Education and Human Development Master's
Theses

Education and Human Development

8-2007

Comparing Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Bullying: Frequency, Location, and Intervention

Danielle M. Ruhlen
The College at Brockport, Danielle.Ruhlen@RCSDK12.ORG

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by

Danielle M. Ruhlen

August 2007

A thesis submitted to the

Department of Education and Human Development of the

State University of New York College at Brockport

in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Science in Education

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Danielle M. Ruhlen

APPROVED BY:

_____   6/29/07

Advisor   Date

_____   6/29/07

Director, Graduate Programs   Date

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Violence among youth is of national concern (Nansel, et al., 2003). One form of violence that is quite common amongst school-aged children is bullying. Teachers readily recognize that bullying frequently happens on most school campuses (Harris & Willoughby, 2003). The pervasiveness and pertinence of this issue has spurred many administrators in school districts to take action. Included in the actions taken districts have adopted bullying prevention programs in an attempt to curb bullying behaviors. The goal of these programs is to increase teacher knowledge and use of bully intervention skills while increasing teacher self-efficacy. The intervention programs also strive towards the reduction and elimination of classroom bullying behaviors (Newman-Carlson, 2004).

I had received training in such a program and I found myself responsible for its successful implementation at my school. Although the training provided strategies for effective implementation, I was concerned that the program would be met with resistance by the school staff. Prior district initiatives implemented to curb bullying, relied upon trained teachers to implement anti-bullying strategies in the classroom. During trainings, teachers would state that they felt that this was just one more responsibility added to their already full workload. However, in research conducted by Harris and Willoughby (2003), teachers reported that they felt that all forms of bullying were hurtful. According to their research, teachers felt that bullying was a serious issue with long lasting implications. I therefore found myself wondering:

What factors interfere with teachers implementing a bullying prevention program into their classrooms and schools as a whole?

Before a bullying intervention program was implemented, such as the internationally used program created by Olweus' after his considerable research in the field, it was important to gain insight into students' perceptions of the prevalence of bullying within their school. Olweus was one of the foremost authorities in the academic area of bullying. His early research conducted in Norway and Sweden was some of the first of its kind to provide an in-depth look into bullying. The first component of his program was a questionnaire designed to gain such a baseline. His questionnaire included questions aimed at gaining students' perspectives of the frequency of bullying in their school, the most common locations that bullying occurred, and the types of bullying behavior that were most pervasive.

Olweus (1993) provided a definition of *bullying* that was widely accepted and used as a starting point for other researchers: A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to *negative actions* on the part of one or more other students. These negative actions can further be defined as when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict injury or discomfort upon another. Negative actions can be carried out verbally through threats, taunting, teasing, or name calling. Olweus stated that these behaviors may also involve physical contact, such as hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another. However, bullies often rely upon more indirect methods like making faces or dirty gestures, intentional exclusion or refusing to comply with

another's wishes. Any of the behaviors, in order to be classified as bullying, must take place over time and can not occur as an isolated incident.

Another crucial element of bullying, as explained by Olweus, is an imbalance of power between the bully and victim. Normally, one student is targeted by a small group of bullies. The victim is characterized by an inability to effectively defend himself or herself against the direct or indirect bullying behaviors.

There were various subgroups within the bully and victim dichotomy referred to in Olweus' research. Passive victims are those characterized as quiet, anxious, and introverted; they rarely acted out towards their aggressor(s). Aggressive victims, also called bully/victims by some researchers, assumed the role of victim with a certain group of peers and acted as a bully in other situations. Often these students were much more extroverted and had a more aggressive behavioral style. Another key difference that was clarified was the difference between direct and relational bullying. Direct bullying, as stated by Olweus, included behaviors that involved physical contact. Relational bullying is similar to indirect bullying and can include exclusionary or isolating behaviors. The group of students who don't fall into any of the above stated categories will often be referred to as the controls, neutrals, or bystanders in the research.

Olweus' program focused upon implementing a bullying prevention program based upon needs identified by students. However, to gain a better understanding of the prevalence of bullying it would be interesting to study the perspectives of both students and teachers. For my study, a thorough examination of students' and

teachers' perceptions of various components of the bullying problem, prior to the implementation of another bullying intervention program within the district, would be beneficial.

In this study I examined the following questions: How do teachers' perceptions of bullying differ from students' perceptions? (a) How frequently does bullying occur? (b) Where does bullying most frequently occur? (c) How often do teachers intervene in bullying?

The purpose of each of the questions was to gain insight into the differing perceptions of teachers and students regarding various aspects of bullying. The questions focused upon the frequency of bullying, the locations in which bullying most commonly occurred, and how often teachers intervened. Frequency related to how often the participant believed an individual was bullied over a specific period of time. The second component of the study relied upon students and teachers to choose specific locations within their building in which they felt that bullying most commonly occurred. The final component of the study question dealt with how often teachers intervened, according to both teachers and students. Each of the sub-questions within the research question was asked of both teachers and students in an effort to gain a comparison of their perspectives.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Foundational Research

Olweus (1994) was the first researcher to evaluate the effects of an intervention program in connection with a nationwide campaign against bullying in Norway. He followed 2,500 students in grades five through eight from 42 schools in Bergen over the course of 2 ½ years. Throughout this longitudinal study, Olweus administered his questionnaire to the students to measure the effects of his intervention. He also obtained teacher ratings of the prevalence of bullying within the school where they taught. He found that the prevalence of bullying problems at school was reduced by about 50 percent during the course of the two years after the introduction of the intervention program. Olweus concluded from his study that there was a dramatic reduction in bully/victim problems due to the implementation of his research-based intervention program.

Some of the first research done to closely examine the intricate dynamics of bullying behaviors and bullying relationships was that of Olweus (1973). He conducted three studies in Norway and Sweden, using a questionnaire that he created. This same questionnaire is still one of the most popular bullying inventories used to determine students' perceptions of bullying. His studies encompassed almost 150,000 participants, allowing him to gain perspectives of students of different races, ethnicities, socioeconomic standing, and religion.

The conclusions that Olweus came to during the course of his research that guided the creation of his intervention program have since influenced fellow researchers and their studies regarding bullying. One such conclusion was that 9% of the sample were victims and 7% of the sample were bullies. Out of the percentage of students identified as victims, 17% fit the profile of being both bullies and victims. He also concluded that bullying was a considerable problem that affected a large number of students. Olweus determined that bullying was not a problem that occurred exclusively in urban areas. His findings supported the fact that bullying behaviors were just as prevalent in rural areas.

Olweus also concluded that there were significant gender differences between bullying and victimization. He found that boys were more often victims and perpetrators of direct bullying. Previous research regarding gender differences and aggression supported this finding. Indirect bullying was not gender exclusive, however. Olweus found that girls were exposed to indirect bullying to about the same extent as boys. His confidence in his measuring tool, discredited the idea that girls somehow engaged in a type of bullying that was subtle enough that the questionnaire had not picked up on it.

Behavioral, Social, and Psychological Differences between Victims and Bullies

The research of Perry, Kusel, & Perry (1988) was the first of its kind that attempted to provide an over-arching profile of the victims of peer aggression. Predictions were made by the researchers that specific children were being singled out for abuse and these victims were usually males. Perry, et al. wanted to determine if

victimization, especially physical victimization, decreased with age since physical aggression decreased with age. They also wondered if victimization would negatively correlate with peer acceptance and positively with peer rejection.

Perry, et al. modified the Peer Nomination Inventory (PNI), originally used by Wiggins and Winder (1961), and asked a group of 3-6 graders to assign certain personality attributes to other students from their class. Teachers were also asked to complete similar inventories. The data collected from teachers and students was used to identify the victims and bullies. Both groups worked towards identifying the victims and bullies in their class and describing not only their personalities but also how their peers and teachers felt towards them.

Perry, et al. found that 1 out of 10 students were severely abused by aggressive peers. Girls seemed to be at the same risk of victimization than boys, a finding that conflicted with prior research done by Olweus. The researchers concluded that victims seemed to stay victims; students reported the same students in the victim role in pre- and post-tests. This also supported previous research, conducted by Olweus, which found that an enduring propensity for victimization began in the middle school years.

The researchers' findings supported the hypothesis that victimization and aggression were both related to rejection. However, victimization and aggression were seemingly unrelated to each other. Not all victims acted out towards their aggressors in an attempt to cope with their feelings of rejection. Researchers concluded that children were rejected for different reasons and could not be

homogenously grouped according to certain behavioral qualities. This research helped to guide later research in drawing attention to a clear distinction between passive victims and aggressive victims. This finding contradicted the work of Olweus who theorized that there were far fewer victims that fell into the subgroup of aggressive victims (bully/victims).

Toblin, Schwart, Hopmeyer-Gorman, & Abouezzeddine (2005), set out not only to determine if the distribution of bullies and victims were unequal, but also to examine the specific attributes of passive victims, aggressive victims, and bullies.

Toblin, et al. conducted their research with 4th and 5th grade classrooms in an urban section of Los Angeles. The final sample consisted of 240 students (119 boys, 112 girls) with a mean age of 9.5 years. The participants were predominately from Hispanic American and European American backgrounds, which was consistent with the school population and the surrounding neighborhoods.

A number of measures were used to assess bully/victim outcomes, behavior, self-regulation, social cognition, psychological adjustment, and academic functioning. Students were given the PNI in which they were asked to nominate up to three peers who fit each of 17 descriptors. The descriptors included items addressing aggression, peer victimization, assertiveness, submissiveness, social preference, and friendship. A few of descriptors included: gossips or says mean things about other kids (relational aggression), pushes of hits other kids (overt aggression), bullied and picked on by other kids (overt victimization) and get left out of fun games or play when other kids are trying to hurt their feelings (relational victimization).

Students also completed a Social Information Processing Interview (SIPI). The SIPI contained five, vague peer provocation scenarios (e.g. getting bumped to the ground while waiting in line for lunch) and various solutions to the problem. Students were asked to rate the effectiveness of each solution. Students also completed a Children's Depression Inventory (CDI). This assessment included 27 items that required students to choose from among three sentences describing varying degrees of severity of depressive symptoms. The final piece of student data was the Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction questionnaire. This was a self-report included 16 items designed to assess loneliness and dissatisfaction with peer relationships. The researchers also had access to students' Grade Point Averages (GPAs) and the results of their Stanford Achievement Test scores.

Another component of the researchers' data were scales and checklists completed by the teachers of the students from the sample. Teachers completed the Social Behavior Rating Scale (SBRS) for each child participating in the study. This was a 44-item scale containing descriptors of children's social behavior and adjustment with their peers. The SBRS also contained subscales assessing assertive-prosocial behavior (shares with others, helpful, good leader), submissive-withdrawn behavior (likes to play alone, shy/timid). Teachers also completed an Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC) for each child, assessing children's capacities for emotional self-regulation. Sample statements included: Can recover quickly from episodes of upset or distress and Can modulate excitement in emotionally arousing

situations. The items were rated on a four-point scale, with points ranging from never true for a child to almost always true for child.

The findings of Toblin, et al. supported the hypothesis that the passive and aggressive victims were equally prevalent in this study's sample. The researchers described passive victims as those that were inhibited and submissive in nature. Aggressive victims were often characterized by depression, anxiety and/or other forms of internalized stress that they may have expressed through a more aggressive behavioral style.

The researchers found that there were clear distinctions between the three sub-groups. Aggressive victims, those which acted out towards their aggressors, exhibited signs of emotional dysregulation and hyperactivity. They had lower social preference scores, meaning that very few of their peers nominated them as a student that they liked in their class. These aggressive victims had higher depression and loneliness scores. They also had lower achievement test scores and lower GPAs than their normative contrasts.

Passive victims, those which did not act out towards their aggressors, had higher scores on scales assessing submissiveness. They also had lower GPAs, lower social preference scores, higher loneliness scores and lower efficacy beliefs for aggression than their normative contrasts.

Bullies had higher scores on scales assessing aggression-related social information processing biases. These students were therefore more likely to react aggressively in social situations which they deemed as negative. However, these

children were well-liked by their peers and reported low incidents of depression and loneliness. The researchers pointed out that future studies should be done to examine the quality of the bully's friendships. It is also important to note that bullies did not have poorer academic outcomes than their normative peers.

This research provided support for the theory that differences existed in the social information-processing styles of aggressive victims and bullies. It also highlighted the need to consider multiple subtypes of aggression and victimization. Individuals within each subgroup were found to differ socially and psychologically.

The work of Veenstra, et al. (2005) investigated a range of variables that may have had an effect upon the results of other research. The researchers believed that data may be convoluted by variables that were not taken into consideration, therefore having an influence on the conclusions that other researchers had come to. The authors set out to investigate each variable with multiple sources to either add validation to previous studies or to dispute the work of others.

The researchers' central focus was examining the extent to which uninvolved pupils, bullies, victims, and bully/victims differed on the basis of gender, familial vulnerability, parenting (emotional warmth, overprotection, and rejection), and individual characteristics. The individual characteristics they examined were: aggressiveness, isolation, academic performance, pro-social behavior, and dislikability. They were also interested in whether multivariate analyses confirmed the univariate findings that parenting characteristics (specifically reduced emotional warmth and an enlarged rejection) were positively related to bullies and bully/victims

and that overprotection and rejection were positively related to being a victim. They wanted to determine if pervious findings that bullies, victims, and bully/victims had a weak social profile (not being pro-social and often disliked), based upon univariate analyses, would hold up to their analyses. Furthermore, they wanted to know if bullies and bully/victims had higher levels of aggressiveness and lower levels of academic performance, whereas victims seemed to have had a higher level of isolation. They also wanted to investigate which characteristics were most related to bullying and victimization- individual characteristics or social circumstances- when these influences were considered simultaneously.

Veenstra, et al. constructed the Tracking Adolescents' Individual Lives Survey (TRAILS) as a cohort study of Dutch preadolescents who were to be measured biennially until they were 25 years old. The results of this study reflected the period from March 2001 to July 2002. TRAILS was designed to chart and explain the development of mental health and social development from preadolescence into adulthood. The sample for this study included 2,230 preadolescents, with a mean age of 11.09 years, in five municipalities in the northern part of the Netherlands. These five regions included rural and urban areas.

Interviewers visited the homes of the participants and conducted a parent interview. The interview included questions related to the child's developmental history and somatic health, parental psychopathology, and care utilization. Children completed questionnaires at school. In addition, intelligence and a number of biological neuro-cognitive parameters were assessed individually. Teachers were

asked to complete questionnaires for each student in their class that was participating in TRAILS.

Veenstra, et al. relied upon peer nominations as a basis for student classification. Students were asked to nominate their classmates on bullying ("By whom are you bullied?") and victimization ("Whom do you bully?"). The researchers used the number of nominations that a student received from their classmates as indicators of bullies and victims. Students were also asked, "Whom do you not like at all?" This was used as an indicator of dislikability.

Parental psychopathology with respect to depression, anxiety, substance abuse, antisocial behavior, and psychoses was measured by the TRAILS Family History Interview, administered during the parent interview. Each of the syndromes was presented to parents followed by a series of questions used to assess lifetime occurrence, professional treatment, and use of medication. The interviews yielded results that were consistent with rates found in adult population samples in the Netherlands and Europe. Parental emotional warmth, rejection, and overprotection were measured by a scale entitled My Memories of Upbringing for Children. This scale was used to assess children's and adolescents' perception of parents' rearing practices.

Children were classified as uninvolved (n=652), bully (n=139), victim (n=164), or bully/victim (n=110) on the basis of peer nominations. The researchers found that boys were more likely to be a bully/victim or a bully than girls. Furthermore, they found that girls were more likely to be passive victims. Their

findings regarding the impact of parenting differed from that of univariate research. Neither emotional warmth nor rejection and overprotection distinguished between bully/victims, bullies, victims, and uninvolved children. Veenstra, et al. thought that parenting may have had more of an impact on bullying and victimization in early childhood rather than in preadolescence because parents were rarely present when aggressive interactions occurred. The researchers also discovered that victims, although they had relational problems with their peers, did not report having negative relationships with their parents. Bully/victims, however, perceived their parenting circumstances to be less favorable than did victims or uninvolved children.

As Veenstra, et al. predicted, individual characteristics had a stronger impact than social circumstances on bullying and victimization. The main characteristic of bully/victims and bullies were their high level of aggressiveness. Bullies were less isolated and victims were more isolated than uninvolved children. Bully/victims, bullies, and victims were all more disliked than the uninvolved group. The individual characteristics, including dislikability, aggressiveness, isolation, and gender, were strongly related whereas parenting was unrelated to bullying and victimization in the multivariate analyses. Also supported by this research, were the existence of the subgroup of bully/victims, who functioned more poorly than bullies or victims.

Woods and White (2005) conducted a study to investigate bullying behavior, arousal levels, and behavior problems. They were interested in seeing if there was an association between bullying behavior, direct or relational, and arousal levels. They used Olweus' definition of direct bullying, including behaviors that involved physical

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contact. Relational bullying included exclusionary or isolating behaviors. Also under investigation was seeing if high- and low-arousal levels were differentially associated with behavior problems such as hyperactivity, conduct problems, emotional problems, peer problems and pro-social behavior.

A cross-sectional design was used with 242 secondary pupils from mainstream state schools in urban locations. One-hundred twenty-one of the pupils were male and 121 were female. Each student answered three questionnaires, which measured different aspects of behavior.

The first questionnaire was the School Relationships Questionnaire (SRQ), which included questions asking students about their behavior in relation to their peers. Students were asked, "Have you been hit or beaten up?" and "Have you told lies, said nasty things, or told stories about other pupils that were not true?" These questions reflected whether they had experienced such behaviors or carried out such behaviors. The questionnaire was subdivided into behaviors classified as: Direct Aggression Received, Verbal and Relational Aggression Received, Direct Aggression Given and Verbal and Relational Aggression Given.

Students also completed The Arousal Predisposition Scale (APS) that was designed to measure an individual's susceptibility to arousal and to act as a predictor of individual differences in arousal. The APS consisted of 12 items designed to assess levels of arousal. Subjects scoring in the top ten percent and bottom ten percent were categorized as clinically over or under-aroused. The remaining 80% were categorized as normal/ borderline.

The final piece of student data was the Strengths and Differences Questionnaire (SDQ). The SDQ measured a total of 25 positive and negative behavioral characteristics which were divided into five categories: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, inattention-hyperactivity, peer problems, and prosocial behavior.

The researchers found that relational bullying was more prevalent than direct bullying. Out of the 242 students who participated in the study, 15 (6%) were identified as direct bullies, 29 (12%) as direct victims, and 12 (5%) as direct bully/victims. The remaining 186 (77%) were classified as neutrals. From the same sample, 24 (10%) were identified as relational bullies, 67 (28%) as relational victims, 44 (18%) as relational bully/victims, and 107 (44%) as neutrals. They found no gender differences in relation to the rate of direct and relational bullying. This lack of gender differentiation contradicted the findings of Olweus (1973), whose research had shaped this specific area of study.

Arousal levels were significantly higher in direct bully/victims, also referred to as aggressive victims in previous research, in comparison with the neutrals. Arousal levels referred to different states of consciousness associated with different activities as measured by The Arousal Predisposition Scale (APS). Each individual had his or her own personal, optimal arousal level. The characterization of the bully/victim as anxious and provocative coincides with their high levels of arousal. Similar high levels of arousal were also found in relational bully/victims in comparison to relational victims. Direct bullies and neutral pupils showed the lowest

mean levels of arousal, which the authors said supported Zukerman's (1979) theory of *sensation seeking*. It suggested that direct bullies, being under-aroused, may sensation-seek or engage in risk-taking behaviors in order to reach their optimal arousal levels. Relational bullies also exhibited similar low levels of arousal.

Woods and White also found lower levels of arousal exhibited by relational victims, as compared with all the other bullying profiles. This finding contradicted Zukerman's sensation-seeking theory which stated that victims would exhibit high arousal levels or an increased propensity to avoid risk-taking behaviors. Behavioral problems, as measured by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), were found to be associated with students reporting over-arousal but not with low arousal levels. The SDQ, used as a measure to assess behavioral problems, was divided into 5 categories: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, inattention-hyperactivity, peer problems, and prosocial behaviors.

The study also revealed that a large number of the bully/victims were in the clinically over-aroused range, which was interpreted as meaning that this group tended to avoid stimulating situations in an effort to reduce anxiety and escape potential punishment.

This body of research provided information about the prevalence of bullying in adolescence. It supported prior research stating that 20% of a group of adolescents are involved in direct bullying, either as the bully, victim or bully/victim. It also supported the hypothesis that relational bullying is more prevalent among this age

group, 60% of the sample was involved in relational bullying, either as bully, victim, or bully/victim.

Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster (2003) conducted a study to develop a better understanding of how bullying and how being bullied affected the well-being and functioning of children. They hypothesized that both bullies and victims exhibited social and psychological problems attributed to the victimization associated with bullying.

This study made use of three perspectives: self-report, peer-report, and teacher reports. A sample of 1,985 sixth graders from a low socioeconomic, urban community participated in the study. Peer reports focused upon identifying specific bullies and specific victims. Student self-reports pertained to individual psychological distress and adjustment problems. Researchers used three psychological and social indicators in the self-report: depression, social anxiety, and loneliness. Teacher reports focused upon identifying students who suffered from adjustment problems. Teachers used eleven interpersonal competence items to rate the students behaviors falling into three sub-categories: internalizing problems, conduct problems, and popularity.

Juvonen, et al. (2003) concluded that gender and race seemed to play key roles in the profiles of victims, bullies, and bully/victims. Boys were twice as likely to be classified as bullies and more than three times as likely to be classified as bully/victims. They were also twice as likely to be classified as victims.

The self-reports of psychological distress yielded findings similar to those of Woods and White (2005). Bullies reported the lowest levels of depression, social anxiety, and loneliness. Victims, on the other hand, reported higher levels of these same three psychological stressors. Similarly, bullies were regarded as the highest in social status and the victims were the lowest. Teachers' reports of popularity mirrored the peer-rate adjustment findings. Teachers also linked internalizing problems (i.e. sadness and anxiety) with the victims more than with the bullies.

The subgroup of bully/victims had a different profile from either bullies or victims. Children falling into the category of bully/victim self-reported elevated levels of depression and loneliness but reported average levels of social anxiety. Peers avoided the bully/victim more than they avoided other classmates. Teachers ranked these students as having the most conduct problems and being the most disengaged in school, in comparison with their classmates.

Aggression and violence have been linked through research related to bullying behaviors, both on the part of the bully and the victim. Research conducted by Nansel, Overperck, Haynie, Ruan, & Scheidt (2003) examined the extent to which bullying and being bullied were associated with involvement in violent behavior. They studied bullying within and outside of school. The violence-related behaviors that they targeted for this study were weapon-carrying outside of school, weapon-carrying within school, frequent fighting, and suffering injury due to involvement in a fight.

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In the spring of 1998, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development supported a national survey of youth in grades 6-10. The survey was part of a larger research project involving 30 countries. For the purpose of their research, Nansel, et al. used samples collected in the United States. For various reasons, the sample included a minority over-sampling so the researchers developed statistical sample weights for the purposes of analysis. The resulting sample was 15,686 students in grades 6-10.

The questionnaire completed by the students contained 102 questions about health behavior, demographics, and social behavior. Specific questions about bullying were preceded by a definition for the students. There were two general questions regarding bullying including the role of teacher involvement in ceasing bullying and the frequency of staff involvement in bullying.

Students were also asked about their involvement in the targeted violence-related behaviors. They were asked to report how many times they had carried a weapon in the past 30 days, in school and out of school. Participants were also asked to report the number of fights they had been involved in during the prior year. According to Nansel, et al., for measurement purposes, four or more fights were defined as frequent fighting. The respondents were also asked to report the number of times within the prior year that they had to seek medical attention due to their involvement in a physical fight.

The results supported existing statistics reporting the increasing prevalence of the various violence-related behaviors targeted in this study. Involvement in the

identified violent behaviors was more common in boys, 13%-23%, than in girls, 4%-11%. Bullying was reported to occur more in school than away from school, including both being bullied and bullying others. Involvement in bullying, both as the bully and victim, was consistently related to each of the four violence-related behaviors. However, the association was the strongest for the bullies themselves, not their targets. The students self-reported that they were more likely to engage in these violent behaviors outside of school where there was less adult supervision and less protection for their victims. Nansel, et al. concluded that when the targeted violent behaviors were engaged in outside the school walls there was a greater chance that the behaviors would escalate into those that were much more severe.

Student and Teacher Perceptions of Bullying

In a majority of the previously discussed research there was a component of the study which relied upon teachers' reports of students' levels of engagement in bullying behaviors. This may be a shortcoming of such research, in that clear and concise definitions of what constitutes bullying were rarely provided for the teachers.

Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela (2002) conducted a study prior to the implementation of a bullying prevention program to obtain baseline data about the prevalence of bullying in rural Illinois. Several research questions guided this study. Researchers' first area of interest was the prevalence of bullying and whether this prevalence was dependent upon gender and/or the grade level of the participants. Secondly, researchers were interested in how perspectives of bullying varied among students, teachers, and parents. Stockdale, et al. also wanted to learn to

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what extent the experience of bullying related to aggressive behaviors and violence-supporting attitudes. Finally, they were interested in the format of the measuring tool and its influence on participants' perspectives of bullying.

Various measuring tools were developed in an attempt to assess aspects of bullying, including: prevalence, location, frequency, and intensity. However, the wording of the tool seemed to make a difference to the individual who completed the questionnaire. Measuring tools relying upon subjective/global questions, such as, "Have you been bullied?", produced different results than more specific behavioral questions. These behavioral questions isolated individual aspects of bullying such as, "How many times in the past week has someone pushed you around?"

Researchers worked with students in seven schools in rural Illinois. A total of 739 students in grades 4-6 participated in the study. A majority of the students were Caucasian (81%) and lived in a home with both a mother and father present (67.5%). Parents were provided with a survey and asked to have their child return it to school. Roughly, 50% (n=367) of parents completed and returned the survey. Out of the seven school buildings participating in the research, 37 teachers completed the survey, representing 82% of the eligible teachers. Their average teaching experience was 19.69 years and their classrooms averaged 25 students each. They also reported that ten to 11 children per class qualified for free or reduced lunches.

Three parallel surveys were developed to gain the perspectives of the students, teachers, and parents. Students reported on bullying as it impacted them as an individual. Parents reported how bullying had impacted their child. Teachers, on the

other hand, did more general reporting, answering questions that pertained to the student body as a whole. Each survey contained perception scales that would measure respondents' perceptions of verbal bullying, exclusionary bullying, and physical bullying. Students also completed an 11-item scale measuring frequency of self-reported aggression as well as the Attitude Toward Interpersonal Peer Violence scale to measure students' attitudes towards violence.

Stockdale, et al. concluded that students and parents agreed upon the prevalence of verbal bullying, but parents underestimated physical bullying as well as whether or not their child had been bullied. Students were also less likely to classify verbal, exclusionary, and physical behaviors as bullying. Teachers and parents seemed to be more aware of the various forms and dynamics of bullying behaviors. Students also reported that the most frequent location of bullying was the playground. Parents and teachers predicted that bullying occurred just as frequently in P.E. class, in the bathrooms, in hallways, in classrooms, on the bus, and waiting for the bus. It is also important to note that boys reported higher rates of physical bullying than girls but there were no significant differences between genders in verbal bullying experiences.

Interestingly, it was difficult for researchers to analyze the data of the teachers. They found that teachers differed markedly in their threshold for perceiving victimization. This lack of consistency among teachers' perceptions of what behaviors constituted bullying was consistent with the research findings of Harris and Willoughby (2003).

Harris and Willoughby conducted a similar study to investigate teachers' perceptions of bullying. There were 68 teacher participants from eight different Texas schools, all enrolled in a principal preparation program. Each participant completed a survey focused upon the following: specific bullying behaviors, the amount of bullying that occurred, and the usual locations where the behaviors occurred. The surveys also provided an opportunity for participants to report the degree to which they intervened in bullying in comparison with their colleagues.

The researchers came to several conclusions regarding the teachers' perceptions. The participants reported that verbal aggressive behaviors were the most common types of bullying. However, they reported that they felt that all types of bullying were hurtful to all involved. They identified hallways, lunchrooms, and recess/playground as the locations where bullying most commonly occurred. Each of the participants self-reported a willingness to help in situations where they perceived that bullying was occurring. However, they reported that their colleagues were seemingly unwilling to intervene consistently.

The work of Roland and Galloway (2004) was the first to address relations between staff professional cultures and school-level estimates of bullying. The researchers hypothesized that schools that differ significantly in the amount of bullying, will also be significantly different on aspects of professional culture. The elements of professional culture that Roland and Galloway investigated were teachers' perception of leadership, professional co-operation, and consensus between

staff. The researchers also explored the influence of the home, stable environment versus less privileged, upon the level of bullying reported in a school.

The research sample consisted of students in grades four through six and their teachers in Norwegian primary schools. A total of 2,002 students participated in the study, completing two questionnaires. The first questionnaire, the Family Scale, provided information for the researchers regarding different aspects of relationships between the student and their family. Students also answered two questions: During this school year, how often have you bullied/harassed other students at school?, and How often this school year have you *been* bullied/harassed at school?

Two-hundred and seventy-nine teachers participated in the study. Teachers completed three questionnaires. The first was a leadership scale containing items concerning stress related to the school leader's style of management. The second was constructed for this study to estimate four areas of professional co-operation: co-operative planning of work, taking part in project groups, peer supervision, and commitment to in-service teaching. The last piece of teacher data was the Consensus Scale, made up on nine items concerning consensus on professional matters.

Roland and Galloway analyzed the student data and concluded that there was a significant, negative connection between scores on the Family Scale and Bullying Others. This suggests that relationship problems within the family can result in a tendency to bully others. After analyzing the various teacher questionnaires they concluded that schools high in bullying suffer from poor leadership, little professional co-operation, and low consensus about professional matters. The researchers also

suggested that improvement in professional culture may be a prerequisite for improvement in academic standards.

Features of Bullying Prevention Programs

Newman-Carlson & Horne (2004) set out to investigate the impact that a bullying prevention program would have upon bullying in middle school. The program that was used was *Bully Busters: A Teacher's Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims, and By-standers*. The focus of this intervention program was to provide teachers with effective intervention and prevention strategies. Researchers hypothesized that with the knowledge and training provided by the program teachers' self-efficacy skills in dealing with bullying would increase.

The study involved a total of 30 participants, teachers in 6-8 grades in a public school in southeastern United States. The program was announced at teacher staff meetings and through promotional flyers in their mailboxes. Participants received continuing education credit for attending the bullying prevention staff development training program. Teachers were provided with instructional manuals while attending three staff training sessions. They met once a week, over the course of three weeks, for a period of two hours per meeting. After the meetings, teachers were asked to share what they learned with their students.

Upon completion of the training sessions, teachers were divided into two teams that met with the instructor for one hour, every other week, for eight weeks. The collaborative groups met to share stories, to seek advice, to obtain classroom activities, to find support, and to develop collaborative problem-solving skills. These

groups provided the participants with an opportunity to challenge their original thoughts and impressions of what bullying looked like and how they could change student behaviors as well as their own behavior.

Four instruments were used for data collection to gauge teachers' knowledge of intervention and their self-efficacy skills prior to the program's training. Researchers also charted the number of disciplinary referrals written by the participants two weeks prior to the intervention. After the program was implemented the trained teachers demonstrated increased knowledge and use of the interventions, higher levels of self-efficacy, and a decrease in the number of referrals written for bullying behaviors.

In another study, Camodeca and Goossens (2005) asked children what they would suggest as useful peer interventions to stop bullying. They developed a questionnaire to ask children how effective retaliation, nonchalance, and assertiveness were in stopping bullying. Respondents were asked to assume different roles in the bullying relationship and suggest which strategy they thought would be most effective. The researchers had three specific areas of interest. First, they wanted to determine if proposed interventions varied according to the actual role played in bullying. They also wanted to study if interventions varied according to the perspective of the bullying situation. In other words, did the fact that children had to imagine themselves as being a bully, a witness, or victims have an influence on their intervention choice? Thirdly, the researchers wanted to determine if there were differences according to gender and age in the intervention the students proposed.

The sample was made up of 311 children (155 boys and 156 girls) from six primary schools in the Netherlands. Most of the students were in 7th or 8th grade with an average age of 11 years old. In order to assign each child a role in bullying for purposes of the study, students were interviewed individually and were asked to nominate peers that fit with various behaviors. The *Effective Interventions Questionnaire*, a self-report measure, was administered to investigate the extent to which children considered certain strategies effective in stopping bullying. Included were questions such as, Imagine you always insult one of your classmates and call him names. What could be done to make you stop? This is a situation in which the respondent imagined himself/herself as a bully. Each of the situations was followed with four items indicating strategies to stop bullying: hitting and pushing back, doing nothing, asking why, and telling angrily to stop.

The research showed that the responses of the students were dependent upon the real and imagined role played by the children. Bullies, as determined by the student interviews, reported that retaliation was the best strategy to use against bullying. They did not think that assertiveness or nonchalance would be effective strategies. This may have been due to experiences they had where these strategies were ineffectual towards them. Another reason they may not suggest either of these strategies was out of fear that the use of these strategies would work against bullying. If these strategies were effective they would be forced to stop their harassment of others.

Victims also displayed a greater preference for retaliation in comparison with the results of students who were not involved with bullying. Again, these roles were deter-mined by the original student interviews in which they provided the names of bullies and victims within the sample. The researchers concluded that due to the frustration that victims must have felt, their desire to retaliate against bullying is prompted by anger and a loss of power. Victims also stated that assertiveness or nonchalance would resolve conflict, both strategies that were aimed at solving the problem.

Students who were classified as followers thought retaliation was effective when assuming the role of the victim but not when in the role of the witness. Based upon this finding the researchers concluded that followers, the bullies' assistants, were not powerful enough to retaliate or dominate. This could be due to a sense of satisfaction they felt when they witnessed a student being a bullied or a sense of fear that standing up to a bully might result in their own victimization.

The group of students who fell into the categories of defenders, outsiders, and uninvolved seemed to have similar opinions. They did not think retaliation would be effective when imagining they were witnesses or victims. Instead they were in favor of strategies which worked towards resolving the conflict, such as assertiveness or nonchalance. The researchers noticed that these strategies were also suggested as effective by this portion of the sample when they were asked to assume the role of the bully. Camodeca and Goossens concluded that students felt these strategies would

work because they knew that these strategies would work when used with them and they would not continue bullying it these interventions were used against them.

There were gender differences and age differences amongst responses of effective intervention strategies. Girls chose assertive strategies more often than boys. The researchers attributed this to the cultural roles that females are expected to assume- submissive, empathetic, defender, and rejecting of violence. Younger children were less likely to choose retaliation and more likely to choose nonchalance than older children.

The researchers concluded that interventions should be different for children with different roles. For example, bullies and victims would benefit from learning non-aggressive responses and social skills to prevent them from resorting to aggressive behaviors. Victims would also benefit from assertiveness training, as indicated by students who were defenders, outsiders, and uninvolved in bullying.

The importance of creating programs individualized enough to address the various subgroups of bullies and victims were stressed by researchers such as Toblin, et al (2005). As a result of their research, they concluded that aggressive victims required unique strategies to address their specific needs. Existing bullying prevention programs did much to address the needs of the bullies, passive victims, and their community, but little was done to address the unique needs of aggressive victims (Toblin, et al.). Aggressive victims needed a program that focused on coping skills, anger management, affect regulation, academic support, and social skills. Bullies would benefit from interventions targeted towards changing their social

information-processing biases. Passive victims needed assertiveness training and esteem building. Each participant needed to learn these new individualized strategies in an attempt to challenge what they were presently doing to cope, either as victims or bullies. A universal prevention program, or a program aimed at passive victims and bullies only, would do nothing for the aggressive victims.

The Discovery Channel produced a video as part of an ongoing series entitled, *Reality Matters: Cruel Schools: Bullying and Violence* (retrieved June 12, 2006). The film focused upon bullying and violence. Its purpose was to educate children, 80% of whom were neither bullies nor victims, merely bystanders, based on prior research. The video provided first-hand accounts of bullies and victims, appealing to the emotional side of those watching the video- a tactic that the producers hoped would initiate change. One major goal of the series was to spur children into action through education into becoming a caring majority.

The film told the story of several victims. Each was identified as being different from the majority, or from their bully, in some way whether it be weight, stature, or intelligence. Out of the three victims in the film, only one survived to tell his or her story. In seeing pictures of the victims, hearing accounts from children who did little to intervene, and emotional accounts from the parents, viewers were more prone to empathize with the victims. The bullies were characterized as researchers have described them: anxious, hopeless, and lacking social skills.

The film also featured profiles of two bullies. One of the bullies was imprisoned while the other was in an alternative school. The accounts of the bullies

were different, however, there were a few over-aching themes. Their behaviors were encouraged and spurred on by the group dynamic in which they tormented their victims. Both came from unstable home environments, in which violence was commonplace. The bullies compared fighting and bullying others to a drug that gave them a natural high. This description closely paralleled Zuckerman's (1979) sensation-seeking theory, in which he stated that bullies sought out others to harass due to naturally low arousal levels. One of the bullies, Nicole, stated that going after her target helped calm her anger and that she felt her mind was set on flames.

One major reoccurring theme in this film was empowerment of the bystanders. However, each student, parent, and specialist interviewed said that teachers did very little to intervene in bullying. One of the victims actually shot himself in front of his teacher stating that he, "…just couldn't take it anymore." This victim's parents stated that more direct involvement of school personnel could have made a difference. They stated that they were unaware that their child was having any problems at school. However, his classmates' stated that they were aware that he had been continuously bullied.

The work of Brown, Birch, and Kancherla (2005) focused upon the perspectives of children and the suggestions they had for an effective bullying intervention program. In surveying children, they hoped to gain a further understanding of whether children believed bullying was a problem, what they did when bullying happened to them or to others, and what they believed were important causes and interventions.

Data was collected from 1229 children, aged 9-13 years, who attended programs at eleven health education centers in the United States. Computer systems which relied upon remote, individual hand-held devices were used to collect student data. Students were given two demographic questions (age and gender) and eight questions that dealt with individual experiences of bullying and opinions related to the degree of, causes of, and remedies for bullying among children. A few questions dealing with bullying experiences included: "How often have you been bullied?", "What do you usually do when someone else is being bullied?", and "What do you think is the best way to stop bullying?" Information from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provided school-level data for the participating schools. The NCES reported school size, urban-to-rural locale code, ethnic/racial proportions, and proportions participating in free and reduced lunch programs.

The schools participating in this study were diverse across population locales, school size, ethnicity, and income. Students' responses provided support for the prevalence of the bullying epidemic; one third of the 9- to 13-year-olds reported being bullied once in awhile. Fifteen percent claimed that they had been bullied at least weekly. One in seven was afraid to go to school at least once in awhile because of bullying.

Brown, et al. found that nearly half of the students who reported having been bullied said that they responded by fighting back; while only eight percent said that they would try to talk to the bully. Nearly 75% of the students believed that bullying was sort of or very uncool. Regardless of their opinions towards bullying, over 40%

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admitted to some form of bullying behavior, one in five admitting to frequent (at least weekly) bullying. Students believed that bullies engaged in this behavior for two main reasons: bullies though it would make them popular (35%) and bullies wanted to get their own way or to push others around (32%).

One third of the total sample of students admitted that they did not know the best way to stop bullying. Of those that did identify a way, the majority suggested some type of adult intervention (tell a teacher or parent, disciplining kids who bully, or have teachers or other adults watch over them). Only 11% recommended that bullying be addressed through lessons at school. According to these findings, Brown, et al. concluded that students are looking towards the leadership and guidance of adults to put a stop to bullying. Therefore, intervention programs which rely upon empowering the bystanders or witnesses of bullying would not be effectual. Of those who witnessed bullying, almost 30% reported that they would either just watch or walk away and do nothing or join in. Students self-report a willingness to engage in bullying but seem unaware of how to put a stop to it.

Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, and Voeten (2005) sought to evaluate the effectiveness of a bullying prevention program. The Finnish program targeted the whole student group, not just focusing upon bullies or victims. Classroom teachers who had attended a one-year training course were responsible for the classroom implementation of the program.

Salmivalli, et al. evaluated the effectiveness of the program based upon multi-level modeling, assessing the program effects after 12 months of intervention,

utilizing a cohort longitudinal design with adjacent cohorts. The researchers also took into account the degree of implementation of the program. Their sample included 48 classes of students in grades four through six. The students came from 16 Finnish schools, with a total population of 1,220 children (600 girls and 620 boys).

The researchers gave a questionnaire at two assessment points during the implementation of the intervention program. The questionnaire assessed the frequency of bullying. The researchers also examined students' attitudes and efficacy beliefs related to bullying and their participant role behaviors. Reports were also collected from teachers pertaining to the specific actions they had taken in combating bullying. The questions that were asked were created to compare the implementation plan to what had been actually implemented.

Salmivalli, et al. found that the intervention plan had made a positive impact upon several of the outcome variables. Improvements were found in the frequency of bullying, observed and experienced, teachers' attitudes and teachers' efficacy beliefs. However, the intervention was found to be more effectual with fourth graders than with fifth or sixth graders. Also, the only schools that showed this degree of improvement were those in which there was a high degree of program implementation. Schools in which staff did not fully implement the program in their classes resulted in less significant results.

These results showed that a bullying prevention program would be more successful if staff was willing to implement the program. The schools from Salmivalli, et al.'s study that showed the lowest levels of improvement, as indicated

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by data collected at two different assessment points, were those that were not committed to full implementation of the program. The researchers were surprised and disappointed that only five of the 16 schools belonged to the high implementation group, and many schools had very low implementation rates.

Salmivalli, et al. concluded that introducing a more clearly structured intervention program might have facilitated its implementation. Even with the one-year training course that provided clear theoretical background, adapting it to classroom became the responsibility of the teachers. Some teachers were able to adapt the intervention program to their needs and their classrooms, whereas other teachers were more passive.

In summary, research showed that there were several subgroups within the bullying dichotomy. Each subgroup had its own characteristics, needs, and risk factors. Bullying was damaging emotionally and psychologically for the victims, the bullies, and for the large group of bystanders. Various proponents of bullying prevention programs concluded that these programs needed to be specifically tailored to the needs of each subgroup. However, other researchers stressed the importance of school climate and teacher investment in a bullying prevention program to produce measureable results. Although there were differing opinions towards whom a program should be targeted, each researcher concluded that the implementation of the program did result in decreased accounts of bullying. The difficulty seemed to lie in creating a school climate in which students were willing to support others and teachers were willing to effectively intervene.

Chapter 3

Methods/Design

The purpose of this study was to collect data from teachers and students in a building in which a new bullying prevention program was to be instituted. The data focused upon gaining insight into the perspectives of teachers and students and how they perceived various aspects of the bullying problem, especially as to how it pertained to their school building and environment. In this study I examined the following questions: How do teachers' perceptions of bullying differ from students' perceptions? (a) How frequently does bullying occur? (b) Where does bullying most frequently occur? (c) How often do teachers intervene in bullying?

Teachers may have perceived certain aspects of bullying, such as frequency and location, differently than students. The work of Harris and Willoughby (2003) investigated the differences in teacher perceptions involving these different components. The participants stated that only ten percent of other teachers at their school were always interested in trying to stop bullying, while 37 percent were seen as usually interested in halting it. Based upon their research it appeared that teachers and students perceived the frequency at which teachers effectively intervene differently. Before a bullying intervention program was to be implemented, it was important to gain insight into what degree teachers' perspectives of bullying differed from those of the students. These insights would be crucial in the initial presentation of the bullying prevention program to the staff. A baseline was gathered identifying the frequency of bullying in a school, the most common locations that bullying

occurred, and the types of bullying behavior that were most pervasive. This baseline, when compared with student data, would be effective in exposing misconceptions that teachers may have regarding the prevalence of bullying within their school building.

The school in which this study was done is part of an urban district in Western New York. The district serviced 34,000 students from pre-kindergarten to twelve and was classified as being in a mid-sized city having a population less than 250,000. With 89 full-time classroom teachers, the school had an approximate student population of 1,140 and a student/teacher ratio of 12:1. A majority of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. The district was extremely diverse, including children from 28 foreign countries speaking 35 different languages. The school was also a full-inclusion building; students with disabilities participated in regular education classes with their non-disabled peers.

Data was collected in three different forms, allowing for a triangulation of the data. Pre-existing data of students' responses to the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire and a teachers' version questionnaire were used to collect data regarding perceptions of bullying. Individual interviews were also conducted, again based upon the original questionnaire completed by the students, to gain a more in-depth look at teachers' perspectives of bullying. Each of the interviewed teachers taught grades seven through nine.

Student Questionnaires

The Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire was administered throughout the district to students in grades 7-9 at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year. For

the purposes of this study, the results from only one school were analyzed. The

district chose these grades as a level in which they would like to pilot the new

bullying prevention program.   Included in the data made available through the

district, 219 students completed the survey. The total population eligible for

participation was not made available. However, 139 girls and 85 boys completed the

survey.

Students answered the 39-question survey at the beginning of the 2005-2006

school year. The questionnaire was in a Likert-scale format. The survey included

questions that were global in nature, using the term bullying versus the use of

questions detailing and isolating specific bullying behaviors. Students were asked,

"How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months?" Questions

that isolated specific bullying behaviors were stated followed by a Likert-scale from

1-5 asking students to rate how frequently they had been bullied, e.g. "I was hit,

kicked, pushed, shoved around or locked indoors". It is important to note that the

students were never provided with a definition of the term bullying to refer to while

completing the survey or a list of behaviors commonly associated with bullying.

Questions included: frequency of experiencing bullying and/or frequency of

being a bully, the location that bullying most commonly occurred within the school

building, and the number of times teachers or other staff had intervened.

The district had already provided a thorough analysis of the data. Using the

Likert-scale from each question, the data was further subdivided according to gender.

For each question the responses of girls and boys were separately listed, followed by

a summative response (indicated as G+B). The percentage of the total sample that gave each response within the Likert-scale was also provided.

Teacher Questionnaires

Teachers received a modified and condensed version of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, consisting of 12 questions using Likert-scale responses. Thirty-two teachers out of the 71 eligible completed the teacher survey. Teacher eligibility was determined by finding teachers that taught the grade levels of the students who had completed the Student Questionnaire. Out of the 32 returned surveys, six were completed by staff members who had received training in the bullying prevention program. The remaining surveys were completed by staff members that had not received any training in the bullying prevention program. The trained teachers had received surveys printed on yellow paper, while the untrained teachers' surveys were printed on white paper. One of the untrained teachers' surveys was returned without a response to Question 10. However, the rest of the teacher's responses were included in the data.

The teachers' versions of the survey included questions similar to the students regarding frequency of bullying, hot spots in the building in which bullying most commonly occurred, and the frequency of staff intervention in a bullying situation. Teachers were asked questions such as, "How often has the average student been bullied in the past few months?", "Where does bullying most frequently occur?", and "How often do other teachers or adults try to put a stop to a student being bullied at school?" Attached to the survey was a consent form asking permission to use the

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survey results in the research study. Teachers were assured that the survey was completely anonymous and were encouraged to make no identifying marks on the survey itself (i.e. name, social security number, school identification number, etc.).

Several teachers had previously attended training in the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. These teachers had already reviewed students' responses to the questionnaire and were familiar with various aspects of bullying within the school building, including the frequency, the hot spots, and the likelihood of intervention. These teachers received a survey printed on a different colored paper than those of their untrained cohorts. This allowed the researcher to explore if knowledge of an intervention program altered the teachers perceptions of bullying.

Teacher Interviews

After compiling teacher data and surveys, five teachers in grades 7-9 were interviewed prior to the implementation of the bullying prevention program. Out of the five teachers, three taught seventh grade, one taught eighth grade, and one taught ninth grade. The teaching experience of each participant varied, ranging from two years to 31 years.

I set up the interviews with the teachers during their planning periods. Three of the five interviews had to be rescheduled for times other than the time originally slated. Due to scheduling conflicts, one of the original participants declined from participating in the study. Another eligible teacher, untrained in the program and teaching the correlating grades, completed the interview in lieu of the original participant.

After completing consent forms I met individually with each of the teachers during one of their planning periods in their classrooms. As voluntary participants, each teacher was reminded that if at any point during the interview he or she wished to either end the process or not have his or her responses included within the research data he or she had these options. Each participant was supplied with a copy of the questions to refer to during the interview while I took notes of his or her responses.

Many of the questions asked during the interview were discussed in detail during the bullying prevention program trainings and it was the effort of the study to determine teachers' perceptions prior to exposure to a bullying prevention program. Therefore, this group did not include teachers who had received prior training in the bullying prevention program.

The five untrained teachers were asked more specific questions than found on the Teacher Questionnaire, designed to mirror those found on the more thorough student questionnaire. These questions were created so teachers would describe specific behaviors that they associated with bullying. The questionnaire provided data that could be easily correlated with student data, the interviews provided a more accurate, candid, and in-depth look at teachers' perceptions of bullying. Each of the participants was asked the following questions:

- What behaviors do you associate with bullying?

- What physical, social, and emotional characteristics do you usually associate with the typical bully?

- What locations in the building are "hot spots" for bullying?

- What specific behaviors would cause you to immediately intervene in a situation where you believe bullying is occurring?

- During a 3-month period, how often do you think your average student is bullied?

The effectiveness of these questions was explored during an assessment pilot study. I conducted the assessment pilot with a $7^{th}/8^{th}$ grade Math Inclusion teacher from the building in which the original student data was collected and where subsequent data was collected from the staff. I asked each of the questions verbally, and took notes of her responses.

It was my goal to create interview questions that would generate responses specific to my research questions and sub-questions. While using the student questionnaire as a blueprint, I assumed the teacher would give responses that would mirror the language given in the students' Likert-scale questionnaire. With the exception of the first question, her responses did not hit upon the key words, phrases, and terms that I was listening for as laid out in the student questionnaire.

The wording of the fourth question was changed to focus upon specific bullying behaviors versus intervention methods that a teacher may use in a bullying situation. It was also determined that the impact of other factors including gender, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, subject taught and/or involvement in prior district initiatives to curb bullying, would not be included in this study. It appeared that there were a number of variables influencing the perceptions of teachers; however the goal of this study was to compare the perceptions of teachers and students not to formulate hypotheses as to the origin of these differing perceptions.

Chapter 4

Results/Discussions

Both teacher responses and student responses to the questionnaires were analyzed in a similar manner. Responses were disaggregated based upon the Likert-scale provided to the respondents. The student sample was disaggregated by gender. The percentage of the sample that gave each answer within the Likert-scale was calculated. The teacher sample was disaggregated by trained teachers, untrained teachers, and all teachers, trained and untrained (T+U).

The rationale for disaggregating the teacher sample into trained and untrained was to examine if training in a bullying prevention program had an impact upon the perceptions of bullying behaviors. The responses of the trained teachers provided insight into the effectiveness of training in the program. If the training was effective, the trained teachers' responses should closely mirror those of the students.

Within the interview responses, I looked for frequency of responses by item. I also looked for unusual and unexpected responses. Various questions from the student surveys which focused upon specific bullying behaviors and the frequency of their occurrences were compared with teachers' interview responses. The goal of the teacher interview was to determine if teachers perceived the specific behaviors associated with bullying and the frequency at which these behaviors occurred in the same way that students perceived these factors.

Figure 4.1 gives the responses of students and teachers to questions which had similar, if not identical wording. The first column includes the questions asked of the

respondents. Questions asked of teachers are given first with the corresponding student question listed below it in parentheses. The second column provides the answer that girls most commonly gave, including the answer in text, and the percentage of girls who responded with that particular answer. For each subgroup included in the figure these two categories (frequency and percentage) are included within each cell. The third column includes answers that boys most commonly gave. The fourth column provides the most common answer for girls and boys. The fifth column gives responses of teachers trained in the bullying prevention program, while the sixth column provides the data of the untrained teachers. The last column shows the most common response of all teachers, including trained and untrained. Various questions resulted in responses that occurred with equal frequency. In these instances, both responses were listed within the subgroup's data including the shared frequency percentage.

Figure 4.1 Mode responses of students and teachers to questionnaires

Question	Girls	Boys	Girls + Boys	Trained	Untrained	U + T
1. How often has the average student been bullied in the past few months? (How often have you been bullied at school in the past few months)	not at all 62.1%	not at all 64.4%	not at all 63%	2-3 times 50%	once or twice 38.5%	once or twice 34.4%
2. In which class(es) are the students who are bullying others? (In which classes is the student or students who bully you?)	different class, same grade 48.6%	different class, same grade 60%	different class, same grade 52.7%	in one class and different class, same grade 33.3%/ 33.3%	in a higher grade 42.3%	in a higher grade 37.5%
3. Which gender most commonly participates in bullying?	both boys and girls	both boys and girls	both boys and girls	both boys and girls	both boys and girls	both boys and girls

(Have you been bullied by boys or girls?)	41%	45%	42.4%	66.7%	53.8%	56.3%
4. What size group usually bullies one specific victim? (By how many students have you usually been bullied?)	mainly by one student 44.1%	mainly by one student/ group of 2-3/ by different students and groups 30% each	mainly by 1 student 38.9%	mainly by one student/ by a group of 4-9 students 33.3 % each	mainly by one student 46.2 %	mainly by one student 43.8%
5. How long do you believe repeated bullying occurs for a victim? (How long has the bullying lasted?)	1 or 2 weeks/ about a month/ several years 26.7% each	several years 41.7%	several years 33.3%	about a year/ several years 33.3% each	1 or 2 weeks 34.6%	1 or 2 weeks 31.3%
6. Where does bullying most frequently occur? (Where have you been bullied?) Data includes listings of the 3 most common responses for each subgroup	1- hallways/ stairwells 73.7% 2- in class with teacher present 64.9% 3- in class teacher absent 62.2%	1- (tie) gym/ lockers/ showers and in class with teacher present 70.6% 2- in the lunch room 66.7% 3- hallways/ stairwells 62.5%	1- hallways/ stairwells 70.4% 2- in class with teacher present 66.7% 3- in class teacher absent 61.5%	1- (tie) hallways/ stairwells and gym/ lockers/ showers 66.7% 2- (tie) in class with teacher present or absent 50% 3- in the lunch room 33.3%	1- in gym/ lockers/ showers 76.9% 2- hallways/ stairwells 69.2% 3- in the class teacher absent 57.7%	1- in gym/ lockers/ showers 75% 2- hallways/ stairwells 68.8% 3- in class teacher absent 56.3%
7. Who do victims most commonly report their victimization to? (Have you told anyone that you have been bullied at school in the past couple of months...told whom?)	your friend(s) 58.8%	your parent(s)/ guardian(s) 50%	your parent/ guardian and friend 48.3%	their parent(s)/ guardian(s) 33.3%	their siblings 26.9%	their siblings 25%

8. How often do other teachers or adults try to put a stop to a student being bullied at school?	n/a	n/a	n/a	once in awhile 50%	almost never 46.2%	almost never 40.6%
9. How often do other students try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school? (same as above)	once in a while 30%	almost never 34.5%	almost never 29.4%	once in a while 50%	almost never 30%	almost never 31.3%
10. How often do you think students self-report participating in bullying in the past couple of months? (How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in the past couple of months?)	not bullied 59.1%	not bullied 63.3%	not bullied 60.7%	never have bullied 50%	never have bullied 38.5%	never have bullied 40.6%
11. Have you ever spoken with your class about bullying? (Overall, how much do you think your teachers have done to counteract bullying in the past couple of months?)	little or nothing 31%	little or nothing 46.7%	little or nothing 36.8%	yes, several times 66.7%	yes, I have once 50%	yes, I have once 46.9%
12. Overall, how much do you think you have done to counteract bullying in the past couple of months?	n/a	n/a	n/a	somewhat/ much 33.3%/33.3%	a good deal 34.6%	a good deal 31.3%

Student Questionnaire Results

Question 1, regarding frequency of bullying, from the teacher survey closely mirrors

Question 4 from the student survey, in that the wording is global. A definition of

bullying is not provided in which specific types of behaviors are isolated for the

respondent. A majority of the students, 63%, reported not being bullied at all.

However, 13.7% of the student sample (boys and girls) reported being bullied two to

three times per month. The preceding eight questions from the student questionnaire

(not included in Figure 4.1) were phrased in a more behavior specific manner,

isolating the various components of verbal, physical, and exclusionary bullying.

Using these questions as a basis for victimization, students responded that 32.9% of

the sample had been bullied two to three times a month.

Students that reported having been bullied two to three times a month were

used as a computational basis for Question 2-7. Question 2 asked victims "In which

classes is the student or students who bully you?" The most frequent response, 52.7%

of the total sample, was different class, same grade. This response was consistent

amongst girls and boys. Question 3 was also consistent across gender lines, both

sexes reported that they were typically bullied by both boys and girls (42.4%).

Question 4 asked the victims to report the size of the group that typically subjected

them to bullying. The female sample reported that they were typically bullied by one

student, whereas boys reported with equal frequency being bullied by one student, a

group of two to three and by different students and groups. Question 5 was asked to

determine how long bullying had lasted for a victim. From this sample, 44.4 %

reported having been bullied a year or more. Thirty-three percent reported that the bullying had lasted several years.

Each of the respondents was asked to choose up to three locations in the building in which they felt bullying most frequently occurred. The responses differed by subgroup within the samples. Girls reported that the hallways/stairwells, classrooms with the teacher present, and classrooms with the teacher absent as the most common locations of bullying. Boys reported that the gym/locker rooms/showers, classroom with the teacher present, the lunch room, and hallways/stairwells as the most common locations.

Bullied students were also asked (Question 7) who they had told about being bullied, if anyone. Girls reported most frequently telling their friends (58.8%) and boys reported telling their parent/guardian (50%). Question 9 asked the total student sample how often they thought other students tried to put a stop to bullying when they saw someone being bullied. Seventy-five percent of the students thought that other students intervened almost never to once in a while, with over half responding almost never.

Students were asked how much their classroom teacher had done to counteract bullying in the past couple of months in Question 11. The responses of the students are shown in Figure 4.2, which includes the responses of girls, boys, and girls plus boys (total sample). The percentage of the total sample that gave each response is also provided. The answers differed by gender with girls responding that teachers had done little or nothing, fairly little, or somewhat with equal frequency. Close to

half, 46.7%, of the boys responded that teachers had done little or nothing to counteract bullying.

Figure 4.2 Efforts of teachers to counteracting bullying (student report)

	N= 126		N= 75		N= 201	
Overall, how much do you think your class (homeroom) teacher had done to counteract bullying in the past couple of months?	Girls	%	Boys	%	G + B	%
1- little or nothing	39	31	35	46.7	74	36.8
2- fairly little	27	21.4	10	13.3	37	18.4
3- somewhat	33	26.2	12	16	45	22.4
4- a good deal	15	11.9	6	8	21	10.4
5- much	12	9.5	12	16	24	11.9

Students were asked in Question 10 how often they had participated in bullying in the past couple of months. A majority of the students (60.7%) responded that they had not bullied other students. Students who self-reported participating in bullying two to three times a month were used as a sample when asking students how often any teacher had talked with them about their bullying of other students (not included in Figure 4.1). A majority of the bullies, 65.4%, responded that teachers hadn't talked with them.

The total sample was asked, "Overall, how much do you think your teachers have done to counteract bullying in the past couple of months?" Thirty-one percent of girls and 46.7% of boys reported that teachers did little or nothing. The next most frequent response was somewhat (26% of girls, 16% of boys).

Teacher Questionnaire Results

The responses of teachers varied according to their exposure to training in a bullying prevention program. Differences and similarities amongst their responses

will be discussed in a later section. Results in this section will be based upon the total sample (trained and untrained teachers). Teachers were first asked in Question 1, "How often has the average student been bullied at school in the past few months?" The most frequent answer provided by the total sample was once or twice (34.4%). Question 2 asked teachers in which classes(s) are the students who bully others. Teachers most frequently responded that students were bullied by students from a higher grade. Question 3 dealt with gender, asking teachers "Which gender most commonly participates in bullying?" A majority of teachers, 56.3%, believed that both boys and girls participate in bullying.

Question 4 asked teachers to predict what size group usually bullies one specific victim. Almost half of the sample, 43.8%, thought that victims were usually bullied mainly by one student. The teachers (31.3% of sample) also responded that repeated bullying usually lasted one or two weeks for the victims.

Each of the respondents were asked to choose up to three locations in the building where they felt bullying most frequently occurred, as shown in the last column of Figure 4.3. Teachers believed that bullying most frequently occurred in the gym, lockers, and the showers. Hallways and stairwells was the next most frequent response, followed by in a classroom in which the teacher was absent.

Figure 4.3 Responses to most common locations of bullying

Where does bullying most frequently occur? (Where have you been bullied?)	Girls	Boys	G + B	Trained	Untrained	T + U
	1- hallways/ stairwells 73.7%	1- (tie) gym/ lockers/ showers and	1- hallways/ stairwells 70.4%	1- (tie) hallways/ stairwells and	1- in gym/ lockers/ showers	1- in gym/ lockers/ showers 75%

Data includes listings of the 3 most common responses for each subgroup	2- in class with teacher present 64.9% 3- in class teacher absent 62.2%	in class with teacher present 70.6% 2- in the lunch room 66.7% 3- hallways/ stairwells 62.5%	2- in class with teacher present 66.7% 3- in class teacher absent 61.5%	gym/ lockers/ showers 66.7% 2- (tie) in class with teacher present or absent 50% 3- in the lunch room 33.3%	76.9% 2- hallways/ stairwells 69.2% 3- in the class teacher absent 57.7%	2- hallways/ stairwells 68.8% 3- in class teacher absent 56.3%

Question 7 asked teachers who they believe victims most commonly reported their victimization to. Twenty-five percent of the sample answered that victims would turn to their siblings regarding issues with bullying. Teachers felt that students were least likely to turn to family (other than siblings) and friends.

Question 8 was phrased in a manner in which respondents were asked to reflect upon the efforts of others and their perspective of how often other teachers would intervene in a bullying situation. Almost half of the teachers, 40.6%, responded that other teachers almost never tried to put a stop to a student being bullied.

The teachers were also asked more self-reflective questions regarding their personal degree of involvement in bullying. Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not provide a clear indicator of what teacher involvement would look like or what it would entail, leaving it up to individual interpretation. A definition or a list of specific interventions would have provided the teachers with a clearer understanding

of teacher involvement. First teachers were asked in Question 11 if they had ever

spoken with their class about bullying. A majority of the teachers, 46.9%, responded

that they had spoken with their class once. However, in Question 12 teachers most

frequently responded (31.3%) that they had done a good deal to counteract bullying in

the past couple of months. The last two columns of Figure 4.4 provided the specific

number of teachers who gave each answer. It is important to note that very few

teachers (9.4%) answered that they had done little or nothing. This response is the

opposite of what teachers said about the efforts of others (assuming little or nothing

most closely parallels almost never).

Figure 4.4 Efforts of teachers to counteracting bullying (personal report)

	N=6		N=26		N=32	
Overall, how much do you think you have done to counteract bullying in the past couple of months?	Trained	%	Untrained	%	U + T	%
1- little or nothing	0	0	3	11.5	3	9.4
2- fairly little	1	16.7	4	15.4	5	15.6
3- somewhat	2	33.3	4	15.4	6	18.8
4- a good deal	1	16.7	9	34.6	10	31.3
5- much	2	33.3	6	23.1	8	25

Close to thirty-percent of the teachers felt that students almost never tried to

put a stop to bullying when they are witnesses to it. Teachers were then asked to

speculate how often students were willing to self-report participating in bullying in

the past couple of months. Slightly more than 40% believed that students would most

frequently respond that they never had participated in bullying. However, roughly

60% of the students reported that they had not bullied other students. When the

global question of bullying was broken down into specific bullying behaviors (name

calling, exclusion, physical abuse, spreading rumors, stealing, and threatening) the percentage of students denying their participation in such behaviors increased. The most frequent responses of students to these behavior specific questions were hasn't happened, with close to 90% of the sample providing this response.

Trained Teachers vs. Untrained Teachers

Several questions in the survey produced results that varied amongst teachers that were trained in a bullying prevention program and those that were untrained. Due to the unequal proportion of trained to untrained teachers (6 to 26) who completed the questionnaire, the summative responses most commonly reflected the beliefs of the untrained teachers. These results are clearly outlined in Figure 4.1 on page 46.

Question 1 produced different results, half of the trained teachers believed that the average student was bullied two to three times in the past few months. However, untrained teachers believed that students were victimized once or twice in the past few months. Trained teachers believed that bullies were in the same grade as their victims, either in the same class or in a different class. Untrained teachers believed that bullies tended to be in a higher grade than their victims. The question that generated the most evident discrepancy between the perspectives of trained teachers and untrained teachers dealt with how long they perceived bullying lasting for a victim. Untrained teachers believed that bullying lasted one or two weeks, whereas trained teachers responded that bullying lasted a year to several years.

Figure 4.3, on page 51, provides the top three responses of trained and untrained teachers to locations of bullying with their school. Untrained teachers focused upon locations within the building that lacked direct teacher supervision: gym, lockers, showers, hallways, stairwells, classroom with teacher absent. Trained teachers also included these locations as well as locations with teacher supervision including the lunchroom and a classroom in which the teacher was present.

Trained teachers put slightly more trust in the efforts of other teachers, half of these teachers responded that other teachers intervened once in awhile. Untrained teachers, who made up a majority of the sample, reported that other teachers almost never tried to put a stop to a student being bullied. Figure 4.4, on page 53, provides an overview of the teachers' responses to Question 12 dealing with their own efforts in counteracting bullying. The six teachers who comprised the trained group responded with equal frequency (33.3%) that they personally had done somewhat to much to counteract bullying in the past couple of months. The 26 untrained teachers were much more optimistic about their efforts, 31.3% responded that they had done a good deal.

Trained teachers, perhaps due to a greater awareness of the prevalence of bullying and their exposure to a bullying prevention program, reported that they spoke with their class several times about bullying. Untrained teachers reported that they too had spoken with their class but only on one occasion. These same untrained teachers that had only spoken with their class about bullying on one occasion, responded that they had done a good deal to combat bullying. However, the trained

teachers who reported that they had spoken to their class several times felt that they had only done somewhat to combat bullying.

Teacher Interview Results

Five teachers, untrained in the bullying prevention program, participated in the interview. Their answers were written down and later compared for frequency of responses as well as unpredicted responses. The responses of each of the teachers are divided into the various components of the interview.

Behaviors associated with bullying.

Each participant was first asked what behaviors (s)he associated with bullying. A majority of the answers included physical behaviors, including hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, throwing students' materials, and fighting. Fighting was the most common response, four out of the five participants listed fighting as the first behavior associated with bullying. Three of the interviewees included verbal behaviors in their list, including name calling and spreading rumors. One teacher mentioned on-line/internet bullying as a new bullying behavior that was becoming a wide-spread problem in the school building. None of the teachers included any behaviors associated with exclusionary bullying.

Characteristics of a bully.

The teachers were then asked to describe the typical bully, including physical, social, and emotional characteristics. All of the teachers began with listing physical characteristics including, large in stature/bigger than other students, well-dressed, attractive, and athletic. One of the respondents stated that bullies often have some

type of physical issue that resulted in lowered self-esteem such as a being overweight, too tall, too short, too thin or unattractive.

Popularity was the most common social characteristic of bullies listed by the participants. Three out of the five teachers first listed "popular" as a social characteristic attributed to bullies. One of these three teachers listed it as the only social characteristic. Other social characteristics of bullies included a large social circle, a small social circle, uninvolved in extracurricular activities, involved in sports, bad grades, and participation in regular education classes. This particular school had two separate tracks for students in grades seven through nine, an honors track and a regular education track. Students were separated a majority of the day except for lunch, gym, and elective courses.

Each of the teachers included low self-esteem as a characteristic of the typical bully. Three of the teachers expanded upon this response, citing various reasons for this lowered self-esteem including a bad family situation, an abusive home environment, academic shortcomings, physical issues, financial problems in the home, and not dressing as nicely as the other students. One of the teachers responded that students who received support services within the building often resorted to bullying to compensate for their academic or behavioral deficits. This particular school was a full-inclusion building in which students, who received special education services, received a majority of their support within the regular education classroom. Many classrooms within the building had two or more teachers/staff

members to support these particular students. This particular interviewee associated the special education stigmatism with students resorting to bullying behaviors.

Hot spots for bullying.

Teachers were then asked what locations in the building they considered "hot spots" for bullying, or locations in the building they felt that bullying most commonly occurred. Two of the five teachers prefaced their list with stating that the locations all lacked direct teacher supervision. The list included the locker room, the hallways, the lunch room, the buses, the gym, and the lockers, all as building "hot spots". Three of the teachers stated that classrooms with substitute teachers seemed to be environments in which bullies felt safe to bully others with little to no repercussions or accountability. One of the teachers listed his/her own classroom as a location in which bullying occurs, stating that it's impossible to stop every time students were engaging in such behaviors.

Reasons for intervention.

Fighting or verbal abuse were the most common answers provided by the participants as behaviors that would cause them to immediately intervene in situation that they deemed as bullying. Two of the teachers expressed apprehension in intervening in bullying situations due to a lack of administrative support. They stated that although bullying was a serious offense, they felt that the administrators had either too many other behavioral issues to deal with or they didn't view bullying in the same serious manner as the teacher. One of the teachers responded that (s)he often called home when (s)he noticed that a student was being bullied in the

classroom. When I asked whose parents (s)he most often called, the victim or the bully, (s)he responded that (s)he would only call the bully's parents. However, (s)he would take time to meet confidentially with the student who was being victimized and might involve a parent at a later point.

Frequency of bullying.

Each teacher was asked how often s(he) thought the average student was bullied within a three month period. The answers were greatly varied since no specific guidelines or time frames were provided for the respondents. Teacher 1 felt that an average student was bullied two or three times, Teacher 2 responded once in a while, Teacher 3 thought six to seven times, Teacher 4 responded quite a bit. Teacher 5 stated that it was dependent upon the student and that it was difficult to provide an average, s(he) eventually responded with once a week. In an effort not to lead the respondents into a particular response or to make any of them doubt and change their responses, I did not ask them to clarify their answers further.

The interviewees provided a description of what they deemed the typical bully, an attractive, popular, well-dressed student, usually larger in stature that has some sort of shortcoming. This shortcoming was most commonly described as an academic issue or a self-esteem issue, often related to a negative home environment. Teachers believed that areas low in direct teacher supervision were hot spots for bullying. They reported that the bullying behaviors most commonly associated with verbal and physical bullying, were those that warranted immediate teacher

intervention. Behaviors pertaining to relational/exclusionary bullying were not mentioned by any of the participants.

Chapter 5

Conclusions/Recommendations

The outcomes of this study shed light upon various areas in which teacher perceptions of bullying and student perceptions of bullying differed. More specifically, there were vast differences in the ways that teachers and students perceived the frequency of bullying, the hot spots for bullying, and how often teachers intervened. Each data source provided insight into how different these perceptions were. Knowledge of such differences of opinion could be a valuable component of teacher training in a bullying prevention program.

Student Questionnaire

Students were hesitant in admitting to being bullied, when asked the global question. However, they were more likely to admit to being chastised in more behavior specific methods. Close to 33% of the students, once asked questions that were behavior specific, admitted to being bullied at least two to three times a month. It could be that students did not perceive these specific behaviors as bullying. It is also likely that students felt extreme shame associated with being bullied and were not likely to report the matter, even in the form of an anonymous questionnaire. A clear definition of bullying, in all of its various forms, needs to be a component of any bullying prevention program implemented.

Victims, that is those students who reported having been bullied two to three times per month, admitted that this was a problem that had lasted for a year or more. Of that percentage of bullied students, 41.7% answered that bullying for them had

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lasted for several years. The long-term effects of being bullied for an extended period of time can be extremely detrimental. It is feasible that the students may have believed that this is a problem that they may never escape.

Sixty percent of the students reported that they had never bullied others. However, when these same students were asked if they had bullied in more behavior specific ways, 90% reported that they had never participated in such behaviors. The key difference between the two types of questions was the removal of the word bullying from the latter. This outcome of lower percents of bullying reported to the behavior specific questions, leads to the conclusion that bullies did not want to admit their own participation in such behaviors. It could be easier for these students to admit to being bullies but more difficult to report on their specific actions. It may also be likely that students did not have a clear idea/definition of what bullying actually was. This is also evident in the findings above. Bullied students were more likely to report being subjected to specific behaviors more often than to just bullying. They didn't want to admit to being bullied just as bullies didn't want to admit to their specific actions. Previous studies, Brown, et al. (2005), have concluded that students feel that kids that bully are often cooler and more popular than the other kids. This perception may also have a negative impact upon students seeing bullying as an actual problem.

Students (55.2%) reported that teachers had done little, nothing, or fairly little to counteract bullying. They perceived the teachers as unwilling to intervene, even reporting the classroom with the teacher present as a hot spot for bullying. More

students chose classrooms in which the teacher is present versus classrooms in which the teacher is absent as locations in which bullying most commonly occurred. This lack of involvement could translate into a lack of trust. Students reported that they were not likely to tell a teacher or another adult at their school if they had been bullied. They were more likely to turn to friends, siblings, and other family members. Since students were not reporting the victimization to their teachers, this may have affected teachers' perceptions of the frequency of bullying in their school.

Teacher Questionnaire

Teachers that had received no formal training in a bullying prevention program underestimated the frequency of bullying as well as the longevity of bullying within their school. Of this same population of teachers, 62.5% believed that bullying was an issue that only lasted a month or less for the victim. This perception that bullying is a short-term issue which is not that prevalent in their building could have a serious impact upon the success of a bullying prevention program. Teachers may be less likely to implement a program which targets an issue that they don't feel is a pressing or relevant problem.

Trained teachers, however, over-reported the frequency of bullying within their school. This piece of data is of particular interest, since this group of teachers had seen the student data several months prior to completing the teacher questionnaire. These teachers had been shown this data and had begun the process of planning the implementation of a bullying prevention program. This planning included weekly meetings and continued research into the area of bullying. Perhaps

the trained teachers, due to their heightened awareness of the prevalence of bullying, were oversensitive to the problem. These teachers, however, were more aware of how long bullying lasted for the typical victim, a majority (66.6%) responded that it lasted a year or more.

Teachers firmly believed that they were doing a good deal to counteract bullying in their school. This perception was evident throughout several components of the teacher data. The idea of the power of teacher supervision was reflected in the responses of the untrained teachers on the teacher questionnaire. The top three untrained teacher responses to the question regarding hot spots in the school for bullying (gym/lockers/showers, hallways/stairwells, and classrooms in which the teacher is absent) were all locations that lacked supervision. Teachers seemed to have confidence that students would not engage in bullying in plain view of a teacher, especially in their own classroom. Exposure to this misconception that direct teacher supervision had a substantial impact upon the frequency of bullying should be included in the training of the bullying prevention program. This knowledge could increase teachers' awareness and make for a more successful program implementation.

Teachers perceived themselves as effective in counteracting bullying, stating that they had done a good deal and/or much in the past few months to put a stop to the behaviors. However, 46.9% of the teacher sample reported only speaking with their class once about bullying. Perhaps these teachers were relying upon strategies other than speaking to the entire class to counteract bullying. According to Harris and

Willoughby (2005), patrolling the halls, contacting parents, and punishing bullies are some of the most used strategies for reducing bullying. The questionnaire did not provide a specific definition for the term counteracting bullying. It could be that these teachers were effectively implementing some of these other strategies. However, as earlier stated, students did not perceive this to be the case. This suggests that teachers were somehow not conveying their concern to the students.

There were slight differences between the two subgroups of teachers. Untrained teachers did not express the same confidence that the trained teachers did, downplaying their efforts in counteracting bullying. However, the trained teachers reportedly spoke with their class more frequently than the untrained teachers. Perhaps the exposure to a bullying prevention program created an awareness that teachers needed to do more to counteract bullying. It is also important to note that a critical element of the bullying prevention program that these teachers received training in, stressed the importance of holding regular class meetings to discuss the issue of bullying. Without this knowledge, the untrained teachers probably believed that what they were doing to combat bullying was more than adequate.

A particularly surprising finding emerged regarding teachers' confidence, or lack thereof, in their peers. While 56.3% of the teachers self-reported having done "a good deal" or "much" to counteract bullying, 40.6% of this same sample reported that their colleagues "almost never" effectively intervened in bullying situations. This perception that teachers are pretty much on their own for counteracting bullying is quite disturbing. It can have obvious implications upon school climate and morale

but it may also result in increased frequency of bullying (Roland and Galloway, 2004).

Interviews

Within the group of interviewed teachers there was little consistency in stating how frequently the average student was bullied. None of the five participants provided a similar answer in response to the frequency question. This inconsistency could be attributed to the format of the question and that the respondents were not provided with specific time frames to choose from. However, with these choices, as provided for the teachers in the survey, their responses were still spread across the spectrum. It may be that teachers are unaware of how long bullying can last for a student since teachers only typically have a student for one year. Teachers are often not provided with the opportunity to follow the student after they have left the grade level they teach.

During the interview, two of the five teachers prefaced their answers to choosing "hot spots" by stating that bullying most commonly occurred in locations that lacked direct teacher supervision. Many of the teachers perceived students to feel less accountable when not under direct teacher supervision. They assumed their presence alone would act as a powerful deterrent to bullying behaviors.

Teachers perceive verbal bullying and physical bullying as situations in which they feel they should become involved. Each of the teachers stated behaviors associated with these two forms of bullying as instances in which they would intervene. None of the teachers included any behaviors associated with exclusionary

or relational bullying as situations in which they would feel the need to step in. Likewise, when teachers were asked to describe the behaviors that they associated with bullying they failed to include any that could be classified as exclusionary bullying. It is possible that teachers do not view these behaviors as bullying. However, according to the student data generated from the behavior specific bullying questions, exclusionary bullying is the most frequent type of bullying that occurs within this school.

During the course of the interviews, the perception that other staff members were not as willing as the respondent to effectively intervene in bullying surfaced several times. One of the teachers extended this lack of confidence to include school administration. If teachers do not perceive that others are trying to combat bullying they may be less likely to intervene themselves. A different respondent expressed this frustration, stating that (s)he couldn't stop the class each time (s)he witnessed bullying in the classroom. Perhaps teachers perceive bullying as a problem that they can't begin to combat as a lone individual, especially if their viewpoint is that no one else is making an effort.

Future Research

Based upon this research, it was evident that there were differences between the perceptions of teachers trained in a bullying prevention program and those that had no training. Although this was not a variable that I intended to research, the differences in opinions were significant. An investigation of the impact that training in a bullying prevention program had upon teachers' perceptions would be beneficial.

This could be accomplished through a longitudinal study of teachers' perceptions before and after the training. An investigation of the effects of training upon the frequency of bullying and the level of teacher involvement could also be studied.

Another area in which there seemed to be differences in perceptions occurred when teachers were asked to reflect upon how frequently they intervened in bullying as in comparison with how frequently other adults effectively intervened. Additional research in this area should be done to gain insight into the pervasiveness of these beliefs as well as the effects of these beliefs upon willingness to intervene in bullying. This could be further extended into a study of the role of administrators when implementing a bullying prevention program. During the interviews, participants expressed an unwillingness to intervene due to a lack of administrative support. A study of how teachers' perceptions of administration impact the frequency of bullying in the school may also be interesting.

Students' responses to being a victim of bullying differed greatly based upon the wording of the question. Global questions that merely asked the students if they had been bullied did not yield the same responses as those questions that were behavior specific. Further research into the area of global questions versus behavior specific questions should also be conducted. Previous research, as in the work of Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela (2002), had focused upon these types of questions and their impact upon teacher and parent responses however little work has been done in the area of student responses.

Summary

The three key areas of interest in this study (frequency, location, and intervention) proved to be topics that teachers and students perceived very differently. Teachers perceived bullying to occur less frequently than students, who reported higher levels of actually being bullied themselves. Perceptions of where bullying was taking place in the school was also perceived differently by each group. Teachers firmly believed in the power of direct supervision, listing locations in which there was a lack thereof as hot spots for bullying. Students, however, believed that the locations of bullying were independent of whether there was supervision or not. Students perceived the classroom with the teacher present and the classroom with the teacher absent as locations in which bullying commonly occurred. This lack of confidence in teachers continued into students' perceptions of effective teacher intervention in bullying. Students felt that teachers rarely intervened in bullying situations and did little in their classrooms to combat the problem. Teachers perceived themselves as much more effective than the students had. They thought they were doing a great deal to combat bullying but they lacked the confidence in their fellow staff members to effectively intervene.

The vast differences in perceptions of bullying could be integrated into the training of a bullying prevention program. Perhaps exposure to student data would provide staff with a clearer understanding of the specific components which comprise the problem of bullying. As a result of this study, it is evident that an explanation of exclusionary bullying should be incorporated into this training, a

component that few teachers seemed aware of, as revealed during the interviews. Not only should staff be exposed to views of the students but also to the perceptions of their fellow teachers. Perhaps simply knowing that they are not alone in combating this problem may be incentive enough to get more involved in bullying prevention.

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Appendix A
Teacher Survey
Circle the number that best represents your response.
Please complete both sides of this survey.

Please respond to what you know/observe/perceive is happening in your school only.

1. How often has the average student been bullied in the past few months?
  1   not at all
  2   once or twice
  3   2-3 times
  4   once a week
  5   several times/week

2. In which class(es) are the students who are bullying others?
  1   in one class
  2   different classes, same grade
  3   in a higher grade
  4   in lower grade
  5   in different grades

3. Which gender most commonly participates in bullying?
  1   mainly girls
  2   mainly boys
  3   both boys and girls

4. What size group usually bullies one specific victim?
  1   mainly by 1 student
  2   by a group of 2-3 students
  3   by a group of 4-9 students
  4   by a group of more than 9
  5   by different students/groups

5. How long do you believe repeated bullying occurs for a victim?
  1   1 or 2 weeks
  2   About a month
  3   About 6 months
  4   About a year
  5   Several years

6. Where does bullying most frequently occur? *Choose up to 3 locations.*
  1   in the playground/athletic field
  2   in the hallways/stairwells
  3   in class (with teacher present)
  4   in the classroom (teacher absent)
  5   in the bathroom
  6   in gym class/locker room/shower
  7   in the lunch room
  8   on the way to and from school
  9   at the school bus stop
  10   somewhere else in school

7. Who do victims most commonly report their victimization to?
1   their classroom teacher
2   another adult at school
3   their parent(s)/guardian(s)
4   their siblings
5   their friend(s)
6   somebody else

8. How often do other teachers or adults try to put a stop to a student being bullied at school?
1   almost never
2   once in awhile
3   sometimes
4   often
5   almost always

9. How often do other students try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?
1   almost never
2   once in awhile
3   sometimes
4   often
5   almost always

10. How often do you think students self-report participating in bullying in the past couple of months?
1   never have bullied
2   once or twice
3   2-3 times
4   once a week
5   several times/week

11. Have you ever spoken with your class about bullying?
1   no, I haven't spoken with them
2   yes, I have once
3   yes, I have several times

12. Overall, how much do you think you have done to counteract bullying in the past couple of months?
1   little or nothing
2   fairly little
3   somewhat
4   a good deal
5   much

Appendix B
Interview Questions

- What behaviors do you associate with bullying?

- What physical, social, and emotional characteristics do you usually associate with the typical bully?

- What locations in the building are "hot spots" for bullying?

- What specific behaviors would cause you to immediately intervene in a situation where you believe that bullying is occurring?

- During a 3-month period, how often do you think your average student is bullied?