Rebecca:** Again, you stole my next question! Go you! I was going to follow up with asking if you think faculty *should* have training, but you made your opinion clear. Is there anything else you would like to share that you think would be helpful in my efforts to understand how the faculty perceive ethical sensitivity at RAIS?

**Teacher A:** I think we covered the main points. It’s just important that others understand that I am trying my hardest to help develop well rounded students. I am always crunched for time, but at the very least, I conduct “peace table” when needed and sometimes pull students aside to conduct private conversations when appropriate.

**Rebecca:** Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate your honesty.

**Teacher A:** Thank you.
APPENDIX F

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER B

**Rebecca:** Thank you so much for speaking with me today. I know you have a very busy schedule!

**Teacher B:** Not a problem.

**Rebecca:** It is important that I let you know that everything you say is 100% confidential. Nothing you say will be shared with faculty or administration at RAIS. Our conversation will only be used for the purposes of my research and data collection.

**Teacher B:** Sounds good to me.

**Rebecca:** Great. Thank you so much. Ready to begin?

**Teacher B:** Ready.

**Rebecca:** So, today we are going to talk about ethical sensitivity at RAIS. I am curious if you have ever had training in ethical sensitivity programming?

**Teacher B:** I have not had any training when it comes to ethics or morals, but I have to be honest and share that I am not 100% sure that I understand what you mean when you say ethical sensitivity?

**Rebecca:** Of course. What I mean when I say ethical sensitivity is an awareness of how our actions affect others. Some researchers in the field have identified some sub skills of ethical sensitivity that include taking others perspectives, communicating, controlling social bias, and reading and expressing emotion.

**Teacher B:** Ok. That helps to clarify things. No. I have not had any formal training in these areas. I think the reasonable person standard is applied to our role as
professionals, and we are simply expected to handle situations appropriately as they arise.

Rebecca: I can appreciate that, but tell me… do you see a need for formal ethical sensitivity programming, and if so, do you think faculty should have such training?

Teacher B: I think the need for the programming and the need for faculty training go together. So, either we do need the programming and therefore teachers should be trained. Or we don’t need the programming, and therefore teachers shouldn’t be trained. In my case, I think our school does need ethical sensitivity programming, and therefore I think teachers should be trained.

Rebecca: Interesting. Can you elaborate?

Teacher B: Sure. I think our school needs ethical sensitivity programming because most, if not all of the other schools I’ve taught in place a greater emphasis on developing the whole child. Our school has a little bit of programming surrounding how students should connect, communicate, and understand different choices they have in given situations, but I could appreciate more robust programming that addresses some of those sub skills you mentioned.

Rebecca: Ok. Thank you for sharing your opinion. Do you think there is time for a formal ethical sensitivity program?

Teacher B: I think it is enough of a priority that the students’ schedule needs to be cleared for such programming. It doesn’t have to take place every day, but I was say at least on a weekly basis would be ideal from a scheduling standpoint. In my opinion, we could take one of the other extra-curricular activities away or at least reduce the time spent. The teachers will tell you that they don’t have time for it, and they’re right. We
barely have time to plan and grade. Most of that comes out of our own time. Maybe if an outsider came in to run the program with our students, that would be great, but we don’t have time to plan for it. We’re swamped. Sucks because it’s important.

Rebecca: I completely understand. Would you mind if I asked you one more question?

Teacher B: Not a problem.

Rebecca: Thank you. Do you informally address ethical issues in your classroom?

Teacher B: Hmm. I am thinking back to those sub skills you mentioned earlier. Would you mind restating them?

Rebecca: Sure. Taking others perspectives, reading and expressing emotions, controlling social bias, and communicating well.

Teacher B: Thanks. Yeah. I would say I do a good bit of reading and expressing emotions and communicating in my classroom. I often ask my students to “read my look” if I am disappointed and want to show it through my facial expression. I sometimes ask other students to tell me how they are feeling. Also, when it comes to communication, I conduct loads of class discussions. Not everyone participates, but the ones who do get great practice with verbal communication.

Rebecca: Thank you so much for your time. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Teacher B: Umm. I don’t think so. Thank you for your time as well.
APPENDIX G

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER C

Rebecca: Thank you very much for speaking with me today. I really appreciate that you are giving up your only planning period of the day!

Teacher C: Happy to do it.

Rebecca: Wow. Thank you. I just want to share with you that everything said during our meeting today is 100% confidential. Nothing that is said will be shared with any faculty member or administrator at RAIS. It will only be used for my research on ethical sensitivity.

Teacher C: Sure. You have my permission to use whatever might be helpful from our conversation.

Rebecca: Thank you. So, let’s get started. Shall we?

Teacher C: Sounds good to me. Clock is ticking!

Rebecca: I’d like to start by asking if you informally address ethical issues in your classroom?

Teacher C: Hmm. Ethical issues in my classroom. From time to time we will discuss the difference between right and wrong, but is usually within the context of a student in my class who just did something he shouldn’t have done. We might talk about what he should have done differently. This is sometimes done privately and then done as a class because I want to prevent it from happening again.

Rebecca: Got it. So it sounds like your using the incidents as learning opportunities.
Teacher C: That’s what I’m trying to do. It’s hard to turn every incident into a learning opportunity because they happen so often.

Rebecca: Really? Tell me more.

Teacher C: Yeah. Last year I had a great class, but for some reason I have a really rough class this year. The dynamic is just tough. I have a few ring leaders who really set a negative tone sometimes for the other kids in the class. It’s really unfortunate.

Rebecca: Jeez. Sounds tough. What else can you tell me?

Teacher C: I would love some ideas on how I can help them. Sometimes I feel lost because I know the other kids are just being followers. I want them to follow positive examples and I want to help the more troubled kids develop the skills they need to express themselves because I do think that is at the root of this. Their inability to express themselves.

Rebecca: Interesting. So then, do you think an ethical sensitivity program is warranted?

Teacher C: Absolutely. Not a question in my mind.

Rebecca: Why do you think there hasn’t been one up until now?

Teacher C: Either it wasn’t enough of a priority or there wasn’t enough time. I know lack of time is a major stress factor around here because of the dual curriculum.

Rebecca: Understood. Have you and the other teachers ever participated in ethical sensitivity training?

Teacher C: That has never come up. I think we are just expected to have basic sensitivity to ethical issues. If there is ever a question in our mind with an incident, I suppose we would just call on the administration to help out.
**Rebecca:** That sounds fair. Do you think the faculty should have ethical sensitivity training?

**Teacher C:** Umm. I think there are other things that are more important if our training time is limited. I think ethical sensitivity is important but I think our teachers might already have a basic understanding of what that means and how to incorporate it in their classrooms. Of course, I am not talking about formal programming. If we are talking about formal programming, then of course faculty should be trained. But if you are asking me if each teacher has a basic understanding of ethics, I would say yes. We all have a basic understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

**Rebecca:** Thank you. Is there anything else you would like to share?

**Teacher C:** I think that’s it. Thanks so much.
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Homewood Institutional Review Board
3400 N. Charles Street
Baltimore MD 21218-2685
410-516-6550
http://web.jhu.edu/Homewood-IRB/

Michael McCloskey, PhD
Chair

Date: September 4, 2015

PI Name: Christine Eccles
Study #: HIRB00003360
Study Name: Ethical Sensitivity Intervention

Date of Review: 9/4/2015
Date of Approval: 9/4/2015
Expiration Date: 9/3/2016

The above referenced study has been approved.

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| Assent Process: | Written assent
Written parental permission |

No changes may be made to the protocol or the consent form without the approval of the Board. Federal regulations require review of approved research not less than once a year, unless a shorter period is determined by the IRB. Therefore a Continuing Review progress report must be submitted no later than six weeks prior to the Study Expiration date of 9/3/2016 or within 30 days of study completion.

https://ehirb.jhu.edu/ehirb/Doc/0/FNT%5NNV5NKBK8LREM1M9ET0BDC/fromString.html 3/24/2016
If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 9/3/2016 approval of this research expires on that date. Failure to submit a Continuing Review Progress Report prior to the approval lapse date will result in termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must discontinue participation in the study. All ongoing research activities must stop immediately, including data analysis.

Please keep in mind that it is your responsibility to inform the HIRB of any adverse consequences to participants that occur in the course of the study, as well as any complaints from participants regarding the research. In conducting this research, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the HIRB Policies and Procedures Manual.

It is suggested that on the assent form, one small portion be removed. This portion reads, "You are being asked to join the study because you are the oldest and most mature students in the school. Rabbi Margoese and I decided that the oldest students in the school should get opportunities to participate in special programs."

The concern is that this is slightly coercive, in that it suggests that if a student opts not to participate, they are not in the "mature" group of students. In addition, this language suggests that the Rabbi wishes that all of the students participate.

It is recommended that you simply deleting this short paragraph. The rest of the assent script looks fine.

Approved Documents:

Written Assents:
Assent Form

Parental Permissions:
Parental Permission Form

Recruiting Materials:
Introduction E-mail

Study Team Members:
Rebecca Friedman

Approval is granted under the terms of FWA0006854 Federal-wide Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for protection of human research subjects.