

***Cultivating Empathy in Schools: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Empathy Pedagogy
in the US, Italy, Germany, and Ecuador***

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Through my dissertation research, I hope to illuminate the best practices for the cultivation of empathy in primary schools. My research focuses on how schools cultivate what I define as “inclusive empathy,” or empathy toward outgroups on various dimensions (race, class, gender, political ideology, religion, etc.) as well as animals and the natural world (“ecological empathy”). In January 2025, I began an eight-month [Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Fellowship](#) to conduct research in Italy, Germany, and Ecuador, and collect qualitative data for my dissertation. During my time at the Rachel Carson Center, I will be focusing on the study of “ecological empathy.”

My goal is to investigate the question of how teachers can foster students’ “inclusive empathy”—towards those who look or think differently than they do—in order to foster a more inclusive and just society. At the Rachel Carson Center, I will be concentrating on exploring how teachers might foster “ecological empathy”—directed towards animals and nature—as a potentially promising approach to mitigate climate change. I look forward to investigating this topic more extensively at the RCC and through my fieldwork in Ecuador where I will be collaborating with several environmental and educational NGOs.