

Applying Social Cognitive Domain Theory for Moral Education: Impact on Student Moral Reasoning and Concepts of Social Convention

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Developmental Assessment Format

Situation I.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, England had not recognized the United States as a country. This meant that there was no way to exchange ambassadors, or establish trade agreements between England and the USA. So, King George of England sent a letter to President George Washington to get the negotiation process started. However, he addressed his letter to "Mr. George Washington" instead of to "President George Washington." When Washington received the letter he sent it back unopened because it was not addressed to him as President.

Questions:

- 1. Was George Washington right or wrong to send the letter back unopened because it was addressed to Mr. George Washington instead of to President Washington?

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

- George Washington was WRONG to send the letter back.
- George Washington was RIGHT to send the letter back.

Please explain why:

- 2. Why do you think George Washington returned the letter without opening it?

- 3. Does the way that the letter is addressed have anything to do with having England recognize the United States as a country? Please explain your answer:

Situation II.

Brandon would like to be able to go to a movie with his friends, but he doesn't have the money that it costs to get in. Later that day, he is riding on a bus when he notices that the woman in front of him has dropped a \$10 bill on the floor while putting some change back into her purse. There is no one else on the bus, so Brandon can either let the lady know that she dropped the money, or Brandon can pick it up and keep the \$10 for himself.

Questions:

- 1. Would it be wrong, or all right for Brandon to keep the money?

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

- It would be WRONG for Brandon to keep the money.
- It would be ALL RIGHT for Brandon to keep the money.

Please explain why: _____

- 2. Suppose Brandon decides to keep the money. Does he have the right to keep the money if he wants to?

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

- Brandon HAS A RIGHT to keep the money if he wants to.
- Brandon DOES NOT HAVE A RIGHT to keep the money if he wants to.

Please explain why or why not:

Developmental Assessments

Initial Assessments

October 2013

163

44

66

53

Second Assessments

June 2014

Total N

254

8th Grade

76

7th Grade

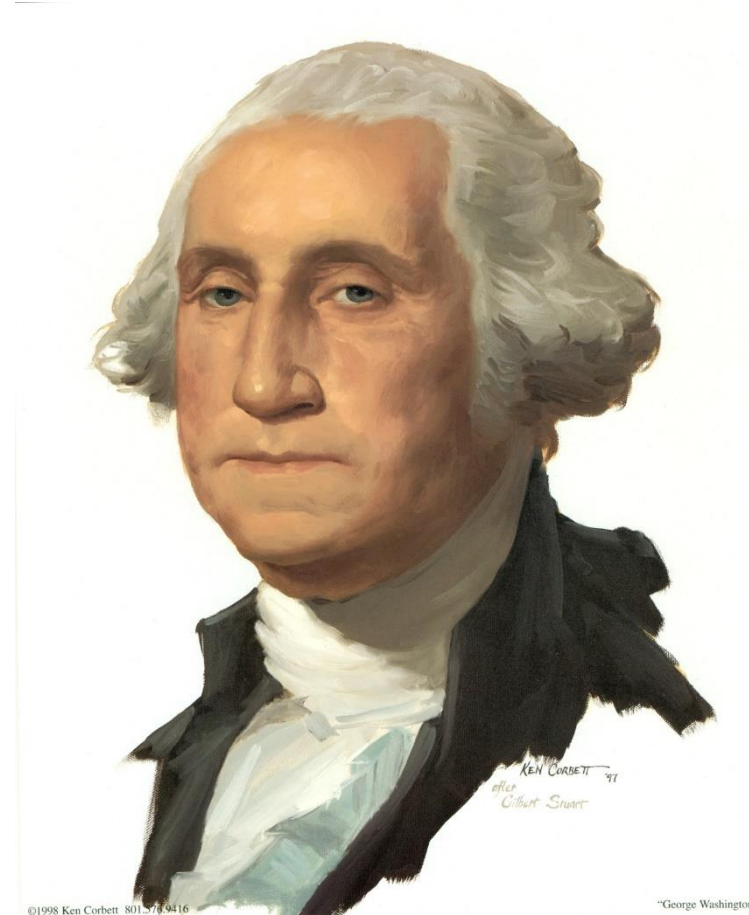
95

6th Grade

83

Social Convention

- At the end of the Revolutionary war, England had not recognized the United States as a country. This meant that there was no way to exchange ambassadors, or to establish agreements between England and the USA. So, King George of England sent a letter to President George Washington to get the negotiation process started. However, he addressed the letter to, "Mr. George Washington" instead of to "President George Washington." When Washington received the letter, he sent it back unopened because it was not addressed to him as President.



Level I: Conventions from Authority Provide Social Order

- Concrete understanding that conventional rules maintain order (e.g., prevent people from running in the halls). Top-down conception of social authority and rules. People in charge make rules that preserve order. **No understanding of individual conventions as elements within a system of norms and rules.**

Level 1

- Was George Washington right or wrong to send the letter back unopened because it was addressed to Mr. George Washington instead of to President Washington?

I think it was right because it wasn't really sent to him. He is the president and if he wants to be title (sic) that then that's the way he should be addressed.

- Why do you think George Washington returned the letter without opening it?

I think because it wasn't addressed to him as a president. It was just addressed to him like he was any other person.

- Does the way that the letter is addressed have anything to do with having England recognize the United States as a country? Please explain your answer:

I don't think that it does because it's just the president not the whole US. They shouldn't have anything to do with that.

Level 2: Negation of convention as part of rule system

- Conventions are now seen as arbitrary and changeable. Evaluation of a given convention is coordinated with evaluation of the act.
- Conventions are “nothing but” the social expectations and dictates of authority.

Level 2

- Was George Washington right or wrong to send the letter back unopened because it was addressed to Mr. George Washington instead of to President Washington?

I think George Washington was wrong for not opening the letter. I think George Washington exagurated (sic) for a dumb thing. King George was just trying to be polite.

- Why do you think George Washington returned the letter without opening it?

George Washington didn't opened (sic) the letter because he wanted to be recognized as the president of the United States

- Does the way that the letter is addressed have anything to do with having England recognize the United States as a country? Please explain your answer:

I don't know.

Level 3: Convention as mediated by social system

- The emergence of systematic concepts of social structure. Convention as normative regulation in systems with uniformity, fixed roles, and static organization. **Understanding of individual conventions as constituent elements of a social system.**

Level 3

- Was George Washington right or wrong to send the letter back unopened because it was addressed to Mr. George Washington instead of to President Washington?

George Washington was right to send the letter back. If England wasn't considering the US a country, then not using president as a title was like purposefully insulting Washington. If they were trying to trade then Britain doesn't need to start things off by being rude.

- Why do you think George Washington returned the letter without opening it?

Washington returned the letter without opening it because he felt disrespected when he was called Mr. nor President. He thought England was trying to insult him and his country.

- Does the way that the letter is addressed have anything to do with having England recognize the United States as a country? Please explain your answer:

The way the letter is addressed shows that England didn't think of the US as a country because without a leader, they weren't a country. So England wouldn't recognize President George Washington as President.

Morality

- Brandon would like to be able to go to a baseball game with his friends, but he doesn't have the money that it costs to get in. Later that day, he is riding on a bus when he notices that the man in front of him has dropped a \$10 bill on the floor while getting the bus fare out of his wallet. There is no one else on the bus, so Brandon can either let the man know that he dropped the money, or Brandon can pick it up and keep the \$10 for himself.



Age Related Changes in Moral Reasoning (Nucci & Turiel, 2009; Nucci, 2014)

- **Level 1:** Simple/Straight Forward - straight-forward evaluation of right/wrong based on salient moral elements
- **Level 2:** Uncoordinated/conflicted - appreciation of moral ambiguity; unable to resolve or coordinate moral and non-moral concerns
- **Level 3:** Coordinated - consideration and weighing of moral and non-moral aspects with resolution

Level 1

- **Would it be wrong, or all right for Brandon to keep the money?**
- It would be wrong. If he pick it up and keeping the money that means that he is taking stuff from other people so it's like stealing. (6th)

- **Suppose Brandon decides to keep the money. Does he have the right to keep the money if he wants to?**
- I think he does not have the right to take the money because it's not his. (6th)

Level 2

- **Would it be wrong, or all right for Brandon to keep the money?**

It would be alright because it's finders keepers losers weepers and that lady probably has a job and you can also probably find money on the street and keep it too. (7th)

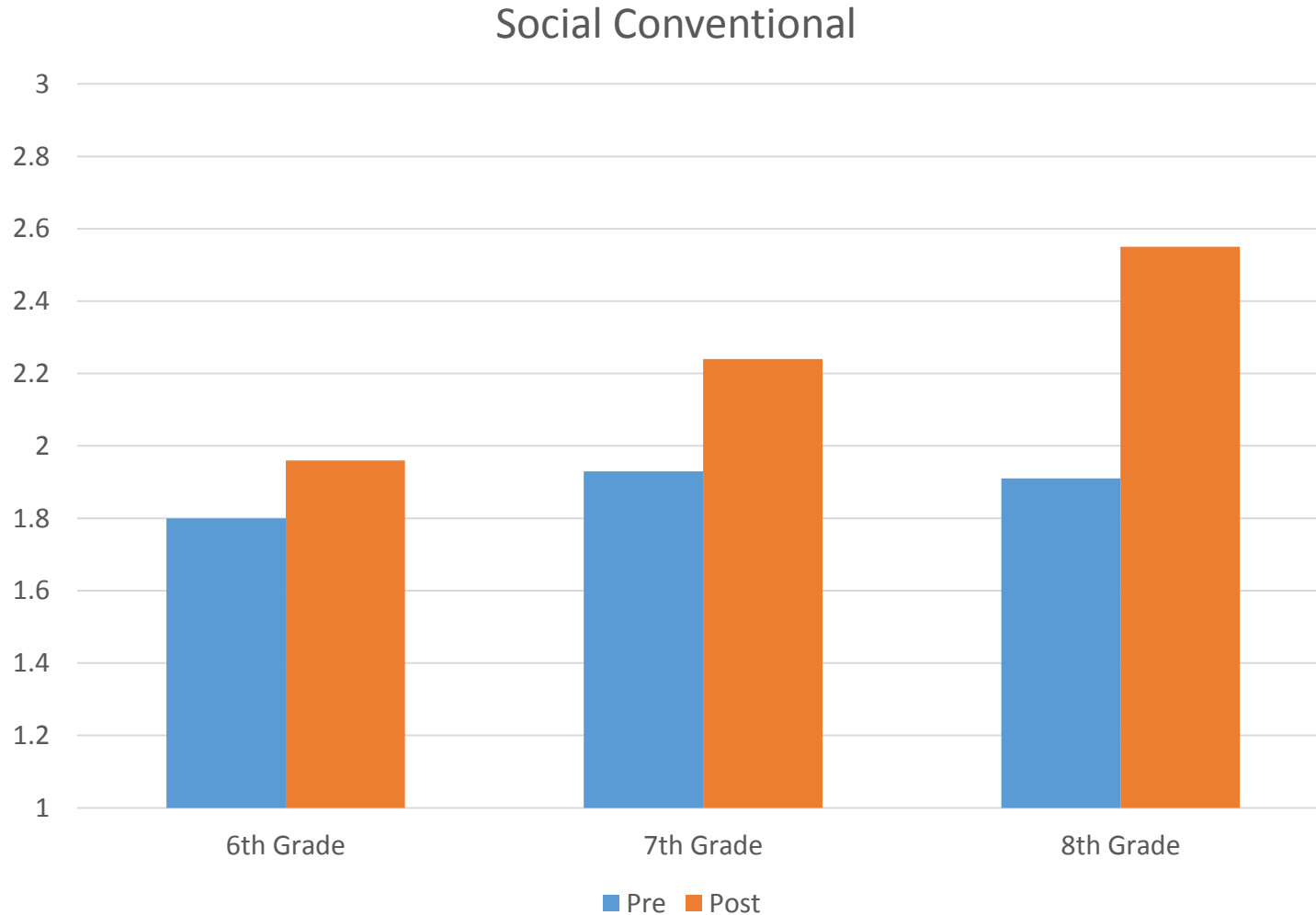
- **Suppose Brandon decides to keep the money. Does he have the right to keep the money if he wants to?**

However wrong it seems for Brandon to keep the money, he has the right to. It is the same thing as finding \$10 on the bus with nobody else around. Lost money is up for grabs. He has the right to keep it because that person dropped and it's a free country. He has a right because it didn't said it was the property of the lady, it just said the property of the United States, and he is an American. (7th)

Level 3

- **Would it be wrong, or all right for Brandon to keep the money?**
 - It would be wrong for Brandon to keep the money. It's unjust if Brandon got the money because he didn't earn it and doesn't belong to him. **(8th)**
- **Suppose Brandon decides to keep the money. Does he have the right to keep the money if he wants to?**
 - I believe that he shouldn't be able to keep it because he doesn't deserve it and didn't earn it. Now, if he just found money on the bus and didn't see the man drop it it's OK to keep it because he couldn't have returned it to anyone. **(8th)**
 - Brandon has not earned the money and even if the man dropped the money it does not mean that it has stopped being the man's because there is a possibility he can get it back. Brandon does not deserve that money and it is not his right to keep because he could return the man's money which is his, the man's. **(8th)**

Student Outcomes: Participating Pre v. Post Social Convention



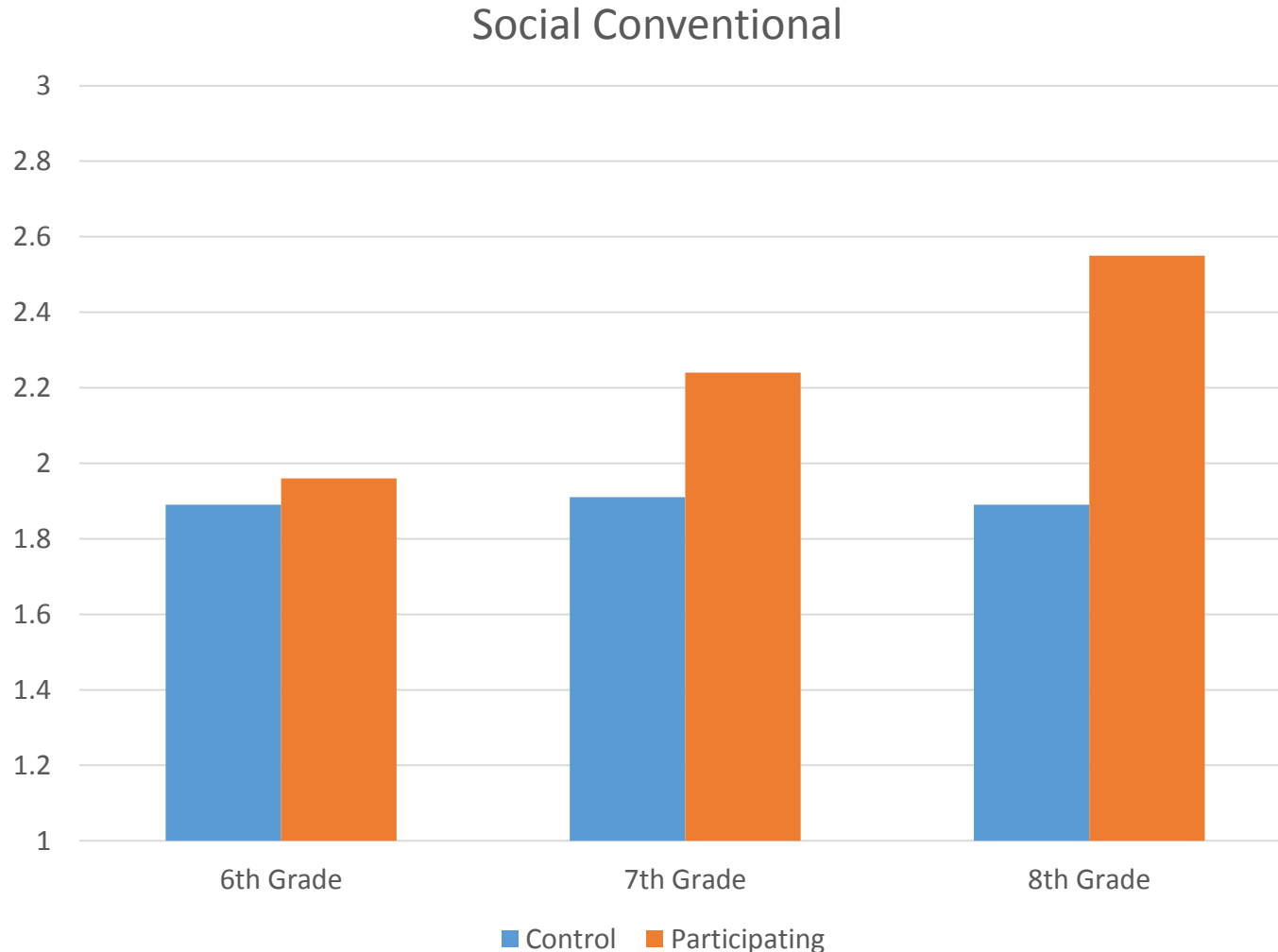
Social Conventional:

6th: n/s

7th: $t = 2.14$ ($p = .01$)

8th: $t = 3.77$ ($p < .0003$)

Student Outcomes: Participating v. Control Social Convention



Social Conventional:

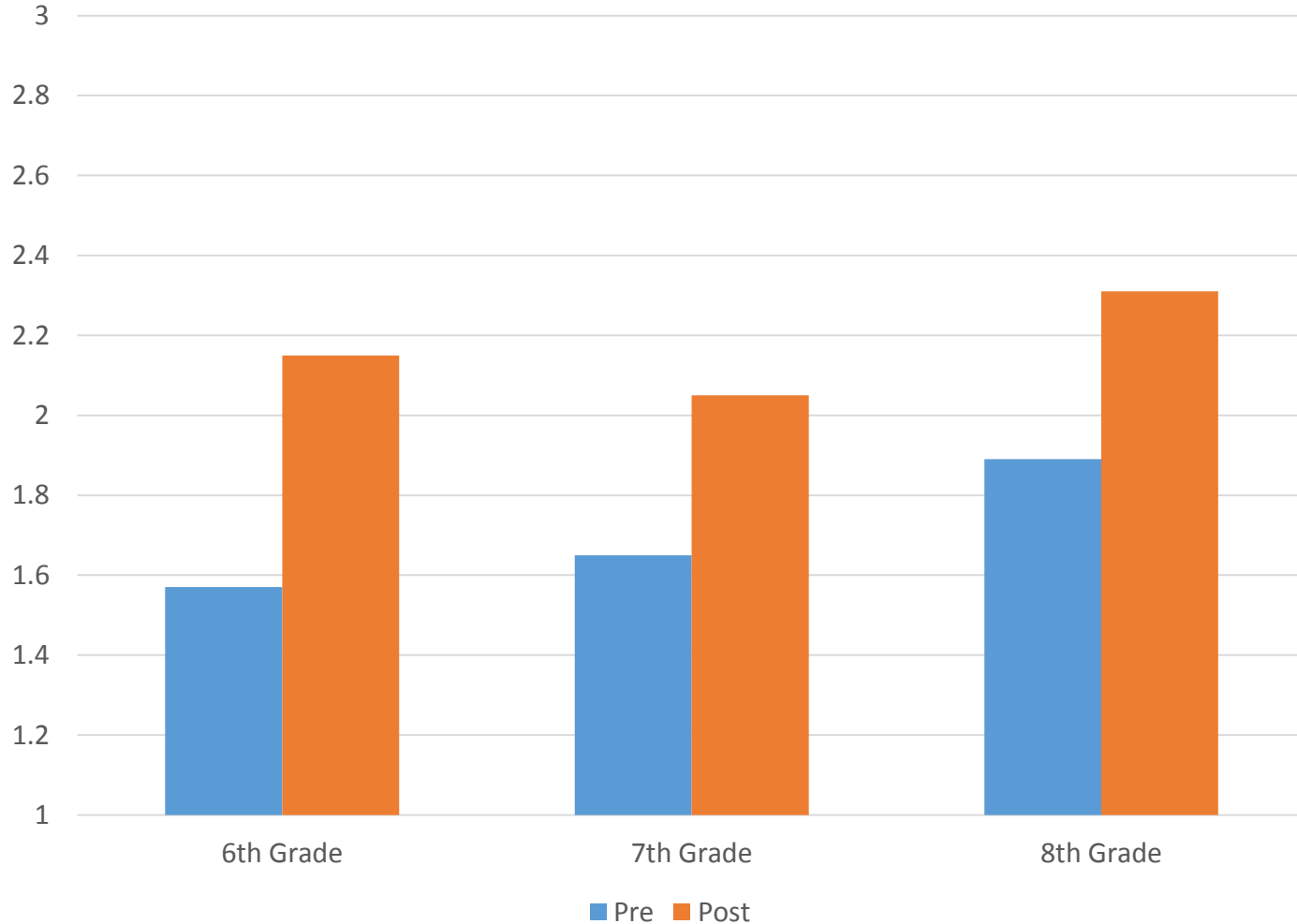
6th: n/s

7th $t=1.95$ ($p=.02$)

8th $t= 2.7$ ($p=.004$)

Student Outcomes: Participating Pre v. Post Moral

Moral



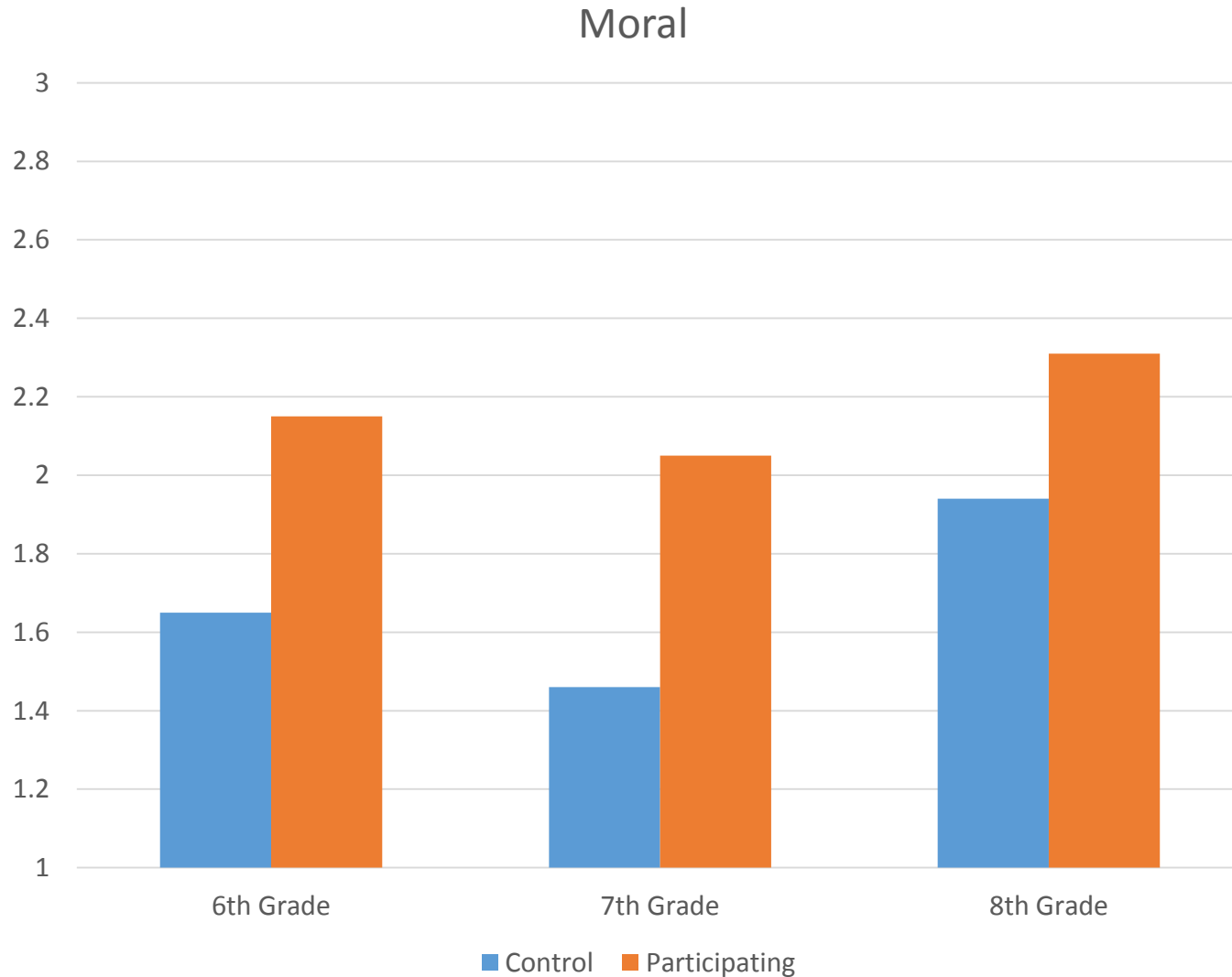
Moral:

6th: $t = 4.34$ ($p < .0001$)

7th: $t = 3.37$ ($p = .0007$)

8th: $t = 2.99$ ($p = .003$)

Student Outcomes: Participating v. Control Moral



Moral:

6th: $t= 1.85$ ($p=.03$)

7th: $t=2.59$ ($p=.005$)

8th: $t= 2.55$ ($p=.006$)

Overlap Scenario: Morality and Convention

- A university in a major city in the Midwest recently received money from the government to provide scholarships for students of Gypsy (Roma) heritage. In addition, the government required that scholarships be available for women as well as men. When the King of the Gypsies learned about this, he refused to accept the scholarships. In a newspaper interview, he said that in Gypsy society only men should receive higher education, and that within Gypsy culture a woman's role is with the family.



Type 1: Subordination to a single domain. Evaluation of the situation by attending to the salience of issues in a single domain and subsequently offering a solution that addressed this same domain.

- **Moral**

Student 1. “The gypsy king was wrong because women have the right to go to college also.

Student 1a. He could resolve by accepting the offer” **(6th grade)**

Student 2. “The gypsy king was wrong. Women should have equal rights.

Student 2a. Let them go to college” **(6th grade)**

- **Conventional**

Student 3. “The gypsy king was right because if the culture is that way then he should let it be that way

Student 3a. I think the gypsy king doesn’t need to do anything. He is the king so he makes the decisions. Not somebody else.” **(7th grade)**

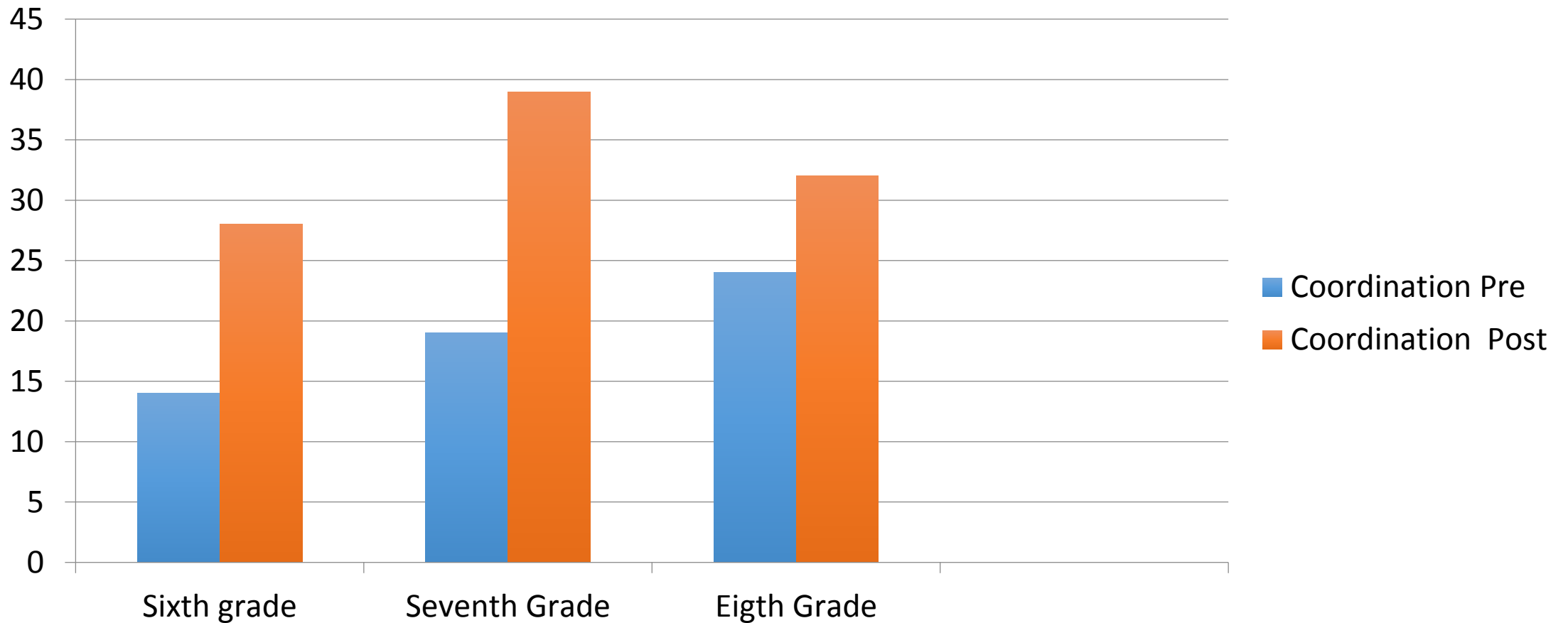
Type 2: Partially Coordinated addressed concerns from both the moral and the conventional domains, however did not fully resolve conflict or ambiguity in their evaluations or proposed solutions

- **Student 4.** “The gypsy King was right to turn down the scholarships because of his culture and religion. He is helping others stay in tradition. I am a female myself, but I still agree with the gypsy king.
- **Student 4a.** The best way to resolve this situation in my opinion is to just give the scholarships MOSTLY to men” **(7th grade)**
- **Student 5.** The village leaders were wrong because women have the same equal rights as men do. Building the school for boys is wrong towards women.
- **Student 5a.** The best way to resolve this situation is to just make a separate school since men think educating girls is going against the cultural position, girls should just build their own school and get educated. **(8th grade)**

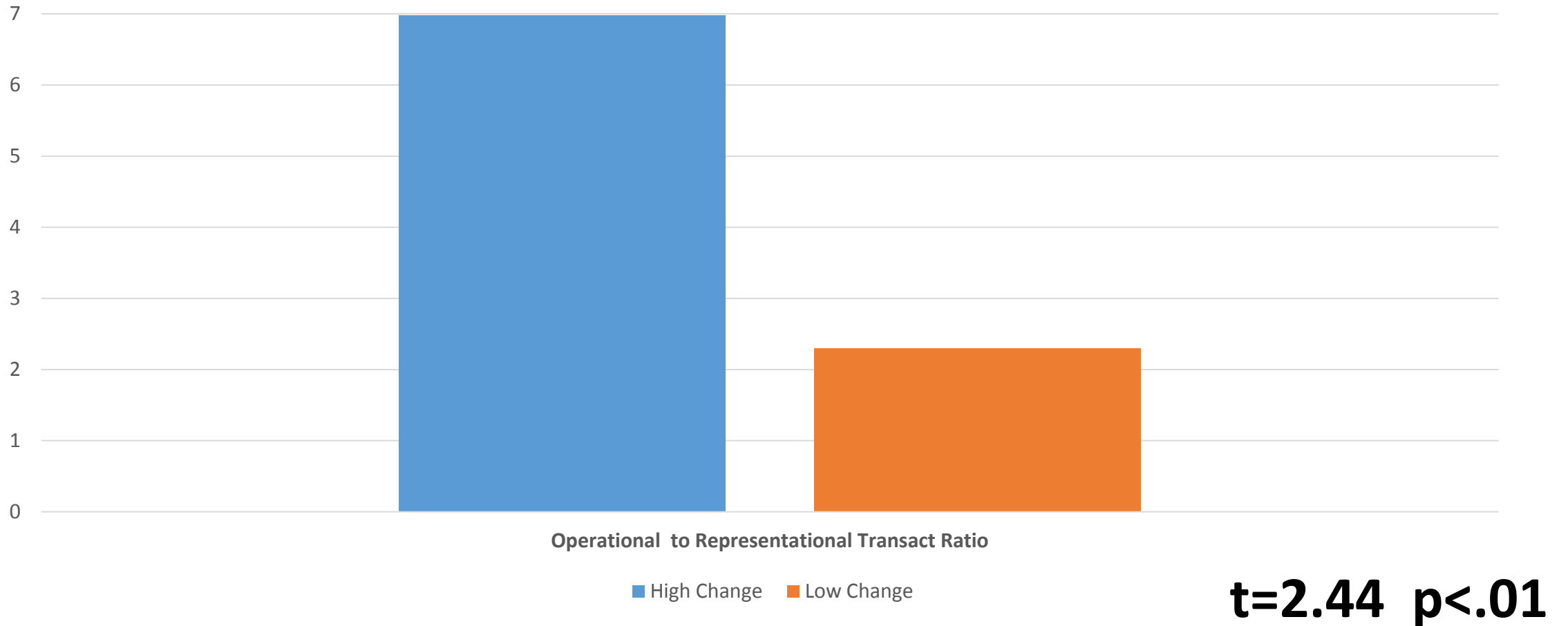
Type 3: Coordinated incorporates elements from both domains to form a non-contradictory solution.

- **Student 6.** The village leaders were wrong to not allow the school to be built. Both genders deserve knowledge and education. By refusing this offer, both boys and girls were denied their rights as human beings to be educated. The village leaders needed to realize that India is evolving and they need to change their traditions.
- **Student 6a.** The best way to resolve the situation is for the village leaders to be removed from power by the Indian government [so that the village would have the same rules about women's rights as the rest of the country.] [**8th grade**]

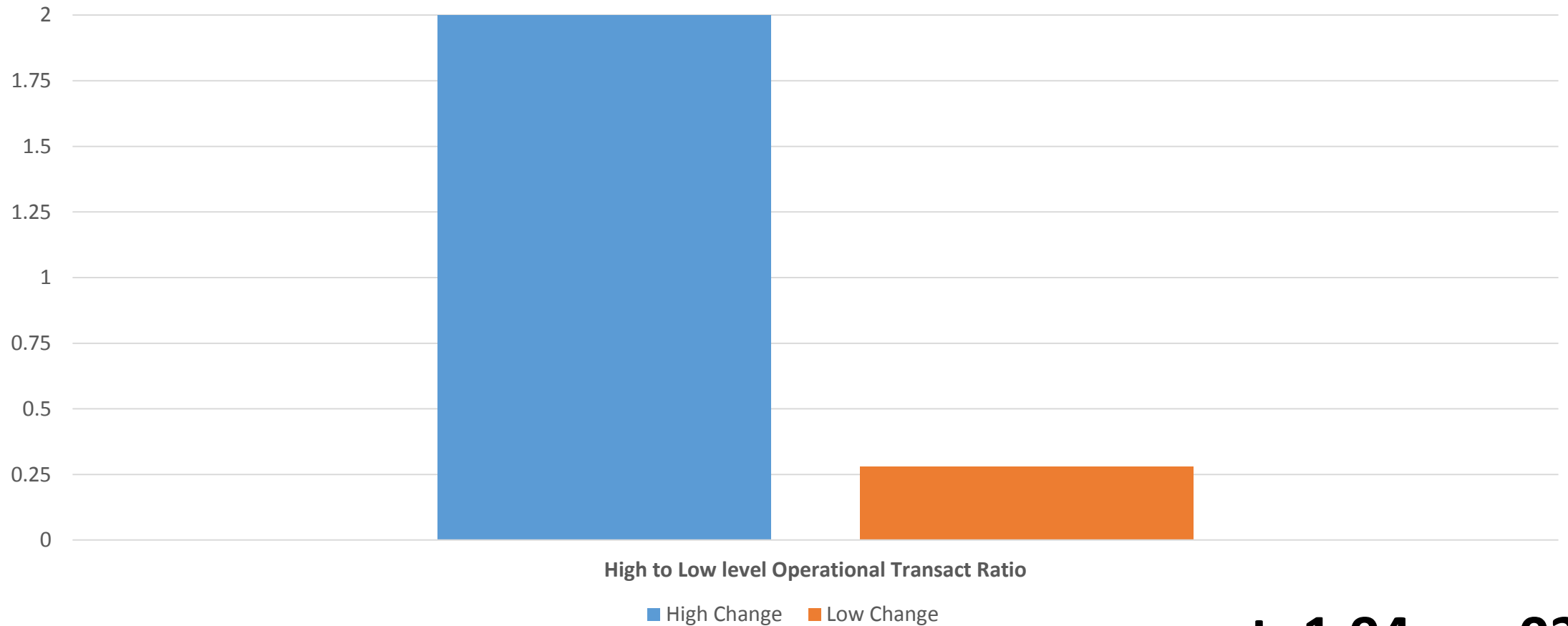
Proportion of Participating Students Exhibiting Domain Coordination Pre v. Post



Relation Between Transactive Discourse and Student Development



Relation Between High and Low Level Operational Transacts and Development



t=1.94 p=.03

In Summary:



Thank you

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