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An Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying at the Elementary School Level

Tiffany Wilson Thomas
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Tiffany Wilson Thomas

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Dr. Sheilia Goodwin, Committee Member, Education Faculty
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Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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Abstract

Teachers in elementary schools are often faced with countless disruptive bullying behaviors, which cause them to lose valuable classroom instruction time. In addition, bullying victims have shown a decline in academic success as compared to students who are not bullied. The purpose of this qualitative bounded case study was to explore teachers' understanding and awareness of bullying behaviors and policies at the elementary school level, particularly in an elementary school in a southeastern state that has experienced large increases in student disruptive behavior over the past 2 school years. Bandura's social cognitive theory served as the conceptual framework. Semi-structured interview data were collected from a purposeful sample of 8 certified teachers at the school who taught students in Grades 3 through 5 during the past 2 school years. Open and axial coding procedures were utilized to discover themes based on teachers' perceptions of bullying, interventions and regulations. The findings revealed that teachers struggled with recognizing bullying behaviors, were unsure of the policies and procedures related to reporting bullying incidents, and their confidence levels were low when handling bullying behavior. Findings reflected components of Bandura's social cognitive theory in that individuals with high levels of perceived competence were motivated to set goals and complete tasks. A professional development workshop was created to provide teachers with the necessary tools to assist them in recognizing, responding, and reporting bullying incidents. Positive social change might occur from promoting bullying awareness among teachers and creating a positive impact on teaching, student learning, and the overall school environment at the local level.

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Dedication

I would like to send a special thank you to my husband and best friend Reginald Thomas for being supportive throughout this difficult process. These past few years were very challenging to say the least. We've missed many events and there were many sleepless nights. There were times when I felt unsure of myself and my capabilities. Thank you for your continued support and inspiring words of encouragement.

To my parents, Barbara Dawson and Bobby Wilson, I would like to say "thank you". Thank you for your words of wisdom and the many praises that you have bestowed upon me throughout my educational endeavors. I could not have gotten this far without you both.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my daughter "Ashley S. Wallace". You were my inspiration and you still are today! You were the reason for continuing my education and now I pray that I can be yours. If there is nothing else that I can leave you with, let me leave you with this. Never underestimate the power of education. Mommy loves you with all my heart.

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Introduction

School bullying, also known as peer victimization (Morgan, 2012), is not a new

phenomenon. However, recent acts of suicides and violence due to bullying, harassment,

and overt violence in schools have called for immediate awareness. Strohmeier and

Noam (2012) explained that aggression, harassment, and teasing are contributing factors

for targeted school violence that have occurred in various school shootings. For instance,

the Columbine shooting in 1999 heightened awareness in the United States of the links

associated with school bullying, victimization, and violence when two students were

bullied and harassed by their peers murdered 15 people and injured more than 20 people

(Zuckerman, Bushman, & Pedersen, 2010). Although extreme school violence is rare,

Algozzine and McGee (2011) reported that violence is often the result of theft,

intimidation, bullying, and harassment. As a result of school-related violence beginning

with the 1999 Columbine shooting, school bullying and violence has become a concern

for many school leaders and politicians in the United States. Because bullying is

associated with violent and aggressive behaviors that can lead to serious injuries to self or

others, it has also become a public health issue (Burgess, Garbarino, & Carlson, 2006;

Herrenkohl et al., 2012). Events such as these have forced politicians and states to take

notice as well as action. State legislatures have either amended or implemented more than

120 bills from 1999 to 2010 to address bullying and aggressive behaviors in schools

across the county (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). As of January 2015, 49 states

have put in place bullying prevention laws requiring schools to implement policies

dealing with peer victimization and harassment including cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015).

Bullying (victimization) is associated with a series of behaviors that are aggressive in nature or meant to do harm (Bullying Statistics, 2013). Some early childhood educators refuse to label young children as bullies because they believe that aggressive or bullying behaviors is a normal part of a child's development process; therefore, they believe that young children are incapable of such acts (Goryl, Neilsen-Hewett, & Sweller, 2013). Although many people view bullying as an innocent behavior or a rite of passage, it can have a lasting effect on the person who is being bullied or harassed. Liu, Lewis, and Evans (2012) explained that aggressive behavior is associated with psychiatric disorders that can escalate over a period of time, from attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder in children, to more violent behaviors in adolescents (e.g., fighting or carrying concealed weapons). In addition to displaying aggression, bullying could lead to students performing harm to others as well as themselves. Suicide is one of the causes of death amongst youth and remains to be a clinical problem (Amitai & Apter, 2012). For example, an 11-year-old Georgia student committed suicide after being verbally bullied repeatedly by classmates in 2009 (Jaffe & D'Agostino, 2011). Due to such events, public school officials have become concerned about both bullying and suicide acts (Zirkel, 2013). Student suicides in U.S. schools are on the rise, and they affect families, individuals, communities, and society (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014). According to the CDC (2013), suicide is the third leading cause of death amongst youth starting at 10 years of age in the United States.

Teachers' goals are to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for their students; while an administrators' goals are to provide a positive school climate for their employees and students. According to Goryl et al. (2013), both teachers and administrators are seeking for the necessary tools to assist them in reaching these goals. In Section 1, I present a synopsis of the bullying phenomenon starting with the problem statement, definition of bullying, rationale, review of literature, and significance of the study.

Definition of the Problem

The phenomenon of bullying in schools is a problem (Bullying Statistics, 2013; Hemphill, Tollit, & Herrenkohl, 2014; McVie, 2014; Morgan, 2010). Bullying is prevalent between students, and the outcome for both the perpetrator and victim can be severe, having long-lasting effects into adulthood (Hemphill et al., 2011; McVie, 2014; Olweus, 2011; Renda, Vassallo, & Edwards, 2011). Students who are subjected to victimization usually show signs of low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression (Cornell & Mehta, 2011; Ttofi, Farrington, Losel, & Loeber, 2011). Cornell and Mehta (2011) explained that students who experience bullying often display higher rates of school avoidance, academic difficulties, and absenteeism. Throughout the United States, schools K-12 has received national attention due to recent bullying issues (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). Bullying can have a negative impact on a school's overall environment (Allen, 2010; Gu, Lai, & Ye, 2011; Migliaccio, 2015; Morgan, 2012; Wynne & Joo, 2011).

Some children view school as a place for aggressive behavior and victimization (Morrow, Hubbard, & Lauren, 2014). Scholars have shown that 15% to 30% of students in the United States have encountered bullying (CDC, 2014; Goldammer,Swahn, Strasser, Ashby, & Meyers, 2013; Migliaccio, 2015; National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2013). According to the NCES (2013), 27.8% students reported being bullied during the school year. Goldammer et al. (2013) reported that 27.9% students were involved in some form of bullying as either a bully, victim or bully-victim. More than 30% of students in the United States have claimed to be involved in bullying incidents as either a bully or victim (Migliaccio, 2015).

Although there are various definitions of bullying, for the purpose of this project study, the following definition was used: Bullying is an aggressive behavior that is intentional, repetitive in nature, and involves an imbalance of power between the aggressor and his or her target (Haltigan & Vaillancourt, 2014). Grumm and Hein (2012) identified aggressive behavior as a behavior that is repeated over a period of time and involves an imbalance of power between the bully and victim. Bullying can involve blatant behaviors (direct bullying) such as hitting, pushing, and teasing as well as less blatant behaviors (indirect bullying) such as stealing, some types of irrational rejections, and spreading rumors (Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennan, & Bradshaw, 2011).

The teacher who is the leader of the class is tasked with the responsibility of maintaining a positive and productive class environment that fosters cooperative learning (Grumm & Hein, 2012). Therefore, it is important to understand that how teachers react to bullying (Grumm & Hein, 2012). Strohmeier and Noam (2012) explained that usually

teachers are not present when bullying happens, and they usually are not made aware of such incidents. Venstra, Huitsing, Lindenberg, Sainio, and Salmivalli (2014) suggested that teachers are not aware of bullying. In other cases, teachers will either ignore or condemn the behavior using disapproving gestures or language (Gardner, Moses, &Waajid, 2013). However, it is typical for teachers to focus more on direct bullying or victimization while struggling to identify indirect behaviors (Cheng et al., 2011). According to Elledge et al. (2013), educators who crack down on classroom bullying usually cause students to find new ways to victimize their victims, making victimization more difficult for teachers to monitor. Therefore, it is important that teachers learn (a) how to recognize bullying in their schools; (b) how to differentiate light cases from serious ones; (c) how to intervene in bullying incidents with the bullies, victims, and bystanders; and (d) how to prevent bullying from occurring (Strohmeier & Noam, 2012). Farmer, Lane, Lee, Hamn, and Lambert (2012) argued that bullying acts are embedded in a social context that supports and sustains unwanted aggressive behaviors, which increases the chances of future aggressive acts.

Aggressive behavior has an effect on academic and school climate (Goldweber, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2013; Wynne & Joo, 2011). Because teachers spend a great amount of time with students, they can establish the level of bullying that is allowed in the classroom. Teachers' attitudes, classroom practices, and the school environment has an impact in understanding how often students report aggression, bullying, and victimization, as well as associated behaviors (Espelage, Low, & Jimerson, 2014). How teachers respond to or tolerate this sort of behavior sets the foundation for how bullying

is viewed and accepted, especially at the elementary school level (Migliaccio, 2015). Morgan (2012) explained that many students are reluctant to report bullying, fearing that teachers will reveal their identity, which could lead to retaliation, or that their claim of being harassed will be dismissed when these actions occur; therefore, many times the victims will choose to remain silent.

Teachers at ABC Elementary School (pseudonym) in the Southern region of the United States have identified a need to better understand bullying, particularly in relation to promoting bullying awareness within the school and the local community (personal communication, March 27, 2015). According to the state's website, suspension reports associated with battering, bullying, and violent incidents increased from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015 (over a 2-year period). These discipline referrals consisted of behaviors such as arguing, excluding other students, teasing, threatening, fighting, and other forms of unruly behaviors. The rise of aggressive acts has caused teachers to stop instruction in order to address these unwarranted behaviors inside the classroom. Bullying is disruptive and can negatively affect teaching and learning (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008; Holen, Waaktaar, Lervag, & Ystgaard, 2013; Migliaccio, 2015; Wynne & Joo, 2011).

The principal at ABC Elementary School suggested that bullying goes on in many cases without teachers being aware that it is taking place (personal communication, March 27, 2015). Allen (2010) argued the importance of teachers being able to recognize bullying before they can intervene or prevent bullying incidents. No data have been collected regarding teachers' understanding and awareness of bullying in ABC

Elementary School. The intent of this project study was to investigate teachers'

understanding and awareness of bullying at the elementary school level.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

In 2014, the ABC School District implemented a new bullying policy in response

to several bullying incidents including an elementary student who committed suicide

after reporting that he was repeatedly bullied by classmates at school (personal

communication, August 4, 2015). This incident has caused school districts to revamp

policies in order to battle bullying based on newly implemented state guidelines. Under

the new state policy, bullying can range anywhere from unwanted teasing on school

premises to cyber-bullying through text messages or social media websites (Georgia

Department of Education [GaDOE], 2015). According to GaDOE (2015), by the end of

each school year, all school districts are expected to report bullying incidents through the

Georgia Department of Education's Student Record Data Collection Database. This

database is part of the newly implemented safe school climate initiative. GaDOE further

explained that bullying, as well as other problems related to school climate, are often

viewed separately from academic performance and that students are unable to reach their

full achievement unless more focus is given to the relationship between academic

achievement and school climate.

In an analysis of the data for students from Grades 3 through 5 over the past 2

years, I found that there is a slight increase in the number of school suspensions. In SY

2013-2014 school year, there were a total of three battery incidents, three bullying

incidents, 11 disorderly conduct incidents, and 22 fighting incidents documented for

Grades 3 through 5 (see Table 1). During the SY 2014-2015 school year, there were a

total of 42 battery incidents, zero bullying incidents, 11 disorderly conduct incidents, and

five fighting incidents documented for Grades 3 through 5 (see Table 1). According to

the same report data, there were a total of two bullying suspensions and 10 violent related

suspensions made for SY 2013-2014 school year, and two bullying suspensions and 18

violent related suspensions reported for SY 2014-2015 school year (see Table 2). ABC

Elementary School Climate report revealed a decline in the school climate star ratings

from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015.

Table 1

Discipline Incidents Reports for Grades 3 Through 5

Type of Discipline Incidents	# of Incidents 2013-2014	# of Incidents 2014-2015
Battery	3	42
Bullying	3	0
Disorderly Conduct	11	11
Fighting	22	5

Note: Data retrieved from public records from the state website.

Table 2

Student Suspension for Grades 3 Through 5

Type of Suspensions	# of Suspensions 2013-2014	# of Suspensions 2014-2015
Bullying & Harassment	2	2
Violent Incidents	10	18
Weighted Suspension	88.73	91.044

Note: Data retrieved from public records from the state website.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

School climate can be defined as a person's perception of the character and quality of school life (Perron, 2015). School climate includes the feelings that all stakeholders (staff, students, and parents) have about the school's environment, safety of the school, and their perceptions of support received regarding teaching and learning (Kartal & Bilgin, 2009; NSCC, 2012). Students who are subjected to victimization fear coming to school because they view school as being an unsafe place (Bullying Statistics, 2013; Kartal & Bilgin, 2009). When students view their school as unfriendly, unsafe, and unsupportive, they begin to have negative views about the school, resulting in them disobeying school rules (Wang, Berry, & Swearer, 2013).

Teachers are faced with the task of improving students' academic performance to meet the standards of Common Core. Teachers must prepare students for high-stakes standardized testing and track student progress while trying to maintain a safe and productive classroom setting (Allen, 2010). Providing a positive learning environment

can be a factor in the wellbeing of the child and his or her academic achievement (Holen et al., 2013). Migliaccio (2015) explained that teachers may have a broader understanding of the meaning of bullying than students; yet, they are unable to recognize and properly respond to bullying. Children who display aggressive-disruptive behaviors early on have been known to suffer with academic difficulties (Bierman, Coie, Dodge, Greenberg, & Lochman, 2013; Reuland & Mikami, 2014). Victimization in the early years can cause poor academic performance (e.g., low grade point average, standardized tests, teacher reports), problems adjusting in school (e.g., disruptive behavior), and negative outlook regarding school climate (e.g., lack of friends or teacher support; Juvonen, Wang, & Espinoza, 2011; Rothon, Head, Klineberg, & Stansfeld, 2011). According to Kartal and Bilgin (2009), bullying issues cause staff to lose instructional time. In this project, I created a positive platform in which teachers had an opportunity to express their understanding and awareness as it regards to bullying at the elementary school level.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project study was to collect teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary school level. Due to an increase in battery and violent related incidents in Grades 3 through 5, there was a need for further understanding about the phenomenon of bullying from the perspective of teachers at this elementary school located in a large metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. Although there has been research on the topic and significant policy changes regarding bullying, teachers in this region have acknowledged a need to address and prevent bullying of students during their early school years. According to Gendron, Williams, and Guerra (2011), children who display

aggressive acts or take part in bullying during their early elementary years begin to believe that this type of behavior is acceptable. Burk et al. (2011) explored the importance of identifying children at an early age who displayed an increased risk of becoming a bully or victim as a means to prevent bullying. Therefore, how educators view and respond to bullying is a factor in reducing the rate in which bullying takes place at school (Espelage, Polanin, & Low, 2014; Kyriakides & Creemers, 2012; Migliaccio, 2015). Addressing the problem of bullying will benefit the overall community and society, thereby promoting social change. Bosworth and Judkins (2014) reported that schoolwide policies and daily norms that support respectful and positive collaboration amongst adults and students contribute to less bullying issues in the school community.

Definitions

Bullying: Bullying is an aggressive behavior that is intentional, repetitive in nature, and involves an imbalance of power between the aggressor and his or her target (Haltigan & Vaillancourt, 2014).

Community violence: When violence occurs between individuals who are unrelated, and who may or may not know each other, usually happens outside of the home (Dahlberg & Krug, 2006).

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying entails sending or posting cruel or harmful images or text using technology (e.g., e-mails, instant messaging, social networking sites, and chat rooms) or other digital devices to communicate such as cell phones (Feinberg & Robey, 2008).

Direct bullying: Direct bullying involves name-calling, hitting, kicking, and teasing (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2009).

Indirect bullying: Indirect bullying includes rumors, stealing, and social exclusion (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2009).

Peer victimization: Peer victimization is defined as a repetitive behavior that is aggressive and intended to do harm, which involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim (Graham, 2010; Piotrowski & Hoot, 2008).

School climate: School climate consists of patterns based on the community and an individual's experience as it relates to school life and reflects goals, norms, interpersonal relationships, values, teaching and learning, leadership practices, and organizational structures (National School Climate Council, 2015).

Victim: An individual who is singled out, targeted, and experiences negative interaction with a bully repeatedly over a period of time (Visconti, Sechler, & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2013).

Violence: The intent of committing the act, no matter the outcome (CDC, 2014).

Significance of the Study

There has been significant research conducted on the issue of bullying or peer victimization; however, few scholars have focused on teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary school level (Goryl et al., 2013). This project study contributed to the current body of research by providing insight on elementary teachers' perceptions of bullying. Migliaccio (2015) explained that teachers may have a broader understanding of the meaning of bullying than students; yet, they are unable to recognize and properly

respond to bullying. Zehr (2005) and Gardner et al. (2013) argued that many educators
ignore or shy away from effectively addressing bullying, which leads students to hesitate
when reporting victimization. The findings from this project study could have a positive
impact on the school's climate and provide administrators, counselors, and teachers with
information for future best practices and antibullying interventions. In addition, this
project study could also contribute to the Walden University mission for positive social
change by promoting bullying awareness and creating a positive impact on students,
teachers, and the overall school environment at the local level. Lastly, this project could
play a role in preparing students to positively interact in society, thus creating a safer
community.

Guiding/Research Question

The focus of this project study was to explore teachers' perceptions of bullying
incidents at the elementary school level. According to Goryl et al. (2013), there has been
little research conducted on bullying during the elementary years. Bullying is a concern
that begins as early as preschool and progresses over the years (Espelage, Jimerson, &
Low, 2014). In order to examine this phenomenon, the following research questions were
used:

RQ1: How do teachers at ABC Elementary School define bullying?

RQ2: How do teachers at ABC Elementary School describe their experience in
preventing and addressing bullying behaviors?

RQ3: What type of professional development do teachers at ABC Elementary
School receive on bullying policies?

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this project study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of bullying, particularly in relation to promoting bullying awareness within the school and the local community. The aim of this literature review is to offer a comprehensive review of scholarly books, dissertations, Internet sources, and peer-reviewed journal articles. The literature review for this study was conducted using a Boolean search on Walden University's library website using the Academic Search Complete, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), EBSCO, ProQuest, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and SAGE databases. I focused on peer-reviewed journal articles dating from 2010 to present. The search terms used included the following: *aggression and bullying, peer victimization, cyberbullying, environmental factors associated with bullying, school climate, learning environment, academic, violent behavior, bullying and suicide, cyberbullying, teachers' perceptions, teachers' attitudes, teachers' efficacy, Bandura's social learning theory, Bandura's moral disengagement,* and *victimization*. My goal was to find relevant material that will contribute to understanding the phenomenon of bullying.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that was used for this study was Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory and Bandura's (1973, 1986) social learning theory of aggression. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy refers to a person's personal beliefs in his or her capability to effectively accomplish a task. A task in which a person may feel unprepared for may instill fear and discourage him or her from completing the task

altogether (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (year) claimed that self-efficacy influences a person's performance. Bandura (1977) identified four influences of self-efficacy beliefs: personal mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. First, mastery experience, also referred to as performance accomplishments, suggests that accomplishments motivate and contribute to a person's belief that he or she can experience success (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1988) explained that because mastery experiences are considered a form of proof, this type of self-efficacy is the most significant of the four. Second, vicarious experiences involve learning while observing others. Self-efficacy can also be acquired by observing models similar to the person seeking success. This is known as identification, which allows the observer to feel a connection with the individual being imitated, leaving the observer more optimistic about being able to follow through on the imitator's action (Bandura, 1988). Third, verbal persuasion or encouragement by others consists of a person believing that he or she can perform a certain task successfully, based on others' suggestions (Bandura, 1977). Finally, an individual's physiological state can affect his or her emotional state, such as his or her anxiety level or feeling relaxed in anticipation to future failure or success (Bandura, 1977).

The social learning theory details people's behavior in terms of continuous shared interaction between behavioral, cognitive, and environmental influences (Bandura, 1977). Solomon (2004) explained that, according to the social learning theory, humans possess the capability to learn and adjust their behavior primarily learning through observation. In the early stages of development, conduct is controlled by external influences and social

factors (Bandura, 1999). The social learning theory includes various influences on behavior, which is a result of observing and interacting in social relationships. According to Bandura (1989), a child acquires aggressive behaviors by observing others (parents, peers, siblings) who engage in aggressive interactions. For example, parents who resolve a conflict aggressively at home may cause the child who is observing this situation to think that aggressive behavior is appropriate when dealing with a peer at school to resolve conflict (Card, 2011; Shetgiri, Avila, Flores, & Lin, 2012).

McLeod (2011) reported that children usually imitate people who are similar to them. If the imitated behavior is accepted, the child will usually repeat the behavior. This is considered as reinforcing the behavior, and reinforcement can be either external or internal (McLeod, 2011). McLeod explained that if a child seeks approval, this is an external reinforcement; however, feeling happy about the approval is an internal reinforcement. Bandura (1989) stated, "In multiple areas within social and moral behavior the internal standards that serve as the basis for regulating one's conduct have greater stability" (pp. 50). People do not change their moral views overnight; this is a learned behavior that takes place over a period of time. People's moral standards stem from multiple influences within their environment (Bandura, 1986). Furthermore, these moral standards are used as a guideline, accepting or rejecting a person's behavior by relevant people in his or her lives and the moral standards modeled by others (Bandura, 1989). Bender and Losel (2011) explained that this trend is common amongst younger children who are easily influenced as opposed to their older counterparts. In addition,

victims are liable to be influenced by bullies by displaying aggressive or violent behavior eventually (Bender & Losel, 2011).

There are various theories available to address aggressive behaviors. Understanding the elements that predict aggressive behavior in school requires a look at the complex interrelationships between the environment and the individual (Hong & Espelage, 2012). According to Bandura (1989), the environment has an influence on how students react to situations. In the social learning theory, individuals learn from others through imitation, observation, and modeling. In Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) he explained how a person's performance is influenced by his or her personal beliefs in his or her ability to successfully complete a task.

Bullying

Bullying is a complex phenomenon that has had an impact on the school and community as a whole (National School Climate Council, 2015; Rowan, 2007). In past decades, bullying was considered a normal part of the growing the process (Briggs, 2012). However, in recent years, bullying has been identified as the most common form of low-level violence in schools and is considered as a factor in more serious forms of violent behavior (Bowllan, 2011; Bullying Statistics, 2013). The two most common forms of bullying are physical bullying (direct bullying) and verbal bullying (indirect or relational bullying). Rueger and Jenkins (2014) and Wang et al. (2014) described physical bullying as including behaviors such as hitting, pushing, or kicking, and verbal bullying includes gossiping or name calling. Smith, Polenik, Nakasita, and Jones (2012) found that students involved in bullying (whether it was direct, indirect, both, or neither)

experienced some form of social rejection. Students involved in direct bullying or both direct and indirect bullying show the greatest levels of emotional, behavioral, and social problems, while students involved in indirect bullying practices display weaknesses in self-perception.

Focusing on the bully alone without understanding the complex roles all youth play in the bully epidemic can hinder the prevention of students being victimized (Espelage, 2012). In a study that included 243 fifth grade students, Jacobson, Riesch, Temkin, Kedrowski, and Kluba (2011) found that 23.8% (about 58 students) reported feeling unsafe at school due to teasing, bullying, or threats made against them. Out of the 23.8% who responded to feeling unsafe, 27 of the 58 participants reported feeling unsafe due to witnessing bullying or fighting, knowing the presence of gangs and weapons, witnessing drug dealing, and other perceived threats (Jacobson et al., 2011).

Rueger and Jenkins (2014) suggested that schools are increasing their awareness of the social-emotional challenges that students experience as they relate to peer victimization. Adolescents who are involved in bullying as either the bully or victim have a greater risk of poor educational and psychological outcomes (Smith et al., 2012). Youth play a role either directly or indirectly in bullying others. Students can experience bullying (i.e., victims), observe bullying (i.e., bystanders), and/or commit bullying (i.e., bullies) depending on the situation and over a period of time (Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Ryoo, Wang, and Swearer (2014) found that students played different roles in bullying throughout their academic lifespan and repeated victims and perpetrators were the least stable subgroup. Victims of abuse may deal with trauma by identifying with the abuser or

by abusing others based on their experience of victimization (Kerzner, 2013). For

example, a student who is victimized at school may victimize his or her siblings at home

(Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Bullying has an impact on many of the nation's youth, either

as bullies, victims, or as bystanders (Espelage, 2012).

Bullies. Unlike their nonaggressive peers, bullies can either disregard moral rules

or they self-justify their aggressive behavior in order to avoid dealing with feelings of

guilt (Caravita, Gini, & Pozzoli, 2012). Bandura (1991) explained that the moral

disengagement process could allow the offender to self-justify his or her aggressive

actions. In most cases, bullies seek an audience for support (Kerzner, 2013). Bullies tend

to seek out victims who they perceived as vulnerable and/or unwilling to defend

themselves. Bullies can be categorized into two categories: (a) the active bully and (b) the

passive bully (Olweus, 1994). Olweus (1994) explained that an active bully is considered

dominant; this individual is secure and exercises his or her power over others. A passive

bully is usually a follower of a bully; this individual is insecure and will not initiate

bullying but would support the bully's action (Olweus, 1994).

According to Card (2011), the home environment is also a contributing factor in

how a bully interacts socially with his or her peers at school. If the parents display

aggressive or violent behavior towards one another during a disagreement, this could

influence or influence the child's behavior (Card, 2011). The possibility of aggressive

behavior in schools is putting students' educational, psychological, and social

development at risk (Johnson, Burke, & Gielen, 2011). Other long-term outcomes and

risk factors as they relate to bullies are the abuse of alcohol and other drugs, more likely

to lash out violently, engaging in sexual activity, criminal activity, and abusive to others (Briggs, 2012; Bowllan, 2011).

Victims. Victims are referred to as individuals who are on the receiving end of bullying behaviors (Espelage, Rao, & Rue, 2013). A victim is an individual who is singled out and targeted by a bully repeatedly over a period of time (Visconti et al., 2013). Victims may display signs of shyness and withdrawal, even anxious demeanor as a result of such behavior (Briggs, 2012; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). In addition, victims may be more likely to retaliate violently, and this violent behavior could continue into adulthood (Briggs, 2012). Kerzner (2013) explained that victims might respond to victimization by displaying acts of aggression. Victims may be disliked by their peers because they lack social skills as well as difficulty interacting with peers (Guerra, Williams, & Sadek, 2011). Austin, Barnes, and Reynolds (2012) suggested that the victim of a bully may display passive behavior and refuse to stand up to the bully. When the victim experiences victimization over an extended period of time, they could experience long-term side effects, such as difficulty adjusting emotionally and socially to their environment (Shetgiri et al., 2012). Victims of bullying have been known to skip school because they perceive school to be unsafe, resulting in low academic performance (Espelage, 2012; Visconti et al., 2013). This heightened level of aggression puts the victim at risk of academic problems (Juvonen et al., 2011; Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010). Furthermore, victims whom are subjected to bullying at school are more likely to display signs of withdrawal, avoidance, and self-protective delinquent behaviors (Wynne & Joo, 2011).

Bystanders. Bystanders is a part of the whole bullying epidemic. They can either have a positive or negative impact on bullying (Espelage, 2012). Bystanders are described as individuals who stand around watching fights instead of helping the victim (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Bystanders can also be categorized as individuals who are not directly involved and may or may not report bullying situations (Espelage et l., 2013). Both overt reinforcement and passive acceptance of bystanders encourages the bully as well as contributes to the aggressive behavior that is bestowed onto the victim (Kerzner, 2013). Although bystanders may not partake in victimization, Briggs (2012) explained that children who witness bullying situations are at risk of alcohol and drugs, chance of mental health problems, and increased absences from school.

Kerzner (2013) suggested that 85% acts of aggression are witnessed by peer bystanders. Twemlow and Sacco (2013) suggested that bystanders are not passive but are a component in the evolution of victimization. The bystander plays a role by providing an audience. When bullies control and force bystanders to support them, the triangle of the bully, bystander, and victim is functioning as a submissive group (Kerzner, 2013). In contrast, if the bystander is perceived as popular or held in high regard, they may prevent bullying from occurring and defend the victim (Caravita et al., 2012). In addition, if bystanders display moral courage by standing up to a bully to defend the victim, the moral standard of the group will increase (Kerzner, 2013). Caravita et al. (2012) further explained that children who are well liked tend to refrain from bullying because this type of behavior is typically disliked by peers.

Association between bullying and school climate. Schools are a part of an extensive community in which children should feel safe, able to engage in learning, and afforded an opportunity to develop their personality, talents, and cognitive and physical capabilities to their fullest potential (Wang et al., 2014). Students' and teacher's interaction in school is important; therefore, it is expected that teachers' perceptions of the environment have an effect on student attitudes and behaviors (Espelage et al., 2014). Kerzner (2013) reported that school communities who ignore bullying are enabling bystanders. This could have a negative impact on the overall culture of a school, as well as the school climate. School climate consists of patterns of a person's experiences related to school life that reflect goals, norms, interpersonal relationships, values, teaching and learning, leadership practices, and organizational structures (National School Climate Council, 2015). Although the climate and culture of a school are different, they both have an effect on the learning environment. Therefore, school culture, according to Kartal and Bilgin (2009), reflects the identity of an organization as well as shared ideas, values, and beliefs for standards and behaviors.

Bullying is mostly studied in the school context. A school's climate can be positively or negatively impacted based on the frequency of bullying and victimization (Gendron et al., 2011; Marsh et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2013). A positive school climate promotes a healthy atmosphere and can determine the success or failure of a school (Osman, 2012). According to Wang et al. (2014), a student's academic achievement and peer victimization is frequently connected to school climate. It is important to understand

how aggressive and negative behaviors, such as bullying, can disrupt the learning

environment as well as have a negative blow on the culture and climate of a school.

Several researchers have described how issues with bullying can have a negative

outcome on the overall learning environment and school climate. Osman (2012) inferred

that the school climate could make a difference in forming a healthy environment that

promotes teaching and learning. Johnson et al. (2011) reported that the environment of

the school could influence students' academics indirectly as well as have an impact on

students' behavior. Factors such as a negative school environment (e.g., staff not reacting

to bullying) can lead to students having low self-confidence, low attendance, and low

academic achievement based on the fear of being victimized (Brown & Benedict, 2004;

Goldweber et al., 2011). In addition, bullying concerns can lead to issues such as

depression, school refusal, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Bowllan, 2011; Tsiantis et al.,

2013).

From the first time that a child begins his or her educational journey outside of

home, he or she spends more time in school than any other place except for home until he

or she finish his or her formal schooling (Bayar & Ucanok, 2012). The environment of a

school is related to a student's self-reported aggression, victimization, bullying, and

willingness to intervene in bullying situations (Espelage et al., 2014). The National

School Climate Council (2015) explained that in order to sustain a positive school

climate, educators must model and nurture attitudes that stress the advantages gained

from learning. Because teachers play a role in ensuring that students are safe while at

school, it is imperative to understand if teachers can recognize and feel adequately prepared to prevent aggressive behavior.

Osman (2012) argued that if the teachers' perceptions of a school are problematic (e.g., significant disciplinary problems), there is a greater chance that the school will have a negative school climate. Not only does this negative perception interrupt the climate, it also interferes with the culture of the school. According to Gendron et al. (2011), students are more likely to take part in aggressive acts when they perceive the environment of the school to be unfriendly, unsupportive, unfair, and a source of potential conflict. Consequently, Waasdorp et al. (2011) argued that how students perceived bullies or bullying incidents are an aspect of a school's culture as it relates to bullying. If bullies are looked upon as popular by their peers, there will be fewer students reporting acts of aggression. Therefore, how teachers respond to victimization not only supports victims, but also helps to create and sustain a school culture that disapproves of bullying (Migliaccio, 2015). I stopped reviewing here due to time constraints. Please go through the rest of your section and look for the patterns I pointed out to you. I will now look at Section 2.

In order to establish a positive school climate, it is important to implement interventions that include the school community as a whole and focus on creating positive relationships among all stakeholders (Cohen & Geier, 2010). The National School Climate Council (2015, para. 4) described a positive school climate as the following:

- A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society.

- This climate entails expectations, norms, and values that support people feeling emotionally, socially, and physically safe.

- People are engaged and respected.

- Families, students, and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision.

- Educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning.

- Each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.

There have been several programs created over the past two decades to shift school's climate from unsupportive to a more caring environment to decrease school bullying (Wang, Berry, & Swearer, 2013). In a study conducted by Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennan, & Bradshaw (2011) found that characteristics of the school-level bullying climate (e.g. amount of indirect bullying and disliking bullies) were connected with individual perceptions of belonging, safety, and reports of witnesses' victimization.

The most important part in keeping the school environment safe is to prevent violent circumstances from taking place or becoming more serious (Johnson et al., 2011). Bullying and violence have been linked to several school violent incidents. Johnson et al. (2011) reported that violence in U.S. schools jeopardizes student's educational,

psychological, and social development. School is one of the prominent locations where violence takes place amongst children and youths (Sela-Shayovitz, 2011). Kerzner (2013) reported that tragic reports of revenge through violence and suicide due to cyberspace bullying and bullying in schools have created public attention on the dangers and sometimes deadly effects of overly aggressive behavior. Ttofi, Farrington, & Losel (2012) argued that there is a significant connection between school bullying, perpetration and victimization, and violent behaviors later in life. Bullying at school was a major factor of violence later in life, on an average of six years later (Ttofi et al., 2012). Despite the growing concern for school violence and prevention, Sela-Shayovitz (2011) found that teachers often confirm they lacked the necessary skills to deal with violent incidents. Along with this information, the same study reported that even though it is important for teachers to be trained to intervene in violent situations, it is not an essential component in teacher training curriculum.

Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying

Teachers and school personnel are an important factor in protecting students from bullying in schools (Duong & Bradshaw, 2013). However, amongst school personnel, teachers are a major component in the prevention of bullying from occurring (Duy, 2013). The most prevalent behaviors that teachers find problematic would be externalizing problems (i.e., aggression, anger, etc.) in which the behavior is disruptive to the child's environment (Galini & Kostas, 2014). O'Connor, Dearing, and Collins (2011) explained that when teachers develop a positive relationship with children who exhibit behavioral issues, this could stop the emergence of future problems from occurring.

According to Duy (2013), a teachers' attitude and how they respond to bullying could possibly discourage or reinforce aggressive behavior.

While research has shown that teachers can have a positive impact on decreasing bullying (Reuland & Mikami; Kartal & Bilgin, 2009; Rigby, 2014; Veenstra et al., 2014), it also suggested that teachers cannot be effective if they are unaware that bullying is taking place (Veenstra et al., 2014). This may be at a time when the teacher is not around to witness aggressive behavior such as recess while students are on the playground or during lunch while students are in the cafeteria. One study reported that often time school staff and teachers fail to notice or, at least to report acts of aggression (Kerzner, 2013). However, in another study, Waasdorp et al. (2011) reported that many teachers are oblivious to the seriousness and to the extent that bullying takes place within their school, and most likely are unable to identify bullying incidents. In a study that included 5,064 teachers and other educational staff, 43% indicated that bullying presents a problem at their school and 53.8% members specified that they received training by the school district on the bullying policy (National Education Association [NEA], 2010). While bullying is a worldwide problem, Twemlow and Sacco (2013) suggested that this dysfunctional social behavior is a result of an adult culture that is not dealing with bullying and victimization.

Despite the fact that educators have attempted to address various forms of bullying, this behavior in schools remains a serious problem. Acts of bullying can start as early as preschool (Goryl et al., 2013) and becomes an established trend during the duration of elementary school (Espelage, Jimerson, & Low, 2014). Bullying Statistics

(2013) reported that around one in four school aged children are bullied in the United

States on a regular basis. According to Rigby (2014), surveys implied that a substantial

number of students is continuously bullied at school even after reporting the incident to

their teachers. This problem can be detrimental to the overall learning environment and

school climate. Teachers who overlook or accept bullying are sending a message that

aggressive behavior is acceptable in which can lead to increased aggression among

students (Holt & Keyes, 2004). Further research conducted by Goldweber et al. (2013)

indicated that when students perceive adults' ability to intervene and prevent bullying

problems to be ineffective, the chances of bullying increases and willingness for students

to intervene decreases.

In many cases, adults view school bullying as common behavior amongst youth.

This thought process is not uncommon for many teachers. Hektner and Swenson (2012)

and Troop-Gordon and Ladd (2014) explained that teachers often believe that bullying is

a normal part of the developmental process and believe that students can solve bullying

issues on their own. However, according to Espelage, Polanin, and Low (2014) youth

will usually display high levels of aggression and victimization if they feel that adults are

ignoring bullying incidents. As a result, there is a need for educators to understand that

students who are victimized will most likely not like school and view school as an unsafe

place (Morgan, 2012).

Despite the crucial role educators play in minimizing bullying in schools, there is

an inconsistency between how students perceive bullying in comparison to how teachers

perceive bullying (Espelage, Polanin, & Low, 2014). How students view teachers'

attitudes towards bullying matters if there is going to be a cultural shift. Veenstra et al., (2014) argued that understanding how teachers respond to victimization will most likely affect the occurrence of bullying and can be critical for a successful development and implementation of a school-wide antibullying prevention program. Teachers are a pivotal part in the intervention in the bullying process (Kartal & Bilgin, 2009) and those who acknowledge that bullying does exist may be more inclined to create learning environments that discourage aggressive acts (Goryl et al., 2013). Cortes and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2014) found in their study that elementary classrooms where children were comfortable with reporting bullying to their teachers had less victimization. As a result, recognizing how teachers' approach peer victimization could influence the probability of bullying occurring and could be crucial for development and implementation of an anti-bullying program (Veenstra et al., 2014).

Bullying and Classroom Management

Classroom management also referred to as "teacher practices" is a term used to describe how teachers manage behavior problems in the classroom (Galini & Kostas, 2014). A lack of effective and appropriate classroom management skills could possibly cause major problems for many educators as it relates to bullying. Garner, Moses, and Waajid (2013) explained that understanding teachers' understanding and beliefs regarding their experiences with students' behavior is a pivotal factor in promoting classroom competence. Classroom management practices play an important role as it relates to teachers reducing and eliminating aggressive behaviors in the classroom (Allen, 2010). By identifying the need for effective classroom management and bullying

prevention, educators and school administrators could potentially avoid future crises from occurring. In one study conducted by Rowan (2007), 87% of participants reported observing no bullying issues in the classroom due to the teachers' strong classroom management skills (defined as orderly with very little misbehavior). Conversely, the majority of the participants who observed a vast amount of bullying taking place in the classroom reported the teachers' classroom management skills as being poor (defined as very disorderly with a great frequency of misbehavior). Rowan (2007) also reported that 14% of the participants surveyed specified that the teacher ignored bullying accidents instead of dealing with the situation. This lack of intervention could be dangerous because bullies or bully victims may view this type of behavior as teacher approved (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008).

Measuring students' academic achievement is a daily routine for teachers while they reluctantly dismiss assessing nonacademic issues, in most cases leaving that to the school psychologists and counselors (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008). An important component of classroom management involves providing structure. Structure consists of having strong expectations, rules and consequences that are fair, consistent routines and procedures, and teacher-centered activities that eliminates misbehavior and promote positive social behavior and academic achievement (Yang et al., 2013). Strohmeir and Noam (2012) suggested that bullying could possibly be reduced if teachers effectively intervened as soon as the situation begins. In classrooms where aggression is more common, children with externalizing tendencies are more likely to take part in victimization opposed to classrooms with less levels of victimization (Reuland &

Mikami, 2014). Educators need to be able to (1) identify or detect bullying, (2) differentiate light cases versus serious cases and effectively intervene with bystanders, bullies, and victims, and (3) prevent bullying from taking place before it starts (Strohmeir & Noam, 2012). Consequently, Biggs et al. (2008) spoke of teachers modeling and teaching positive behavior by showing empathy for victims, promoting an attitude that bullying is unacceptable and encouraging students to take responsibility for the dynamics within the classroom by responding positively when aggravated. In addition, teachers can minimize problematic behaviors by observing students in various settings (e.g., classroom, lunchroom, playground) for longer period of times, comparing observations with another teacher, and having activities overlap to keep students engaged in continuous learning (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008).

Educators who value the importance of emotion in learning understand both the negative and positive impact that it can have on planning lessons, teaching styles, capability to engage students, and may very well be attuned to the slight relational bullying that takes place in school and its potential negative influence on teaching and learning (Garner, Moses, & Waajid, 2013). In addition, when there are high aggression levels in the classroom, there is a risk that students' learning is in jeopardy, thus lowering the academic achievement of the entire classroom (Reuland & Mikami, 2014). As a result, there is a need for educators and students to have a prevention program in order to reduce peer victimization (Morgan, 2012). Reducing peer victimization affords students an opportunity to focus on academic achievement, which is the reason for schools' continuing existence. Biggs et al. (2008) explained that the degree to which teachers

develop bullying intervention skills in their classes could significantly contribute to student academic outcomes. Crothers and Kolbert (2008) shared that one way for teachers to maintain classroom management and possibly prevent bullying is to implement effective instruction to keep students actively engaged in the learning process giving them little time to engage in bullying. When classroom management is poor or minimum, students have more opportunities to misbehave, and as a result, they are missing out on quality classroom instruction. In addition, Riley, McKevitt, Shriver, & Allen (2011) reported that improper behaviors and disruptions in the classroom is time-consuming and takes away precious instructional time from academics. Besides disruptive behaviors and taking away from instructional practices, Strohmeir and Noam (2012) reported that harassment, victimization, and teasing have been connected to several school shootings.

Many people may view bullies as having low social skills and academic abilities, affording them a chance to manipulate the situation in their favor. Perpetrators of peer victimization sometimes use manipulation to mislead their teachers while victimizing other students (Hamarus & Kaikkomen, 2008). Morgan (2012) went on to explain that bullies in many cases are over achievers who are often favored by teachers, administrators, faculty, and students because of their academic and social standing, creating the problem of teachers having to choose whom to believe, the bully or the victim. This misconception could possibly leave the victim feeling vulnerable and unsure. According to Crothers and Kolbert (2008), students who are victimized may feel that bullies get more attention from the teacher rather than those who are harassed. In this

type of situation, it is important that teachers not only be able to identify when bullying is taking place (Rigby, 2014), but understand that peer victimization can have a negative emotional impact on the victim. Therefore, it is important for educators to acknowledge that emotional competence is an important factor in promoting academic performance as well as seeking assistance from parents and administrators to assist when dealing with peer victimization (Gardner et al., 2013).

The teacher's idea of what represents acceptable classroom behavior is at the heart of this matter because their classroom style and perception of bullying impacts how decisions are made and how discipline is handled (Gardner et al., 2013). If the teacher is effective in providing classroom management, not only will this increase the probability of decreasing bullying but it can also open up a gateway for teaching and learning. By creating a positive environment, the teacher is promoting cooperative learning opportunities by allowing students the ability to work cohesively in groups while learning respect and mutual trust (Cohen & Geier, 2010).

21st Century Bullying (Cyberbullying)

With the rise of technology in the 21st century, a new kind of bullying referred to as cyberbullying or cyber victimization is becoming a common form of bullying for many young children (Baas, Jong, &Drossaert, 2013). Social communication using electronic devices (i.e., through Facebook and Twitter) has provided a new means for students to harass their peers and it is apparent that cyberbullying is an increasing concern for the United States and counties abroad (Elledge et al., 2013). While cyberbullying is in fact different from traditional bullying, Elledge went on to explain

that there are similarities between the two. The primary difference between cyberbullying

and traditional bullying is the ability for the perpetrator to remain anonymous and reach a

large audience in a short period of time (Burton, Florell, & Wygant, 2013). In most cases,

cyber victims are unable to identify their perpetrator (Toshack & Colmar, 2012; Bullying

Statistics, 2013; Burton, Florell, & Wygant, 2013).

According to Morgan (2012), cyberbullying creates a new problem in American

schools because technology has made bullying easier than ever. This form of bullying

presents serious problems because youths are subjected to being victimized by their peers

by using various techniques such as online harassment, sexual explicit messages, social

networking websites, images and videos via electronic devices such as laptops and cell

phones (Bullying Statistics, 2013; Tolia, 2014). This cruel trend has become popular

among youth by posting insensitive messages and pictures that is often harmful and

irreversible. Stop bullying (n.d.) explained that cyberbullying is harder for students to

escape from because it includes the following: (a) being victimized 24 hours a day, 7

days a week, and can reach students even when they are alone, (b) involves hurtful

messages or images posted anonymously and dispersed rapidly to a large audience, and

(c) erasing harassing or inappropriate messages or images can be extremely difficult once

they have been posted.

Cyber victimization can have lasting effect on adolescents' well-being; causing

challenges and much concern for many adults (Feinberg & Robey, 2008; Bullying

Statistics, 2013). Tokunaga (2010) estimated that cyberbullying would affect 20-40% of

youth during their adolescence. In the study conducted by Baas et al. (2013), twenty-eight

elementary students from four different elementary schools participated in an

examination of cyberbullying. The study revealed that cyberbullying was a common

phenomenon in all four schools and that most of the participants were involved in some

form of cyberbullying. In another study, it was concluded that students who are involved

in bullying as either the victim or bully in the traditional sense would likely be involved

in cyberbullying incidents (Burton, Florell, Wygant, 2013). It is estimated that almost

43% of youth in the U.S. experienced some form of cyber victimization (National Crime

Prevention, 2007; No Bullying, 2014). Bullying Statistics (2013) reported that over 25%

of adolescents have been repeatedly bullied via their cell phones and the internet. More

recently, Hinduja and Patchin (2015) argued that the number for youth who experience

cyber victimization ranges from 10-40% depending on how cyberbullying is defined and

the age group of the study's' participants.

     With the staggering numbers of cases of cyberbullying, bullying is now being

associated with youth violence, consisting of both homicide and suicide (Bullying

Statistics, 2013). Victims of cyberbullying may be at a greater risk of suicide opposed to

victims who endure traditional bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Morgan, 2012;

Bullying Statistics, 2013). Dowd (2015) explained that bullying is a form of a destructive

violence that demands our attention and is a serious matter that must be taken seriously in

schools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] (2013) reported that a

staggering 17% of students who attend high school thought about committing suicide and

13.6% attempted suicide at least one time in the past 12 months. However, in a more

recent report from NCES (2014) revealed that out of 1,456 suicides of youth ranging

from ages 5-18, three of the suicides took place on the school premises in 2011. In the

same report, 1,336 homicides of youth ranging from ages 5-18, three took place on the

school premises (NCES, 2014). While this may not all be relevant to elementary school

students, it shows the importance of addressing all forms of bullying during an early age.

It is important to take into account tragedies such as the Columbine shooting

remembering that adolescents are a whole person and that school is not a solo act but

remains connected to the entire community (Dowd, 2015). As of recent, the government

has realized the seriousness of bullying and have passed various government initiatives

and educational acts to promote bullying awareness and safeguard children from the

effects of victimization (Allen, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

The review of literature suggested that young adolescents as early as elementary

school feel unsafe at school. In addition, the data revealed that victimization as early as

elementary school can lead to various acts of violence from physical altercations to gang

facilitation. Georgia was one of the first states to pass an antibullying legislation law and

was actively involved in informing the public that bullying affects student's emotional

and social well-being (Weaver, Brown, Weddle, & Aalsma, 2013). Bullying, whether in

or out of the school environment can cause both bullies and victims to have problems

academically and socially (Morgan, 2012). Although research from students' perceptions

regarding bullying exists, there is a gap in literature from teacher's standpoint (Dedousis-

Wallace et al., 2013; Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012).

Implications

The local community in which the school in this study is located consisted of school board, staff, students, and parents. Therefore, researching teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary school level could have a positive impact on social change within the local community. Depending on the research findings, school administrators may decide to implement an antibullying program to assist students and staff in understanding the importance of peer victimization. The antibullying program could possibly decrease bullying incidents, which would cause less disciplinary problems, allowing more time for what is important, teaching and learning. Along with increased teaching and learning, the possibility for positive academic outcomes, and an increase in students' standardized tests scores might emerge. Finally, the antibullying program may help students and teachers to develop a positive outlook on the school's environment as well as develop strategies that would assist students in becoming productive citizens within their community. The antibullying program could be a possible project in which I constructed a three-day workshop informing teachers on how to recognize, respond, and report bullying behaviors. It is important for school staff to recognize bullying behavior if they are going to be effective in addressing and reducing bullying issues in the classroom. The workshop would focus on providing PD to improve the school's learning environment and school climate as well as make the environment a safe place for students and staff members.

Summary

Section 1 of the project study included an introduction followed by the definition of the problem. The focus of the project study was centered on teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary school level. While some individuals viewed bullying as innocent child's play, researchers have provided data on the seriousness of this aggressive behavior. The conceptual framework, Bandura's (1973, 1986) social learning theory suggested that younger children and adolescence behaviors are influenced by their environment and social factors.

Section 2 of the project study provided a conceptual context outlining the methodology of the study by justifying the research design, giving explicit details on the method used to recruit participants, the characteristics of the participants, and the procedures utilized throughout the life of the project study. Lastly, detailed information was given on the data analysis process and methods used to ensure trustworthiness of the data process.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

Bullying is associated with antisocial behaviors that negatively affect the learning environment. Aggression and other disruptive acts can negatively affect academics and school climate (Goldweber et al., 2013; Wynne & Joo, 2011). As a result of these types of behaviors, the study site revealed a decline in the school climate report at the researched site from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015 (see Table 2). My study has the potential to raise bullying awareness, improve recognition and intervention, streamline the reporting process that can improve social interactions among staff and students, increase student achievement, and increase overall school climate.

In Section 2, I discuss the research design and approach, participants, data collection process, as well as the method used for data analysis. A qualitative, descriptive case study design was used that consisted of open-ended, face-to-face interviews with semistructured questions to gather data as they relate to teachers' perceptions of bullying. Questioning techniques afforded me the ability to gather rich data that could only be generated in a qualitative context (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Participants were purposefully selected based on the criteria that were set in place. I collected interview data via audio recordings and notes, documented the data in a Word document, and analyzed the data using open coding procedures that allowed themes to emerge until saturation was obtained. Creswell (2012) explained that when using qualitative methods, the researcher is able to supply validity by having participants, external reviewers, or data sources offer evidence of the accurateness of the information in the report.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

A qualitative case study design with an interview approach was selected to investigate the phenomena of bullying at ABC Elementary School from the teachers' perceptions. Due to the nature of this project study, using a descriptive case study design allowed me to gain a deeper understanding on how teachers perceived bullying. Merriam (2009) explained that qualitative researchers have an interest in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. Li and Baker (2012) further explained that a qualitative case study provides an understanding and detailed description of a particular topic.

Qualitative researchers rely on thick and rich description affording the researcher to gain a broader understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). These descriptions allowed me insight on the participants' experiences and perceptions and afforded me the ability to paint a picture of what was taking place within the school. The participants included eight elementary teachers. I used semistructured questions to obtain in-depth information as it relates to bullying.

Research Questions

The research questions for this project study were as follows (see Appendix B):

Research Question 1: How do teachers at ABC Elementary School define bullying?

Research Question 2: How do teachers at ABC Elementary School describe their experience in preventing and addressing bullying?

Research Question 3: What type of professional development do teachers at ABC Elementary School receive on bullying policies?

Justification for Research Design

Although many researchers in the field of education use quantitative methods to present information related to bullying through longitudinal studies, survey design, and meta-analysis (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Olweus, 1993; Rowan, 2007; Veenstra et al., 2014; Goryl et al., 2013), a quantitative approach was not beneficial for this particular project study. According to Lodico et al. (2010), quantitative researchers summarize results numerically; my goal was to gain a deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon. Creswell (2012) explained that the qualitative methodology comes in many forms such as a case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenological. As a result, all qualitative methods were considered and taken into account. Although a narrative approach or phenomenology research design may yield the same outcome, they both differ from a case study design. As I researched phenomenological designs, I found that that this particular design would not be a good fit because I sought to understand the participants' perceptions not the "essence" of the human experience (Lodico et al., 2010). A narrative approach is based on a life story. Ethnography is used to understand the cultural behaviors, values, attitudes, and belief of a group over an extended time period in an attempt to answer questions such as what, why, and how and culture, whereas the grounded theorists seek to discover a theory (Merriam, 2009). I chose not to use a grounded theory because I was not anticipating to establish theory through the data collected in this study.

A case study is used to explore more than one issue in a bounded environment. Therefore, I selected a descriptive case study design method which aligns with the purpose of my project study and with the research questions asked in the study. As a researcher, my goal was to understand teachers' shared perspectives in their natural environment, which deemed a case study to be more suitable (Yin, 2003).

<div align="center">**Participants**</div>

This project study took place at a Title I elementary school that was comprised of approximately 530 students, 54 staff members, and two administrators. In this section, I explain the procedures that were used in order to select and gain access to participants. In addition, I describe the methods that were taken to protect participants' rights.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

The primary goal for this study was to gain an understanding of teachers' perceptions and awareness of bullying at the elementary school level. Selecting a sample can be a complex process, and the researcher has to be knowledgeable of the population characteristics and sampling methods to ensure that the selected sample is valid (Kandola, Banner, O'Keefe-McCarthy, & Jassal, 2014). Both Creswell (2012) and Merriam (2009) explained that qualitative researchers use participants who are available and convenient in nonprobability sampling. Both purposeful sampling and convenience sampling were used when selecting participants for this study. The target population consisted of certified teachers who taught students during the SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015. This school had a total of 33 general education teachers, eight special education teachers, and five special area teachers. An invitation was sent out to eight general

education teachers, two special education teachers, and five special area teachers. Creswell (2012) wrote, "In purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (p. 206). In case studies, researchers must provide criteria when designing a qualitative study for studying individuals (Creswell, 2012). From the sample size, eight participants were selected to partake in the project study. According to Creswell (2012), case studies consist of smaller sample sizes because the data collection is time consuming and the analyzing process is complex. In addition, the sample size was appropriate because conducting too many interviews can weaken and hinder the depth of information (Bryman, 2012). A sample size of eight participants allowed me to dive deeper into the data.

The participants included certified teachers who had experience working with students who were in the grade levels (see Table 2) during the SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015. This was based on an analysis of data that revealed an increase in school suspensions for the SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015 for grade levels (see Table 2). Creswell (2012) explained that in qualitative research, purposeful sampling affords the researchers to select people or sites that can best assist them in understanding the central problem.

Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

The role of a researcher is to build a rapport and foster a trusting relationship with participants (Morrison, Gregory, & Thibodeau, 2012). My role as a classroom teacher at the research site granted me an opportunity to work in a professional setting with the selected participants, partake in grade-level meetings and departmental meetings, and

make them more comfortable to speak with me about their perceptions of bullying.

Lodico et al. (2010) explained that having a positive relationship with participants could

allow the researcher to gain an insider view into the participants' world. Like other

educators, I have had challenges trying to implement positive social change and finding

an effective approach to tackling the problem of bullying. Every year, I addressed the

topic of bullying with students, teachers, and administrators; however, bullying is an

issue that continues to plague the school environment. My experiences dealing with

bullying on a regular basis have enlightened me of the need for stronger bullying policies

at the elementary level. This enlightenment motivated me to use my project study as an

opportunity to give teachers a voice as it relates to bullying.

Ethical Considerations

There were protocols and guidelines established by Walden University to protect

the rights of the participants in the research study. In order to protect participants' rights

there were measures required to ensure that ethical protection was provided (Alavi,

Roberts, Sutton, Axas, & Repetti, 2015). The first requirement consisted of completing a

web-based training course offered through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on

protecting human participants in which I received a certification number 1632510 (see

Appendix D). Second, I had to gain approval from Walden's Institutional Review Board

(IRB), and I received approval on August 1st, 2016. My approval number is 08-01-16-

0409221, and it expires on July 31, 2017. Once permission was granted from Walden's

IRB, I obtained permission from ABC School District's Research Review Board (RRB)

to conduct my project study at ABC Elementary School (pseudonym). Next, I e-mailed a

letter of cooperation to the principal explaining the purpose of my study and obtained

permission to contact potential participants. Only after permission was granted from all

mentioned parties did I proceed with the informed consent process, which consisted of

inviting potential participants to participate in the project study (see Appendix E). The

informed consent process included e-mailing participants with the following: (a) a

detailed overview of the study, (b) type of data that will be collected, (c) and the amount

of time participants can expect to allocate to the study. I informed each participant of

their rights, which included the following: (a) they can elect not to answer any question

that makes them feel uncomfortable, (b) all information including their identity will

remain confidential, (c) possible benefits and risks, (d) they have the right to withdraw

from the study at any time without harm, and (e) there is no monetary reward for

participating in the study. The chosen participants voluntarily signed the consent form

before participating in the interview and were provided a signed copy for their personal

records.

Participants' interviews were conducted during nonbusiness hours in locations

that offered privacy with a locked door that was requested by the participant for

convenience and comfort. Each participant was assigned a code in order to protect his or

her identity. The codes were used to track data and are only known to myself and the

participant. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed before storing away in a

locked file cabinet at my personal residence. All data collected were stored and

password-protected on my computer and backed up on a password-protected hard drive.

Finally, all data associated with this study are stored in a locked file cabinet in my home in which it will be destroyed after a period of 5 years.

Data Collection

Lodico et al. (2010) explained that collecting and analyzing data in qualitative research is an inductive process. Data are collected over the duration of the project study and combined to give a broader description and conclusion. Qualitative researchers normally participate in a series of steps during the data collection process, which includes the following: (a) gaining access to participants, (b) establishing trust with participants, (c) collecting and analyzing data, and (4) and solving technical field and data storage issues (Creswell, 2007). I conducted semistructured interviews with eight elementary school teachers individually, face-to-face lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. I audio recorded and used a reflective journal to jot down notes during the interviews to ensure accuracy. There were six questions with additional probe questions; an interview protocol was used as a guideline during the interviews consisting of semistructured and open-ended questions to elicit opinions and views from participants (See Appendix B (Creswell, 2012). The protocol was used as a reminder to explain the purpose of the study to participants, the informed consent process, the structure of the interview questions, and the follow-up process (Jacob & Furgerson, year). The research questions were created based on the conceptual framework of Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory and Bandura's (1973, 1986) social learning theory of aggression. The interview questions were designed to address each of the research questions.

An open-ended, semistructured interview design that included six questions with additional probe questions to elicit participant opinions and views was used to collect rich descriptive data regarding teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary level. I provided participants with a copy of the interview questions prior to conducting the interview to ensure that they were comfortable with proceeding with the process. Being an educator, I drew on my experience to connect with participants (teachers) in making them feel more comfortable during the interview process. Lodico et al. (2010) suggested that the interview should feel more like a conversation as opposed to an actual interview. Participants were advised that their participation is strictly voluntary and that they have the option to opt out the study at any time. Each interview was held during non-school hours at a time and location chosen by the participant for convenience and privacy purposes.

System for Keeping Track of Data

During the duration of the data collection process, I kept a reflective journal to document my experiences or any questions that arose during the data analysis process. In addition, each participant was grouped by colors and assigned a numerical code such as Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and so on, which is discussed in the findings. Regular education teachers were assigned yellow, special education teachers assigned orange, and special area teachers were assigned blue. The information was stored in a password-secured, Word document on my computer and backed up on a password-protected hard drive. Due to the small number of participants involved in this case study, I opted to identify which

participants were general education teachers, special education teachers, or special area

teachers as well as the grade level taught to further protect their identities.

Role of the Researcher

I have worked as a regular education teacher at ABC School District for the past 7

years. My role as a faculty member and the years spent at ABC have afforded me the

ability to establish a positive rapport with the participants. For instance, I have attended

grade level meetings, weekly staff meetings, and PD trainings with teachers and support

staff across grade levels and subject levels. In addition, I have never worked in any

managerial role nor have I worked in a supervisory role to any of the participants at the

research site. I stopped reviewing here. Please go through the rest of your section and

look for the patterns I pointed out to you. I will now look at Section 3.

Data Analysis

In this qualitative case study design, I was solely responsible for the data

collection process. Merriam (2009) explained that the researcher is the primary

instrument for collecting and analyzing data in qualitative research. The analysis portion

of the research study is an important piece in finding meaning in the collected data. In

order for a researcher to make data come alive, they must read it over and over again,

code it, color it, and keep track of possible themes that emerge from the data (Merriam,

2002). The data analyzed in this study consisted of archival data, interviews, and self-

reported observations. I then began to triangulate the data by following a series of steps

using a systematic approach.

All interviews were transcribed from the recording device within 24 to 72 hours following each interview. I created a typed transcript in which I noted gestures and words the interviewees made during their interview. After the transcriptions was completed, I scheduled an individual face-to-face follow-up interview also known as member's checking which allowed the participants to check for any discrepancies; this process allowed me to seek further clarity if needed as well as ask additional questions. Member checking allows each participant to review a copy of their draft findings and confirm that the findings are accurate (Creswell, 2008). Once the participants had an opportunity to read, make suggestions, and approve their interview transcript, I began to code the transcriptions identifying recurring ideas, patterns, and themes that originated from the guiding research questions and answers provided from the interviews. I used a systematic approach involving a series of chronological steps. The first step consisted of the hand analysis method in which I was able to inductively identify recurring patterns, ideas, and themes. Next, I utilized open coding, where I had to read and reread through the transcripts while highlighting information that indicated patterns, themes, and similarities to reduce data into smaller segments. The last step consisted of axial coding which is linking data into categories. Both, the open and axial coding is a process that is iterative and assisted me to discover themes and subthemes for my study. This process provided me with a clear visual as to how the data is linked while forming a descriptive narrative (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010; Glaser & Laudel, 2013).

Evidence of Quality

Establishing evidence of quality when conducting qualitative research can be a difficult task. However, Merriam (2009) explained that it is imperative for researchers to make every attempt to validate the quality of their research by linking their study findings to their problem and research questions. In this project study, triangulation which included member checking was utilized to gain credibility and trustworthiness (Hussein, 2009). By using member checking, I was able to seize the accuracy of the participants' words (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2012). Each transcript was reviewed multiple times while listening to the audio recordings simultaneously. I double checked my coding to ensure that it was properly aligned with the right data before asking the participants to review the data for accuracy. Next, individual follow-up interviews were scheduled with each participant for them to review the data to ensure accuracy. Refer to Appendix F for the copy of a sample transcribed interview. In conclusion, I proceeded by reviewing my coding to confirm that my themes and assigned data were properly matched. A sample of the data codes and themes are included in Appendix G.

Procedures for Dealing with Discrepant Cases

I conducted 8 interviews with certified elementary school teachers who fit the criteria set for this case study. However, there were 15 teachers who were eligible to take part in the study. Therefore, if any of the participants dropped out of the study for any reason, there were eligible participants who were available to take their place. As explained to participants, participation is strictly voluntary and teachers had an option to withdraw from the study anytime without penalty. For example, if a participant became

ill and had to go out on medical leave, I would have proceeded to ask another eligible

participant to volunteer and take part in the study.

Triangulation

I utilized a variety of data sources as a means of triangulation such as interviews,

public documents, public websites, student code of conduct, and district and school

bullying policies. Multiple strategies were utilized for this qualitative case study,

including member checking (affording participants an opportunity to review draft

findings as well as discuss and comment on the findings from the interviews),

triangulation (using data sources to confirm emerging findings), and thick, rich

description (providing a rich filled description so that readers can determine the

credibility of the research) (Merriam, 2009). I compared the interview transcripts to

public documents, student code of conduct, and district and school bullying policy

performing a cross-check of the data. The rationale for incorporating multiple sources of

data such as documents and interviews is an opportunity to address the behavioral issues

on a large scale as well as develop opportunities for converging lines of inquiry (Yin,

2009). He went on to discuss that case study findings are even more persuasive when

multiple sources are utilized. In my case study, I provided multiple perspectives through

individual interviews from eight certified general education teachers, special area

teachers, and special education teachers that work with a variety of grade levels

throughout the school.

Limitations

This case study does have its limitations since the primary focus was on a particular elementary school. Although, an invitation was emailed to a principal at second elementary school with similar demographics and revealed high suspension rates due to bullying/harassment and violence incidents. In addition, I followed-up with a telephone call to introduce myself and to explain my project study in which I had to leave a voicemail. However, a response was never received and I therefore had to proceed with my study. Lodico et al. (2010) suggested that convenience sampling is usually undesirable because it limits the study due to inability to generalize to a larger population. Thus, Lodico et al. (2010) also stated that qualitative researcher's primary focus is to examine individuals in their natural setting, and they have little interest in generalizing the results beyond the participants in the study. Transferability is another potential limitation to this case study design which involves researcher bias. When using a case study design, the researcher is responsible for collecting and analyzing the data (Merriam, 2010). Merriam added that a researcher may be unaware of biases and that bias could affect the final outcome.

Data Analysis Results

During this process, data was generated, gathered, and recorded to gain a broader understanding of teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary school level. The data was generated through teacher interviews using an audio recorder for accuracy. During the transcription process, data was typed into a Word document, hand-analyzed, and saved on a password protected laptop and backed-up on a password protected hard-

drive. As I carefully analyzed the transcribed interviews, five main themes emerged: (1) teachers' perceptions are important in bullying prevention; (2) physical and verbal bullying are the most prominent acts in elementary school; and (3) cyberbullying is becoming more prominent among elementary students; (4) school's policy for managing bullying; and (5) more professional development on intervention and prevention is needed.

Findings

Research Question 1: How do teachers at ABC Elementary School define bullying?

Research Question 2: How do teachers at ABC Elementary School describe their experience in preventing and addressing bullying behaviors?

Research Question 3: What type of professional development do teachers at ABC Elementary School receive on bullying policies?

A qualitative approach was used that allowed me to address the problem and guiding research questions. I chose this approach because it afforded me the flexibility to explore an in-depth understanding of bullying from the viewpoint of 8 elementary school teachers in their natural setting. The interview was the primary source of data. The interviews revealed clusters of information, themes, and patterns which began to emerge. I used open and axial coding by reading and rereading through transcripts and color coding patterns, common themes, and similarities. This process allowed me to make sense of the content of the transcripts by breaking down the information into smaller chunks, creating subgroups, and making sure that the information was accurate. Some of

the themes that emerged from my analysis were student's behavior, societal influences, school effectiveness, and teacher's self-efficacy. The themes that developed are consistent with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive learning theory which explains that our capabilities are influenced by our beliefs and decisions. According to Bandura (1977), individuals may be aware that certain achievements could result in a desired outcome; however, if they lack the necessary beliefs that they have the ability to perform such duties then the information is virtually useless.

Summary of Findings

Theme 1: Teachers' perceptions are important in bullying prevention. The first theme to emerge was established based on the patterns and relationships from the participants' responses. The findings revealed that every teacher had encountered or witnessed some degree of school bullying and/or has had a bullying incident reported to them by a student or parent. Participants in the study described bullying to be cyber, physical, and verbal (see Table 3) as suggested by (Olweus 1993) and Weber et al. (2013). Even though the teachers used different methods in diffusing aggressive acts, they all reported taking the time to investigate the situation by speaking with students involved to learn if the situation is in fact bullying. For example, Teacher 8 said, "If I witness bullying myself, then I may have a discussion with both people. And if I do find that it is a serious case of bullying, then I would report it to administration, if I find out that it needs to go that far". Versus Teacher 4 who stated, "If it is verbal bullying, we usually talk about how our words can be hurtful and if it's sneaky then usually I talk to the person after class concerning that". However, Teacher 4 went on to explain that the

following, "If it's physical, then I usually report it right away by writing it up". Based on the severity of the situation, several teachers reported that they would try various methods before reporting the incident to an administrator, while others reported that they would automatically report the incident to an administrator.

Table 3

Percentage of Teachers Who Experienced Physical, Verbal, and Cyber Bullying Behaviors

Bullying Behaviors	Percentage of Teachers
Physical	50%
Verbal	62.5%
Cyber	37.5%

Note: Teachers explained their personal experiences with school bullying.

Participants reported that they had students to report bullying acts or have personally observed acts of physical and/or verbal bullying. More teachers reported observing or having student to report verbal bullying (62.5%) acts to them. Next, 50% of the participants reported acts of physical bullying and 37.5% reported cyberbullying acts.

Theme 2: Physical and verbal bullying are the most perceived acts of aggressive acts amongst participants. Based on the findings, participants in the study perceived physical and verbal bullying to be the most predominant forms of bullying in elementary school. The most perceived form of bullying amongst teachers was verbal bullying. Verbal bullying was described as name calling, teasing, saying mean things, threatening or intimidating another student, and spreading rumors (see Table 3). Teacher 2 explained, "That students have reported other students saying mean things to them,

making fun of how they look, or making fun of the type of clothes they wear". Verbal bullying acts consisted of name calling, teasing, or talking about other students. These behaviors are also referred to as overt bullying which means easily to recognize (Olweus, 1993). Physical bullying was the second highest perceived bullying behavior among teachers which includes pushing, kicking, shoving, pushing, and hitting other students (see Table 3). Teacher 4 stated, "The types of bullying have been both physical and verbal that I've seen. The strength of the bullying has been the diversity, there has been some very subtle and some bullying that has been very blatant". Some of the physical acts of bullying were described as fighting, pushing, shoving, tripping, and hitting (see Table 4).

Cyberbullying was the least perceived form of bullying amongst participants; however, several teachers did speak about the increase of cyber bullying (see Table 3). Cyberbullying is referred to as bullying acts conducted with the use of technological devices (Bauman, Toomey, & Walker, 2013) (see Table 4). Teacher 2 responding on cyberbully by saying, "The social media component is the most predominant form of bullying in elementary even though they shouldn't have any social media accounts because they are not of age but you hear more of that nowadays".

Table 4

Teachers' Explanations of Bullying Behaviors

Types of Bullying Behaviors	Teachers' Explanations
Physical	"pushing, shoving, tripping, touching, and hitting other students"

(continued)

Verbal	"name calling and teasing saying mean things gossiping (spreading rumors) threatening and intimidating"
Cyber	"bullying with the use of technological devices such as cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, and text messages"

Note: Teacher's definition of bullying.

Participants were effectively able to define that bullying is an unwarranted

repeated behavior that is used to intimidate someone. They described various forms of

bullying that has been reported to them by either students or parents. Most of the bullying

observed was physical, verbal, and cyberbullying.

Theme 3: Cyberbullying is becoming more common in elementary schools.

While most of the participants found verbal or physical bullying to more common in

elementary school; 37.5% of the teachers described cyberbullying to be the most

predominant form of bullying. Teacher 3 explained that more students are reporting other

students writing negative things about them on social media. Teacher 3 stated, "I don't

think that they understand that it is cyberbullying, I think that they are kids and that they

are trying to impress someone". Teacher 8 said, "I received a phone call from a parent

who reported to me that a student was cyberbullying her child via cellphone by sending

text messages". Several teachers (37.5%) reported having cyberbullying acts reported to

them during their interview (see Table 3). This is in alignment with emerging evidence

that suggests that it's possible that educators are oblivious of the magnitude of

cyberbullying among students (Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2012). The difference

between cyberbullying and traditional bullying is that cyberbullying is more anonymous

and pervasive while reaching victims at home as well as at school, has potential to reach large audiences, and easier to hide from adults (Baas, de Jong, & Constance, 2013). This anonymity would explain why teachers reported cyberbullying as the least common form of bullying because it falls under covert bullying which means that it is difficult to recognize and usually takes place off school grounds.

Theme 4: School's policy for managing bullying. The fourth theme to emerged was the school's policy in relation to managing bullying. On average, 50% of the teachers said that the school had written protocols in place that they were required to follow in regards to managing bullying. Teacher 5 stated, "We have a bullying protocol where teachers should talk to the students to get all of the information, fill out the bullying sheet, and give the information to the administrators who will do a thorough investigation". Teacher 6 explained, "As a teacher, you report to an administrator and what they do is refer to the student code of conduct". Two teachers specifically referenced the Student Code of Conduct Handbook (see Table 5). The Code of Student Conduct identifies rules of student behavior and the procedures for enforcing discipline for students who have violated the rules (JCD, 2016). However, Teacher 2 claimed that they were unaware of the school's policy and guidelines for managing bullying (see Table 5). Also, teachers gave different answers for the school's policy and guidelines for managing bullying (see Table 5). For instance, Teacher 2 said, "I honestly don't know, there are policies in place but maybe it hasn't been shared with me". Teacher 1 stated, "We do have a protocol that we follow to ensure that we address bullying. I have to do my part and then it has to go up the chain of command and if necessary we go to the

counselor and then beyond that it does need to be addressed so that the child knows that

that it's been address". In comparison, Teacher 3 reported, "I think a precursor for

managing bullying is whatever discipline plan that you have in place. You have verbal

warnings, the students can earn incentives, seat change, phone call home, and if that

doesn't work, a referral to an administrator". This may suggest a need for further in-

service training for teachings on the policy and guidelines for reporting and managing

bullying situations.

Table 5

Teachers' Explanations on School's Policy for Addressing and Reporting Bullying

Participants	School's Policy for Addressing and Reporting Bullying
Teacher 1	"There is a protocol, I have to do my part and then it has to go up chain of command and if necessary we refer it to the counselor"
Teacher 2	"I honestly can't say. There are policies in place but it hasn't been shared with me"
Teacher 3	"You have verbal warnings, students can earn point incentives, seat change, phone call home, and if that doesn't work referral to an administrative "
Teacher 4	"One is the code of conduct that's one of our posted rules and it's also a district policy for bullying"
Teacher 5	"They have protocol that is set by the district, they have to take every allegation seriously and investigate it. Teachers follow the protocol that is set forth by educating students about bullying, what's considered bullying, and how to behave"
Teacher 6	"As a teacher you do report it to an administrator and what they do is refer to the code of conduct. Students when they first get here are required to take a test that goes over all of the different rules and what bullying is so they know the meaning"

(continued)

| Teacher 7 | "We have referral forms; we also have counselors that meet with the kids and work in groups to address any community concerns in the classroom as well as writing it up to an administrator" |
| Teacher 8 | "We have guidance counselors, it's reported to an administrator and they may refer it to the guidance counselors. I think that's what we have in place at the school" |

Note: Participants' descriptions of the school's policy for addressing and reporting

bullying differed.

Theme 5: Professional development on bullying intervention and prevention.

The last theme to emerge was the lack of professional development of bullying

intervention and prevention. Every teacher acknowledged that they received professional

development training on bullying at the beginning of the school year. However, the

training was described as a bunch of PowerPoint slides that provided teachers with a lot

of definitions and various examples of bullying. Teacher 1 said, "What I think is that we

could use a little bit more comprehensive professional development on bullying".

Teacher 2 response to the interview question regarding the additional need for future PD

is as follows, "Absolutely, again my perception is that we need to have a clear protocol of

what the steps are in handling bullying". In spite of receiving the bullying training, one

teacher claimed that they were either unaware or unsure of the school's policy for

managing bullying. Another teacher explained that they were uncomfortable with

handling major bullying issues because of the lack of bullying training. Teacher 5

response to the question in regards to is more PD on bullying needed is as follows: "Yes,

I think that more professional development is needed as it is more people speaking on

bullying or saying that they are victims of bullying, there is more violence, and suicides

from kids that feel that they are being bullied, so it is something that we cannot take lightly. Everyone should be well versed so that if can be addressed with fidelity". According to Winsper, Lereya, Zanarini, and Wolke (2012), children who are repeated bullied by their peers over a long period of time opposed to those bullied for a short period of time, have been reported to have an increased risk for adverse outcomes, such as psychiatric problems in childhood. Adolescent youth exposed to various forms of aggressive and violent behaviors are less likely to feel connected with their school environment and more likely to commit suicide (Crepeau-Hobson & Leech, 2013; Borofsky, Kellerman, Baucom, Oliver, & Margolin, 2013).

It is important to note that teachers' reporting practices varied from one teacher to the next as it relates to responding to bullying incidents (see Table 6). Fifty percent of the teachers stated that they would automatically report students involved in a bullying incident to an administrator. In addition, participants described their confidence level in recognizing bullying behaviors (see Table 8). Teacher 8 stated, "A lot of things that are happening at the school, kids know how to hide it from teachers and it's not until you have done a lot of investigating when you find out oh my God, that was really happening. So I am going to say that my confidence level is a 5 on a scale from 1-10". Twenty-five percent of the participants rated themselves as having high levels of confidence, seventy-five percent having medium levels of confidence, and zero percent having low levels of confidence in recognizing bullying situations (see Table 7).

Table 6

Teachers' Explanations of How They Respond to Bullying Behaviors When Reported by Students or When They Witness Bullying Situations.

Participants	Explanations Responding to Bullying Behaviors
Teacher 1	"Normally, I try to listen to both sides, I have the students to write a statement explaining what happened, I give them advice, separate them, and monitor the situation. When I witness bullying I then report it to an administrator".
Teacher 2	"I report it to administration and/or refer it the counseling department."
Teacher 3	"when I witness bullying I pull the student to the side to have a conversation with them and explain that their behavior is not nice. If an incident is reported to me, I immediately submit the bullying form to our administrators".
Teacher 4	"I go back to classroom expectations and lecture on respecting each other. If it's physical, I write it up immediately. If it's verbal we usually talk about how words can be hurtful and if it's sneaky I'll talk to them after class".
Teacher 5	"I first make sure the student is alright, get a good understanding of the situation, secure that students are emotionally fine and then I follow the protocol by taking notes and submit the bullying sheet to the administrators".
Teacher 6	"I automatically let an administrator know. If the situation seems a little irate or out of hand I usually try to diffuse the situation but I also make a referral to an administrator".
Teacher 7	"I start off the school year saying that I will not make a big statement and letting them know that you can come to me and talk to me or you can leave me a note in my chair anonymously".

Teacher 8	"if a child or parent uses the word bullying, then I believe the teacher is to give them a form and have them to fill it out in their own words to report the bullying".

Note: Response to Bullying Behaviors. Participants reporting methods as it relates to bullying incidents varied from one teacher to the next. Depending on the severity of the situation, the teacher may decide to speak to all students involved. Fifty percent of the participants stated that they would report the bullying incident to an administrator.

Table 7

Percentage of Teachers Who Rated Their Confidence Level in Recognizing Bullying Behaviors as Not Confident, Somewhat Confident, or Very Confident

Teacher's Confidence Level	Percentage of Teachers
Not Confident	0
Somewhat Confident	75
Very Confident	25

Note: Confidence Levels. Participants rated their confidence levels by self-assessing their ability to recognize bullying behaviors. They rate themselves using three categories: not confident (low confidence), somewhat confident (medium confidence level), or very confident (high confidence level). No teacher reported themselves as not confident, 75% reported as being somewhat confident, and 25% acknowledged that they were very confident in recognizing bullying behaviors.

Table 8

Teachers' Explanations of How They Respond to Bullying Behaviors When Reported by Students or When They Witness Bullying Situations.

Not Confident	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident
*	"I am often in situations where we are into dialogue and I recognize facial expressions or body language that enables me to see a difference is a child"	"I am very aware and understanding and can see those things that are true bullying and things where the kids are just whining"
*	"things that may not bother me or I don't necessarily see see as bullying or something that will not hurt my feelings may hurt someone else, so I have to stay mindful of that" may hurt someone else, so I	"if you see the same kid engaging in the same pattern of behavior, it could be name calling, physical bullying and it's the same kid over and over"
*	"you often times see a consistency of those kids who are bullies in class. But there are those situations where you don't see, not saying that it's not happening but you are just not catching it in time"	
*	"I guess I catch some and I miss some. Everything is not seen, for example I taught just this week alone, today is Monday and already a kid is hitting another kid"	
*	"A lot of things are happening at school, kids know how to hide it from teachers and it's not until you have a done a lot of investigating when you find out you are surprised"	
*	"there are some incidences where I'm looking at situations and I'm	

> not really sure if that is really
> considered bullying. Then there
> are others where I am like yes,
> that is definitely know that this
> is a bullying situation and I know
> what I need to do"

Note: This table offers an explanation of the participants' confidence level in recognizing

bullying situations. Teachers were asked to self-assess themselves using three categories:

Not Confident, Somewhat Confident, and Very Confident in Recognizing Bullying

Behaviors.

Participants who self-assessed their confidence level as somewhat confident

explained that they caught some bullying behaviors but was unable to catch all. Some

examples of bullying behaviors that went unnoticed were when students were in transient

or crowded areas such as the restroom, cafeteria, or on the playground. Participants who

reported having high confident levels suggested that they would be able to recognize

bullying behaviors due to the fact that it is usually the same students partaking in the

same type of behaviors repeatedly.

Discrepant Cases

All data was reviewed for recurring patterns and themes without eliminating any

specific set of data that might challenge the general data collected. Although there were

many commonalities that emerged from the findings, the findings did indicate some

discrepancy. For instance, Teacher 2 revealed that she was unaware of the school's policy

for managing school bullying. Every participant in the study responded to bullying

behaviors. Every teacher responded to bullying behaviors whether it was verbally or they

submitted a bullying referral to an administrator. However, teachers reporting practices

differed when it came to referring bullying incidents to administrators or a counselor. Another form of discrepancy that emerged from the data analysis was that several teachers reported being more lineated with reporting students who were involved in verbal bullying incidents opposed to students who were involved in physical bullying incidents. In addition, several teachers were more lineate when students were involved in verbal bullying was another form of discrepancy that emerged in the data. None of the teachers reported that their confidence level was low when it comes to recognizing bullying. One teacher reported that further professional learning on bullying was not needed. Lodico et al. (2010) explained that social constructivists understand that individuals' construct meaning from their personal experiences. Based on the data collected, teachers' responses revealed different means for reporting bullying incidents, responded differently to verbal bullying opposed to physical bullying, and was unaware of the school's policy for managing and reporting bullying. Saturation of the data was reached by coding all data into themes and subthemes prior to the results be reported in a narrative form.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1: How do teachers at ABC Elementary School define bullying? Teachers' perceptions are important in bullying prevention. The first theme that emerged was strictly established on the relationships in responses from the participants. The findings revealed that every teacher had encountered or witnessed some type of school bullying and/or has had an incident reported to them by a student. Participants in the study described bullying to be cyber, physical, and verbal (see Table 4) as suggested

by (Olweus 1993) and Weber et al. (2013). They described bullying characteristics to be

an aggressive behavior that is intentional and repeated toward what is perceived to be a

weaker student.

Teacher 2 stated:

"Over the years I've seen, personally witnessed students physically getting

aggressive with students in terms of pushing and tripping students. I also had

students come and reported that students have said mean things to them, making

fun of how they look, the types of clothes they wear. And these are behaviors that

are being displayed from the same students over and over again".

These are bullying characteristics are typically taught during staff bullying

prevention development trainings (Copeland et al., 2013; Wolke, Angold, & Costello,

2013; Compton et al, 2014). Even though the teachers used different methods in diffusing

aggressive acts, they all reported taking the time to investigate the situation by speaking

with students involved to learn if the situation is bullying (see Table 6).

Teachers spend more time per day with students and are responsible for the

students as well as in charge for the events that take place during school hours

(Oldenburg et al., 2014). Strohmeier and Noam (2012) wrote, "Adequate responses by

teachers are considered to be most important in a whole-school approach to intervention

and prevention". However, in order for teachers to intervene or prevent bullying acts

from occurring, they must be knowledgeable on the topic. Direct bullying is described as

acts that are blunt, obvious, overt, often displayed in the same vicinity as the victim and

includes physical and verbal harassment that is repeated toward a single victim (Olweus,

1993). Approximately, 75% of the teachers in the present study describe direct bullying acts to be the most observed or reported by students. Other forms of direct bullying include hitting, name calling, kicking, shoving, teasing, damaging one's personal property or stealing, and humiliation (Khawar & Malik, 2016). In comparison, 50% of the teachers described covert bullying to be the most witnessed or reported by students.

Teacher 3 stated:

"I have witnessed students making fun of other students but as far as students reporting episodes of bullying to me? I've noticed students reporting that other students are calling them names, reporting somebody is writing something about me on social media, or somebody is putting their hands on me. These are the behaviors that have been reported to me that I have not necessarily witnessed".

Teacher 7 said:

"A lot of the bullying is not very obvious, it's more covert and a lot of times I find that it is going on in the bathroom or in a transition period where the teacher is not totally in a place where they are able to see all of the kids. A lot of the kids are telling me that it is happening on the bus, in the cafeteria, or in the bathroom".

Indirect bullying is more covert and involves mainly relational and cyber types of bullying (Khawar & Malik, 2016). These types of behaviors are undercover in nature and often include spreading rumors and exclusion of peers. Cyber bullying is another exclusion form of bullying that has emerged and is used through communication technology (e.g. mobile, internet, etc.) to purposely hurt others through intimidating behavior (Khawar & Malik, 2016; Shaw, Dooley, Cross, Zubrick, & Waters, 2013). All

participants defined bullying behaviors as unwanted, aggressive, repeated, intentional, and overpowering. These bullying characteristics are normally taught to staff in bullying prevention trainings (Compton et al., 2014; Copeland et al., 2013; Wolke et al., 2013).

Most teachers in the study rated themselves as having medium confident levels and high confident levels in term of recognizing bullying behaviors (see Table 7). Teachers who viewed themselves as having somewhat confident levels in recognizing bullying behaviors or situations felt that they would be able to detect if a student is being bullied. Each participant did acknowledge that there are times when they feel that they are unable to recognize if bullying is taking place. One teacher stated, "A lot of times I find that it is going on in the bathrooms or in a transitional period where the teacher is not in a position to see all of the kids". Teachers who reported having medium confident levels also discussed how it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between conflict and bullying situations in which they would just refer the students to an administrator. Teachers who reported having high levels of confidence in recognizing bullying behaviors felt that they had a pretty good gauge on picking up on repeated patterns or a change in behavior from the student who is being bullied. Teacher 2 reported, "I am very confident in terms of recognizing bullying behavior; I say that because if you see the same child engaging in the same pattern of behavior, it could be name calling or physical bullying and it's occurring over and over". In comparison, Teacher 1 stated, "I think that I am very aware and understanding and can see those things that are true bullying opposed to where the kids are just whining because someone is looking at them the wrong way". Conversely, findings from one study suggests that students move to more

covert means of bullying such as cyberbullying via electronic means and social exclusion

if they perceive their teacher to be highly capable in addressing bullying incidents

(Elledge et al., 2013). This indicates that in such situations, students could choice

alternate means of bullying in which could make it difficult for teachers to detect and

monitor.

All of the teachers in the study believed that the major contributors to bullying

either stemmed from a child's home environment, lack of security, lack of empathy, low

self-esteem, peer pressure, or not being properly taught how to socially interact with

others at home. Teacher 7 reported, "Many times they've been picked on so they are

going to find what I say is the weakest link, someone weaker than they are to target who

they think that isn't going to fight back or that won't maybe run and tell on them".

Teacher 4 stated, "I truly believe that it is a societal problem, we have lost respect for a

line where children have not been taught what is not appropriate for them. They also

witness and see so much in their youth that is on television and in their music that those

things have more influence that we understand". According to Saarento, Garandeau, and

Salmivalli (2015), recognizing influential factors can assist to further establish school-

based antibullying initiatives to further expand the positive development of students and

the fully functioning of schools as social systems. The result of the school environment

on teachers' beliefs, behaviors, and expectations is a mesosystem that explains the

relationship between school environment and the teachers influences on students

(Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This is important when identifying school climate factors that

may influence an educator's self-efficacy and expectations as well as provide guidance

for those creating preventive interventions (Skinner, Babinski, & Gifford, 2014).

In a recent study, it was suggested that victimization rates were higher in

classrooms where teachers contributed bullying to factors in which they had no control of

(e.g. victims' behavior) and teachers themselves had a history of bullying others

(Oldenburg et al., 2014). The study went on to explain that teachers who believed that

they could handle bullying in the classroom also had higher levels of victimization.

However, based on the teachers' efforts, or lack of efforts to mediate, they could affect

classroom norms for bullying-related behaviors as well as the occurrence of these

behaviors (Saarento, Karna, Hodges, & Salmivalli, 2013). This could pose a potential risk

for all student's well-being. One research study reported that a survey with 369

elementary students was conducted which revealed high rates of aggression and

victimization that contributed to a negative school climate with high-risk behaviors

(Giovazolias, Kourkoutas, Mitsopoulou, & Georgiadi, 2010). In schools where negative

aggressive behavior is the norm, even students who are not taking part in bullying

behaviors are at risk emotionally or academically (Reuland & Mikami, 2014).

Research Question 2: How do teachers at ABC School describe their experience

in preventing and addressing bullying behaviors? Educators have an important role in

preventing bullying was a major theme that emerged from the patterns of the data

analysis process. Oldenburg et al. (2014) argued that the beliefs of a teacher on the causes

of bullying is probable to impact how they feel about bullying taking place in their

classrooms and if they are likely to intervene when bullying situations arise. Establishing

caring, fair, and supportive relationships amongst adults and peers are crucial in developing a school climate that has low aggression and victimization (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014). While teachers may feel confident in addressing bullying behaviors, they usually underrate the volume of bullying that impedes the schoolhouse (Strohmeier & Noam, 2012). One study revealed that 22% of students were bullied two or more times in the past month; of those, between 30% and 53% reported the incident to a teacher (Rigby, 2014).

When dealing with bullying situations, it is important that teachers understand the dynamics of bullying. Understanding how bullying affects youth is critical to recognizing and considering when and how to intervene (Bells & Willis, 2016). One research study reported that teachers perceived verbal bullying to be less serious than physical bullying (Yoon & Kerber, 2003). This also happens to be in alignment with the current study, participants reported that they would talk with students involved in verbal bullying opposed to immediately submitting a bullying referral for those involved in physical bullying. Students who display aggressive behavior has been typically defined as lacking social and problem-solving skills; being disruptive and impulsive, shunned by their peers, unpopular with teachers, and chastised by parents (Bells & Willis, 2016). They went on to conclude that unlike bullies who move into less physical acts of bullying as they mature, those who are victims of aggression continue to partake in aggressive behavior.

Based on the findings, the perceptions and experiences of student bullying and how teachers responded to bullying differed but very similar in nature. For the most part, teachers viewed physical and verbal bullying to the be the most common types of

bullying observed or reported by students in elementary school. Verbal acts of aggression were described as name calling and teasing. Physical acts of aggression were reported by teachers in the study as hitting, kicking, pushing, and shoving other students. The *Code of Student Conduct-Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* (2016) define bullying as:

> Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding from a group on purpose (JCD, 2016, p. 33).

While the majority of the teachers in the current study reported acts of bullying witnessed or acts of bullying that was reported to them by students in the forms of physical, verbal, and cyber bullying; cyberbullying was least discussed out of the three forms. Teacher 6 reported, "In my experience of teaching, I have witnessed basically the same type of bullying throughout. The type of bullying that I have witnessed is verbal bullying such as calling names, teasing, things like that". Teacher 2 stated, "Over the years, I personally witnessed students physically getting aggressive with students in terms of pushing and tripping students". Teacher 2 said, "I think that technology has played a big role in how things have transitioned in elementary school; the latest trend from what's happening like Facebook and Snapchat is spilling over into the classroom". Only 37.5% of the teachers mentioned some form of cyberbullying during the interview (see Table 3). Needless to say, evidence that emerged based on teachers' perceptions suggest that they

may be increasingly unaware of the amount of cyberbullying taking place among students

(Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2012). According to the Conduct of Student – Student

Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, cyberbullying is defined as the willful, hostile and

repeated harassment and intimidation of an individual through the use of digital

technologies such as blogs, email, social networking websites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram,

Twitter, etc.), instant messaging, chat rooms, and texts (JDC, 2016).

For the most part, teachers in the present study reported pushing, shoving, hitting,

and fighting as the most reported or witnessed form of physical bullying and name calling

and teasing as the main type of verbal bullying reported or witnessed. The teachers took

various approaches when they witnessed bullying. Several teachers stated that they would

try to speak with students if they witnessed bullying acts. On the other hand, one teacher

reported that they would refer a student to an administrator if they observed bullying.

Conversely, 75% of the participants reported that they would automatically refer students

to an administrator when bullying is reported to them.

Several teachers in the study used their own strategies at the classroom level to

deter or to prevent bullying from occurring. For example, Teacher 7 stated, actually

started a volunteer club instead of punishing bullies, have to come and volunteer by

making posters for a fund raiser or do something to help someone out". Teacher 8

explained, "Sometimes I try to diffuse it, we talk about it and try to come to some type of

resolution in the classroom". This approach included calling home to inform parents,

having open classroom discussions, conferencing with the bully and victim, seat change,

loss of privileges, administrator referrals, and counseling referrals. These findings are in

alignment with current literature. Glasner (2010) explained that classroom management and open class discussions provides an opportunity to highlight the issue of the lack of appropriate training, which can leave students vulnerable and; therefore, could impact the frequency of bullying practices.

Based on the literature, it is suggested that the teacher's role in preventing bullying efforts is extremely critical. Effective teacher interventions depend on two different but related concepts: positive expectations that teachers have for the student's future outcomes in the classroom ("Is it possible for the student to be successful at some point in the future:") and teachers' beliefs in their capability in resolving bullying incidents ("Do I have the necessary skills to intervene and improve the situation?") (Skinner, Babinski, & Gifford, 2014).

Research Question 3: What type of professional development do teachers at ABC Elementary School receive on bullying policies? The findings indicated that 100% of the participants received a professional development and training on bullying at the beginning of the school year. Only 12.5% of the teachers suggested that more training on bullying was not needed. Teacher 3 stated, "I say no, I'm not really sure that you can pin point every situation that can happen or every bullying situation or to be able to explain each situation to a group of people that this is bullying". However, several teachers explained that the bullying training that they received at the beginning of the school year consisted of a lot of PowerPoint slides that defined bullying along with a bunch of regulations.

Teacher 4 said:

"I think that we need a lot more professional help with understanding how to help our children in this society. Our children have changed so much and I would love to have something to help to recognize and respond to someone a certain body language or arguments that are starting or I would just like to be see examples of mild or strong bullying. Not just hear it or read about it, but actually see it in a situation even if it's just modeling or film from past bullying".

Researchers have reported the difficulty of teachers distinguishing between peer conflict and school bullying (Strohmeier & Noam, 2012). Teacher 6 suggested, "When we do receive bullying professional development it's kind of minor. They really don't dig into the details of the more severe cases. So, the minor situations I am comfortable with, it's more of the major types of bullying that I think we need more in-service on". Many of the participants suggested having professional development on bullying geared more on teaching teachers the difference between mild and serious cases of bullying, how to recognize and respond to bullying, learn coping skills to share with students who are victims of bullying, and learn what the step by step process is for reporting bullying. Research suggested that it is critical for educators to learn (1) how to recognize bullying in their schools, (2) how to determine light cases from serious ones and how to effectively intervene with bullies, bystanders, and victims, and (3) how to prevent bullying from occurring in the first place (Strohmeier & Noam, 2012).

Rigby (2014) suggested that there needs to be more emphasis put on preventive strategies opposed to trying to diffuse a situation after an incident has taken place. An important strategy worth looking into for improving antibullying interventions may be to

provide a rigorous bullying training to staff that target specific behaviors to both certified and noncertified staff members (Williford, 2015). This suggestion would prove to be true, since many of the participants claimed to lack training in which may cause them to be reluctant to intervene when bullying incidents are witnessed or reported as well as properly report a bullying incident.

This would explain the relationship between teachers' attitudes and how their perception of bullying may be directly tied to their level of professional development training. When teachers are lacking proper training, bullying behaviors can be unrecognizable to them (Barnes et al., 2012). This is very important as research suggests that students were more likely to report acts of aggression and seek assistance from staff when they thought staff cared, were fair, and competent to intervene in aggressive situations (Eliot, Cornell, Gregory & Fan, 2010). We can conclude with the notion that professional development trainings need to be streamlined to offer educators with the necessary skills, tools, understanding, and self-efficacy to effectively address bullying using practices and policies that are set in place as a schoolwide effort (Barnes et al., 2012).

Theoretical Implications

Every participant in the study believed that the major contributors to bullying stemmed from a child's home environment, lack of security, lack of empathy, low self-esteem, peer pressure, or not being properly taught how to socially interact with others at home. These findings are backed up by Bandura's (1989) social learning theory which propose that people learning by observation, imitation, and modeling others. Based on

this information, it is suggested that children display more aggressive behaviors when they witness aggression or violent models. This theory is based on the concept that individuals learn through interactions with others in a social setting. Supporting the teachers' beliefs, Bandura's theory suggests that a child's behavior is influenced by certain factors: (a) children learn by observations and imitating the behaviors modeled by others; (b) children inherit certain behavioral traits from their parents; (c) children are influenced from social factors and the desire to be accepted by peers; and (d) bullying acts such as teasing are often portrayed by kids who are lacking a safe home and/or school environment (Bandura, 1989).

A teacher's motivation level can influence their overall behavior as well as the motivational belief and behavior of students (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, it is important to understand internal factors that influence teachers' level of motivation, their perceptions of students, and their ability to effect students' behaviors (Madni, Baker, Chow, Delacruz, & Griffin, 2015). Anderson's (2011) continuum to action described how teachers move through seven phrases that requires action or inaction. The first step consisted of teachers understanding their own perceptions, as discussed in the theme *teachers' perceptions of bullying invention and prevention*; then any altruistic blind spots must be removed. This implies that teachers must recognize that something uncommon was happening, as stated in the theme recognizing bullying behaviors. In this situation participants reported that they are not always able to recognized bullying situations, distinguish conflicts from bullying incidents, and catch bullying behavior during transition periods or heavily populated areas. The second phase in Anderson's (2011)

continuum to action involved coming to terms that something was not normal. It's very possible that if the participants in the study cannot recognize bullying behaviors, then they are unaware of unusual circumstances. Further suggesting that more bullying incidents are taking place than faculty and staff is aware of.

The following four phrases in the continuum to action is needed in quick series if immediate intervention is to take place: a) decide if something is abnormal, b) determine the degree of accountability, c) decide their capability level to assist, and d) choose whether to help or not (Anderson, 2011). In the event of recognizing bullying behaviors, participants are required to accomplish all four phrases. Seventy-five percent of the teachers reported having medium level of confidence in recognizing bullying behaviors opposed to twenty-five percent of the teachers who reported having high levels of confidence in recognizing bullying behaviors (see Table 7). The last phrase of the continuum to action involved implementing professional development to close the communication gap (Anderson, 2011). Results from my study revealed that 87.5% of the participants believed that further professional development training on bullying is needed.

Summary

For Research Question 1: How do teachers at ABC Elementary School define bullying, I found that all teachers viewed bullying as an aggressive behavior that is repeatedly used for intimidation purposes. The participants also perceived bullying as: (a) verbal; (b) physical; and (c) cyberbullying. For Research Question 2: How do teachers at ABC Elementary School describe their experience in preventing and addressing bullying

behaviors? The study findings revealed that participants experienced more verbal

bullying (62.5%) at the researched elementary school. In comparison, 50% of the

teachers reported physical bullying incidents, while 37.5% reported experiencing

cyberbullying acts. Lastly, with regard to Research Question 3: What type of professional

development do teachers at ABC Elementary School receive on bullying policies? I

found that 75% of the teachers reported having medium levels of confidence in

recognizing bullying behaviors and 25% of the teachers reported having high levels of

confidence in recognizing bullying situations. Zero participants reported having low

confidence levels in recognizing bullying situations. In conclusion, 87.5% of the

participants felt that further professional development was needed to assist them in

recognizing bullying acts, detailed steps in reporting bullying incidents, and determining

light cases of bullying versus serious cases of bullying.

Conclusion

In this section, I described the procedure for collecting data and gathering

evidence. In this project study, I explained how I purposefully selected 8 teachers to gain

their perceptions of bullying and their ability to respond to bullying incidents at the

elementary school level. I used a descriptive qualitative case study design with one-on-

one s as the primary approach to collect and gather data in order to present the research

findings. After analyzing the findings for patterns and themes, I presented the findings

using a narrative approach. The research findings revealed that many of the teachers

shared similar perceptions as it relates to bullying behaviors. However, teachers'

reporting practices differed based on their opinion of the severity of the situation. For

example, more teachers reported that they submitted students for physical bullying situations opposed to verbal bullying. As a result, based on the findings there is a need for a project focusing on professional development centered on bullying to better assist teachers in recognizing bullying behaviors as well as guide teachers' reporting practices.

Section 3 contains a professional development project in which I developed based on the findings of the project study. Based on teacher's feedback, a criterion was utilized to design the PD to provide a more structured bullying professional development to provide teachers with information on recognizing bullying cases as well as to provide a streamline reporting policy for reporting bullying practices. It is mandated that any employee who is employed by ABC School District to promptly report bullying incidents by documenting the incident and forwarding the complaint to the school's principal or designated person.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

School bullying is an ongoing problem for elementary students. Teachers and administrators have the responsibility of ensuring that the school climate offer students a learning environment that is safe and promotes high-level learning opportunities while dealing with bullying incidents. Strohmeier and Noam (2012) explained that teachers in most cases are unaware that bullying is taking place in their schools and that they are missing the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute to a bully free learning environment. My study consists of two components: a review of school suspensions for the SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015 and teacher interviews.

In the findings from my project study, I found that the participants shared similar views related to their confidence level in recognizing bullying behaviors and their reporting practices. In order to reduce bullying behaviors, it is imperative that educators master (a) how to recognize bullying in their schools; (b) how to differentiate light cases from serious ones; (c) how to intervene in bullying incidents with the bullies, victims, and bystanders; and (d) how to prevent bullying from occurring (Strohmeier & Noam, 2012). Based on the results from the study, I created a bullying PD project with the intention of providing activities to assist teachers with recognizing bullying behaviors and uniform reporting practices. The overall goal for the project is for teachers to work collaboratively by having meaningful discussions on bullying and participating in hands-on activities that will increase their ability to recognize bullying and properly report bullying incidents.

Participants at my research site used various practices when responding to bullying incidents, as well as expressed a need for more PD training on recognizing bullying. This PD project will focus on addressing the following objectives to assist teachers in becoming more confident in recognizing bullying situations when they occur and more uniformed in reporting bullying situations:

1. Examine teachers' perceptions of bullying and compare them to the project study results.

2. Teachers will work collaboratively to understand and recognize bullying behaviors.

3. Teachers will continue to make connections based on the project study results by working collaboratively to recognize bullying behaviors and the proper bullying reporting practices.

Motivators

By presenting the teachers with the project study's' results, I am hoping that this information will encourage them to take the PD by actively participating and meeting the training objectives. There are three motivators that could encourage participants to meet the objectives provided by the training. Motivator 1: The school district and state law has rules and guidelines in place for responding and reporting bullying; therefore, it is important for teachers to have a full understanding in order to be in compliance with the law; Motivator 2: The training will offer teachers an opportunity to gain continuing education credits that will go towards their certification renewal; Motivator 3: The training will offer teachers an opportunity to meet the goals of district's strategic plan,

particularly foal area: staff efficacy which allows employees to focus on their continuous

development. Motivators may enhance the probability that training goals are met

(Kongnyuy, 2015; Luo & Mkandawire, 2015; Onjoro, Arogo, & Embeywa, 2015).

Overall Professional Development Goals

The goals for this project are to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and

confidence levels in recognizing and intervening in bullying incidents before, while, and

after they occur. Also, it is my hope that teachers will walk away from this PD training

with an understanding of their role and responsibility as they relate to reporting bullying

incidents (GaDOE, 2015). Developing an extensive antibullying PD in order to prepare

elementary school teachers to deal with bullying is fundamental to creating a bully-free

school climate. Duy (2013) explained the importance of providing teachers with

antibullying PD to give them the necessary intervention strategies and skills to tackle

bullying. This PD training can be used to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and

confidence in recognizing, responding, and reporting bullying incidents within the

elementary school setting. I will share the project evaluations with the district's PD

department and with my school administrative team.

Rationale

After analyzing the data, I found that participants shared similarities relating to

their perceptions of bullying behaviors; however, they differed when it came to

responding and reporting bullying incidents. Due to teachers need for more understanding

on how to recognize, respond, and reporting practices, I concluded that a PD training

would be most beneficial for this project. The training will provide teachers an

opportunity to work collaboratively to recognize bullying situations and to become more uniformed as it relates to reporting bullying incidents.

This project will benefit teachers in meeting their legal obligations. Law 0.C.G.A.20-2-751.4 section (c) (2) states, "A requirement that any teacher or other school employee who has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal" (GaDOE, 2015). My research study site has procedures in place; however, the reporting procedures that teachers are taking vary. Therefore, the PD project was created to ensure that all teachers and staff members have an understanding of the reporting policies. The PD will also assist teachers with recognizing bullying situations. Ultimately, the PD project will help to improve the school's learning environment and school climate as well as make the environment a safe place for students and staff members.

Review of the Literature

The PD project will enhance teachers' knowledge of bullying, recognizing bullying situations, and school policy for reporting bullying incidents while engaging elementary school teachers in collaborative and hands-on activities. This PD project falls in line with the district's strategic plan, in particular the goal area (staff efficacy) which allows employees to focus on continuous development. Also, the training will assist teachers in meeting the requirements of the Georgia Performance Standards. The following provides a detailed description for each performance standard: Performance Standard 7 (Positive Learning Environment) involves teachers providing a well-managed, orderly, and safe learning environment that is conducive and encourages respect for all

students; Performance Standard 8 (Academically Challenging Environment) the teacher creates an academic, student-centered environment in which teaching and learning is rigorous and students are self-directed learnings; Performance Standard 9 (Professionalism) teachers exhibit a commitment to professional ethics and the school's mission, participate in opportunities in which they can grow professionally to support student learning as well as contribute to the profession; and Performance Standard 10 (Communication) teachers effectively communicate with students, district and school personnel, parents or guardians, and other stakeholders in ways that increase student learning.

The literature review was gathered using ERIC, Sage, Thoreau databases, PsychINFO, and Education Research Complete. The research was conducted using Google Scholar, Walden University Library, and Georgia Department of Education website. I used the following search terms: *bullying, bullying laws, anti-bullying laws, and, Georgia Performance Standards, bullying PD,* and *Georgia laws on bullying*.

District-Wide Bullying Policy

School districts are expected to offer teachers PD on the districts' antibullying policies as well as expectations to participate in interventions (Gorsek & Cunningham, 2014). The GaDOE (2015) reported the following:

> Upon receipt of receiving a report of bullying, schools are to immediately
> investigate the incident including the appropriate personnel. The
> investigation should take place no later than the next school day. Included
> in the investigation will consists of the alleged perpetrator(s) and

victim(s), witnesses, staff member(s), and teacher(s) in which all parties

will be interviewed as well as reviewing any video surveillance if

available. School counselors, school police, school social workers, and

school staff should be used for their expertise as determined by the

conditions of the situation. (p. 6)

According to ABC School District (2016), employees must do the following: (a) any

employee who received a bullying complaint must immediately document and report the

incident and forward it to the principal or designee, (b) if an employee witnesses a

bullying accident or learns that a student is being bullied, he or she must immediately

submit a written statement to the principal or designee, and (c) the principal and designee

will make sure that proper documentation is maintained throughout the investigation until

the matter is resolved.

The research site has the following procedures in place for reporting bullying

incidents: (a) if a parent or student reports a bullying incident to a staff member, that staff

member must provide the parent or child with the bullying reporting form to complete

and submit it to an administrator or designee; (b) if a staff member witnesses a bullying

incident, they are to submit a bullying referral to an administrator or designee; and (c) the

school principal or designee will launch an investigation no later than the following

school day.

For the 2016-2017 SY, ABC School District adopted the restorative justice (RJ)

into their school discipline policy. This newly adopted discipline policy is intended to

keep students in the classroom where they can learn opposed to out-of-school suspension

where they are losing out on learning opportunities, as well as the possibility of getting

into trouble. For example, Fabelo et al. (2011) reported that African American students

were more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension more so than White students by

26.2%. High levels of punishment for ethnic minorities and students with disabilities

(Losen, 2014). Schools are looking to take other avenues of discipline and doing away

with zero-tolerance policies, which were popular in the United States during the 1980s-

1990s (Losen, 2014). Morgan (2012) described how some schools enforced zero-

tolerance policies with the hope that it will prevent students from bullying; however,

these polices do not work but only heighten the issues at hand (Graham, 2010).

The main principle of the RJ program is centered on the offender and the victim

both being involved in repairing the harm done instead of making an amends with the

school when an incident of injustice takes place (Shelton, 2014). Through the RJ

program, students feel respected by their teachers resulting in fewer discipline referrals

(Fronius et al., 2016). In a pilot study conducted in Minnesota on RJ, McMorris et al.

(2013) revealed an increased school connectedness and students showed improved

problem-solving skills in just 6 weeks. RJ contributes to increased student achievement,

parent involvement, student connectedness, and offered staff to be more supportive to

students (Gonzalez, 2012). Schools have decreased rates in bullying, fighting, and

suspension due to the implementation of a RJ program (Armour, 2013; Gonzalez, 2012).

Georgia Standards for Educators

Teacher's buy-in is essential in order for PD to be effective. The PD will serve

two purposes: teacher evaluation-professional growth and accountability. GaDOE (2015)

stated,

> Professional Growth Goals and Plans may consist of the following: (a) District's
>
> Improvement Goals, (b) School's Improvement Goals, (c) Teacher's individual
>
> professional goals, (d)Weaknesses identified through the Teacher Assessment on
>
> Performance Standards (TAPS) process, and (e) Any other school or district
>
> identified need.

The state of Georgia implemented the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) in

2016. TKES has three factors that contribute to the overall Teacher Effectiveness

Measure (TEM): TAPS, student growth, and professional growth (GaDOE, 2015). There

are 10 performance standards in which teachers are required to perform and serve as a

basis for their evaluation. During the approval process, the principal will receive a copy

of the PD workshop, along with the GPS, to ensure that the standards and indicators are

correctly aligned with PD training.

Teachers will be able to upload information from the PD into TKES to show that

they are working on improving their professional growth in order to maximize student

growth. The PD will cover Performance Standard 7 (positive learning environment),

Performance Standard 8 (academically challenging), Performance Standard 9

(professionalism), and Performance Standard 10 (communication). Each performance

standard consists of indicators, which describes the role of the teacher. Both performance

standards and indicators will serve as the basis for this PD workshop. They each set guidelines to assist teachers in understanding and evaluating their learning environment, their level of professionalism, and communication skills as they relate to their perceptions of bullying, how they respond to bullying, and their bullying practices.

Performance Standard 7: Positive learning environment. According the GaDOE (2014), Performance Standard 6 (positive learning environment) consists of students engaging while thriving in an enriching learning environment in which effective teachers establish expectations for behavior; monitor student behavior; ensure that students are on task; and have a caring, humorous, and respectful classroom to create a climate that is conductive to student learning. School climates that are responsive, safe, caring, and participatory create attachment and bonding to school, thereby reducing both aggression and victimization (Gregory et al., 2010; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013).

Teachers will review the following indicators that state that the teacher

- Creates an attractive, inviting, warm, and supportive classroom environment

- Models a fair, caring, respectful, and enthusiastic environment for learning

- Actively listens and pays attention to students' needs and responses

- Responds to disruptions appropriately and in a timely manner

- Promotes respect and an understanding for diversity, including – but not limited to – race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin

The trust that is established amongst teacher and students and between student peer relationships is an essential element to an effective classroom environment (GaDOE, 2014).

   Performance Standard 8: Academically challenging environment. In this performance standard, it is the teacher's responsibility to provide students with a quality learning environment that create opportunities for an active and engaging classroom that is crucial to students' learning. GaDOE (2014) explained that when teachers are presented with students who display lower levels of language and cognitive development, or attention and behavioral problems, teachers' expectations are low, rather than providing students with a rigorous and challenging curriculum that supports learning. Teachers will review the following indicators for Performance Standard 8: During PD, the teacher will

- Maximize instructional time

- Welcome mistakes and embrace as a valuable part of learning

- Provide transitions that minimize loss of instructional time

- Communicate high, but reasonable, expectations for student learning

Bullying and peer victimization have been found to be linked to low academic achievement (Wang, Iannotti, & Luk, 2011). However, bullying has shown to have a negative impact on both bullying victims and bystanders (Swearer et al., 2010). Lacey and Cornell (2013) explained that the effect of bullying could cause a greater risk on the entire school because witnesses to bullying may also be effected; therefore, it is important to focus on more than the cumulative reports of victims alone. The presence of school

bullying may cause students to view school as unsafe or cause them to lose interest altogether. Schools with increased amounts of bullying behaviors, such as teasing, have students who are less engaged in school, with school level effects on student willingness to commit to school and school activities (Mehta, Cornell, Fan, & Gregory, 2013). I stopped reviewing here. Please go through the rest of your section and look for the patterns I pointed out to you. I will now look at Section 4.

Performance Standard: 9 Professionalism. Georgia Department of Education (2014) uses Performance Standard 9 (Professionalism) as a guideline to assist teachers to exhibit responsibility and professionalism at all times. Under this standard, teachers are expected to perform their job duties in accordance with federal and state laws, established state and local school board policies, Code of Ethics, regulations, and practices. During the professional development workshop, the following indicators will be review:

- Respect and maintain confidentiality.

- Self-evaluate job performance and identify areas of personal strengths and weaknesses and how they impact student learning as well as set goals for improvement.

- Exhibits professional behavior (e.g., attendance, appearance, and punctuality).

- Participate in ongoing PD based on identified areas for improvement and implement learning into classroom activities and daily routines.

During this PD workshop, teachers will demonstrate Performance Standard 9 by evaluating how they respond to bullying and the steps taken to report bullying situations.

Teachers will have an opportunity to work collaboratively with other educators to share ideas and best practices that have been successful for them. As aptly noted by GaDOE (2014), teachers who are effective are willing to share their knowledge to help other teachers who are experiencing difficulties. Low self-efficacy levels could cause teachers to struggle with addressing difficult situations including behaviors that involve both bullies and victims which could affect the structure of their classroom and their interaction with students (Skinner, Babinski, & Gifford, 2013). Compared to teachers with less self-efficacy, teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs tend to implement more challenging teaching techniques, innovative strategies, and their classroom instruction is more organized, student centered, and humanistic (GaDOE, 2014).

Performance Standard: 10 Communication. Georgia Department of Education recognizes Performance Standard 10 (Communication) as a guideline for communicating and collaborating effectively amongst teachers, colleagues, parents, community members, and stakeholders. Effective collaboration empowers teachers to re-conceptualize themselves as change agents and advocates for their students (GaDOE, 2014, pp. 68). Teachers will review the following indicators under Performance Standard 10 (Communication), the teacher will:

- Observe that both school and home share common expectations for their progress and well-being.
- Give examples how the teacher includes their families in classroom activities.
- Are comfortable having family visit the classroom.

- Report that the teacher contacts families for both positive feedback and concerns.

One study reported that PD is more effective when teachers are provided with opportunities to: (1) collaborate with colleagues in a PD session, (2) incorporate goals into PD to support local and district goals, (3) and inquire and reflect on their teaching practice (Kollener, Jacobs, & Borko, 2011). There are so many factors involved when it comes to teaching. Teachers are held accountable and responsible for things that are in their control such as academic and nonacademic interactions with their students (GaDOE, 2014). This is why effective ongoing professional learning communities are so important. Van Driel and Berry (2012) suggested that in order for PD to be effective, it need: (1) to be aligned with teacher's practice, (2) offer time for teachers to reflect, (3) and time and necessary tools to implement new initiatives.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

It is essential to prepare teachers to effectively intervene to bullying incidents when they occur (Yoon & Bauman, 2014). According to a national survey, 75% of teachers reported having students to report a verbal bullying incident to them, 50% reported physical bullying, 58% reported relational bullying, and 14% cyberbullying (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Bradshaw, Waasdorp, O'Brennan, & Gulemetova, 2013). Yet, teachers are often uncertain of how to respond when faced with bullying situations (Rigby & Bauman, 2010). Sairanen and Pfeffer (2011) explained that there is a persistent disconnect between how teachers view bullying and what they know about bullying in which needs to be further evaluated not just their understanding of how teachers define

bullying but their overall involvement and perspective about bullying, especially because awareness is an important piece to responding to bullying. Research suggest that a teacher's response to bullying determines the extent in which a bystander is willing to intervene (Hektner & Swenson, 2012).

The PD training is geared toward bullying prevention and intervention. The PD will provide teachers with strategies to recognize, respond, and effectively report bullying incidents resulting in positive outcomes for students and staff. Implementing a PD training for teachers on recognizing, responding, and reporting bullying will hopefully play a major role in promoting a safe and nurturing learning environment. The U.S. Department of Education National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environment (NCSSLE) reported that students learn better when they are in a learning environment in which they are challenged, accepted, supported, and feel safe (2016).

A variety of PD workshops are offered throughout the school year; however, anti-bullying PD is often overlooked. According to Allen (2010b) many teachers lack the training or knowledge and is unequipped to respond to bullying issues. Rigby (2011) suggested that educators are uncertain of what to do when presented with bullying incidents and proposed the following preparation steps are needed: (a) knowledge of current intervention strategies in the school; (b) strategies for handling different kinds of bullying situations; (c) resources to assist in developing strategies for anti-bullying; and (d) a commitment of faculty and staff to carefully evaluate their intervention systems by continuously monitoring the results.

In order for teachers to provide a safe learning environment for students, bullying needs to be addressed. Therefore, it is crucial to offer PD opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in handling bullying because well-trained teachers are more likely to intervene in difficult situations when they arise (Morgan, 2012). However, effective anti-bullying programs is a school-wide effort that involves administrators, teachers, and other faculty and staff (Morgan, 2012).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

A PD training that is effective is a great way to motivate and increase teachers' self-efficacy by affording them an opportunity to work in a collaborative setting while completing instructional exercises (Chong & Kong, 2012). Findings from the project study revealed that some participants expressed low self-esteem in either recognizing bullying, responding to bullying, or reporting practices due to a lack of training. This is in alignment with the conceptual framework of Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory which is the belief that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are motivated to set goals and complete tasks and individuals with low levels of self-efficacy are unmotivated to set goals and complete tasks.

Williford (2015) explained that teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and self-efficacy beliefs are critical to the success of a school-wide intervention and prevention program. Previous research conducted that suggests bullying and victimization rates increase and willingness decrease when students perceive adults' intervention and prevention efforts as ineffective (Goldweber et al., 2013; Waasdorp et al., 2011). An increase in aggressive behavior could have a negative impact on the learning environment as well as the overall

school climate which may affect the teacher's ability to work with students. Identifying these school climate factors that impact teachers' self-efficacy may offer assistance for those who are creating preventive interventions (Skinner et al., 2014).

Implementation

Based on the project study findings and literature review, I developed an antibullying PD project that will be conducted consecutively for three days. The PD was created using the Georgia Performance Standards in mind to assist in increasing educator's knowledge on bullying and implement best practices when responding and reporting bullying incidents. The proposed PD sessions will take place at the beginning of the school year during pre-planning week. In addition to increasing teacher's knowledge on bullying incidents, this PD will hopefully lead to an increased self-efficacy for teachers as well as an increase in student achievement.

Needed Resources, Existing Supports, and Potential Barriers

Needed resources. The PD training will take place in the media center at ABC Elementary School. The media center is designed to accommodate anywhere from 35 to 40 faculty and staff members. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) explained that planning learning environments for adults can be challenging and requires the instructor to establish program needs, goals and objectives while designing effective instruction. The necessary resources needed to conduct the PD includes an Interactive Promethean Board, a lap-top, Wi-Fi, eight round tables to accommodate small group collaboration, chart paper, sticky-notes, pencils, and markers. In addition, the support of the school principal would be needed in order for the PD workshop to be added to the pre-service planning

calendar. The support of key stakeholders is essential in the planning process in order to

have a successful PD workshop (Caffarella and Daffron, 2013).

Use of existing supports. When planning a PD workshop, it is imperative to

evaluate existing support. The PD workshop is scheduled to take place in the media

center. Therefore, the school's media specialist would qualify as an existing resource.

The media specialist would be able to assist me with setting up technical equipment as

well as assisting me with getting any instructional resources needed for the PD training.

The media center is large enough to accommodate small and large group participation, is

readily equipped with a Promethean Board, tables, projector, and Wi-Fi.

Potential Barriers. After carefully analyzing the details of the project, I

determined time to be a potential barrier that may affect the implementation of the PD.

Teacher's in-service is held the week before students begin school and is usually

crammed with other PD trainings that are required by the district and Department of

Education. Therefore, it is possible that the principal may not approve the PD due to this

being a three-day workshop and the lack of time for teachers may present an issue.

Although, I am proposing that the antibullying PD takes place at the beginning of the

school year during pre-service, the principal or district may have other PD workshops

planned and may feel that three days is not sufficient. Another issue with this timeframe

in addition to other PD workshops being scheduled; this is the week that teachers usually

set up their classrooms to ensure that they are ready for the arrival of the students.

Therefore, an alternative solution for my project would consist of breaking-up the 3-day

PD workshop. Instead of offering the PD sessions in 3 consecutive days, I would suggest

a 1-day PD workshop during pre-planning week and recommend that the remaining PD sessions be broken up into smaller segments. However, the principal would have to ensure that the PD is mandatory and it is possible that the PD workshops may have to take place after school in order to accommodate collaboration amongst teachers. As Caffarella and Daffron (2013) explained, it is crucial that the dates and times are convenient with the participant's schedule when planning a successful PD workshop.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The planned implementation for the PD workshops would be more beneficial the first semester of the school year. This timeframe is more realistic due to the first week of pre-planning days that is built into the district's school calendar. In addition, teachers will receive training on bullying intervention and prevention strategies that they will be able to implement on the first day of school to promote a safe learning environment that's bully-free. The following provides a detailed description of the proposed project timeline for the 2017-2018 school-year:

1. May 2017: A board meeting will be scheduled to present the project study findings and implications to ABC principal, district superintendent, and school board.

2. June 2017: A meeting will be scheduled with ABC school principal and district superintendent to add the PD workshop to the training calendar as well as arrange PD continuing education credits for teacher participation.

3. June 2017: I will send an email to the media specialist requesting the dates needed for the media center as well as the necessary equipment that I will need to check out for those dates.

4. July 2017: I will print out PD agendas, activity handouts, articles, and standards for workshops.

5. July 2017: I will present all 3 anti-bullying PD workshops during the three of the five in-service days.

Roles and Responsibilities of Other Involved

There is no specific strategy for schools to have in place to prevent or reduce bullying (Swearer, Espelage, & Napolitano, 2009). However, a systematic action involving all school personnel is required in order for it to work (Ertesvag & Roland, 2015).

The researcher. Based on the project findings, I created an antibullying PD workshop to meet the needs of teachers at the researched site. Bosworth and Judkins (2014) argued that schoolwide polices and norms that support interactions among students and adults that are positive are factors that contribute to school climate that is bully-resistant. As the researcher, my responsibility includes providing the principal with the research study findings and PD proposal in order to gain approval to conduct the PD workshops. Also, I am responsible for working with the administrators, media specialist, and teachers to organize the professional development training. Lastly, as the facilitator of the proposed PD workshop, I am responsible for creating the materials, scheduling the

media center, checking out the necessary equipment, and providing the training for the workshops.

Elementary school teachers. The teachers' responsibilities include being an active leaner by actively engaging and participating in all aspects of the PD workshop. The antibullying PD provides a collaborative environment, providing teachers with effective strategies to deal with bullying incidents inside and outside of the classroom (Gorsek & Cunningham, 2014). The role of the teacher is to work collaboratively in hands-on activities identifying the difference between bullying and conflict, identifying effective ways to respond to bullying incidents, distinguishing light cases verses serious cases of bullying, and identifying bullying reporting practices. However, it is the responsibility of the teacher to obtain and implement the information gained from the PD training. In turn, teachers are expected to immediately intervene in bullying and report bullying incidents to decrease bullying and promote a safe learning environment.

Student expectations. The roles and responsibilities of students are to follow the rules and guidelines set by the school district. Students are expected and will be challenged to exhibit behavior that promotes mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among peers, staff, and volunteers. Teachers will help students to understand what bullying is and that it is unacceptable behavior that will not be tolerated. Students overall responsibility entails coming to school and engaging in meaningful learning communities to become productive citizens.

Others. Although the focus of the PD workshop is centered on teachers, other stakeholders have influence on the implementation as well as the direction of the project.

For instance, the principal's role is key in the implementation process. The support of the principal is needed in order for the PD to be successful. The principal's role and responsibility is to promote a collaborative learning environment where professional growth is encouraged to ensure increased academic achievement. Also, cooperation from the bookkeeper is needed to get resources such as copy paper for printing purposes, along with the media specialist to assist me with setting up the technology component. Other stakeholders play an essential role in the development and implementation of the PD workshop. In conclusion, creating and implementing a PD workshop is a collaborative process that involves a team approach.

Project Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the antibullying PD to ensure that teachers at the research site are provided with the necessary resources and support to provide a bully-free and safe learning environment. Evaluation of a project is to determine if the design and delivery of a program were effective and whether the program outcomes were met (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). Formative and summative evaluations will be used for the PD in which I can use to enhance future trainings. At the end of each PD, participants will be asked to complete an exit slip in which they will be able to provide feedback and suggest ways that I can improve the workshops. Following the last workshop, each participant will receive a summative evaluation via SurveyMonkey (see Appendix A) to determine the overall effectiveness of the PD.

Justification for Using Goal-Based Evaluations

Goal-based evaluations are a necessity to determine project's outcome. The first

step to achieving this goal for any project, is to define goals and objectives (Subrt &

Brozova, 2012). Stijn van Osselaer and Janiszewski (2012) suggested goal-based

evaluations such as formative or summative to weigh a variety of attributes within set

parameters. My focus when creating this project was based on goals and outcomes, my

audience, and effective implementation. For evaluation purposes, I included both a

Likert-type scale and open response based questions to gather participant's feedback on

the PD workshop. Lodico et al., (2010) argued that the preferred evaluation tools are

Likert scale surveys because it allows the presenter to gather teachers' opinions and

feedback. Collecting feedback from the participants provides me with valuable

information such as if the PD is effective as well as if further changes are needed.

Project Goal

The overall goal for this professional development project is to enhance teacher's

knowledge of bullying, recognizing bullying situations, and school policy for reporting

bullying incidents. This success of this project is greatly dependent on teacher

participation. There are three motivators that will hopefully inspire and encourage teacher

buy-in. Motivator 1: this project will benefit teachers by assisting them in meeting their

legal obligations. Law 0.C.G.A.20-2-751.4 section (c) (2) states, "A requirement that any

teacher or other school employee who has reliable information that would lead a

reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall immediately report

it to the school principal' (GaDOE, 2015, p. 11). Motivation 2: the PD will offer an

opportunity for teachers to meet the District's Strategic Plan: Goal Area (Staff Efficacy) which allows employees to focus on continuous development while gaining continuum education credits that will be applied towards their certification renewal. Lastly, Motivation 3: the training will support teachers in meeting the following Georgia Performance Standard: Performance Standard 7 (Positive Learning Environment) involve teachers providing a well-managed, orderly, and safe learning environment that is conducive and encourages respect for all students; Performance Standard 8 (Academically Challenging Environment) the teacher creates an academic, student-centered environment in which teaching and learning is rigorous and students are self-directed learnings; Performance Standard 9 (Professionalism) teachers exhibit a commitment to professional ethics and the school's mission, participate in opportunities in which they can grow professionally to support student learning as well as contribute to the profession; and Performance Standard 10 (Communication) teachers effectively communicate with students, district and school personnel, parents or guardians, and other stakeholders in ways that increase student learning. Hopefully, teachers will realize the benefits of these motivators and encourage them to meet the overall goals that are outlined in this PD.

Evaluation of Project Goals

Both formative and summative goal-based surveys will be utilized in an effort to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the PD. A formative evaluation will be provided at the end of the day-1 and day-of the training to collect participant's feedback. A summative evaluation will be provided to gather opinions and feedback from the

teachers via Survey Monkey at the end of day-3. Survey Monkey offers a Likert scale to collect a variety of responses and open-ended responses. The Likert scale responses that are collected is in a numerical form, for instance: where (1) represents the lowest numerical value and (4) represents the most the highest on a scale from 1-4. One (1), two (2), three (3), and four (4) will be used to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of the PD training. If a participant selects (1) or (2) it suggests that revisions are needed and if (3) or (4) are selected, this represents positive feedback. The data from the summative evaluations will be used to determine if the overall goal of the project was met.

Description of Key Stakeholders

The key stakeholders for this project will include teachers, local school district, parents, students, community members, and school administrators. The local school district, administrators, and teachers will experience a collaborative working environment to decrease the overall aggressive behaviors. In turn, this will increase instructional time for teaching and learning and will ultimately increase student academic achievement. Parents and students will experience a healthy school climate where students feel safe. Community members will feel pride in knowing that their local school is preparing students to be productive, respectful, and responsible citizens. In conclusion, all stakeholders will benefit from an increase in teacher's self-efficacy as it relates to effectively intervening and addressing bullying incidents.

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Implications Including Social Change

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Implications for this PD project in a larger context is that it offers an example of a collaborative and situational approach to address bullying in schools. The project

provides the local school an opportunity to enhance teacher's confidence and knowledge by exposing them to best research practices and strategies offered through the antibullying PD. With this newly found knowledge and strategies, teachers will be able to effectively intervene in both traditional and cyberbullying situations, ensuring a school environment that is safe and resistance of bullying.

The project offers situational and collaborative activities which will ultimately increase teachers' self-efficacy by developing workshops that are built on collective responsibility as well as mutual trust. Teachers will gain more confidence in their ability in communicating with bullies, victims, bystanders as well as parents. This increase in confidence will strengthen teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships bringing about a feeling of connectedness for all involved. Research suggested that connectedness can only come about when bullying is viewed as a school-wide problem and promotes a positive school climate (O'Brennan & Bradshaw, 2011). This view is extremely important as students and parents will feel secure in their teacher's ability to effectively intervene in bullying situations providing students a safe learning environment.

Local Stakeholders and the Larger Context

The antibullying project is aligned with the local school district and the Georgia Department of Education's Performance Standards and their overall goal which is to eliminate school bullying. In order to achieve this goal, teachers need to have a full understanding on the effects of bullying and the necessary skills to recognize, respond, intervene, and report bullying situations. The decisions that we make are influenced by our perceptions and our capabilities (Bandura, 1997). By implementing the proposed PD

training, elementary teachers will meet district guidelines in continuing professional

growth to promote a caring, safe, and engaging learning environment. The proposed PD

workshop will also tackle the local school's problem as it relates to an increase in out-of-

school suspension rates, aggressive behaviors, and a decrease in the overall school

climate report in which will ultimately increase teacher retention rates, reduce bullying,

improve student achievement, and increase the overall school climate report. The project

will provide teachers with the necessary tools to follow school policies as it relates to

intervening and reporting bullying situations. Lastly, teachers will strengthen

relationships to meet the needs of victims, bullies, and bystanders as well as provide

students with the necessary tools needed when either confronted or witnessing bullying.

Conclusion

Section 3 explained the PD project that was created to address the themes that

emerged from the findings of my study. The project study findings revealed that teachers'

perceptions of bullying were similar but their report practices and confidence levels

differed as it related to bullying incidents. Based on these outcomes, a PD project was

developed to provide teachers with hands-on activities that uses a collaborative and

situational approach to address these issues. The three motivators to encourage teachers

to participate in the PD training are: (1) the school district and state law has rules and

guidelines in place for responding and reporting bullying; therefore, it's important for

teachers to have a full understanding in order to be in compliance with the law; (2) the

training will offer teachers an opportunity to gain continuing education credits which will

go towards their certification renewal; and (3) the training will offer teachers an

opportunity to meet the goals of the District's Strategic Plan, particular Goal Area: Staff

Efficacy which allows employees to focus on their continuous development.

Furthermore, implications for social change suggest a need for this project on a larger

context to promote professional growth and increase the school climate and student

academic achievement.

The ultimate goal for this project study is for the results to have a positive impact

as it relates to social change. In section 4, I included reflective thoughts regarding the PD

project that was created to assist teachers in recognizing bullying incidents, properly

reporting bullying incidents, and increasing their confidence levels in responding to and

recognizing bullying incidents. In addition, the proposed strengths, recommendations,

and remediation for the project is discussed. In conclusion, a reflection of my personal

growth as a scholar as well as a discussion for possible future research is provided.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this project study was to gain an understanding of teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary school level. A small group of elementary teachers were interviewed in order for me to obtain their views on bullying; after analyzing the data, I determined that there was a need for an antibullying PD training. The teachers' confidence levels in recognizing bullying situations differed, as well as their reporting practices when faced with bullying incidents. I used the study findings to design a PD workshop to improve teachers' understandings of school bullying, provide resources and strategies to assist teachers in identifying best practices as they relate to bullying intervention and prevention, and provide the proper tools to report bullying incidents. In this section, I will present a description of the project study's objectives.

Project Strengths

My project was designed based on the needs of the researched site. I created the project using the Georgia Performance Teaching Standards as a criterion. This is the project's greatest strength because the Georgia Performance Teaching Standards affords the PD to serve two major purposes: teacher evaluation-professional growth and accountability. By implementing the GA Standards, teachers will have an opportunity to meet professional growth goals and plans that consist of the following: (a) district's improvement goals, (b) school's improvement goals, (c) teacher's individual professional goals, (d) weaknesses identified through the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) process, and (e) any other school or district identified need (GaDOE,

2015). Teachers can use artifacts from the PD training to meet Performance Standard 7 (positive learning environment), Performance Standard 8 (academically challenging environment), Performance Standard 9 (professionalism), and Performance Standard 10 (communication).

Another strength of this project involves assisting teachers in meeting their legal obligations. Law 0.C.G.A.20-2-751.4 section (c) (2) states, "A requirement that any teacher or school faculty member who has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal" (GaDOE, 2015, p. 11). Given the results of the study, I focused on providing teachers with the necessary tools to ensure that there is a uniformed reporting practice as it relates to bullying incidents.

The literature review was used to justify the implication of the problem, placing an importance on the lack of intervention and prevention PD training for teachers in the local school. Burger, Strohmeier, Sprober, Bauman, and Rigby (2015) explained that a critical factor to reducing school bullying is for teachers to properly handle bullying incidents. However, teachers have to be provided with PD so that they are knowledgeable and can be effective when implementing antibullying strategies (Boulton et al., 2014). This project offers teachers research-based best practices on antibullying strategies that can be incorporated daily to reduce aggressive behaviors, increase academic student achievement, and increase the overall school climate. In addition, the PD is free of charge to the school, and it is offered during a time when instructional time will not be interrupted and the strategies can be implemented on Day 1 of the school day. The project

can be used to increase teacher's self-efficacy which is in alignment with the districts'

goals.

Project Limitations

With any project, there are always the possibility of limitations. One limitation

includes the timing and timeframe of the PD workshop. The project is projected to take

place over a period of 3 consecutive days during preplanning week, which is the first

week that staff members report to work. Preplanning week is usually allotted for a variety

of PD workshops, as well as allowing teachers to work in their classroom in preparation

for the return of students. Another limitation is teacher participation (teacher buy-in). It is

crucial that teachers understand the need for the antibullying PD training. In order for this

project to be successful, teachers need to cooperate in the PD and implement the

strategies learned, as well as follow the mandated policies and procedures. The support

from district leaders and school administrators is critical in relaying the importance of the

antibullying PD.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Wolke et al. (2013) reported that school bullying is a problem for parents,

schools, and public policymakers. This has led to an increase of PD with a focus on

school bullying. According to Migliaccio (2015), researchers are now more aware of the

demand for PD training on bullying prevention and intervention techniques and the

significance of teachers intervening when bullying episodes presents itself. One approach

to resolve further need for PD with school bullying would be to review the school's

bullying data, survey students, parents, and teachers and observe how teachers deal with

student conflicts. Veenstra et al. (2014) argued that understanding how teachers respond to victimization will be critical for a successful development and implementation of a school-wide antibullying prevention program. Understanding teachers' and students' perceptions regarding how effective teachers are with responding and dealing with bullying incidents is the start to developing an effective PD. Hektner and Swenson (2012) reported that the chances of peer victimization is greater when teachers lack these skills. An alternative approach to increasing self-efficacy and bullying awareness is by providing effective PD workshops and affording teachers an opportunity to take part in learning communities in which they are able to share best practices, antibullying strategies, and have meaningful discussions as it relates to school bullying.

<div align="center">**Scholarship**</div>

A paradigm shift was required in the beginning of my doctoral study process. This writing process mandated more than just writing my thoughts; it required me to find my scholarly voice. Researching literature on bullying has enlightened my understanding of the subject matter as well as my scholarly voice. I was challenged with incorporating scholarly writing while identifying the local problem, developing research questions, constructing the literature review, and connecting the theoretical framework to the literature review and local problem. As Jalongo, Boyer, and Ebbeck (2014) explained, in doctoral scholarship there is a greater level of demand for communication than expected ever before. During my doctoral process, I began to study, write, and speak in ways that were unimaginable.

Through the in-depth knowledge that I acquired from my readings of books, journal articles, and findings from the project study data analysis, I was able to develop a PD workshop for the research site. Designing a PD workshop that is scholarly while also trying to make the PD interpersonal and rigorous proved to be time intensive and challenging. The development of a PD training comes close to putting together a jigsaw puzzle (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). While my doctoral process was frustrating at times, it was a humbling and unforgettable experience.

Project Development and Evaluation

It was difficult to wrap my mind around the concept of a project study. I did not understand what it entailed; however, after reading literature on bullying, collecting and analyzing the data became easier. Although creating the project was tedious, challenging, and time consuming, I allowed the study findings to guide the overall purpose and goals to form the PD workshop. Harris (2011) suggested that a person cannot employ strategies that were successful in one country and replicate those same strategies in another country expecting similar results. Therefore, it was important to factor in the study findings along with recommendations received from participants in the study to successfully incorporate strategies that would meet the needs of the individuals at the research location. The project supports Bronfenbrenner's (1979) socioecological theory and has potential to promote social change that could spread beyond the local community.

Leadership and Change

As an educator, I am an advocate for promoting and demonstrating leadership skills along with displaying positive characteristics. However, this process has taught me

the meaning of leadership on a larger scale. This process required me to collaborate with a diverse population and inspired me to embrace others' critique and vision. Gaiter (2013) stated, "Some important skills for a role in leadership involve being a good communicator, a good listener, a visionary, patient, and flexible" (p. 323). By having the support of Walden University's faculty and staff, I developed a respect and desire for research. As students begin to make progress toward self-authorship and leadership for social change, they begin to take more responsibility for co-constructing their learning environments and become stronger students (Cohen et al., 2013). My role as a student has made me a better educator and my ability to accept feedback along with the knowledge that I have acquired throughout this process has developed me into a visionary leader. The knowledge and skills that I have gained afforded me an opportunity to create a PD that will promote social change that could benefit the school district as a whole and extend into communities near and far.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

As I began this journey, I did not understand the extent of research and preparation that was required. The doctoral process has pushed me out of my comfort zone and has allowed the scholar in me to blossom. I have strengthened my research and writing skills as well as acquired skills in collecting, organizing, and analyzing data. Throughout this process, I was tasked with developing critical thinking skills, organizational, and time management skills, all which enabled me to become more detailed and task-oriented. These skills were instrumental during the PD phrase, which required organization and planning to include critical elements for adult learners and their

learned experiences. Overall, this journey was enlightening. It is refreshing to know that through it all, you're not alone. From the beginning to the end of my journey, I had a committee to assist me in ensuring that my problem statement, research questions, literature review, research design, and theoretical framework were properly aligned. Together, my committee members assisted me in finding my scholarly voice and ensured that I remained biased free throughout the process. As I reflect on my experience, the most important lesson that I took away is in order to grow, an individual must be pushed out of their comfort zone and it will be challenging but worth it in the end.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

Because I am an educator, the teachers' perceptions of bullying as well as their inability to properly report bullying incidents were both informative and startling. However, the more I delved into my research, the more I began to re-evaluate my daily practices and thought process which leads to the importance of leadership, PD, and teachers' self-efficacy. Gardner and Laskin (2011) argued that a strong leader understands that leading involves creating a sense of community for their employees. Building a professional learning community allow faculty to share best practices which can help struggling teachers, thus increasing their self-efficacy. Collie et al. (2011) noted that when teachers communicate with their coworkers, they tend to be more receptive to professional growth and innovation. In addition, positive teacher self-efficacy has been linked to improved psychology well-being as it relates to higher levels of commitment and job satisfaction as well as less stress and burnout (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Collie Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Klassen & Chiu, 2011). The knowledge that I acquired

throughout my doctoral process have prepared me to develop a PD that will provide

teachers with the necessary knowledge to be successful in combating bullying and

increasing their overall self-efficacy when presented with bullying situations. Through

this process of developing a PD workshop, I learned that a successful PD training

depends on the collaboration of the leadership team and stakeholders working towards a

common goal. I stopped reviewing here. Please go through the rest of your section and

look for the patterns I pointed out to you. I will now look at your references.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

Developing the project required knowledge of the topic, knowledge of the

collected data, and determination. Throughout the entire process, I kept the teachers'

recommendations in mind. Also, I reflected on the many PD sessions that I set through

and my ultimate goal was to create a PD that was relevant to my audience by ensuring

that it was informative yet collaborative and hands-on. I developed my project around the

themes that emerged from the research findings. I ensured that the PD was aligned with

the districts' goals and state standards to offer an additional layer of relevance to my

audience. Lastly, it was important that the project activities were strategies that teachers

could incorporate into their daily practice in the hopes of eliminating bullying behaviors,

increasing student achievement, increasing school climate, and leading to positive social

change.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

The proposed project could have a huge impact on social change for numerous

reasons. Hoffman (2010) explained that diversions such as school administrators and

teachers taking time from academics to investigate bullying claims and counsel victims have a negative impact on quality education. However, in order to combat the issue of school bullying which has been reported as a serious issue in many schools for the past several decades, it is important that administrators, students, teachers, parents, and the community work together to find ways in helping victims, bullies, and bystanders to incorporate coping strategies and prevent bullying (Hughes & Laffier, 2016). In addition, the proposed PD could possibly boost struggling teachers' self-efficacy by allowing them an opportunity to collaborate with teachers who are more effective with recognizing and responding to bullying behaviors. PD workshops is an effective strategy and the most important variable in assisting teachers to be more prepared and to ensure that they are using the proper techniques when intervening to decrease bullying behaviors as well as offer support to bullying victims (O'Neil, Keller, Green, & Elias, 2012). Social change has the potential to come about when students and staff are empowered and committed to intervening and preventing bullying.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The purpose for this qualitative project study was to understand elementary school teachers' perceptions of bullying. The findings revealed that participants struggled to recognize bullying behaviors from daily conflicts, lack of knowledge on the policy for reporting bullying situations, and the need for a more rigorous PD on antibullying. However, this was a qualitative study and involved a small sample size; therefore, the study findings cannot be generalized to the general population.

Initially, in the beginning I did not factor in implications and directions for future research. Implications for the project consist of me clearly defining bullying as well as providing examples of light and serious cases of bullying, including hands-on and collaborative activities to incorporate antibullying strategies, and providing guidance and techniques for responding and reporting bullying behavior to meet district and state mandated guidelines. Providing a larger outlook, this project could be provided to all faculty and staff at the elementary and secondary school levels. As O'Brennan, Waasdorp, and Bradshaw (2014) suggested one factor that is often overlooked is how staff perceive their personal connectedness and their level of safety of the school environment. It is important to view bullying as a systematic school climate problem because it opens up the possibilities for prevention and intervention (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014).

Although the purpose of this project study was to examine and gain an understanding of teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary school level, other research possibilities emerged for future research. Based on the research findings, 100% of the participants reported not having low confidence level as it relates to recognizing bullying behaviors. However, Waasdorp et al. (2011) explains that many teachers are unaware of the seriousness and to the extent that bullying occurs within their school, and it is likely that they are unable to recognize bullying incidents. In addition, it is suggested that teachers cannot be effective if they are oblivious to the fact that bullying is taking place (Veenstra et al., 2014). According to Strohmeir and Noam (2012), educators need to be able to (1) Detect bullying, (2) Differentiate light bullying cases versus serious

bullying cases and effectively intervene with bystanders, bullies, and victims, and (3) Proactively prevent bullying from taking place before it starts. Therefore, I recommend future research to gain an understanding of teachers' perceptions of their ability to recognize bullying versus their ability to handle bullying situations.

Conclusion

The purpose for this project study was to explore elementary school teachers' perceptions of bullying behaviors. The Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory and Bandura's (1973, 1983) social learning theory of aggression conceptual framework was utilized for this study. My research led me to conclude that some teachers struggled in recognizing bullying situations, teachers reporting practices as it related to bullying varied, teacher's low confidence level as it relates to handling bullying situations, and a more rigorous PD training was needed to improve teacher effectiveness when intervening in bullying incidents. Based on this data, I created a project which included a 3-day PD workshop. The PD is a collaborative workshop that includes hands-on activities that will provide teachers with the necessary skills to recognize bullying situations, strategies to effectively handle and report bullying situations. The ultimate goal for the PD project is to improve teacher self-efficacy, reduce school-bullying, increase student achievement, and increase the school climate.

Included in section 4 was a detailed discussion of my projects' strengths, projects' limitations, as well as other recommendations to remediate the projects' limitations. As I analyzed my project, I determined that one of my projects' strengths was the fact that I used the Georgia Performance Standards to guide my research design. This

is essential because the goal is for teachers to earn PD credits towards their certification renewal. Another important strength for this project involves assisting teachers in meeting their legal obligations. Law 0.C.G.A.20-2-751.4 section (c) (2) states, "A requirement that any teacher or school faculty member who has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal' (GaDOE, 2015, p. 11). As I examined my growth throughout the research process, I was challenged to explain my role as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. In conclusion, I discussed the implications for my research, recommendations for future research, and how an alternative approach to increasing self-efficacy and bullying awareness is by providing teachers with effective PD workshops and affording them with an opportunity to take part in learning communities to share best practices, anti-bullying strategies, and have meaningful discussions as it relates to school bullying in which will have a positive impact on social change.

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    and-violence/

Appendix A: The Project

The project for this study entails a three-day anti-bullying PD workshop. The PD was established based on the research study findings. Therefore, the purpose for this PD workshop is to provide teachers with the necessary tools needed so that they can recognized, effectively respond and report bullying incidents. The PD will serve two major purposes: teacher evaluation-professional growth and accountability. This will be beneficial to teachers because they will be able to upload information from the training into TKES to prove that they are continuously improving their professional growth in order to maximize student growth and school climate. The PD workshop will cover the following standards: (1) Performance Standard 7 (Positive Learning Environment), (2) Performance Standard 8 (Academically Challenging), (3) Performance Standard 9 (Professionalism), and (4) Performance Standard 10 (Communication) (GaDOE, 2015). Each Performance Standards has indicators that describes the role of the teacher. Both Performance Standard and indicators will serve as the basis for this professional development workshop. They set clear guidelines to assist teachers in understanding and evaluating their learning environment, their level of professionalism, and communication skills as it relates to their perceptions of bullying, how they respond to bullying, and their bullying practices. The overall goal for the project is for teachers to work collaboratively on bullying activities to build teachers' self-efficacy, improve teachers' reporting practices, provide strategies to effectively intervene in bullying incidents, increase student achievement, and increase school climate.

Agenda for Professional Development Session Day One
Anti-Bullying Intervention and Prevention

Time	Activity
Day-1 Professional Development Workshop	
Time	**Activity**
8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. (15 min)	Welcome: Introduction
8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. (15 min)	PD Session purpose and goals
8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. (15 min)	Module 1: Activity 1 (What is Bullying) Definition (Slide 6)
8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. (15 min)	Group discussion - Reflection for Activity 1
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. (30 min)	PowerPoint Presentation – Explanation of Bullying
9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. (15 min)	Break
9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. (15 min)	YouTube Video: Two Anti-Bullying Videos
10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (30 min)	Module 1: Activity 2 – Responding to Bullying Activity (Response to Anti-Bullying Videos) (Slide 13)
10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (30 min)	PowerPoint Presentation
11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (30 min)	Module 1: Activity 3 - Self-Reflection Activity: Work with partners and share own bullying experience. Individual – write a summary about the emotions you felt. (Slide 16)
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (30 min)	Self-Reflection Gallery Walk
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (1 hr)	Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. (30 min)	Module 1: Activity 4 – Breaking Down the Literature (Cyberbullying)! (Slide 19)
1:45 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. (30 min)	PowerPoint Presentation - Cyberbullying
2:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Group Discussion: Small groups will discuss how they can break the barriers and change their perceptions of bullying behaviors using the results from the current research study as well as the perceptions of their peers
2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (15 min)	Wrap-up (exit slip): Complete Formative Evaluation for Day-1 (Slide 24)

Day One Anti-Bullying Intervention and Prevention Activities

Module 1: Activity 1 - *What Is Bullying? Activity*
With your group, discuss the definition of *school bullying (traditional and cyber)*. On the chart paper provide, write down both definitions. In addition, discuss and write down what does not constitute as bullying. Come up with one effective way as to how you handle bullying. Select one person from your group to post your definitions on the wall and to be your spokesperson (15 min).

What Is Bullying?

My Definition of Bullying
Bullying is _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Bullying is not _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

I handle bullying by _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Module 1: Activity 2
Abby's Story & 10 Most Evil School Bullies Activity
With your group, discuss both *school bullying videos*. On the chart paper provide, write down if you have or had an Abby in your class. What are some signs to recognize an Abby? How would you approach the situation? From the video "10 Most Evil School Bullies", as a group choose the bully you feel is the most evil and come up with some effective strategies as to how you would handle that bullying situation. Select one person from your group to post your definitions on the wall and to be your spokesperson (15 min).

Module 1: Activity 3
Self-Reflection Activity (Do you remember how it feels to be a victim of bullying?)
Was there ever a time when you were bullied or a situation when you were embarrassed or were threatened? With the person sitting next to you, share how that made you feel. (5 minutes). Summarize the emotions you felt during that experience by sharing with the class. (Write how you felt and draw an emoji on the large chart paper and taped it to the

wall). Individually, we will all take 5 to 7 minutes to walk around and read the responses (30 min).

Module 1: Activity 4
Breaking Down the Literature (Cyberbullying)!
Teachers will be provided with literature on cyberbullying. In their group, they will be asked to read the "abstract" and the "results or discussion" and select at least three important points to present to the whole group (30 min).

Module 1: Formative Evaluation
Using the "Teacher Keys Effectiveness Fact Sheet" attached the performance standards that were covered through the PD workshop along with a brief description (15min).

PROJECT FORMATIVE EVALUATION (End of Day One)
Directions: Please answer the following questions:
1. What did you take away from today's PD?
2. What questions do you have about what you have learned so far?
3. Which standards can you attach to today's PD workshop?

Agenda for Professional Development Session Day Two
Anti-Bullying Intervention and Prevention

Day-2 Professional Development Workshop	
Time	**Activity**
8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. (15 min)	Welcome
8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. (15 min)	PD Session purpose and goals
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. (30 min)	Share Project Study's Findings
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. (30 min)	Module 2: Activity 1 – Conflict vs. Bullying (Slide 32)
9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. (30 min)	PowerPoint Presentation w/YouTube Video– Conflict Vs. Bullying
10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. (15 min)	Break
10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. (30 min)	Module2: Activity 2 – Classifying Bullying Activity (Slide 36)
10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (30 min)	PowerPoint Presentation - Recognizing Bullying
11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (45 min)	Module 2: Activity 3 – Create an Anti-Bullying class activity (Slide 42)
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (1 hr)	Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. (30 min)	Module 2: Activity 4 – Breaking Down the Literature (Recognizing Bullying)! (Slide 43)
1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. (1 hr)	Module 2: Activity 5 – Bullying/Harassment Scenarios (Slide 44)
2:30p.m. – 2:45 p.m. (15 min)	Break
2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (15 min)	Group Discussion: Small groups will discuss how they can break the barriers and change their perceptions of bullying behaviors using the results from the current research study as well as the perceptions of their peers
3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. (15 min)	Wrap-up (exit slip): Complete Formative Evaluation for Day 2 (Slide 45)

Day Two Anti-Bullying Intervention and Prevention Activities

Module 2: Activity 1- *Conflict vs. Bullying Activity*
With your group, read over the Conflict Vs. Bullying worksheet. Together, answer the questions and state why you selected whether it is bullying or a conflict. We will share our answers and reasons in 15 minutes (30 min).

CONFLICT VS. BULLYING

Read each of the descriptions below and determine if it is Bullying or a Conflict. Explain why.

1. Devon doesn't like what how Ronald looks and wants to fight him _____

_____

2. Kayla isn't talking you anymore because a boy she likes asked you to be his girlfriend _____

_____

3. Different students is saying that Shantell is calling them names and threatening to fight them _____

_____

4. A girl in your homeroom class says that a student in another class is making up stories about them on

Twitter_____

5. Gerald calls a student in your class a name and laughs at their hair cut _____

_____

6. A new student arrives to your school and one of the students keeps calling her names and taking

things from her _____

7. As Monica was walking to her seat, Brian stuck his foot out and tripped her disrupting the entire class

_____

Module 2: Activity 2 - *Classifying Bullying Activity*
With your group, read over the Classifying Bullying worksheet. Together, answer the questions and classify which bullying behavior each situation falls into. Be ready to share your answers (30 min).

CLASSIFYING BULLYING

Read each of the behaviors listed below and decide which type of bullying it is. Some cases may fall under two or more different categories. Justify your answers.

1) Teasing   2) Exclusion   3) Harassment   4) Physical Aggression

_____ Stealing items from others.

_____ Embarrassing other by making degrading comments or groping them.

_____ Giving the silent treatment to someone and encouraging others to ignore them as well.

_____ Calling people insulting names.

_____ Pretending to be someone's friend but then turning on them.

_____ Passing silly notes about someone.

_____ Nagging and/or insulting others.

_____ Kicking, pushing, shoving, intentionally tripping, bumping, pinching, or hair pulling.

_____ Hiding or throwing someone's else personal belongings around.

_____ Gossiping, telling others' secrets.

_____ Making statements like "I not your friend if ....I am going to tell that you ___ if you don't ....".

_____ Making silly noises as certain individuals walk by.

_____ Intimidating people in a nasty way.

Module 2: Activity 3
Anti-Bullying Class Activity
With your group, create an Anti-Bullying activity that is age appropriate for your students. The activity should be meaningful, collaborative, and hands-on. Create your activity on the "chart paper" provided and hang it on the back wall once you are finished for all to see (45 min).

Module 2: Activity 4
Breaking Down the Literature (Recognizing Bullying)!
Teachers will be provided with literature on recognizing bullying and anti-bullying prevention. In their group, they will be asked to read the "abstract" and the "results or discussion" and select at least three important points to present to the whole group (30 min).

Module 2: Activity 5
Bullying/Harassment Scenario Activity.
Teachers will be provided with 10 scenarios of possible bullying or harassment situations based on real-life situations. Please use
the following questions to analyze the scenarios:
1. Is this bullying or harassment or some other form of misconduct?
2. If it is possible harassment, what is/are the protected category/categories?
3. If you are not sure, what additional information would you need to determine if it might be harassment? (1 hr)

PROJECT FORMATIVE EVALUATION (End of Day Two)
Directions: Please answer the following questions:
1. What did you take away from today's PD?
2. What questions do you have about what you have learned so far?
3. Which standards can you attach to today's PD workshop?

Agenda for Professional Development Session Day Three
Anti-Bullying Intervention and Prevention

Day-3 Professional Development Workshop	
Time	**Activity**
8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. (15 min)	Welcome - PD Session purpose and goals
8:15 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. (45 min)	Module 3: Activity 1 – Anti-Bullying Strategic Handout (Slide 49)
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. (30 min)	PowerPoint Presentation – Keeping Lines of Communication Open Regarding Bullying
9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. (15 min)	Break
9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. (1 hr)	Module 3: Activity 2 – Responding to Bullying/Harassment Scenarios (Slide 53)
10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (30 min)	PowerPoint Presentation – Responding to Bullying
11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. (30 min)	Module 3: Activity 3 – Superhero Activity (Slide 61)
11:45 a.m.- 12:45 p.m. (1 hr)	Lunch
12:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. (30 min)	PowerPoint Presentation - The Bystander
1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. (1 hr)	Module 3: Activity 4 – Policies & Procedures Scavenger Hunt Activity (Slide 64)
2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. (15 min)	Break
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (30 min)	PowerPoint Presentation - Reporting Policies & Procedures
3:00 p.m. – 3:15p.m. (15 min)	Wrap-up (exit slip): Complete a Summative Evaluation via Survey Monkey for Day 3 (Slide 64)

Day Three Anti-Bullying Intervention and Prevention Activities

Module 3: Activity 1
Antibullying Strategic Handout
Teachers will be provided with the following handout. Together as a grade-level, read, discuss, and answer the following questions. Be ready to share your strategies with the whole group.

1. Grade-level discussion.
2. What does elementary school teachers need to know about school bullying in order to be effectively intervene when presented with bullying incidents?
3. Use the worksheet to list skills and strategies needed to intervene.
4. Decide which skill or strategy is more important and explain why (45 min).

WHAT DO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SCHOOL BULLYING?	
Classroom Management	Managing Bullying Behaviors

What is the most important skill or strategy needed for maintaining bullying behaviors?

_____

Why? _____

_____

What strategies do you feel is most important in order to effectively intervene in bullying

situations? _____

_____

Module 3: Activity 2

Responding to Bullying/Harassment Scenario (Follow-Up) *Activity*.

Teachers will be provided with 10 scenarios of possible bullying or harassment situations based on real-life situations. Please use the following questions to analyze how you would respond to the scenarios:

1. What are some immediate responses you could initiate to manage or resolve this situation and who needs to be involved?
2. What would you do and/or say?
3. Consider how you would respond to the target, perpetrator, bystanders, parents, and/or school staff.
4. What follow-up steps need to be taken and by whom? (1 hr)

Module 3: Activity 3

Superhero (Bystander) Activity!

Teachers will use the worksheet provided "Superhero Activity" in their packet to answer questions about bully bystanders. Imagine that you are a "Bully Superhero", what skills do you possess? Take 10 minutes to discuss the skills you need to fight school bullying with your table. Then write the skills your group thinks are important traits on the chart provided, next select a spokesperson to share with the class, tape the chart paper to the back wall. Activity and skills will be discussed with the entire class. This is an activity that you can do with your students!!! (30 min)

"Superhero Bystander Activity!"

Directions: Imagine that you are a Superhero standing up to bullies. As teachers, list the necessary "skills" you would need as a superhero to intervene when you encounter a bullying situation. As a group, write the skills you think are important traits on the chart provided, next select a spokesperson to share with the class, tape the chart paper to the back wall. Activity and skills will be discussed with the entire class. This is an activity that you can do with your students!!!

Answer the following questions:

1.Define Bystander

2.How significant do you think bystanders are in bullying situations?

3.List five things bystanders can do to prevent bullying?

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

   e. _____

Module 3: Activity 4
Policies and Procedures Scavenger Hunt.
Today we're going to look at our policies and procedures on bullying using the Student of Conduct Handbook. Our policies and procedures exist to protect both our school and our students. Knowing our policies and procedures will help you make good decisions when respond to bullying, answering questions from parents and students about bullying situations, and reporting bullying situations. Now we're going to practice using our policies and procedures to help answer questions to common problems about bullying as well as reporting bullying situations (1 hr).

DAY THREE - PROJECT SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Directions: Please use the computers to complete a Summative Evaluation via Survey Monkey:

1. Log into your work email

2. You will see an email from me titled: Anti-Bullying Summative Evaluation

3. Click on the survey invitation link and begin

4. Once you are finished, you may leave!

Bullying Prevention Summative Evaluation
Survey Monkey

1. Please tell us a little about yourself.

Grade Level

Number of Years in Education

2. Please select one of the following that best describes your overall experience with the Professional Development.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The PD was informative, I learned new information that will help me to be more effective in dealing with bullying situations.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The PD was informative, but I already new all this information. This information will not help me to be more effective in dealing with bullying situations.	○ Strongly Agree	○ Agree	○ Disagree	○ Strongly Disagree
The PD was informative, however, I do not feel comfortable dealing with bullying situations.	○ Strongly Agree	○ Agree	○ Disagree	○ Strongly Disagree
The PD was not informative and will not help me in any way.	○ Strongly Agree	○ Agree	○ Disagree	○ Strongly Disagree

3. I would like more Professional Development in the area of:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Recognizing Bullying Behaviors	○ Strongly Agree	○ Agree	○ Disagree	○ Strongly Disagree
Responding/Managing Classroom Bullying	○ Strongly Agree	○ Agree	○ Disagree	○ Strongly Disagree
Reporting Bullying	○ Strongly Agree	○ Agree	○ Disagree	○ Strongly Disagree
Classroom Management	○ Strongly Agree	○ Agree	○ Disagree	○ Strongly Disagree
Developing Bullying Classroom Activities	○ Strongly Agree	○ Agree	○ Disagree	○ Strongly Disagree

4. Briefly describe the best Professional Development session that you've ever attended. Explain why it was the most valuable to you in regards to improved instructional strategies and student achievement.

5. How has this bullying professional development differed from other bullying professional development sessions that you've attended?

6. What suggestions do you have for the trainer in how he/she can improve upon for future professional development sessions?

Three Day Anti-Bullying Intervention and Prevention Presentation

BULLYING INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

PRESENTED BY TIFFANY THOMAS WALDEN UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL STUDENT

1

DAY 1: BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

2

PURPOSE

The purpose of this professional development training is to increase teacher's understanding of Bullying by offering best practice strategies needed to recognize, intervene, and prevent bullying situations effectively.

GOALS

- Understand school bullying and the problems it entails.
- Understand that school bullying can have a negative effect on the culture of the school
- Learn how to recognize bullying, respond to bullying, and prevent bullying from happening.
- Learn the proper bullying reporting protocols.

TRAINING MODULES

Module 1: Identifying and understanding the affects of school bullying.

Module 2: Recognizing, intervention, and prevention strategies for school bullying.

Module 3: Best practices for reporting bullying incidents.

MODULE 1: ACTIVITY 1
WHAT IS BULLYING

My Definition of Bullying

Bullying is _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Bullying is not _____
_____
_____
_____

I handle bullying by _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

STOP
THINK
OBSERVE
PROCEED

BULLYING DEFINITION
www.stopbullying.gove

•Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

•In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

•An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

•Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

•Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose and can be perpetrated electronically (i.e., cell phone, computer, gaming).

IDENTIFYING BULLYING

Bullying characteristics is as follows:

✓ Power imbalance

✓ Aggressive behavior

✓ Critical of others

✓ Repeated behavior

✓ High levels of self-esteem

✓ Lacks empathy

✓ View violence as acceptable

EXPLANATION OF BULLYING

Students suffer from be bullied daily.

- Bullying takes place at least once every seven minutes.
- Over 70% of students have been involved or witnessed school bullying as either the bully, bystander, or victim.

(Graham, 2015)

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EXPLANATION OF BULLYING

NEA reported that their survey reveled that 98% of school staff felt that it is their job to intervene once they witness bullying happening.

(Graham & Robertson, 2013)

10

How Serious Is Bullying?

- National surveys suggest the following about bullying:
- ✓ Elementary students view bullying as a big problem
- ✓ Middle school students are more focused on emotional and social mistreatment from their peers than they are with anything else including academic achievement
- ✓ Peer harassment have been linked to student's health
- ✓ Recent school violence such as shootings are directly linked school bullying

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BULLYING is…..

- A social relationship problem

- A mental health problem

- A societal problem

12

MODULE 1: ACTIVITY 2

Abby's Story – A Bullying Story.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YGjz5SV_Qk

10 Most Evil School Bullies

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45X2GlEw-_Y

13
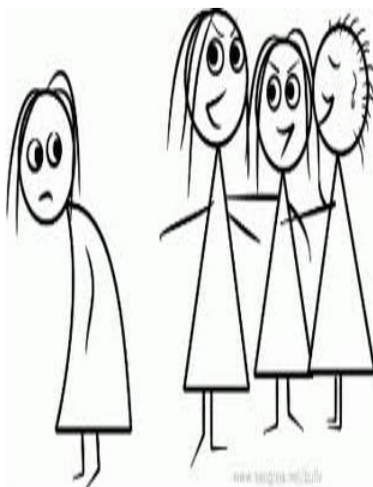
Harassment

- Harassment and bullying in most cases overlap.
- Harassment is unwanted conduct towards a protected class that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and creates an environment that is aggressive.
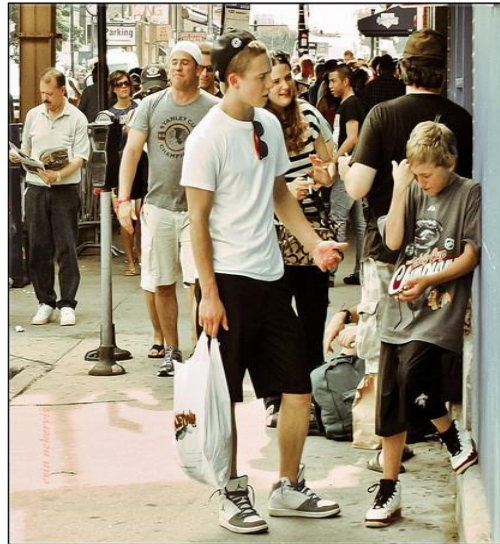
(Federal Civil Rights Law)

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SCHOOL BULLYING

It is common for school bullying to take place during breaks such as bathrooms, or transition periods such as hallways where children are easily accessible and but teachers rarely go or hard for teachers to pay attention.

(Majcherova, Hajduova & Andrejkovic, 2014).

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Module 1: Activity

STOP
THINK
OBSERVE
PROCEED

Self-Reflection Activity (Do you remember how it feels to be a victim of bullying?)

- Was there ever a time when you were bullied or a situation when you were embarrassed or were threatened? With the person sitting next to you, share how that made you feel (5 minutes).
- Summarize the emotions you felt during that experience by sharing with the class (10 minutes).
- (Write how you felt and draw an emoji on the large chart paper and taped it to the wall). Individually, we will all take (5 to 7 minutes) to walk around and read the responses.

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EFFECTS OF BULLYING

The National Association of School Psychologist reported that 160,000 students stay home due to school bullying every day.

Source: www.nea.org

RISK FACTORS FOR BEING BULLIED

❖ Being different

❖ Overweight/underweight

❖ Lack social skills

❖ Sexual orientation

❖ Socioeconomic status

❖ The way one dresses

MODULE 1: ACTIVITY 4

Breaking Down the Literature (Cyberbullying)!
Literature

1. Read the Abstract.

2. Read the Results and/or Discussion

3. Discuss with your grade-level group three to five points of interest to present to the other grade-level groups

STOP
THINK
OBSERVE
PROCEED
19

MODULE 1: ACTIVITY 4

Literature on Cyberbullying
Incidents

Grade Kindergarten
Web: http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/
Literature: http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1058&context=jlh
Grade 1
Web: http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/
Literature: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1053975.pdf
Grade 2
Web: http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/
Literature: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=ccflfacpub
Grade 3
Web: http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/
Literature: https://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/academics/communications/research/vol3no1/04doneganejspring12.pdf
Grade 4
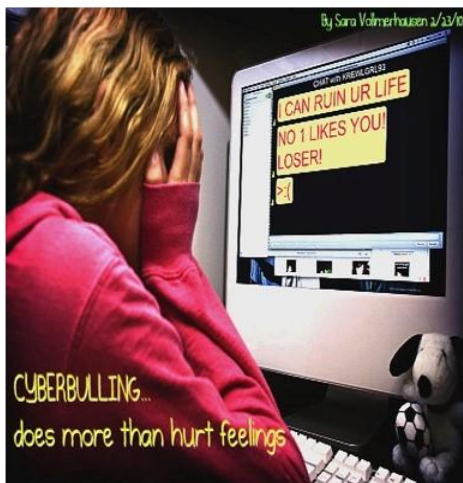**Web:** http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/
Literature: http://benthamopen.com/contents/pdf/TOPSYJ/TOPSYJ-8-78.pdf
Grade 5
Web: http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/
Literature: http://agnesday.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Slonje-Cyberbullying.pdf

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic devices such as cell phones, computers, tablets, social media, text messages, etc.

Examples: mean text messages, rumors posted to social media sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

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WHY CYBERBULLYING IS DIFFERENT

Kids who are being cyberbullied are often bullied in person as well. Additionally, kids who are cyberbullied have a harder time getting away from the behavior.

- Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a kid even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night.
- Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.
- Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

www.stopbullying.gov

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EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING

Kids who are cyberbullied are more likely to:
- Use alcohol and drugs
- Skip school
- Experience in-person bullying
- Be unwilling to attend school
- Receive poor grades
- Have lower self-esteem
- Have more health problems

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DAY 1 EVALUATION

PROJECT FORMATIVE EVALUATION (End of Day One)

Directions: Please answer the following questions:

1. What did you learn today?

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What questions do you have about what you have learned so far?

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Which standards can you attach to today's PD workshop?

_____
_____
_____
_____

24

DAY-2 BULLYING INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

PURPOSE

The purpose of this professional development training is to increase teacher's understanding of Bullying by offering best practice strategies needed to recognize, intervene, and prevent bullying situations effectively.

GOALS

- Understand school bullying and the problems it entails.
- Understand that school bullying can have a negative effect on the culture of the school
- Learn how to recognize bullying, respond to bullying, and prevent bullying from happening.
- Learn the proper bullying reporting protocols.

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Teachers' Explanations of Bullying Behaviors

Types of Bullying Behaviors	Teachers' Explanations
Physical	pushing, shoving, tripping, touching, and hitting other students.
Verbal	name calling and teasing saying mean things gossiping (spreading rumors) threatening and intimidating
Cyber	bullying with the use of technological devices such as cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, and text messages.

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Percentage of Teachers Who Experienced Physical, Verbal, and Cyber Bullying Behaviors

Bullying Behaviors	Percentage of Teachers
Physical	50%
Verbal	62.5%
Cyber	37.5%

29

Percentage of Teachers Who Rated Their Confidence Level in Recognizing Bullying Behaviors as Not Confident, Somewhat Confident, or Very Confident

Teacher's Confidence Level	Percentage of Teachers
Not Confident	0
Somewhat Confident	75
Very Confident	25

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Not Confident	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident
*	"I am often in situations where we are into dialogue and I recognize facial expressions or body language that enables me to see a difference is a child"	"I am very aware and understanding and can see those things that are true bullying and things where the kids are just whining"
*	"things that may not bother me or I don't necessarily see see as bullying or something that will not hurt my feelings may hurt someone else, so I have to stay mindful of that" may hurt someone else, so I	"if you see the same kid engaging in the same pattern of behavior, it could be name calling, physical bullying and it's the same kid over and over"
*	"you often times see a consist-ency of those kids who are bullies in class. But there are those situations where you don't see, not saying that it's not happening but you are just not catching it in time"	
*	"I guess I catch some and I miss some. Everything is not seen, for example I taught just this week alone, today is Mon-day and already a kid is hitting another kid"	
*	"A lot of things are happening at school, kids know how to hide it from teachers and it's not until you have a done a lot of invest-igating when you find out you are surprised"	
*	"there are some incidences where	

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MODULE 2: ACTIVITY 1

Conflict Vs Bullying

Name:_____

Determine if the example provide is **Bullying** or **Conflict** and state why:

1. Joe doesn't like Jake and wants to hurt him._____

2. Sally isn't talking to you because you were picked for leader of the team._____

3. A new student arrived at school and another student keeps calling him names and taking his things.

4. Your friend stopped playing with you at recess and is now playing with another friend of yours.

5. Someone in your class calls another student names and laughs at the clothes they wear.

6. A girl in your class gossips and makes up stories about your friend._____

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BULLYING vs. CONFLICT

Sometimes the word *bullying* can be abused (misused) for every disagreement.

Can you distinguish bullying situations from everyday conflict?

EVERYTHING ISN'T BULLYING

✓ Peer conflict
✓ A statement of dislike toward or about someone
✓ Telling a single act of telling a joke about someone
✓ Pushing, shoving, hitting, tripping, etc. which occurs ONCE (not a repeated behavior)
✓ Argument or heated disagreement between two or more people (not a repeated pattern)

BULLYING vs. CONFLICT-KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

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MODULE 2-ACTIVITY 2

Classifying Bullying

Name:

For each of the behaviors listed below, decide which type of bullying it is. In some cases, you may list it under two categories.

1 Teasing   **2** Exclusion   **3** Harassment   **4** Physical Aggression

_____ Calling other individuals insulting names.

_____ Nagging and or insulting others.

_____ Pretending to be friends but turning on them.

_____ Giving the silent treatment to known individuals.

_____ Stealing items from others.

_____ Pushing, shoving, kicking, intentional bumping, tripping, hair pulling, pinching.

_____ Embarrassing others (grabbing at their clothing, sexual comments)

_____ Making silly noises as individual is nearby.

_____ Silly note passing about an individual.

_____ Pointing, staring, mocking or laughing at individuals.

_____ Gossiping, exposing secrets to others.

_____ Making statements like "I won't be your friend if...... I won't go with you if........"

_____ Hiding or throwing another individual's belongings around.

_____ Intimidating other individuals in a nasty way.

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STOP
THINK
OBSERVE
PROCEED

RECOGNIZING BULLYING

Look for unexplainable changes such as:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Sudden loss or destroyed clothing, books, or other personal items
- Sudden frequent stomach aches or headaches, feeling ill or faking illness
- Loss of interest in school, declining grades, or not wanting to attend school

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RECOGNIZING BULLYING

Look for unexplainable changes such as:

- Difficultly sleeping or nightmares
- Isolation from peers or avoiding social activities
- A decrease level of self-esteem or depression
- Self-destructive behaviors

(stopbullying.gov, 2014)

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KIDS INVOLVED IN BULLYING

Students play different roles when it comes to bullying.

- Kids who bully: these children engage in bullying behavior amongst their peers
- Kids who are bullied: these children are targets of bullying also known as the victim
- Kids who bully and is bullied: these children often starts off as the victim and start bullying others because it's done to them or to feel less inferior (they are known as the bully-victim)

(Stopbullying.gov, 2014)

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SIGNS OF A CHILD BULLYING OTHERS

Students may be bullying others if they:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

www.stopbullying.gov

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KIDS DON'T ALWAYS REPORT BULLYING INCIDENTS

Statistics from the 2012 Indicators of School Crime and Safety reported that an adult was informed less than half (40%) of bullying incidents. Some of the reasons why students do not tell are because:

- Bullying can make a child feel helpless. They may want to handle it on their own to feel in control again. Kids fear being seen as weak or looked at as a tattletale.
- Kids may fear backlash from the childe who bullied them.
- Bullying can be a humiliating experience. Kids may not want adults to know what is being said about them, whether true or false. They may also fear that adults will judge them or punish them for being weak.
- Kids who are bullied may already feel socially isolated so may feel like no one cares or would understand.
- Kids may fear being rejected by their peers. Friends can help protect kids from bullying, and kids can fear losing this support.

www.stopbullying.gov

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MODULE 2: ACTIVITY 3

Create an "Anti-Bully" activity that is specific to your grade level that you can take back for your students to complete. The activity should be hands-on and collaborative. Make it fun!!!

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STOP
THINK
OBSERVE
PROCEED

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MODULE 2: ACTIVITY 4

Literature on Recognizing Bullying

Grade Kindergarten
Web: http:// https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/
Literature: http://www.highscope.org/file/NewsandInformation/Extensions/ExtVol25No3_low.pdf
Grade 1
Web: https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/
Literature: http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=marc_pubs
Grade 2
Web: https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/
Literature: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3501605/
Grade 3
Web: https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/
Literature: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1079521.pdf
Grade 4
Web: https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/
Literature: https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/spq-24-4-211.pdf
Grade 5
Web: https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/
Literature: http://www.hrpub.org/download/201308/ujer.2013.010201.pdf

www.stopbullying.gov

MODULE 2: ACTIVITY 5

Bullying/Harassment scenarios

Below you will find 10 scenarios of possible bullying or harassment situations based on real-life situations. Please use the following questions to analyze the scenarios:

1. Is this bullying or harassment or some other form of misconduct?

2. If it is possible harassment, what is/are the protected category/ies?

3. If you are not sure, what additional information would you need to determine if it might be harassment?

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DAY 2 EVALUATION

PROJECT FORMATIVE EVALUATION (End of Day One)

Directions: Please answer the following questions:

1. What did you learn today?
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What questions do you have about what you have learned so far?
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Which standards can you attach to today's PD workshop?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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REPORTING BULLYING
Day 3

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this professional development training is to increase teacher's understanding of Bullying by offering best practice strategies needed to recognize, intervene, and prevent bullying situations effectively.

GOALS

- Understand school bullying and the problems it entails.
- Understand that school bullying can have a negative effect on the culture of the school
- Learn how to recognize bullying, respond to bullying, and prevent bullying from happening.
- Learn the proper bullying reporting protocols.

MODULE 3: ACTIVITY 1

Antibullying Strategic Handout

WHAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SCHOOL BULLYING	
Classroom Management	Managing Bullying Behaviors

MODULE 3: ACTIVITY 1

Antibullying Strategic Handout

What is the most important skill or strategy needed for maintaining bullying behaviors?

_____

_____

Why? _____

_____

_____

What strategies do you feel is most important in order to effectively intervene bullying

situations? _____

_____

_____

HOW TO TALK ABOUT BULLYING

Keep lines of communication open!

- Talk to students so that they understand what bullying is and it's effect.
- Check in on students and listen to their concerns.
- Encourage students to do what their interested in. Protect students from bullying behaviors.
- Model kindness.

www.stopbullying.gov

before you speak:
THINK

T is it true?

H is it helpful?

I is it inspiring?

N is it necessary?

K is it kind?

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HELP STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND BULLYING

- Encourage kids to speak to a trusted adult if they are bullied or see others being bullied. The adult can give comfort, support, and advice, even if they can't solve the problem directly. Encourage the child to report bullying.
- Teach kids how to stand up to bullies. Give tips, like using humor and saying "stop" directly and confidently. Talk about what to do if those actions don't work, like walking away
- Talk about strategies for staying safe, such as staying near adults or groups of other kids.
- Urge other students to help students who are bullied by showing kindness or getting help.

STOPBULLYING.GOV

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MODULE 3: ACTIVITY 2

Responding to Bullying/Harassment Scenarios

Below you will find 10 scenarios of possible bullying or harassment situations based on real-life situations. Please use the following questions to analyze the scenarios:

1. What are some immediate responses you could initiate to manage or resolve this situation and who needs to be involved?
2. What would you do and/or say?
3. Consider how you would respond to the target, perpetrator, bystanders, parents, and/or school staff.

• What follow-up steps need to be taken and by whom?

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MODULE 3: ACTIVITY 2
Responding To Bullying/Harassment Scenarios

Scenario #1

Cheryl, Candace, and Alicia are friends and in 7th grade. Cheryl and Alicia live in a trailer park with their families. All three girls ride the school bus home in the afternoon. Amanda and Sarah, both 8th graders, also ride the same bus in the afternoon. During the fall, Amanda and Sarah start repeatedly calling Cheryl and Alicia "White trailer trash" and make fun of their clothes and belongings. One day, Candace, frustrated with the on-going treatment of her friends, shouts at Amanda and Sarah, "Why don't you two stupid snobs shut up and leave Cheryl and Alicia alone!" Amanda gets up and hits Candace and says, "You shut up! You're just a stupid 7th grader. Why do you hang out with those two trailer trash idiots anyway?" Several students and the bus driver witness this interaction.

Scenario #2

Dylan is a 9th grade gay student who is out. Over the summer, one of Dylan's friends reports to the principal that other students from the high school have created a website that says "Dylan is gay" and includes derogatory comments about Dylan and his "lifestyle." Dylan's friend tells the principal that Dylan is now afraid to come back to school in the fall because the website includes threats to physically harm him. The principal Mia Karvonides, DOE/Tracey Tsugawa, HRC goes online and finds the website. While the students who created the website are using screen names, they provide enough information about themselves for the principal to easily identify who the students are.

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MODULE 3: ACTIVITY 2
Responding To Bullying/Harassment Scenarios

Scenario #3

Rebecca Rabinowitz is Jewish and in the 6th grade. In October she missed a few days of school while her family observed Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. When Rebecca returned to school after Yom Kippur she was teased by some of her classmates while walking home from school. Her classmates

made comments about how Jews get special treatment at school and about how Jews always have a lot of money. When Rebecca gets home, she is in tears and tells her mother what happened. Mrs. Rabinowitz calls the school immediately and tells Rebecca's homeroom teacher what happened.

Scenario #4

Edgar is in 4th grade and is much taller and heavier than most of his peers. However, because he has a tremendous sense of humor, he is very popular and well-liked by most of his peers. One day during recess, during a game of dodge ball, Edgar trips on the ball and falls down. Steven, a 5th grader, yells,

"Look at the beached whale on the playground!" and Steven and the other 5th graders with him laugh. Edgar turns red but picks himself up and starts to get ready to play again. Several of Edgar's friends get angry and tell Steven and his friends to "shut up." A shouting match ensues until a teacher comes over to break it up.

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According to the National Association of School Psychologists (2012) schools have a ethical and legal responsibility to provide a safe school environment.

(NASP, 2014)

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YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Educators and other staff spend most of the school day interacting with students; therefore, we can have a huge impact on bullying behavior.

How to prevent bullying?

1. Care an environment that's safe and supportive within the classroom.
2. Develop clear rules.
3. Use positive language explaining acceptable behavior opposed to unacceptable behavior.
4. Manage student behavior.

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RESPONDING TO BULLYING

When adults are consistent and respond quickly to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time. There are simple steps adults can take to stop bullying on the spot and keep kids safe.

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RESPONDING TO BULLYING

The Do's:
- Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
- Separate the kids involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe.
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

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RESPONDING TO BULLYING

The Don'ts:
- Don't ignore it. Don't think kids can work it out without adult help.
- Don't immediately try to sort out the facts.
- Don't force other kids to say publicly what they saw.
- Don't question the children involved in front of other kids.
- Don't talk to the kids involved together, only separately.
- Don't make the kids involved apologize or patch up relations on the spot
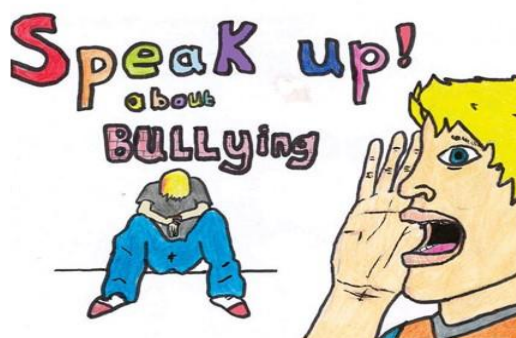
www.stopbullying.gov

MODULE 3: ACTIVITY

Superhero (Bystander)!

Superhero Activity. Teachers will use the worksheet provided "Superhero Activity" in their packet to answer questions about bully bystanders. Imagine that you are a "Bully Superhero", what skills do you possess? Take 10 minutes to discuss the skills you need to fight school bullying with your table. Then write the skills your group thinks are important traits on the chart provided, next select a spokesperson to share with the class, tape the chart paper to the back wall. Activity and skills will be discussed with the entire class. This is an activity that you can do with your students!!!

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THE BYSTANDER

Research suggest that a teacher's response to

bullying determines the extent in which a bystander

is willing to intervene (Hektner & Swenson, 2012).

- Bystanders is a pivotal part of the whole bullying epidemic, they can either have a positive or negative impact on bullying (Espelage, 2012).
- Bystanders are described as individuals who stand around watching fights instead of helping the victim (Hong & Espelage, 2012).
- While bystanders may not partake in victimization, Briggs (2012) explained that children who witness bullying situations are at risk of alcohol and drugs, chance of mental health problems, and increased absences from school.

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THE BYSTANDER

- A recent study suggested that 85% acts of aggression are witnessed by peer bystanders (Kerzner, 2013).
- Twemlow and Sacco (2013) suggested that bystanders are not passive but is a major component to the evolution of victimization and the bystander plays a powerful role by providing an audience within the magnified epidemic of bullies and victims.
- When bullies control and force bystanders to support them; the triangle of the bully, bystander, and victim is functioning as a submissive group (Kerzner, 2013).

silent witness

If the bystander is perceived as popular or held in high regard, they may prevent bullying from occurring and defend the victim (Caravita, Gini, & Pozzoli, 2012).

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MODULE 3: ACTIVITY 4

Stop
Think
Observe
Proceed

Policies and Procedures Scavenger Hunt

Today we're going to look at our policies and procedures on bullying. Our policies and procedures exist to protect both our school and our students. Knowing our policies and procedures will help you make good decisions and answer questions from parents and students about bullying situations. Now we're going to practice using our policies and procedures to help answer questions to common problems about bullying.

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REPORTING BULLYING
AN OBLIGATION

- LAW 0.C.G.A.20-2-751.4 section © (2) states, "A requirement that any teacher or other school employee who has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal" (GaDOE, 2015).

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WHY IT'S IMPERATIVE TO REPORT
BULLYING INCIDENTS

- Oldenburg et al. (2014) argued that the beliefs of a teacher on the causes of bullying is probable to impact how they feel about bullying taking place in their classrooms and if they are likely to intervene when bullying situations arise.
- While teachers may feel confident in addressing bullying behaviors, they usually underrate the volume of bullying that impedes the schoolhouse (Strohmeier & Noam, 2012).
- One study revealed that 22% of students were bullied two or more times in the past month; of those, between 30% and 53% reported the incident to a teacher (Rigby, 2014).
- The U.S. Department of Education National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environment (NCSSLE) reported that students learn better when they are in a learning environment in which they are challenged, accepted, supported, and feel safe (2016).

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REPORTING BULLYING
District's/School's Policy

- Below are the following steps for staff reporting bullying incidents:

1. If a parent or student reports a bullying incident to a staff member, the staff member must provide the parent or child with the bullying reporting form to complete and submit to an administrator or designee.

2. If a staff member witness a bullying incident, they are to submit a bullying referral to an administrator or designee.

3. The school principal or designee will launch an investigation no later than the following school day.

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Strategies For Prevention

- Comprehensive school plan to address bullying policy
- Appropriate responses/consequences to identified bullies and targets
- Professional development for ALL staff/faculty
- Parent training
- Build empathy
- Teachable moments to build community and model appropriate behavior
- Student empowerment Source

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Georgia Performance Standards

- The professional development workshop served two major purposes: teacher evaluation-professional growth and accountability.
- ➤ Georgia Performance Standards – Teachers will be provided with the performance standards. We will discuss which standards were covered under this PD workshop in which they will be able to attach into their teacher keys under to show that they attended the training.

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DAY-3 SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

PROJECT SUMMATIVE EVALUATION (Day-3)

Directions: Please use the computers to complete a Summative Evaluation via Survey Monkey:

- Log into your work email

- You will see an email from me titled: Anti-Bullying Summative Evaluation

- Click on the survey invitation link and begin

- Once you are finished, you may leave!

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Bullying Prevention Professional Development Evaluation Survey Monkey

1. Please tell us a little about yourself.

Grade Level _____

Number of Years in Education _____

2. Please select one of the following that best describes your overall experience with the Professional Development.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The PD was informative, I learned new information that will help me to be more effective in dealing with bullying situations.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The PD was informative, but I already new all this information. This information will not help me to be more effective in dealing with bullying situations.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The PD was informative, however, I do not feel comfortable dealing with bullying situations.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The PD was not informative and will not help me in any way.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

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Bullying Prevention Professional Development Evaluation Survey Monkey

3. I would like more Professional Development in the area of:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Recognizing Bullying Behaviors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Responding/Managing Classroom Bullying	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Reporting Bullying	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Classroom Management	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Developing Bullying Classroom Activities	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**Bullying Prevention Professional Development Evaluation Survey Monkey**

4. Briefly describe the best Professional Development session that you've ever attended. Explain why it was the most valuable to you in regards to improved instructional strategies and student achievement.

5. How has this bullying professional development differed from other bullying professional development sessions that you've attended?

6. What suggestions do you have for the trainer in how he/she can improve upon for future professional development sessions?

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THE END
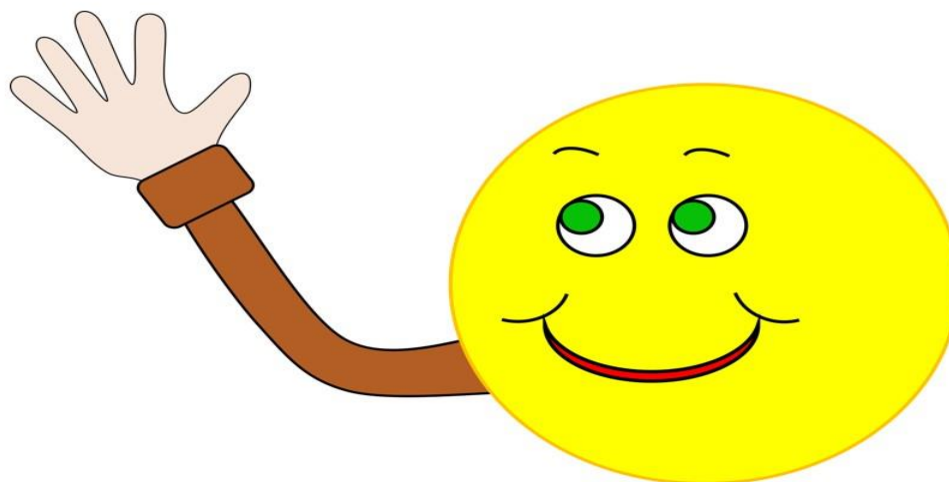
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Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Guide

Interviewer: Tiffany Thomas   Date:

Interviewee Identification Number: Location:

Time of Interview:

Prior to the Interview:

Thank the participants for participating in this project study as well as the interview. Describe the purpose of the study and confirm that the interview is being recorded. Confirm that the interview will last 45 minutes to one hour. Have the participant to sign the consent form. Turn on the audio recording device and record the word "test". Replay the audio devise to make sure that the recording is working properly. The following questions will be utilized to guide this interview. Follow-up questions will be asked as necessary.

1. Tell me about what types of bullying have you personally witnessed or were

   reported to you by students at ABC Elementary?

2. What do you believe to be the major cause of bullying?

3. What actions do you take when students report bullying acts or when you witness

   bullying? Are they effective?

4. What forms of bullying do you think are more predominant in elementary school?

5. What is the school's policy for teachers addressing and reporting bullying?

6. What policies are in place to manage bullying ABC Elementary School?

Following the Interview:

Thank the participants for participating in the study and ensure each participant that

all of their information related to the study will remain confidential.

Appendix C: Sample Transcribed Interview

Project Study Title: An analysis of teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary school level

Teacher 1

1Q₁: *Please tell me a little about your educational background and how long you have been teaching?*

Participant: I have been in education for over twenty-plus years. I have been teaching at this particular school for close to fifth-teen years. I have a master's degree in education and I really enjoy what I do.

1Q₂: *Tell me about what types of bullying have you personally witnessed or were reported to you by students at ABC Elementary?*

Participant: Most of them are name calling, that's what I see a lot of, he said-she said type of behavior. It's kind of a sneaky behavior where kids like to tease one another like on the low, where the teacher can't see it but everyone else can. But the teacher cannot or doesn't catch wind of it until later. So sometimes it's those little sneaky things or name calling that's done in the bathroom or places where they have an opportunity to be alone with a child and it even happens in the classroom with notes and things like that. We have fights but I don't necessarily think that can be considered bullying. Bullying itself is something that is repeated. But the main thing that I see is that sneaky name calling, picking at each other type thing that I would consider bullying.

1Q₃: *What do you believe to be the major cause of bullying?*

Participant: In our society today, we have taken away the opportunity for children to play with each other and converse with each other. We text, we do things online and we don't look at one another anymore. So those personal expressions when you talk with someone, you don't see that. I write one thing in a text and it can misinterpret a whole lot of ways. I just don't think that we are spending the time to teach our children how to interact with one another. They have their phone, just about every kid has a cell phone, they have their tablets, and they have something where they are connected outside of being together as a child. Even when children play games, their playing video games, they're not looking at each other. More board games need to be played, outside games should be played. You used to have kids fight with one another but they would solve their own problems but nowadays it's bullying "he looked at me strange". No, it's not, they don't understand those nuances of physical behavior or social biases of how to get

along with each other. I think that's one of our biggest problems. Stop letting these kids have their phones and internet, make them talk to one another.

1Q4: *What actions do you take when students report bullying acts or when you witness bullying? Are they effective?*

Participant: Normally what I try to do when they come to me is I would try to listen to both sides, watch and see, and if it's something serious where they are calling names or hitting one another or girls pulling hair in the bathroom, I have them to write a statement so that I know exactly what's going on so that we can monitor the behavior and a lot of times we try to give them advice and separate them so that they are away from each other, sometimes that works. It doesn't always work but sometimes it does. Witnessing bullying at that point we would usually write it up and put it in the hands of an administrator but you would have to make sure that you have multiple forms of documentation for that to happen. Is it effective? Separating the desk or separating them geographically, sometimes that works. Sometimes bringing them together and talking so that it is not a misunderstanding. That's what happens, they don't understand each other and it becomes a problem. Sometimes it's bigger than that and we have to go beyond that and get an administrator involved. Beyond that, effectiveness, sometimes. Have I seen any really bad things going on that I have not been able to be resolved? No. I have not had a child that was so distract that they did not want to come to school or so distract that there was a possibility to do harm to themselves.

Appendix D: Sample Codes and Themes

Participants	Types of Bullying	Factors Influence Student Behavior	School/Teacher Effectiveness	Recognizing Bullying Behaviors
Teacher 1	**Most** of them are name **calling and teasing**. It's kind of **sneaky behavior**.	In our **society today**, we have taken away the **opportunity** for **children to play together**. They have their **cell phone** and **tablets**. Even when children **play games**, their playing **video games**, they're not looking at each other. taught to be **social.**	I **try** to **listen** to **both sides**, watch and **see** if it's **something serious** when students report bullying acts. **When witnessing bullying** at that point we will have **students to write a statement** and **give** it to an **administrator but** you would have to have multiple forms of documentation. School's policy – I **document and** take necessary action as well as I can and **call parents** if needed from there **contact counselor** and the **administrators** if **needed.**	I am **very confident** with **recognizing bullying**, there is always those **conflicts** that **you don't catch** until later on. I haven't seen a lot of fighting. Now **that doesn't mean** that it hasn't happened or that it won't happen but the **true bullying** where someone is making someone **feel very uncomfortable** and a child is **not coming to school**, I have not seen that so if it happens **I am confident** that I can **discern** that.
Teacher 2	**Physically getting aggressive** (tripping and pushing) and **saying mean things**, **teasing**	**Lack of parental involvement**, **students are raising themselves.** Family values such as having dinner and having family	I **report the incident** to an **administrato**r and make **referrals** to **counseling** department.	I think I am **very confident** in terms of **recognizing bullying behavior** because if you see the **same child engaging** in the

	about clothing and shoes.	discussions are no longer taking place.	School's policy – **I really don't know**. I'm told that we have a **bullying policy** that's **district-wide**. Generally speaking, they **say report** it to the **principal** and the **administrative team**. But not clear steps such as step 1 and so on.	same **pattern of behavior over and over** whether its name calling or physical.
	Sneaky and **physical bullying** such as shoving and tripping are the most common from a small group of students.	**Technology is playing a big role in elementary**. The latest trend in **Facebook** and **snapchat** is spilling over in school. Students are trying to fit in with other students (clickish).		
Teacher 3	**Teasing** (making fun). Students reporting **wrote something** about them on **social media,** put their **hands on me**, and **teasing me**.	I believe the major cause of bullying is a **lack of empathy**. In elementary, honestly **social media** component even though they shouldn't have any social media accounts because of they are not of age but you here more of that now.	When I **witness bullying** I will pull a student to the side and have a **conversation with them** to try to get them to see that they **behavior is not nice**. If an incident is **reported to me**, I **immediately submit the bullying form** to our **administrative team**. School's policy: Once a **student** or **parent reports bullying** to a teacher, we have the **student or parent** to **fill out the bullying form** and the **teacher submit** the **form to an administrator**.	I have **medium confidence** level **recognizing bullying**. There are some incidences where **I'm looking at situations** and I'm **not really sure** if that is really **considered bullying**.

Teacher 4	I have seen both **physical** and **verbal bullying**. The strength of the bullying has been the diversity, there has been **very subtle** and **very blatant**.	I truly believe that it is a **societal problem**, we have lost a respect for a line where **children have not been taught what is not appropriate** for them. So if they have not been taught, they do not know any different. They also **witness and see** so much in their youth that is on **television** and in their **music** that those things have more **influence** than we understand.	Usually, I give a **ten-minute sermon**, because to me if we don't have the respect for one another what is the use of education. If it's **physica**l, then **I usually report it right away**, I write it up. If it is **verbal,** we usually **talk about how our words can hurtful** and if it's **sneaky** then usually I **talk to someone after class** concerning that. School's policy: Our school expects us to **report bullying** and then the **counselors deal** with it from there and either refer it to higher level or deal with it on the counselor level.	I have **medium confidence** level in **recognizing bullying**. I am very **aware** of my student's **facial expressions** or **body language** this enables me to see a difference. There are **sometimes cases** where kids are **able to mask** it and I would **not feel confiden**t saying that I could every time **catch it**.
Teacher 5	I **have not personally** witnessed any bullying. I **have students report** bullying **but after further investigation** it was **not incidents of bullying.**	**Lack of self-confidence** for the bully in not having an understanding of a broad people and different ways of life.	I first make sure that the **student who is reporting the bullying is O.K**., get a good **understanding of the situation**, and secure that **student is emotionally alright** before I do anything else. I **follow the bullying protocol** that is in place by taking notes and turn it in to the	I have **medium confidence levels in recognizing** bullying because my **personality interferes** with that, I am a **strong minded person** so things that **bother someone else** may not bother me or I **don't necessarily see as bullying** might hurt someone **else's feelings** but not mine.

			administrative team. School's policy: We have a **bullying protocol** where **teachers should talk to students** to get all of the information, **fill out the bullying shee**t, give it to **administrators, and administrators** will do a **thorough investigation**.	
Teacher 6	I have witnessed is **verbal bullying** such as **calling names**, stuff like that.	**Appearance**, usually their bullying because they're **not wearing** the latest **name brand clothes, hair isn't combed**, **overweight,** or **underweight**. Sometimes **boys dressed like girls** or **girls dressed like boys**.	I **automatically report** all bullying situations to an **administrator**. **School's policy:** As a **teacher you report** it to an **administrator** and they refer to the **student code of conduct**.	I am **somewhat confident** with **recognizing bullying behavior**. Often times in class you do **see a consistency** of those **kids who are bullies**. But there are those **situations where you don't see**, not necessarily saying that it's not happening but you are just not catching it at the time.
Teacher 7	A lot of bullying is **not very obvious**, it's **covert** and a lot of times I find that it is going on in the **bathrooms**	Kids **don't feel good about themselves**. They've been **picked on** so they **find the weakest link** to pick on. They also find someone	Instead of punishing **bullies, have them to volunteer**, allow **victims** to **leave a statement anonymously**. I	I am **somewhat confident**, I **catch some** and I **miss some**. Some kids are just aggressive and know that as soon as the teacher

	or in a **transition period**. Kids also tells me that it is happening on the **bus**, in the **cafeteria**, or in the **bathroom**.	who they can **intimidate** and who will **take the abuse.**	talk to both sides before I **involve an administrator**. **School's policy: Teachers have a bullying form** that we forward to the **administration** and they contact all those involved. I also **contact the parents** to let them know what's taking place.	is not looking that is their time to do something. **You notice behavior changes** when kids don't want to participate in activities that they normally would do, work ethics change, or things like that**. But some kids just fall under the radar**.
Teacher 8	I have witnessed when a **superior child** was **bothering an inferior** child **trying to fight them**, **consistently bothering them**. I have also had **cyberbullying reported to me**.	The bully seems to be a **little insecure**, especially **academically** so they **want to bully** the **academically smart kids.**	If **I witness bullying** I may bring the **two people involved** to have a **discussion**. If **I find** that it is a **serious case** of **bullying I report** it to an **administrator**. **School's policy:** If a **child or parent** uses **the word bullying** then the **teacher is to give them a form** for them to complete using their **own words.**	I have **medium confidence** level **recognizing bullying** because a lot of the things that are happening at school, **kids know how to hide it from teachers** and it's not until you have done a lot of investigating that you find out that oh my God, that was really happening.

Note: The codes such as teacher 1 was created to protect the participants' identities. In addition, the following codes and themes emerged from the project study's' research questions after the data analysis was conducted. I color coded the codes and themes which are categorized into the table headings.

Appendix E: Teacher Keys Effectiveness Performance Standards

Georgia Department of Education
Teacher Keys Effectiveness System

"Making Education Work for All Georgians"

Fact Sheet #9 – Performance Standard 7: Positive Learning Environment

POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The teacher provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all.

Students need an engaging, stimulating, and enriching learning environment to grow and thrive. In order to achieve this type of rich environment, effective teachers establish and communicate guidelines for expected behavior, monitor student behavior, keep students on task, and infuse humor, care, and respect into the classroom interactions, so as to develop a climate that is conducive to student learning. As a result, research has indicated that a positive learning environment can shape student outcomes in cognitive, motivational, emotional, and behavioral domains.[1]

Among others, the attributes of caring, supportive, safe, challenging, and academically robust help define what it means to have a positive learning environment that is conducive to student success.[2] However it is defined, virtually all teachers and administrators, and even students, themselves, recognize how valuable a positive classroom climate is to learning. The most prevalent criteria used to define learning environments are probably the physical arrangement of the classroom, discipline and routines, organization of learning activities, and the engagement of students with tasks, among others. The key features highlighted next can elucidate what research indicates about an effective learning environment.[3]

Key Features of an Effective Learning Environment

Defining Characteristics	Focus
Physical arrangement of the classroom	The teacher develops functional floor plans with teacher and student work areas and furniture/materials placement for optimal benefit.[4]
Discipline and routines	The teacher establishes classroom rules and procedures early on in the school year.[5]
Organization of learning activities	Classroom activities have an academic focus. The teacher orchestrates smooth transitions and maintains momentum throughout teaching and learning.[6]
Engagement of students	The teacher uses effective questioning, smooth transitions, and challenging but interesting activities to increase student engagement in learning and student accountability.[7]
Maximizing instructional time	The teacher protects instruction from disruption and makes the most out of every instructional moment.[8]
Communication of high expectations	The teacher assumes responsibility for student learning, sets high (but reasonable) expectations for all students, and supports students in achieving them.[9]
Care and respect	The teacher establishes rapport and trustworthiness with students by being fair, caring, respectful, and enthusiastic.[10]

Research has found that an effective teacher:

- Is adept at organizing and maintaining an effective classroom environment.[11]
- Has a sense of "with-it-ness," which can be translated as being aware of when routines need to be altered or an intervention may be needed to prevent behavior problems.[12]
- Fosters relationships where respect and learning are central so students feel safe in taking risks that are associated with learning and believes in the students.[13]

Georgia Department of Education

Appendix F: Policies and Procedures Scavenger Hunt

Common Key Components of State and Local Anti-Bullying Policies and Procedures

A. Definition of Bullying
A definition of bullying, including types and specific characteristics.
(1 of 8)

B. Statement of Scope
Describes when and where schools are responsible for dealing with bullying incidents. For example, when students are on school grounds immediately before or during school hours or any other time when the school is being used by a school group.
(2 of 8)

C. Report Bullying
The procedure for reporting bullying incidents in a timely and responsive manner.
(3 of 8)

D. Investigating and Responding to Bullying
The procedure for investigating and responding to any report of bullying, often including the timeframe for dealing with the incident, safety strategies, and guardian and law enforcement (if necessary) notification.
(4 of 8)

E. Written Records
The procedure for documenting bullying incidents and their resolution.
(5 of 8)

F. Sanctions
A description of the graduated range of consequences, based on the severity of the bullying incident.
(6 of 8)

G. Training and Prevention Education
Describes training and bullying prevention strategies used for school staff. Often also includes student and community-wide bullying prevention programs.
(7 of 8)

H. Communication Plan
The plan for communicating bullying procedures and policies related to bullying with students, families, and staff.
(8 of 8)

Teacher and Parent Questions

1. _____
Teacher: There is a problem with a couple of students in my class. How can I tell if it's bullying or just a conflict?

2. _____
Teacher: Something happened over the weekend online among several students in my class. They are so distracted that it is interfering with my ability to teach. Do we have the authority to do anything about this, even though it didn't happen at school?

3. _____
Teacher: Why do we have to do this bullying prevention training and curriculum?

4. _____
Teacher: Some parents have been telling me about bullying incidents that are going on during recess and lunchtime. Should I make a written record of these conversations?

5. _____
Teacher: Where do I tell parents to find the information about our bullying policies and procedures?

6. _____
Parent: What steps are you taking to investigate the bullying incident my child reported yesterday?

7. _____
Parent: My child is being bullied. Do you have some sort of report I can fill out, or is telling you about the bullying incident enough?

8. _____
Parent: What are the consequences for students who bully?