Cyberbullying – Instructional Approaches by Middle School Teachers

By

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Abstract

With the recent increase of technological advancements and its use in and outside of the classroom, cyberbullying is a problem many teachers and parents must deal with today as a result. Research surrounding anti-bullying programs concerning cyberbullying has been limited and scarce because of its recent emergence. The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine how middle school teachers are being instructionally responsive to cyberbullying. My data consisted of two semi-structured informal interviews with a teacher and itinerary guidance counselor. Both have had many years of experience with not only dealing with cyberbullying but also anti-bullying instruction. The findings highlighted the importance and combined role of school staff, parents and students in preventing bullying of any kind, and the importance of fostering empathy in the classroom.

Key Words: Cyberbullying, Anti-bullying instruction, Empathy.
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Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

With the recent proliferation of technological advancements and increased use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Ask FM. The global community is not what it used to be 10 to 15 years ago. “A review of the literature published in 2010 showed that no articles referenced ‘cyberbullying’ before 2004, confirming its recent emergence” (Peebles, 2014, p. 527). Although the recent increase in global technology has its benefits within the classroom, it also has its associated risks (Jones, 2013). Cyberbullying is often cited as a catalyst or contributor to several high-profile suicides of young students (Peebles, 2014, p. 527). One unfortunate teen suicide in particular, sparked conversations surrounding the negative implications of cyberbulllying around the world. Amanda Todd, a 15 year old teen from British Columbia, committed suicide after intimate images of her were circulated online (CBC News, 2014). Peer victimization or cyberbullying has been one unfortunate result of this increased access to technology (Gaa, Jackson, Olenchak, Dempsey, & Smith, 2012). Bullying is an ongoing issue within schools, however with the introduction of technology, bullying has evolved in many ways. In school bullying results in students being ignored, teased, and even physically hurt, however these occurrences are easily controlled by administrators and parents because they take place on school property (Jones, 2013). With the increase of technology use on and off school property, cyberbullying has increased as well. It has become increasingly difficult for teachers and administrators to control it, especially when the bully can be anywhere in cyberspace (Jones, 2013). According to Belsey (2007) cyberbullying is defined as: “the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others” (Froese-Germain, 2008, p. 47). In contrast, Feinberg and Robey (2009) define cyberbullying as a process
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that “involves sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the Internet (e.g., instant messaging, e-mails, chat rooms, and social networking sites) or other digital communication devices, such as cell phones” (Feinberg, Robey, 2009). Although, “There is no universally accepted definition; most definitions describe a repeated activity conducted via electronic means with an intent to cause psychological torment” (Peebles, 2014, p. 527). In my research paper I hope to examine the various preventative and instructional strategies teachers are using to address the issues of cyberbullying within the classroom.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to hear teachers’ perspectives on student cyberbullying behavior and to learn from them how they are being instructionally responsive to cyberbullying. According to Slovak and Singer (2011), “Cyberbullying has been estimated to have affected as many as 29 percent of youth Internet users. Victims of Cyberbullying have reported negative physical, social, and psychological problems, such as extreme stress, being upset, fear, and depressive symptomology” (p. 5-6). The recent increases in youth suicidal rates have also gone up as a result of cyberbullying (Slovak, & Singer, 2011).

In a Canadian study published in 2010 involving over 2000 students in grades 6, 7, 10 and 11, 25% reported experiencing a cyberbullying event in the previous three months. Eight percent reported acting as a cyberbully, and 25% reported being both a cyberbully and cyberbully victim (Peebles, 2014, p. 527).

With the growing concerns of cyberbullying my research will answer the following question:

How are middle school teachers being instructionally responsive to cyberbullying?

1.3 Research Questions

Some sub-questions that will help answer my research question are:
1. What preventative strategies are teachers incorporating in their pedagogy to respond to the issue of cyberbullying?

2. How do these teachers reactively respond to incidents of cyberbullying through their instruction?

3. What evidence of effectiveness do these teachers observe their instruction having on students’ cyberbullying behaviors?

4. What factors effect student engagement in cyberbullying?

5. What role do staff and parents play when dealing with issues surrounding cyberbullying?

1.4 **Background of the Researcher**

The recent increase in teen suicide has been an issue that has affected me to a great deal. I personally encountered bullying when I was in middle school and high school. At first the bullying began with some teasing, racial and Islamophobic remarks, however the bullying quickly became physical. When I entered high school the bullying I had encountered was much more different because it had transitioned online. Having the unfortunate experience of dealing with cyberbullying I was left to deal with the negative effects of bullying on my own. I had personal information and pictures that were circulated online and I did not know what to do about it. Feelings of hopelessness, sadness and anxiety were emotions that I became familiar with quickly as a result of the bullying. I had also encountered bullying from my grade 11 chemistry teachers. It is very easy I think for people to assume that students are the only people who can bully you on school premises, however, unfortunately teachers and administrative staff can also partake in bullying behavior. I had attended an all girls private school which was fairly small. I had about 18 students in my class. At first the bullying was subtle, my teacher would pass smart remarks and refer to me as “this student.” However, everyone in my class knew she
was referring to me. The detrimental effects quickly showed in my grades. I went from having an A- in chemistry to gradually failing and receiving a D. I had developed severe anxiety, poor self-esteem and self-confidence, as a result. My classmates knew what was happening but no one ever spoke about it, especially because they were afraid their grades would be impacted if they did. Watching recent news reports of teen suicides as a result of bullying and cyberbullying resonated with me to a great deal. The emotions these poor students were experiencing were emotions and feelings I had experienced as well. Not ever having teachers effectively dealing with the issue affected me greatly. Not only was my social life affected but my self-esteem was as well. I developed a strong connection to students who experienced similar acts of bullying. As a future educator it is important for me to understand the strategies teachers are using to help limit and prevent cyberbullying and bullying of any kind. It is also important for me to understand what teachers are doing to help students who are dealing with the negative after-effects of bullying. Through my research I hope to develop a better understanding of what preventative strategies teachers use within the classroom to help deal with the issue of cyberbullying.

1.5 Overview

Chapter 1 includes an introduction to my study and the purpose of the study, the research questions, as well as how I came to be involved in this topic and study. The second chapter of my research paper is a review of the literature on the issue of cyberbullying within middle school classrooms. Chapter three discusses my methodology, the procedure, information about the sample participants, and the instruments used to collect data. Chapter 4 identifies the participants in the study and describes the data as it addresses the research question. Chapter 5
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includes limitations of the study, conclusions, recommendations for practice, and further reading and study. References and a list of appendixes follow at the end.
Chapter 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

While there are a variety of different instructional strategies and school programs outlined in the literature concerning cyberbullying, this chapter examines a few programs and preventative strategies that may be conducive to teachers when addressing bullying related issues online. I have arranged the literature into the following themes and sub themes:

2.1 Negative Effects of Cyberbullying

2.1.1 The Victim and The Bully

2.2 General Measures to Cope with and Prevent Cyberbullying

2.2.1 Fostering Empathy

2.3 Authoritative Intervention

2.3.1 The Role of the Parents

2.3.2 The role of administrators and the school

2.4 Anti-Bullying Programs

2.5 Bill 13

I begin this chapter by examining literature that relates to the negative effects of bullying not only for the victim but also for the bully. I then move on to discussing preventative measures teachers can use in their instructional practice when addressing cyberbullying. I then address the different ways teachers are creating inclusive and empathetic classroom environments. I look at literature that examines the role of parents and school staff in promoting a safe and cyberbully-free zone on and off school property. I also considered literature on anti-bullying programs and their effectiveness and legislation on cyberbullying in Ontario. The reason why I looked on literature in these specific areas is because, in order to inform my own teaching I wanted to look
at what teachers are already doing and what parents and administrative staff are doing to help address the issues of cyberbullying.

2.1 **Negative effects of Cyberbullying**

2.1.1 The Victim and the Bully

There is substantial research and evidence on the negative implications of cyberbullying on the person being bullied and the victim (Froese-Germain, 2008). Cyberbullying affects both the emotional and psychological well being of both the victim and the bully (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012, p. 24). According to Froese-Germain (2008) Depression and suicide are the two main effects of cyberbullying. The media coverage on the recent increase in teen suicide as a result of cyberbullying has increased in the past few years (Froese-Germain, 2008). As mentioned above, teen suicide, is one of the unfortunate cases that are associated with incidents surrounding cyberbullying. It is important to recognize, however, that suicide amongst youth is not solely due to cyberbullying (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012). Students may have an underlying condition such as depression, which may be heightened as a result of being bullied online, and therefore lead to the student committing suicide (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012). Although suicide is an unfortunate consequence of bullying in some cases, it is important to not disregard other unfavourable affects of cyberbullying, According to Slovak and Singer (2011), “Victims of cyberbullying have reported negative physical, social, and psychological problems, such as extreme stress, being upset, fear, and depressive symptomology” (p. 6).

Although Froese-Germain discusses the negative implications of cyberbullying for the victims they do not discuss the personality traits, motivations and implications for the bully. This is important because it helps teachers and students better understand why students may act out and bully other students. Recognizing these traits in students who bully others may help teachers
implement certain preventative techniques to help students be responsible digital citizens before situations may potentially get worse. Sticca and colleagues (2013) not only outline the implications of cyberbullying for the victims but also for the bully and the personality traits, and motivations of the bullies. This is helpful for teachers in particular so that they can recognize key warning signs of a student who is the bully and a student who is a victim of cyberbullying. Some of this behavior as outlined by Sticca et al. (2013) Include: rule breaking behavior, moral disengagement, lack of empathetic concern and lack of self-esteem. The negative effects of cyberbullying for both the victim and the bully increase with the frequency and duration of the bullying (Peebles, 2014, p. 527). Victims who endure cyberbullying frequently experience a decline in academic performance, begin lashing out, have increased anxiety and even experience difficulties at home (Peebles, 2014, p.527). Students who cyberbully suffer behavioral difficulties such as lack of remorse, low grades, truancy, emotional difficulties and depression than children who are not involved in cyberbullying behaviour (Peebles, 2014, p.527). “One study has shown that children who act as cyberbullies are also at increased risk for suicide, although they score lower on measures of suicidal ideation than their victims” (Peebles, 2014, p.527).

2.2 General Measures to Cope with and Prevent Cyberbullying

There are a variety of preventative school strategies that are available that help address cyberbullying and bullying issues. Hurley (2004) outlines the practical measures that can be taken in order to reduce cyberbullying. Some strategies Hurley (2004) suggests are: protecting one’s personal information, avoiding unknown messages, blocking messages, avoiding response to bullying behavior, gathering evidence (messages and pictures), reporting incidents to school and other authorities and making the reporting process more accessible. Although Hurley
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provides helpful tips students and teachers can use for cyberbullying prevention, he fails to mention how schools’ administrators and educators are working to use these strategies particularly for a teachers instructional practice. Another preventative measure that some educators may think is helpful are punitive measures. The Ontario Ministry of Education has created a plan not only to prevent negative behavior among students but also promote positive behavior in the classroom. This methodology is a progressive discipline approach which “includes promoting positive student behavior, preventing inappropriate behavior, providing more supports to students, and offering administrators discretion in determining disciplinary actions after their consideration of the circumstances surrounding the misbehavior” (Winton, 2013, p. 483-484). Most teachers report that components of this approach are implemented in their schools to a certain degree Winton, 2013, p. 483-484). However, advocates for supporting students who at risk for bullying behavior, call for a more universal approach to preventing cyberbullying (Winton, 2013, p. 491). These prevention programs involve student mentoring, tutoring programs, extra-curricular activities, character education, bullying prevention and opportunities for them to take on leadership roles (Winton, 2013, p. 491). The Seattle school curriculum uses a different strategy, that they claim to be promising when preventing cyberbullying (Holladay, 2001, p. 7). They implement the following four preventative strategies when dealing with cyberbullying:

- Debunking misperceptions about digital behavior,
- Building empathy and understanding,
- Teaching online safety skills,
- Equipping young people with strategies to reject digital abuse in their lives (Holladay, 2001, p. 7).

Although the researchers above have addressed many ways in which educators and staff can prevent cyberbullying and bullying from happening, they did not discuss ways in which students can help. The reason why youth involvement is a key element to preventing bullying is because
many times bullying behavior is not evident under adult supervision (Pepler, Rigby & Smith, 2004, p.3). Students agree that the best way school administrators can prevent bullying is by encouraging students or bystanders to speak up even if it is done anonymously (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012, p. 68).

2.2.1 Fostering Empathy

One of the behavioural traits of a bully as mentioned above, is there lack of empathy. Creating a safe and empathetic environment for students is an indispensable feature of bullying prevention. A recent study conducted on the components and effects of emotional intelligence and its role in fostering empathy amongst students, outlines the importance in order for students to self-regulate and prevent cyberbullying (Baroncelli & Ciucci, 2014).

The term “emotional intelligence” (EI) was used for the first time by Salovey and Mayer (1990) to indicate the subset of social intelligence that involves several emotion-related abilities: appraisal and expression of emotions in self and others, regulation of emotions in self and others, utilization of emotions in problem solving. The components related to perception, appraisal and expression of emotions constitute the basic psychological processes, while the components of reflective regulation and use of emotions are abilities that develop later and emerge as more closely integrated with other skills (Baroncelli & Ciucci, 2014, p. 808).

The results of this student showed that cyberbullies tend to have more “cold cognition” or lack of empathy and lower emotional intelligence, which leads to a lack of understanding their peers, a decrease in emotional self-efficacy and an inability to self-regulate (Baroncelli & Ciucci, 2014, p. 813). The solution to this Baroncelli & Ciucci (2014) suggest, are bullying prevention programs that empower children and provide them with ways in which they can master “regulating and using emotions in peer relationships in the real world; this strategy should lead to accumulating increases in emotional self-efficacy and preventing cyberbullying” (Baroncelli & Ciucci, 2014, p. 813). According to Pepler, Rigby and Smith (2004), “Literature, film and role
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plays may be used to develop more empathetic and insightful ways of interacting with each other” (p.3).

Pumpian (2013) discusses another strategy that involves tolerance in order to foster empathy with in the class. According to Pumpian (2013), teaching tolerance in order to have a diverse classroom environment is a responsibility for all teachers. She states that tolerance, understanding, compassion, and respect cannot simply be taught as part of a character building or anti-bullying program, this is not the only way (Pumpian, 2013). Rather, they must be woven into schools and aligned with curriculum. Pumpian makes a good point on teaching diversity and tolerance throughout the curriculum. She believes that character-building and anti-bullying programs may help teach the very traits (tolerance, understanding, compassion, and respect) she places importance on. Pumpian argues that these programs shouldn’t only be located in the “extra-curricular,” instead teachers and administrators need to see these as being so important as to be included in the formal curriculum and instruction time as well. Pumpian (2013) quotes Waters and Cameron (2006) who refer to this process as creating a "purposeful community." She (2013) later states that an effective school culture provides students with a respectful experience through which they can learn to examine, understand, affirm, modify, or change their understandings of the world and how they want to engage it. The question now is how are teachers doing this? How are teachers are meaningfully integrating these techniques within the classroom? Unfortunately Pumpian (2013) does not discuss this, but I hope to fill in these gaps through my research.

Promoting a positive classroom environment is essential. According to Simmonds, Boulton, Fowles, Down, & Hardcastle (2014): “Research has shown that empathy is a predictor of pro-social helping behavior, especially if the empathic concern involves feelings such as
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compassion, tenderness, and sympathy.” Although Simmonds and colleagues (2014) discuss the lack of research when it comes to teachers using empathy to prevent bullying, the research above suggests otherwise.

Another way in which teachers can facilitate empathy within the classroom is through Boalian theatre (Bhukhanwala, 2014). Bhukhanwala (2014) examines the role of Boalian theatre in middle schools. The research:

Examines the role of theater of the oppressed activities as a tool for engaging middle school students in talking about their experiences with bullying and rehearsing possible actions when being bullied or witnessing acts of bullying, with a goal of creating a more humane environment (Bhukhanwala, 2014, p. 3).

Boalian theatre is a way students can develop self-efficacy and awareness about themselves and their actions (Bhukhanwala, 2014, p. 3). “Boal (2014) argues that when participants empathize, they begin to bridge the distance between self and others. They also begin to experience the “other” as human—as human as themselves” (Bhukhanwala, 2014, p. 4).

Participation in theatre has been shown to promote student growth in self-understanding, empathy, understanding of human emotions and perspective taking, i.e., imagining what other people may be thinking and feeling. Perspective taking skills can help reduce bias and as a result, promote feelings of connectedness and mutual understanding between individuals (Bhukhanwala, 2014, p. 5).

2.3 Authoritative Intervention

2.3.1 The Role of Parents

In his article Jones (2013) provides a list of preventative measures parents can take in order to take care of the issue of cyberbullying. The preventative measure Jones (2013) outlines are as follows:

1. Kids should be given a code of conduct. Parents should tell their kids to be careful what they say. If they wouldn't say something to someone's face, then they should text it, email it, or post it. 2. Kids should be encouraged to open up about cyber bullying. If they see it online, they need to know that it is OK to go to a responsible adult for help. 3. Parents should not be
afraid to check up on their kids online. 4. If parents find out that their kid is engaging in bullying behavior, consequences for that have to be established. If children contribute to degrading or humiliating others, the technology needs to be restricted. 5. Parents who find that their child is being victimized should not be afraid to call for back up by reporting the matter to law enforcement. (Jones, 2013, p. 5-6)

The list above are general measures parents can take. Jones (2013) also outlines preventative measures teachers can take with students in primary, secondary and high school. F. M. & Forrester, J. (2013) also provide a similar list to prevent bullying as mentioned by Iris however they do not address the issue of cyberbullying and instead brush it off as an “outside of the school problem” which has to be under parental and adult supervision. Unfortunately, this attitude is neither accurate nor helpful because many of the concerns that occur in school and affect the students emotionally or physically, as mentioned above.

In contrast, Peppler and colleagues (2004) think that counter-bullying initiatives should involve not only a “whole school” approach but should also involve the parents (p. 3). The Seattle curriculum for example, “recognizes the importance of parental engagement by offering take-home letters and activities” (Holladay, 2011, p. 7). According to Peebles (2014):

Parents should be counseled about the negative effects of cyberbullying and instructed on safer Internet use. Parents have a critical role in providing online education for their children. Parents should be encouraged to keep computers with Internet access in open areas, monitor the child’s online activities and behavior, encourage their children to never reveal passwords or secrets, and never open a message from someone they do not know. Parents should remind their children not to believe everything they read, and the entire family should be encouraged to spend time together away from the online world. Parents can also model appropriate use of technology and teach children that posting harmful content about others is not appropriate (Peebles, 2014, p. 527 – 528).

2.3.2 The Role of Administrators and the School

As mentioned above, parents are not the only important actors in cyberbullying prevention, so is the whole school (Peebles, 2004, p.3). The teachers’ responsibility according so McCarra and Forrester (2013) is that they need to, “promote a positive classroom environment,
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teach a variety of conflict resolution strategies, respond to incidents of bullying, help students develop new roles, and provide positive role modeling” (p. 1). Although McCarra and Forrester (2013) mention these strategies for bullying they can easily be used for cyberbullying prevention as well, so they are helpful strategies. Froese-Germain (2008) suggests linking the legal implications of cyberbullying to a human rights perspective in order for students to analyze the serious implications of cyberbullying. Although the article was written before the law passed in Canada against cyberbullying, it is helpful for schools to create comprehensive policies that include and expand on school/home responsibilities which involve the students, staff and teachers. Based on his review of cyberbullying literature, he also suggests there be an ongoing evaluation for policy effectiveness.

The role of school administrators is a crucial one because without the support of the school administrators teachers are not able to make effective use of the policies preventing cyberbullying. School administrators are also responsible for providing a safe learning environment for all students free from fear and intimidation (Beale and Hall, 2007, p. 10). School administrative staff are also responsible for conducting professional development seminars that are related to issues concerning cyberbullying (Beale and Hall, 2007, p. 10). According to Patchin and Hinduja (2012) “school counselors are key players in providing parents, guardians, and school staff with professional development or training they need to reduce the risk of cyberbullying amongst students” (p. 82). It is a combined effort; all of the school staff should be involved in implementing effective anti-bullying strategies (Pepler, Rigby & Smith, 2004, p. 2). Janet and Forrester unfortunately do not discuss these strategies in depth or how teachers can specifically use these strategies in classrooms.
2.4 Anti-Bullying Programs

In his article Bullying in schools: A Plea for a Measure of Human Rights, Greene (2006) assesses the effectiveness of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and also looks at what this program is lacking. One of the issues he discusses addresses the effectiveness of the program. According to Greene (2006) The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and other anti-bullying programs are not as effective especially when the whole school is not committed in fighting bullying. Greene (2006) also argues that different kinds of bullying are not being addressed or dealt with. He stresses that bullying needs to be addressed from a social-ecological perspective and that it not only involves the school staff but also parents. He concludes that a Human Rights Framework that is consistent with a peace psychology perspective is more effective because it increases the effectiveness and sustainability of school-based bullying programs while targeting behaviours and practices that cause mental distress, maltreatment, and exploitation in children. Unfortunately Greene does not talk about the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and what it entails, so it would be difficult for anyone to assess the effectiveness of the program especially when there is no empirical evidence. However, this is not to discount that the peace psychology perspective Greene suggests is not effective because it addresses important issues that none of the other researchers I have mentioned in this paper have addressed (Greene, 2006).

According to Beale and Hall (2007), in order for anti-bullying programs to be effective, the school must establish a cyberbullying task force that includes tech savvy educators, parents, students and community members who are aimed at keeping the school safe and secure (p. 10). In addition, parents and teachers should also team up with local law enforcement officials, or police officers in order to educate parents and students on how to address and deal with
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cyberbullying (Beale & Hall, 2007, p. 11). “These programs emphasize the importance of safe learning environments, while offering factual information regarding the consequences associated with cyberbullying and providing instruction aimed at stopping online harassment and keeping students safe on the Internet” (Beale & Hall, 2007, p. 11).

2.5 Bill 13

Bill 13 is a new Bill that has recently been passed on Ontario apart of the Safe Schools Act (Peebles, 2014, p. 528). “In Canada, there are currently no laws specifically addressing cyberbullying” (Peebles, 2014, p. 528). After the establishment of a cyber crime group in 2012, they outlined the flaws and where the criminal code was lacking with regards to creating implications and punitive measures for cyberbullying. The changes were implemented in Bill C-13, which was introduces in 2013 (Peebles, 2014, p. 528).

The bill criminalizes the nonconsensual distribution of intimate images, and updates terminology regarding telecommunications technologies by removing reference to radio, telegram and telephone. This allows for harassment charges to be filed when messages are sent via any electronic means. There are privacy concerns regarding Bill C-13 because it also deals with lawful access legislation. The bill, among other things, would allow police to request personal information from Internet service providers without a warrant through a ‘preservation demand’ (Peebles, 2014, p. 528).

Furthermore, below is an excerpt from the actual bill discussing the importance of creating an inclusive and safe environment for students:

The people of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly:
Believe that education plays a critical role in preparing young people to grow up as productive, contributing and constructive citizens in the diverse society of Ontario; Believe that all students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability; Believe that a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment where all students feel accepted is a necessary condition for student success…Recognize that a whole-school approach is required, and that everyone — government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community — has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and preventing inappropriate behaviour,
such as bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia, transphobia or biphobia…Acknowledge that an open and ongoing dialogue among the principal, school staff, parents and students is an important component in creating a positive school climate in which everyone feels safe and respected; Acknowledge that there is a need for stronger action to create a safe and inclusive environment in all schools, and to support all students, including both students who are impacted by and students who have engaged in inappropriate behavior, to assist them in developing healthy relationships, making good choices, continuing their learning and achieving success. Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows…

**Cyber-bullying**

(1.0.0.2) For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” in subsection (1), bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including, (a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; (b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and(c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals (Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act, 2012).
3.1 **Procedure**

This study was conducted in order to examine teacher instructional strategies when addressing issues concerning cyberbullying. The nature of my research is grounded in qualitative analysis and research. For my literature review I focused on anti-bullying programs initially, however, after conducting my interviews I adjusted my literature to focus on more prevalent topics that were discussed during the interview process. I conducted two face-to-face interviews with teachers who have many years of anti-bullying instructional experience. I then analyzed and transcribed my data accordingly.

3.2 **Instruments of Data Collection:**

I conducted two semi-structured informal interviews and used two recording devices to collect the data during these interviews. I asked open-ended and clear questions that were easy to understand. I began by asking questions that made a personal connection between the participant and the research topic. I also made sure the questions had a degree of flexibility (Turner 2010). Some questions I asked were:

1. Can you tell me about your current teaching position and how long you have been teaching?

2. You agreed to participate in this interview because you are committed to anti-bullying instruction. Can you tell me how you developed this interest?

3. How have you seen bullying behavior change over the years?

4. What does cyberbullying mean to you?

5. How do you address the issue of cyberbullying with your class?
3.3 Participants

I chose two participants for my interviews. The first participant Lisa, is a teacher who has been working in a social justice based independent school that focuses on anti-bullying initiatives, for over 20 years but has been teaching for over 30 years. Her motivation for teaching in a school dedicated to anti-bullying instruction stems from her previous employment experiences where bullying and social justice issues were given no priority even when student well-being and academic progress was affected. I found Lisa from a previous OISE Masters student who had done his research surrounding bullying pedagogy. I chose to interview Lisa for this study because of her experience with anti-bullying instruction and because the school she teaches at is dedicated to this type of instruction.

The second participant, Sandra, is a former elementary, middle school and high school teacher and is now an itinerary guidance counselor for several schools in the Toronto District School Board. Her experiences include everything from working with students with social and emotional issues to practicing restorative justice and other techniques in order to resolve conflict amongst students. I found Sandra through my first interview participant and chose her as my second participant because of her experience working with students with social and emotional issues and dealing with bullying issues that take place in school and online.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

After collecting my data I began reading and rereading the transcribed interview data, focusing on common themes I was finding the third time I read the data. I then began coding my data, this was done by writing key words and themes in the margins of my paper. After this I went through my data again and began chunking common themes and keywords together. After chunking the themes together I used different color highlighters to highlight the important quotes
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and insights in the interview data. I identified 8 themes and 15 sub themes, which I later consolidated into 6 major themes and 10 subthemes. I organized and listed the themes on an excel sheet. I then analyzed my data which involved organizing excerpts from my interviews in a chart I created on excel: highlighting important quotes that may be useful to use directly and writing an analysis and summary of these passages on the side section of the chart. The final step of my analysis involved editing the titles of my themes to compliment the literature findings. I organized my data in the following themes and subthemes:

1. Anti-Bullying Instruction
   - Emotional Intelligence and Fostering Empathy in the classroom
   - Restorative Circles and Conflict Resolution
   - Cross-curricular Anti-bullying instruction

2. Evolution of Bullying
   - Screen Addictions
   - The Definition of Cyberbullying and the Different mediums for Cyberbullying

3. Cyberbullying Behavior and Effects
   - The Bully
   - The Victim

4. Authoritative Intervention
   - Parental, Staff and Administrative role
   - Student Role
   - Punitive Measures

5. Bill 13 and its limitations

6. Teacher Apprehensions when Addressing Issues Concerning Cyberbullying
3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

I followed the ethical review approval procedures for the Masters of Teaching within the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I also made sure I received consent from both interview participants. Before conducting the interviews the participants had signed a consent form. Both participants had also revived an email that outlined my research question, purpose of study and interview questions before the interview was conducted. Any questions and concerns on behalf of my participants’ were also addressed prior to the interview. I had also received consent to record the interviews on two electronic recording devices. The identity of my participants remained private throughout this paper; pseudonyms were used instead of real names. All the data collected was done so in a respectful manner and all recordings, and transcriptions were only shared with the Participant, the research supervisor and myself.

3.6 Limitations

There are a few limitations that are associated with this study. The first limitation to my study is the limited number of participants I had interviewed for my research. The data that I had collected was only from two teachers who are only from the Toronto District School Board; this also limits the range of teachers because both teachers are from on school board so I was unable to get a different perspective from teachers who are from other school boards. Also the Sandra also works at the same school as Lisa works at as an itinerary guidance councilor, which could possibly create a bias to a particular instructional strategy.

Also due to a small sample size of participants the thoughts and beliefs of my participants are not only limited but may also carry certain bias’. My participants may be bias because of their personal bullying experiences and also because they only work in with in a certain area of
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Toronto, the demographics may impact their opinions, thoughts and beliefs. Finally the limited amount of time allotted for this research may have prevented it from being more thorough, getting more perspectives, and exploring other areas that may have been conducive to my research.
Chapter 4 - FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

The data that was collected for this study and my research were from two interviews with teachers who have many years of experience dealing with issues concerning bullying and cyberbullying. The first participant for this study, Lisa, has been a teacher for over 30 years and has been teaching at a school devoted to anti-bullying instruction and social justice pedagogy. Anti-bullying instruction at this school is intertwined within the regular school curriculum. Lisa is also one of the lead teachers in a position of responsibility at this school. The second participant for this study, Sandra, is an elementary itinerary guidance counselor and former elementary, middle school and high school teacher. Sandra does everything from working with students with social and emotional issues to doing restorative justice pieces with kids in order to resolve conflicts. She is also one of two school guidance councilors at the same school Lisa works at. Both participants have had countless Personal Development certifications in anti-bullying instruction and restorative practices.

Based on the data collected and the analysis of this data, I have divided this chapter into six major themes with various sub themes. The themes and corresponding sub-themes are as follows:

4.2 Anti-Bullying Instruction

4.2.1 Emotional Intelligence and Fostering Empathy in the classroom

4.2.2 Restorative Circles and Conflict Resolution

4.2.3 Cross-curricular Anti-bullying instruction

4.3 Evolution of Bullying

4.3.1 Screen Addictions
4.3.2 The Definition of Cyberbullying and the Different mediums for Cyberbullying

4.4 Cyberbullying Behavior and Effects

4.4.1 The Bully

4.4.2 The Victim

4.5 Authoritative Intervention

4.5.1 Parental, Staff and Administrative role

4.5.2 Student Role

4.5.3 Punitive Measures

4.6 Bill 13 and its limitations

4.7 Teacher Apprehensions when Addressing Issues Concerning Cyberbullying

4.2 Anti-bullying Instruction

4.2.1 Emotional Intelligence and Fostering Empathy

In order to create an empathetic classroom environment that deters all kinds of bullying, teachers and staff must develop a comprehensive anti-bullying program that starts the moment students’ walk in the door, according to Lisa. A program that like the school Lisa works in, addresses issues of bullying upfront rather than waiting for it to happen. Lisa compares the school she works at now with her previous teaching job, which was much more academically focused and did not address bullying and emotional issues upfront resulted in issues concerning bullying getting out of hand. In order to create an empathetic environment for students and prevent bullying to begin with, it is essential for students to know who they are, “because if you figure out who you are, you are less likely to hurt other people” According to Lisa. Lisa’s school
mandate explicitly mentions the importance of practicing and teaching students how to be more emotionally intelligent. Reading from the school mandate, Lisa states:

Students need to know themselves, and understand and accept themselves for their strengths and challenges before they can extend this same empathy to others. Students need to be given the opportunity to explore, name and work creatively with their feelings so that these feelings don’t come out in destructive ways that may impact themselves as well as the community. (Lisa, Jan 16, 2015.)

According to Lisa, emotional intelligence helps reduce bullying behavior in students. In order for students to be more emotionally intelligent, Students at Lisa’s school participate in various art therapy activities. For example At the very beginning of the school year the students in grade 7 do something called a shadow mask, which is this concept of the Jungian shadow, which is a part of ourselves we don’t show the world. It is not necessarily the bad part of the students but it is a part of them that is not apart of their outer persona. Lisa then elaborates what the students do with these masks:

So the kids draw their own shadow masks and they talk about why this is their shadow and they create these beautiful paper Mache shadow masks and then we do these interpretive dances and the kids dance out their bullying experiences they dance out their anger, its very beautiful. But it’s all about this concept of getting to know who you are. For the grade 8’s, they work on emotional intelligence in a similar manner. They do an art project called “my inner garden” or my “inner monster” and get a chance to present their bullying experiences in a similar manner. (Lisa, Jan 16, 2015.)

Sandra however employs empathy in a different manner at schools apart from Lisa’s. She asks students to think about the worst think that they have ever been called, and then write this on the chalkboard if they feel comfortable. Using the words the students put on the board Sandra creates a class wordle and then she creates a positive wordle and the students collectively examine them. She also makes a personal connection and brings in her personal experiences on bullying, to help students feel more comfortable expressing their own bullying experiences.
4.2.2 Restorative Circles and Conflict Resolution

Both participants agreed that the restorative practice is a crucial part of their Anti-bullying instruction. They also spoke about the importance of having restorative circles for conflict resolution. According to Sandra, restorative circles are extremely helpful especially when dealing with students who are transitioning into high school. At Lisa’s school they practice a variety of different kinds of restorative justice circles. The restorative circles not only involve students but they also do full school circles and restorative circles with parents at PTA meetings.

Lisa elaborates on how the full school circles work:

We do full school circles where we talk about bullying as a whole and incidents of bullying around the world and how we react to it. And we talk about what happened to them in the old schools because some of them come here and a number of them come here because they have major bullying experiences. So we talk about that in full school Circles But so it’s much harder to bully someone who you have been sitting beside and you have heard their story. (Lisa, Jan 16, 2015.)

Lisa also discussed a cyberbullying incident that recently happened at the school where a few students had taken a video of a student and created a spoof of the way she dressed and the way she walked and had spread it online. Lisa and a few administrative staff had done a mini restorative circle with the students who were hurt and had asked them if they were ok with having a bigger circle with the rest of the students involved. Around this time a local newspaper were doing an anti-bullying piece and had interviewed one of the ring leaders and she had mentioned that she was really happy that the issue was dealt with in a restorative circle “because they didn’t really realize how mean it was and now they really learned something” (Lisa, Jan 16, 2015.). Lisa also mentioned that there are sets of questions that the whole school follows when conducting these circles based on a book on restorative circles.

Although Lisa practices a variety of different sized restorative circles. Sandra only practices small restorative circles that only involve the students who were apart of the incident.
Although Sandra also uses the same questions that Lisa’s school uses for restorative circles, she allows the students to vent freely, however she monitors the circle and everyone’s behavior very closely and reminds the students to be respectful towards each other. Sandra also makes it a point to mention that she is very careful with restorative circles to make sure no one feels attacked in the circle. Sandra said:

I make sure that it isn't like three kids against one if there is only one person who is a victim than I allow them to have a friend who knows going on with them or I reduce it to the main player who is causing it and the victim and then you sort of grow from there and then you can turn it into like a whole class discussion on a topic that’s related to what you have been doing the restorative piece on. (Lisa, Jan 16, 2015.)

Sandra also mentions that restorative pieces do not work for everyone, it differs from case to case, which is something Lisa also agreed on. However, Lisa discussed the many benefits of practicing restorative circles, one of which was closure for the victim who was being bullied. When I had asked Lisa why she feels so strongly about restorative circles helping the victim get closure, Lisa responded:

I think it really does help and it also helps when it’s actually worked out in a circle with the kids who had been cyberbullying them because then there is some kind of closure, like just coming and talking to me or the guidance counselor, I mean it might make you feel a little better but really we are not the ones that count in these kids world it’s the peers so the thing that actually work are those circles because then they feel, first of all the person takes some ownership of the bullying that they have done and acknowledges that it is their fault and their responsibility and not because the victim has actually done something wrong because which is of course how they feel because I’m stupid, or I’m ugly so that’s very clear as well so I would say that by far the best is to get some interaction between the person who bullied and the person who is the victim. (Lisa, Jan 16, 2015.)

Sandra also mentioned student support programs other than restorative circles that are available at the schools she works. Some schools have student wellness committees and have addressed issues concerning bullying either through peer mediation or other restorative practices. They also
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have the OCA (One Caring Adult) program that encourages students to speak to an adult about bullying, or other issues that they are going through.

4.2.3 Curricular Anti-Bullying Instruction and Media Literacy

Since Lisa’s school is dedicated to anti bullying instruction and social justice, issues surrounding it are weaved throughout the curriculum, which is an integral part of the schools’ mandate. When it comes to cyberbullying media literacy is an integral part of the schools mandate, especially because of screen addictions, according to Lisa. As mentioned above emotional intelligence is another tool used throughout the curriculum, for example The Jungian masks Lisa mentioned are apart of the social studies curriculum.

At schools other than Lisa’s school, Sandra discusses how teachers use topics covered in restorative circles and bring that into the curriculum. For example teachers will use poetry, music, or novel studies to discuss particular issues surrounding bullying. She elaborates:

So if they are doing Grade 8 geography and it talks about the movement of people can talk about a new group immigrants experience when they came to Canada because they look different or they spoke differently. So we have done things like that. (Sandra, March 16, 2015)

Media literacy is also an important part of Sandra’s pedagogy especially because it is one of her teachable subjects. She mentions that she adjusts her media literacy pieces based on the community the students are in. She talks about the use of various social media on a need to know basis. So if something about the misuse of twitter comes up she talks with her class about what twitter was used for in the first place and how we can use it responsibly. Sandra also mentions bringing in experts or speakers who have personal experiences with regards to a specific issue. She discussed bringing in a speaker who suffered from an eating disorder to talk about body image with her class and how she noticed how students could make personal connections when a
person was brought in to talk about personal experiences. Sandra also discusses the importance of responsible use of media, in particular social media sites. She talks about hiding personal information, like house addresses, location services.

4.3 **Evolution of Bullying**

4.3.1 Screen Addictions

The proliferation of screens and technology in general has lead to the unfortunate increase in cyberbullying. This has also brought upon an increase in bullying behavior to transition from being on the school premises to happening from the comfort of your own home. Lisa and Sandra discuss the implications of the proliferations of screens and technology and its continuous use. In a recent PTA meeting at Lisa’s school teachers and parents spoke about the negative affects of screens and how students are becoming increasingly addicted to them. The reason for the meeting was that one of the students who went on to grade 9 from Lisa’s school had become increasingly addicted to screens. The school had a speaker come in who runs a day program for kids at the school, to discuss the implications of excessive technology use. During this time the speaker had the student’s write about screen addictions and cyberbullying because of the different ways you can reach people through screens. One of the problems that the parents encountered during the PTA meeting Lisa mentions was there lack of tech knowledge and that parents think that they are monitoring their kids but in reality they are not because their kids know a lot more than they do.

Although Lisa addressed the problems with screen addictions she did not discuss how parents could help reduce the problem especially at home. Sandra mainly blames parents for not monitoring their child’s technology use. She talks about various ways they can do this. For example, not letting them take their devices to their room or only allowing them to use
technology for a certain period of time. Within the classroom Sandra uses techniques such as telling students to do certain projects on a Bristol board and even refrain from using calculators at times. Sandra also discusses the problems she has encountered with parents when doing so but she does not compromise because as she says “they still need to know how to use a ruler and a pair of scissors” (Sandra, March, 16, 2015).

4.3.2 The Definition of Cyberbullying and the Different mediums for Cyberbullying

According to Lisa “cyberbullying is when issues that happen in the school are taken home and they happen in media space, and they happen there because they feel they are immune and that nobody can really do anything about it” (Lisa, Jan 16, 2015.). According to Sandra, cyber bullying is the use of any Electronic media to convey Negative talk about an individual or a situation. So it could include photographs video, or one-liners in response to something” (Sandra, March 16, 2015).

Because of screen proliferation and screen addiction cyberbullying has increased a lot, both Lisa and Sandra share this sentiment. Sandra in particular discusses the negative effects of this and why cyberbullying is on the increase:

The whole introduction of the online world it has really allowed people who wouldn’t have necessarily been bullies to become bullies and under the same token a lot of them who hadn’t had a voice before, have a voice because of the freedom of speaking on the screen or to the screen rather than face-to-face. (Sandra, March 16, 2015).

Some of the mediums through which cyberbullying occurs are Facebook, Instagram, twitter, ask FM, snap chat etc. However, Ask FM according to Sandra has become increasingly detrimental, because it allows students to ask questions and everyone can answer them. Sandra gave multiple examples:

Basically you get an account and you post questions ‘so who thinks so and so is pretty?’ and all these people weigh in on this person and they may or may not even know them.
‘Who thinks so-and-so is a snob? And it could also be things like who thought last nights episode of survivor was great or whatever, but it is a very cruel website because people as always online they jump in and weigh in with their two sense. (Sandra, March 16, 2015)

Sandra also talks about a particular incident of cyberbullying that had occurred on Facebook, where one of the students had taken a private photo from a account where the girl was in a bikini and posted it on his Facebook and made fun of her. One of the students had felt uncomfortable with this and had complained to Sandra. So Sandra addressed the issue with the class and the boy who had complained had spoken up and addressed the bully in front of the class and asked him why he had done that. The rest of the students had felt bad as well and also stood up against the act. The bully had recognized the ramifications of his actions especially on the young girl whose pictures he had taken and apologized.

4.4 Cyberbullying Behavior and Effects

4.4.1 The Bully

Both participants had agreed that more or less there are not definite behavioral traits that can identify who a bully is. Lisa in particular was very opposed to this because she felt like this was unfair because of the self-fulfilling prophecy. However, she referenced a Debra Pepler local case study on bullying behavior in Toronto schools particularly on the school yard which was done over several months, had outlined that bullying behavior had to do with a power imbalance where the bully was someone who had a sense of entitlement and power which stemmed from their home environment and projected at school. However, Lisa also mentions that bullying behavior is different from online bullying, especially according to the kids at her school who say that:

You are more likely to bully online than to bully in real life. The kids who are bullying in real life are also bullying online but then you have this whole other segment of kids who
probably wouldn’t bully in real life but are doing it online because it’s so easy and this is according to the students and they feel quite strongly about this. (Lisa, Jan 16, 2015.)

The kids also agree that bullying that happens online is much worse because of the screen. It allows students to say things that they would not necessarily say face-to-face. Lisa also addresses misconceptions of bullies, like people who bully are treated poorly at home, or who come from low-socio economic backgrounds, although this may be true, according to Lisa who references Debra Pepler’s study, it mostly has to do with entitlement and power. In any case, Lisa makes it clear that you cannot identify a bully before they begin to bully:

Because some guy came up with this list of traits that you can use to identify a bully before they bullied and people were saying oh this is amazing and I was horrified how can you do that talk about setting somebody up. You just can’t do that, I mean are there a list of traits that make someone more like to bully probably however with the right set of circumstances, the right school the right teachers with education for the parents they will never bully you can’t identify someone as a bully before they bully. (Lisa, Jan 16, 2015.)

Sandra for the most part shares some similar sentiments about bullying behavior. She talks about the role power has to play in a bullies behavior. She referred to the Facebook bullying incident with the girl in the bikini and said in that particular incident that boy was seen as powerful so a whole bunch of other kids had weighed in and commented negatively as well because they saw him do it. When asked if she notices similarities between online and in person bullying behavior, she said that she does and she does not.

I think a lot of people bully online who would never bully in person because they don’t have the physical presence to do so or the courage. Its very easy to say nasty things and that’s one of the lessons I teach if you can’t say it to someone’s face looking in their eyes then don’t say it online, because words live forever and everything you type and put it online even though you get rid of it on your computer it exists in cyberspace, it is locked away somewhere forever photos and everything. (Sandra, March, 16, 2015)

A major factor that Sandra believes determines if a person would bully online is their socio economic status, something Lisa did not address during our interview. Having the opportunity to
work with a variety of schools from rich neighborhoods to low-income government housing, Sandra talked about how socio-economic status is a crucial factor to the spread of online bullying behavior. She noticed that although students with low socio-economic status may bully in person, they do not online, perhaps because they do not have access to technology. However, this is just her opinion concerning bullying behavior.

The negative effects of bullying behavior on the bully are also an important aspect of bullying behavior that only Lisa talked about. Lisa mentions that many long-term studies show that bullies do terribly in life. They have trouble having relationships, they have trouble at work, and they generally don’t do well in life. She makes sure she talks about this with her students to deter them from bullying and to help them stand up against bullying out of care for the other person.

4.4.2 The Victim

Both Sandra and Lisa say that anyone could be a victim of bullying. Lisa says that you wear the wrong clothes one day, or if you are different chances are you could be a victim of bullying and cyberbullying. She references the incident of the girl who was recorded and made fun of because of the way she dressed one day. Sandra mentions that it could be incidental, or out of jealousy, it doesn’t matter what your social status is. However an interesting factor that contributes to being victimized, is something Lisa talks about which is the teachers role. Lisa mentions that if a teacher shows annoyance with a student, especially in front of the rest of the class, students will pick up on that and prey on that student like a pack of wild animals. So it is important for teachers, according to Lisa, to not victimize students.

Lisa also discusses some of the unfortunate effects of bullying on victims. She provides an example of a student who moved on to a regular school in grade 9 from her school, who was
bullied for being different, and how he attempted to commit suicide. Lisa also discussed the emotional effects of singling students out and how it impeded their learning and caused them to breakdown. Sandra also discussed some of her students who suffered from depression as a result of being bullied and also tried to hurt themselves. These are just some of the unfortunate effects of bullying on the victim.

4.5 Authoritative Intervention

4.5.1 Parental, Staff and Administrative Role

Authoritative intervention is a crucial part of taking a stand against cyberbullying and bullying behavior. Both Sandra and Lisa stress the importance of parental involvement in taking a stand against bullying. However parental involvement is different for Sandra than Lisa. Sandra talks about how parents need to stop being the “helicopter parent,” however, they need to be informed about what their children are doing at school and online. Lisa also shares this sentiment. Sandra believes that parents need to have a shared password with their kids for all online sites they may have. She also informs parents to tell their kids “when you are an adult and you are paying your own bills, that’s when you can have your own secrets.” But she also mentions that it depends on the relationship the parents have with their children. Sandra also mentions that parents need to take an authoritative stance when limiting their child’s Internet and screen usage. Both Lisa and Sandra expressed parents’ difficulties when discussing technology use. Parents face many challenges when it comes to cyberbullying mainly because they have difficulty understanding and controlling its use with their children. When disciplining their children, Lisa mentions, it becomes more like a battle between parents and their kids.

Lisa talks about a three-legged stool approach, which is a part of her schools mandate. In order to cultivate a safe, caring and inclusive school environment, is a vision of a three-legged
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stool where “all three parties must work together - school personnel, parents and students” (Lisa, January 16, 2015). According to the school mandate, Lisa reads:

This mandate must permeate everything that is done within the school community. it must be emphasized that the cultivation of this kind of environment is an education priority, just as literacy, numeracy and preparing for academic transitions are. it is not an ‘add-on’ but an essential part of the culture. Authoritative intervention - there must be a strong disciplinary stance for when bullying occurs; consequences need to be in place, all students and parents need to be aware of the consequences, and all reports of bullying must be taken seriously and investigated. All people within positions of authority in the school must be on board - the super intendant, principal, parents, teachers, lunch room supervisors, and caretakers. It must be made clear that the adults do not condone bullying in any way; they must be proactive, consistent, and make action their priority. (Lisa, January 16, 2015)

Regular PTA meetings are held at Lisa’s school, which encourage parents to be involved. During initial PTA meetings restorative circles take place with the parents and they are able to reflect upon their own experiences with bullying, then teachers and parents talked about the three-legged stool analogy so that parents understand, as well as staff, their involvement in the anti-bullying program at school. During these PTA meetings students are able to present their Jungian shadows and inner gardens in an interpretive dance. Lisa also mentions, that parents are encouraged to report bullying because they are given the opportunity to report bullying anonymously so that they are not afraid to report cases that affect their own children.

Sandra discussed the importance of having the whole school work together as with parents in order to ensure every students success. She talked about the pressure that she has to endure at some schools because the whole staff is not involved in anti-bulling initiatives or taking an active authoritative stance against bullying. Although many parents may be on board with anti-bullying initiatives, unfortunately some parents may be in denial with regards to their child’s involvement especially with regards to cyberbullying. Both Sandra and Lisa discuss the importance of physical evidence when it comes to addressing parents who are not compliant with
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school anti-bullying initiatives and rules. Sandra prefers that students and parents print out online bullying so that if someone erases anything, teachers and parents can still have a physical record.

4.5.2 Student Role

As mentioned above the three-legged stool analogy that Lisa’s school mandates also involves students. Student involvement in preventing bullying is crucial for Lisa. The whole school practices anonymous writing, where students write down what the face of bullying looks like. Every student is responsible for writing down the name of a student they think is bullying another student. Lisa stresses the importance of this approach:

We tell them that it’s actually really important for them to name names because the whole issue with bullying and the reason why we have bullying is because of this concept of ratting out, you’re ratting your pal out. We talk about how we don’t call it bystander or anything else; we call it being a witness. You are witness and this is a crime and as a witness to a crime it is your duty to do something and it’s the expectation that you are going to do something and if not you are an accessory to that crime. (Lisa, January 16, 2015)

So if a student is seeing someone bullying another student they have to report. The activity mentioned above allows them to do so anonymously. Once a name has been written many times, Lisa calls the student and talks about the fact that many students have written their name. The students then get a warning and if they do not stop their parents are called in. however, Lisa also mentions that there may be another side to the story so it is also important to get the alleged perpetrators view as well. Lisa stresses the usefulness of this tool of anonymous writing. Because according to her “bullying does not happen when you’re in the classroom in front of the teacher because you’re sitting watching them It happens at break, and it happens out at lunch, it happens after school and it happens online.” For Sandra evidence, when it comes to cyberbullying is a crucial part of student responsibility when reporting bullying. She asks her students to print out any evidence of online bullying they encounter.
Many students at Lisa’s school think that because cyberbullying happens online, it can’t be dealt with at school. She elaborates:

What kids don’t realize is that the TDSB mandates us to deal with cyberbullying, so just as we are expected to deal with any bullying that happens at school we are expected to deal with cyberbullying that happens at home amongst our students and kids don’t believe that. They are like well its in my home, how can you do anything about what happens in my home, well this is in my home how can you do anything. Well we can and not only can we but we have to so if this is the case. (Lisa, January 16, 2015)

Lisa spoke about having police officers come into school and talk about the legal implications cyberbullying. The police liaison speaks to the children about whatever they put online stays there and the police can find it. It is different from saying something to someone in person. If you say something to someone on Facebook, you can try to erase it but the police can retrieve it. The police officer also informs students that it is a crime and if it ever gets to the point where the police are involved, charges can be filed. Sandra discussed instances where police have been involved and formal charges had been pressed because the student felt that the learning environment was no longer safe for them. There have also been times where Sandra had involved the CAS because the bullying was something that mimicked parental behavior at home. Lisa mentions that if cyberbullying gets really bad parents are involved, and if the student still continues to bully, then the principal is involved and the school considers suspension. The final step is a letter in the student OSR. If the student does not change by the end of the year then the letter goes with them to high school or the following grade. Lisa has never had to involve the police because the letter in the OSR usually scares parents and students and the student no longer continues to be a bully.
4.6 Bill 13 and Its limitations

When asked about what their thought on bill 13 were both participants had similar views. Both Lisa and Sandra agreed that it is a great asset in order to create a safe school however shared concerns about the lack of resources and support in order to implement these laws. Lisa talks about the fact that her school is an independent school and is a lot smaller, the staff is collectively able to work together, sacrifice prep-time, and spend the whole morning with students to work out bullying issues. Lisa’s school also unlike regular public schools, has one guidance counselor and one social worker. However, she says that when schools don’t have this time and support, all they do is suspend students and “if you just suspend without any kind of circles and follow up there is no point, the kid gets the day off and that’s not bad, so we need to be able to implement it.”

Sandra voices similar concerns with regards to Ontario’s legislation with regards to cyberbullying. She stresses the importance and lack of PD sessions for teachers and staff. Many teachers already have a lot to deal with and not having a safety committee or support systems make it difficult for teachers to deal with bullying. As a guidance counselor she voices her concerns about not only the lack of support for teachers but also students. There is no mental health support, social workers, or teacher support.

4.7 Teacher Apprehensions when Addressing Issues Concerning Cyberbullying

Sandra and Lisa criticize the lack of teacher support and time as one of the main reasons amongst many others why teachers do not get involved in issues concerning bullying. When asked why teachers do not get involved with bullying and cyberbullying issues, Sandra talked about the lack of teacher support, resources and time. Many teachers already have so much on their plate, like student IEP’s, report cards, and huge class sizes, amongst many other
responsibilities. So it is very hard for teachers to do anything to prevent or deal with bullying. Teachers feel overwhelmed according to Sandra because they have so many things to deal with as it is, bullying is just another thing to add to their to do list. Lisa disagrees however, although she does admit one of the main reasons teachers don’t intervene is because dealing with bullying is hugely time consuming, she says it is a teachers priority to deal with bullying. Although there is drama and it is time consuming, Lisa says it is a school wide priority and the problem is that teachers and staff do not view bullying of any kind as a priority. Lisa stresses that “anti-bullying instruction is as important as literacy or numeracy, and nobody does I mean the board does not, but they say they do but in reality you know its hard, it is really hard.”

The data collected above highlights importance of anti-bullying instruction, its benefits as well as the issues teachers face when incorporating anti-bullying instruction within the classroom. Both teachers express concerns about the lack of resources, professional development and support for teachers who need help in anti-bullying instruction and conflict resolution. There is no clear cut way to implement anti-bullying instruction however, based on the data above, fostering empathy is an important element of anti-bullying instruction. The next chapter will make connections between the literature review and the data collected in chapter 4 in order to highlight common themes and key learnings.
Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

The role of not only the teacher but also the administrative staff and students is a crucial factor that influences anti-bullying instruction. Teachers and school administrators carry the heavy responsibility of being responsible for not only the classroom environment and safety but also for the overall school environment. After conducting interviews and an extensive review of literature, it has become increasingly clear that this responsibility and task is very difficult. It has also become apparent that there are several ways teachers and staff can ensure the emotional and physical safety of students, which is more often than not supported by legislation surrounding bullying. The purpose of my qualitative research was to examine how middle school teachers were being instructionally responsive to cyberbullying. The reason for my focus on middle schools was because there was an overwhelming amount of literature that supported claims that cyberbullying is most prevalent during this time in an adolescent's life.

While it is true people of all ages are potentially subject to online harassment, it appears to be most prominent among middle school aged youth. Several studies have found that cyberbullying peaks in middle school and diminishes in high school. Other research has identified a steady increase in prevalence rates starting in the middle school years and continuing through high school. (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012, p. 22)

Although there were a few divergent themes amongst my data and the literature review, much of the information from my data and the literature findings overlapped. There were many similarities that were found between the two particularly surrounding anti-bullying instruction, fostering empathy and holistic approaches to cyber bullying. Before I begin discussing the converging and diverging themes of the literature and data, I will re-state the sub questions to my research:

1. What preventative strategies are teachers incorporating in their pedagogy to respond to the issue of cyberbullying?
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2. How do these teachers reactively respond to incidents of cyberbullying through their instruction?

3. What evidence of effectiveness do these teachers observe their instruction having on students’ cyberbullying behaviors?

4. What factors effect student engagement in cyberbullying?

5. What role do staff and parents play when dealing with issues surrounding cyberbullying?

I have arranged this chapter into the following themes and sub themes:

5.1 A Holistic Approach to Cyberbullying that Involves: Teachers, School Administration, Parents and Students.

5.2 Fostering Empathy Through Various Instructional Strategies

5.3 Bullying Behavior and the Negative Effects of Cyberbullying for the Bully and the Victim

5.4 Authoritative Intervention and Bill 13

5.1 A Holistic Approach to Cyberbullying: Teachers, School Administration, Parents and Students.

A combined effort by Parents, Teachers, School Staff, and students is required in order to have successful anti-bullying programs that deter cyberbullying. Lisa, Sandra and many of the researchers mentioned in the literature review, shared this sentiment. Lisa stressed the importance of having a three-legged approach to anti-bullying instruction, a key feature of her schools mandate. This approach involves parents, school administrative staff and students.

Similarly, Patchin and Hinduja (2012), stress the importance of students, parents and educators working together in order to educate students about proper Internet use (p. 68). Pepler and colleagues (2004) also share the same sentiment with regards to a “whole school” approach to
address bullying (p.3). Pepler and her colleagues (2004) also recognize this approach as being an integral part to any anti-bullying school program (p. 3). As a guidance counselor, Sandra discussed the importance of having the whole school be on the same page as well in order to ensure every student's success. She talked about the pressure that she has to endure at some schools because the whole staff is not involved in anti-bullying initiatives or taking an active authoritative stance against bullying. Student involvement is also a key factor for preventing cyberbullying, which is shared amongst the researchers and the interviewees. According to Patchin and Hinduja (2012) Students agree that the best way school administrators can prevent bullying is by encouraging students or bystanders to speak up even if it is done anonymously (p. 68). The overwhelming consensus on having a holistic approach when addressing and preventing bullying shows the importance of social cohesion amongst staff, parents and students in order to create an inclusive and safe environment for everyone.

5.2 Fostering Empathy Through Various Instructional Strategies

Creating a safe and inclusive classroom environment is a responsibility that every teacher and school administration faculty member has. Fostering empathy amongst students in order to deter bullying behavior is a sentiment that is echoed by both the interviewees and researchers. According to Simmonds, Boulton, Fowles, Down, & Hardcastle (2014): “Research has shown that empathy is a predictor of pro-social helping behavior, especially if the empathic concern involves feelings such as compassion, tenderness, and sympathy.” There are multitudes of ways teachers can do this. At Lisa’s school there are a few ways they create an empathetic environment for students. One way is to elicit emotional intelligence amongst students. A view Baroncelli & Ciucci (2014) share as well. Lisa discussed various activities students can do in order to be more emotionally intelligent. One way in which students can become more
emotionally intelligent according to Lisa is by creating Jungian masks that allow students to display a part of themselves they do not show, through an artistic paper Marché mask. Students also partake in an interpretive dramatic arts dance where they show their bullying experiences. This is similar to the Boalian theatre method that Bhukhanwala (2014) advocates as an integral part to creating an empathetic environment amongst students. Boalian theatre is a way students can develop self-efficacy and awareness about themselves and their actions (Bhukhanwala, 2014, p. 3). This is similar to emotional intelligence and Lisa’s Jungian mask activity. “Boal (2014) argues that when participants empathize, they begin to bridge the distance between self and others. They also begin to experience the “other” as human—as human as themselves” (Bhukhanwala, 2014, p. 4). Art therapy in a multitude of ways can help students’ express who they are, whether it is through interpretive dance or by creating art pieces. Students are able to self-regulate themselves through these practices and recognize their triggers, according to Lisa. Another facet to creating an empathetic environment is through restorative practices. There was little to no literature found on restorative practices however there was much research to support restorative ideals. According to Patchin and Hinduja (2012), restorative practices ensures the well-being of all students, and it also allows the victim to voice their hurt to the bully which enables the bully to become aware of his or her actions and therefore be empathetic towards the victim or victims. Lisa and Sandra mention the importance of restorative circles particularly for gaining closure. Lisa also discussed the benefits of restorative circles in an incident involving cyberbullying at her school. Once the bully heard how the victim was feeling they were shocked at how the victim felt and felt remorse and apologized. Also research done in Canada, Norway and Germany has shown that the method of shared concern works best with the bully, victim and any by standers (Holladay, 2011, p.7).
5.3 Bullying Behavior and the Effects of Cyberbullying for the Bully and the Victim

There is a substantial amount of evidence from the literature review and data collected from the interviews for this study, that bullying behavior is detrimental to both the bully and the victim. Cyberbullying affects both the emotional and psychological well being of both the victim and the bully (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012, p. 24). Lisa stresses the importance of creating a safe environment for students and how this is affected when students’ are being bullied because they feel unsafe and anxious. Although Sticca and colleagues (2013) identify various bullying behavioral traits teachers can recognize before a bully acts out, Lisa is opposed to this idea. Lisa voices her concern surrounding pre-made bullying behavioral traits. She says that this only sets a person up for failure, similar to the self-fulfilling prophecy. She thinks that is not fair to have a set of traits to look out for because then we can start categorizing students as bullies and this is detrimental because if given the right setting and support the student wouldn’t be a bully.

5.4 Authoritative Intervention and Bill 13

Authoritative intervention when linked to the holistic approach mentioned above is essential for both the researchers in the literature review and the interviewees. Sandra emphasizes the importance of taking an authoritative stance particularly when students do not feel safe as a result of bullying. Although Authoritative and punitive measures are beneficial when teaching students’ about the implications of cyberbullying, but it is not always effective because bullying online and in person is rarely solved through suspension (Holladay, 2011, p. 8). Lisa agrees with this sentiment because she says that if you just suspend the student without any restorative practice the student think of it as a day off. With regards to Bill 13, which outlines the responsibilities of teachers and staff:
School administrative staff are also responsible for conducting professional development seminars that are related to issues concerning cyberbullying (Beale and Hall, 2007, p. 10). However, many teachers are not provided with the support for this, both Lisa and Sandra also share this sentiment.

5.5 **Implications/Recommendations:**

I have learned so much through the process of my research. Having the opportunity to interview teachers who are experienced in the field of bullying has been truly humbling. This study has allowed me to learn practical strategies I can implement within the my future classroom in order to prevent cyberbullying. Learning about various behavioral implications and preventative strategies to bullying has allowed me to think differently about bullying behavior. I had always thought that bullying behavior only affected the victim however; learning about the social, psychological and emotional ramifications of bullying has been eye opening. Using various art therapy methods in order to create an empathetic class environment is extremely practical and helpful. After conducting this research I feel like I will work harder to create a safe and empathetic learning environment for my students and make that a priority like any other subject within the curriculum I also intend to make anti-bullying instruction apart of my cross-curricular instruction by using practices both interviewees mentioned and practices describes in the literature review. Although much of the information and tips are practical and helpful, resources and support is essential for teachers and students. In order to provide teachers with support professional development seminars are essential as well as support staff like social workers and guidance counselors. Some recommendations may be that teachers are in need of training and education with regards to cyberbullying. My research outlined a multitude of different approaches for preventing and dealing with issues concerning bullying. It is important
to be aware of your class and your students and work through problems accordingly. Just because one method worked for a particular researcher or teacher it does not mean it will work for you. Also it is important to be aware of the lack of teacher support in many of Ontario schools.

5.6 Limitations

A few limitations to my study were that I only interviewed two teachers for my study. I would have liked to interview a principal as well, because Principals mainly deal with issues concerning cyberbullying, particularly when situations get out of control. Also because cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon there is not much information concerning teacher instructional strategies and practices. Other limitations to the study were that there was no way of testing methods these teachers used within my own practice because of time constraints. There were also many overlaps between bullying practices and cyberbullying practices, at times it was hard to make a distinction.

5.7 Further study

Some questions that arose through my research were: which methods for preventing cyberbullying are most effective. There is so much research to be done regarding cyberbullying particularly because there are constant technological advancements that are occurring. First there was MSN, then Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc. There are various mediums through which cyberbullying can take place, it would be interesting to see how teachers can limit or control the use of technology. It would also be interesting to examine ineffective ways of dealing with cyberbullying and bullying as a whole.
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References


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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: ____________________

Dear ________________,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. I am studying how teachers are dealing with cyberbullying within the classroom for the purposes of investigating an educational topic as a major assignment for our program. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. My course instructor who is providing support for the process this year is Dr. _________________. My research supervisor is _________________. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of a 40 minute interview that will be tape-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you. I can conduct the interview at your office or workplace, in a public place, or anywhere else that you might prefer.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my assignment work will be my research supervisor and my course instructor. You are free to change your mind at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the tape recording after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share with you a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy.

Please sign the attached form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher name: _________________________________

Phone number, email: ______________________________

Instructor’s Name: _________________________________
I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by ___________________________(name of researcher) and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: ___________________________________________

Name (printed): ___________________________________

Date: ______________________
Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your current teaching position and how long you have been teaching?

2. You agreed to participate in this interview because you are committed to anti-bullying instruction. Can you tell me how you developed this interest?

3. How have you seen bullying behavior change over the years?

4. What does cyberbullying mean to you?

5. How do you address the issue of cyberbullying with your class?

6. Do you work with other teachers, staff, or school administrators to devise a plan to address the issue of cyberbullying?

7. How are you creating a safe and empathetic environment for students in the classroom?

8. What is the role of parents in your instructional response to cyberbullying?

9. What programs if any, are available at your school to help students talk about cyberbullying?

10. “How does the school respond to cyberbullying and what kinds of supports are offered to students who experience cyberbullying?

11. What in school programs are available to educate students about responsible media literacy?

12. What factors do you believe prevent teachers from intervening in issues regarding cyberbullying?

13. Do you notice behavioral similarities between On-line bullying behavior and in-person bullying behavior?

14. How are you encouraging victims of cyberbullying to talk with parents, teachers and school administrative staff about their experiences?

15. What tools do you introduce to students in order to for them to be digital citizens?

16. Do you incorporate restorative justice when dealing when addressing students who cyber bully? How effective or ineffective is this?

17. What punitive measures do you take with students who partake in cyberbullying?

18. Is there a pattern or certain behavioral traits in students who cyber bully and students who are victims of cyberbullying?

19. What is your view on Bill 13, and how does this impact a school wide perspective or you as
an educator?