Evaluating Interactive Social Justice Education: The Relationship between Responsive Fiction and Social Empathy

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May 2019

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my three advisors, Dr. Danny M. Cohen, Dr. Terri Sabol, and Dr. Regina Lopata Logan, for their constant support and feedback throughout this process. There is not enough space to fully explain how these three mentors have impacted my academic journey. I am thankful to all three of you for recognizing my passion my first year at Northwestern and constantly pushing me to be a better scientist and a better person. I would also like to thank Susan Olson, Dr. David Rapp, and Sarah White for providing me with guidance throughout this process, as well as the Office of Undergraduate Research for providing me with a grant to cover the costs of compensating participants. Lastly, this research would not have been possible without my two mothers and sister who taught me justice is worth fighting for, and Allie, Blake and Jess who fill every day of my life with love and encouragement.

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Abstract

The theorists who developed Social Justice Education (SJE) claim that its goals are: to critically analyze how oppression operates on an individual, cultural, and institutional level, to harness empathy and respect for others, and, ultimately, to commit to working for lasting change. Despite having established goals, the literature lacks research on how to evaluate such programs. Social empathy—empathy that takes into account contextual understanding and social awareness—is associated with higher engagement in social action and helping behaviors. Based on this research, I used a mixed method design to analyze the affect SJE has on participants. I analyzed *Tomorrow*, a social justice program on mental health in high school, by having participants take the Social Empathy Index (SEI) before and after the workshop. They then participated in a group interview. Participants were randomly assigned to facilitated or online versions of *Tomorrow* to assess the differences between the pedagogies. The coding scheme consisted of established subscales of empathy, Bloom's taxonomy of the four dimensions of knowledge, and codes on general feedback established through grounded theory. Using a paired t-test between pre- and post- SEIs, a significant difference between social empathy after participating in *Tomorrow* was established. However, no difference was found between the online and facilitated conditions. Participants reported an understanding of new perspectives related to mental health and social justice. This study not only analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of *Tomorrow* but also proposes a novel and robust method for creating and evaluating SJE in the future.

Keywords: social justice education, social empathy, mental health, mixed methods design

Note on Writing Style

In every study the researcher plays an integral role in the research and always influences the findings simply through their participation in the research process (Savin-Baden & Tombs, 2017). Due to this fact there has been a growing acceptance of using first person in academic writing (Kim, 2015). Third person or passive tense removes the researcher from the analysis. This has been criticized by many academics who claim that this removal is deceptive and does not accurately present the research process (Webb, 1992). In addition, I have worked for the non-profit organization, Unsilence, for two years, and I was on the original design team for *Tomorrow*, which is the program that is analyzed in this study. This not only gave me access but also a deep knowledge of the program, which enhanced my research. However, I understand the potential conflict of interest and therefore I am using first-person throughout this paper to promote full transparency of the research process.

This paper will use the singular "they" due to an effort to avoid gendered language, which discriminates against women and non-binary individuals. The singular "they" was considered grammatically correct prior to the 19th century. Linguists argue that prescriptive grammarians altered the language to further push the use of the sex-indefinite "he" (Bodine, 1975). In the 19th century the argument against using "he or she" claimed it was clumsy and pedantic, but I argue the erasure of non-binary and trans* individuals from "he or she" is more problematic. Moreover, the singular they is becoming more accepted in common language and academia (Ackerman, 2018). Therefore, this paper will use the singular "they" for its gender neutrality.

Content Warning: This paper discusses mental health issues, specifically suicide in high school.

Evaluating Interactive Social Justice Education: The Relationship between Responsive Fiction and Social Empathy

In our current political climate, there is an increased effort to "make a difference" in the world. Companies are paying for Diversity and Inclusion programs to try to eliminate racism and sexual harassment in the workplace (Bersin, 2015). There is a push for schools to fund civics programs that encourage students to take action within their communities (Shapiro & Brown, n.d.), and non-profits continue to educate the public on social justice issues to encourage positive change. Despite this increase in programming and attention, there has not been a commensurate increase in research on the efficacy of such educational programs. Of the work that has been done, ethnographic and correlational research has shown an indirect positive influence of social justice education on various educational outcomes. Although, analyses have focused on how the school as a whole has improved by adding a social justice framework into the curriculum, rather than analyzing the effect the program had on learners (Brown, 2004; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Shields, 2004; Theoharis, 2007).

Social justice education—the teaching of systemic inequality and social oppression with the goal of developing a commitment to lasting changing and skills necessary to foster that change—has a robust theoretical foundation (Adams & Zúñiga, 2018). It rests on the notion that by gaining a deep understanding of systemic injustice and gaining an ability to notice how we as individuals contribute to forms of oppression through our language, behavior, and thoughts, we can learn to analyze and change our behavior that leads to individual accountability and ally-ship towards marginalized groups (Love, 2000). This educational theory requires a deep level of empathy in order to analyze one's own privilege and treat everyone, regardless of social identity, with respect and value (Pharr, 1996).

In addition to the educational theory, there is strong psychological evidence that empathy, specifically social empathy, leads to prosocial and helping behaviors (Batson, Chang, Orr, & Rowland, 2002). Research has shown that by increasing one's likelihood to develop empathy about a social issue (having them focus on how someone in that situation feels, rather than objective facts) they become more likely to aid in that particular issue (Batson et al., 2002). However, there is a gap in the literature analyzing the effect of social justice education and the differences in participants' empathy levels after engaging in this type of education.

Although there is strong evidence that the use of online and technology-based education is increasing (Allen & Seaman, 2015), the effectiveness of such education has not been adequately studied. There is a vast range in quality and design of online education programs, and therefore when analyzing online education as a whole it leads to inconclusive results (Kim & Bonk, 2006). Empirical evidence on the effectiveness of online learning compared to facilitated learning, controlling for training of educators and program content, is lacking.

Although limited, research on specifically interactive and web-enhanced learning has shown to increase engagement in students (DePietro, 2012). Introducing an interactive component to education results in higher levels of conceptual learning (McDaniel, Lister, Hanna, & Roy, 2007), cooperative problem solving (Knight & Wood, 2005), and student participation (Benmayor, 2008; Knight & Wood, 2005). In addition, there is ample evidence that storytelling and fiction can increase empathy and improve theory of mind (Kidd & Castano, 2013) because it forces the reader to strengthen their perspective taking skills (Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, & Trifiletti, 2015). Therefore, interactive fiction and choose-your-own-adventure stories that focus on social justice issues are a theoretically robust area of study.

This study analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of two social justice education pedagogical approaches, online and facilitated, and the differences in how participants demonstrate empathy between the two approaches. It did this through both quantitative and qualitative measures. Adult age participants attending a social justice education workshop in Chicago were given a pre- and post-test to analyze their change their social empathy. They then participated in a one-hour focus group interview where they discussed their experiences in the workshop. Interview responses were coded using a combination of established social empathy subscales, dimensions of knowledge and cognitive processes, and grounded theory. Evaluating social justice education is a largely unstudied field. This study began to fill that gap by evaluating two social justice education pedagogies, online and facilitated, by analyzing how participants demonstrate social empathy in both conditions and what the strengths and challenges are in each.

The decision to focus on demonstrations of social empathy is rooted in the research that social empathy is a strong predicting factor of social action (Batson et al., 2002; Segal, Gerdes, Lietz, Wagaman, & Geiger, 2017a). Since informed social action is one of the main goals of social justice education, social empathy is a strong proxy for success. This study examined the program *Tomorrow* (Cohen, Oberman, & Patel, 2018), which is hosted on the website of the non-profit "Unsilence." Unsilence is a Chicago based social justice education 501(c)(3) non-profit. Its mission is "to illuminate stories of human rights and ignite action against injustice," (UNSILENCE, n.d.) which it works to accomplish by designing and implementing educational programming on social justice and human rights in schools, community centers, museums, and other institutions. Unsilence programming is rooted in its educational framework, which breaks down barriers to social justice and access to human rights into three forms of silencing:

institutional silencing, cultural silencing, and personal silencing. Unsilence creates both online and facilitated learning experiences that teach participants about systemic silencing of injustice in an effort to increase empathy and lead to informed action (UNSILENCE, n.d.). *Tomorrow* is a choose-your-own-adventure[1] story based on a teacher's original testimony, that navigates participants through the aftermath of a student's suicide at a high school. *Tomorrow* can be completed online or be facilitated by a trained Unsilence facilitator. This study analyzed the implementation strengths and weaknesses and learning outcomes of both *Tomorrow* as an online tool and as a facilitated workshop for students and educators in the Chicago area by analyzing how participants demonstrated social empathy.

Literature Review

Background on Social Justice Education

Social justice education (SJE) is the interdisciplinary practice of analyzing forms of oppression and gaining the skills necessary to challenge the power structures that exist in society in order to confront these ongoing forms of injustice (Adams & Bell, 2016). Unlike multicultural or diversity programs, which have the primary goal of teaching about other cultures and valuing differences, social justice education works to foster the skills needed to address social injustice from a systemic perspective (Adams, 2016; Zúñiga, Lopez, & Ford, 2012). The goal of social justice education is to teach that oppression is a systemic problem, rather than act as a celebration of differences (Johnson, 2006).

Therefore, the goals associated with social justice education are multi-layered. Those who design and deliver such programs strive to empower learners to acknowledge their roles in systems of oppression (Johnson, 2006; Love, 2000; Zúñiga et al., 2012), critically analyze how

[1] Unsilence uses the phrase "choose-your-own-adventure" because that is established terminology associated with this type of methodology. However, it is in no way meant to trivialize suicide or stories of suicide.

oppression operates on an individual, cultural, and institutional level (Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Johnson, 2006; Love, 2000), create a politic of shared power rather than power over (Freire, 1970; Pharr, 1996; Zúñiga et al., 2012), harness empathy and respect for others (Bell, 2010; Collins, 1993; Love, 2000; Pharr, 1996; Zúñiga et al., 2012), and ultimately make a commitment to work for lasting change (Adams & Zúñiga, 2018; Collins, 1993; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Love, 2000). In essence, all of these objectives lead to a broader goal: to increase learners' level of understanding about power and oppression in an effort to increase empathy and motivate individuals to take action and make change.

Social justice education initially came out of Paulo Freire's foundational and radical pedagogy. Freire (1970) challenged the "banking" model of education, which involved educators who had more power "depositing" knowledge into students' brains, which they were then required to regurgitate on an exam. From this model Freire originally coined the term "critical consciousness" which has since been adapted into "liberatory consciousness" (Love, 2000). Liberatory consciousness is the process of developing an awareness of how everyone contributes to maintaining systems of power and oppression. In order to develop liberatory consciousness, one must have the ability to analyze any situation in order to determine when change is required, to work to make that change, and ultimately to acknowledge that we all have the responsibility to help those who have been disenfranchised due to socially constructed identities and systems of oppression (Love, 2000). It is through this process that we can work towards a politic of liberation and inclusion, in which power is equally distributed, and everyone is treated as valued and whole (Pharr, 1996). To work towards this goal, leaders of social justice education prioritize inquiry-based learning where students have as much agency in their education as their educator,

and they, too, can safely examine and question systems of power (Adams, 2016; Freire, 1970; Stewart, 2012).

Due to the history of social justice education challenging structural oppression, it requires deep consideration of the structure of curricula, the nature of classrooms, and the design of teaching practices. To truly empower students and embolden them with the tools necessary to begin challenging the status quo, a school must analyze who holds power in its own administration. For example, who does the school hire and who has a voice in that process. In order for curricula to be defined as social justice learning it must go beyond so-called "diversity days" or other forms of multicultural education, which de-politicize social justice education by focusing on celebrating different cultures instead of teaching about structural inequalities (Gorski, 2006; Lee, 1991). This notion is well said by Amosa & Gorski (2008; p. 167) who stated schools were "abandoning [their] social justice roots for Taco Nights." While this might seem like an extreme example in reality, it is not. Many schools host "cultural dances" or "international fairs" where students share foods from different countries, dress up in clothing that is traditional to cultures other than their own, and learn about holidays they do not celebrate (Gorski, 2006; Lee, 1991; Troyna, 1987). Educators who choose to implement these types of activities often do so to promote the idea that all perspectives are equal and valued. However, they do so without articulating that some narratives are privileged while others are silenced, and simply celebrating differences does not work to destruct this inequity (Gorski, 2006). In order for a lesson or unit to be considered social justice education, it must attempt to analyze discrimination and oppression on some level and teach about inequality, power, and privilege as structural and systemic issues (Adams, 2016; Adams & Zúñiga, 2018; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Gorski, 2006; Zúñiga et al., 2012) .

Research on Social Justice Education

Despite the magnitude of literature on the theoretical foundation of social justice education, empirical evaluation of these programs is lacking, and the research that has been done is not robust. For example, Stover (2005) studied a year-long college course in the Midwest in which students were assigned a country in the Middle East. They were then told to simulate government discussions and decisions based on research they had done about their assigned country. The goal of the curriculum was to increase students' empathy for each country's role in the conflict by requiring students to act as though they were leaders of their assigned country. The study consisted of 90 participating students being evaluated on their ability to empathize with their country's perspective in the Middle East conflict. The researchers operationalized empathy as self-reported feelings and understanding of the lives and experiences of those who live in their designated country. Change in empathy was assessed through student response papers and one quantitative measure. While the researchers note that the sample size is too small to yield any statistically significant results, the quantitative data demonstrated a trend toward change in empathy (Stover, 2005). Although, analyzing student responses is a common method of analyzing qualitative change, I would argue that this methodology was not valid because students were graded based on how well they empathized with their country, which they knew prior to writing their response papers. This leads to a high likelihood of students artificially increasing their demonstrated empathy in order to show a more drastic result and increase their grade. Therefore, the findings of this study are not useful. However, it is noteworthy that the educators and researchers involved argued for the importance of analyzing and increasing empathy in students—particularly in order to learn about foreign affairs and debate.

It is also common for individual organizations to conduct internal surveys to assess the efficacy of their programs. The Sustained Dialogue Institute is a non-profit dialogue program that uses social justice education methods to improve collaborative community action (Sustained Dialogue Institute, n.d.). Sustained Dialogue collects survey responses and analyzes journal entries throughout the ten-week workshop from all consenting participants. 383 participants took a pre- and post-assessment survey that measured eight values on the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale. Results showed that three values, Controversy with Civility, Consciousness of Self, and Collaboration, all increased due to Sustained Dialogue (Brown-Henderson, n.d.). While this research was conducted using valid and reliable measures, it was used for internal purposes and not published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Overall, social justice education is a growing academic field that lacks research and evaluation commensurate with its growth. Part of the challenge of studying social justice education is the difficulty in defining success. Social justice educators teach incredibly complex and abstract concepts, many of which can take years to fully grasp. However, another objective of social justice education is to harness empathy and respect for others (Bell, 2010; Collins, 1993; Love, 2000; Pharr, 1996; Zúñiga et al., 2012). In addition to empathy being a learning objective for social justice education, there are many psychological benefits to empathy including promoting helping behaviors, which could lead to further action. Therefore, I argue that empathy, particularly social empathy, should be used to analyze and evaluate social justice education.

Benefits of Empathy

Empathy is a complex term that, in many cases, is not clearly defined. This lack of consistency in definitions has led to a difficulty in measuring its impact (Gerdes, Lietz, & Segal,

2011; Segal et al., 2017a). First, when the term "empathy" is used both commonly and by researchers, it is most often referring to interpersonal empathy. While different psychologists have identified various components of interpersonal empathy, all have included some form of "affective matching, other-oriented perspective-taking, and self-other differentiation" (Coplan, 2011 as cited in Segal et al., 2017a). This means that, in order to demonstrate empathy, one must mimic the physical forms of expression of another (for example, cringing when one sees someone get hurt), put oneself in the shoes of another individual, and understand that one's emotions are separate from the emotions of others (Hoffman, 1989).

Interpersonal empathy differs from social empathy by stepping beyond an individual's empathy for another individual. Social empathy is the ability to perceive a person's life experiences by analyzing structural inequality (Segal et al., 2017a).

Social empathy is a necessary aspect of social justice because, unlike interpersonal empathy, it incorporates the contextual understanding of systemic barriers to further understand the experiences of individuals who hold different social identities than one's own (Segal et al., 2017a). Interpersonal empathy has shown to lead to moral actions regardless of situation. However, the likelihood of sparking interpersonal empathy that leads to moral action is more likely when the individual acting has seen the individual victim in need (Hoffman, 1989). At its core, interpersonal empathy relies on basic sensory functions and responding to expressive cues from a perceived victim (Hoffman, 1989). However, social empathy can lead to prosocial behavior on a larger scale because it does not require the same degree of direct sensory information to have an impact on an individual. One who is high in social empathy understands the contextual factors that lead to oppression and, therefore, understands the harm and suffering of innocent individuals without needing to see it themselves (Segal, 2011; Segal et al., 2017a).

In addition, by emphasizing injustice and inequity rather than individual misfortune, participants who are high in social empathy are more likely to take action rather than blame suffering on undesired traits (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Interpersonal empathy can lead to favoring those who are similar to us because it can be easy to understand their situations; however, by increasing social empathy, individuals can apply their desire for a fair and just world to individuals who are unlike them (Segal et al., 2017a).

Although randomized control trials have not yet tested these theories, the basis for them is supported by previous psychological work. For example, foundational empathy research has shown that gaining empathy for one member of a stigmatized group can increase the likelihood of empathy towards that group as a whole (Batson et al., 2002). To test this claim, undergraduate students listened to an interview with someone who was addicted to heroin and were then asked if their home institution should increase funding to drug programs. In the "induced empathy" condition participants were told to focus on how the interviewee *feels* in his situation. The control group was told to report objectively on the facts of the interview. All participants heard the same interview, but the "induced empathy" participants were more likely to take a perspective-taking role, a key component of empathy, which caused them to perceive the situation from the perspective of the person suffering from addiction. Participants filled out a questionnaire assessing how empathetic they felt towards the individual and then were then asked how much funding they would like to allocate to their home institution's drug rehabilitation program. Lastly, a further empathy manipulation check was conducted. Even after being told that the increase in funds would not help the individual whose story they had heard, students in an "induced empathy" condition, compared to the control, advised to allocate more funds to help people addicted to drugs than those in the control group. The "induced empathy"

participants also reported feeling more empathy for people suffering from addiction in general (Batson et al., 2002). This research shows that hearing individuals' stories can evoke social empathy within participants and affect their helping behaviors.

Storytelling in Social Justice Education

Although storytelling has always been a foundational aspect of human culture, recently researchers have analyzed the impact of fictional storytelling on readers' psychology. Kidd and Castano (2013) analyzed how reading literary fiction improves one's theory of mind. Theory of mind is the psychological concept that enables humans to understand that someone else's thoughts can be different from their own. This is an essential component in building social relationships and is positively correlated with empathy (Kidd & Castano, 2013; Segal et al., 2017a). This occurs because one practices perspective taking when reading fiction (Vezzali et al., 2015). Perspective taking—an essential component of empathy—is the ability to cognitively process what it might be like to be in another person's situation (Segal et al., 2017a). It is commonly referred to as "stepping into someone else's shoes." When reading fiction, the reader identifies what the characters are feeling, understands that it is different than what they themselves are feeling, and imagines what it would be like to be in that situation. This process increases levels of theory of mind recognizing that the characters are thinking and feeling differently than oneself and increases empathy by practicing perspective taking and stepping into the characters shoes (Kidd & Castano, 2013; Segal, 2011; Vezzali et al., 2015).

Social justice educators have increasingly adopted storytelling into their programs. Social justice education deals with a variety of complex and abstract concepts. It requires the learner to confront their own prejudice, analyze systems of oppression, and name obstacles to justice, which all can be vague and confusing to new learners (Hutchinson & Romano, 1998).

Storytelling allows students to understand the complexity of these issues. It makes learning more accessible and understandable because it allows them to attach concrete examples to abstract concepts, thus stimulating deeper learning (Bell, 2010).

Storytelling allows students to hear other people's perspectives. As Batson et al. (2002) demonstrated through a study of storytelling about addiction, storytelling gives students opportunities to hear perspectives to which they would otherwise not have had access. In this study, students' empathy towards people who suffer from addiction increased due to hearing a personal story they might not have previously known. Social justice education requires telling what Bell (2010) refers to as "Concealed Stories:" stories that are hidden from the mainstream and combat the dominant narrative. Contrasting dominant or "stock" stories with concealed stories helps students build intellectual tools to analyze systems of oppression, while simultaneously practicing perspective taking and building empathy (Zúñiga et al., 2012). Lastly, reading stories allows participants to recognize their own potential harmful behaviors in non-defensive ways. Storytelling allows learners to experience the situation from a safe distance allowing them to simultaneously analyze their own behaviors that lead to honest discussion (Bell, 2010).

Online and Interactive Pedagogies

While the foundational theory of social justice education is robust and social empathy is an important component to the success of this education, little is known about what pedagogies are best suited to help teachers implement this material effectively. According to a 2015 study, since 2003, the rate at which students in the US are engaging in online education has grown faster than the higher education student body—at times reaching over 20% growth (Allen & Seaman, 2015). While these rates vary depending on the type of institution, all public and non-

profit private educational institutions have seen an increase in online education. In addition, "cost and student debt" is cited as the largest impediment to the growth of academic institutions (Allen & Seaman, 2015). Therefore, there is a great need to understand how to invest effectively in academic institutions and online programming.

While many researchers have analyzed the efficacy of online education, the results have been fairly inconclusive. One study found that student demographics do not greatly affect success in online learning environments, however the participants of this study were mostly adults who had some level of higher education (Colorado & Eberle, 2010). Therefore, this sample was not diverse enough to understand adequately whether students from different backgrounds succeed in online learning environments similarly. In addition, just like traditional education, online learning environments range in efficacy. Kim and Bonk (2006) surveyed educators and administrators and found that, while there is a significant increase in technology-based learning tools, the efficacy of these programs ranges based on the level of training of educators and the quality of the program. Empirical evidence on the effectiveness of online learning compared to in-person learning, while controlling for content and training, is lacking.

However, most of these studies analyzed non-interactive and isolating online educational programs. Digital education that focuses on web-enhanced and interactive learning is becoming more popular due to its accessibility (McDaniel et al., 2007) and increased engagement from students (DePietro, 2012). Creating web-enhanced classrooms that prioritize making the student an agent in their education result in higher levels of conceptual learning (McDaniel et al., 2007), cooperative problem solving (Knight & Wood, 2005), and student participation (Benmayor, 2008; Knight & Wood, 2005).

These findings align with what players enjoy about interactive fiction and gaming. Tyndale and Ramsoomair (2016) found that choose-your-own-adventure stories and other interactive videogames are gaining a large share in the market due to the emotional investment players feel in the characters and their outcomes. They found that players got enjoyment out of feeling a sense of control and ownership and that the games that required the deepest amount of engagement all had an illusion of choice that resulted in visible consequences to the player based on their decisions. In addition, Tyndale & Ramsoomair (2016) claimed that empathy must be experienced in order to enjoy the game, however they did not explain how they measured empathy.

As our culture increasingly relies on technology and user generated experiences, students will continue to expect a higher degree of engagement in their own education (DePietro, 2012; Tyndale & Ramsoomair, 2016). In order to meet this need, digital education is increasingly being introduced into the classroom, but researchers are focusing more on the technology itself than the experience of its users (Montfort, 2011; Tyndale & Ramsoomair, 2016). Participant focused research is needed to understand how technology and interactive pedagogies are impacting the students and their educational experiences.

In addition, student led interactive pedagogies are theoretically aligned with the goals of social justice education. Giving students more power in their own education and learning style helps promote a sense of shared power within the classroom rather than a power over dynamic from educators to students (Freire, 1970; Pharr, 1996). It also increases engagement in education by promoting a sense of investment in characters and control over the outcome, thus stimulating a deeper sense of empathy and analysis of complex topics (Tyndale & Ramsoomair, 2016; Vezzali et al., 2015). Theoretically, there is a strong argument for the need and success of

interactive social justice education that can be experienced online for wide and democratic distribution, but the literature is lacking in the evaluation of such programs.

Research Questions

In light of the gaps in research on social empathy and interactive storytelling in social justice education, there are two central research questions at the heart of this study:

1. What are the differences in the way social justice education participants demonstrate social empathy between online group learning experiences and facilitated learning experiences?
2. What are the implementation strengths and challenges and learning outcomes of online versus facilitated interactive social justice pedagogies?

Methodology

Participants

Participants consisted of educators, students, and other Chicago residents. As shown in Table 1, out of the 21 participants, 71% of them identified as female and 29% identified as male[2]. Participants ranged in age from 18-60 years, and a variety of races were represented including white, Hispanic[3], multiracial[4], Black, and Asian. "Other" consisted of Black and Asian, however the sample size for each race was too small and had to be collapsed into "Other" to secure the identity of the participants. Lastly, 48% of participants had previously attended a social justice education workshop of some kind. This demographic breakdown aligns with the overall demographic data of Unsilence participants (UNSILENCE, n.d.).

[2] Gender identity was written in by participants. All participants self-reported cis-gender identities.
[3] The term "Latinx" is a generally more accepted term, however participants wrote in their race and all but one participant in this category wrote "Hispanic." Therefore, I named this category "Hispanic" instead of "Latinx" even though it includes one participant who identifies as "Latina."
[4] Multiracial includes participants who self-identified as "multiracial" as well as named the multiple races they identify with. No participant wrote "mixed race" therefore I did not use that terminology.

In addition, the sample was generally equally distributed between online and facilitated conditions. As shown in table 1, all demographic factors were split between workshop type, and a series of t-tests showed no significant differences based on demographic factors between the two randomly assigned groups.

Unsilence staff members, including the executive director and founder, recruited participants through the Unsilence listserv, Facebook page, community networks, and word of mouth. This is in keeping with other Unsilence workshops that are open to the public. Some participants had heard of Unsilence before through members of the organization and some had not. Many participants were not recruited through the organization but instead heard about the workshop through word of mouth and signed up on their own. Participants signed up via a google form and were told ahead of time that in addition to participating in a social justice workshop about "mental health and suicide in high school," they would also be participating in a one-hour post-workshop focus group. They were compensated $30 for their time and also were told they could be reimbursed for their travel expenses; however, no one took advantage of that option. Everyone who participated in the workshop also participated in the post-workshop focus group.

The program: *Tomorrow*

Tomorrow is a social justice program that can be experienced as an online tool or as a facilitated workshop. It consists of a choose-your-own-adventure story that follows a high school the day after one of its students has died by suicide (Cohen et al., 2018). The story is broken up into three parts: a teacher's perspective (Ms. Liza Cutler), a student's perspective (Sanjay), and the principal's perspective (Principal April Kadon). Participants are taken through the school day and exposed to each of the character's perspectives individually as well as many obstacles that

prevent safe and productive communication about mental health and suicide in schools. The story in *Tomorrow* is based off of original testimony from a high school teacher who submitted her story to Unsilence to use for mental health programming (See Appendix E for sample of *Tomorrow*).

I chose *Tomorrow* as a case study for this project for three main reasons. First, *Tomorrow* is unique in its ability to be experienced entirely online or completely facilitated. The content is standardized regardless of setting and is frequently taught in both ways. This allowed me to control for the content while testing differences in the pedagogy and maintaining a high degree of external validity. Second, *Tomorrow*'s goals aligned with the goals of social justice education theory: using stories to help students analyze oppression on an individual, cultural, and institutional level (Bell, 2010; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Love, 2000; Pharr, 1996) Third, *Tomorrow* is an example of the growing field of interactive pedagogy and choose-your-own-adventure stories that are understudied (Tyndale & Ramsoomair, 2016).

Measures

Social Empathy Index (SEI). A modified version of the Social Empathy Index (Segal, Gerdes, Lietz, Wagaman, & Geiger, 2017b) was used as the pre- and post-survey. This instrument is the most recent and most robust empathy measure currently available and has a particular focus on social justice and systemic social justice issues. Therefore, it is a particularly useful measure to assess change in participants' social empathy. The original measure consists of 40 Likert Scale questions which assess one's level of social empathy by analyzing seven domains: affective response, affective mentalizing, self-other awareness, perspective-taking, emotion regulation, contextual understanding of systemic barriers, and macro self-other awareness/perspective taking (Gerdes, Lietz, et al., 2011; Segal et al., 2017a). Affective

response, affective mentalizing and emotion regulation all refer to automatic implicit responses, such as cringing when one sees someone experience humiliation, smiling when one sees someone laugh, and the ability to control one's own emotions in order to focus on someone else. These subscales are essential for interpersonal empathy, which prioritizes empathic concern for others rather than for the world or society at large. The items in these three subscales were removed because they are referred to responses that were not expected to be affected by the workshop. For example, a participant's response to "Friends view me as a moody person" will not be affected by the workshop, therefore I removed such items from the scale, but analyzed them in the post workshop focus group to maintain the integrity of the measure. At the end of the measure, I developed seven additional items related to self-other awareness, perspective-taking, contextual understanding of systemic barriers, and macro self-other awareness/perspective taking. These items used the same language as the tested items, however they referred specifically to mental health and suicide, which is the issue *Tomorrow* deals with directly. I did this in order to analyze whether the workshop only influences issues it directly discusses, or if learning about social justice theory and structural factors of oppression could affect participant's view points on other issues as well. I wrote my own items because there is not another peer-reviewed social empathy measure that discusses mental health specifically. The final measure consisted of 32 items ($\alpha = .78$) focusing on self-other awareness, perspective-taking, contextual understanding of systemic barriers, and macro self-other awareness/perspective taking.

Procedure

This study implemented a mixed method design to collect data. All participants began by completing the Social Empathy Index (SEI) pre-test (Appendix A) before participating in the workshop. I randomly assigned participants to either receive the online or the facilitated program

of *Tomorrow*. Both conditions consisted of participants coming to the workshop, which took place in various classrooms in downtown Chicago and Evanston. In the "online" condition participants were broken up into groups of 2–3 and given a tablet. As a small group, without any facilitation, the participants completed the online program *Tomorrow*. They were encouraged to choose pathway options as a group and discuss the given questions embedded in the online story on their own. However, the participants received no form of facilitation to ensure that these conversations took place. The term "online" is used for brevity, since the program was completed on a tablet without facilitation. However, the online condition, like the facilitated condition, took place in a classroom with other participants. In the "facilitated" condition, the online program was projected on a screen in the classroom, and then the entire group worked through the story together while being guided by a trained facilitator. The group discussed all options as well as any questions embedded in the story, and they then voted on which path they wanted to take. Both conditions covered the same content and allowed participants to discuss the material with their peers, but only the facilitated condition had a trained facilitator to guide those conversations.

After the workshop (both online and facilitated), participants completed a post-test, repeating the adapted SEI (Appendix B). This provided data on participants' change in beliefs related to the contextual understanding of systemic barriers and the macro self-other awareness and perspective taking (Segal et al., 2017a).

I collected qualitative data through in-person semi-structured small group interviews. Participants took a short break (up to 5 minutes) after taking the post-test before beginning the focus group. Interviews were exploratory in nature. The interview protocol (Appendix C) was semi-structured, allowing me to follow a similar path for all interviews while having the

flexibility to probe participants for more explanation on a specific topic or follow a path of relevant inquiry that was not on the original protocol. The protocol contained questions analyzing the subscales of social empathy, participants' reactions to the content of the material, participants' reaction to the structure of the workshop and learning tool itself, and questions pertaining to what participants had learned in relation to social justice and silencing of systemic injustices. The interviews allowed participants to share any positive or negative aspects of the program and provided specific feedback to improve *Tomorrow* as well as inspired future investigations.

I used focus groups for this study due to their long history in social justice and feminist research (Barbour, 2005) and due to their ability to assess how individuals respond and act in front of their peers. Interviews for qualitative research have historically been one-on-one with a researcher and a participant. However, this setting has been criticized by social justice researchers who argue that this method often results in participants who are white, western, educated, and democratic (Barbour, 2005; Madriz, 2000). Barbour (2005) argues that focus groups allow participants to feel comfortable and are less likely to alter their behavior for the research setting, particularly with participants of color and women. Focus groups have gained popularity in qualitative research due to their ability to allow participants to respond to each other, thus decreasing the role and the influence of the researcher in the interview process (L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Madriz, 2000). While focus groups are limited in their ability to isolate individual participant responses, they create a more naturalistic setting that elicits responses more true to social reality, which can yield a higher degree of external validity (Madriz, 2000). Focus groups are predominantly used in the exploratory phase of research where interview protocols are primarily open-ended and the researcher has a smaller role in the

interview process (L. Cohen et al., 2018; Fontana & Frey, 2000). I used focus groups for these reasons. *Tomorrow* is a workshop that deals with the silencing of mental health issues and suicide and analyzes why individuals find it difficult to talk about. Being around one's peers creates a safe space in some aspects, but it also can make it more difficult to discuss topics like mental health. However, it is in classrooms around one's peers when it is most essential to have these conversations. Therefore, I argue that the ability to discuss these issues in a focus group is more relevant data for my research questions than if a participant could discuss these issues alone with a researcher. Focus groups allowed me to analyze how participants interacted with each other and consider the differences in these interactions in the online versus facilitated condition. In addition, it allowed me to take a smaller role in the interview process due to participants responding to each other rather than solely to my questions. Therefore, while some might argue that focus groups limit the internal validity of the methodology, I argue that the benefits of this method outweighed the costs.

Social Empathy Index Survey Analysis

I scored pre- and post-test surveys by adding Likert scale point value of each item and dividing the total by the number of answered questions. I then used an alpha command to determine if the items that I added correlated with the established items in the SEI. I then compared the final scores of the pre-test to the final scores of the post-test using a paired t-test and calculated an effect size in order to assess if there was a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests, and the size of such a difference. I, then, calculated difference scores by subtracting the post-test score from the pre-test score and used an unpaired t-test to determine if there was a significant difference between the online and facilitated conditions.

Focus Group Interview Analysis

I audio recorded all interviews that were then transcribed using a transcription service. I went through all transcripts and added in field notes and observations from the interviews. I used a grounded theory approach to analyze the focus group interview transcripts (Charmaz, 2000). This required doing a close reading of the data and noting all distinct aspects of data known as "open codes." From the open codes, I saw three general themes begin to emerge: demonstrations of social empathy, demonstrating learned knowledge, and personal reactions and opinions. I wrote the coding scheme based on the literature in these categories. The codes for demonstrations of social empathy were rooted in the literature on subscales of social empathy: Affective Mentalizing, Perspective-Taking, Self-other Awareness, Affective Response, Emotion Regulation, Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers, and Macro Self-other Awareness/Perspective Taking (Segal et al., 2017a). This part of the coding scheme took the least amount of revision, because the interview protocol had been written with these subscales in mind.

When grouping open-codes about knowledge I realized they were aligning with Bloom's Dimensions of Knowledge Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002). In order to understand and compare demonstrations of different types of knowledge I used the updated version of Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide when writing the coding scheme. Bloom's Taxonomy describes four dimensions of knowledge: factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive; and six dimensions of cognitive processes: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create (Krathwohl, 2002). The dimensions of knowledge outline types or categories of knowledge. Factual knowledge is the most basic form of knowledge, consisting of specific details or terminology. Conceptual knowledge is the interrelationships between basic elements of

knowledge to form more complex structures or theories. Procedural knowledge consists of the methods, techniques, or skills for doing something. Lastly, metacognitive knowledge is one's knowledge of their own cognition or cognition in general. These dimensions of knowledge exist as distinct categories and not as a spectrum or a hierarchy (Krathwohl, 2002).

However, the dimensions of cognitive processes are conceived of as a hierarchy with *Remember* as the most basic cognitive process and *Create* as the most sophisticated (Krathwohl, 2002). However, when I created the codes, I did not assign values to them. I instead described the qualifications for each dimension of knowledge and cognitive process together in addition to how they related to the data. Lastly, I separated participants' personal reactions and opinions from social empathy and knowledge to analyze on their own.

Once I had identified the main categories and written the coding scheme, I went through all the interviews and began selective coding. In this phase data are coded using the established codes according to the coding scheme. During this time, I continuously edited the coding scheme until it was detailed enough to avoid any confusion when coding. After completing the final coding scheme, I went back and re-coded all of my data using the final detailed coding scheme. After I finished coding each interview, I analyzed both the content of the discussions and the interactions between the interviewees when discussing various topics.

Social Empathy Index Results

I analyzed the differences in the way participants demonstrate empathy before and after the *Tomorrow* workshop by comparing participant scores on the Social Empathy Index (Segal et al., 2017a) before and after participating in a one-hour workshop on mental health and social justice. As shown in Table 2, I conducted a paired t-test to analyze the difference between pre-test and post-test results regardless of workshop type, resulting in a significant difference

between pre-test (M = 5.13, SD = .27) and post-test scores (M = 5.27, SD = .26), t(20) = -3.98, p<.0005, and a moderate effect size of d=.52. These findings result in an average 0.14 point increase, which can be seen in Figure 2. These are a summary of average scores as obtained by the entire sample, n=21. This means that the increase in scores seen from pre-test to post-test was likely not due to chance and is considered to be a moderately large increase. This is determined by analyzing how much the distribution of scores increased based on the mean and standard deviation. As shown in Figure 2, the post-test score distribution (red dotted line) is significantly greater than the pre-test score distribution. An insignificant difference would visually have more overlap, specifically around the mean.

Also shown in Table 2, I conducted an unpaired t-test to analyze the difference between online and facilitated workshop types. Importantly, as demonstrated in Table 1, participants who received the online versus the facilitated workshop type were balanced based on observable characteristics at baseline. I found that there were no statistically significant differences in social empathy between participants in the online condition (M = 5.36, SD = 0.09) and the facilitated (M = 5.28, SD = 0.08); t(19) = 0.171, p = 0.05 at the end of the program. This means that there is not enough evidence to conclude that the slight difference found between the scores of participants who were in the facilitated versus online conditions were due to the difference conditions.

The implications of these social empathy index results are integrated within the discussion of qualitative data below.

Discussion

This study analyzed the effect of a one-hour social justice education workshop on participants' social empathy. Quantitative results were obtained through pre- and post-survey

responses of the Social Empathy Index (Segal et al., 2017a), and then analyzed using t-tests. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured group interviews. In accordance with social justice theory and social justice education learning objectives, I hypothesized that participants' social empathy scores would increase after participating in the workshop. I also hypothesized that the increase would be greater for those who participated in a facilitated version of the workshop, more than for those in the online version. The dependent variable was the difference score between pre-test and post-test. Both tests were adaptations of Segal et al.'s (2017) Social Empathy Index. As shown in Table 2 the results aligned with the first hypothesis. While causal claims cannot be made, due to the absence of a control group, a paired t-test showed a statistically significant increase of 0.14 points between pre-test and post-test scores, resulting in a 0.52 effect size. This means there was a moderately large increase in social empathy scores from before and after he workshop that was not due to chance. However, the results showed no significant difference between the online and facilitated conditions. The first two aspects of this finding must be critically analyzed. First, the participants in the sample had a low degree of variance of social empathy. That is, participants' pre-test scores were all very high on the social empathy index. Participants walked into the room already with a high degree of empathy, possibly due to the selection variable that people interested in social justice work are ipso facto already high in empathy. Because the entire sample grouped around the mean, a small increase in empathy on the index (0.14 point increase) yielded in a statistically significant difference and a moderately high effect size. This analysis begs the question, what does a 0.14-point increase on the social empathy index look like in reality?

In order to answer this question, I conducted semi-structured group interviews and coded them for subscales of empathy, dimensions of knowledge and cognitive processes, and

participant reactions and thoughts. The focus group data were purely exploratory and were used as an opportunity to describe the quantitative results and explore the nature of what had been gained from the experience. Due to lack of research on social justice education and its impact on empathy, this is a necessary step in the research process. It will help to make educated predictions about the meaning of the quantitative data as well as inform future studies and help to implement the workshop in a safe and effective manner.

Associations Between Social Empathy and Dimensions of Knowledge

The coding scheme, derived through the iterative process of grounded theory methods, initially was organized by discipline—grouping all empathy subscales, knowledge dimensions, and participant reactions and thoughts. Demonstrations of social empathy consisted of participants describing their experiences during the workshop or processing their reactions in the moment. This theme was broken down into four unique codes: affective mentalizing, perspective taking, contextual understanding of systemic barriers, and macro self-other awareness/perspective taking. The theme on knowledge dimensions initially emerged from grounded theory based on participants' responses and was then was refined using the four types of knowledge from Bloom's taxonomy on the dimensions of knowledge: factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive (Krathwohl, 2002). Lastly, participants' personal reactions and thoughts emerged entirely from grounded theory. The codes consisted of engagement, enjoyment, confusion, usefulness, and general feedback. However, through the iterative process the patterns of convergence did not emerge along these lines. Three new themes emerged out of the codes: Investment in Characters, Social Justice Learning, and Connection to Self. The following section will analyze each theme, the codes that create them, and the practical implications of the data.

Theme 1: Investment in Characters. The first code in this theme is affective mentalizing, a subscale of empathy. Affective mentalizing occurred when a participant imagined a character's response or imagined how an individual would feel in a given situation. They were able to develop a picture of what was happening in the story and could infer what the character or individual's response would be to the given situation. Affective mentalizing acts as a bridge between a cognitive and physiological response. Early empathy research relied on the notion that empathy occurs in response to basic sensory functions. It was understood as a largely involuntary response, which occurred in reaction to a stimulus or an expressive cue (Hoffman, 1989). However, more recent research has identified this as only one aspect of empathy. This aspect of interpersonal empathy is known as "affective response" and is a purely physiological response to sensory triggers (Segal et al., 2017a). Affective mentalizing differs from affective response in its cognitive component. Affective mentalizing occurs when the individual evokes a sensory response solely through imagining a given scenario. Therefore, affective mentalizing can occur without a direct stimulus. It is common for people to experience affective mentalizing when reading a vivid book, speaking to someone on the phone, or listening to a friend describe an experience. All of these situations elicit the creation of a visual image, which can spark a physiological response (Segal et al., 2017a).

Participants demonstrated affective mentalizing frequently throughout the workshop, in both the online and facilitated conditions. In the online condition all participants sat silently as they read, but every so often someone would make a soft noise. One woman put her head in hand and said "oh wow" with a sigh, and another woman made "mmm" sounds and cringed her face at various points while she read. In the facilitated condition, one woman's eyes filled with tears as I read the story aloud. These are all examples of affective mentalizing. In addition to

demonstrating affective mentalizing during the workshop, in the interview participants also reported personal reactions they had experienced during the workshop. For example, group three spoke about what they had been feeling during the workshop. The interview data below, as with other interview data represented in this study, represents one continuous interaction.

> "I just felt like, imagining being that woman, where you're just put on the spot. She goes through all this thing now, and just immediately, like, have a reaction, it's just, like, 'That's so stressful.' I felt so stressed." – Jasmine[5], facilitated group 3

> "I felt stressed at that section too. I was just, like, 'I wish you had better options, and you didn't have to be doing this.'" – Grace, facilitated group 3

Jasmine and Grace both discussed their own feelings of stress. Reading about a character's difficult situation evoked a feeling and physiological response in each of them. Some participants' reactions were based on characters' actions, saying, "I found myself really feeling for the teacher, as I have taught in a classroom before. So, there was a lot of like, oh yeah, oh no. Okay. (Getting louder) Um, and then immediate animosity for the principal, before that email came out, it was like, 'Oh god, here we go.' (quieter)" (Barbara, online group 1). Here, Barbara's increase in volume when she said "oh yeah, oh no" demonstrated how she was experiencing the stress of the teacher, rather than reporting how the teacher feels.

Most participants spoke more broadly about how they were feeling throughout various scenes and situations. This occurred in both the facilitated and online conditions. Some participants imagined being in the situation themselves, and therefore felt their feelings changing throughout the story as new information and perspectives were introduced.

> "My feelings changed along with the perspective we were in at that time, and what was happening to that person. I feel like I was simulating for myself what they were going through." – Grace, facilitated group 3

[5] All names have been replaced with pseudonyms

Another example of affective mentalizing occurred in group five when they were discussing how their feelings were changing. “Feeling overwhelmed,” “feeling relaxed,” and exclamations such as “come on!” are all signs of affective mentalizing.

> “I liked the different perspectives too … I don't know I felt overwhelmed. They really went through how everybody was feeling which I feel, everybody was feeling overwhelmed and that translated to me.” – Vivian, facilitated group 5
>
> “I agree, I definitely felt more relaxed when Sanjay went over to Cole's house and he was like just chilling with him.” – Travis, facilitated group 5
>
> “Yeah, I feel we all counted that as a win and that reverses the conversation with the principal and her wife. Again, um and like the teacher and like-- I don't know it's just like budget cuts and I’m like come on! (Louder) I definitely got very stressed thinking about how the principal was going to respond the next day with the limited resources she had to deal with, I think.” – Vivian, facilitated group 5

This was also evident in the online condition, such as group four. Feeling “on edge” or “nervous” are other signs of affective mentalizing. However, Tyndale & Ramsoomair (2016) found that these feelings of stress can increase enjoyment and engagement even more because it increases the sense of control one feels in the outcome. This is seen in the following transcript where participants connect their nervous feelings to the outcome of their decisions.

> “I was on edge a little bit sometimes. One of our decisions has been to, like, trigger in terms of, like, the situation and what was coming next. I didn't know how it was going to get really chaotic, or just not go the way I wanted it to go.” – Olivia, online group 4
>
> “I feel like I was really nervous when we get a choice.” – Randall, online group 4
>
> “Yeah, and then there were times when I felt relieved. I feel like I was, like, the characters were doing the right thing. Like, when the principal sat down and talked with Sanjay. This is nice that she's doing that. She had always been really passive.” – Marcia, online group 4

Lastly, participants directly reported physiological responses such as tearing up.

> "I got a little teary eyed a couple times. I was like, "I felt that." I could just imagine being Sanjay, and having that family secret, and then hearing this, and compounding everything. I wanted to cry for him, so I was, like, 'You know you can't cry.' So, I sucked it up. I was like, 'No, I'm not going to cry.'" – Naomi, online group 4

All of these participants spoke about how the characters' experiences affected how they were personally feeling. Whether the story in *Tomorrow* evoked stress, nervousness, tears, anger, or any other feeling, the story itself evoked an affective response stimulated by imagining how characters would feel in a given situation. This process is often motivated by perspective taking. Perspective taking, another aspect of empathy, is the attempt to understand what someone else is thinking and feeling based on their personal situation (Segal et al., 2017a). Perspective taking utilizes theory of mind, the psychological process of understanding other people have their own thoughts and experiences that differ from our own. Therefore, perspective taking is the ability to receive the information of how an individual is responding to a situation, and, from that knowledge, an individual can to infer how they feel in that situation. In order to achieve actual perspective taking, one must separate how *they* would feel in that situation and use the information given to imagine how the *other* feels (Segal et al., 2017a). This is commonly referred to as "stepping into someone else's shoes."

Perspective taking can be difficult to recognize because sometimes participants imagine themselves and their own responses to given situations rather than the responses of the character. For example, in *Tomorrow* the reader is first introduced to Sanjay (the main student character) when he has just learned of the suicide and is sitting completely still and silent amidst a chaotic classroom. Perspective taking is the ability to put oneself in Sanjay's *shoes* and validate the need for stillness and quiet in that moment. This differs from putting oneself in Sanjay's *situation* and imagining for oneself wanting to cry, as an example. Imagining oneself in a given situation and

predicting how oneself would react is not perspective taking and does not contribute to empathy. This is an essential distinction both in terms of emotional safety, empathy, and respect for others' experiences.

Asking a participant or learner to imagine themselves in a tragic situation is emotionally manipulative and disrespectful to individuals who have suffered in those situations. Individuals who have not experienced the specific situations of trauma or tragedy discussed in social justice workshops cannot imagine what it is like to be in those situations, and asking them to do so can result in trivialization of the issue and shock for the learner (Mann & Cohen, 2011). Shock can stifle critical thinking and prevent the learner from engaging with the issue. Moreover, participants will never be able to fully imagine how it would feel to be in such a position, and acting as if they do is disrespectful to the individuals who have been in that position (Bell, 2010). Therefore, the nuances of perspective taking—understanding the situation and feelings of another rather than oneself—is essential to social empathy and effective social justice education.

Participants consistently demonstrated perspective taking. For example, Marcia (online group 4) said "I got the impression [the principal] didn't know what to do. She's like, 'I have a policy I have to follow for my job, but it's important I have to touch on this.' She felt lost, is what I took from it." This is an example of perspective taking because Marcia is using the information from the story to imagine how the principal was feeling in the given situation and inferred that she felt lost. Marcia did not say "I have been in that situation before and I felt lost," which would not have been an example of perspective taking, rather it would have been an example of relating one's own experience to the story. Olivia (online group 4) also demonstrated perspective taking when discussing how Sanjay (the main student character in *Tomorrow*) must have felt frustrated. "I think he was frustrated mostly because he wanted to talk to several people,

and he couldn't talk to anybody. It's, like, not only did he have the silence thing going on at home, when he went to school, he tried talking to other people, and he couldn't get that." Again, Olivia used information from the story in order to infer how Sanjay felt.

The story is broken into three parts and participants read the principal's perspective in the final part. Participants demonstrated the importance of hearing one's perspective in terms of how they perceive them. Frannie (facilitated group 2) demonstrated perspective taking of the principal only once she had heard her side of the story.

> "Our first introduction to her was this cold email, and hearing somebody else call her cold and then not like a super great interaction with Sanjay. Like, I mean she tried, but it was, yeah, it seemed kind of like you said, like she didn't, she was kind of like on her computer and didn't necessarily make a closer contact with Sanjay. So, she was, we were just kinda keeping, keep going with like that coldness that we thought of her as. But then, you see her at home and she kind of put off this like principal persona and you'd see her just like, as like a person, and just like everything that she's dealing with. And you can kind of like, okay, maybe when she was like with Sanjay came in and she's like on the computer, she probably was like dealing with like a flood of emails from the parents or the media or everything. And yeah, it just like humanize her more to like see her at home and being able to just talk and say what she was thinking and feeling and not trying to be like the perfect like spokesperson of the school, that is kind of her job." – Frannie, facilitated group 2

Frannie described how earlier in the story the only connection the reader has to the principal is through her email on the school policy to all teaching staff, and it was not until the reader was able to get to know her that they started to understand her perspective and feel for her. This is why hearing people's stories from their own perspectives is essential to building empathy. This was a common feeling amongst participants. Camila (facilitated group 2) said "It also made me think that I did judge [the principal] and then, you know, changing the setting in a more of like a family spousal way. Um, it made me think like, oh, she's a human." Vivian (online group 5) said, "I liked the different perspectives too because I definitely judge the principal at the beginning."

Tyndale & Ramsoomair's (2016) study on interactive stories and games found that participants thought the stories were most enjoyable when they experienced mental stress, an emotional investment in characters, and empathy. This pattern emerged in the qualitative data. Participants and groups that showed high degrees of affective mentalizing—the subscale of empathy that has the largest impact on one's physiological state—and perspective taking also reported the highest levels of enjoyment, stating, "I thought it was great," (Grace, facilitated group 3) and "it was really fun" (Leo, online group 4).

Responses were coded for engagement based on self-reported experiences of investment in the workshop in some capacity, either due to the fictional narrative, the choose-your-own-adventure pedagogy, or the content. Engagement is a common measure of success for digital education in other studies, making it an important area of inquiry. Examples of this were found in both the facilitated and online conditions. When asked about her initial thoughts of the workshop, Grace (facilitated group 3) said, "Being able to choose what we do next makes you engage more with it, and think about the relative merits of each of these choices, more than you would if you were just- like you were saying, given a list of best practices." Not only the mention of the engagement, but also the fact that this was her first take away speaks to the importance of theme. When asked about their thoughts to the choose-your-own-adventure style, Dina and Frannie said:

> "It's brilliant because you, you're being asked at various points to step into that character's shoes. So, you're being asked to connect on a personal level with the story with the events or the people." – Dina, facilitated group 2

> "You're much more invested with what's happening instead of, yeah, like if you were, if we just had you read a story to us and then we glaze over and be like, or yeah, we're here. Like you said, you have to step into that person's shoes. And like when we stopped and talked like what we wanted to have the character do, it's like okay, what do we think that they should do versus what do we think they're actually going to do based on like how we're

> understanding the character and so yeah, you just, I think that's what a lot of people like about like choose your own adventure and it's like because it really puts you in that moment it puts you in that situation that you might not otherwise feel that connection." – Frannie, facilitated group 2

Dina and Frannie both mentioned the importance of stepping into a character's shoes (an indicator of perspective taking) to their level of engagement and enjoyment. Vivian (facilitated group 5) specifically mentioned how the facilitation caused the group to stop and think about their choices, stating "I think it was good because it made you reflect on what was happening more deeply because you had to weigh the options. We talked a lot of options we thought were better than what was being presented, so that means that we were really thinking about everything that was happening in the story." While here Vivian is attributing her engagement to the facilitation, she is highlighting that the facilitation forced her to think more deeply about the character's options, which in essence is what increased her engagement.

This is further supported by the fact that reflecting on one's choices did not only occur in the facilitated condition. Sofia (online group 4) said that her engagement increased "just by having the different options on there. It makes you really reflect on it because you have to just click choose, and then, like, there may be a consequence if I choose what is the wrong one." A visible consequence to a user's decisions is a crucial component to satisfaction in interactive stories because it builds a deeper investment in the reality of the world and character's lives (DePietro, 2012; Tyndale & Ramsoomair, 2016). Believing that the decisions one makes matters increases a level of stress and creates a more vivid image in the user's mind, thus increasing their level of engagement and affective mentalization.

Group four compared this experience to common required online sexual misconduct prevention trainings. Unlike *Tomorrow*, these trainings tend to consist of having participants read a scenario and then having to pick the correct answer. This started a lively discussion between

multiple members of the group about the learning objectives of these types of trainings and how they support learner engagement. The following is a transcript of that conversation between group four participants.

> "I think I learned more on this one, because I did the sexual assault [misconduct training], and I did not read a single thing. I just clicked until I got the right, green answer, because it was a 30 minute one, and I had to take it twice. I was like, 'I am not going to read this.' I think this one is more engaging." – Naomi, online group 4

> "Adding to that, I think stories serve a different purpose. At least, for me, taking this, it was definitely a lot more engaging, I was paying attention to what was happening. Also, I guess there are different purposes to the program. I think one major purpose you can see from this it's just to be able to, like, build empathy, and be able to think from different perspectives, using people's stories and points of views, but that's not something that the sexual assault education tool probably sets out to do. That one is more telling you, "This is what is right, and what's wrong." It really depends on what the learning outcomes of that program would be. I think this is a pretty effective way of building empathy. Getting more engaged in this issue at the very minimum." – Sofia, online group 4

> "I think, going back to finding comfort in there being an answer, whether or not you completely agree with it or not, in sexual assault, there is always an answer, like they highlight it in green, and that triggers, "Okay, I am on the right track. This is what should be happening." When people have that sense of authority, like, they feel comfort in being guided. Whereas, like, this kind of leaves you, like "All right, I still have to think about this." I think that is the point, you have to continue thinking about it because it is an important problem that we need to stop." – Penelope, online group 4

What is important to take from this section is the participants' connection between empathy (specifically affective mentalizing and perspective taking) and engagement. Throughout the interviews there was a pattern showing a connection between empathy and engagement.

This connection is most clearly seen when analyzing the opposite effect. Alex demonstrated the lowest of amount affective mentalizing and perspective taking and the lowest amount of enjoyment. He said, "You can only partially identify with how they're feeling because you only have how they are acting. Do you know what I'm saying?" When asked to elaborate

Alex said "Meaning like you're, you in this story you can say this is how they behaved. So, they must've been at least feeling this way, right?" Another participant in the room, Barbara, asked if she could use an example from the story to help clarify his thoughts. When Alex agreed she said, "Okay, so, when Sanjay is talking to the principal and he notices that she becomes unsure of herself, we are experiencing his, um, what he thinks is happening with her behavior as opposed to her, as opposed to being in her head?" To which Alex said, "Right." Alex later went on to say that he "sort of ran into it a point of indifference because I found it a little arbitrary. Yeah. It's, it was fairly arbitrary. I didn't feel connected to one person's story. And maybe It's because it wasn't designed to hear one side of one story." Alex was the only participant that reported he did not know what characters were feeling because the reader only knew their behavior, thus not demonstrating perspective taking.

For example, participants in group four discussed what they thought Sanjay was feeling without having to be told explicitly how he felt.

> "Also hearing other people's perspectives on what had happened and how he felt was very different. When he had an outburst in math class because of what someone said. I think, yes, frustration because people don't understand what he knows, and it's hard to connect these very deep issues." – Kathy, Online group 4
>
> "I don't think he even knew what he was feeling." – Naomi, Online group 4
>
> "Yes. That's true." – Kathy, Online group 4

These responses show the pattern connecting enjoyment and engagement with affective mentalizing and perspective taking.

These findings are significant because they not only contribute to new paths for research but are essential for social justice education designers in understanding what aspects increase empathy.

Theme 2: Social Justice Learning. The second theme combined the empathy subscales that specifically focus on social empathy (contextual understanding of systemic barriers and macro self-other awareness/perspective taking), with conceptual and procedural knowledge dimensions, based on Bloom's taxonomy. Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers, (referred to moving forward as "contextual understanding" for brevity) is the ability to apply a sociohistorical context on a macro scale to a given situation in order to fully understand the differences of one's lived experiences compared to those of one in a different social group or identity (Gerdes, Segal, et al., 2011; Segal, 2011; Segal et al., 2017a). It is crucial for an individual to understand the systemic nature of oppression, and how it affects individuals differently, based on context and culture, in order to develop a true sense of social empathy. Participants demonstrated this throughout the interviews. Kathy (online group 4) demonstrated contextual understanding by explaining how institutional decisions often infringe on the rights of those who are oppressed.

> "If you're neutral in silence and oppression, you're choosing the side of the oppressor. I think with a lot of social justice issues, it's not those whose rights are being infringed upon, um. They're not the ones who don't want to talk about it, and it's usually not coming from an institutional level. … It's not the choice of those being oppressed to stay silent. They're living it, … those in power are the ones that are silencing them. That's not good." – Kathy, online group 4

Kathy articulates the power dynamics involved in silencing, which demonstrates contextual understanding.

Some participants demonstrated contextual understanding by explaining the barriers students with mental health issues face and how those students are not at fault. When asked if they thought the silencing of mental health issues was a social justice issue, all participants (in all groups) responded with nods or a verbal "yes." Some participants said they had believed this

before the workshop and others said they had not previously thought about it in that way. Regardless of whether the participant had previously thought about it in that way, they often articulated their explanation as to "why" in terms of fault. Facilitated group two explored this in one interaction by relating it to the opportunities one has based on where they grew up. The following is a transcript of one interaction.

> "'Cause people aren't allowed to heal. They're being silenced and then that can affect I guess the way that like you learn, you know, being able to heal in a way, to learn as well as um, like do well in school and I feel like that can affect other parts of your life. Like as you grow older too." – Camila
>
> "If the goal is to break cycles and, and a cycle of violence or mental health issues that are not dealt with. It's going to stay the same." – Dina
>
> "And I guess also just like knowing that it's not their fault." – Camila
>
> "Mmhmm." – Dina
>
> "Probably permits worse feelings knowing that it's not, you know, like telling them saying like the friends that felt that maybe they were responsible for the child who died by suicide. I think some of his close friends felt like it was their fault. They were saying specifically like to tell them it's not your fault. That's a, I think a big part of social justice is the knowing that like you were born in a certain neighborhood or whatever. Like that's, that's not your fault. That's where you grew up." – Camila
>
> "It's society's fault." – Eileen
>
> "Yeah. The goal of social justice is to create a society that is just for everyone. That needs to include people who struggle with mental health issues." – Dina
>
> "Damn. Yeah." – Eileen

Group two was able to connect the guilt and sadness friends of someone who died by suicide may be feeling with larger issues of inequality. Dina articulated this by explicitly stating the goal of social justice and the importance of including people who struggle with their mental health.

Macro Self-Other Awareness/Perspective-Taking (MSP) is the most complex aspect of social empathy and the most difficult to achieve. MSP combines macro self-other awareness and perspective taking by using the contextual understanding of sociohistorical factors, to simultaneously put oneself in the shoes of someone who holds different identities than them (perspective taking) and understand that they are different and will never fully comprehend their experience (macro self-other awareness) (Segal et al., 2017a). One cannot express social empathy without reaching a level of acceptance with this dichotomy. Perspective taking is essential in gaining empathic insight, which often leads to social responsibility. However, one believing they understand the experience of those who have been oppressed is an impossible and potentially harmful practice. Therefore, MSP is demonstrated by an ongoing willingness and desire to learn about others' perspectives, experiences, and needs (Segal, 2011; Segal et al., 2017a). An example of this occurred in facilitated group three when discussing future steps and how protocols should be designed in schools. Camila mentioned how different students will react differently and the importance of flexibility and willingness to adapt when creating protocols.

> "But also, the fact that like each individual has a different personality and everything is going to affect them differently and so you need to be prepared to figure out how to get through that as well. Um, you know, it's not going to be like a one size fits all. This is gonna maybe help these people and maybe by doing this it's going to help these people and what do we do with, we think that they're going to think or act this way, but they act totally different and you have to be prepared for that as well. Like anything that you say or like these exercises that have worked for some are not going to look for others. And I guess probably be really open to realizing that you might need to revise the protocols." – Camila, facilitated group 3

Camila is demonstrating MSP by acknowledging that individuals will react to protocols in a variety of different ways based on many different factors. What works for one person might not work for another. Camilia pointed out that it is important to revise protocols to strive to include as many people's needs as possible.

Contextual understanding and MSP codes aligned with codes on conceptual and procedural knowledge. This aligns with research on social empathy which claims that an understanding of systems of power are necessary in order to develop contextual understanding and MSP (Segal, 2011; Segal et al., 2017a). To create conceptual and procedural knowledge codes, I used a mix of grounded theory—seeing what concepts organically emerged from the data—and then fined tuned the codes using Bloom's taxonomy on the dimensions of knowledge. Bloom's original taxonomy acted as a framework to sort different types of knowledge from concrete to abstract in order to help standardize testing and curriculum design. The original taxonomy has since been revised and is commonly used by designers and educators when creating learning objectives (Krathwohl, 2002). I used the requirements of the revised Bloom's taxonomy and applied them to the codes in order to understand what participants were learning.

The taxonomy organizes knowledge into four categories: factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive. Factual knowledge refers to the most basic elements of knowledge, such as terminology, details, dates, etc. (Krathwohl, 2002). The coding scheme referred to factual knowledge as specific terminology used, details from the story, or details about the characters. This yielded little interesting data. Everyone was able to use the details of the story and remember terminology. There was not any form of test; the interview took place immediately after going through the story; and there were not any facts that were essential to remember in order to gain further understanding. The fact that everyone was able to retain basic knowledge about what had happened was not noteworthy or surprising, and it did not differ based on workshop type.

The only factual knowledge that could be analyzed was participants' use of "suicide contagion" or the term "died by suicide." "Suicide contagion," or "copycat suicides", refers to

the psychological process that claims the exposure to suicide or attempted suicide can influence one's decision to take their own life (CDC, 2001). Although suicide contagion mainly refers to media sensationalizing and glorifying suicide through large ceremonies, many schools have made policies to avoid talking about suicide in all situations in an attempt to avoid the effect.

When asked if they had learned anything in the workshop, participants often mentioned suicide contagion first. "I hadn't heard the term suicide contagion before. I now understand the concept of it," (Barbara, online group 1), "I feel like I didn't know about the suicide contagion. That was talked about in there and just a lot in our group. I just became aware of it. Maybe knowing about it, I have different thoughts, probably, from what I had felt before," (Jasmine, facilitated group 3). In addition, many participants wrote on their post-surveys (Appendix B) that they had learned about suicide contagion.

> "The concept of suicide contagion and how it may hinder school admin from helping their students."
>
> "I learned about suicide contagion and that is might be harmful or glorifying a suicide if it is talked about in a certain way, like if a lot of details are given about it, or if it is acknowledged right away, with a ceremony maybe."
>
> "Suicide contagion is rare but real, and there are ways outside of memorials to process effectively."

Another form of factual knowledge that participants learned was the use of the phrase "died by suicide" rather than "commit suicide." This new language comes from a desire not to vilify or criminalize suicide but instead to state it as a cause of death. An example of this is Dina (facilitated group 2) stopping herself and changing her language when talking about how schools plan for other tragic events, "But you don't have time to, 'let's set up a plan for if one of our students commits suicide' oh, um dies by suicide. See I did learn something! (giggles)." However, there were not any trends in workshop type as to who used more learned terminology,

or who recalled more details from the story. Factual knowledge is important however the workshop and the focus group did not yield any variance in ability to demonstrate learned factual knowledge.

On the contrary, conceptual knowledge is essential to achieving contextual understanding and MSP. According to the taxonomy, conceptual knowledge is the interrelationships of facts that form larger structures and theories (Krathwohl, 2002). Conceptual knowledge on the coding scheme was defined as participants' ability to use the Unsilence framework (Institutional, Cultural, and Institutional Silencing) as a method for explaining the larger structure of a specific example. It was then further broken down by cognitive processes from simple to complex, separating a participant's ability to recall the framework from their ability to apply it to the story, and furthermore use the framework to identify other forms of injustice not mentioned in the story. The following transcript from online group four demonstrates how the group tried to tease apart these differences, and how they are applying the conceptual knowledge they learned to real situations, thus demonstrating contextual understanding.

> "I think the aspect of silencing is when we're just-- You don't have the tools, you won't learn of the tools that we might need to talk about this, because it's just never talked about. It only perpetuates this cycle where things are silent, and you might not know how to react. It doesn't get anywhere." – Sofia

> "I think it can be sometimes a good thing too like temporary silencing, like, reflecting, and collecting thoughts. The first reaction which Sanjay had was just to sit silent in the classroom, and while everybody else was just talking about it. Sometimes, like, in situations like that, talking before you even think about what you're going to say and how it can affect other people can hurt worse in some situations. So, silence can be useful." – Olivia

> "But I think it goes back to having these negative stigmas attached to it, builds this segregation into it, and builds high rates of people feeling like they're not heard, and creates this barrier. So, it is a social issue, because there is a population who's not being heard, who's not getting their needs met." – Naomi

> "Yes, you could see it with the way his family reacted to his cousin trying to commit suicide. They were completely- They just abandoned him, and they didn't want to hear about his thoughts. They're like, 'He tried to commit suicide, we're not going to talk about it. We're not going to talk about it with him,' because it's just something that they were uncomfortable with. As a result, he probably feels like he can't talk to his family about it." – Penelope
>
> **"**I also think of social justice as something, like, you can describe physically, so like, dealing with people from different backgrounds. Like, they talk about it from a mental kind of category, how people feel emotionally, probably deal with things like-- It's a big problem in terms of people just not addressing it. They want to question each other, things we had to write was whether or not we've got students, um should have access to medical care. Um, I mean, it might not, like seem like so explicit, but, um." – Marcia
>
> "Yes, stigma is something that can prevent people from seeking out help and seeking out care. Just by, like, by talking about it more, it's something that people will be more okay with opening up to others or seeking help if they need to because they won't view it as such a wrong thing to do." – Sofia
>
> **"**Yes. I just think it should be, like, healthcare should encompass mental health services, because for someone with mental health issues, mental health services aren't the same thing as, like, medicine for physical health." – Randall
>
> "Yeah that's still like their basic need." – Marcia
>
> "In some cases, like, it would have saved their lives. I think it should be considered a basic right." – Randall

As a group, without help from the facilitator, group four took the conceptual knowledge they had learned from the story—silence is cyclical and can prevent people from getting help—and analyze how it relates to different scenarios. When Olivia mentioned that Sanjay's silence helped him in the classroom, Naomi was able to identify the difference between personally remaining quiet in a situation of shock, and the negative stigma that silences individuals from speaking up who want to speak up. Naomi was able to see the implications of one being silenced as part of a "social issue," thus connecting a specific action or behavior to a larger context and

demonstrating contextual understanding. Most importantly, a conversation that began speaking about abstract ideas turned into the group agreeing on mental health care and medical services being a basic right that everyone deserves. This is an example of how educating individuals and building social empathy can lead to social change.

Lastly, procedural knowledge was also aligned with contextual understanding, MSP, and conceptual knowledge. Procedural knowledge has a wide array of definitions. In some cases, it is defined as the technical skills and techniques for a given subject and has been demonstrated by the proving the actual ability. However, it is also defined as understanding and determining appropriate procedures (Krathwohl, 2002). Therefore, in this study, I included procedural knowledge in the coding scheme and defined it as a participant's ability to discuss "next steps" in the real world or describe the implications of a character's actions or behaviors. Compared to conceptual knowledge, which focused on a participant's ability to explain abstract structures, procedural knowledge focuses on the participant's ability to explain and analyze the decisions—and implications for those decisions—characters (or real people) took. Participants' procedural knowledge covered multiple dimensions of cognitive processes. The first is understanding the implications (including untended consequences) of characters' actions.

> "I feel like they were like almost doing them a disservice. By just letting the day go by. Um, you know, probably missed an opportunity. Not to say that I know what those steps would be, but they kind of missed an opportunity to understand from, you know how that event affected everyone." – Camila, facilitated group 2

The next dimension is hypothesizing different actions characters or individuals could have taken and how their outcomes would be affected.

> For example, "I just feel like if it happened again, I wish that it would be handled differently than it was. I hate to say that, but I'm just saying like, it seems to me like there were some things that maybe could have been headed off if the letter was different. Um, you know, making the teachers feel like

> this is the reason why I sent this now and not just like "don't talk about it." You know, probably having a meeting with the teachers in the teachers' lounge, explain them as to why we're feeling this way, or telling the teachers too, like, you need to see somebody," – Frannie, facilitated group 2

The third dimension is identifying *why* characters, people, and institutions made the decisions they did. Participants identified why many different characters made the decisions they did, not just characters they personally identified with.

> "I think it's hard, because it seems easy from here, but from the administrators' perspective, they're protecting themselves from any of it, so if they do talk about it, and somebody commits suicide, then the school would be liable, and could get in trouble for that. That's really difficult." – Leo, online group 4

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> "I also think they want everybody to be silent because they don't have the training to deal with that, so they would rather them not talk about it, rather than say something wrong. I feel, like, just because they don't have that training aspect, they're, like, "We don't have to train them, so we'll just keep them silent." – Penelope, online group 4

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> "I learned that maybe a teacher's choice not to talk about it isn't really a reflection of their own wants or experience. Sometimes, it's just policy, and it's, like, they want to probably talk about it with us about issues, but they just can't." – Kathy, online group 4

The last dimension is determining what characters or individuals should have done or should do in real life. Participants came up with many ideas based off of the story for what a school could do, including "Providing strategies to parents, providing coping strategies for students and letting them know definitely talking about it is important" (Vivian, facilitated group 5), "Have training if you're not equipped to handle that question. You should have the tools to at least say, well, I can answer that, or some satisfying answer, some source to point them to. Because you just may do more harm" (Olivia, online group 3), and "stuff when you know their side of the equation to address

in terms of just day-to-day emotional regulation, or how to support yourself, how to give compassion to yourself and others. Hopefully do more preventative work, before it reaches to the point where people feel like they have to take their lives" (Naomi, online group 3).

Discussions in all groups about these issues all included aspects of conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, contextual understanding and macro self-other awareness/perspective taking (MSP). An example of how these codes complement each other is demonstrated in a comment Eileen (facilitated group 2) made early on in the interview.

> "Unfortunately, these kind of like, it's one of those things where if you haven't gone through it, you don't necessarily know what you're going to be feeling and then you can kind of think about what, what you would do in that situation. How would you feel? But when you're actually in that moment, it could be totally different. Um, yeah, especially just depending on all those outside factors coming in. … I would, I would almost say that it would be a good idea to kind of almost think through a plan like had never happened to her as a principal. … Afterwards she reaches out to her friends who are like professionals in this and they give her like really good advice and like really good resources. And it's like if she could almost have that before something like this happens, that would be amazing. And I feel like, I mean obviously there's a lot of factors that like just having time and like being busy with everything else that she has to do. But then it could also be just that stigma of not wanting to talk about things like mental health and suicide that you almost don't want to prepare for it, because you're not, you don't want to talk about it. But it's something that I think definitely the things like in our society, it's something that everybody kind of should be prepared for. Like in a school setting especially." – Eileen, facilitated group 2

In this quote Eileen is demonstrating the importance of combining social empathy and conceptual and procedural knowledge. When she mentions the importance of having a plan, she is able to identify barriers (such as stigma) that prevent institutions from making those plans. Without that conceptual knowledge and contextual understanding of the situation, her procedural knowledge and desire to make change would not work. This is further demonstrated by Frannie who responds to her comment by questioning what would dismantling silencing even look like:

> "This conversation in the scenarios making me think about this idea of like preparing versus being knowledgeable about best practices. 'Cause I do wonder, because even with active shooter drills, people don't agree how to handle them and often they don't play out the way people have practiced them. Um, because you can't prepare for certain scenarios and how your community will react. So, what would breaking down some of these silencing pillars that, that you bring up the personal, cultural, and institutional silencing, like my question, I was like, what does that look like? Beyond just like the resources and the best practices. Because I see that like those will remain barriers to, like, all of these types of situations. Like even beyond suicide, like as a society we don't deal with grief and death well and like, and so it all seems to be, um, influenced by that and like that, um, I'm curious about that." – Frannie, facilitated group 2

Frannie is articulating the difficulty of putting social justice values into practice. She is taking thee conceptual knowledge and applying it to other aspects of society that are silenced. In this quote Frannie demonstrated the need for conceptual knowledge, contextual understanding, and MSP in order to gain procedural knowledge and take action.

Social justice learning is rooted in making informed social change, either within oneself or in the world. This research highlighted the importance of combining conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, contextual understanding and MSP in motivating participants to not only make change but make informed and positive change.

Theme 3: Connection to Self. The final theme focused on metacognitive knowledge and connections participants made between the workshop and their own lives. Many participants related the content to their own lives without being prompted by the facilitator. This is significant for two reasons: social justice education requires learners to self-reflect and think critically on their own life and past behaviors, and it acts as an example of overcoming personal silencing. According to the taxonomy, metacognitive knowledge refers to one's awareness of their own knowledge and understanding (Krathwohl, 2002). It was defined on the coding scheme as demonstrating self-awareness in relation to mental health or social justice. Bloom's taxonomy

ranks the cognitive dimensions in order of complexity. While these categories are not a strict hierarchy—there are overlaps between dimensions—they do serve as a guide to understand how deep a participant's cognitive process is. The cognitive processes associated with metacognitive knowledge were defined on the coding scheme from last to most complex as follows: participant recalls their own experience in relation to the story or framework; participant explains the reasons behind, implications for, and consequences of their own experiences; participant identifies how the story connected to their own experiences and actions or predicts how the story will affect their actions in the future; participant attempts to make sense of how silencing has played a role in their own life; and, lastly, participant evaluates their previous thoughts, feelings and behaviors in relation to the story or silencing framework. This theme does not include any empathy subscales because empathy does not require a connection to oneself. This theme solely focuses on using the information in order to critically analyze one's own thoughts and behaviors.

Many participants brought up their personal experiences without being prompted. This is because the interview protocol did not directly ask participants to bring up their own experiences in order to ensure their own emotional safety. Regardless, six participants shared a story of someone who had either attempted suicide or died by suicide.

> "In my high school I had a suicide happen and I was trying to think what the administrative response was, and what the student response was. A lot of it was done outside of the school setting. There was a memorial that was not run by the school, but the school told us about it. It was outside of the school setting on a Saturday. It had nothing-- That they made an announcement, like, you can go to the guidance counselor, but there wasn't, like, all school counselling sessions, or memorials, or something that everyone was invited to. It was just on your own volition. It's what I was thinking about." – Marcia, online group 4
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> "It was easier for me to compartmentalize the fiction. So, going to high school, my friend committed suicide, and if it was a real situation that would trigger it more than reading it in a story. I can distance myself." – Olivia, online group 4

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> "Where I grew up in New England, in Massachusetts, we had a student commit suicide who was a senior. I was a freshman." – Alex, online group 1

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> **"**I feel like I felt personally connected to the stories themselves, like some of that happened to me when I was in high school. I was very empathetic with what was going on." – Halle, facilitated group 3

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> **"**I think I really did most of the first one, probably because I recently had a former roommate have her ex-boyfriend commit suicide." – Jasmine, facilitated group 3

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> "My freshmen year, one of my best friends almost committed suicide, and I talked him out of it, and then got him to a hospital. I didn't know how to do that. My mom's a therapist, so I called somebody who knew how to do it, and I gave the phone to my friend and he's alive today, but if I had to do it myself, I would have, I don't know. I remember the gravity of not knowing what to say, and what the words to say were. I had a resource, but not everybody has a resource." – Ian, facilitated group 3

It is important to note that participants shared their experiences in groups. Other than group one, which only consisted of 2 people, when someone shared a personal experience with suicide in their group, another person shared theirs as well. While we do not know the lived experiences of any participants beyond what they shared—meaning it is entirely possible that no one in group two or group five had any personal experiences with suicide—these results lead one to question how hearing someone else share their story may make one more willing to share their own. This hypothesis is supported through Halle's (facilitated group 3) comment about waiting to share her experience until the end of the workshop **"**I feel like I didn't talk about the suicide that happened in my high school until the end of it, when there was plenty of opportunities to bring it up before." When asked what point in the workshop made her want to bring it up, she said, "Actually, like, going through the whole thing, saying, this whole experience was able to bring me through my whole experience when I went through it. I was able to relate with the whole thing and to internalize it myself, and then realize, like, 'Yes, that was pretty accurate, the way

they portrayed the situation.'" Going through the experience and hearing another story that felt similar to hers made her want to share her own.

However, participants who did not have personal experiences with suicide, or chose not to share them, also connected to the story and shared personal experiences. Sanjay—the main student character in *Tomorrow*—was brought up most frequently by participants. Barbara (online group 1) shared "I recognize Sanjay. In a lot of different people that I love and know and a lot of students that I have loved." Facilitated group five also brought up Sanjay but was the only group that used the space to promote reflection and healing. The following is one interaction from group five:

> "I think me personally dealing with similar trauma in the past it's a good reminder on its just open communication and just reaching out people that are close to you who you might think is going through a tough time… I think actually his name was Sanjay, right? The main character, you know that part of the story where he tells Cole or even after he tells the principal, that sense of relief you get, I think personally that was relatable to me just because lately again I've just felt these things in the past, so I think that moment of relief when you tell someone that you're close with and talk through it. I think I kind of relate to that similar feeling." – Travis
>
> **"**I think I have more appreciation just for me as a person reaching out really to ask people how they really feel and get to talk to them. You never know what somebody might be going through. What a minute of genuine conversation can do to someone." – Will
>
> **"**I'd say the same thing. I think me personally dealing with similar trauma in the past it's a good reminder on its just open communication and just reaching out people that are close to you who you might think is going through a tough time." – Travis
>
> **"**It made him feel so much better when he talked to Cole. That was a really quick conversation and that even if you-- it's a good reminder that even if you feeling something in the past, maybe other people-- that you don't want to bother people with it, like the Ravi thing happened a year ago, it's still--. If you still feeling some way about it, it's important to talk about it with people who care about you. If it's important to you it's still important even though time has kind of passed." – Vivian

Not only did they discuss Sanjay and the connection to their own lives, but they also demonstrated metacognitive knowledge by evaluating their previous thoughts and behaviors and deciding how they want to take action in the future. All three participants were able to use this moment to support each other and support their decision for open conversation. Other participants, rather than sharing personal experiences, just demonstrated metacognitive knowledge by identifying and questioning how the information connects to one's own experiences. For example Jasmine (facilitated group 3) talked about how the structure helped her apply the information to her own decisions: "After the story part I felt being more interested in the actual list, because when it makes you ask the questions to yourself, instead of just being presented with a list without having to ask the questions. It's a lot more interesting." Another demonstration of metacognitive knowledge is the ability to analyze why one previously may have viewed a situation from a particular lens, which Grace (facilitated group 3) demonstrated when she said, "I had never really thought about it from the perspective of the teachers and administrators before. Maybe because I'm a student. When I thought about this before, it's been like, "What can we do to help students?" I just haven't thought about how complicated that is for all the parties involved. Like making sure they're okay, and also doing the right things." Grace was able to attribute her identity as a student to the reason why she had previously thought about these issues through a student-centric lens.

However, other participants shared their personal experiences for different reasons. For example, Barbara (online group 1) shared her experience in high school as a peer helper in order to propose possible solutions.

> "When I was in high school, we had "Natural Helpers." It was a group of students they had, and they would put out a survey every year. They would have the students vote on people they felt like they could turn to and trust. Then they would bring those students together and they would train them

> and then they were just out there in the school setting and people knew that if they wanted to, they could come talk to them and they would be able to provide them with the correct adults to talk to, or just sit and listen, or do whatever. And nobody necessarily felt overburdened because there were groups of them and every year there were more trained. I was in the first cohort. (Said quietly with a smile)." – Barbara, online group 1

In essence, personal experiences were expressed for a variety of reasons and no patterns presented themselves. Participants ranged in their demonstration of complex cognitive process. Some simply recalled personal experiences related to the story, while others used the information to question their roles and identities. Because this was not directly asked in the workshop or on the survey responses, one cannot assume that participants who did not share deeper thinking were not capable of it. This theme is still important to analyze for two reasons. Firstly, enough participants brought up their own experiences in some capacity that it is clear this workshop evokes that response. Secondly, one learning objective of social justice education is to acknowledge one's own role in systems of power and silencing (Adams & Zúñiga, 2018).

It is important to highlight that participants' ability to share their own experiences is a demonstration of metacognitive knowledge not empathy. It is commonly believed that drawing on one's own experiences to feel the emotions someone else is feeling is an example of empathy, but this is not true. This can be confusing because it is common for friends to act similarly to situations, and therefore demonstrating empathy may be aligned with one's own feelings. However, this is most easily understood when using an example of two people who have different reactions. If person A reacts to a friend dying by suicide by feeling angry and person B reacts by feeling sad, person B sharing their feelings of sadness with person A to help person A and "empathize" with what they're going through is not actually empathy. In this hypothetical scenario, person B would acknowledge and validate person A's feelings of anger and have the self-awareness to understand the different between person A's feelings and their own. Then

person B would step into the shoes of person A and connect with those feelings of anger, rather than sharing how they have felt sad when similar experiences have happened to them. Therefore, participants in this section are not demonstrating empathy. However, they are taking the first step towards analyzing their own feelings and experiences, which is essential for social justice education.

It is important for practitioners of social justice education to be prepared to handle students disclosing personal experiences. Participants in this workshop were never asked to share their own experiences, but many chose to do so. The story in *Tomorrow* highlights the lack of training teachers and educators receive on mental health issues and the consequences for that lack of training, and the responses of participants further supported the need for practitioners and educators to be able to safely handle these conversations. Because the fictional narrative is so close to students' experiences, it is highly likely that when implemented in classrooms students will express a wide range of reactions. While these results show that the tool has benefits when experienced online or when facilitated, teachers must always be aware of what it can evoke in students and be trained on how to safely handle those reactions.

Limitations

Study design. Due to a lack of research in social justice education evaluation, the present study was exploratory. Therefore, no causal claims could be made, however the study made a significant contribution to the field by analyzing patterns between social empathy and dimensions of knowledge.

This study utilized a within-group design, analyzing change within participants rather than between groups. While this type of research design is subject to carry-over effects—particularly practice effects—I am confident that this did not significantly alter the data. This is

because practice effects tend to be seen when assessments measure a skill or ability that can be increased simply by taking the assessment (Charness, Gneezy, & Kuhn, 2012). The Social Empathy Index does not meet this requirement, but rather asks participants to rate their reactions and feelings to given statements. In addition, the surveys were given in accordance with the guidelines established by the developers of the assessment. These guidelines stipulate that the surveys can be used to assess changes in individuals after an intervention as long as the word "empathy" is not directly stated in order to decrease the likelihood of social desirability effects (Segal et al., 2017a). Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the methodology, and therefore, the significance of the results are valid. In addition, within-group designs are superior to between-group designs when samples between groups significantly vary. Due to the small sample size of this study, there was a high risk of sampling error between conditions, meaning differences in baseline empathy between conditions despite random assignment. Therefore, it was important to prioritize minimizing group differences over the potential of practice effects.

In addition, data in this study were subject to bias in self-reporting. The Social Empathy Index, which was used to assess participants' change in social empathy, requires participants to assess how likely they are to engage in certain behaviors or react in certain situations. Due to the social desirability and better than average effects participants tend to think of themselves as better than they actually are in a given field. This is another reason why the within-group design was essential. By focusing on the difference in scores between before and after the workshop, one can remove the individual effects of self-reporting because the researcher can assume that they would affect both scores equally.

Lastly, another limitation in the study design was the lack of knowledge I had on participants' lived experiences with the topic. *Tomorrow* discusses suicide and mental health,

which are topics that many individuals find difficult to talk about. The use of focus groups was essential in observing if participants could talk about this topic in front of their peers. However, there was no way of coding for what was not said. For example, two of the five groups did not share personal experiences with suicide or attempted suicide. This could be because no one in these groups had these experiences or because they did not feel comfortable sharing them.

Generalizability. This study had a small sample size and was susceptible to sample selection bias. The participants in this study all had a high baseline social empathy score, meaning even before the workshop they were all empathetic people. This is likely due to the sample selection process. Participants were recruited through Unsilence networks and word of mouth. Although participants were compensated for their participation, most of the sample reported signing up because of their interest in the program. Therefore, the results of this study are not generalizable to a population that is not interested in this type of programming. However, this method of recruitment was intentional in order to increase external validity. Many social justice programs for adults are voluntary. Therefore, this method is less generalizable, but more congruent with actual methods of recruitment for social justice programs.

This study also only analyzed one social justice program, which focused primarily on one social justice issue. The program included a social justice framework that could be applied to other issues; however, the main focus of the program was mental health and suicide. In addition, this study focused entirely on interactive social justice education and specifically choose-your-own-adventure storytelling. Therefore, specific aspects of this study cannot be generalized to all forms of social justice education. However, the main claims of this study focused on relationships between engagement, knowledge, and social empathy. These associations can be applied to various types of learning environments and social justice issues.

Lack of resources. Due to lack of resources, I was the only person to code the interview transcripts. So, inter-rater reliability could not be measured. In order to combat the potential for bias in the coding scheme, I refined each code using established measures, such as the Social Empathy Index (Segal et al., 2017b, 2017b) and the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002). Grounding the coding scheme in the literature works to reduce bias, and only having one coder increases the consistency in how codes are applied to the data.

Future Research

Most importantly, this study did not allow for making causal claims. Therefore, this research shows patterns in how participants understood and made sense of what they experienced in the workshop. Future research should not only test for a causal increase in social empathy due to social justice education, but also test the relationship between social empathy and various dimensions of knowledge. For example, theme two "social justice learning" shows an association between social empathy subscales conceptual understanding and MSP with conceptual and procedural knowledge. However, future studies should analyze this relationship and understand if conceptual and procedural knowledge is required to increase social empathy, or high levels of social empathy increases one's ability to learn conceptual and procedural knowledge. Based on this study, I would hypothesize a more complicated relationship between the two. A basic level of conceptual and procedural knowledge is required to demonstrate social empathy; however, social empathy also increases open-mindedness, which might increase one's ability to absorb new concepts. This hypothesis comes from the participants' conversations in this study, which did not move in a linear fashion but rather teased about these complex concepts in a less prescriptive manner.

Future research should also analyze the long-term effects of social justice education. This study focused on immediate gains, in order to not confound the data with other experiences. However, it is important to know whether these effects decrease over time and what type of programs or check-ins could help mediate this decrease. Longitudinal data should be collected to assess change in social empathy over time as well as studying how social justice education impacts change in action and behavior directly.

Implications for Education Design and Implementation

The need and desire for social justice education is clear, and has been demonstrated by the funding of Diversity and Inclusion programs, civics programs, and social justice education non-profits (Bersin, 2015; Shapiro & Brown, n.d.). However, the research evaluating these programs has not been commensurate with the increase in need. In addition, the research that has been done has focused on the impact of the institution rather than the individual students (Brown, 2004; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Shields, 2004; Theoharis, 2007) or has been conducted by the organization whose programs are being evaluated (Brown-Henderson, n.d.). This study began to fill this gap by analyzing how participants of social justice education workshops demonstrate social empathy and the implementation strengths and weaknesses and learning outcomes of different pedagogies of social justice education.

Engagement and perspective taking. The associations found in this study between engagement, knowledge, and social empathy discovered in this study are helpful for further work in design and implementation of social justice education. Engaging students can be an uphill battle, and many educators utilize harmful pedagogies such as simulations and role playing in an effort to increase student engagement (Onion, 2019). The results in this study highlighted a pattern between engagement, perspective taking, and affective mentalizing that participants

enjoyed without being subject to emotional manipulation, student shock, or trivialization of issues (Bell, 2010; Mann & Cohen, 2011). The results of this study found that interactive storytelling, specifically choose-your-own-adventure stories, did not ask the reader to play the role but instead gave them agency in their education to learn about different perspectives from a safe distance. This methodology allows students to practice the skills required for perspective taking: utilizing the information given about a situation and individual to infer and work to understand how they feel. This does not put students in an emotionally unsafe position by subjecting them to potentially reliving their own trauma, nor does it ask students to predict how they would feel in a position they could not ever imagine. Educational designers should prioritize having students practice perspective taking skills using storytelling, particularly reading stories from different perspectives.

Social justice learning. The most complicated relationship demonstrated in this study was between conceptual and procedural knowledge, contextual understanding, and MSP. All of these domains are essential to social justice learning (Adams & Zúñiga, 2018; Bell, 2010; Love, 2000; Segal, 2011; Zúñiga et al., 2012); however, this study highlighted the interconnectedness of these concepts in how participants learn. Conversations about social justice within focus groups had aspects of all of these codes. Therefore, when designing social justice education, it is important to have multilayered learning objectives that cover all of these concepts. For example, participants benefitted from having both abstract concepts and specific examples at their disposal. When teaching about complex social justice theory, it is useful to combine conceptual knowledge with stories that demonstrate the application of these concepts. This helped students demonstrate contextual understanding and MSP (social empathy) because they could use specific examples from the story to apply the knowledge they had learned. Because contextual

understanding and MSP are most important in motivating individuals to take social action (Segal et al., 2017a) it is important to ensure students have tangible examples to demonstrate they have mastered this material.

Teacher preparedness. Social justice education evokes a wide range of responses from learners. This workshop did not require or encourage any form of self-disclosure. However, at least one person in every group spoke about themselves or their own experiences in some capacity. Therefore, it is essential that teachers are able to facilitate these conversations with their students and have access to additional resources when necessary.

Conclusion

Based on the Social Empathy Index results in this study, it is clear that from before the workshop to after there was a statistically significant increase in social empathy. The interview data contextualized this finding and demonstrated that an increase in social empathy is related to engagement and knowledge. These findings are essential in moving forward for researchers, educational designers, and teachers. Utilizing affective mentalizing and strengthening perspective taking skills are related to engagement and have the potential of making social justice learning richer and more enjoyable through interactive storytelling. Conceptual and procedural knowledge and social empathy are interrelated concepts that should be taught and researched together. Lastly, social justice education evokes a lot of emotion and self-reflection in students that teachers need to be prepared for. There is a strong need and desire for social justice education. However, this education is not sufficient without robust research and evaluation of its impact. This study demonstrated a novel method for evaluating social justice education by using social empathy as a proxy for success and utilizing mixed methods. Increasing social empathy increases one’s likelihood to take social action (Gerdes, Segal, et al., 2011; Hoffman, 1989;

Segal, 2011; Segal et al., 2017a) and participate in helping behaviors (Batson et al., 2002; Hoffman, 1989). Therefore, working to increase social empathy through education helps to make tangible change against injustice. This is an incredibly important and relevant field of research because today's society needs to enact change. More research on this topic should focus on how to expand the impact and access of social justice education in order to keep working towards a more just society.

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Table 1

Sample Descriptive Statistics

	Full Sample *(n=21)*	Facilitated Condition *(n=11)*	Online Condition *(n=10)*
	% / M(SD)	% / M(SD)	% / M(SD)
Participant gender			
Male	0.29	0.27	0.3
Female	0.71	0.73	0.7
Participant age (years)	26.1 (9.7)	24.2 (6.2)	27.8 (12.2)
Participant race/ethnicity			
White	0.33	0.36	0.3
Hispanic	0.24	0.18	0.3
Multiracial	0.24	0.27	0.2
Other	0.19	0.18	0.2
Participant had previously attended SJE workshop (0 = no, 1 = yes)			
Yes	0.52	0.55	0.5

*$p<.05$

Table 2

Change in Social Empathy Score and Variation by Workshop Type

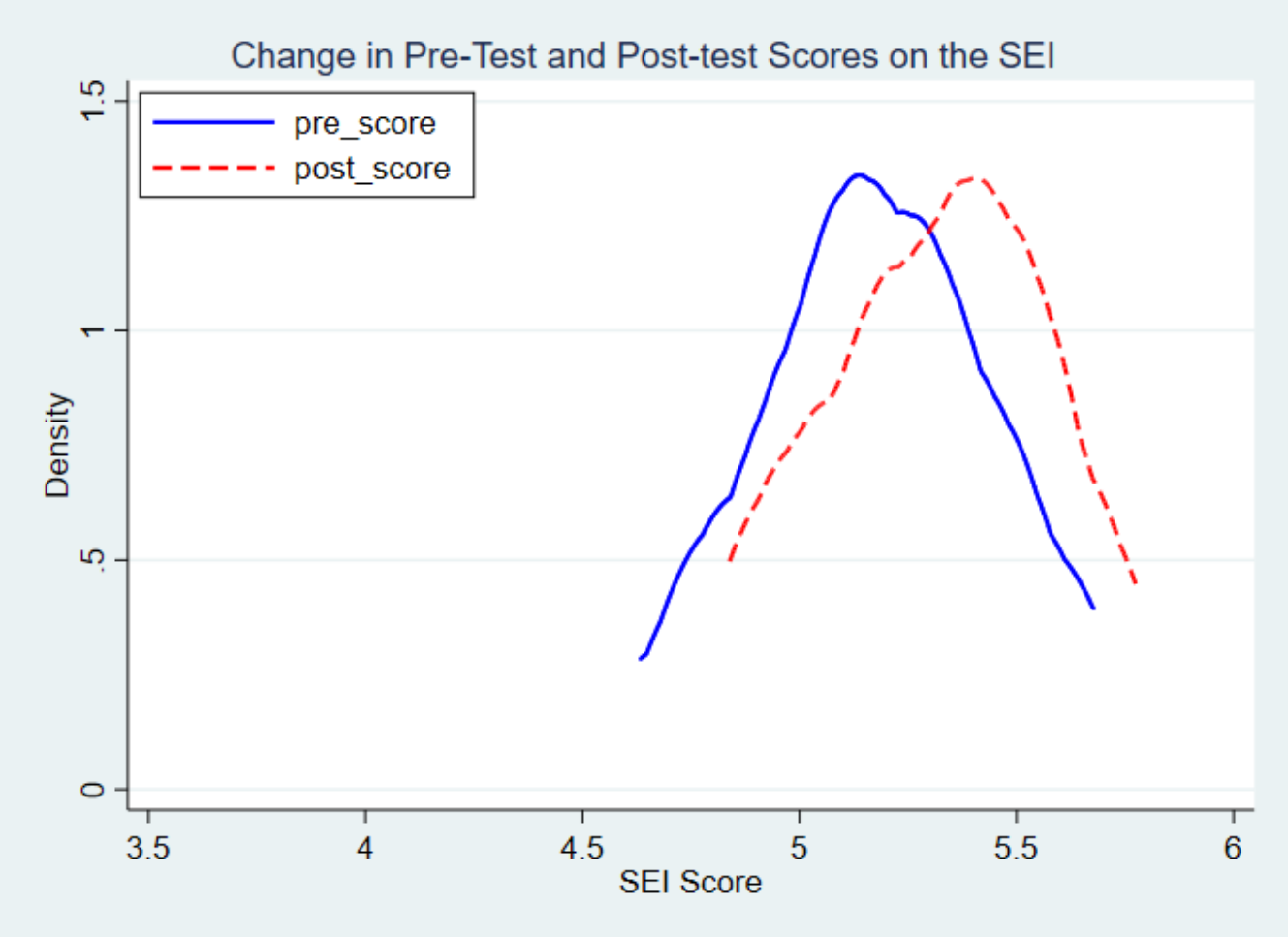
	Timepoint				Workshop Type			
	Pre-test M (SD)	Post-test M (SD)	diff	d	Online M (SD)	Facilitated M (SD)	diff	d
Social Empathy Score	5.13 (.27)	5.27 (.26)	0.14***	0.52	5.36 (.09)[a]	5.28 (.08)[a]	0.07	0.27
Change in Social Empathy Score	-	-	-	-	0.15 (.12)[b]	0.14 (.21)[b]	0.01	0.06
n	21	21	-	-	10	11	-	-

****p<.0005*

[a] Values represent post-test scores

[b] Values represent change scores from pre-test to post-test

Figure 2


Change in Pre-Test and Post-test Scores on the SEI
pre_score
post_score
Density
0
.5
1
1.5
3.5
4
4.5
5
5.5
6
SEI Score

Appendix A: Pre-test Survey Adapted Social Empathy Index

Please respond to the following questions by selecting the choice that most closely reflects your feelings or beliefs.

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	6

1.	I can consider my point of view and another person's point of view at the same time.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2.	I can imagine what the character is feeling in a good movie.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3.	I can tell the difference between someone else's feelings and my own.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4.	I can tell the difference between my friend's feelings and my own.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5.	I consider other people's points of view in discussions.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6.	I can explain to others how I am feeling.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7.	I can agree to disagree with other people.	1 2 3 4 5 6
8.	I am aware of what other people think of me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9.	I believe adults who are in poverty deserve social assistance.	1 2 3 4 5 6
10.	I confront discrimination when I see it.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11.	I think the government needs to be a part of leveling the playing field for people from different racial groups.	1 2 3 4 5 6
12.	I believe it is necessary to participate in community service.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13.	I believe that people who face discrimination have added stress that negatively impacts their lives.	1 2 3 4 5 6
14.	I am comfortable helping a person of a difference race or ethnicity than my own.	1 2 3 4 5 6

15.	I take action to help others even if it does not personally benefit me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
16.	I can best understand people who are different from me by learning from them directly.	1 2 3 4 5 6
17.	I believe government should protect the rights of minorities.	1 2 3 4 5 6
18.	I believe that each of us should participate in political activities.	1 2 3 4 5 6
19.	I believe people born into poverty have more barriers to achieving economic well-being than people who were not born into poverty.	1 2 3 4 5 6
20.	I feel it is important to understand the political perspectives of people I don't agree with.	1 2 3 4 5 6
21.	I think it is the right of all citizens to have their basic needs met.	1 2 3 4 5 6
22.	I believe the role of government is to act as a referee, making decisions that promote the quality of life and well-being of the people.	1 2 3 4 5 6
23.	I have an interest in understanding why people cannot meet their basic needs financially.	1 2 3 4 5 6
24.	I believe that by working together, people can change society to be more just and fair for everyone.	1 2 3 4 5 6
25.	I believe there are barriers in the United States' educational system that prevent some groups of people from having economic success.	1 2 3 4 5 6
26.	I believe people who experience mental health issues deserve access to medical care.	1 2 3 4 5 6
27.	I believe students who experience mental health issues deserve access to medical care.	1 2 3 4 5 6
28.	I believe schools have a responsibility to help students navigate their mental health.	1 2 3 4 5 6
29.	I believe schools have a responsibility to help students navigate racial issues.	1 2 3 4 5 6

30.	I think it is best for people to not get involved with issues that don't concern them.	1 2 3 4 5 6
31.	I believe if you work hard enough anyone can succeed	1 2 3 4 5 6
32.	I believe success is based on merit.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Please respond to the following questions with whatever information you are comfortable sharing.

Gender: _____

Race: _____

Occupation: _____

Age (please circle): 18-22 23-30 31- 40 41-50 51-60 61+

What is the highest level of education you have completed? (please check one)
□Some High School, but no diploma
□High School Graduate (diploma or GED)
□Some College (but no degree)
□Associate Degree
□Bachelor Degree
□Some Graduate Coursework
□Master Degree
□Doctoral or Professional Degree

Have you attended other workshops related to social justice or social justice education? (please circle) YES NO

Why were you interested in attending this workshop?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B: Post-test Survey Adapted Social Empathy Index

Please respond to the following questions by selecting the choice that most closely reflects your feelings or beliefs.

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	6

1.	I will try to consider my point of view and another person's point of view at the same time.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2.	I can imagine what the character is feeling in a good movie.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3.	I can tell the difference between someone else's feelings and my own.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4.	I can tell the difference between my friend's feelings and my own.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5.	I will consider other people's points of view in discussions.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6.	I will explain to others how I am feeling.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7.	I will agree to disagree with other people.	1 2 3 4 5 6
8.	I will be aware of what other people think of me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9.	I believe adults who are in poverty deserve social assistance.	1 2 3 4 5 6
10.	I will confront discrimination when I see it.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11.	I think the government needs to be a part of leveling the playing field for people from different racial groups.	1 2 3 4 5 6
12.	I believe it is necessary to participate in community service.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13.	I believe that people who face discrimination have added stress that negatively impacts their lives.	1 2 3 4 5 6
14.	I am comfortable helping a person of a difference race or ethnicity than my own.	1 2 3 4 5 6
15.	I will take action to help others even if it does not personally benefit me.	1 2 3 4 5 6

16.	I can best understand people who are different from me by learning from them directly.	1 2 3 4 5 6
17.	I believe government should protect the rights of minorities.	1 2 3 4 5 6
18.	I believe that each of us should participate in political activities.	1 2 3 4 5 6
19.	I believe people born into poverty have more barriers to achieving economic well-being than people who were not born into poverty.	1 2 3 4 5 6
20.	I feel it is important to understand the political perspectives of people I don't agree with.	1 2 3 4 5 6
21.	I think it is the right of all citizens to have their basic needs met.	1 2 3 4 5 6
22.	I believe the role of government is to act as a referee, making decisions that promote the quality of life and well-being of the people.	1 2 3 4 5 6
23.	I have an interest in understanding why people cannot meet their basic needs financially.	1 2 3 4 5 6
24.	I don't believe that by working together, people can change society to be more just and fair for everyone.	1 2 3 4 5 6
25.	I believe there are barriers in the United States' educational system that prevent some groups of people from having economic success.	1 2 3 4 5 6
26.	I believe people who experience mental health issues deserve access to medical care.	1 2 3 4 5 6
27.	I believe students who experience mental health issues deserve access to medical care.	1 2 3 4 5 6
28.	I believe schools have a responsibility to help students navigate their mental health.	1 2 3 4 5 6
29.	I believe schools have a responsibility to help students navigate racial issues.	1 2 3 4 5 6
30.	I think it is best for people to not get involved with issues that don't concern them.	1 2 3 4 5 6

31. I believe if you work hard enough anyone can succeed 1 2 3 4 5 6

32. I believe success is based on merit. 1 2 3 4 5 6

What is one thing you learned or are taking away from this workshop?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

General Reaction to the Experience & Story Related Questions

1. Thinking about what we just did for the last hour, tell me about your experience
    a. What did you learn?
    b. How did you feel?
    c. What are your thoughts about tomorrow as a learning tool?
2. What do you think the point of tomorrow was?
    a. What do you think other people would walk away with?
3. Why did you make the decisions you made?
    a. Were there any decisions that your partner(s) disagreed on?
    b. Were there any decisions that your partner(s) made that you disagreed with?
    c. Did you share that, or did you keep it to yourself?
4. Is there something you were thinking while doing this program that you didn't share with your partner(s)?
5. What was your reaction to the story?
    a. While you were going through the story, were you making any real world connections?
6. Which character(s) did you connect with? Why?
7. What emotions did you experience throughout the story? Can you name them?
    a. Do you think your emotions changed throughout the story?
    b. How? Why?
8. What do you think Liza, Sanjay and April were feeling? Why?
    a. Let's start with Liza
    b. …Sanjay?
    c. …April?
    d. Was it different from what you were feeling?
    e. Are there any other minor characters you have any thoughts about?
9. Did you feel yourself judging any of the characters at any point?
    a. Which characters?
    b. Which points?
    c. Why do you think you felt that way?
10. How do you feel about Brandon? Why?
11. How do you feel about Ravi? Why?

Social Justice & Empathy Questions

12. What do you believe a school's role should be when one of its students is experiencing mental health problems?
13. What obstacles prevent students, teachers, and administrators from discussing mental health issues?
    a. What about suicide?
    b. What obstacles prevent students, teachers, and administrators from discussing other social justice issues?
14. What is institutional, cultural, and personal silencing?
    c. What affect does silencing have on society?
    d. In what ways are other social justice issues silenced?
15. What happens when we don't talk about these issues?

16. Is the silencing of mental health a social justice issue?
    e. Unsilence calls the silencing of mental health a social justice issue. Why might this be?
    f. Is in-access to or lack of mental health care a social injustice?
    g. To what extent is access to mental health care a social justice issue?
17. Do you think the silencing affects whether or not people get help?
18. Where is the line between an issue being an individual issue versus a social issue?

Appendix D: Sample of *Tomorrow*

Inspired by real events

11:29am

J U M P

"You can't blame the kids! Their parents came here for a better life." Robbie is indignant.

Caroline snaps back. "When did being illegal become okay?" Her comment elicits a combination of groans and nods of agreement.

Liza lets out a sigh of frustration, but her students don't hear. She hadn't intended for the debate to turn into a fight. "Come on, let's all cool down."

Her classroom door flies open, making Liza jump. Four students rush inside.

"Ms. Cutler, we need to talk to you."

Liza can see that two of the students are in tears. As her classroom falls into silence, all eyes on the interruption, Liza checks the clock. Class will be over in 15 minutes.

LIZA TALKS WITH THE FOUR STUDENTS >

LIZA ASKS THE STUDENTS TO WAIT UNTIL END OF CLASS >

If participant chooses Liza talks with the four students

B R A N D O N

Liza tells the class to take out their workbooks. She walks with the four students into the hallway.

As soon as the classroom door closes behind them, Jonah blurts out, "Brandon killed himself last night."

Liza holds her breath and puts on her best teacher-face.

The two students who had been crying continue to weep silently.

The fourth student, Sara, speaks so softly that Liza can barely hear her words. "We didn't know who else to go to."

LIZA SUGGESTS THE STUDENTS VISIT THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR >

LIZA INVITES THE STUDENTS INTO HER CLASSROOOM WHILE SHE WRAPS UP >

For More Visit: www.unsilence.org/tomorrow