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Student Voice in Social Emotional Learning

Angelo Mills

A dissertation in practice submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

in Education Leadership

University of Washington Tacoma

June 2019

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree: University of Washington Tacoma

Education Program

Abstract

Social emotional learning (SEL) is a proven effective tool in instructing students in managing their emotions. Public schools are beginning to understand the importance of SEL programming, because in addition to academic skills development, the critical focus of SEL programs are the social emotional competencies that are essential to student development. SEL provides a level of emotional support that works in consort with academic, student behavior, and emotional management that foster a productive community of learners.

In order to create that effective model of enmeshment among student academic, behavior, and emotional learning, it is imperative that all who facilitate learning among students must have an understanding of the cultural dynamics and experiences (student voice) that students are arriving with when they enter the school buildings.

The purpose of this study was to develop the process to capture and incorporate student voice from an indigenous (native American) student population into a social emotional learning program to meet the cultural context of the students being served.

This study used Bernal's ecological validity model (EVM) as a framework to incorporate student voice into a SEL program. Three ninth grade classes of native American students participated in the study. The native American focus was an important area because there is no study to date that explores the native culture (student voice) and then creates a process to incorporate their cultural experiences as an integral part of a SEL program.

The results of the study indicated significant positive impact when SEL was introduced to ninth grade students as an intervention. The findings were discussed through the lens of the importance of the process to incorporate student voice into SEL. The study explored current

impact and future implications of long-term gains when student voice (their cultural experiences) becomes a fundamental aspect of the SEL framework.

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Introduction

Student Voice in Social Emotional Learning

Mrs. Hamilton reaches out to the principal at the middle school where she teaches and reports that Jerome is unable to manage himself. He is very impulsive. The principal Mr. Yates seeks clarification. Mrs. Hamilton explains that she has taught many of the social emotional lessons to her class and finds that Jerome lacks self-awareness and self-management. He seems to have very little respect for others. He does not cooperate with others and does not take responsibility for his actions.

Mr. Yates tells Mrs. Hamilton he will call Jerome down to the office for a chat. Jerome visits the principal's office after lunch. The principal asks Jerome to explain his side of events. Jerome says to Mr. Yates that he does not know what he has done wrong. The principal tells the student what Mrs. Hamilton has reported about him. Mr. Yates then ask the student about the social emotional lessons and what has he learned from them. Jerome reports that he is paying attention to the lessons in class, however he continues to report to Mr. Yates that he is unable to make connections to the lessons. Jerome explains that the scenarios highlighted in the lessons are not about himself or people he knows. "Mr. Yates, these lessons are not talking about me. I cannot relate to the scenarios in the lessons." Jerome is unable to identify with the experiences talked about in the lessons. His frustration stems from his inability to make the connection between his own experiences and those covered in the lessons from Mrs. Hamilton. These lessons have no student voice to which Jerome can identify. The lack of student voice is one of the major reasons why students find it difficult to engage in classroom lessons (Fielding, 2001). There is very little in the lessons to hold students' interest.

Definition of Student Voice

Student voice refers to the experiences, the perspectives, and the opinions of students and how they are able to make a connection and relate to the situation (Hammond, 2015). It is important to consider that student voice is all about students and their contribution (Fielding, 2001). When students are allowed to have a voice, at the most basic level, this action promotes the development of basic civic patterns of paramount importance to our democracy such as their right to speak and state their opinion (Mitra & Gross, 2009). As students are able to advocate for themselves, they build personal and academic resilience (Mansfield, Welton, Mark, 2018).

The application of student voice as a major component to pedagogy is supported by the constructivist learning theory (Sands, Guzman, Stephens, and Boggs, 2007). When students are provided opportunities to articulate a point of view, it develops their writing and oratory skills (Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, 2008). The activation of student voice creates critical awareness of oppressive societal structures, and in turn encourages disenfranchised youth to realize a sense of power through collective action (Cammarota and Romero, 2011). The majority of schools are not structured to encourage student voice (Mitra and Gross, 2009). Schools represent more of a business model that focuses on controlling students to meet accountability standards (Fielding, 2001).

Student voice is often overlooked in classroom lessons (Brasof, 2015). Inviting students to participate and share their experiences is not often considered by the classroom teacher or administration (Mansfield, 2018). School personnel may exclude students from sharing their perspectives or point of view because of a belief that young people do not have the ability or scope of experience to make a valid contribution (Mitra and Gross, 2009).

Justification

Social emotional learning program (SEL) by their very nature are programs that are inextricably linked to students' intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences. Although it is therefore important that SEL programs incorporate the sociocultural experiences of the students, most programs need considerable amount of adaptation in order to do so (Garner, Mahatmya, Brown, and Vesely, 2014). This study focused on the process that obtains and infuses student voice into an SEL program with the intention of creating goodness-of-fit in terms of context and culture. The main objective was to develop a planning and implementation process that resulted in a SEL program that is culturally relevant and validates students' experiences, and at the same time, engages students and leads to more desired outcomes.

I have often wondered about students who are deemed “a problem” in class due to their impulsive behavior. The same students are able to sit in a hard church pew through a three to four-hour black church service on a Sunday morning. How is this even possible? It is because they identify with the message being delivered. They see themselves through the lessons taught. They are able to engage because they identify with the experience. The pastor becomes the teacher in understanding what is important to the students. The pastor makes sure he connects with the students by incorporating experiences to which the students can relate and connect from his message. The pastor is incorporating student voice to keep students fully engaged. Since the pastor understands what is important to the students, he makes his message more culturally and contextually relevant. The contrast is that on Monday morning when the students returns to class, they are often rebranded “a problem” because the classroom teacher at school has made little to

no effort to make the lesson culturally relevant to the students by seeking their input, interests, and perspectives.

Problem Statement

This study was created to develop a process to incorporate a specific cultural context within a SEL program. The study focused on secondary school students in Western Washington State. Thus, this project focused on a specific cultural group, youth in the Puyallup tribal school. Judging from the literature review, indigenous students have not been represented in any SEL study to date. In 2016, there were twenty-three social emotional programs highlighted in CASEL (2013) guide (Garner, et al, 2016). Of all the twenty-three programs highlighted, not one focused on a specific cultural group, not even on a collaborative effort (Garner et al, 2016). This study was modeled on the work of Castro-Olivo and her colleagues in the cultural adaptation of Strong Teens SEL programs (2012; 2014) and applied Bernal's EVM as recommended in the SEL literature to date (Peterson, 2016). Student voice was obtained from a group of students that was used to inform specific adaptation, including instructional content and methodology. Ultimately, the intent was to develop a guiding process for the use of the EVM and student voice with any SEL program.

Theoretical Frame

The Bernal's ecological Validity model was selected because of its use and endorsement in the field of SEL and its clear guidelines and dimensions. The study used Bernal's ecological validity model (EVM). It used the eight dimensions: language, person, metaphor, content, concept, goals, methods, and context (Bernal et al, 1995) to guide program adaptation. Language was important because it was needed to be adapted to be aligned with the language of the

targeted population. Knowing the communication style of indigenous secondary students was important because it demonstrated value to their voice. The cultural dimension of persons was important because teachers had to be sensitive to the cultural needs of the students. Metaphors or examples had to reflect the folklore and symbols to which the students were accustomed. This study explored content or basic cultural knowledge that were sensitive to the values, customs, traditions, and typical experiences of Chief Leschi indigenous secondary school population. Context was another important cultural dimension that this study focused on. In this way, new concepts like acculturative stress was introduced to make SEL more relevant to Chief Leschi secondary school students. The school counselor ensured that the goal of teaching the SEL program was for students to introduce and communicate values from cultures of their origin. Two key dimensions that this study focused on were methods and context. The delivery method was adapted to reflect the cultural traditions of Chief Leschi secondary school students. The context of the students' life circumstances and the effect that social emotional learning could have on these circumstances were certainly taken into consideration.

Fielding asserted that when students were provided opportunities to be actively engaged in class, there was a willingness by the teacher to listen to the students' experiences and incorporate in the lessons (Fielding, 2001). Bernal et al (1995) EVM provided a suitable platform to incorporate the dimensions of EVM and student voice. Presented with the opportunities, students were able to articulate their experiences around the cultural dimensions of language because when provided opportunities to speak of their cultural experience, it created value to their voice. In the same way, the dimension of person allowed for students to validate the authenticity of the teacher by being able to articulate a point of view and the teacher acknowledging that as the teacher, they too are learning from and about the student. The cultural

dimension of metaphors allowed students to validate their experience in their own tradition. Using content, allowed students to visualize their identity in classroom space and in so doing provided an environment for self-expression through their experiences. Context created a bridge between whatever the current circumstances were and students having an opportunity to enrich the discourse by articulating their point of view. Both dimensions of context and delivery methods allowed students to add their perspective as they received the information from the teacher. The dimension of goals created an opportunity for students to be able to voice what they wanted to get out of the program. It was important to underscore that the reason for incorporating cultural adaptation to SEL is not to modify the big ideas of the existing program but to involve the target audience in a more inclusive way (Martinez and Eddy, 2005).

Literature Review

Student Voice

There was scholarly evidence to support the importance of student voice as part of pedagogy. For example, Shields wrote that when educators made the cultural experiences of students as an integral part of the learning environment, students found their realities represented in the lessons and were encouraged to participate in classroom discourse, thus connect to their own learning, and experience greater school success (Shields. 2004).

Paris and Alim (2017) proposed as teachers listen to students sharing their cultural perspectives, this listening action by teachers provided honor and value to the students' cultural perspectives and increased students' engagement. Sands, Guzman, Stephens, and Boggs (2007)

wrote that with all of the efforts to empower students and improve success, the sole voice that is not considered is that of the students themselves.

Noted scholar on student voice, Michael Fielding (2001), wrote that there is a sense of urgency to the work of implementing student voice as part of pedagogy. The sense of urgency allowed students to have a voice in the classroom and with the framework, their voice was acknowledged giving their experiences value. This conceptual framework sought to transform the entire culture of the organization where all racial and ethnic groups found value as they introduced their cultural experiences, their voice, to the conversation (Fielding, 2001). He suggested that there must be a consultancy with students themselves about the importance of their cultural perspective and how that aligned with a given lesson.

Fielding described the framework as having two prongs. The first prong sought to answer how the inter-relationship between students and staff worked when students were able to share their perspectives based on their cultural experience. The second prong sought to evaluate the process by asking the questions as the student voice activity was taking place. According to Fielding, student voice is exemplary when students were able to initiate inquiry. For example, student voice was highlighted when provided opportunities for students to ask questions based on class discourse referencing their point of view from their cultural experience. When the inquiry process occurred, teachers became facilitators of the discourse and partners in the learning and, students became active respondents as they were tuned in and engaged (Fielding, 2004). Fielding noted as students became active respondents, teachers moved from not just compiling data but listened to what students had to say (Fielding, 2004). Compiling data was still a critical aspect in measuring student voice. Fielding asserted that teachers must listen intently to

students as they spoke of their cultural experience. In doing so, teachers were able to pay attention and measured student performance through their participation. Student did in turn learn through a more informed pedagogy because teachers paid attention and learned about their students (Fielding, 2004).

Fielding argued that the use of the themes and questions was a transformational process (Fielding, 2001). This involved a mind shift of the entire school from attitudes, beliefs, actions of staff, and the styles and strategies used by teachers. Fielding referred to this mind shift as informed pedagogy because teachers were being knowledgeable of the students that they were serving which has a direct impact as teachers were taking the time to acknowledge students and their experiences (Fielding, 2001).

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

As mentioned earlier, this study was centered on the process of obtaining and then implementing student voice as a fundamental component to the lessons within a SEL program. Social emotional learning (SEL) was designed to help students develop skills to recognize and manage their emotion. SEL encapsulates a very broad focus to include, positive youth-development, resilience violence prevention, wellness and character education. SEL can be conveyed as the framework for which these focuses can be aligned to meet the academic and the social education of all students (Greenberg, 2003; Merrell and Guelder, 2010).

The aim of social emotional learning (SEL) is to develop the social emotional skill set for students (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, &Walberg, 2004). SEL is the process through which students cultivate their ability to connect their thinking, feeling, and behavior in becoming emotionally

healthy human beings (Zins et al, 2004). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning (CASEL) began in 1994 with the idea of creating the standards upon which social emotional learning would establish its foundation. Five competencies were introduced as a guide to facilitate social emotional learning. The first being self-awareness, the ability to recognize one's own emotions and how they influence behavior. Self-management is the ability to regulate one's own thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. Social awareness is the ability to have a perspective and empathize with others. Relationship skills are the ability to establish and foster healthy relationships. Responsible decision making is the ability to make constructive choices based on ethical standards.

The instructional value of SEL is to establish social and emotional growth with lessons and strategies that focused on students learning and practicing SEL skills. The framework for social emotional learning applied herein is that of the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) competencies. As overviewed previously, the five competencies developed by CASEL were self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. For example, students will be able to identify emotions, understand self-perception and maintain an appropriate sense of self-confidence. Self-management is the ability to regulate one's own emotions, thoughts, and behavior in different situations. Self-management helps students in developing impulse control, self-motivation, and stress management. Another competency is relationship skills which is the ability to establish and maintain healthy and positive relationships. Some of the attributes gained from exploring relationship skills are communication, social engagement, and relationship building. The fifth competency is responsible decision making which is the ability to make

constructive choices about personal behavior which leads to identifying, analyzing, and creating solution to issues. The objective of the competencies is to develop intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive skill sets within students (casel.org).

Social emotional learning programs are critical in students' development; however, it is important that the programs incorporate the sociocultural experiences of the students being served (Garner, Mahatmya, Brown, & Vesely, 2014). Students social emotional development is shaped by their experiences, attitudes, values, and behavior of families in the communities where students live and learn (Bradley, et al, 2001). There should be an understanding of sociocultural influences of the participants and the way in which SEL is implemented (Lareau, 2011). There should be an acute understanding of social demands such as family socialization behaviors, school, and community elements before incorporating into SEL programming and strategies because the intent of SEL is to reach all students being served (Graves & Howes, 2011). The sociocultural elements and the social demands will have significant impact on the process of implementation for any social emotional program because it is imperative to create a contextual frame for students to be able to identify with (Griner & Smith, 2006). The contextual frame could be race or ethnicity, socioeconomic, gender, disability, or the family emotion socialization process; are they experiencing any level of acculturative stress (Griner & Smith, 2006).

As with the quality implementation of any SEL program, there should be adaptation to suit the students being served yet ensure fidelity and that core components of the program remains intact. For adaptation to be effective, it must be purposeful, meet the objectives of the adaptation, provide timely guided professional development, and well executed (Durlak, 2016). Professional development is crucial in the establishment for any implementation as this is where teachers and facilitators of the program receive the essential information on the process of

implementation (Durlak,2016). Instructors who are learning the implementation process must walk away with a level of confidence knowing how to take the program and begin to use it with fidelity. Quality professional development allows the implementers to understand how to effectively adapt the program implementation to the intended audience (Durlak, 2016).

Strong Teens SEL Program

Merrell's Strong Teens is the high school component to the Strong Kids SEL program series (Carrizales-Engelmann, Feuerborn, Gueldner, &Tran, 2016). The program was developed by authors with diverse backgrounds and was designed to be implemented as a universal prevention strategy. The program is designed for straight forward implementation in any given classroom without having the facilitator go through any kind of mental health training. The program includes 12 lessons that facilitate skills associated with resilience and the prevention of symptoms and problems such as anxiety and depression. Targeted skills include, but not limited to, emotional awareness, problem solving, empathy, stress, and anger management, positive thinking, and goal setting. These skills promote healthy social emotional development to cope with challenging life experiences (Greenberg et al, 2003). Merrell's Strong Kids SEL programs have evidence for their use as an effective program for diverse students with example outcomes including self-awareness, problem solving, and emotional regulation (Castro-Olivo,2014).

The Strong Teens program was selected for this study because it was a suitable and feasible option for this study. This study was built of what is already known from previous research and address a gap in this literature. This study involved the creation and implementation of a process of incorporating indigenous students' voice (i.e., cultural perceptions and experiences) into the Strong Teen program. The cultural incorporation that I focused on is the

integration of student voice, but I also included the perspectives of teachers, administrators, support staff, and community members.

There have been a few studies conducted expressly for the purpose of exploring the implementation of the Strong Kids program with diverse learners. Social emotional learning has been used within the ELL student population as an intervention in evidence-based treatments (Castro-Olivo, 2012). These ELL secondary students improved their resilience and lowered challenging behaviors, both critical components to academic and life success.

These studies with ELL students provide a great starting place in understanding the significance of incorporating students' cultural experiences into a SEL program. As an intervention, SEL has done well in helping ELL students deal with building social, academic, and emotional skills set (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Students must be explicitly taught SEL through incorporating their cultural experiences so that they are able to have a reference to their own cultural upbringing so as to not be exposed to acculturative stress (Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivo and Merrell, 2008; Castro-Olivo et al, 2008) where ELL students feel external pressure to conform to the dominant culture other than the one to which they have been oriented from birth. Acculturative stress has been found to have a negative impact on students particularly when there is no cultural representation in the curriculum (Castro-Olivo, et al, 2014).

Castro-Olivo (2014) has set out to determine whether incorporating cultural experiences enhances the outcomes of SEL. Specifically, they studied secondary school English language Learners (ELL) students and an adapted version of Merrell's Strong Kids program.

One of the questions that Castro-Olivo sought to answer is if cultural adaptation makes an impact in the SEL program as a valid intervention (Castro-Olivo, 2014). She constructed her study by first aligning all eight dimensions of the Ecological Validity Model (EVM; Bernal, Bonilla, Bedillo, 1995). The eight dimensions are *language* of intervention, which is to say that the language aligns with that of the intended audience. The character of *persons* has to do with the sensitivity of the individual who is delivering the material to be culturally astute to the social emotional needs of the audience. Another dimension is *metaphors* which relate to the folktales and traditions to which the audience is accustomed to and must be incorporated as part of the adaptation. Adding new *content* is also a dimension of Bernal's model as a way to align to the values, traditions, and customs of the audience. In the same way, *concept*, like acculturated stress, should be thoroughly explained to the audience as well as make this new intervention language relevant to audience. In addition, the *goals* of the program must be of value to the target population and will allow them to exhibit values from their cultural heritage. The *delivery method* must be reflective of the culture and customs of the audience. *Context* is the final dimension and it refers to the presentation having relevance as it relates to the current conditions of the audience. In the Castro-Olivo (2014) study, these dimensions were then paired up with the target skills to be taught from the Strong Kids program.

For example, since the study focused on Latino students, the *language* was translated to Spanish. *Persons* selected as facilitators were bilingual or bicultural. Since the population of this study was ELL, the *metaphors* were all Latino folklore. All of the *content* reflected cultural values and customs adapted to the SEL model. New *concepts* were introduced within the *context* that would be relevant to the audience. The *method of delivery* was also adapted and altered to fit the cultural frame of the Latino students, e.g. the overarching frame were respect and familismo;

two important attributes within the Latino culture (Castro-Olivo, 2014). The *goal* of the Strong Kids program is to promote resilience through SEL knowledge and skills. A focus group was conducted to determine that the planned adaptation met the community's approval. Once the adaptation was met with community approval then the study started to select participants.

The research design was constructed around a pre-post intervention to assess the effectiveness of the culturally adapted intervention on participating students' outcomes (Castro-Olivo, 2014). Both sets of students and parent participants were selected by teachers who have done extensive work with ELL students. Teachers were asked to select students who showed some resilience as a result of SEL and were articulate about SEL challenges that their peers faced. Student focus group participants were asked about the main challenges that ELL students face in schools. The study was able to develop themes based on responses of students. These responses were then used to build SEL themes like acculturative stress, language barrier, perceived discrimination, and lack of school belonging. When asked if cultural adapted SEL might help them, there was unanimous agreement (Castro-Olivo, 2014). The adapted SEL program was then piloted to assess three areas, one was the feasibility of implementation in a classroom. The second was to assess the effectiveness of teaching SEL skills. The third was social validity and participants satisfaction (Castro-Olivo, 2014). After the goals for the feasibility of implementation were established, then the study rolled out the method in which the study would be conducted (Castro-Olivo,2014).

Forty high school participants were selected (20 males and 20 females). Once approval was granted by the IRB, the school administration made the choice as to what grade will participate. The program was then explained to the teachers, subsequently, teachers explained to their classes. Parents attended an information night and all requisite permission forms were

signed and promptly returned to school. There were three main objectives in the set-up of the study. Teachers were asked to complete questionnaire to assess how feasible it would be to deliver each of the culturally adapted twelve lessons. An observation tool was used to assess the fidelity of intervention as delivered by the facilitator. This observation tool focused on the number of concepts taught and time spent on each concept as examples of items measured. Three of the lessons (25%) were observed by Castro-Olivo to assess fidelity of implementation. Also, teachers were asked to audiotape a sample of lessons to determine the number of concepts they used. The second objective was to assess the effectiveness of teaching SEL skills and students' outcomes. This was accomplished by having teachers and students' complete questionnaires and rating scales to provide data on levels of acculturated stress, systems of internalizing problems like depression and anxiety, and students' knowledge of SEL concepts and applications. The study used the internalizing systems test, a self-report measure to determine participants mental health like symptoms of depression and anxiety. This test comprises of ten questions, answered on a Likert scale. The next measure was the Strong teens knowledge test, another self-report measure that assesses participants knowledge of SEL content taught in the program. This test comprises of twenty true/false items along with some multiple-choice items. Also, the societal attitude familial environment for children (SAFE-C) was used to measure acculturative stress, and the people in my life scale was used to assess students' connectedness to their school. This measure comprises of eight items, answered on a Likert scale. The third objective was to assess the social validity and acceptability by asking teachers and students to complete a questionnaire about social validity and acceptability. This questionnaire sought to establish how much participants liked the program, how likely would they recommend it to others, and how much they thought that the skills addressed their social emotional needs (Castro-Olivo, 2014).

A student measure was used to determine participating students' perspectives of the program. Here a Likert scale response was formed from the statement, "I think this program was created for Latino like myself." The final question was qualitative, and it asked the question of how the participants think that the program can be improved (Castro-Olivo, 2014).

Data from the intervention fidelity confirmed that the program was executed with fidelity through observational data, and the result indicate that the program was effective. Students did report that the SEL skills through the program did help with acculturative stress. Both teachers and students reported a high satisfaction in the area of social validity. There was an overall 80% satisfactory rating. In the end, the results of this study affirm that the culturally adapted Strong Teens program, when incorporated with a cultural adaption representing the Latina/o culture proved both socially valid and acceptable (Castro-Olivo, 2014).

The researchers discovered that in the relatively brief time of twelve lessons implemented once per week, they were able to make a positive difference in promoting social emotional resilience among ELL students. The Castro-Olivo study demonstrated that evaluating the impact of resilience was critical in the study because the SEL intervention proved that it was able to build ELL students resilience in dealing with adversity in their lives (Castro-Olivo, 2014). ELL students have been identified as an important group worthy for further study along with other communities of students who may be historically marginalized (Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

In much the same way that Fielding's framework provides support in implementing student voice as part of pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching can provide more tools in implementing student voice in the classroom. For example, it is imperative for teachers to take

the time to get to know their student in small ways every day, eventually, the teacher is able to have a conversation about the student's game over the weekend or the festival that the family was involved with. In culturally responsive teaching, culture becomes critical to learning. It is pivotal in communicating and shaping the thinking process of students. As teachers get to know their students, they plan lessons knowing the intended audience (Gay, 2010). For example, in planning a math lesson, the teacher would incorporate the contribution of an African mathematician to spark the interest of the black children in the classroom. When pedagogy affirms culture, the combination celebrates equitable access to education for all students from all cultures (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Culturally responsive teaching is pedagogy that respects and recognizes the importance of including students' experiences to the lessons being taught in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The following are some tenets that are applicable to culturally responsive teaching. The first thing a teacher needs to do within the framework of culturally responsive teaching is to explore ways of communication with students to get to know the students in a meaningful way. Genuine communication initiated from the classroom teacher provides a perspective of the teacher caring about the student and seeking to understand the student (Nieto, 2012). Learning within the context of culture is another area of culturally responsive teaching. It is critical that teachers learn of the cultures represented in their classroom. Students learn about themselves and their environment through their cultural experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Student centered learning is an aspect of culturally responsive teaching that is a fundamental shift in the delivery method of pedagogy (Hammond, 2015). Learning is a social construct and as a result, students learn best when they are able to articulate their cultural

experiences to their peers. When students are able to articulate their experience, all students in the class benefit from expanding their cognitive abilities (Vygotsky, 1978).

Culturally mediated instruction is another area within the framework of culturally responsive teaching. Culturally mediated instruction allows students to learn that there is more than one way to interpret an event or statement. In so doing, students' interpretation is based on their cultural lens and social experience (Nieto, 2012). Culturally mediated instructions create an environment for less student behavioral disruption because when students see themselves in the lessons, they are more inclined to be fully engaged (Hollins, 1996). Reshaping the curriculum is another way to focus on culturally responsive teaching. When lessons include topics and issues related to students' cultural experiences, students are motivated to develop a higher-level thinking skill set to articulate their point of view (Villegas, 1991). As teachers plan lessons incorporating students' experiences, they make meaningful connections between school and the real-life experiences of the students themselves (Padron, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002).

Another aspect of culturally responsive teaching is the ability of the teacher to see themselves as facilitators. When teachers facilitate the learning, they are able to acknowledge and create value to students' cultural experiences and thus nurture student development as relationship between teacher and student materialize (Ladson-Billing, 1995). Teachers who are facilitators, use students' cultural experiences as a foundation to develop lessons that transfer what is learned into real-life scenarios (Padron, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002). Facilitation takes preparation and planning to provide a successful implementation.

The sociocultural elements provide context for exploring individual student experiences, and how emotions are expressed and socialized in the home environment (Trommsdorff et al, 2017). Students require a variety of social emotional skills because they are coming from varying

sociocultural experiences (Padron, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002). For example, 20 to 25% of native American students experience significant social emotional learning challenges which correlates to the long history of cultural, psychological, and physical genocide because of not acknowledging and respecting a value system different from that of the dominant culture (Cummins et al, 1999). At the same time, demographically students may be over-represented as having social emotional issues because of misconceptions and not understanding the cultural dynamics of the student (Heathfield & Clark, 2004). Recognizing the social dynamics and finding a way of incorporating that aspect in the SEL program speaks volume of the classroom teacher's knowledge of her student (Rogers-Atkinson, 2003).

The school's geographic location is an aspect of importance along with sociocultural elements because this combination of factors can go a long way in revealing the social emotional challenges inherent in that environment (Wentzel, 2002). Students within the demographically diverse population may not always receive opportunities in developing social and emotional skill set to help them successfully navigate in their environment (Boutte, 2012). There is an ongoing thought that suggest that school is the great equalizer regardless of the sociocultural dynamics because they share a common knowledge of expectations and, as a result student can be held to the same social, emotional, and behavioral standard (Horner, 2004). The reality is that this is a misnomer because the skills in creating a socially and emotionally rich environment comes from the staff who may not understand their students and adapt the lessons to serve the demographic (Osher, 2004).

Peterson, Villarreal, and Castro (2016) suggest that the challenge going forward is to find effective ways to address the social emotional learning needs of students within the demographically diverse population. According to Peterson, et al., there are a limited number of

models of practice that are able to use ideas from culturally awareness frameworks that can be adapted to serve culturally and linguistically diverse students (Peterson, et al., 2016). One of the most salient models in the field of SEL is Bernal's ecological validity model (EVM), a framework for culturally responsive counseling originally designed to service Latino students but is thought that this framework can be applied to other demographics (Peterson, et al, 2016). The main objective in using Bernal's EVM is to utilize it as a culturally adaptive fidelity model when exploring any other culturally and linguistically diverse group other than the Latino population for which the EVM was originally intended (Peterson, et al 2016). The EVM has been an effective tool in infusing cultural awareness into social emotional learning. The eight dimensions within Bernal's ecological validity model are language, persons, metaphors, content, concept, goal, methods and, context. Language that is used as the delivery model must be apt to the student population being served as it introduces a level of familiarity for ease of conversation and at the same time remove barriers which may be present when a more formal approach to language is used (Peterson et al, 2016). The dimension of persons refers to researcher as well as the subject, it is incumbent that the researcher understands enough of the subject before-hand so that they can introduce similarities among all parties to create some comfort with the subject. The researcher must understand the cultural profile of the demographically diverse group with whom they are working, it cultivates a level of respect and at the same time the researcher gets to look inward to understand their own bias and how to adjust as not to offend (Peterson et al., 2016).

Metaphors brings familiarity because it demonstrates that the researcher has done work in creating a culturally sensitive environment and atmosphere which may take the form of objects and images that are familiar to the group being served at the same time this familiarity may take

the form of language and sayings to which the subject may be familiar and thus create a great level of comfort (Peterson et al., 2016). The dimension of content is critical as it creates an atmosphere where cultural knowledge, values and tradition are demonstrative of the level of preparation that has gone into the service that is about to be provided. When reviewing concept as a dimension within Bernal's EVM it is important to consider that pathology is not universal, what works within one culture has no bearing on another. It is important to consider the pathology within the context of the culture being served and enquire from the demographic if the pathology is acceptable or even better seek their input (Peterson et al, 2016).

Goal as a dimension must be framed with the cultural context of tradition, customs and, values because in a direct way the researcher is relaying to the demographic that they understand the situation and here is their approach and the reasoning (Peterson et al, 2016). For example, earlier it was mentioned that Bernal's EVM was originally created to help Latino students, in dealing with a Latino client with some hyperactive behavior, the goal maybe for him to respect their wishes when his parents ask him to behave because respect is an important trait of Latino culture. Method as a dimension encapsulates all of the dimensions already mentioned especially ensuring that a cultural frame is followed, and the wishes of the demographic is being followed through. Context as a dimension is critical because it is time sensitive (Peterson et al, 2016). For example, during the Castro-Olivo (2014) ELL study, immigration and deportation were contextual situations that were foremost on the minds of ELL families. Having an awareness of this situation as being a pending concern to the ELL population is to understand context. What is happening at that moment that is impacting that particular population. As the researcher, it is important to understand how circumstances relate, for example, asking questions about

immigration status to decipher political or social stress will provide information and insight, Bernal's EVM was used with Latinx adolescents (Castro-Olivo, 2014).

Tribal Focus

Chief Leschi is the largest Bureau of Indian Affairs school in the United States. The school serves 98% Native American students representing over 60 tribes from throughout the United States (Chiefleschischools.org). Secondary school students of Chief Leschi are not currently exposed to any SEL program (Chief Leschi Administration, 2018). Washington state records more than sixty percent of indigenous native students drop out of school each year in the Pacific Northwest (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010). There are several reasons for this alarming number of dropouts in state including lack of student engagement, a perceived lack of empathy by teachers, irrelevant curriculum, and students feeling as though no one is asking their opinion (Mac Iver, 2009). In Washington state, indigenous students are feeling unwanted or pushed out of school (Swisher & Hoisch, 1992). This feeling of being unwanted can be attributed to poor quality of student-teacher relationship (Colodarci, 1993). In general, teachers are not acknowledging the traditional values and beliefs of students' culture which is paramount in the development of students being engaged and to stay in school (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010).

Indigenous (native Americans) students can experience significant SEL challenges as a direct result of their cultural and linguistic upbringing (Garner, Mahatmya, Brown, Vesely, 2014). Culturally and linguistically diverse students may have a hard time staying engaged in a learning culture in which they are unfamiliar and do not see themselves represented and as a result, students may not fully engage in the lessons being delivered (Castro-Olivio, et al, 2014). Castro-Olivio and Merrell (2012) refer to students who are having difficulty in adapting to this

unfamiliarity as experiencing acculturative stress. Acculturative stress according to Castro-Olivio and Merrell (2012) is part of a process where children from culturally diverse groups feel external pressure to conform to the dominant culture other than the one to which they have been oriented from birth. There is substantial historical evidence to support that acculturative stress has a negative impact on native students. For example, the establishment of “Mission schools” in the early 19th century to educate the indigenous children of the northwest has left a lasting negative impact on the native population (Suarez-Orozco, 2007).

The Forest Grove Indian School was introduced in the Pacific Northwest and was modeled after the Carlisle school in Pennsylvania (Collins, 2000). The main objective of this school was to assimilate native students by prohibiting their established cultural practices and language. This federal policy established the removal of native children from their families and place them in Forest Grove, it was administered by the government for the sole purpose of cultural eradication. The curriculum developed by the federal government which Forest Grove had to use was based on a military-style regimen, strict rules, and students were only allowed to speak English (Collins, 2000).

In light of the oppressive past and the subjugation that the northwest indigenous peoples endured, the community of learners at Chief Leschi schools are moving forward with a positive determination to reinstate cultural pride. In Chief Leschi’s school improvement plan (2018), the focus is to reintroduce and weave the traditional ways as the main cultural way within the campus and throughout the tribal community. For example, some traditional ways highlight a belief that, “all natural things are our brothers and sisters...they have things to teach us if we are aware and listen; we honor a person for what they have done for people...not for what they have

done for themselves; we have a proud heritage that continue to live and grow within us”(leschischools.org).

It is critical to focus on reinstating the cultural pathway because one third of all the Native-Americans residing in the Pacific Northwest are under eighteen (US Census, 2016), and children and youth are the key to the social and cultural survival of indigenous communities in the Pacific Northwest (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010). Failure to ensure these young people stay in school places the entire population at risk (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010).

Methods

Research Questions

Primary research questions for the current study include the following.

- (a) How does one develop a process to capture and incorporate student voice from an indigenous student population into a social emotional learning program to meet the cultural context of the students being served?
- (b) When student voice is incorporated into a social emotional learning program, and the program is implemented, to what extent are students engaged in the program?
- (c) How do students and teachers perceive the adapted social emotional learning program? Do they perceive it to be feasible, acceptable, effective, and relevant?
- (d) What are the associated outcomes of implementation of the culturally adapted Strong Teens program?

Participants

Ninth grade students of Chief Leschi middle school participated in the study. Ninth graders were applicable in this study for their more developed social, emotional, and cognitive developmental abilities as compared to elementary and middle school students. Also, ninth graders were the preferred grade level of our partner school. The counselor assisted in determining the grade classes for the case study. Students and their parents were notified of social emotional learning and invited to participate. Students were also informed of the study during their advisory class. All students in this ninth-grade class were given a consent form for parents to read and sign, giving permission for their child to be a participant. This study had forty-five students receiving the program.

Research Design

This study employed grounded theory as the methodology to conduct the research. Grounded theory is the method used to discover and develop a theoretical account of events that which can be grounded through empirical observational evidence (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). The purpose of the study was to develop a process to incorporate student voice into a social emotional program. Once approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) I convened a meeting with my partner school, Chief Leschi. I elicited the names of five ninth-grade student leaders so as to convene a student focus group. The names were provided by the school partner staff, and they were prompted to provide the names of students who represent the larger class and may have insights of the SEL related strengths and challenges within the school community. Some students were viewed as student leaders, others as resilient or overcoming challenges, or others as struggling or needing more SEL related support. They all had the ability

to express themselves verbally and function in a group setting. They also had parental consent and provided student assent, and they also participated in the Strong Teens program and in a second debriefing focus group following the completion of the program. The intent of the initial student focus group (pre-implementation) was to facilitate a conversation about the main SEL related challenges students face, their perceived SEL needs and goals and understand their SEL assets and resources. The intent of the second focus group (post-implementation) was to gather student feedback about their perception of the program, including cultural relevance and accountability. During both focus groups, I audio recorded and transcribe the discussion and identified themes. The student focus group questions were open-ended and used as a guide to facilitate a conversation that would generate as organic responses as possible. Questions for student focus group: (Cultural context) Tell me about you as a native youth, (SEL) When I say the term Social Emotional Learning (SEL) what comes to mind? (SEL) Tell me about what do you see as your emotional strength? (SEL) What is an emotional challenge for you? (Program + Culture) We are going to explore the lessons of Strong Teens, the SEL program we will be using here, and I need your help. I want for us to have a relaxed conversation. We will look at each lesson's theme, we will talk about it a little as it is in the book, then I want you to think about and talk to me about how do we make these themes relevant to you and your cultural experiences.

Once this focus group was completed and I had collected student voice, then I facilitated a meeting with the partner school to debrief the themes from the focus group and work with them to incorporate the themes into the SEL program (e.g. emotional expression, stress management, utilization of community resources, resilience). We also discussed logistical considerations for program implementation (e.g. scheduling) along with content and methodological considerations for implementation. The school staff was provided SEL professional development, so SEL is not

a new concept to them, however, I provided some professional development that is specific to Strong Teens prior to implementation. At the professional development meeting were the school specialist, two school counselors, three teachers, and two community elders. The partner school liaison was one of the school counselors. The SEL lessons were taught during ninth grade advisory.

All twelve lessons underwent a cultural adaptation using Bernal et al, (1995) ecological validity model during the professional development for implementation of SEL program. For example, we reviewed each of the twelve lessons as a team to make certain that the language does align with the ninth-grade native students of Chief Leschi. The first lesson deals with identifying emotions, and my language enhancement was to adapt identifying and expressing emotions by having students take an introspection and reflect and record ways in which they identified and expressed emotions in themselves and cultural norms including their roots as native youth who valued pride and resilience. It is important to note that the teachers as implementers were instructed to use language that guided this discourse rather than prompting a response. The objective was to have the students respond organically so that the study recorded their authentic voice and their thinking. The dimension of person referred to the individual delivering the SEL program. According to Bernal et al, (1995), this person must demonstrate cultural knowledge of the targeted audience. It is for this reason that the teachers facilitated the lessons because they were well versed and familiar with the cultural dynamics of the school's ninth graders.

Another dimension that this case study employed is the use of metaphors or examples. During the professional development, I explored with the school team all of the twelve lessons to

determine where we could incorporate native folklore and symbols as a way of infusing native culture into the SEL program. It was incumbent that the focus be sensitive to the values, customs and traditions of the native youth. I also focused on concepts particularly new to the native community to make these concepts relevant to the native youth. As Bernal et al, (1995) points out that the goals of program must be of value to the targeted audience. During professional development I always circled back to the goal as a way to make certain that this study was incorporating the values of the native youth as the ultimate goal. In the professional development for implementation, I looked to the students and team to guide me as to what is the best delivery method to reach ninth grade native youth and keep them engaged. In keeping with the rich cultural tradition that was a norm of practice on the campus, the planning of this program was always mindful of context and the participants' life circumstance.

The social emotional learning program selected for the use in my study was Merrell's Strong Teens as described previously. There were twelve lessons focused on targeted skills associated with resilience such as emotional awareness, emotional expression, problem solving, social understanding, stress and anger management, positive thinking, and goal setting. These skills promote healthy social emotional development to cope with challenging life experiences (Carrizales- Engelmann, Feuerborn, Gueldner, & Tran, 2016). Table 1 provides examples of Strong Teens lesson titles (original and adapted), skills promoted in the lesson, and an example of the ways the lessons were culturally adapted. It was important to point out that from the outset, the intent of this study was to establish a reciprocal partnership among the staff and students and myself. In the most organic way, this study intended to learn from this community through their cultural experience. The study presented the framework as a guide to our work but the specific recommendations and the way in which things were done, ultimately depended on

the students and the learning community as they shared their cultural experience. My role was to listen to these experiences and implemented them within the study's framework as a way to authentically record and demonstrate that their contributions had a genuine place in SEL.

Table 1. Strong Teens lessons and cultural adaptations

Lessons (L)	Skills of SEL program	Potential adaptation
Strong Native Roots (L1)	Overview of program, getting to know students, setting behavior expectations, introduction to mindfulness	Student involvement in expectations and goals; drum circles; mindfulness in indigenous communities.
Understanding Your Emotions (L2 and L3)	Improving students' emotional vocabulary and awareness and their ability to express emotions in constructive ways	Understanding cultural norms for emotional expression; ancestral emotional strength; native pride, resilience, and harmony with the natural world.
Understanding Other People's Emotions (L4)	Introduce students to the concept and practice of empathy	Discussing the power of community, village, team, the collective, exploring the native word for empathy.
Dealing with Anger (L5)	Demonstrating to students that everyone experiences anger	Culture and gender norm for the expression of anger; anger in response to oppression. The power of talking with elders to work through anger.
Clear Thinking (L6 and L7)	Having students recognize their thought pattern and how they contribute to moods, choices, and actions.	Refocusing the mind to see the power of being a part of a multicultural world; internalize oppression, societally influenced inner narrative, and societal expectations.

Solving People Problems (L8)	Promoting an awareness of useful strategies for resolving conflict	Cultural traditions for resolving conflict.
Letting Go of Stress (L9)	Using appropriate techniques to manage stress and promote resilience	Sources of stress such as oppression and racism, cultural traditions in managing stress.
Positive Living (L10)	Incorporating positive habits into day to day life	Discussing cultural ways such as creating harmony with the natural world and connecting to community.
Creating Strong and Smart Goals (L11)	Learning to set goals independently	Understanding the traditions; making a commitment to Chief Leschi cultural pathways.
Finishing up (L12)	Celebrating the positivity of the SEL concepts	Celebrating the tradition of milestones as markers of growth.

Measures

This study employed instruments that assessed both staff and students in areas of knowledge of SEL, a validity scale for both students and teachers, and a basic fidelity checklist.

Strong Teens Knowledge Test

The Strong Teens knowledge test was used to assess students' knowledge of SEL competencies pre and post program implementation. The test consists of twenty items in categories of true or false and multiple choice. Sample questions are "Why would you want to know how someone else is feeling?" "Emotions feel the same for everyone (True or False)."

“Which of the following is a helpful way to handle your emotions in class when your neighbor’s talking begins to annoy you? (a) Yell and tell him or her to stop, (b) Tell the teacher during class, (c) Stare at the person until he or she gets the idea, (d) Stop and breathe deeply. The internal consistency reliability ranges from the .50s to the mid.70s and improves when post knowledge of SEL competencies are administered.

Social Validity Scale

The social validity scale was a nine-item measure that was used to assess participating students’ satisfaction of the SEL program. The social validity implementation scales were used in the Castro-Olivo studies (2012;2014). The questionnaire used a Likert scale (1= strongly agree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, and 6=strongly agree). The last item was a qualitative item seeking students’ input by asking students how can the culturally incorporated SEL program be improved. The social validity teacher report was used to determine perceived acceptability, satisfaction, and feasibility of the SEL program for the facilitator. The questionnaire was designed on a six-point Likert scale (1= strongly agree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, and 6=strongly agree). Permission for the use of both tools were obtained.

Basic Fidelity checklist

The Strong Teens Basic Fidelity Checklist was completed by the teacher during the delivery of each of the twelve lessons. For each section the teacher checked a box to verify that the concept within the lesson was delivered. Once all concepts of the lesson were delivered, the teacher wrote a final check in that box. In addition, the instrument provided an area for the

teacher to write notes about the lesson itself, the delivery of the lesson or just classroom lesson observations in general. Each section of the lesson determined a numeric value which allowed for a statistical analysis to be performed on the instrument at the end of all twelve lessons.

Procedure

I conducted a half-day workshop of professional development so that staff heard what my study was about and what was my focus as it relates to student voice as part of SEL. During the professional development, staff was introduced to Bernal's ecological validity model (EVM) (Bernal et al., 1995) as the conceptual framework that guided the work in creating the process for infusing cultural adaptation into the SEL program. The model was introduced as such, a framework onto which staff, community elders and I worked in reviewing all twelve lessons to determine what cultural experience (student voice) would be applicable to deliver a particular concept of any lesson.

Staff and Community Elders Round Table

After the morning of professional development, the rest of our time together focused on a conversation from questions I posed centered around culture and SEL. The questions were designed to be open ended to facilitate ease of conversation as well as to capture cultural themes that emanated from the discourse. The questions were formulated into two categories, one in a cultural context so that staff could develop responses with native culture in mind and the other category with SEL as the focus to decipher their prior knowledge in this area.

Student Round Table

This student round table was designed to listen to students during a pre-program implementation. The objective was to introduce my study and hear students as they shared about what they knew of SEL and in the process tell me about their native cultural experiences and how those experiences (student voice) could be incorporated in the delivery of SEL lessons to secondary students at the Chief Leschi campus. Five students were selected in conjunction with their classroom teacher and the school counselor to have a group conversation prior to program implementation. Questions were similar in design to the question asked of the staff, focusing on cultural context as well as SEL. Questions for student focus group were (Cultural context) Tell me about you as a native youth, (SEL) When I say the term Social Emotional Learning (SEL) what comes to mind? (SEL) Tell me about what do you see as your emotional strength? (SEL) What is an emotional challenge for you? (Program + Culture).

Classroom Observations

Three observations were performed by me as observer to determine how the program was being implemented and delivered. I also wanted to observe students' participation and overall involvement with the program. As the classroom observer, it was also important for me to capture the discourse among the students and teacher. The first course of implementation was for students to take the Strong Teens Knowledge test. This instrument is part of the program and was provided to students in two phases. First as a pre-assessment to determine prior knowledge. This same assessment was provided to students at the end of the program as a post-assessment to determine if there was a difference in students' score at the completion of the lessons.

Staff and Community Elders Post-Program Round Table

The first post conversation was conducted with all of the staff and community elders who participated in the staff and community elders pre-program conversation. The data derived from this conversation was compared with the pre-program data to determine themes and to listen about the adults' experiences with the program.

Student Post-Program Round Table

A post-program conversation was also conducted with the five students with whom I had the pre-program conversation. The purpose of this conversation was to hear from students first-hand about their experiences in the program. Questions posed to students during this post-program conversation were, now that you have experienced SEL lessons, what are your thoughts? What did you learn about your own emotions? How would these lessons help you going forward? Is there anything else you discovered while in the SEL program? The conversation was collected, transcribed, and data were coded for themes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

Although my study focused on the process of cultural adaptation into the SEL program, it was also important to determine what associated outcomes were derived from the program implementation. Strong Teens Knowledge test data was analyzed to assess students' knowledge pre- program implementation compared to post-program implementation. The validity scale was another measure that was analyzed to determine students' and teacher reception to the program. The students' outcome towards this measure showed positive receptivity indicated by the scores that students attributed to each item on the scale. Teachers did report some positivity but illustrated a cautionary script in the attribution of the assigned scores. When asked about their scoring, teachers noted that time was a factor since they would have liked to have more time for program delivery.

The data obtained through the Strong Teens knowledge test, the validity scale, and the basic fidelity checklist were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This statistical program was also used to determine descriptive statistics including mean (*M*), standard deviation (*SD*), confidence interval (*CI*), and percentages (%). In order to account for missing responses for an item, the mean substitution was employed.

Qualitative

Grounded theory (Glaser, 1992) was most applicable for all qualitative data gathered because it allowed for the creation of open codes that built from the data rather than applying a pre-determined theory. All categories and themes were determined by a process through which

any link made must be grounded in the evidence of the original data collected (Saldana, 2015). An important component to the grounded theory process is the system by which the data is coded (Holloway & Todres, 2003). Coding is the process by which the data is analyzed for themes or categories (Glaser, 1967).

Both staff pre and post program implementation round table conversations were recorded and transcribed to determine what was being said by staff and community elders in our pre-conversation compared to the post round table conversation. Once the conversations were transcribed, they were analyzed and then coded for themes. In much the same way, both students' pre and post round table conversations were recorded and transcribed. Class observations, discussions were transcribed and coded for themes as well.

This study used a two-tier system for coding to identify patterns in the data that eventually led to themes. Themes originated from within the data and identified what a unit of data may mean (Saldana, 2015). After all recordings were transcribed, I went through line by line just to get a sense of the stories and the ideas that were coming through. The next phase of the process was to code for big idea themes that were coming through. This was done through a series of first order coding just building themes as I read. Then I identified codes that I could merge together to create overarching higher order codes or themes. These overarching codes were the ones used to build the final themes. These themes were used to weave the story to help explain the process and findings in current study.

Table 2. Classroom Observations Notes

Classroom Observations	Observation Notes
Class 1: First Observation	Students are not interested. Based on observations of students talking among themselves, on their phones and in a general sense complacent. Two students have heads down appear to be asleep. This observation concludes that students' lack of interest is due to classroom management because no rules for engagement is established. Teacher makes no effort to call the class to order. Gives no directive to students to put away distractions and focus. Teacher never calls the class to order.
Class 1: Second Observation	Classroom management- same classroom from 1 st observation. Classroom management is on point. Students are attentive and ready to be engaged. Good classroom management. Teacher is prepared and has lesson sequence in order with a good pacing. Students are engaged. Answering the question as posed by the teacher. Other students are engaged in discourse and participating. Cultural Adaptation. Student makes the connection with explanation of native culture and what that experience is like compared to what is seen in the SEL picture. Putting Native attributes within SEL competencies.
Class 2: First Observation	Students were all over the place within the classroom. The teacher seems to be now putting the lesson together. The lesson did not have structure. There was no anticipatory set, no teacher student engagement, no closure to the lesson.

Quantitative Results

The purpose of the study was to develop a process to capture and incorporate student voice from an indigenous student population into a social emotional learning program to meet the cultural context of the students being served. I also wanted to determine to what extent were students engaged in the program. It was also important for me to know how students and teachers perceived the adapted social emotional learning program and what were some associated outcomes.

Strong Teens Knowledge Test

To assess students SEL knowledge gained after program implementation, I used a paired t-test. This test is most applicable as it facilitates a comparison using the program as the intervention before and after.

Table 3. Paired Sample t-Test performed for Strong Teens Knowledge Test. Pre and Post.

Class	Mean	t	df	P*	95% CI
Class 1	1.267	3.537	14	0.00015	(2.035-3.537)
Class 2	2.933	4.073	14	0.0005	(4.478-4.073)
Class 3	2.582	4.000	14	4.000	(4.097-4.000)

**indicates statistical significance*

There is significant evidence that social-emotional knowledge test score increased after the program was implemented ($p = 0.0015$). On average, the social-emotional knowledge test score after the program was 1.267 (95% CI: 0.499, 2.035) units higher than the social-emotional knowledge test score before the intervention.

Fidelity Checklist

Table 3 measures fidelity of SEL program implementation. This instrument was recorded by two teachers indicating levels of implementation for all twelve lessons.

Table 4. Fidelity Checklist

Class 1		Class 2	
Program Lessons	Levels of Implementation	Program Lessons	Levels of Implementation
1	100%	1	100%
2	77%	2	88%
3	55%	3	100%
4	77%	4	88%
5	77%	5	77%
6	100%	6	100%
7	77%	7	55%
8	77%	8	66%
9	66%	9	0%
10	100%	10	0%
11	77%	11	0%
12	77%	12	0%
Total lessons fully completed		Total lessons fully completed	
3		3	

Participating teachers reported that 25% of the lessons were implemented fully. This low level of implementation was reportedly due to limited time for both the individual lesson delivery and in the duration for all of the lessons in the program.

Social Validity Scale

The Social Validity Scale was used to assess teacher and students' perceptions of the program. Table 4 illustrates students' perceptions of the program. Results delineated below represents responses tabulated from all students across all classes. The mean (M) listed in table 4 are average responses from a six-point Likert scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

Table 5. Social Validity Scale

Statement	Percentage Endorsed	M
1.I liked program this program.	70%	4.9
2.I found skills useful.	70%	5.2
3.I am likely to use skills that were taught.	80%	5.2
4. I would recommend this program to others.	80%	5.2
5.I liked the way the class was taught.	80%	5.7
6. This program taught important skills to my peers.	70%	5.1
7. I have noticed a change in my, and my peers' behavior since we started this program.	70%	4.7%
8. I feel the skills taught in this program have taught me how to do better in my schoolwork.	80%	4.9
9.The skills taught in this program have helped me cope with challenges in my life.	80%	5.2
10.This program was targeted to students like me.	60%	4.4

The majority of students reported that they liked the program and indicated that the program provided skills that they would use. Most students (80%), reported that they were now able to cope with challenges and would recommend the program to others.

Qualitative Results

Table 6 captures students' narratives which were derived from a round table conversation that occurred prior to the program implementation. With the students' data it was very evident that they became more knowledgeable post program implementation. Students were using the SEL terminologies and articulating a scope of understanding that suggested that the lessons were meaningful to the students themselves.

Table 6. Student group themes, description of themes, and proportion of students discussing the themes

Themes	Description	Pre-Program Interview	Post-Program Interview
Social Dependence	The importance of communal lifestyle where there a social dependence on each other without recognizing as young people that reliance on each other and how significance that dependence is. Students speak openly of their family dynamics because they know that in this space there are other students who are also going through similar experiences and can relate. Students understand their native identity one to another. They may not readily be thinking about the struggles that their fore parents went through, but they recognize that they are all native people.	80%	100%
Realities of secondary school	Student speaks openly about the realities of high school		

	e.g., students vaping and other sorts of negative behavior.		
Juxtaposition of student life	Student reports that she is from a two parents' household and does not vape or use drugs or disrespects her elders. Student is finding it hard to fit in because the student does not portray those negative behaviors. Student has friends who are involved in this negative behavior, wants to keep them as friends and at the same time recognizes right from wrong.	40%	60%
SEL: A self-management tool and its importance	Student recognizes the importance of SEL and how it can help the students. Student sees SEL as important to their wellbeing as they mature. SEL provides me with coping skills. How to get along with people and manage my emotion. Based on what is going on at school right now-vaping, drugs and other negative vibes. SEL would help. Students are paying attention to what is going on. Students are aware.		100%
Adaptation	Finding ways to keep friends who are involved in negative behavior and still keep their friendship. SEL will give the tools to handle this situation.	40%	80%
Timing	SEL program implementation.		100%

	<p>If the SEL program started earlier and not at the end of the school year, it would have provided opportunities for me to practice what I learned from the lessons in class.</p>		
SEL and the Native way	<p>Cultural Adaptation Students' impression is that there would be more students' participation if some of the lessons were about Native people.</p>	60%	80%
The Art of Introspection	<p>Through SEL Student is able to make connection of Kinder class to SEL.</p>		100%
New learning for SEL	<p>Putting into practice skills what I learned from the competencies: Self-awareness, social-awareness, responsible decision making, self-management, and relationship skills. It's not about me and how I react to things but how to manage those emotions through SEL.</p>		100%

Table 7. Staff and Community Elders pre and post interviews: themes, description of themes, and proportion of participants discussing the themes.

Themes	Description and Codes	Pre-Program Interview	Post-Program Interview
Disconnect	Disconnect refers to statements indicating a lack of continuance in SEL instruction across the grades. Staff is voicing this because there is no SEL after 3rd grade, they are seeing first-hand what that Gap of no SEL instruction is doing. By the time students get to the 9 th grade, they do not have the skill set to manage emotion. More so, since students have not been practicing nor exposed to SEL program beyond 3 rd grade they have no reference point to go back to on managing emotions.	60%	100%
Historical Significance of Native Culture	Historical significance of Native Culture. Staff points out that students have no idea of their cultural significance and their history to have come to this place in time. Staff worry about that because they are the future and since they have no idea now, staff cannot see how the students are able to make the connection between the elders' contribution and the contribution of their future legacy to the body of their ancestral work.	20%	60%
Trust	Trust. Staff points that there is a trust factor that emanates from the researcher. The staff points out that the researcher comes with a passion and a sense of genuineness to want to learn about native culture and their contribution. The staff makes comparison to other researcher and gets a negative vibe of folks who have come to get what they can to create name recognition for themselves with no regard to persons from where the information comes from. Acknowledgement of the researcher's respect to the community.	60%	100%

Embracing the Native community	Teachers embrace the native community will lead to a genuineness and openness to the students. Students become judge of teacher character with the idea of if you are staying then teachers are making an investment in me. This investment will serve as a bridge to between SEL and the awareness of Native cultural significance.	60%	100%
Timing	If the SEL program started earlier and not at the end of the school year, it would have provided opportunities for me to practice what I learned from the lessons in class.	80%	80%

The themes that materialized were disconnect, historical significance of native culture, trust, embracing the native community, and timing. Disconnect was identified because staff highlighted that kindergarten to third grade has a SEL program and fourth through twelve do not. Teachers understand this disconnect with ninth grade currently having no SEL program. This theme of disconnect permeates the discourse because staff were connecting the dots by saying that there is a foundation of SEL for the primary level students. The problem as they saw it was that by the time the students move up from the third grade where the primary level SEL program ended, students were disengaged from managing their emotions. By the time the student began ninth grade, the social emotional skills set that was introduced at the primary level has been long been diminished and there is no program at present to fill that gap.

The theme of historical significance of native culture was highlighted because staff felt as though students had no idea of the significance of the impact of their culture and history as part of the foundation of the northwest. Staff felt that students do not understand the contribution of the elders to their present existence. The theme of trust was recognized as a focus on the

researcher. They voiced that for the first time in a long time that a researcher was present with them in their community wanting to learn from them rather than just taking and then recreating whatever that was collected as their own without acknowledging the source; that of the native people.

Embracing the native community was a theme that illustrated teacher support towards students. Staff pointed out that teachers who did not have a vested interest in native students became complacent very easy to the point of getting another job rather than mold and nurture the students within their care. The last theme of timing centered around not having enough time to observe the outcome of the SEL program.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to develop a process to capture and incorporate student voice from an indigenous student population into a social emotional learning program to meet the cultural context of the students being served. In addition, this study evaluated the effects of incorporating native American cultural experiences (student voice) among secondary school students in the areas of SEL knowledge, and perceptions of the program. The results indicated that the process of adapting native American cultural experience into a SEL program was effective. Students were able to verbally demonstrate using pre and post program recorded conversations as data to illustrate effectiveness of knowledge of SEL. The study also measured high levels of social validity among students.

The current study illustrated that student voice is an integral component in the implantation of any SEL program. Students' cultural experience is of paramount importance in this regard because since SEL teaches one the ability to manage their own emotion, it is critical

that their individual cultural experience are brought to bare as a way of understanding who the individual is and more importantly what culturally experiences they are bringing to the discourse.

The highlight of the study does illustrate a need for SEL among native students demonstrating the importance of their experience and how that can be incorporated into their learning of managing emotions. All of the data support the positive impact of SEL on native youth. The process of infusing cultural experiences (student voice) as an integral component was successful because it offered a process with the EVM as a guided model as to how the process can be effective. In reviewing the data, specifically looking at the process of incorporating culture adaptation into SEL, it proved successful. Teachers had an established process to guide them all the way through. In addition, hearing the contribution of students as they highlight their cultural experience during the classroom discourse creating meaning for implementation.

This current study was designed using the ELL study of Castro-Olivo (2014) as a model and a road map from which to develop a cultural lens in working with native American youth to build a culturally adaptive process within a SEL program. SEL is an essential tool for students who need to understand how to manage emotions (Merrell, 2010). The effectiveness of the program in providing the skill set needed to manage emotion became evident as students were able to demonstrate and use the language of program to articulate a point of view for the importance of being able to manage emotions using some established skills and tools to do so. Students were able to illustrate their levels of participation in program by showing the ability through discourse how tools can be applied as a result as having gone through the program. For example, in my second classroom visit to the same classroom and listen to the student elaborate on a point of view when asked to defend his position. The student was able to refer to what he found culturally lacking in the scenario that the teacher had put up for discourse. The student

referenced the fact that the spiritual element was lacking in the scenario as presented. The student spoke of the importance of the spiritual cultural awareness that is crucial when dealing with another person. The fact that one has to see the individual with whom you are having this interaction as yourself so as the tenets of the relationship materialize, treating that individual more than an equal is critical. As a matter of interpretation, one has to view the individual and self as one and the same so that whatever you desire for yourself has to be the same you desire for the other person. The comparison of a pre and post program conversation made this very clear. Students were able to demonstrate their SEL knowledge by using the verbiage introduced from the lessons. These were the same students who at the first-round table conversation when asked the question, what did they know about SEL, they could not really say. Merrell (2010) asserts that when statistical evidence produces significant result, that demonstrates in and of itself that teaching this program to general education students yields substantial benefits. That is to say, students do not need to be clinically diagnosed to benefit from the lessons of this program. This is further supported in the case of the students of Chief Leschi because students in the study were all from the general education population within the school.

Using Bernal's ecological validity model (EVM) (Bernal et al, 1995) as the cultural adaptive framework for this study, proved to be helpful because the study introduced an established framework to the staff from which the process of cultural adaption was centered. During the professional development, staff and community elders were able to review the model and then look at the program lessons and determine how to infuse some aspect of native culture within the lesson so as to engage students. Keep in mind that this study centered on building a process for cultural adaptation inside a SEL program. The results of the social validity scale are indicative of the process to implement the cultural elements within the program as successful

from the perspectives of the students and implementers. The results of the social validity scale affirm that students were satisfied that the process to infuse native culture as part of a SEL program allowed them to recognize the significance of their cultural experiences as it relates to social and emotional health and well-being.

Limitations and Implications for future research

One of the major limitations was the researcher's ability to measure the overall effectiveness of this program of SEL-related outcomes. SEL programs have proven their effectiveness in facilitating tools for students to use to manage their emotions (Durlak et al., 2008). Apart from Castro-Olivo (2012) ELL study, there has not been any other study to date studying the impact of SEL programs on any one specific ethnic student population. This study introduced a SEL program to a specific student group for the purpose of creating a process for cultural adaptation (student voice) with a SEL program. Future researchers should repeat this process but also measure SEL skills, such as resilience, in addition to SEL knowledge.

Both staff and students suggested that limited time adversely affected the study, both in the process to implement a culturally adaptive model as well as to implement the SEL program. Future researchers should allocate sufficient time for students to have a greater opportunity to practice the knowledge and skills gained from the SEL program. In so doing, implementers would also have a better chance to measure outcomes beyond knowledge including resilience and impact on school overall emotional wellbeing. This is a legitimate limitation that is supported by Castro-Olivo and Merrell (2012) because they assert that in their study, students were not able to speak about program impact for their study over an eight-month duration. Another limitation was the lack of an experimental design that includes a control group with randomized assignment across treatment and controls. Future researchers, for instance, could

establish a group of students where the program was culturally adapted and compare that to another group that would have implemented the program without cultural adaptation.

This study does suggest that the process for cultural adaptation of a SEL program is achievable. Based on the social validity scale score, there is evidence that students liked the program, albeit more has to be done to measure its impact. Last, going forward, I would also recommend a systematic implementation at the secondary school level with a focus on studying the impact on the program over an extended duration.

Conclusion

SEL programs that are specifically designed to provide students the tools and the skill set to manage emotions can only serve develop individuals who know the importance of mental health and well-being and have the skills to be able to cope with the daily stresses of life (Blanco-Vega et al., 2008). Largely, SEL programs in the U.S. have been introduced within the dominant (white) culture. However, there needs to be a focus on the impact of SEL intervention among native American secondary school students. Many Native students are of the mindset that the teachers do not care about them (MacIver, 2009). Sadly, this is noted in the current study in which students stated that no one believes in them. We can imagine for a moment the trauma on the psyche of a young person having to internalize that message on a daily basis, especially if they do not have SEL skill set to manage the emotions that may emanate from carrying around that narrative. This is but one of many reasons for a SEL program at the secondary school level for native youth. The current study illustrates the process to adapt a cultural perspective within a SEL program is doable and has promise to create a positive impact. Teachers, particularly while they are still in school acquiring the knowledge to become teachers must be trained with a cultural adaptive framework to reach each student they come in contact with as they prepare to

teach SEL. In order to effectively teach SEL, one has to understand the culture of the students they serve and have the ability and the skill set to reach that student. Unlike numeracy or literacy, SEL instructs students in managing emotions. An SEL program cannot be implemented with the idea of one size fits all. In dealing with human emotions, it is crucial to consider a student cultural experience (student voice) so that a program can be tailored to meet the emotional needs of that individual student and at the same time being fully aware of their cultural dynamics.

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