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### The development of a scale to measure empathy in 8- and 9-year old children

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#### Abstract

Empathy has been suggested to facilitate effective collaborative problem solving in children. The current study adapted the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI, Davis, 1980), a well-validated empathy measure for adults, for use with children aged 8 and 9 years. Four hundred and thirteen school children aged between 7;11 and 9;11 years completed the new measure, 'Feeling and Thinking' (F&T) aimed at measuring both the affective and cognitive components of empathy. Principal Components Analysis with Varimax rotation produced a clear and logical four factor solution that resembled but did not duplicate the IRI. Further scrutiny reduced the scale to a more parsimonious 12 item, two factor scale representing the two components of empathy. It is suggested that F&T is capable of measuring empathy in children. Further psychometric investigations of the F&T will enhance knowledge of the affective/cognitive distinction in empathy.

[Link to full text paper pdf \(248KB\)](#)

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