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The Role of Values Education in Primary School Bullying Prevention and Mediation

By

Janine Brown

A thesis presented to The University of Notre Dame Australia
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree in Masters of Philosophy (Education)

Supervisors:

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Ms Liz McKenna

The University of Notre Dame Australia
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Abstract

This study explores the incidence and implications of bullying in primary school and the beliefs parents and educators share about the explicit application of a values based approach to bullying interventions and mediations. Interviews and focus group discussions explored current anti-bullying practices employed by teachers and principals. The study also examined specific values perceived to be relevant by parents and educators, in the endeavour to successfully resolve the growing incidence of bullying conflict situations and the serious implications for both victims and bullies.

Individual interviews and focus group discussions were administered in three Catholic systemic primary schools to a sample group of principals, teachers and parents. This study examined the personal experiences and opinions of the participants, regarding current bullying interventions and the explicit teaching of relevant values, to achieve positive behaviour changes towards others to resolve these conflicts.

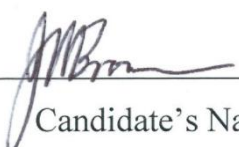
The data revealed that most participants approved of mediation between bully and victim, merged with the positive aspects of restorative approach, with accountability and imposition of consequences, as the preferred intervention. An explicit core values teaching approach to assist the bully to achieve positive behaviour changes towards others was a commonality in all data collected. Specific teacher training in dealing with bullying conflicts, to achieve consistency of practice, was a strong recommendation of the study.

Further research to determine the views of public and independent schools and the experiences and opinions of children directly involved in bullying conflict situations, would be beneficial for future studies, to gain a broader perspective on the preferred approach to dealing with bullying.

Declaration of Authorship

This full research master's thesis is the candidate's own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other institution.

To the best of the candidate's knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.


Candidate's Name

9-10-14
Date

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Finally to my family who have been understanding throughout this process. I could not have achieved this without their help and support.

Dedication

I dedicate this to all the teachers, parents and administrators who work hard to keep those in their care safe and happy in their daily endeavours to achieve positive outcomes in bullying conflicts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Both on a personal and professional level, I have experienced the negative effects of bullying on family members and children in my care. My awareness of this growing problem in schools and the implications for those involved, has been my motivation for research to find a solution to this form of conflict.

Historically, bullying had not been seen as a problem that needed too much attention, but rather accepted as a fundamental and normal part of childhood (Limber & Small, 2003). In the last two decades, however, this view has changed and bullying in schools is seen as a serious problem that warrants attention (McCarthy, Rylance, Bennett & Zimmermann, 2001). Smith (2004) suggests the systematic examination of the nature and prevalence of school bullying only began with the work of Olweus in the 1970's in Scandinavia (Rigby, 2010). The volume of research since then has clarified much about the nature of bullying and the suffering it can cause. Schools are currently struggling with the increasing incidence of bullying and its vast and debilitating ramifications for victims and bullies. In acknowledging the immense amount of research that has already been carried out on bullying, it is worth noting, that regardless of this, bullying is on the increase. As the following reviewed literature reveals, further research and action is needed, given the negative implications and consequences for the victims and perpetrators.

The results of a recent survey of 21,000 school children show bullying to be the number one social concern for Australian school children (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The issue has grown in the last four years to such an extent that one in five children are experiencing bullying (Kids Help Line, 2011). Over half, about 56 percent, of all students

have witnessed a bullying incident at school and about 71 percent of students report bullying as an on-going problem. A reported 15 percent of all students who do not show up for school report it to being out of fear of being bullied while at school. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), suicide, as a result of bullying, continues to be one of the leading causes of death among children under the age of 14 and the incidence is so high that bullycide is a term now used to describe suicide as the result of bullying.

With advances in technology, communication engines such as email, texting, chat rooms, mobile phones, mobile phone cameras and websites can and are being used by young people to bully peers. As a result of this, cyber bullying is now a global problem with many incidents reported in the United States, Canada, Japan, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Statistics and definitions on cyber bullying, are specifically included, as this form constitutes the increase in the incidence of bullying. It provides the opportunity for perpetrators to hide behind their technology and continue bullying behaviours towards other school peers long after the bell has rung (Campbell, 2005). For example forty three percent of teens aged 13 - 17 report that they have experienced some sort of cyber bullying in the past year and one million children were harassed, threatened or subjected to other forms of cyber bullying on Face Book during the past year (Enough is Enough, Consumer Reports, 2011). According to Campbell (2005), this growing problem has not as yet received the attention it deserves and remains virtually absent from the research literature.

In an attempt to find a solution to this growing problem, a values based strategy is considered as a possible approach to achieving positive behaviour changes in these conflict situations.

Following is a review of research of literature on bullying issues and interventions and the potential role of values education in assisting with positive behaviour changes in bullying situations. The initial part of the review aims to identify the growing incidence of bullying, highlighting current interventions that have shown some success. The final part of the review explores the values education component as a possible strategy to explicitly embed in conflict interventions and mediations, to achieve positive behaviour towards others.

As a result of the qualitative research, it was established that an intervention must be a collaborative effort of principals, teachers and parents, to be effective. The evidence of the need for this approach, mentioned throughout the reviewed literature, formed the basis for the participants chosen for interviews and focus groups, to provide the data on strategies for the implementation of values, in bullying mediations and interventions. As a number of past studies on beliefs of educators have utilized interviews, this study employed this method of data collection. This qualitative study explored the meaning of the data collected from the individuals and groups and was analysed deductively to establish themes. The final report provided, the voices of the participants, description and interpretation of the problem, added to the literature and called for action (Creswell, 2013).

1.1 Definition of Terms

Defining the two key elements of the literature review attempts to show a possible relationship between values and achieving positive behaviour changes in bullying conflicts.

Bullying Definitions

There are many different definitions of bullying, depending on the setting. The term "bullying" once referred only to physical actions such as hitting, kicking and punching. Not surprisingly, the definition of bullying has evolved over time as research has revealed that other types of non-physical behaviour can have similar impacts on the victim. The damaging effects of psychological and verbal bullying as well as social exclusion are now also being recognized, although not everyone incorporates these behaviours into their definition or their action plans.

Campbell (2005) defines bullying as the abusive treatment of a person by means of force and coercion. Ma, Stewin and Mah (2001) see bullying as a subset of aggression. DiGuilio (2001) agrees with Ma, Stewin and Mah (2001) in describing it as aggressive behaviour and he adds that it is repeated over time, is intentionally harmful and occurs without provocation.

Bullying may be physical, including behaviours such as hitting, punching and spitting, or it may involve language that is browbeating using verbal assault, teasing, ridicule, sarcasm and scapegoating (DiGuilio, 2001). It involves a minimum of two people, one the perpetrator and the other victim, however, a large number of people may be involved in an indirect manner as an audience. These bystanders may be other students who witness the bullying event but remain uninvolved. They are frequently afraid of becoming the next victim if they interfere. Bystanders often feel powerless and experience a loss of self respect and self-

confidence (Harris & Petrie, 2002).

The definition of bullying used in this report is broad based but relevant to the school setting. It includes actions within a relationship between a dominant and a less dominant person or group where an imbalance of power (real or perceived) is manifest through aggressive actions, physical or psychological (including verbal or social). Negative interactions occur that are direct (face-to-face) or indirect (gossip, exclusion) and negative actions are taken with an intention to harm. As DiGuilio (2001) noted above, these can include some or all of the following, such as, physical actions (punching, kicking, biting), verbal actions (threats, name calling, insults, ethno culturally-based or sexual comments), and social exclusion (spreading rumours, ignoring, gossiping, excluding). These negative actions are repeated towards the victim over a period of time (Ma, Stewin & Mah, 2001). DiGuilio (2001) also noted the harmful intent repeated over time without provocation. In this research, bullying is examined in the context of student-to-student relationships rather than student-to-teacher contexts.

Cyber bullying is defined as a form of bullying that involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging (IM), defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling web sites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others (Belsey, 2004). Cyber bullying is different from face-to-face bullying in a number of ways. While face-to-face bullying is something that is often under the radar screen of adults, cyber bullying is even more so. It allows the opportunity for communicating in ways that are often unknown by adults and away from their supervision (Belsey, 2004). Cyber bullying is also different in that it is a particularly cowardly form of bullying as cyber

bullies can more easily hide behind the anonymity that the internet can provide. They can also communicate their hurtful messages to a very wide audience with remarkable speed. Cyber bullies often do not have to own their actions, as it is usually very difficult to identify cyber bullies, so they do not fear being punished for their actions. Cyber bullying is often outside the legal reach of schools and school boards as this behaviour often happens outside of school on home computers or via mobile phones.

Values

Values are defined as ideals and customs of a society toward which people of the group have an effective regard. They are often non-denominational and are valid across all cultures.

Alomari, Jerban and Awamleh (2011) define values as the basic element that all generations should learn and apply as the core of how we should treat individuals. Values are also defined as principles and standards that guide behaviour (Hill, 2006). Hill (2006) and Halstead and Taylor (1996) both refer to the term values as principles and Halstead & Taylor (1996) refer to them as fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances which act as a general guide to behaviour. Values play a leading role in nearly every explanatory behavioural theory. They are considered to be basic determinants of social action (Hechter, Nadel & Michod, 1993).

Values Education

Values Education consists of a set of content and instructional strategies aiming at achieving positive behaviours within yourself and towards others. These positive behaviours are represented in the form of values. Values include the core moral and social principles that all generations should learn and apply as the basis of how we should treat one another in daily

life (Alomari, Jerban & Awamleh, 2011) and values education is an integral part of teaching in all schools (National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools, 2005).

Explicit teaching and reinforcement of core values in bullying interventions is central to the study. Moral Education involves the moral commitment of actioning these values (Halstead & Pike, 2006). An operational definition of values is discussed in the next section.

These definitions in the papers reviewed all refer to the relationship between values and behaviour towards others, therefore suggesting a possible association between bullying and values education, as applying explicit values instruction in bullying conflicts may assist when trying to achieve positive behaviour changes in the treatment of others.

2. Literature Review

Following is a review of literature revealing alarming statistics on the increase of bullying and negative implications and consequences for victims and bullies. Information was sourced on current bullying interventions and their pros and cons in terms of success. The importance of the role of the teacher and the age of the students formed part of the research. The literature was explored from a values education approach explicitly addressing the source of the problem, to find solutions to achieving positive behaviour changes in the perpetrators in their treatment of others in bullying conflicts.

2.1 Bullying Information

2.1.1 Bullying Statistics

According to The Australian Bullying Bureau of Statistics (2012) the incidence of bullying is on the increase. A review of published research on bullying indicates this behaviour is an extensive ongoing issue in primary schools and has become the number one social concern for Australian school children in the past four years. One in five children will experience some form of bullying in school which tends to peak just as students are leaving primary school. Some other alarming facts supporting the enormity of this issue are that over half (about 56 %) of all students in Australian schools, have witnessed a bullying occurrence at school. There are about 71 % of students that report bullying as an on-going problem and a reported 15 % of all students who do not show up for school attribute it to fear of being bullied (The Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Research shows 50% of United States children and 10% of Australian children report they have been cyber bullied and that is tracking up two to three per cent every year (Cross, 2009).

2.1.2 Impact of Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying, or the use of technology, is a phenomenon that children and adolescents seem to be increasingly using to harm others (Campbell, 2005). According to Alomari, Jerban and Awamleh (2011) interacting with each other in a morally permissible way in social media situations is a challenge.

The National Children's Home (2002) study in Britain found that one in four children reported being bullied by mobile phone or the internet, while in an Australian study of 120 students in Year 8, over a quarter said they knew someone who had been bullied using technology (Campbell, 2005). Australian principals have also indicated that this is an increasing problem in schools (Beckerman & Nocero, 2003).

It would seem that the consequences of victims of cyber bullying could be even more severe than those of face-to-face bullying (Campbell, 2005). Although bullying by physical violence is a threatening form of bullying, the following research shows that verbal and psychological bullying that can be conducted by technology, may have more negative long term effects. In addition cyber bullying can be more widespread as it has the potential to reach a much wider audience than an incident in schoolyard bullying (Reid, Monsen & Rivers, 2004).

2.1.3 Implications and Consequences

Bullying is not normal behaviour or just a part of growing up. Children bully for a number of reasons including feeling insecure, having watched another person act like a bully, having been bullied, or feeling that bullying can get them what they want, including social acceptance or dominance over others (Cross, 2009).

Understanding why children bully can help in changing bullying behaviours. Bullies tend to be more impulsive, aggressive and have trouble complying with rules or authority figures. They also tend to lack empathy for others. Gaining an insight into the characteristics of bullies can assist with the direction to take in resolving these conflicts. It is important to get help for a child who is acting like a bully because the bullying can have a negative impact, not only on the victim, but on the bully and the whole school community (Cross, 2009).

Research indicates that students who are bullied are more likely than students who are not bullied to experience impaired social and emotional adjustment, poor academic achievement, anxiety, higher absenteeism, increased loneliness and low self esteem (Cross, 2009).

Research also shows that students repeatedly bullying others were likely to have the same symptoms as the students experiencing the abuse. The students bullying were just as likely to have elevated levels of anxiety, to be disconnected from school and to have higher levels of depression as the students who were bullied (Cross, 2009).

According to no bullying.com (2014), students who are bullied are three times more likely to show depressive symptoms, nine times more likely to have suicidal thoughts and are more likely to develop psychotic symptoms in their early adolescence. Young people who bully have a one in four chance of having a criminal record by the age of 30. Bullying is the fourth most common reason young people seek help from children's help services (The Bullying Bureau of Statistics Australia, 2010). There is also considerable evidence to suggest that the experience of being a victim of bullying leads to school refusal and can exacerbate and create mental health issues such as low self esteem, anxiety, depression, mistrust of others and psychosomatic symptoms. In addition, when a person displays bullying behaviours in school it predicts increased risks of violence and abuse in later life for the perpetrator (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Those who bully are also more likely to drop out of school, use drugs and

alcohol, as well as engage in subsequent, delinquent and criminal behaviour (Farrington, 2009). The section below studies the implications and consequences of bullying for both the victim and the perpetrator and the suggestion that bullying has widespread, long term negative ramifications for the well being of both the victims and bullies.

Suicide

The most tragic outcome of bullying victimization is suicide. It was the suicides within a short interval, of three boys in Norway in 1983, that led to the first major anti bullying intervention by schools at a national level (Smith, 2004). In early 2013 a thirteen year old teenage girl thought to be the youngest in NSW to take her own life became a tragic statistic of bullying (Cuneo, 2013).

A strong connection between bullying and suicide was evident in a recent study from the Yale School of Medicine (2012) stating that suicide continues to be one of the leading causes of death among children under the age of 14. According to this study the incidence is so high that bullycide is now a recognized term used to describe suicide as the result of bullying. Suicide rates are continuing to grow among adolescents and have grown by more than 50 percent in the past 30 years (Bullying Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Empirical studies and some high-profile anecdotal cases have demonstrated a link between suicide and experiences with bullying victimization or offending. A 2007 survey completed by a random sample of 1,963 middle-schoolers from one of the largest school districts in the United States concluded that youth who experienced traditional bullying or cyber bullying, as either an offender or a victim, had more suicidal thoughts and were more likely to attempt suicide, than those who had not experienced such forms of peer aggression (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

Bullying Behaviours Linked to Life of Crime

A pertinent insight gained when looking into bullying in schools and the future implications for bullies if their behaviours continue was the fact that a high percentage of bullies are likely to follow a life of crime if their behaviour continues (Coie, Underwood & Lochman, 1991).

Preventing children from becoming bullies and intervening to get bullies back on track can not only protect others from the pain that bullying inflicts immediately, but can protect all from a crime later on (Fox, Elliot, Kerlikowske, Newman & Christeson, 2003). In their study the authors found that nearly 60 % of boys, who researchers classified as bullies in grades six to nine, were convicted of at least one crime by the age of 24. Even more dramatic, was that 40 percent of them had three or more convictions by age 24. A recent study of school shootings in America found that almost three quarters of the attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked or injured by others prior to the incident (Fox, Elliot, Kerlikowske, Newman & Christerson, 2003). Bullying is an early warning that bullies may be headed toward more serious anti social behaviour, but victims of repeated bullying can also explode in ways that threaten not just bullies but many others as well.

Likewise a small sample of incarcerated young male offenders in Ontario, Canada were administered an anonymous questionnaire asking for information about their experiences with bullying in the context of an individual interview. The results showed that most residents (70%) were involved in bullying several times a week or more often, either as bullies (45%) or victims (25%) (Connell & Farrington, 1996).

In general, bullying is a component of an antisocial, rule-breaking pattern of behaviour. Boys who frequently bully are at risk of later criminality when this condition is accompanied by a

high level of psychiatric symptoms. Childhood bullying does predict criminal offending in late adolescence (Sourander, et al. 2007). In this prospective study by Sourander (2007) information about bullying was collected from parents, teachers and eight year old children. Information about various forms of crime was later collected from the Finnish National Police Register when the subjects were aged 16 to 20 years. It was hypothesized that childhood bullying would predict criminal offending in late adolescence. Because bullying is behaviour that victimizes other people, it is more likely to be linked to violent rather than nonviolent crime. As a result of the research linking bullying behaviours to a life of crime, it was hypothesized that child bullies with psychiatric symptoms are the ones for whom early crime prevention efforts should be targeted.

Emotional and Psychological Problems Related to Bullying

Reijntjes, Kamphuis, Prinzie and Telch (2010) suggest victims of bullying are at an increased risk of adverse outcomes in childhood, including physical health problems and emotional and psychological problems. A study of 2,680 primary school students over 2 years, in 12 districts in Melbourne, was carried out in government, independent and Catholic schools. It reported on the occurrence of being teased, having rumours spread about them, being deliberately excluded and the experiencing of physical threats or violence. The participants that were victims of these recurrent bullying behaviours, self reported symptoms of anxiety that were significantly associated with this peer victimization (Bond, et al, 2001). Similarly, in a study of eighteen elementary schools in the Netherlands, 1118 children aged 9-11 years participated in a self administered questionnaire to measure victimization from bullies and a variety of related possible psychological symptoms. The results showed that victims had a significantly higher chance of developing problems such as depression, anxiety, bed wetting, sleeping problems and feelings of tension, than children who were not bullied (Fekkes, et al, 2006).

To examine adjustment problems in young children, a nationally represented environmental risk study on a 1994-1995 cohort of 2,232 American children was carried out. Children who experienced bullying between the ages of 5 and 7 years, either purely as victims or as bully/victims (victims who go on to bully others), were identified. Reports were collected from mothers and teachers about children's behaviour problems and school adjustment when they were 5 and again when they were 7. Results showed that pure victims and bully/victims were less happy at school, showed more behaviour and school adjustment problems and exhibited less pro-social behaviour. A bully/victim is an individual who is both a perpetrator and a bullying victim. It was concluded that being the victim of a bully during the first years of schooling contributed to maladjustment in young children. Prevention and intervention programs aimed at reducing mental health problems during childhood should target bullying as an important risk factor (Arseneault, et al 2006).

The extent to which bullying victimization in school is a factor in depression later in life was investigated in a study by Ttofi and Farrington (2009). It was established that the probability of being depressed up to 36 years later was much higher for children who were bullied. Children's psychological problems (Goodman, Joyce & Smith, 2011) or exposure to abuse (Currie & Spatz Widom, 2010) impact on functioning, decades later in adulthood. Furthermore, Wolke, Copeland, Angold and Costello (2013), concluded that victims of childhood bullying, including those who bullied others (bully-victims), were at increased risk of poor health, wealth, and social-relationship outcomes in adulthood.

Reid, Monsen and Rivers (2004) also discuss the consequences of bullying as being linked to increased levels of depression, anxiety and psychosomatic symptoms in victims and suggested that even though the effect of cyber bullying on victims has not yet been fully researched and realized, it would seem that the consequences could be even more severe than

those of face-to face bullying.

The growing incidence and long term negative consequences associated with bullying, revealed in the literature, provide justification for the need for further research to find a solution to these conflicts. The studies in the reviewed literature also suggested that interventions in childhood are likely to reduce long-term health and social costs. Moreover, Smith, Ananiadou and Cowie (2003) endorsed the need for schools to continue to pursue bullying interventions to find a solution to this form of conflict as the cost of continued victimization is considerable and it is morally imperative for schools to do what they can to prevent this. These researchers also reinforced the need for further evaluation and research on bullying approaches to maximize effectiveness as the processes and outcomes have only been sporadically assessed.

2.1.4 Media Reports

When justifying the need for further research it is difficult to ignore the media interest in bullying which signifies the seriousness of the issue. Articles cover a range of topics from an increasing incidence and new and damaging implications for victims and bullies to current campaigns and interventions that attempt to find a solution to these conflicts. In a recent article in The Sunday Magazine of The Telegraph, Beverly Hadgraft (2013) asks us to consider “what you would do if you had to send your child off to school knowing they were being bullied?” The severity of this growing issue is highlighted by her reference to bullying as endemic in Australia. Hadgraft (2013) also acknowledges, that while being harassed is dreadful for the child involved, it is also devastating for their often helpless parents. New analysis of data from The Australian Bureau of Statistics Census ‘At School Survey’ (2012) shows a dramatic rise both in the level of concern Australian children have about bullying and the number of hours children are spending in front of the computer. Experts say it is no

coincidence that there is an increased use of technology and an increase in bullying at the same time. A front page article by Cuneo (2013) in The Daily Telegraph on Wednesday 8th May, reported on a 13 year old girl thought to be the youngest in NSW to take her own life, as a result of bullying. This is one of many reports of suicide as a direct result of bullying, as statistics now show that 40% of suicide victims were bullied at school.

Samantha Landy (2013), reported in The Telegraph, on a former Supreme Court judge, who described bullying as being akin to sexual abuse in terms of the psychological damage it can cause young people. She revealed a suggestion by former family court Chief Justice Alastair Nicholson, stating "making bullying an offence would help young people to understand the gravity of abusing their peers online and in the school yard." Mr Nicholson, who is also chair of the National Centre against Bullying, said existing laws differed between states, providing little guidance about how bullying should be handled. The Daily Telegraph Education writer Katherine Danks (2013), recently reported that children as young as 10 years old could face criminal charges amid a push to make Australia the first country in the world to have unified laws on bullying, including cyber bullying. The inconsistency of practice from state to state was also evident in the data collected from the teacher participants for this study and is worth considering as contributing factor in the inability to stem these negative behaviours.

On 20 May 2013 Andrew Carswell from The Daily Telegraph reported on the fact that thousands of anxious parents are hiring private investigators to track down anonymous bullies who terrorise and stalk their children on Face book and other social networks. Frustrated with a lack of action from schools and police, parents are paying up to \$800 a day to have cyber security experts confront the bullies in a desperate bid to protect their vulnerable kids. More alarming fallout from bullying was a damage pay out reported in The Daily Telegraph on

13th March, 2013. \$300,000 was awarded to a 22 year old former female student after the court decided the school was found to have breached its duty of care. These recent issues arising from bullying reinforce the need and urgency to find a solution to bullying.

Two recent reports in the same publication present new concerns for victims and bullies. McDougall (2012), explained a new offensive against bullies where employers will reject job applications for young people who have engaged in bullying, cyber stalking, harassment or threatening behaviours. 'Bully Check' involves consent to a reference check from their current or former school and they will not be hired if they fail the character test. The scheme trial currently involves 12 major employers and could be expanded to others, following a number of extreme bullying incidents in which teenage victims have been driven to suicide. Anti-bullying experts will be going into schools to run forums warning students that their future career could be affected by aggressive behaviour. According to McDougall (2012):

Up until now, anti-bullying programs have focused on the effect on the victim.

Considering the bullies show a complete lack of concern for their victim, this will force the bully to think about the effect their bullying will have on them (p. 4).

As the data from the findings of this study showed a consensus of opinion towards addressing the source of the problem, this new offensive against bullies is a promising initiative.

An initiative reported by McDougall (2014) Education reporter for The Daily Telegraph will soon move in to the classroom, in the battle against bullying. Five thousand students as young as 8 across 100 schools will be taught skills to develop resilience and handle bullies. McDougall (2014) stated that the intervention program called 'Preventing Anxiety and Victimization through Education' is aimed at primary aged children from years 3 - 6 and is

embedded into the school curriculum. Whilst there is a need to explore new programs to deal with bullying, data findings of this study show support for a more explicit approach to address the source, as there are already many interventions supporting the victim in place, yet the incidence of bullying is still on the increase.

As Rigby (2010) suggests, statistically it is worth noting that even though a very high proportion of bullying cases occur in a school, there exists only a relatively small proportion of students who are perpetrators. This data affirms the suggestion that targeting these few bullies may be achievable. Peplar, Craig, Zeigler and Charach, (2001) agree that there is an urgent need for more interventions that must be extensive and aimed at changing the behaviour patterns of bullies. Todd, Campbell, Meyer and Horner (2008) also endorse the growing body of research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of targeted interventions in decreasing the frequency of problem behaviours in primary school aged children. Crone, Horner and Hawken (2003) also acknowledge the value of interventions targeting the source of the problem, as educators search for highly efficient strategies for preventing and addressing problem behaviour.

As reported by Landy (2013) the Federal School Education Minister Peter Garrett (2013) suggested that "too many young Australians are having their schooling and their lives disrupted by the unacceptable behaviour of a small minority." He also suggested that "young bullies who are not taught that their behaviour is unacceptable will often become bullies in the work place." He promised that every school in the country would be required to address the issue by having a Safe School Plan and "teachers will have clear guidelines for dealing with bullying."

2.1.5 Current Anti-Bullying Strategies and Their Success

This section of the literature review involved studies that explored types of interventions and mediations and their effectiveness in dealing with bullying conflicts. The case for improving the effectiveness of school interventions, in cases of bullying, is overwhelming (Rigby, 2010). Colvin, Tobin, Beard, Hagan and Sprague (1998) identified a large number of programs in the United States of America designed to address bullying in response to the growing concern and increase in these behaviours.

In general, efforts to reduce bullying in schools, have involved two complementary approaches. One is to improve the attitudes and inter personal behaviour of all children in a school. This aims to prevent bullying from ever occurring. The second approach is to focus predominantly on the students who have become involved in bully/victim problems at school. The aim here is to stop the bullying from continuing and to assist people who bully or are being victimized to lead more constructive or less troubled lives. The whole school approach aims to prevent bullying starting as opposed to the second approach that only addresses the problem of bullying once it is apparent and targets the parties involved. Rigby (2010) presented an interesting perspective of there being two clearly different defined approaches to bullying, once these conflicts are evident in the schools. One program emphasized a traditional punitive approach with the enforcement of rules and sanctions to bullies, whereas the others emphasized the so called problem-solving approaches with mediation, shared concern, restorative justice and no blame approach. Descriptions and viewpoints on the nature and effectiveness of these interventions are explored in this section to gain an insight into the phenomenon of bullying through the data collected for this study.

2.1.6 Rules and Sanctions Punitive Approach/The Traditional Disciplinary Approach.

The traditional way of dealing with school bullying, as with many kinds of anti-social behaviour, has been to discipline the offenders. This approach requires sanctions and it is estimated 75% of teachers in Australia believe that cases of bullying should be dealt with by punishing the perpetrator (Rigby, 2012). This approach is seen to send a clear message that bullying would not be tolerated and will be disciplined. The aim of this method is concerned with dealing justly with the offenders, getting children to behave in a disciplined manner and to deterring others from bullying by making them aware of consequences. These methods are typically punitive and popular in most schools as they are seen as straight forward and involving the administration of justice.

A large scale survey conducted online in the United States of America revealed that over 70% of teachers and counsellors opt to apply punishment in cases in which children perpetrate even mild forms of bullying behaviour (Bauman, 2008). Similar findings employing the same research instrument were found in Australia (Rigby, 2012) and in Finland (Sairanen & Pfeffer, 2011) which given the high incidence of bullying reveals the inadequacy of this approach. This also was noted in an examination by The American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008). In a recent survey in the USA conducted with school psychologists, 96.7% of them reported that their school cases of bullying were dealt with disciplinary consequences, even though just over half (57%) believed that the zero tolerance punitive approach was ineffective. This suggests educators use this approach as they are unsure of how else to deal with these conflicts.

Currently, this traditional approach in responding to bullying in schools focuses on undesirable behaviours and on applying sanctions. This approach is often ineffective in terms of achieving positive behaviour changes as well as failing to address the needs of the children

as distinct from the behaviours they produce (Rigby, 2012). Rigby (2010) also suggests that narrowly focused programs directed solely at bullies or their victims; situational deterrents (e.g., increasing supervision in bullying hot spots), and zero tolerance policies (including school expulsion), have limited effectiveness and may actually increase or exacerbate the problem.

In following this traditional narrowly focussed approach schools and school administrators are failing to address the needs of the children involved and are therefore often unable to achieve desired behaviours towards others in the school setting (Rigby, 2012). It needs to be emphasized that popularity of a method does not equate to effectiveness and punishment to deter an anti social act may not lead to pro-social behaviour. Despite this knowledge, it is highly likely that this traditional approach will continue to be the primary way interventions are conducted for some time (Rigby, 2010).

The most variation among programs within the traditional approach is evident in those interventions that work with students who have been identified as bullies. This most commonly used procedure employs rules against bullying and consequences for breaking them. Such punitive measures are seen by some as not only likely to discourage bullying behaviour but also to send a message to deter others who might otherwise engage in bullying. It is often difficult to devise clear rules and a miscarriage of justice may lead to a doubling of effects to continue the bullying in less detectable but equally damaging ways (Smith, 2004).

It can be concluded from the literature reviewed by Rigby (2007) and Sairanen and Pfeffer, (2011) on the traditional approach to bullying that employing this intervention has shown little success with regard to achieving a positive outcome in bullying conflicts. In fact this punitive approach can sometimes have more damaging effects. Regardless of the opinions of

educators and the negative statistics of its success, the rules-and-sanctions traditional approach is still the most widely used approach to deal with bullying conflict resolution.

2.1.7 Problem Solving Approaches

This next section of the literature reviewed explored the alternative problem solving approaches. Currently there are six problem solving interventions that are employed in schools to stem the increase in bullying behaviours. Their strategies and success are discussed below.

2.1.7.1 Restorative Justice

This is a practice employed to receive a just outcome in a conflict situation. This application of restorative practice in dealing with cases of school bullying has become increasingly popular over the last ten years. Although this intervention may appear to be in contrast to the traditional approach, it needs to be noted that both deal with justice and put pressure on offenders to change their behaviour in a desirable direction. This method seeks to heal the hurt that has occurred through discussion facilitated by the teacher. These discussions can be between perpetrator and victim or can also involve a larger group setting (Rigby, 2010). Restorative Justice is about building communities of care around individuals while not condoning harmful behaviours; in other words, holding individuals accountable for their actions within systems of support. This process has been found to be effective in schools, particularly in addressing bullying (Cameron & Thorseborne, 2001). Despite this success, the practice of restorative justice conferencing in schools has been slow to be picked up when dealing with conflict situations (Morrison, 2002).

Morrison (2002) discusses the likelihood and risk of a school bully continuing on with a life of anti-social and criminal behaviour and touches on bringing about behavioural change by

providing a framework based on restorative justice to repair the damage caused to victims of bullying. The rationale behind this program is that if students are versed in core principles they should be the ones to develop strategies to resolve their conflicts productively while allowing all students to voice and express their views. Responsive and restorative practices can counter problems of bullying and violence in schools and build safer school communities (Morrison, 2007). Hopkins (2004) focuses on the values and skills that underpin all restorative practice and reinforces the positive transformation that can result in the daily interactions within a school community when dealing with inevitable conflicts.

The reference to the theory of core principles and values being a factor in achieving positive results with this intervention, particularly for its relationship to justice, is worth noting when researching a values education based approach.

2.1.7.2 The Support Group Method

This method was previously known as the no blame approach. Like the restorative justice approach it places emphasis on getting the bullies to appreciate the suffering they have inflicted on their victim. Its prime focus is in providing a solution to the problem rather than enacting a consequence for a wrongdoing. This method involves the presence of peers of the victim to assist with constructive ideas on how to improve the situation. This can constitute a sort of pressure group that can influence the bullies towards acting in a pro-social and positive way in their subsequent interactions with the person they had previously victimized. An important assumption in this method is that the students who have bullied someone can be motivated to respond empathetically to the plight of their target. However it is argued by some that 'bullies lack empathy' a claim that challenges the credibility of this method. It has been suggested that the support group method may not be supported by the parents of those who have been victimized as they may feel a punitive response towards the perpetrator is

needed from the school (Rigby, 2010). Smith, Howard and Thompson (2007) also suggest this approach is not embraced by parents of victims due to its no blame approach.

A study carried out in England of 55 cases in which this method was used, showed success in the majority of cases with the bullying almost completely stopping (Rigby, 2007).

Questionnaires were sent to local authorities and schools in England who had received training in the Support Group Method and had been involved in the program for between 1-5 years. Based on the responses of teachers, parents and pupils, over half of the participants reported being satisfied with the results of the approach (Smith, Howard & Thompson, 2007). Smith, Ananiadou and Cowie (2003), referred to a two year evaluation of this approach, after it was first developed in the UK and immediate success was found to occur in 80% of the cases of bullying.

2.1.7.3 The Method of Shared Concern

This is the most comprehensive and complex method for addressing cases of bullying. It adopts a non blaming approach but unlike the mediation and support group approach, the mediator works on the problem with the suspected bullies first as individuals and then in a group. Bully/victim problems are identified by teachers through observation or from child/parent reports. This method seeks not only to stop the bullying but also restore the health and well being of those involved in the bullying situation. The Method of Shared Concern is the most ambitious of all the methods designed so far to address cases of bullying in schools. There is evidence below suggesting that the Method of Shared Concern is effective in addressing a large proportion of cases of bullying (Rigby, 2010). As this method is more complex than others Rigby and Griffiths (2011) cite the need for practitioners to receive training.

The Method of Shared Concern approach was employed and evaluated in schools in Australia followed by a report released by the Federal Government. The report indicated that motivating and engaging bullies and their victims to take part in a negotiation process can be an effective method of preventing bullying (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009).

This Method of Shared Concern intervention was explored in depth with 17 cases of severe bullying, where trained practitioners worked with these students to try and achieve positive outcomes in terms of behaviour changes. Its non-punitive approach is less common, as many studies emphasized a zero tolerance approach where a bully is punished rather than helped with their issues. In the 17 sample school cases undertaking the evaluation of the Method of Shared Concern a 90% success rate was demonstrated. The evaluation of this approach is the most comprehensive undertaken of interventions up to now and the reduction in bullying suggests that this program shows positive results (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009).

It is interesting to note that the Department of Education and Training website (DET, 2011) with information for staff in schools suggests that the success of the method of shared concern relies on the ability of all participants in this method to display the ability to demonstrate empathy. It also states that this intervention should only be implemented by people who are trained in the intervention and who understand the circumstances in which it may be of benefit.

2.1.7.4 Strengthening the Victim

This is an approach that some teachers and counsellors believe can assist a child to avoid being bullied by learning to become less vulnerable. Such work may include teaching basic social skills to become more confident and assertive. The development of resilience is recognized as an antidote when dealing with difficult situations. This approach is not

favoured by a good number of teachers as the belief is that the victim may need help to address the problem and this approach often means the bullies are not disciplined (Rigby, 2010). This approach appears to have received less attention as it was difficult to find any research literature on the subject.

2.1.7.5 Check in – Check out

The check in – check out program approach is based on the simple strategy of increasing ongoing structure, feedback and strategies for students at-risk of developing problematic behaviours and part of the monitoring involves a home–school component (Hawken & Horner 2003). Results on a study of four primary aged boys, undertaken at the University of Oregon in 2008, indicated that a ‘check in-check out’ program, saw a reduction in their problem behaviour. This program approach is based on school wide positive behaviour support. Part of the strategy of this targeted intervention included a social skills training component and provision for efficient behaviour support for the student aggressors at risk of problem behaviour (Horner, Sugai, Todd & Lewis-Palmer, 2005). Prior to this behaviour support approach there had mainly been a push to establish a whole positive school culture, universally (Homer et al., 2005). The strategy of providing support for the student aggressors would complement the proposed values education approach as the explicit teaching of worth of a commitment of core values provides students with strategies to achieve positive behaviours towards others. The value of this type of support intervention is reinforced by Smith, Ananiadou and Cowie (2003) when researching evaluation of a peer support method within classrooms to address bullying. This type of intervention was found to be of benefit to the whole school climate, however, specific benefits for victims and bullies remain to be proven.

2.1.7.6 Mediation

Mediation as a means of intervention, in cases of conflict between students, is seen as a less traditional form of intervention which seeks to impose solutions to problems. It is an attempt to bring about a peaceful settlement or compromise between disputants through the interventions of a mutual party. The mediator is usually a staff member who enters into negotiating with the involved parties. Mediators do not discipline anyone and they act non-punitively (Rigby, 2010).

In studies conducted on evaluations of active listening/counselling-based approaches the majority of peer supporters reported benefits arising from the interpersonal skills and teamwork acquired in training. Users reported that peer supporters offered helpful interventions and most pupils and teachers believed that the service was having a positive impact on the school as a whole (Cowie, et al., 2002). This mediation intervention has been trialled with peers but not teachers. Peer to peer mediation showed positive benefits in victim and bully situations. Cowie (2002) also discusses the higher success rate of a non-punitive approach. This type of approach endorses a system of personal responsibility for one's actions and shows that when the students are involved in developing a code of conduct they are more likely to take a sense of ownership and work towards pro social behaviour (Cowie, et al., 2002). There has been growing interest in peer support and mediation as an approach to bullying. These methods hold promise, but more evaluation research is needed (Smith 2004). An evaluation of a peer mediation scheme applied in three Canadian primary school playgrounds, experienced a 51 - 65% reduction in bullying (Smith, Ananiadou & Cowie, 2003). Smith (2004) agrees with Cowie, et al. (2002) that evaluations of peer support and mediation suggest a general improvement of the school climate but specific benefits for the victims of bullying remain to be proven. An issue suggested by Theberge and Karan (2004) may be the mediators' difficulty in remaining impartial. They also cited objections raised by

parents to mediation due to the fact that they often want to see the person who bullied the child punished rather than mediated with.

2.1.7.8 Summary of Interventions

From the literature reviewed on current bullying interventions, it can be concluded that the zero-tolerance punitive approach is the most widely used intervention despite proving the least effective and the least preferred approach by educators and administrators. The non-punitive approaches reviewed show some positive results when dealing with bullying conflicts and further evaluation of elements of each show that their possible link to a values based approach is worth pursuing. For example Espelage and Swearer (2005) identified the use of a variety of intervention approaches that have been designed and implemented throughout America. One approach discussed involved character education as the foundation for curriculum development with focus on ethics, attitudes and behaviours. It emphasized the promotion of understanding, accepting, appreciating and respecting others with the goal being to enhance students' moral development and lesson peer victimization.

Relevant training in the process of bullying interventions is limited and a sound knowledge of all approaches is required to achieve any conflict resolution success. Rigby (2010) notes the difficulty also in determining which of the six interventions is the best approach and considers the possibility of mixing methods. When discussing the possible interventions to use it is worth noting that no method of addressing bullying has been reported as completely effective (Rigby, 2010).

2.1.8 Role of the Teacher and Student Age as Factors in Achieving Behaviour Changes

In attempting to achieve positive behaviour changes in bullying situations there are two factors worth considering. Firstly the following literature revealed the potential influence teachers have on their students. Secondly the literature also contained relevant statistics regarding the higher the chances of teachers achieving these behaviour changes in the school setting when the children are younger (Olweus, 1997).

There has been greater success with behaviour modification in elementary aged students, supporting the claim that the younger the age of intervention, the greater the chance of success (Crone, Hawken & Horner, 2003). Interventions and explicit teaching of acceptable behaviours by teachers at a primary school age are therefore likely to be a factor in achieving positive results in conflict situations. Interventions in childhood are likely to reduce long-term health and social costs (Wolke, Copeland, Angold & Costello, 2013). Similarly, educators play a strong role in the control of behaviours in the school environment and have the power to influence, teach and nurture pro-social behaviours (Colvin, Tobin, Beard, Hagan, & Sprague, 1998). This body of research suggests the potential of the educator to interrupt the cycle of negative behaviour, so children are less likely to carry these behaviours over into high school and have them escalate into violent behaviours in adulthood. Schroeder (1999) agrees that children have indicated they want their teachers to get involved and believe if they do not act in these conflicts, the bullying will not stop.

Halstead & Taylor (1996) cite the major influence of schools and teachers alongside the family and the peer group when teaching fundamental values. Irvine (1997) reinforces Halstead and Taylor (1996) as he emphasises the significant link between teachers making a difference in student's lives and the social structure of schools. The teachers' role is to hedge against social conflicts that arise between peers. Halstead (1996) also acknowledges the

teaching of values as central to both the theory of education and the practical activities of schools. Some programs place major emphasis upon developing a positive classroom climate on the assumption that if classrooms are characterized by positive relations between teacher and students, children will not be inclined to engage in bullying (Rowland and Galloway, 2002). This again reinforces the importance of the positive role the teacher can play in these conflicts.

Hattie (2003) reported on an extensive study undertaken in the classroom of America's very best teachers. He used quantitative methods to explore the influence of five variances of student behaviour (home/socio-economic background, attitudes of principals, peers and teachers and attitudes within schools). The quantitative method used in the study, presented statistics in graph forms, showing the ratio of percentages of the variances that influence students' behaviour. Teachers influence on students was shown to account for 30%, second only to the major influence of parents (a 50% influence). This statistic identifies the potential power teachers have in influencing their students. This is a promising statistic in terms of the likelihood of the teachers being a factor in achieving positive results in behaviour changes in bullying situations (Hattie, 2003).

Peplar, Craig, Ziegler and Charach (1993) discussed a preliminary evaluation of a school based anti-bullying intervention, carried out in Canada by the Toronto Board of Education. This study worked on both a qualitative (interview) and quantitative (survey) approach. One interesting result of the quantitative study of the children in the elementary school was that 71% of the students surveyed, believed that teachers should intervene in bullying situations in schools. As a result of the qualitative research, it was established that an intervention must be a collaborative effort of teachers and parents in order to be effective (Pepler, Craig, Ziegler & Charach, 1993).

Teachers play a crucial role in preventing and managing the widespread problem of bullying. Despite this, scant attention has been paid to their views on this problem (Boulton, 1997). Boulton (1997) explored teachers' self-beliefs about their ability to deal with bullying and their need for training in this area. A sample of infants, junior and secondary school teachers from the United Kingdom were randomly selected for convenience to discuss their confidence in dealing with bullying conflicts. Views were sought from teachers aged from 19 - 57 years with length of teaching experience ranging from one to thirty eight years. The study concluded that teachers generally expressed negative attitudes towards bullies and sympathy diminished with increasing length of teaching service. Of particular interest in this research was also that regardless of teachers' length of service they were not confident in their own ability to deal with bullying and 87% wanted more training.

The above body of literature reinforces the impact the teacher potentially has in achieving positive behaviour changes while also highlighting the benefits of intervening at a young age. For example, Smith, Ananiedou and Cowie (2003) acknowledged the stronger positive effect teachers have on primary school aged children, compared with secondary aged school pupils and the fact that younger children are more willing to accept teacher authority.

2.1.9 Teacher Confidence, Training and Ability to Deal with Bullying Conflicts

It is worth noting the high percentage of teachers that feel they need more training in dealing with bullying in schools (Boulton, 1997). Educating teachers about how to address bullying peer victimization is essential (Espelage and Swearer, 2005). Feinberg (2003) suggested that new teachers arrive at school with minimal training in the kinds of conflicts, such as bullying, that take place in classrooms every day. Teachers need specific training to identify and respond to these behaviours as well as how to model and reinforce positive problem solving in these situations. Rigby (2010) agrees that the average teachers' knowledge and

understanding of what can be done to address cases of bullying is often severely limited. Teachers need to be well versed in appropriate approaches, but adequate knowledge and consistency of practice is not always achieved. Nicolaidis, Toda and Smith (2002) suggested that even teachers who have sound knowledge of aspects of bullying often do not feel fully equipped to tackle it.

Rigby (2010) states that most methods of intervention rely on teacher training and knowledge to be successful yet suggest teachers typically are uncertain about how they can best deal with cases of bullying. He concludes that there is general lack of technical knowledge of methods of intervention and often therefore teachers are unaware of what actions are needed to solve bully/victim problems. Cremin (2002) agrees with Rigby (2010) that very few teachers receive relevant training in mediation and conflict resolution. He also states that this process is much more likely to be successful when staff are well trained and aware of both the strengths and limitations of the approach. As evident in the reviewed literature, there was a lack of specific teacher training and therefore a corresponding lack of confidence in dealing with and solving bullying conflicts.

2.1.10 Summary of Bullying Approaches

Pepler, Craig, Zeigler and Charach (2001) refer to research findings that indicate a non-punitive approach is worth pursuing in bullying situations, as there is an urgent need for more interventions that must be extensive and aimed at changing the behaviour patterns of bullies. Todd, Campbell, Meyer and Horner (2008) agreed with a growing body of research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of targeted interventions in decreasing the frequency of problem behaviours in primary school aged children. Recently the value of interventions targeting the source of the problem have gained more attention as educators search for highly efficient strategies for preventing and addressing problem behaviour (Crone, Hawken

& Horner, 2003). Espelage and Swearer (2005) emphasized the influence of the group as a whole- the family, the classroom and society, upon individuals acts of bullying. The bully, bully-victim, victim or bystander exists within a family. This reference to the influence of family, reinforces the value in addressing the source of the issue to achieve positive results when aiming to achieve behaviour changes.

Statistically worth noting is that even though a very high proportion of bullying cases occur in a school, there exists only a relatively small proportion of students who are perpetrators (Rigby, 2010). The literature researched indicates a shared view of the merit of interventions that address the behaviours of the perpetrators and acknowledge that, as perpetrators generally involve a small proportion of students, an intervention targeting these students, is a direction worth pursuing. These findings suggest that a values based approach to attempting to achieve desired behaviour changes for these minority students is a valid focus for this study.

2.2 Values Education and Their Role in Bullying Conflict

While researching values education as an approach to dealing with bullying conflict, research was reviewed regarding current values taught in schools. These were identified in the National Framework of Values Education (2005) document and discussed in terms of their explicit application to bullying conflict.

2.2.1 Establishing the Need for Values Education

Certain values are regarded by some commentators as the basic elements of morality that all generations should learn and apply within the context of civil life. These values provide guidance as to how we should treat individuals, and therefore teaching these values may make an effective contribution in helping teachers face behaviour difficulties (Alomari,

Jerban & Awamleh, 2011). Values can also be defined as principles and standards that guide behaviour (Hill, 2006). The teaching of values can make a difference in student achievement and possibly in preventing or dealing with conflicts within the school environment (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001). Values education can also encourage students to think about living well and emphasize to them that values are most visible in what people do (Freakley, Burgh & MacSporran, 2008). Helping to instill a moral code in the hearts and minds of the young is imperative when teaching children how to treat others (Alomari, Jerban & Awamleh, 2011). These descriptions allude to the teaching of values as a possible strategy in helping teachers face challenging behaviour in a primary school context. As bullying behaviours towards others are a current concern there is a definite need for the explicit teaching of relevant values.

The literature also reveals recent calls for schools to be more concerned about values education (Freakley, Burgh & MacSporran, 2008). The call for values education in the Australian Curriculum has been gathering momentum as educators, politicians, parents and community representatives from all corners of the nation have been concerned about the increasing levels of aggression in our schools and the general decrease in positive social interaction between our children (Adams & Vichers, 2003). Etherington (2013) suggests values education is an essential part of schooling and reinforces the belief that the growing demand from educators, governments, and the community for the teaching of values in public schools has led to the implementation of formal values education. Moral education is worth pursuing as schools respond to the reality of problems faced today, such as intolerance and acts of bullying. Nord (2010) agrees with the importance of values education but suggests, it cannot simply be about how students should act, it is also about why they should act in some ways rather than others. Oskan and Cifci (2009) suggest there are a wide range of emotional factors relevant to understanding bullying behaviour and its related attitudes, such as low

levels of empathy. This connection to values and the treatment of others is reinforced by Obermann (2011) as he describes behaviour by the bully as moral disengagement. The review of literature on values education in schools reveals a shared view of the importance of the relationship between values and how we should treat others. For example, Morrison (2002) discusses the importance of students being versed in core principles through which they can develop strategies that assist in resolving conflict productively. The review of literature, however, uncovered little suggesting how values can be reinforced so that they are well articulated and effective, specifically in current anti-bullying interventions. As negative values and attitudes are implicit in bullying approaches, exploring positive values in relation to establishing how they can be explicitly embedded in these programs, forms part of the study. It seeks to fill a gap in research regarding the explicit teaching of values to assist in achieving positive behaviour changes in bullying conflicts.

2.2.2 The National Framework of Values Education

In July 2002, with the unanimous support of all states and territories, the Australian Government commissioned a values education study designed to enable schools to develop and demonstrate current practice in values education, provide an informed basis for promoting socially beneficial values education in Australian schools and make recommendations on a set of principles and a framework for improved values education in Australian schools. This study led to the development of a Draft Framework for values education that was modified after further consultation and published in 2005 as the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools (Jones, 2008). The document recognized the significant history of values education in government and non-government schools and provided insight into the expectation of specific core values that should be taught in schools. Following the development and implementation of the document from 2004 onwards, the government provided \$29.7 million dollars over four years, to incorporate a set

of core values as an integral part of Australian schooling. The introduction of a National Framework of values gave a strong indication of the views of educators and government bodies regarding the need for implementation of values education in schools.

It was expected that schools should comply with the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools framework introduced in 2005 (Jones, 2008). The NFVEAS claimed that a specific set of values are common to Australians and this was established by the Values Education Study (Curriculum Corporation, 2003). It is important to note that the validity of the claim that a specific set of values could be regarded as national values is widely challenged, even by researchers in the same field. According to Deveraux, Knight and Collins (2006) these values are asserted without adequate definition or justification. Jones (2008) identified three factors that make Australia's values education policy worth investigating: the widespread nature of the values education movement, the lack of adequate critique of the movement and the fact that this framework represented the first official Australian standard of values education.

The NFVEAS identified nine core values as important for schools to apply. Those are as follows:

- 1) Care and Compassion: Care of self and others
- 2) Fair go: Pursue to protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just Society
- 3) Respect: Treat others with consideration and regard
- 4) Responsibility: Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive non violent and peaceful ways
- 5) Understanding, tolerance and inclusion: Be aware of others and include others.
- 6) Integrity: Act with principles and ensure consistency between words and deeds

- 7) Freedom: Enjoy all rights and be free from unnecessary inference or control and stand up for the rights of others.
- 8) Doing your best: Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence.
- 9) Honesty and Trustworthiness: Be honest, sincere and seek the truth.

Of the nine values identified in the Framework at least seven emerged as relating to actions towards others. For example, the description of the first stated value in the Framework relates to bullying, as care, compassion and empathy are central to the treatment of others.

Compassion implies a desire to relieve another's suffering or sorrow. Empathy, on the other hand, is the ability to put oneself in another's place. Often, empathetic people are also compassionate and vice versa. By empathizing with others and considering how others might feel in a given situation we can be more objective in our decision making. Empathy enables us to think beyond our own experience and treat others as we might like to be treated (Freakley & MacSporran, 2008).

A key principle in the document was the identification of the need to strengthen students' character to assist them to exercise ethical judgment and social responsibility. It also acknowledged that education is as much about building character as it is about equipping students with specific skills. This document is central to the discussion of values that will be of benefit to schools in teaching positive behaviours towards others and it challenges educators to promote improved relationships and tackle anti-social behaviour issues through the education of the core values.

Freakley and MacSporran, (2008) acknowledged that we cannot assume that the framework itself is free of shortcomings. Regardless of this view there is a shared belief that the

promotion of values education in schools should be supported and that our approach to the nine values provides teachers and their students with an opportunity to seriously engage with values education. While there have been studies completed on international policies, this new terrain has not yet been properly mapped out: Australian values education policy is an unknown territory (Jones, 2008).

When reviewing papers on the NFVEAS there was agreement on the importance of values education in schools. The literature suggested a call for schools to be more concerned about values education in direct reference to increasing levels of aggression in our schools (Adams-Jones & Vichers, 2003).

2.2.3 Establishing Applicable Values

While acknowledging the importance of the nine values established in the National Framework, other literature on types of values applicable in the school setting was also reviewed. In January, 1996 the United Kingdom's School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) hosted a National Forum for values in education and the community. One hundred and fifty delegates from educational, religious, and other national organisations with a membership representative of the population at large, were charged to discover whether there are any values upon which there is agreement across society. The delegates were also commissioned to decide how best society in general, and SCAA in particular, might support schools in the task of promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Organizers and educators involved with the Forum felt compelled to begin their task by establishing agreement on the point that there is such a thing as 'right', versus 'wrong.' Once they had demonstrated that it is possible to distinguish one from another, they sought agreement from a wide variety of people on some fundamental premises, or norms of conduct, for right behaviour. They hoped to identify the sorts of values that a wide variety of

people of goodwill can and should agree upon. The list of common values that they generated included friendship, justice, freedom, truth, self-respect, and respect for the environment (Smith & Shu, 2000).

In recent times, schools, while accepting the importance of values education, have tried to identify important values and how they might be included in the curriculum. Students, teachers and parents provided reasons for the differences in their choices of values and values identified as necessary to teach varied depending on the situation at hand (Gilbert, & Hoepfer, 2004). Etherington (2013) questioned which values our schools are to encourage in order to find a solution to behaviour, discipline, and interpersonal relationship problems that can present themselves in schools. Adams and Vichers (2003) also questioned what values we need to teach our students and suggests that one way of evaluating the benefits of any values education program is to assess whether there are fewer incidents of aggression and bullying, although one indicator will not provide conclusive evidence. This reference to bullying suggests a possible link between explicit values teaching and achieving positive behaviour outcomes in bullying conflicts.

The validity and possibility of a specific set of national values is in itself widely challenged (Bardi & Schwartz, 2001) and it is suggested that such values are asserted without adequate definition or justification (Deveraux, 2006; Knight & Collins, 2006). According to Gentile (2010), however, the majority of well-disposed and rational members of civil societies share a small set of values across cultures and time.

Despite the debate over exactly what the core values are that ought to be taught in schools, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (1996) suggested it is possible

for communities to reach consensus on a set of values that would be appropriate for inclusion in the school curriculum. What values and virtues should schools cultivate in young people as part of moral education? Agreement upon the type of basic values to instil in students is achievable, but the difficulty lies in finding agreement on how to apply them in the institution of formal schooling (Smith & Shu, 2000). Interestingly, when asked to list core values different individuals chose common values, if they are handed lists from which to choose (Gentile, 2010). Values such as justice, forgiveness and love to others are identified as important to teach to assist in the practical application of the socially beneficial treatment of others (Alomari, Jerban & Awamleh, 2011).

Values education in schools is apparent in the sense that organisation, curriculum and discipline procedures of schools imply a commitment to certain values (Halstead, 1996). Frequently the values of a school however, are not fully explored or articulated and even where schools have produced a values statement, the schools must achieve a shared understanding of what is meant. For example, it can be agreed upon that all pupils are entitled to be treated with respect, but what does this actually look like (Halstead & Taylor, 1996). More attention needs to be given to the application in everyday life of these agreed upon values. Although some of the researched literature challenges the validity of values commonality, most suggests that a shared view that this is not only achievable but also appropriate in a school setting. The challenge is then in the teaching of a recognised set of shared values.

2.2.4 Application, Voicing and Acting on Values

Whilst it is important to firstly identify what explicit values we need to teach, just how this should be done is also important but less clear (Gilbert & Hoepper, 2004). The second challenge then is how one should go about the process of teaching these values once a

community has established an appropriate set of values. The way in which we view the teaching of values is important but our definition of values is equally important since we must move from a focus on a value as a cognitive state to a focus on a value as a ‘disposition’, a virtue or readiness to act in certain ways. For example, if we value justice then we must know what acting justly would look like. (Hill, 2006). Values education refers to pedagogical practice in which young people learn about and inculcate values and morality, acquiring knowledge of this domain and its implications for relating to other people as well as developing the ability and disposition together to apply values and rules intelligently (Aspin, 2000). All generations learn and apply values and virtues in an endeavour to change unacceptable behaviours towards others (Arsenio & Lemise, 2001). Gentile (2010) recognizes that the way we voice and act on values may be different in different contexts, but there is agreement on the types of values we must commit to and the need to act on them.

Regardless of what the central values behind a project of moral or civic education are, the really complex questions for educators to address as they attempt to undertake such projects pertain to how best to cultivate particular values and virtues in students. Questions relating to how best to teach values and virtues are even more complex in pluralistic environments where such concepts are interpreted and applied differently by different people. The most difficult aspects of moral and civic education are not necessarily located in the process of asserting what values are most important. Instead, determining how to balance these values, and how to teach them to young people, within the complex interactions of daily institutional life, are among the most difficult challenges that teachers face (Smith, 2000).

The ‘Giving Voice to Values’ curriculum designed by Mary Gentile (2010) draws attention to the importance of a shared set of values and recognising inhibitors to voicing and acting on our values. Gentile states it is a shared assumption that most people want to find ways to not

only voice, but also act on their values effectively. As noted above, Gentile focuses on those times and situations when we believe we know what is right to do and want to do it, but we experience external pressures which inhibit our desire to do what is right. There is a fear of the price we may pay such as social disapproval from others and exclusion from the inner powerful circle of work colleagues (Gentile, 2010). She advises not underestimating an inhibitor, recognising and being aware of our core values.

Smith and Shu (2000) suggest that an interesting inhibitor is the complexity of applying norms for right behaviour, when values are interpreted and applied differently across the boundaries of school and community. For example, it is nearly impossible to teach students appropriate behaviour when inappropriate behaviour may be condoned by misguided parents and community members. Smith and Shu (2000) concluded that it would be necessary to change the values and behaviours of parents in order to cultivate appropriate values in their school community. Gentile tends to focus students with an already established positive moral code acting on their values rather than instructing and instilling core values in students displaying negative social behaviours. The difficulty of measuring and responding to emotional factors, such as low levels of empathy, when attempting to understand bullying behaviour (Oskan & Cifci, 2009) and moral disengagement (Obermann, 2011), may be the most challenging factor when exploring the idea of embedding morals and values.

To act on our values we need to build on the strengths we identify in ourselves. Some people say they are able to act on their values because they have always had a strong sense of right and wrong and a need to act on this conviction. What is interesting is a trait that may enable one individual may be the opposite of what works for another (Gentile, 2010). For example, having a strong sense of right and wrong may be enough to enable a person to act on this value in a conflict situation but this action may be disabled if that person has a shy

personality. It is therefore important to create our own narrative, working on our strengths and convictions, to enable us to develop strategies to enable us to act on our values. Once a set of values are established, schools can work on strategies to implement them into the fabric of the school and embed them in conflict mediations.

The primary assumption behind Gentile's 'Giving Voice to Values' approach is that most of us would like to find ways to voice and act on our values; and some people do voice and act effectively on their values (Gentile, 2010). Recognizing that we are all capable of speaking up and acting on our values and yet that we do not always do so, is both empowering and enlightening. Gentile emphasises our capacity for choice and explains how we enable people to effect positive changes in conflict situations, such as bullying (Gentile, 2010). In doing so, she illustrated that freedom and confidence were necessary to exercise values in conflict situations.

Gentile argues that if we demonstrate credible responses to conflict situations we may empower those around us to who act on their values and to feel competent to respond, rather than fearful. This empowerment requires providing opportunities for students to script and practice voicing their values. Gentile argues that this training makes it more likely we will believe it is possible to act on our values, and more likely that we will do so (Gentile, 2010). She explores the ways in which students can speak and act on their values in the face of misbehaviour or in conflict situations; and she provides a framework for building the skill and confidence to do so. Part of the 'Giving Voice to Values' framework requires students to look at themselves: who they have been and who they wish to be. From this, focus on establishing one's purposes, training focus on action, planning and scripting. 'Giving Voice to Values' draws attention to the fact that effective communication skills are important in voicing your values and that there are ethical aspects relevant to effective communication.

Therefore students are trained to choreograph and practice conversations so as to build the confidence to act in these situations of ethical conflict. It is also made clear that voicing of values can develop moral muscle and hence ethical action can become a habit so that the more one does it, the more one will do it (Gentile, 2010). This suggests that voicing and acting on one's values is a learnable skill. Voice is developed over time and with practice that involves voicing one's values using the style of expression with which one is most comfortable or skillful and which is most appropriate to the situation. Students are most likely to speak out to say those words that they have pre-scripted and already heard themselves express when under pressure. Within the 'Giving Voice to Values' curriculum, strategy and skill development are just as important as moral conviction (Gentile, 2010).

There are many different ways to express one's values in conflict situations and some may work better than others in certain situations. In an emotion charged situation involving bullying students may blurt out responses rather than choose a more carefully prepared response. Sometimes it is most effective to address these conflict situations with a question rather than an impassioned speech. A review of research on persuasion, negotiation and influence - as well as reflection on one's own experience and that of others - reveals many tools and approaches that can be used in managing situations of bullying such as assertion, questioning and identification of allies. Allies can be particularly important since it is typically easier to voice and act on one's values when one does not feel alone. Confirmation from others can have a powerful impact on whether one acts on one's values in conflict situations and absence of allies is identified as a reason why individuals do not voice their values (Gentile, 2010). Allies can sometimes be found by simply asking for the opinions of others.

When examining the literature on acting on values, it was commonly accepted that the application of values can be inhibited by a number of factors. Uncertainty about such things as which values are most important, and should be upheld in a particular situation, how to effectively respond in conflict situations and the possible variance in moral conviction, due to community influence, are all cited by researchers as relevant.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework and perspective for this study is interpretivism. Interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning seeking to understand social members' definition of a situation. O'Donoghue (2006) suggests the idea of interpretivism is that all human action is meaningful and has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. This approach involves a person interacting with others and endeavours to give meaning to the action of others. This study examines perspectives through the eyes of the participants and as, an interpretive paradigm has a focus on action and is future oriented. Hence, it is the appropriate approach for this small scale study of human action.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Based on the review of literature further research is needed to find a solution to address the growing incidence of bullying in schools. Regardless of the number of interventions to address bullying, current statistics show these conflicts to be on the increase. As a result of this the main focus of this study is to explore how explicit values-based education may assist in dealing with bullying in an endeavour to pursue a new approach to address the source in these conflicts.

Addressing the source of the bullying and employing explicit values-based education to teach social skills directly to the respectful treatment of others is the purpose of the study.

Collecting data on this values strategy, aimed to achieve positive behaviour changes in these conflicts, is an approach not evident in the literature explored in this study as a possible way of addressing the growing incidence of bullying in schools.

2.5 Research Objectives

In general terms the present study intends to explore the perspectives of parents, teachers and administrators on embedding an explicit values-education based approach to bullying intervention mediations in an endeavour to find a resolution to the growing incidence of bullying conflicts. More specifically, the study intended to address the following questions:

- 1) What understandings do teachers hold towards bullying prevention and mediation strategies?
- 2) What are teacher's professional development needs in regard to bullying prevention and strategies?
- 3) How do teachers', principals' and parents' perceive the role of values based approaches to bullying intervention and mediation?; and
- 4) What are the implications of the above perceptions in the design and implementation of bullying intervention programs?

2.6 Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review uncovered a large body of research already carried out on bullying. The aim and initial challenge of this study was to build on the existing body of knowledge to provide an original contribution in an endeavour to resolve this growing concern in our schools. The review began with an examination of the studies on the likelihood of assisting children with changing unacceptable behaviours and then an exploration of the types of interventions currently taken in primary schools to deal with bullying situations. The need for further assessment of programs was a common finding in the reviewed papers. Another

common thread found throughout the review of papers on interventions was the higher rate of success in reducing bullying using the interventions that had a non-punitive approach and one that encouraged students to consider others in bullying situations. These findings led to reviewing papers on moral education and its inclusion in non-punitive anti-bullying interventions to assist with achieving positive behaviour changes in students, in relation to their treatment of others. While extensive research on values education is available, it became apparent while accessing material on the explicit teaching of values, to enhance current interventions, that comparatively little research was available on linking values education to explicitly enhance anti-bullying interventions. The studies reviewed on values education, indicated there firstly needed to be an agreement on the types of values that should be embedded in the fabric of the school and how these can be applied to attempt to achieve reduction in bullying situations.

Information compiled initially for this study may appear less specific as it was important to research statistics of bullying, to provide evidence of the increase in the incidence to establish the significance of further research. The initial step was followed by reading the literature to become aware of types of current interventions in place and the approaches showing the most success. From this research it was concluded that more research needed to be conducted on non-punitive approaches to deal with bullying. Finally, with the above conclusions in mind, literature that takes a new approach to curbing the growth in bullying behaviour was sought. In particular, literature exploring values teaching and embedding the explicit teaching of values in current bullying interventions and mediations was examined; given the premise that values are the basic elements of morality that guide the behaviour of all generations in their treatment of others (Alomari, Jerban & Awamleh, 2011).

Values teaching and its possible place in bullying interventions to achieve positive behaviour changes became the obvious direction for the final part of the literature review, when reviewing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools.

There are common threads of findings and recommendations in the articles read in the review of literature that are relevant to the direction of further research. For example a review of published research on bullying indicates that bullying behaviour is quite extensive in Australian primary schools and further research is needed (Bullying Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The review suggests that to break this cycle of violence, it is logical to target bullying behaviour of children at school at a young age. As evidence suggests success with behaviour changes in younger children, targeting bullying behaviour at primary school age shows a greater chance of breaking the cycle of unacceptable behaviour (Crone, Horner & Hawken, 2010).

Rigby (2012) considers how a primary focus on the children rather than the behaviour, may result in a more humane method of dealing with the problem of bullying in schools. The main approach currently in use in response to bullying, focuses on the undesired behaviours and on applied sanctions. It is not only ineffective, but also fails to address the needs of children as persons, distinct from the behaviours they produce. By comparison, as evidenced in the statistics reviewed, there is a growing body of research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of non-punitive interventions in decreasing the frequency of problem behaviour in primary school aged children. Given that its approach is one of assisting in achieving behavioural changes rather than punishing, it would appear this kind of intervention may relate to values education. Explicitly teaching values that encourage positive ways of treating others was, therefore, a worthwhile direction for this study. This present study also aims to address a gap in values policy evaluation identified in the research as it seeks to collect data on the opinions of educators and parents on a broader range of values to deal with

unacceptable bullying behaviours, while also directly discussing the identified values in the NFVEAS.

It was acknowledged throughout the literature reviewed that not only the types of values to teach need to be established, but the way we go about teaching the values also needs further investigation (Gentile, 2010). The readings also uncovered the need for further assessment of bullying programs, specifically non-punitive anti-bullying approaches, and further investigation in linking values education with current mediations and interventions. There was clear evidence in the literature that teachers can influence children's behaviours and when intervening at a young age, are more likely to have success achieving positive behavioural changes. The need for a collaborative approach from parents, teachers and principals, mentioned throughout the literature, is recognised in the approach taken in this study, with the participants in interviews and focus groups, providing data on strategies for the implementation of values, in bullying mediations and interventions.

2.7 Significance of the Study

This study seeks to collect data from a selection of teachers with a variety of experience to further investigate this increase in bullying incidence. Based on the review of literature it is clear there is a need to find a resolution to the increasing incidence of bullying and the negative implications for those involved. Research on values revealed an implicit teaching approach exists in schools but one that is not evident explicitly in relation to conflict bullying situations. This research aspires to present a theory of explicit values education in bullying mediations designed to achieve positive behaviour changes. Establishing core values and the implementation of behaviour guided by these values is central to explicitly teaching in the context of behavioural conflict and is an area that requires and merits more research. The need for further evaluation of current interventions and teacher education in this area is also evident throughout the literature reviewed. For instance, Farrington and Ttofi (2009) agree

with Smith (2004) that there has been relatively little attention paid to evaluating the success of bullying interventions, thus reinforcing the need for further research. A necessary first step is for educators to systematically assess the prevalence and magnitude of the bullying problem in their schools. This was an area absent in the review of literature that is explored further in this study.

The study requires a qualitative approach for the collection of data to make sense of participant's views and interpretations of values and conflict interventions in comparison to the literature reviewed and the merging and analysis of this data. The use of interviews as the main source of data collection are discussed in the next chapter. The present study seeks to address the gap in the research regarding the benefits of explicit implementation of values education specifically in bullying situations, to achieve positive behaviour changes towards others. Just as we cannot assume young children starting school know how to share and cooperate, we also cannot assume all children have been taught the values that can guide them in the treatment of others or that they are able to action these.

The emerging themes from the literature formed the basis for the direction of this study. The inconsistency in knowledge, understanding and practice of current intervention and approaches towards bullying by teachers, parents and the communities, prompted data collection on what anti-bullying interventions are currently in place in the schools and with how much success and consistency. The readings also uncovered a lack of teaching training to specifically deal with bullying and lack of teacher confidence to address and resolve these conflicts. Hence the importance of values education in reinforcing socially acceptable behaviours towards others will be explored in terms of schools implicit and explicit approaches and the relevant values to teach to achieve a consistent approach to values education.

3. Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Framework

An interpretivist paradigm was applied to this research study as it is concerned with how people define events and act in relation to their beliefs in everyday settings. It relied on the participant's views of a situation and it emphasizes social interaction as the basis for knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The interest was in understanding the meaning behind bullying behaviours and possible approaches to find a solution. This interpretivist paradigm was suited to this small scale research as it investigated individual perspectives to gain an understanding and provide explanations. This study also seeks to investigate the perspectives of the participants on their beliefs regarding an explicit values based education approach.

The researcher used her skills as a social being to try to gain a perspective on how others understand their world, specific to the situation being investigated. The emphasis was on the importance of understanding a situation through the eyes of the participants. Furthermore, the researcher's ultimate aim was to establish a framework to account for human, social behaviour and then focus on the understanding and explanation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The research strategy applied was case study and the method of collection and analysis was through interviewing and focus groups.

A multi-embedded case study was the research methodology employed for this study. It was chosen to portray, analyse and interpret the in-depth detailed data from a wide source through individual and group accounts. Case studies provide a unique example of real people in real situations. They enable readers to see how ideas and principles can fit together (Yin, 2009).

This was achieved through interviews and focus group discussions to collect data for the case

study.

A series of in depth interviews and focus group discussions were carried out to explore beliefs and opinions of administrators, teachers and parents from three Catholic primary systemic schools. This research focused on these participants individual beliefs regarding current bullying interventions and relevant values to embed in bullying conflict situations. Attention was paid to the positive roles values play in human existence and the development of an individual's values in direct relationship to developing appropriate behaviour towards others. The study also sought to discover beliefs regarding the teaching and actioning of these values in resolving these conflicts. It was important to examine the current bullying interventions and their impact on addressing the issue to establish the knowledge and experiences of the participants with these interventions.

The conceptual framework was values education as outlined in section 2.2 with emphasis on the National Framework of Values Education. It provided a background into the teaching of values in schools and their place in achieving positive behaviour changes in these conflicts. Values are beliefs that determine the way one behaves and they guide and influence the actions and decisions of students. Refshauge (2004) identified the need for values to be taught explicitly in schools. He cites education to be as much about building character, through fostering and transmitting values, as it is about equipping students with specific skills. The National Framework for Values Education provided discussion regarding values applicable to the treatment of others.

During these interviews and focus group discussions, descriptive and detailed accounts were gathered from participants to establish beliefs and practices. In depth interviews allowed the

researcher to interact with the participants in order to discuss their points of view in a flexible manner while enabling spontaneity (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

3.2 Situating the Research Methods

Studies using interviews allow researchers to interact with the respondent which provides opportunity for more questioning and discussion. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) refer to the interview as a flexible tool for data collection that allows for greater depth, as opposed to other methods of data collection, such as surveys and experiments, employed in the positivist approach for quantitative methods. Questionnaires and interviews are used for data collection in most of the literature reviewed, as outlined below, suggesting this as an appropriate method of data collection for study when dealing with people's beliefs and attitudes.

In depth interviews have been used to understand the bullying phenomenon in schools. For example, Mishna (2004), conducted a pilot study using qualitative interview methods to investigate school bullying from the perspectives of their parents and educators. Interviews were conducted with students in grades 4 and 5, their parents, teachers and school administrators, to extract important experiences with bullying and beliefs on the interventions. A similar in-depth interview study, by Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin and Patton (2001), on the emotional problems associated with bullying, was employed in government, independent and Catholic schools and successfully extracted valuable information from participants.

Likewise, Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler and Wiener (2005) employed a semi-structured interview format to gain an insight from teachers into their understanding and viewpoints on bullying. They established the need for support to address bullying incidents. This type of interview enables the researcher to interact with the respondent and opens the way for more

questioning and discussion rather than a fixed set of statements that only allow opportunity to agree or disagree (Minichiello, Aroni & Hayes, 2008). In a study by Sourander et al (2007), information about bullying was collected from parents and teachers, during interviews, regarding childhood bullying predicting criminal offending in late adolescence. The study involved interviews with 8 year olds and later with the same participants as 16 - 20 year olds, generating useful information from this qualitative method, thus reinforcing this approach as most suitable for this study.

Similarly, when examining papers on bystander unwillingness to act in bullying conflicts, Thornberg, et al (2012), presented interesting perspectives on motivations that lead to different responses. The primary goals of that study were to investigate the reasons for children's decisions to help or not to help a victim when witnessing bullying and to generate a grounded theory (or conceptual framework) of bystander motivation in bullying situations. Thirty students ranging in age from 9 to 15 years from an elementary and middle school in the south-eastern United States participated in this study. Open- ended, semi-structured interviews were used, and sessions ranged from 30 to 45 minutes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of children's perspectives and concerns when witnessing bullying. Establishing a moral code of behaviour and strategies for assertion of values may assist bystanders to take action in these conflict situations. The discussion of specific relevant values and ways of actioning these, form part of the data collected in similar semi-structured interviews, for this study.

Given the above research background, interviews were employed for this study as the most suitable tool for data collection to gain information regarding bullying behaviour and interventions, as the participant's views provided the opportunity to further clarify these conflict issues.

3.3 Schools Sampling

The three schools from which the data was collected all have all implemented an explicitly taught behaviour model called 'Positive Behaviours for Learning' (PBL). This is complemented by involvement in a social and emotional well being program called 'Kids Matter'. For this reason a purposive sampling was undertaken for this study including three Catholic schools as they possess the same approach to behaviour management. This enabled valid comparisons to be made between the three schools. As these are referred to by the teacher and principal participants throughout the collection of data, a brief explanation of both terms was included to establish an understanding of their processes.

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) is a whole school approach to behaviour management that adopts proactive strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate student behaviours, to create positive school environments. It provides a broad range of systemic and individualised strategies for achieving social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviour. The program involves a whole school approach with all staff involved. It focuses on the why rather than the what when managing behaviours. This behaviour management program operates within a context of justice, compassion, reconciliation and forgiveness. It is intended to promote the dignity and responsibility of each person while ensuring the respect for the rights of all students and staff (Community of Catholic Schools, n.d).

Kids Matter is a whole school approach to improving children's mental health and well being. Schools undertake a two-to three-year cyclical process in which they plan and take action to be a positive community, founded on respectful relationships and a sense of belonging and inclusion. Social and emotional learning is an important part of this program as it teaches how to manage feelings, manage friendships, relate to others, resolve conflict

and solve problems. Kids Matter teaches skills that assist children that help develop resilience and the capacity to cope with the negative things that happen through life (Kids Matter Australian Primary Schools Mental Health, n.d).

3.4 Procedure

The data for this study was derived from qualitative interviews from six focus groups and three individual in-depth interviews with a sample of principals, teachers and parents. The study was conducted in three phases. The first phase of the study involved semi-structured interviews with principals. Phase two of the data collection employed focus group discussions also referred to as group interviews with teachers. These gathered qualitative data on attitudes, values and opinions and were useful to gain insight and develop themes on bullying interventions and values education. They yielded a collective rather than an individual view and were useful to compare information from the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The informants were drawn from various age groups, degrees of teaching experience and both gender.

Phase three of the data collection process involved the same procedure as with the teachers focus group discussions, but with parent participants. These also gathered attitudes, values and opinions on current approaches to bullying, their expectation of how conflicts can be resolved and the place of a values based approach. The collective rather than individual view provided a useful comparison of information. The participants for these parent groups were drawn from various age groups, with children with a variety of ages, from preschool to teenagers.

Issues that were identified in the literature review were a guide for the choice of

interview and focus group discussion questions. The questions for phases 1, 2 and 3 focused on the need to find a solution to the growing incidence of bullying in schools as outlined in the literature review. Initial questions were proposed to source the opinions of the participants on current interventions. These were followed by a series of questions to promote discussion on a values education based approach and specific values to teach that would assist in achieving positive behaviour changes and complement existing interventions. In order to facilitate the analysis of responses, all interviews were scheduled and responses were recorded and subsequently transcribed.

This research also helped to understand if the targeted schools were aware of their obligation to implement core values in their school and the specific core values endorsed in The Australian National Framework. Data was then sought and compared to the framework, regarding those specific values participants view as the most important to explicitly embed in the teaching of anti bullying behaviours. This information formed the base for data comparison and contrast between the three schools. Apart from the nine core values presented in the National Framework, discussions also took place to determine other important values participants believed were a useful inclusion. These values were sourced and extracted and compiled into lists to present to the participants to choose from as Gentile (2010) suggests, the process of collecting opinions of values from others is more successful when participants were provided lists.

The central concern as researcher was to generate valid and reliable data and this was achieved by focusing the interview content on issues central to the research questions using the type of questions that allow greater flexibility for discussion. From the review of literature, an outline of issues and topics to be covered emerged, with the topic area being the guide for the questions asked, to allow for the tone of the interview to remain informal and

conversational. The crucial role of the researcher was to keep a clear focus and sense of the direction of the data collection.

All interviews were conducted in a school setting and consent forms were obtained from all participants. Between 5 to 7 semi-structured, open-ended questions were proposed and discussed during 40 minute sessions. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed. The analysis of data focused on thematic discovery from the transcripts recorded through the interviews with the participants. The focus was to identify themes that emerged from the transcripts, through systematic examination of the data line by line, to make sense of what was being said by the informants as a collective group. From there, meaningful categories were obtained followed by a detailed description of the themes.

3.5 Interview Guide

The framework for research planning began with identifying the topic of bullying due to the ineffectiveness of current interventions, as proven by the increasing incidence and negative ramifications of this conflict behaviour in schools as outlined in the literature review. The literature review also revealed a gap in the explicit teaching of values in relation to achieving positive behaviour changes. For this reason a values based approach to these conflicts formed the next part of the discussions.

As a result of the review of literature the following five themes were designed to achieve research objectives to determine the beliefs of all research participants.

Theme 1: Inconsistency of knowledge, understanding and practice of current intervention and approaches towards bullying. Rigby (2010) cites the difficulty in determining which of the six interventions is the best approach and considers the possibility of mixing methods.

Interview and focus group question: What anti-bullying interventions are currently in place in your school and with how much success and consistency?

Theme 2: Lack of teacher training and confidence in dealing with bullying conflicts. Feinberg (2003) and Rigby (2010) agree that teachers lack training and confidence in dealing with bullying conflicts. Interview and focus group questions: To what extent, in terms of training, do you feel equipped to effectively deal with bullying conflicts?

Theme 3: Schools adopt various methods of values education, some implicit in their whole school approach and others explicit in key learning areas. As Etherington (2013) suggests, values education are an essential part of schooling and there has been a growing demand from educators, governments, and the community for the teaching of values in schools.

Interview and focus group questions: How does the school engage in values education?

Theme 4: It is expected that schools comply with teaching a set of core values outlined in the national values framework. It was expected that schools should comply with the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools and teach nine identified core values (Jones, 2008).

Interview and focus group questions: Discuss the values outlined in the national framework for values education and their significance in terms of dealing with bullying behaviours and conflict resolution?

Theme 5: Values are seen as directly related to the treatment of others. Alomari, Jerban and Awamleh (2011) cite values as directly related to the treatment of others and Morrison (2002)

reinforces the importance of these core principles as assisting with conflict resolution productively.

Interview and focus group questions: Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations?

Following the selection of the initial question topics established from the literature review more specific questions were devised to engage participants in a discussion to provide data for rich description. These were as follows:

1. Describe bullying situations you have you encountered and how you and others involved, dealt with these situations.
2. Ask the participants to share their ideas on how we should deal with bullying.
3. Present approaches currently in practice in the education system. Discuss which ones the participants see as most useful and why.
4. Discuss opinions on the benefits and negatives of a punitive and non-punitive approach.
5. Regarding their experience and opinions on some of these punitive and non-punitive approaches, what strategies or programs do you feel would be best to employ in bullying situations? Present the idea of a mediation intervention approach
6. Present the participants with a list of core values and virtues. Collect their views on values from the list they feel are important to teach children to instil the correct behaviour towards others?
7. Look at the ‘Australian National Framework’ of values that are considered important to be taught in schools. Which would you see as important in teaching our students to directly apply to conflict/bullying situations?
8. In relation to relevant Values, should schools look at teaching values in general education to embed them in the culture of the school, to reduce bullying conflict, or is there any merit in

teaching values to specifically in bullying mediations?

9. Do values only need to be taught implicitly as a values Education program throughout the school or is there a need to teach them explicitly to assist positive behaviour changes in conflict bullying situations?

10. Consider some of these bullying behaviour programs that have been presented and discuss those that you feel may best suit the values Education approach?

3.4 Interview Theoretical Sample

From the collected data for this qualitative study this section describes the information collected from participants regarding explicit values education in bullying conflicts, to discover patterns, generate themes and discover commonalities among the nine interviews.

The composition of group participants is shown in table 1.

*Table 1
Composition of Group Participants*

Schools	Principals	Teachers	Parents
	Gender/Experience	Number / Experience	Number
School A	Female 8 years/1 school	1 male/ 4 females 3-20 years+	2 male/3female
School B	Male 15+years/3schools	6 females 15-20 years	4 all female
School C	Male 15 years/3 schools	1 male/ 7 F 1-20 years+	2male/2females

Three Catholic primary schools formed the participants for this research. The data collection involved a thirty minute interview with each school principal and forty minute focus group discussions with teachers and parents separately from the three schools.

All group participants volunteered to be involved in the discussions. An insight was gained

from principals and teachers from both gender and with a broad range of teaching experience. Parent groups consisted of parents of children of varying ages and with some degree of encounters of bullying. As primary schools have a larger ratio of female teachers the groups reflected this imbalance.

The data collected from three Catholic Systemic Primary Schools was analysed using a thematic approach. Although each school is from the same Diocesan Catholic Office of Education and all are situated within a ten kilometre radius, there are varying demographics and socio economic factors. For this reason a brief profile on each school has been included. Throughout the paper, for confidentiality reasons, the schools will be referred to as School A, School B and School C.

3.7 Procedure

3.7.1 Individual Interviews with Principals

The first phase of the study intended to capture school principal's experiences and perceptions of current anti-bullying interventions and discuss the values education taking place in their schools. The interview also aimed to explore their opinions on the teaching of specific values to enhance the moral development of students in the treatment of others, in direct relationship to achieving positive behaviours towards others and in dealing with conflict bullying situations. To achieve this, semi-structured interviews were conducted as this type of methodology permits the examination of people's perceptions on a broad range of issues (Minichiello, Aroni & Hayes, 2008).

In July 2013 initial questions were prepared to generate discussion on the topic of bullying and a possible connection with values education. Other interview questions were prepared to further explore specific ideas on dealing with bullying, punitive as opposed to a non-punitive

approach and identification of relevant values to embed in bullying conflicts based on The Australian National Framework of Values. The interviews were audio- taped and transcribed. Each interview took approximately 40 minutes and confidentiality of the participants was ensured. Interviewees were also provided with an information and consent form for participants and permission was obtained from The Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Notre Dame Australia and The Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office. Participation was voluntary.

Design of the interview questions were based on the literature papers reviewed and it was established that the specific purpose of this paper needed research questions to extract beliefs and perspectives of principal administrators and these would best suit an interview setting. To ensure the validity of the content in the interviews, care was taken in constructing questions that were measuring what they claimed to measure and that also followed the same format for each respondent (Silverman, 1993). The second group of questions, however, were less structured and more open-ended. Silverman (1993) argues for the importance of these open-ended interviews to enable respondents to demonstrate their definition of the situation and unique way of looking at it. The same format and sequence of open-ended interview questioning for each respondent group was ensured and similar order employed. The interview is, however, a flexible tool for data collection and even though the order of the interview may be controlled there was still space for spontaneity and the interviewer could press for complex responses about deep issues.

The following questions were presented to principals during the interviews:

- 1) How does the school engage in any Values Education?
- 2) Discuss values that the Australian National Framework for Values Education propose as important to teach in schools and how these may be explicitly embedded into the fabric of

schools to enhance moral development of the students and assist with positive behaviour changes in bullying conflicts.

3) Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations.

4) What do you see as the best approach to deal with bullying?

3.7.2 Phase 2 and 3: Focus Group Discussions with Teachers and Parents

Within the methodology, the technique of group interviewing was employed to bring together people with varied opinions whereas unit of analysis reflects the whole group. Focus groups are a form of group interview and from these groups data was generated from participants' insights. Group Interviews were carried out using the interview guide approach where topics to be covered were in outline form and the sequence of these was decided during the course of the interview (Cohen et al, 2011). The sequence and framing of questions for these semi-structured interviews was considered to ensure non-controversial and non-threatening questions to put respondents at ease. They mostly comprised open-ended, indirect questions inviting opinions rather than facts and allowing flexibility to gain unanticipated responses (Cohen et al, 2011). This type of interview yielded a collective rather than individual view and allowed for the participants to interact with each other rather than relying on the interviewer.

The following questions were presented to teachers during the focus group discussions:

1) What anti-bullying interventions are currently in place in their school and with how much success?

2) How does the school engage in values education?

3) Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations.

- 4) Discuss the values The Australian National Framework for Values Education propose as important to teach in schools and how these may be explicitly embedded into the fabric of schools to enhance moral development of the students and assist with positive behaviour changes in bullying conflicts.
- 5) What do you see as the best approach to deal with bullying?

The following questions were presented to the parent focus groups:

- 1) How do you feel schools should address bullying issues?
- 2) What do you see as the best approach to deal with bullying?
- 3) Why do you feel values education is important to teach in school?
- 4) Describe values you perceive as being a useful inclusion in teaching students how to treat others to address bullying situations.

3.8 Descriptions of Participating Schools

School A is located in the Diocesan Catholic Office of Education of Broken Bay on Sydney's Northern Beaches. The school aims to create a Catholic learning community which nurtures, inspires and prepares individuals for the future. The core purpose is to provide excellence in teaching and learning so that the potential of each child is achieved. The school motto, 'Constant and True', is also reflected in a commitment to faith and service to others. It aims to provide each student with a quality education that supports and nurtures their own needs, abilities and learning styles, with enrichment opportunities for leadership, the arts and sport. Supported by an active 'Parents and Friends' Association and School Advisory Board, the school enjoys a positive profile in the community due to its reputation for excellence in teaching and learning and the nurturing pastoral care provided. This is achieved with a peer support programme and a positive behaviour model that is taught and reinforced through school rules based on a values that pertain to the positive treatment of others. There is an

interactive whiteboard and a number of lap tops in each room and a central room containing a class sized set of laptops. The school actively engages any environmental programs that educate their students to be stewards of future sustainability such as reduction in the use of paper, green wall building, a no packaging policy and an eco garden. All play areas are resurfaced, landscaped and recently upgraded playground markings. NAPLAN results for 2013, for years 3 and 5, were consistently above or substantially above the state average for literacy and numeracy.

School B is also situated on the Northern Beaches of Sydney in the Diocese of Broken Bay. The school community is committed to excellence in learning. The motto, 'Strength and Gentleness' given by the founding order of the Brigidine Sisters is a key foundation to the atmosphere and functioning of the school. It forms the basis of many of the policies, especially pastoral care and behaviour management. The core values of the school are hope, justice, respect, celebration, service and compassion and these are modelled, taught and rewarded throughout all aspects of the curriculum and daily life. The school aims to build a community of strength and gentleness that celebrates inclusive, supportive and respectful relationships and create a safe, well-resourced and sustainable environment that is valued and respected by all. The staff are committed and experienced and the school enjoys positive relationships with its parish and local community. Parent involvement in the school is very strong and appreciated by the school. There are a number of children with an ESL background throughout the school, predominantly from an Italian heritage. The school offers a variety of sporting opportunities for students from weekly school activities through to regular Gala Days and representative opportunities. Technology is incorporated throughout the school. There is an interactive whiteboard in every classroom and a number of laptops and desktop computers for use by the students. The school completed a major building project in 2010 and the new facilities are being enjoyed and appreciated by the whole

community. NAPLAN results for 2013 in year 3, show average and below average for literacy, and below or substantially below in numeracy. Literacy results for year 5 were average to above average and substantially above specifically in grammar and punctuation.

School C is also part of the system of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay. It aims to be an innovative and inspirational Catholic community school that celebrates the journey of faith and learning our children, parents and teachers make in relationship with all creation. It aims to support the needs of all learners so they are able to realise as much of their potential as possible in all Key Learning Areas before moving on to high school. The motto 'Listen and Love' is a constant reminder of the values - hope, justice, respect, service and compassion - which shape the curriculum experienced at the school. Authentic pastoral care and extensive community outreach provide a dual focus for the learning community. Broad parent participation and mentor based learning programs are a key feature of the school. During 2011 the school was able to provide a new library/learning centre and a newly landscaped play area for K-6. It also opened new classrooms for Years 4-6 plus a multipurpose art/craft space in the renovated senior school building. The school enjoys a close relationship with the local parish and the children participate actively in regular liturgies and a flourishing family based sacramental program. NAPLAN results for 2013 were above and in some cases substantially above the state average in both grades in literacy and numeracy.

In terms of enrolment School A is the smallest school. There are three defined playground areas comprising a large shaded undercroft area, play equipment and a synthetic grass area. All playground areas are open and easily supervised by teachers. The majority of children come from stable socio-economic backgrounds. This area has minimum unit dwellings so the most families live in houses with access to outside play areas. School B has the highest enrolment. The school playground areas have a balance of open asphalt and grass areas where children are easily supervised by teachers. The children come from varying socio-

economic backgrounds as the suburb has a housing commission component. There is also an element of cultural difference with a large Italian community residing in this suburb. School C has an enrolment higher than School A but lower than School B. The playground has limited space and comprises smaller pockets as opposed to open areas. This is quite an affluent beach suburb with high density housing. School C displayed the highest NAPLAN results, followed by School A, with School B being the only one of the three schools to achieve below average results. Demographic details about the three schools are provided in Table 2 below. The main variance of note between the schools is the higher percentage of ESL (English as a Second Language) students in School B.

Table 2
School Data Comparisons

	School A	School B	School C
Teaching staff	15	17	22
Non-teaching staff	4	6	9
Total enrolments	225	378	291
Girls	109	221	160
Boys	116	157	131
Full-time equivalent enrolments	225	378	291
Indigenous students	-	1%	-
Language background other than English	21%	45%	9%
Student attendance rate	96%	96%	95%
Average class size	28	26	25

4. Findings, Results and Discussions

This chapter details the first part of the analysis of data and emerging from each of the three schools. The second part of this chapter is the comparison of data across the three schools.

The themes that emerged for discussion were regarding strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviours, awareness and implementation of bullying interventions, importance of consistency and teacher training and the use of explicit values education to effect positive behaviour changes in these conflicts.

4.1 Intra School Analysis of data

4.1.1 Case Summary - School A

4.1.1.1 Principal Interview

This school principal is in her early 40's with 20 years+ teaching experience, 8 years of these being as a principal in their current school. The interview involved discussion on bullying experiences, interventions and other behaviour management strategies and the place of values education in developing positive social skills.

Theme 1: Dealing with bullying

The principal has formalised a positive behaviour management model that has recently been implemented in the school. The staff have engaged in a professional learning session on this behaviour model are therefore all consistent in practice in the process and meta-language within this model. The principal stated she believes "in the need for consistency of practice by the staff for this behaviour model to be successful." This agreed practice has now been embedded into the school policy behaviour management section of the school handbook. It is interesting to note that School A had the most formalised model of behaviour, in terms of consistency of practice and exhibits a very low incidence of bullying. This consistency of practice amongst the staff was seen as the reason for the minimal occurrence of these conflicts. Dealing with bullying behaviours is embedded within this behaviour management

model.

The principal stated "as we are dealing with young children, a simplistic approach is required." The process outlined for bullying behaviours in School A is as follows:

- 1) Incidents are reported and none are dismissed. A solution must be found. All children need to be heard;
- 2) The teacher is the first port of call;
- 3) In the process of ascertaining information, emotion is taken out of the process by insisting on a factual recount from parties involved. At this stage, only the incident at hand is looked at, not what has gone on in the past;
- 4) Recounts are collected from the perpetrator, the victim and reliable bystanders;
- 5) The principal then looks at the incident to establish whether this is a situation involving meanness or a repetitive act that is classified as bullying.

Theme 2: Bullying Intervention

The process of response that the principal uses and endorses as the most effective method in bullying incidents involving both bully and victim is mediation. If this process does not show sufficient positive results, the next step is to involve the parents, with their child, in a similar process of mediation. Problems can arise if parents are in denial of their children's negative behaviours, however, this principal strongly believes in the need to involve them for repeat offender behaviours. According to her: "Parents need to not only be involved in the process but have to be on board with supporting the school and reinforcing positive behaviours with follow up at home".

Theme 3: Behaviour strategy

Another strategy, called the white slip, was implemented to maintain positive behaviour in

the school and is also a valuable communication tool to keep parents informed of any unacceptable behaviours. If a child behaves in a way that impacts negatively on others or lets themselves down, they are issued with a white slip. This slip goes home to be sighted and signed by the parent, in acknowledgement of the incident. If a child receives three slips a meeting is called with the child, the parent, the teacher and the principal. The meeting focuses on the unacceptable behaviours, "not the character of the child." The aim of the meeting is to work through supportive ways, with consistency, to support the child to achieve positive behaviour changes. This approach is not the traditional punitive one but rather a supportive approach. According to this principal "a hard and fast punitive approach does not work". A mediation approach with a targeted social skills program, to achieve behaviour changes, is the preferred approach.

Theme 4: Social skills program involving explicit values education

The school, as a whole, also engages in a process called friendship audits, where the children are presented with written surveys and asked to identify children in the school that display repeated unacceptable behaviours, such as bullying. These students are then specifically targeted to engage in a social skills program where such values as tolerance, inclusion, respect and caring for others is taught by the school special needs learning support. The program also engages victims in a social skills program to develop resilience in these social situations. The principal expressed the belief that " if we do not go to the source of the problem then we as a school are not doing our job to arrest these behaviours for the victims sake."

The principal also expressed her belief that it is just as important to assist rather than punish the bully/perpetrators. "The behaviour they are displaying indicates they clearly are hurting in some way and therefore need some care and compassion shown towards them". A mediation

approach with explicit social skills strategy teaching was her preferred direction in the endeavour to achieve a positive outcome in addressing the issue of bullying.

Theme 5: Specific relevant values

When questioned on the place of values in resolving bullying conflicts, this principal endorsed the validity of a need for some type of explicit values teaching, with repeat offender bullying behaviour, to assist the bully with positive behaviour changes. The key values she identified as most relevant from The National Framework for Values Education were care and compassion, respect, responsibility, understanding, tolerance and inclusion.

In summary, during the interview with the principal from School A, it was established that she believes in the need for teacher training and consistency of approach to achieve positive behaviours. Mediation, as the preferred form of intervention, with an explicit values education component, reflecting the core values identified in the National Framework, was strongly endorsed. As the school already engage in a values education based approach she was most supportive of this as an explicit approach specifically in bullying conflict resolution.

4.1.1.2 Teacher Focus Group

This group was comprised of five participants with varying degrees of teaching experience. Two of the four female teachers also held an administrative executive position. Both of these teachers also have 20+ years experience. The male participant is the only male teacher at the school and has under 5 years classroom teaching experience. Of the remaining three female participants, one has over 5 years teaching experience and the other two have three years. This group of teachers volunteered for this discussion.

The questions presented to this focus group of teachers from school A evoked discussion on familiarity and practice of current bullying interventions, the importance of consistency of practice and the lack of teacher training related specifically to managing bullying behaviours. A discussion of the role and importance of values education in achieving positive behaviour changes in these bullying conflicts formed another important part of the data collection.

Theme 1: Bullying experiences and opinions

When the topic of bullying was presented to this group, there was a shared opinion that this school did not appear to have obvious issues with bullying or a culture of this type of behaviour. The teacher with the longest teaching history in this school stated,

I have not experienced ongoing, serious bullying issues in this school and I feel this is partly due to the behaviour management program, currently in place, that gives a clear behaviour expectation to the students. Children are constantly referred back to the principles and commonality of language associated with this behaviour model and are better able to articulate and understand the expectations.

All group participants agreed that there is a zero tolerance to bullying, but also suggested "there is a reason why a bully does bully another child and while there is a clear need to support the victim, the bully also clearly needs help too." This statement was supported by the suggestion of going to the source of the problem, that being the bully.

An interesting observation from the teachers in this focus group suggested that any bullying they had experienced usually could be linked to one or two perpetrators. The teachers at this school shared the view that they had not encountered many serious bullying situations at this school. The principal has established clear expectations of appropriate behaviours towards

others, and the participants believe this to be a factor in the low incidence of repetitive bullying. There was recognition of consistency of practice with negative behaviours, but no one consistent approach specifically related to bullying. The teachers often deal individually, in their own way, with incidences of bullying and this can mean inconsistency in approaches directly related to bullying management.

Theme 2: Knowledge of bullying interventions

When presented with a question regarding their knowledge on the current interventions to address bullying, regardless of their varying years of teaching experience, all were unaware that there were six existing approaches to bullying. Once shown examples and specific explanations of these interventions, only the teachers with the most teaching experience, had heard of and used some of the strategies from the Restorative Practice model and the Strengthening the Victim approach. In discussing the current interventions, the mediation approach was the one preferred by the group, as having the most potential to achieve positive outcomes. There was a collective agreement that a non-punitive approach was preferred, yet the teachers admitted that they would often resort to a punishment approach when dealing with bullying conflict. All participants had a zero tolerance to bullying but not necessarily with a traditional punitive approach.

It was suggested that there is a lot of information and research out there on bullying, but not everyone is on the same page with consistency of practice, as we are yet to find a model that works. One teacher said in that regard:

How best to tackle bullying is a grey area. We tend to jump around and try this and that and even though we may have a belief in restorative practice, we often resort to a punitive approach, out of frustration, thus creating inconsistency in our approach.

Theme 3: Lack of teacher training to deal with bullying

All of the teachers agreed that behaviour management strategies were taught broadly during teacher training but there was no specific training to deal with bullying conflicts. One of the younger teachers stated,

I have only learnt how to manage these types of ongoing behaviour problems, such as bullying, through experience and with help and advice from other experienced teachers I have worked with.

The group suggested this would be a useful addition to teacher training as they do not feel there is a clear understanding or consistent model to follow on how to tackle bullying. Every teacher in this discussion group agreed there needs to be more teacher training and implementation of a uniform approach.

Theme 4: The role of values education in achieving positive behaviour changes

When discussing the role of values education, the teachers agreed on the importance of Teaching values to establish and maintain a positive whole school culture. One teacher remarked:

This values education is currently being taught implicitly in religious education and personal development programs in this school and the nine core values in The National Framework have been embedded in the religion programs.

The two executive members of this teacher focus group were the only ones with a substantial knowledge of the Framework as they had participated in an in-service day where links were made between the Religion Education syllabus and the nine core values identified in the Framework to ensure they were implicit in the units of work. The younger members of the discussion group had only heard of the document when they were at university but unfamiliar

with the specifics. When presented with the core values from the framework those that stood out as important to explicitly teach in bullying conflicts were respect, understanding, tolerance, inclusion and giving everyone a fair go.

One staff member stated that she believed that "the values and morals instilled in the students by the parents at this particular school was the reason for the low incidence of bullying conflicts". According to a participant:

There was a shared view that children's behaviours and value systems are established at a young age and it is achievable to assist positive changes in these in a primary school setting.

In their teaching experience, bullies do not appear to have an understanding of the basic core values that are expected in regard to the treatment of others. A bully would therefore benefit from assistance in achieving positive behaviour changes. There was a shared view that going to the source and assisting the perpetrator by explicitly teaching relevant values, was a useful strategy. The values identified from the Framework, by this teacher focus group, as important to instil in their students, were respect, understanding, tolerance, care, compassion and a fair go. Others that came up in the discussion, as important, but not in the Framework were forgiveness, equality and kindness.

Summary

One of the teachers was currently using a mediation approach with her class and was supportive of the amalgamation of a values education component with this intervention. The group concluded that a mediation intervention, with an explicit values based component, was the approach that would best assist the bully in achieving positive behaviour changes. There was also a shared view on the need for consistency of practice when managing

negative behaviours and there was a lack of teacher training in bullying conflict resolution and therefore it was essential to provide this in servicing to achieve consistency and work toward a solution to bullying.

Finally, when dealing with the parents in these bullying conflicts, there is less understanding and tolerance from the parents of the victims as this is an emotive issue for parents and they often have very different ideas and opinions than teachers on what is the best approach.

Some of the final comments regarding the best approach to these conflicts proposed the bully putting themselves in the other person's shoes.

The only male participant in this group stated that in his experience:

The perpetrator is often unaware of the negative effect of their actions on the victim and they don't have the understanding of how they should treat others as these values are not evident in their behaviours.

Finally, the religious coordinator expressed how potentially powerful restorative practice models are and how they may help develop the empathy to think of how it would feel to walk in the other persons shoes.

4.1.1.3 Parent Focus Group

This parent focus group consisted of three females and two males, past and present parents and members of the parish and all current members of the school board. There was a range in ages from young parents to grandparents.

Theme 1: Approach to addressing bullying

It came across strongly from this group that there is an expectation from parents that:

"as children are at school for more waking hours than what they are at home parents expect they should feel safe and happy when at school". For this reason parents expressed a zero tolerance to bullying. Parents agreed on wanting immediate action to bullying conflict.

There was a shared view that even though there was a zero tolerance to bullying, there needed to be a supportive, non-punitive approach, but with consequences. Parents collectively expressed the need for parents of bullies to be informed and involved in the resolution of bullying conflicts. When discussing their opinions on the best ways to deal with bullying conflict, a mediation approach was endorsed. This parent group felt it important to make parents aware if their children were engaging in mediations and to specifically involve parents in the process if necessary. One parent stated:

Parents need to be informed if their child is involved in a bullying conflict as the bully or the victim so they not only aware but also as parents need to reinforce any follow up discussion with their child to ensure the parent supports the school with a consistent approach.

There was a shared view that we need to teach children resilience and there is also a need to explicitly teach children how to treat others. One parent mentioned the golden rule for all Catholic schools is: "to treat others as you would like to be treated and values are at the core of this".

Collectively this parent group endorsed a non punitive approach with consequences for their poor choices in the treatment of others. One parent stated: "as mediation makes perpetrators acknowledge how their choices affect others, this was their preferred bullying intervention". An example of a consequence the group discussed community service. The discussion and opinion of the group repeatedly came back to the need to address the source of the problem as

being crucial.

Theme 2: The role of values education in changing bullying behaviours

The belief of this group was the treatment of others is the core of the issue and the only way to reach a solution to bullying was to deal with the source of the problem and work with the behaviours of the bully. One parent raised the point that "initial behaviour comes from the family setting and their families values and it can, at times, be difficult to convince some parents that their child is doing anything wrong." This led to the discussion on values and a description of these being directly related to actions towards others.

From here the group discussed the relevance of values when addressing negative actions towards others and all agreed on the need to teach appropriate behaviours towards others. The group collectively agreed that explicit teaching of certain values could assist with achieving positive behaviour changes. Empathy came through strongly as being an important value to teach students to improve their treatment of others and respect was endorsed by all as paramount to embed in bullying conflicts. In conclusion, one parent spoke strongly in favour of this values based approach as a useful proposal to teach to address bullying behaviours and conflicts. She expressed her experience as follows:

During scripture teaching in state schools, I have experienced an improvement in behaviours towards others, in a particular school that made core values education a priority in their school.

Theme 3: Specific relevant values

As the group spoke of their belief that the perpetrator lacked empathy towards others they confirmed their support for explicit teaching of this and other values to improve behaviour in these bullying conflicts. When discussing the nine core values in The National Framework,

respect, integrity, responsibility, understanding, tolerance, inclusion, care, compassion, a fair go and standing up for the rights of others, were expressed by the participants, as relevant to explicitly teaching bullying perpetrators to achieve positive behaviour changes. When presented with other, more extensive lists of values, some of the following were also identified as relating to these behaviours. Kindness, justice, forgiveness, strength, empathy, sensitivity and love were consistently chosen across the group.

4.1.2 Case Summary - School B

4.1.2.1 Principal Interview

This school principal is in his early 50's with 30+ teaching experience. He has been in this current school administrative position for 3 years and prior to this has held principals positions in two other schools. Collectively he has 20+ years experience as a school principal.

When first presented with an insight into the topic for this paper, regarding an exploration of the benefits of an explicit values education based approach to bullying conflicts, this principal mentioned where values are already implicitly embedded in the school. The school policy, current board awards and the school behaviour policy all contain underlying aspects of values education. The PBL behaviours program and Kids Matter, are previously outlined and the specific values identified in the school policy to build positive relationships, are discussed below. He said, "Values education is embedded in our school policies and forms the basis of school awards and behaviour expectations."

Theme 1: Dealing with bullying issues

When discussing how the school currently deals with behaviour issues, specifically bullying, principal B outlined the following process as a typical approach:

- 1) A child or parent presents a victim situation and discloses an initial complaint. He

stated "I like to take a reasonable amount of time to investigate the issue."

2) The principal then speaks to all parties involved to gain each perspective and determine if it is a bullying incident. The principal stated: "I feel that this way, I can perceive and acknowledge not only the situation, but also the feelings of the victim and bully."

3) Through discussion with both parties there is an acknowledgement from the principal of the feelings of all involved.

4) The principal then determines whether there is a case to answer in terms of the seriousness of the behaviour.

5) If it is established that there is a need to take this further the principal then attempts to establish a cause/reason as to why the bullying has taken place.

6) A plan is put in place to work towards achieving positive behaviour changes towards each other and to provide support in an endeavour to empower the child to be more independent in changing their behaviours. He said: "Children may need to be taught specific strategies to learn the correct way to treat others."

7) If necessary, support from the parents is enlisted to assist in achieving a positive change of attitude and in behaviours. In regard to this he said: "I am looking for sincerity and commitment from the perpetrator during this talking, mediating and counselling."

8) When there is a necessity to bring parties together, to meet face to face, in what the principal referred to as "mediation," he employs a "no blame approach", but with accountability for actions. Both parties are heard and the feelings of all involved are acknowledged during this meeting, as is everyone's position on the conflict. He commented that: "A plan of action is agreed upon and I expect everyone involved to feel a sense of responsibility for what has taken place and in moving forward to achieve positive changes."

9) There is a record kept of what is discussed and agreed upon in the meeting.

10) Follow up meetings and ongoing monitoring of the situation is part of the process where parties discuss what they are doing to achieve positive behaviour changes. During this check

in process, there is monitoring, to ensure positive changes have remained in place.

Theme 2: Values education currently in the school

During the interview, this principal remarked that:

positive behaviour from the children at school can't be assumed and we sometimes need to explicitly teach these behaviours, as these negative bullying behaviours may well be modelled from the home.

Furthermore, he identified that social and emotional issues are often related to bullying behaviours. For this reason the principal believed that specific skills and values education, linked to the six core values already identified by the school as important, should definitely be a part of the process, when dealing with bullying conflicts. The six core values that the school embed to form part of the school culture are respect, compassion, hope, justice, service and celebration. They are directly aimed at 'building positive relationships,' as reflected in their school policy. The identification and description of these values were a collaborative effort from the staff, parent board and past principal. The school community felt these were most relevant to building positive relationships in the school. Respect is described as the acknowledgement of the sacredness and value of the individuals' uniqueness.

Similarly, compassion is seen as the display of kindness and sensitivity in the acceptance of others. Hope suggests we have to be positive and encouraging in our interactions with others as we display optimism and resilience. Justice is seen as encouraging us to act with integrity as we live the belief that everyone has the right to be treated fairly treated. Service is about reaching out with compassion and respect to all and celebration rejoices in the gifts, efforts and achievements of all.

Theme 3: Explicit values education applied in bullying conflicts

This principal stated:

I would like to see a clear link between values that are identified as important to the fabric of the school, already implicit in policies and behaviour models, coupled with similar values to explicitly teach in resolving bullying conflicts, to assist positive behaviours towards others.

He would also like to see a clear strategy for developing specific skills for improved social behaviour. He stated "There needs to be a core expectation of behaviour embedded in these strategies." The principal also commented:

My aim in bullying situations is to achieve positive behaviour changes, I therefore see explicit values teaching to achieve these positive behaviour changes, as an important part of the whole process. Our current behaviour model compliments this process.

This principal identified respect as number one and a critical inclusion in an explicit values education approach. He identified care and compassion as the next most important values as he stated:

Developing empathy towards others would allow them to put themselves in other peoples position. Responsibility is also important as it puts it back on the child to have accountability to do something about changing their behaviours.

Integrity was also mentioned in terms of the perpetrator feeling good about acting this way towards others. He felt this may encourage students to continue these positive changes.

Understanding, tolerance and inclusion, he feels, are at the heart of the issue. Finally, hope gives all children involved a clear message that they can improve and they will be forgiven:

"Forgiveness is an important part of any reconciliation in a mediation."

Theme 4: Teacher training and consistency

Teacher involvement was seen as crucial as they are often the first port of call and therefore the ones dealing with these bullying conflicts. Regarding professional development he added:

Teachers need to learn the process to ensure consistency of practice. There is a need for specific training and knowledge of the process. My concern is the time constraint on teachers, but regardless of this I still see a need for further in servicing and the benefits of following a consistent process.

Summary

This principal endorses a non punitive approach with consequences for their actions. He believes in the benefits of the combination of the practice of restorative justice, shared concern and a mediation approach. This approach would include a sincere written apology with behaviour changes that the perpetrator agrees on. The principal reinforces the need for actions, not just words. For this to be effective there needs to be the collaborative involvement of parents, in a supportive manner, to assist with reinforcing the behaviour changes. There is a need for the child to feel they are being helped rather than punished.

My concern with this approach is that the parents of the victims want to go straight down the punishment road. They don't understand the perpetrators need for support to achieve positive behaviour changes.

In this principal's experience, some families need ongoing assistance maintaining a consistent approach to positive behaviours. In conclusion, this principal has experienced positive behaviour changes in young perpetrators with this collaborative approach. He also believed this needs to be coupled with some ongoing outside professional assistance when dealing with some of the more difficult perpetrators.

4.1.2.2 Teacher Focus Group

This group was comprised of seven participants all with 15 - 20 years teaching experience. All were female classroom teachers with no participants holding executive positions. The discussions revolved around current practice in their school to deal with bullying behaviours, their knowledge regarding current interventions available, teacher confidence and consistency of practice and finally the role and merit of a values education based approach.

Theme 1: Current Approach to Bullying Behaviours

Discussion began with the group describing how their school engage in a bullying focus week at the beginning of each year. This has been taking place for a few years and all classes engage in specific activities that focus on the bullying triangle and the importance of bystander behaviour. The staff felt the consistency of the language and practice by all teachers made this a useful approach to bullying. A teacher remarked:

School bullying focus week held at the beginning of every year teaches the children the expectation of behaviours in the treatment of others. All the teachers use the same language and this is a way of beginning the year with a consistent approach and ensures all teachers are on the same page.

The whole school approach to developing acceptable behaviours continues with all classes engaged in the kids matter social and emotional well being program. This was inserviced to the staff and parents and has encouraged consistency of practice which has given the staff a certain confidence in their ability to deal with bullying conflicts at this primary school level.

One teacher responded:

This year our whole staff has been taught about a behaviour model called kids matter and how it can be helpful in preventing and dealing with bullying behaviours.

Learning as a staff ensured a consistency of practice across the school which has

really made a positive difference with the children's behaviour.

In relation to the PBL program one teacher stated:

Since the school as a whole has engaged in PBL training and practice the staff are a lot clearer on how to address negative behaviours. There is a procedure to follow which can be specifically applied to bullying situations and it involves structure with documentation and follow up.

There was also mention of technology being more controlled at this primary age group, thus minimising this opportunity to bully. There was a discussion on the need for a policy to be developed for upper primary grades regarding the use of technology to lower the possibility of bullying increasing with its use. One teacher suggested:

Parents can't completely be responsible for cyber bullying and realistically the older primary school children are using technology to communicate maybe a cyber bullying policy needs to be developed to formalise the rules in regard to the use of this communication engine.

Another teacher remarked on the effects of cyber bullying in primary school:

We seem to cope better with cyber bullying at a primary level as opposed to high school as we don't battle so much with the use of technology creating opportunity for more bullying issues.

Theme 2: Knowledge and use of bullying interventions

The teacher group were only aware of a bullying triangle approach but had no knowledge of other interventions. When presented with the interventions, some of the more experienced teachers had been exposed to the restorative justice approach and used some of the justice

principles related to this. A formalised mediation approach was an intervention that this group saw as a direction to take to address bullying because the victim and bully both had a fair hearing. Trust came up as a potential issue with the mediation process but one teacher suggested: "this may be overcome by involving the children in selecting a teacher they feel comfortable with." Another teacher suggested:

It would be a good idea to train all teachers in the mediation process as often children would feel more comfortable talking to their own classroom teacher. This would also put everyone on the same page so the school could be consistent in their approach.

Theme 3: Teacher training and consistency of practice

The questions presented to this focus group of teachers from school B evoked discussion on familiarity and practice of current bullying interventions, the importance of consistency of practice and the notion of addressing the cause of the problem. The lack of teacher training, knowledge and consistent practice, related specifically to managing bullying behaviours, was an important part of the discussion. For example one teacher spoke of consistency of practice relating to their current general PBL (Positive Behaviour for Learning model):

We as a staff engage in the same practice and language in this program so the children are very clear on the behaviour expectation and have begun to use the same language. This has been working in terms of achieving some positive behaviours with the children. It would make sense to use this approach also specifically in bullying conflicts as we don't follow one model to address bullying conflicts.

There was a collective zero tolerance to the act of bullying but an acknowledgement of the bully having problems they may need help with. This discussion of the bully needing help led to the teachers confirming the explicit teaching of values to bullies as they often need to be taught responsibility and a just way to treat others.

Theme 4: The role of a values education approach values

The role and importance of values education, in achieving positive behaviour changes in these bullying conflicts, formed another important part of the data collection. All teachers were aware of the National Framework of Values document. There was a shared view that we cannot assume that children come to school knowing an acceptable way to act towards others and therefore an explicit teaching of values was endorsed by this focus group. One teacher suggested: "Not all children appear to know what being good means so explicitly teaching values to children may be necessary to show them how to correctly treat others". When presented with a list of values those identified by this group as being important to explicitly teach were responsibility, respect, care, compassion, understanding, tolerance, inclusion and a sense of justice.

4.1.2.3 Parent Focus Group

This parent focus group was comprised of five female participants with children ranging in age from Kindergarten to year six. There was a collective view expressed that parents believed there are rarely solutions to bullying and parents of victims feel unsupported in these conflicts and are frequently disappointed in the way they are handled. They commented that: "There appears to be no follow up from the school."

One parent suggested often the bullies' parents do not acknowledge their children to be displaying bullying behaviours and it is necessary to have these parents on board for there to be any chance of a solution. When presented with existing bullying interventions this parent group favoured an approach that saw consequences for actions. They also acknowledged the need to look at the individual child displaying the bullying behaviours as there is usually more to the issue than just punishing the perpetrator to achieve a positive outcome. It was suggested that interventions that involved group sharing, such as a method of shared concern

and restorative justice circles, would only work with the victim speaking up. As this may not always happen these approaches were not popular with this group.

Mediation was strongly endorsed as the preferred intervention to deal with bullying conflict as it was a one on one approach. This was said to “give the victim the opportunity to be heard.” There was also the acknowledgement that the bully would have the opportunity to be heard in a mediation setting and this is important as they may also need help.

Strengthening the victim was an approach that this parent group endorsed as also being very important. One parent, in particular, had personal experience with bullying as she stated “I felt helpless to control the behaviours of the bully”. So she felt the need to empower my own son to deal with the conflict as parents cannot be there to protect their children on these occasions. When discussing this approach there was acknowledgement that while necessary to assist victims not to remain victims this did not deal with the source of the problem that being the bully and the bullying.

One parent with a legal background was more concerned with looking at the behaviours of the bullies. She viewed their actions as a lack of understanding the correct way to treat and act towards others. There was also the belief that the bullies were exposed to negativity and in need of help. She has specific experience in the mediation process in other conflict situations and recommended this process as a great direction as this is a positive process with a high success of positive outcomes. She claimed: "In my experience a mediation approach to conflict has a high success rate with adults as it is very fair and would be a good process to implement with conflict situations with children."

Much of the next part of the discussion was regarding the parents of bullies not accepting

that their child is bullying others. The school has then in the past suggested there is not much they can do to completely resolve the problem if the parents believe their children have done nothing wrong. The process towards a resolution breaks down without a collaborative approach from the school and home. It was suggested that parents of the victims need to be informed rather than involved, as they can be too emotional in these conflicts when it involves their own child.

When discussing this groups' opinions on the place of values in resolving these conflicts, the group collectively agreed that explicit values taught to perpetrators will instil a code of ethics that could see an improvement in the treatment of others. The specific values identified were care, compassion, respect, responsibility, understanding, tolerance, inclusion, justice, kindness and forgiveness.

4.1.3 Case Summary - School C

4.1.3.1 Principal Interview

This principal is in his late 40's, with 15 years experience as a school principal in three different schools. He has only held the position in this school for the past 2 years. During the interview we discussed the schools approach to unacceptable behaviour, dealing specifically with bullying conflicts and his opinion on a values based education approach to deal with bullying conflicts.

Theme 1: Approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviours

When discussing how this principal deals with unacceptable behaviours he stated:

This school relates any unacceptable behaviour back to the schools attitude towards pastoral care and well being. This school approach is heavily centered around 'Kids Matter'. With this approach, you are constantly working on building a sense of other

which is reinforced and reflected in the individual, the classroom and the whole school. As some children find it difficult to maintain positive behaviours towards others, messages of care for the well being of others are constantly reinforced to staff, parents and students, at every opportunity. It can take time to build a culture that is centered on the well being of others.

This principal also stated that: "Building a sense of others which leads to empathy towards others, is what I am trying to achieve". A values approach is already implicit in this school to achieve this expectation of acceptable behaviour through the teaching of socialisation skills.

Theme 2: Dealing with bullying conflict

When dealing specifically with bullying as opposed to negative behaviour, the following process is in place:

- 1) The first person to identify this bullying situation is usually the teacher.
- 2) The behaviour needs to be looked at as to whether it is deemed minor or major and this is then referred to and dealt with by the principal or assistant principal.
- 3) The principals approach from here is to use this as a learning opportunity for the perpetrator and this is how the process is communicated to students, teachers and parents.
- 4) This principal sees a need for consequences for the negative behaviour and community service is one used in this school.
- 5) A mentoring program from student to student and a community circle system (which involves a meeting with the victim, perpetrator and principal) both aim to develop empathy from the perpetrator and build a sense of other from the perpetrator towards the victim.
- 6) Responsibility for their actions and the reinforcement of "the golden rule of treating others as you want to be treated" is enforced.

This principal has taken components of a variety of interventions such as shared concern, restorative practice and mediation, to deal with bullying conflicts. He expressed a zero tolerance to bullying and has achieved the most success with a non-punitive approach with consequences. He believes it is important to learn positive behaviours as a result of these conflicts and sees all adult stakeholders, as in parents and teachers, as needing to assist and be supportive of the bully to achieve a greater degree of success in changing their behaviours and attitudes. The motto he quoted as relating to this belief was, "It's not the falling down that matters, but the getting up that counts."

Another strategy in this school to assist children in need of support was an identified list of vulnerable students at risk. These children may be withdrawn students needing to develop resilience or students displaying inappropriate behaviours towards others that need assistance to achieve positive behaviour changes. These students engage in activities such as weekly meditation and are known to all staff members.

Theme 3: Linking values education to bullying conflicts

In relation to the merit of a values education approach to bullying, this principal stated: "I would see explicit teaching of specific values to perpetrators as a way of assisting them to make positive behaviour changes towards others." The specific values identified by the principal at this school were care, compassion, integrity, respect, responsibility, understanding, tolerance, doing your best, fair go, honesty, love, hope, truth and wisdom.

Summary

There is a zero tolerance to bullying at this school and a non punitive restorative mediation approach with consequences is the preferred approach. The principal stated:

When dealing with a child displaying bullying behaviours there are factors, that need

to be taken into account, such as their past experiences, social skills and parenting.

When specifically looking at bullying conflicts, the victim needs to break the cycle of being a victim, bystanders need empowering and the bully needs to be educated in positive behaviours.

The principal expressed the need for the staff to have the opportunity to learn a structured system of behaviour management to have the confidence to deal with these conflicts. Staff in servicing needs to take place to ensure the consistency needed to successfully address bullying. He believes the process needs firm structure to work well. In regard to pastoral care and bullying, the principal commented:

Everything at the school is centered around relationships and the message conveyed to the children is that they are cared about. This message of pastoral care then needs to come through in them in the way they show care and concern for others and the aim is for this shared concern for others, to become part of the culture of the school.

There was a discussion regarding the new curriculum in reference to values education.

He stated that: "Values are more evident in the new curriculum, not only in Religion and Personal Development and Health, but also in English and Maths." For this reason, the principal sees this approach to bullying conflicts would be a good direction to take. He believes it is up to each school to extend the values education and can see the value in embedding these into the school behavioural policies.

4.1.3.2 Teacher Focus Group

This focus discussion group was comprised of eight teacher participants, one male and seven females. There was a broad variety of experience ranging from student teachers, still studying at university, to first year out teachers, to those staff with 20+ years experience.

Theme 1: Knowledge and use of bullying interventions

When asked about their knowledge of six specific interventions currently available to address bullying, 100% of the staff were unaware of these interventions. When presented with the interventions, most had heard of the traditional approach and the more experienced teachers had heard of the bullying triangle approach that aims to empower the bystanders.

Each teacher at this school deals with bullying conflict as they see fit at the time. All agreed on a zero tolerance to bullying in the school, but acknowledged that a positive approach to management of the bullying behaviour needs to be pursued as the traditional approach is not working. The teachers spoke of the PBL (Positive Behaviour for learning program) and the Kids Matter social and emotional well being initiative, that the staff were currently learning about and working with. According to one teacher: "These initiatives are being engaged in, as a staff, to work towards consistency of expectation and enforcement of positive behaviour, throughout the school".

Theme 2: Approach to dealing with bullying conflicts

All participants have had experience with students exhibiting bullying behaviours, yet there was the acknowledgement that there is no uniform approach to dealing with these bullying conflicts. The male participant within the group described his approach to bullying within his classroom as "approaching the conflict with the attitude of trying to solve a problem. We don't formally use the restorative practice model but some of our practices use the same strategies." He suggested the staff would like to see consistency of practice across the school. There was a discussion about a mentoring program in the school addressing a the list of

identified children at risk. These children are both victims, requiring the building of resilience and perpetrators needing help in social situations. There was an acknowledgement that it was often the bully that needed the most help.

When discussing personal experiences with bullying, one of the more experienced teachers shared her opinion based on this experience.

Fifteen years ago, I encountered a bully with extreme negative behaviours and whilst I agreed with supporting the victim, I always felt the approach was not doing this particular boy any favours. I suggested we needed to do something for this bully or he would go off to high school and continue with this behaviour pattern. I was told that we do not, as teachers, have the skills or resources and he should go to counselling. We need something in place here in the primary school at this age group level.

Another teacher talked about some identified students with bullying behaviours in this school. The school recommended to their parents that the family seek help with addressing the behaviours through parenting classes or counselling to address the source of the problem.

Theme 3: Teacher training and consistency of practice

The younger teachers talked about their training in behaviour management at university as being very general and hypothetical and have found the reality of dealing with these conflicts difficult. One teacher stated:

Every child and incident is different and cannot all be solved with the same approach. The university training does not really prepare us for dealing specifically with

bullying and I learnt learning more through experience on the job and the support of experienced teachers around me.

The staff as a whole were supportive of formal training in dealing with bullying conflicts just as we have formal in servicing for many other areas such as first aid and anaphylaxis. When elaborating on this a teacher commented:

Teachers need to be taught these skills as we are the ones with the relationship with the students and children are more likely to relate to their own teacher. As teachers it is up to us to ensure our students are learning and this will be compromised if they are socially unhappy so we need to arrest these unacceptable behaviours.

Theme 4: Values education opinions

There was a shared agreement in the teacher discussion group that not all children come to school exhibiting a positive set of values towards others. One of the teachers commented:

The values of a child that stem from home can often be different to what is expected at school. Some come to school believing they are the centre of the universe and the parents agree with them and enable this behaviour. We are then trying to change the behaviour of a whole family and this is a much harder thing to do in trying to change the behaviour of the child.

This teacher shared an example of a meeting with a parent of a child displaying intimidating, bullying behaviours and the parent justified the behaviour as merely trying to be a leader. In that situation the teacher thought that there was no support from the parents to the teacher and no accountability expected from the perpetrator as the unacceptable behaviours were justified by the parents.

This discussion of values then led to a shared agreement by the focus group that values need

to be explicitly taught to achieve positive behaviours towards others. This school targets a value each week that is identified and presented to the children at assembly and reinforced throughout each classroom for the week. Examples used were honesty and respect and these were also evidenced in the teachers behaviour towards the students, as part of the strategy to instil these values. The staff expressed their support of building on this approach with specific reference to explicit teaching to bullying perpetrators. One teacher stated:

There is a strong values based approach to learning already evident in the school culture so adding to this explicitly in teaching positive behaviours to bullies would be a good direction to take.

When presented with the National Framework of Values the staff were unfamiliar with the document. During a discussion of the document one of the teachers expressed strongly the view that care was the most important value in terms of care of self, as she believes that a bully often has low self esteem. In her view it was not only about care of others but also about the importance of caring for oneself. Another teacher felt respect was the most important as respect for oneself and others assists in building relationships. She added: "When respect is shown the care and compassion for others is a natural progression from there."

Understanding, tolerance and inclusion were seen as the next most important values. Other values that were identified by these teachers from a comprehensive list were equality, forgiveness, love and justice. Accepting people's differences was mentioned as important to live these values. Responsibility, as in taking ownership of actions, was also identified as important in the endeavour to solve bullying conflicts. Regarding responsibility and ownership, a teacher commented:

If a child is initially unable to see what they are doing towards others is disrespectful

or uncaring and take ownership of these behaviours, then they won't acknowledge they are doing anything wrong and changes in behaviour won't be made.

The staff believe they all need to be in-serviced on bullying approaches to achieve consistency throughout the school. A structured approach, such as mediation, where the children feel they are being listened to and taken seriously, was a direction supported by this teacher forum. It was seen as a way of both parties understanding how the other party felt. The group collectively felt this approach was a way of "putting themselves in the other persons shoes". Going to the source of the bullying and explicitly teaching values to the perpetrator was also agreed upon by this teacher group as a strategy to trial.

4.1.3.3 Parent Focus Group

This participants of this focus group was the current school board and was comprised of three female and two males, all with children attending the school. This group discussed the experiences and the beliefs they share on parents expectations of how schools should deal with bullying issues. Following this their views on a values based approach to these conflicts was discussed.

Theme 1: Parents expectations in dealing with bullying

The statement from Rigby (2010) was presented to this parent forum 'that parents feel frequently let down by the way bullying is dealt with in schools'. There was a shared view that we should not accept these inappropriate behaviours and parents want these problems rectified. Their thoughts on this statement were then discussed, with one parent suggesting:

Parents are never going to be satisfied with the handling of bullying in the schools unless there is vindication. This approach, however, doesn't fit well with the values a Catholic school promotes.

Parents expressed the need for an immediate response and action rather than what they view as a subtle approach towards the problem. In a Catholic context the group suggested we shouldn't accept negative behaviours but the reality in society is these behaviours exist. In regard to expectations when dealing with bullying one parent suggested:

We can't make everything right for children so we need to prepare them for the hurt there will be in the real world and I therefore feel very strongly about building resilience. We need to take the approach that these situations will arise and they are hurtful, but what can we do about and where do we need to go from here. We need to give strategies and tools to solve these conflicts.

The above justifies the need to build resilience in the victims and bystanders and the acknowledgement that this is being addressed in our schools, while also acknowledging the need to assist the bully to achieve behaviour changes.

An interesting comment made by one of the male participants in the focus group was that "victims can become bullies as a form of defence, so an avenue of exploration may be to look at the reasons why a person becomes a bully." Finding out what led to these negative behaviours is a strategy that correlates with the belief of dealing with the source of the problem as necessary. There was full support to assist the perpetrator as the negative behaviour can be "a cry for help".

All parent participants of the focus group agreed that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and "never ok" but suggest there are two sides to solving these conflicts. There is the need for resilience and confidence building for the victims and the need to assist the bully to achieve behaviour changes, as a bully could continue to move onto new victims. Building emotional intelligence is as important as developing a child's cognitive and personal growth. One parent

commented: "A curriculum involving values education is as important as a curriculum to build strategies to develop emotional intelligence."

There was a suggestion from one participant that "bullying can stem from childhood issues and family problems so the reality is we will probably never stamp out bullying. We need to re focus on giving children the tools to deal with this conflict." This parent suggested that "what you focus on is what you get so there should be a focus on positive behaviours." It was suggested it would then be good to evaluate the effect this approach has on the school.

Theme 2: Values based approach to bullying

An explicit values based approach as a strategy to achieve positive behaviours in conflict situations was a shared belief by this group. It was stated that bullies need to learn acceptable behaviours towards others. The values that were identified by the participants as important in achieving this were respect, understanding, tolerance, inclusion, responsibility, care and compassion. Empathy, kindness, justice and love were also consistent in the data.

In general, when asked for any final comments on finding a solution to bullying conflicts on parent stated:

As all children are different, some different approaches are needed. Strengthening victims is important and to identifying bullies is also important as we need to go to the source of the problem, to stop a bully moving on to other victims.

4.2 Analysis Between Schools Expanding on the Identified Themes

Subsequent to the analysis within each of the three schools a second qualitative analysis was carried out to articulate and compare the perceptions of the principals, teachers and parents across the three schools by the three participants that being principals, teachers and parents. The data was analysed to highlight the commonalities across all three schools.

4.2.1 Principal's Shared Beliefs and Perceptions across the Three Schools

Interviews in the three schools revealed the three principals shared some common views. When presented with the bullying topic all three principals described the incidence of bullying in their schools as low.

The three schools are within a ten kilometre radius in the same Catholic office of Education and the three principals meet for professional development. All principals across the three different schools endeavour to achieve positive behaviours towards others by engaging the whole school in the Protective Behaviour for Learning and Kids Matter programs.

Principals were also using what they described as a combination of the best strategies from a variety of non punitive approaches such as restorative justice, support group method and mediation. All principals were interested in learning more about the mediation approach and engaging their staff in awareness of the strategies of this practice. All would like to see their staff have the opportunity to engage in training or in servicing so the school can have consistency of practice in dealing with bullying conflict.

There was a shared view that explicit values education for the perpetrator would be a useful inclusion to embed in bullying conflicts. The common values that were identified by the principals as important to teach to achieve positive behaviour changes were respect,

understanding, tolerance, inclusion, responsibility, care and compassion.

4.2.2 Teacher's Shared Beliefs and Perceptions across the Three Schools

The majority of teacher participants were unaware of many of the widely used specific approaches to bullying conflicts specifically the current 6 bullying interventions as discussed by Rigby (2010). The responses from teachers regarding the lack of knowledge, training and confidence, confirms Boulton's (1997) study findings stating that generally teachers are not taught the strategies to deal with these bullying conflicts and regardless of teachers length of service and they are not confident in their own ability to deal with bullying and 87% wanted more training. Analysis of teacher's responses confirms a lack of knowledge of current approaches by teachers regardless of their years of experience particularly for those new to the teaching workforce. Most teacher interviewees revealed a need for a consistency of practice approach to bullying yet teachers all agreed on their being inconsistency of practice in these conflict situations.

Another strong theme emerging from the data was how teachers deal with the majority of bullying conflicts in their own way with little consistency across the school and some admitted to resorting to a punitive approach, out of frustration, even though they do not necessarily agree with it and know it does not really work.

There was a shared view of merit in teaching explicit values to children displaying bullying behaviours. Common values identified by all teacher participants were respect, understanding, tolerance, inclusion and giving everyone a fair go.

4.2.3 Parent's Shared Beliefs and Perceptions across the Three Schools

Parents across all focus groups expressed a zero tolerance to bullying and an expectation of immediate action to address incidents of bullying. All agreed that what is currently in place is not working and endorsed a mediation approach to conflict resolution.

Parents also expressed the desire for communication regarding bullying incidences identified at school and would like some ongoing assistance with how to deal work in partnership with the school to deal with these unacceptable behaviours at home.

A values based approach targeting the unacceptable behaviours was endorsed by all parent groups and the values identified by all parent participants were respect, understanding, tolerance, inclusion, responsibility, care, compassion, empathy, kindness, justice and love.

4.2.4 Summary of Themes across the Schools

One commonality across the three schools was a belief in the efficacy of a non punitive approach to address bullying. There were few significant differences between the beliefs of participants regarding the preferred intervention. Most were in favour of a mediation approach.

Teachers tend to create their own strategies such as withdrawing bullies and engaging them in mediation and restorative practices. They seem to use a mixture of strategies from current interventions without labelling them from a research perspective.

Explicit values education approach at the source of the conflict was a shared view. During data collection with all discussion groups, the value 'responsibility', was consistent in the dialogue from all participants. Common values identified by principals, teachers and parents from all three schools were respect, understanding, tolerance, inclusion, responsibility, care,

compassion and empathy.

It is interesting to note that the Kids Matter program makes mention of the values of respect and inclusion and these are both core values identified in The National Values Framework and also identified by all participants during data collection, as important to teach children in regard to the treatment of others.

Regardless of the amount of bullying experienced by discussion participants, all agreed there were only ever a small amount of perpetrators. This shared view is also evidenced in the literature by Rigby (2010) suggesting that even though a very high proportion of bullying cases occur in a school, there exists only a relatively small proportion of students who are perpetrators. This research gives strength to the suggestion that addressing the source and trying to achieve positive behaviour changes with the bully may have merit in arresting the increase in bullying incidence. The value of targeted interventions, at the source of the problem, have gained more attention, as educators search for highly efficient strategies for preventing and addressing problem behaviour (Crone, Hawken & Horner, 2010).

5. Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The interview and focus group discussions with principals, teachers and parents provided detailed responses to capture perceptions of the validity of a values-based education approach to enhance current bullying intervention practices. Due to the common themes that emerged from the case studies, the findings were presented as a comparison of the perceptions of the principals, teachers and parents beliefs, across the three schools.

Six obvious themes emerged from the data collected. These were consistent and evident in the data collected from the three schools. These findings are graphically represented below.

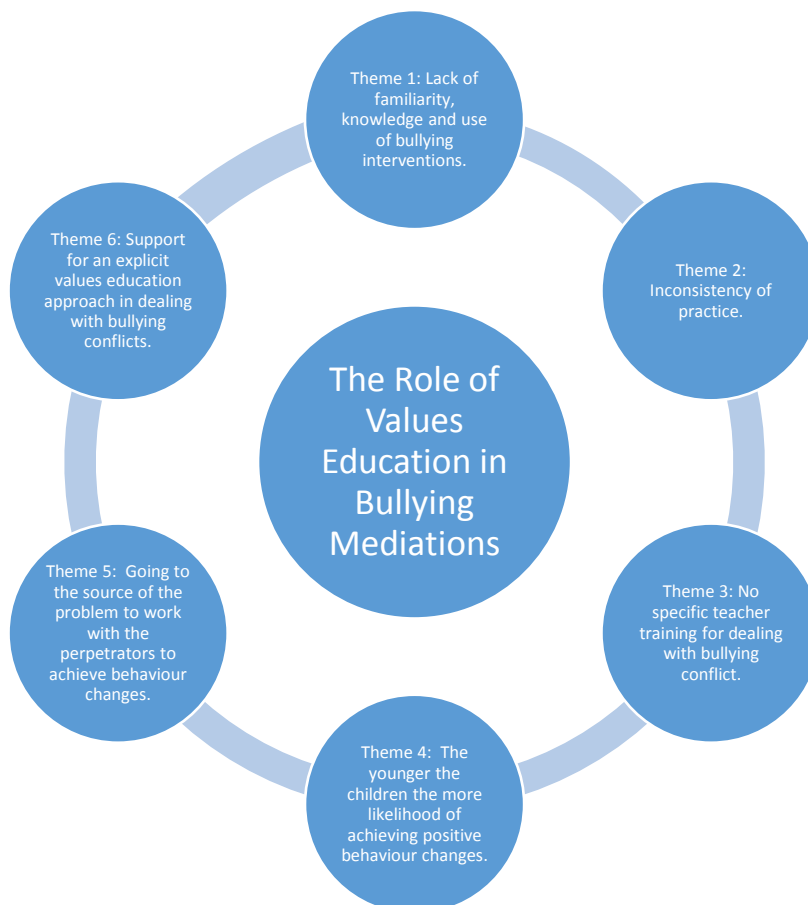


Figure 1. Emerging Research Themes

The first theme to emerge was a lack of familiarity, knowledge and use of a broad range of formal bullying interventions. Across the three schools, interventions were centred around mediation strategies and no much evidence was found about the other problem solving approaches discussed in the literature review. However, each school was engaged in PBL and Kids Matter behaviour models showing an attempt to a consistent approach to achieving acceptable behaviours in school. Given that the three schools were not familiar with a variety of interventions, making their staff familiar with those interventions would be a direction to take to achieve results in bullying conflicts. Some components of a few of the non punitive interventions, such as restorative practice and shared concern, were evident in only two of the three schools.

Inconsistency of practice, specific to bullying, was the second theme emerging from the data. Not only was their inconsistency of practice from school to school, but also within the school, from teacher to teacher and incident to incident despite principals' advocacy for greater uniformity. Such dissonance could be an indication that teachers have insufficient education, training and therefore knowledge and understanding, in dealing with bullying conflicts. This might also mean some teachers modify prescriptive strategies to suit their classroom contexts.

The data revealed a third theme expressed by all three schools regarding teacher training. It was established that there is no specific teacher training for dealing with bullying conflict either at college, university or in servicing in the school setting. This was consistent with current research by Cremin (2002) who suggests that very few teachers receive relevant training in mediation and conflict resolution. This view is likewise supported by Feinberg (2003) and Rigby (2010) whose research acknowledges the need for specific training to respond to these behaviours, as the average teachers knowledge and understanding of what can be done to address cases of bullying, is often severely limited.

Another common theme that emerged from the data was the likelihood of more success with addressing and arresting bullying behaviours and achieving positive behaviour changes if an intervention takes place at a young age and addresses the source of the problem. This suggests that bullying behaviours need to be arrested in primary school before they escalate and continue on into high school. This is a conclusion also supported by Crone, Hawken and Horner (2010) who agree there is greater success with behaviour modification in elementary aged students, supporting the claim that the younger the age of intervention, the greater the chance of success.

Going to the source of the problem and assisting the perpetrators with achieving positive changes was a strong common theme in the data corroborated by Crone, Hawken and Horner (2010). They acknowledged the value of interventions targeting the source of the problem which is the perpetrator. Many focus group participants spoke of the majority of interventions that are currently aimed at assisting the victims and bystanders in these conflicts, where often the bully is the person needing the assistance to achieve these necessary positive behaviour changes towards others. The acknowledgement of the need to address the source of the problem and work with the perpetrators to achieve positive behaviour changes was an approach endorsed by all participants on the study. Rather than accepting the negativity of bullying as something victims need to develop resilience towards, participants saw dealing with the issue as needing a two prong approach. We not only need to develop resilience in the victim but also go to the source and teach the values to the perpetrator that relate directly to the positive treatment of others.

Belsey (2004) reinforces this approach with the bully as he suggests bullying to be about human relationships, power and control. Those who bully others are trying to establish power

and control over victims they perceive to be weaker. Looking at why the bully treats others this way and assist the bully to make positive behaviour changes came through strongly in the data.

The final theme reflected in the data, was the support for explicit values education to be taught in order to achieve positive behaviour changes in perpetrators. This related well with the belief of going to the source of the problem and explicitly teaching these values to the perpetrators. A values based component involving values instruction for the perpetrators was embraced by all groups with some specific core values emerging from the data collected from all participating groups

The common values identified to teach explicitly in a social skills program capacity were respect, inclusion, care, compassion, tolerance and inclusion. It is interesting to note that the Kids Matter program makes mention of the values of respect and inclusion and these are both core values identified in The National Framework. These common values were also identified by all participants during data collection, as important to teach children in regard to the treatment of others. When discussing relevant values, responses revealed there were no major differences between the three groups as shown in Figure 2 and they were also very similar to the core values in the Framework.



Figure 2: The Values Identified in Preference Order.

5.2 Implications and Recommendations

A number of pedagogical implications on the role of values education in primary school bullying prevention and mediation are drawn from the results of the interview study. These implications relate to new perspectives on bullying interventions, conceptual obstacles in the teaching of values, values and the curriculum and the type of professional development recommended. In addition, implications for the students, parents and carers, and the school administration are discussed.

5.2.1 Professional Development

One of the main implications is the need to provide professional learning opportunities to assist teachers in developing bullying intervention skills according to their own classroom contexts. In general, the interviews in the study reflected the sentiment that an educational

rather than an exclusively punitive approach is preferred in dealing with bullying behaviours. Teachers reported using mostly mediation while combining that approach with others and/or creating new ones like the meditation groups. The latter confirms the concept that teachers adapt rather than adopt innovations. Principals reported promoting specific approaches but teachers seemed to interpret them within their own context giving a sense of inconsistency. What was actually happening is that teachers, were meaningfully engineering more effective approaches on the basis of already prescribed bullying intervention programs. It therefore, can be argued that absolute consistency is not the way to go from a professional learning approach.

5.2.2 Creating an Organic Anti-Bullying Culture

Principals should be able to celebrate individual innovation, recognise sharing and personal initiative rather than uniformity and imposition in order to create a rich anti-bullying culture in their schools. For example, workshops can be led by classroom teachers rather than outside experts, policy-making can include teachers, and sharing and discussion can be directed to facilitate organic growth rather than vertical imposition of methods. Teacher education for beginning teachers must be also introduced to establish these grass root cultures. They should be given opportunities to voice their views and contribute to existing interventions using their own understanding and experiences gained from both the school and the tertiary level. In addition, consultation with other schools where teachers can share their ideas, experiences and talents would help develop strategies and policies consistent across schools

5.2.3 Values in the Curriculum

Several obstacles appear to interfere in the process of teaching values associated to bullying interventions. While there was a commonality of core values drawn from the National

Framework that teachers were ready to espouse, religious education was considered as the most obvious relevant subject. The fragmentation of the school curriculum in areas like maths, science, English, religious education, among others, does not allow for the cross disciplinary delivery of values education. Also the curriculum does not give space to establish substantially the link between “being” and “doing” because the treatment of such human dynamics is not acknowledged at the lesson plan level. In secular curriculums where reason and logic are over celebrated and pragmatism is one of the main drivers, where basic numeracy and literacy skills are overemphasized and standardized assessment judge students’ worth through cold metrics, the teaching of values can become more a rhetorical exercise than a meaningful student learning experience. A living, rather than a didactical approach to values, is therefore recommended.

5.2.4 The Students’ Role

It should not be assumed that students come to school displaying an acceptable code of values in the positive treatment of others. How to teach values and translate values into practice is an area needing further development. For instance, the explicit teaching of these in a social skills program is recommended (Rigby, 2010) because values will be taught in a context. These experiences must make use of modern approaches such as role-play, group reflection and gaming digital environments. Students can also be encouraged to present about bullying issues to their peers, be members of the anti-bullying school committee, be trained as mediators, or involved them in mentoring groups (student-to-student), in order to make them active rather than passive recipients in any intervention.

5.2.5 Parents and Carers

Likewise, families can reinforce the message that values cannot be taught in isolation to the extent that values are living ideas. Parents and careers can help modelling specific values at home and reflecting on them with their children, as recommended by Feinberg (2003).

Parents not only need to be informed of policies and procedures but must be involved in their making as school stakeholders. They should be able to voice their opinions on the implementation of anti-bullying programs and, furthermore, participate and deliver them hand-in-hand with teachers to show the message that values are not cognitive but affective concepts supported by the whole community. For example, along with their children, parents and carers can develop the code of conduct as personal responsibility comes with a sense of ownership. Schools can also conduct parenting programs where parents/carers are taught new skills to educate their children in bullying issues. Similarly, forums where parents/carers, students and teachers can be facilitated to create more awareness on the dangers of bullying in schools. Likewise, time and funding may be better spent on supporting and assisting families of the perpetrators to achieve behaviour changes rather than allowing this cycle of repetitive unacceptable behaviour towards others reach the stage where the victims need funding for psychological help and in recent times or financial payouts for psychological damage.

5.2.6 The School Role

Inter-collaboration among neighbouring schools is a dimension exploited very rarely. Giving that participating schools in this study have in common significant socio-economic variables and demographics, so they should share their expertise, experiences and resources gained during their journeys. It is envisioned that from these strategic partnerships, opportunities for professional development, curriculum development, anti-bullying weeks, parents and

students initiated activities and other cluster events will emerge given a sense of community and universal participation (Snyder & Bardi, 1995). Partnering with universities and non-governmental organisations would greatly empower the school capacity to respond to bullying situations as a whole. Another important direction for the schools is, given the amount of mortalities associated with bullying, the instigation of programs that teach help-seeking behaviours. It is about assisting, both children at risk as well as the whole cohort, and providing information about children public help lines. But it is also about helping the bully to achieve behaviour changes (Stop Bullying Now, 2012) acknowledging that he/she also requires counselling assistance for the sake of his/her own welfare but more importantly, for the wellbeing of the victim.

5.2.7 Going to the Source

The data collected from participants strongly endorsed working with the bully and providing support in order to alleviate his/her condition. Snyder and Bardi (1995) agree that more comprehensive programs are needed to prevent and assist children with anti-social behavioural patterns. There is a need to help the bully in achieving behaviour changes, as supported by Stop Bullying Now Website (2012) because of its negative impact not only on the victim but also on the whole school community. The increase in the incidence of bullying and the future negative social implications for all involved in these conflicts are significant reasons for the need to work with bullies to find a solution to this issue particularly through a values based social skills program. Horner and Hawken (2003), Peplar, Craig, Zeigler and Charach, (2001) and Rigby (2010) all agree that comprehensively targeting the perpetrator is a meaningful strategy for changing behaviour patterns.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study was the fact the perspectives were collected from three Catholic Systemic Schools in the same Diocese and within a ten kilometre radius of one another. Catholic schools were chosen as they have a strong religious oriented curriculum that promotes spiritual values which in turn influence or make more pertinent approaching bullying from a values perspective. Hence the generalisation of the data is restricted by the religious context of these schools which at the same time are geographically located in the middle class metropolitan area. The study therefore did not include public schools posing a limitation to the generalization of results.

Purposive sampling was undertaken as all three school participate in the Kids Matter and PBL behaviour programs thus enabling comparisons to be made. This gives greater depth to the study but lesser breadth.

5.4 Further Research

Based on the responses of the participants, the study suggests further exploration of mediation around a set of explicit values. The components of other non-punitive restorative practice approaches would best support a mediation intervention when seeking a combination of the successful aspects of the current approaches. For example, the friendship audit strategy employed by school A correlates well with explicit values education. Through that methodology, children are presented with written surveys and asked to identify anonymously identify children in the school that display repeated unacceptable behaviours, such as bullying. These students are then specifically targeted to engage in a social skills program where such values as tolerance, inclusion, respect and caring for others is taught by the school special needs learning support staff.

To increase the generalisability of the data, it would be beneficial to extend the study to state and independent private schools encompassing a variety of districts and zones. It may also be useful to compare city regions as opposed to country areas. As the study only used data from primary schools, ideas and experiences were limited to parents and educators of students aged from five to twelve years. It would be useful to collect data in high schools to extract their beliefs and practices about the nature of bullying interventions, practices and values education, as it applies to bullying behaviours.

Given that values are to be manifested inside and outside the school building, some questions remain: How can we assess them to measure the efficacy of a program? Shall we teach values in a spiral or a modular format? How to reach a consensus among parents/carers, teachers and students about which values to target? Should we deal with values in isolation or combine them with others? How are we going to relate the *know-what* (content) with the *know-how* (skills) and the *know-why* (values and dispositions)? Should values be taught separately in bullying prevention programs, and if not, what weight should be allocated among these three elements? The need to respond to the issues was perceived in the interview and warrants further discussion to integrate more effectively values into the curriculum. Developing a curriculum to embed the identified Framework values into new bullying strategies and policies is also an area for further research.

As data only involved the perceptions and experiences of adult groups comprising principals, teachers and parents, a valuable addition to the data would be the perspectives of students. This could also be extended to participants of varying ages, cultures and socio economic backgrounds. Similarly, since the review of literature on bullying interventions uncovered a gap in the evaluation of the of these current interventions there is a need for further research on the success of these methods of approach. Relating values education explicitly to bullying

conflict resolution was also absent in the literature so it would also be a direction for further research.

Extending the study to take the values education proposal from identification of relevant values to how one teaches these values, as a defence against the development of a bullying culture, would be a useful direction to take. If values are to have an impact on motivation to action, they must be seen as their role as virtues, attitudes and habits.

6. Appendix

6.1 Interview guide questions

These questions are to establish the topic for the participants and provide initial data for comparison and contrast. They vary for each of the participant focus groups.

Principal

- 1) What anti-bullying interventions are currently in place in their school and with how much success?
- 2) What do you see as the best approach to deal with bullying?
- 3) Describe behaviour management strategies currently in place in the school.
- 4) How does the school engage in any Values Education?
- 5) The Australian National Framework for Values Education recommend nine core values be explicitly embedded into the fabric of schools to enhance moral development of the students?
How would you see teaching these in direct reference to bullying conflict resolution?
- 6) Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations?

Teacher

- 1) What anti-bullying interventions are you aware of and are any of these currently in place in your school and with how much success?
- 2) What experiences have you had in dealing with bullying conflicts? What do you see as the best approach to deal with bullying?
- 3) What consistency of practice is evident in this school?
- 4) In terms of knowledge and training, how equipped do you feel, to effectively deal with bullying conflicts?
- 5) What type of values education does the school engage in?
- 6) Describe values you perceive as being an important inclusion in teaching students how to

treat others to achieve positive behaviour changes in bullying conflicts?

7) Are you aware of the Australian National Values Framework for values education and the values they recommend be explicitly embedded into the fabric of schools to enhance moral development of the students? Which of these nine core values do you see as relevant to teach in achieving positive behaviours towards others ?

Parent

- 1) What do you see as the best approach to deal with bullying?
- 2) Are you aware of the current bullying interventions in the school?
- 3) Do you feel values education is important to teach in schools in relation to dealing with bullying conflicts?
- 4) Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations?

General discussion questions for focus groups

Below are the areas proposed to all focus groups to engage participants in a discussion to provide data for rich description.

- 1) Have you encountered bullying situations? Describe how you and others involved, handled these situations. (Principals, teachers and parent's handled them.)
- 2) Ask the groups to share their ideas on how one should deal with bullying.
- 3) Present approaches currently in practice in the Education system. Discuss which approaches you see as most useful and why.
- 4) Discuss their opinions on the benefits and negatives of a punitive and non-punitive approach.
- 5) Regarding their experience and opinions on some of these punitive and non-punitive

approaches, what strategies or programs do you feel would be best to employ in bullying situations? Present the idea of mediation. It is currently carried out from student to student.

6) What are your thoughts on teacher mediations with victims and bullies?

7) Present the 'Bullying Triangle' bullying approach. Discuss it and its worth. Should we aim to empower bystanders and victims or look at working through the issues of the bullies?

8) Consider this list of values (Present the participants with a list of core values and virtues).

9) Discuss what core values you feel are important to teach children to instil the correct behaviour towards others?

10) Look at the 'Australian National Values Framework' list of values that are considered important to be taught in schools. Which would you see as important in teaching our students to directly apply to conflict/bullying situations?

11) In relation to relevant Values, should schools look at teaching values in general education to embed them in the culture of the school, to reduce bullying conflict, or should values be specifically focused on in bullying mediations?

12) Consider some of these bullying behaviour programs that have been presented and discuss those that you feel may best suit the values Education approach?

13) Why do you think students are not exercising values in bullying situations? Do they need to be taught implicitly as a values education program throughout the school or taught explicitly in conflict bullying situations?

6.2 Participant Information Sheets



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Interview Participant Information Sheet

Dear Principal

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in an interview study about perceptions of values that would be worthwhile teaching to improve behaviours of students towards others in bullying situations. The findings will be collated for the purpose of a research paper. It would be greatly appreciated if you could present the research project information to teaching staff and parents regarding their valued participation in focus group discussions to include their input.

The interview will take approximately one hour. Specific information about individual participants and schools will be *kept strictly confidential*. The findings that are published will not reference any individual teacher or school since the study will only analyse relationships among groups of data. Your consent is strictly voluntary without undue influence or penalty and you can withdraw from the study at any time.

The interview will focus on the questions below (although not limited to):

- 1) What anti-bullying interventions are currently in place in their school?
- 2) Does the school engage in any Values Education?
- 3) Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations?
- 4) Are you aware of the Australian National Framework for Values Education and the values they recommend be explicitly embedded into the fabric of schools to enhance moral development of the students?

Interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher for analysis. Only the researcher will have access to the data and no identifying material will be kept with the transcriptions. Your privacy will be maintained at all times. If any comments are used in subsequent University presentations or professional publications, these will be anonymous. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any prejudice. If you have any complaint regarding the manner in which the project is conducted, you can contact the HREC Executive Officer, Research Office, The University of Notre Dame Sydney. The researcher is

Janine Brown, Master of Philosophy student at Notre Dame in Sydney, available at janine.brown@nd.edu.au Ph: 0402016388. My research supervisor is Dr Boris Handal available at boris.handal@nd.edu.au Phone number is (02)82044225.

Without your help, this important research cannot be completed.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Janine Brown



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Interview Participant Information Sheet

Dear Teacher

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a focus group interview study about perceptions of values that would be worthwhile teaching to improve behaviours of students towards others in bullying situations. The findings will be collated for the purpose of a research paper.

The interview will take approximately one hour. Specific information about individual participants and schools will be *kept strictly confidential*. The findings that are published will not reference any individual teacher or school since the study will only analyse relationships among groups of data. Your consent is strictly voluntary without undue influence or penalty.

The interview will focus on the questions below (although not limited to):

- 1) What anti-bullying interventions are currently in place in their school and with how much success? Does the school engage in any Values Education?
- 2) Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations?
- 3) Are you aware of the Australian National Framework for Values Education and the values they recommend be explicitly embedded into the fabric of schools to enhance moral development of the students?

Interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher for analysis. Only the researcher will have access to the data and no identifying material will be kept with the transcriptions. Your privacy will be maintained at all times. If any comments are used in subsequent University presentations or professional publications, these will be anonymous. Approximately 8 to 10 teachers will be present. If you have any complaint regarding the manner in which the project is conducted, you can contact the HREC Executive Officer, Research Office, The University of Notre Dame Sydney. The researcher is Janine Brown, Master of Philosophy student at Notre Dame in Sydney, available at janine.brown@nd.edu.au Ph: 0402016388. My research supervisor is Dr Boris Handal available at boris.handal@nd.edu.au Phone number is (02)82044225.

I would very much appreciate your valuable insight so if you are interested in participating in this research please show expression of interest to your principal.

Without your help, this important research cannot be completed.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Janine Brown

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Interview Participant Information Sheet

Dear Parent

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a focus group interview study about perceptions of values that would be worthwhile teaching to improve behaviours of students towards others in bullying situations. The findings will be collated for the purpose of a research paper.

The interview will take approximately one hour. Specific information about individual participants and schools will be *kept strictly confidential*. The findings that are published will not reference any individual teacher or school since the study will only analyse relationships among groups of data. Your consent is strictly voluntary without undue influence or penalty.

The interview will focus on the questions below (although not limited to):

- 1) Are you aware of the current bullying interventions in the school?
- 2) Do you feel values education is important to teach in school?
- 3) Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations?

Interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher for analysis. Only the researcher will have access to the data and no identifying material will be kept with the transcriptions. Your privacy will be maintained at all times. If any comments are used in subsequent University presentations or professional publications, these will be anonymous. Approximately 8 to 10 parents will be present.

If you have any complaint regarding the manner in which the project is conducted, you can contact the HREC Executive Officer, Research Office, The University of Notre Dame Sydney. The researcher is Janine Brown, Master of Philosophy student at Notre Dame in Sydney available at janine.brown@nd.edu.au Ph: 0402016388. My research supervisor is Dr Boris Handal available at boris.handal@nd.edu.au Phone number is (02)82044225.

I would very much appreciate your valuable insight so if you are interested in participating in this research please discuss your inclusion in the group discussion with your principal.

Without your help, this important research cannot be completed.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

6.3 Interview Schedules



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Principals Interview Schedule

Project Title: The Role of Values in Primary School Bullying Prevention and Mediation

Proposed interview questions may differ slightly from those listed below. Date, time and place of the interview will be negotiated between the researcher and principal of the school.

Introduction:

Inform principals that the purpose of this interview is to explore the current anti-bullying interventions in place in their school and discuss the role embedding values education make play in developing a non-bullying culture in schools. An insight into the specific types of values will be sought in the interviews. As part of the project emerging case studies will be characterised indicating appropriate legal procedures to follow.

Stress that there are no right or wrong answers. It is each principal's opinions that are valuable. We do not know the answers, and we are hoping they can help us understand the issues we ask about.

Inform them that their identity will never be revealed. Ask what alias they want me to use when reporting on their data. Write alias name beside their real name on your information sheet.

Stress that a copy of the interview transcript will be sent to them, so they can change anything, or remove any information they want to.

Ask if they mind taping the interview, so we will be accurate in reporting what they say. This is because everything they say is very important, and we simply cannot write fast enough, but don't want to miss anything they say. Anything they do not want reported they can preface with "this not to be quoted".

Start tape recorder: Say "Interview with ___ (alias) on ___ (date)."

Questions:

- 1) What anti-bullying interventions are currently in place in their school?
- 2) Does the school engage in any Values Education?
- 3) Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations?
- 4) Are you aware of the Australian National Framework for Values Education and the values they recommend be explicitly embedded into the fabric of schools to enhance moral development of the students?



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Teacher Interview Schedule

Project Title: The Role of Values in Primary School Bullying Prevention and Mediation

Proposed interview questions may differ slightly from those listed below. Date, time and place of the interview will be negotiated between the researcher and teachers at the school

Introduction:

Inform teachers that the purpose of this interview is to explore the current anti-bullying interventions in place in their school and discuss the role embedding values education make play in developing a non-bullying culture in schools. An insight into the specific types of values will be sought in the interviews. As part of the project emerging case studies will be characterised indicating appropriate legal procedures to follow.

Stress that there are no right or wrong answers. It is each teacher's opinions that are valuable. We do not know the answers, and we are hoping they can help us understand the issues we ask about.

Inform them that their identity will never be revealed. Ask what alias they want me to use when reporting on their data. Write alias name beside their real name on your information sheet.

Stress that a copy of the interview transcript will be sent to them, so they can change anything, or remove any information they want to.

Ask if they mind taping the interview, so we will be accurate in reporting what they say. This is because everything they say is very important, and we simply cannot write fast enough, but don't want to miss anything they say. Anything they do not want reported they can preface with "this not to be quoted".

Start tape recorder: Say "Interview with ___ (alias) on ___ (date)."

Questions:

- 1) What anti-bullying interventions are currently in place in their school and with how much success?
- 2) Does the school engage in any Values Education?
- 3) Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations?
- 4) Are you aware of the Australian National Framework for Values Education and the values they recommend be explicitly embedded into the fabric of schools to enhance moral development of the students?



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Parent Interview Schedule

Project Title: The Role of Values in Primary School Bullying Prevention and Mediation

Please find below proposed interview questions. Interview questions may differ slightly from those listed below. Date, time and place of interviews are to be confirmed with parents from the school. Introduction:

- Inform parents that the purpose of this interview is to explore the current anti-bullying interventions in place in their school and discuss the role embedding values education make play in developing a non-bullying culture in schools. An insight into the specific types of values will be sought in the interviews. As part of the project emerging case studies will be characterised indicating appropriate legal procedures to follow.
- Stress that there are no right or wrong answers. It is each parents opinions that are valuable. We do not know the answers, and we are hoping they can help us understand the issues we ask about.
- Inform them that their identity will never be revealed. Ask what alias they want me to use when reporting on their data. Write alias name beside their real name on your information sheet.
- Stress that a copy of the interview transcript will be sent to them, so they can change anything, or remove any information they want to.
- Ask if they mind taping the interview, so we will be accurate in reporting what they say. This is because everything they say is very important, and we simply cannot write fast enough, but don't want to miss anything they say. Anything they do not want reported they can preface with "this not to be quoted".
- Start tape recorder: Say "Interview with ___ (alias) on ___ (date)."

Questions:

1. Are you aware of the current bullying interventions in the school?
2. Do you feel values education is important to teach in school?
3. Describe values you perceive as being a valuable inclusion in teaching students how to treat others in bullying situations.

6.4 Consent Forms



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Principal Perceptions of Values in Bullying Mediations

I agree to participate in this research after having read the Information Sheet. Any questions I had about the research have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that the interview will be audio-taped.

I, (participant's name) _____ agree to participate in the above research project.

- I have read and understood the Information Sheet about this project and any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I may withdraw from participation in the project at any time without prejudice.
- I understand that the interview will be taped
- I understand that all information gathered by the researcher will be treated as strictly confidential.
- I agree that any research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not disclosed.

YOUR NAME

SIGNATURE

RESEARCHER'S NAME DATE.....

SIGNATURE DATE.....

Thank you for your participation.



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Teacher Perceptions of Values in Bullying Mediations

I agree to participate in this research after having read the Information Sheet. Any questions I had about the research have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that the interview will be audio-taped.

I, (participant's name) _____ agree to participate in the above research project.

- I have read and understood the Information Sheet about this project and any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I may withdraw from participation in the project at any time without prejudice.
- I understand that I can stop my participation in the focus group at any time if I do not wish to continue, however, as it is a focus group discussion it will not be possible to erase my participation to that point.
- I understand that all information gathered by the researcher will be treated as strictly confidential.
- I understand that the interview will be taped
- I agree that any research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not disclosed.

YOUR NAME

SIGNATURE

RESEARCHER'S NAME DATE.....

SIGNATURE DATE.....

Thank you for your participation.



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Parent Perceptions of Values in Bullying Mediations

I agree to participate in this research after having read the Information Sheet. Any questions I had about the research have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that the interview will be audio-taped.

I, (participant's name) _____ agree to participate in the above research project.

- I have read and understood the Information Sheet about this project and any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I may withdraw from participation in the project at any time without prejudice.
- I understand that I can stop my participation in the focus group at any time if I do not wish to continue, however, as it is a focus group discussion it will not be possible to erase my participation to that point.
- I understand that all information gathered by the researcher will be treated as strictly confidential.
- I understand that the interview will be taped
- I agree that any research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not disclosed.

YOUR NAME

SIGNATURE

RESEARCHER'S NAME DATE.....

SIGNATURE DATE.....

Thank you for your participation.

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