Analysis Regarding the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy and its Influence on Cyberbullying in the Classroom

By
Felica Kumar

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Abstract

In this study I explore the relations of the new Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy and its implications on cyberbullying in the classroom. In order to gather the data, I conducted three semi-structured interviews with teachers that work within the Peel District School Board. All of the participants for this study regularly integrate technology into their teaching. In the study, it became apparent that cyberbullying is an issue teachers are currently facing. The teachers in this study expressed their concerns about the issue, and shared the different ways they incorporate technology into their classroom in order to decrease the likelihood of cyberbullying occurring.

Keywords: Bullying, Cyberbullying, Education, Digital Citizenship, Contract, Technology, and Communication
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Research Study

On October 10th of 2012, a fifteen-year-old girl named Amanda Todd took her own life due to the cyberbullying she faced from her peers and by strangers (Shaw, 2012). On April 4th of 2013, Rehtaeh Parsons attempted suicide due to video footage of her being gang raped that went viral on the Internet. Her attempt had put her into a coma and she passed away on April 7th, 2013 when her family took her off life support (Thomson, 2013). On September 9, 2013 a young man, also fifteen years of age, took his own life due to the bullying he faced both in school and online (Mahoney, 2013). All of these stories have one thing in common: these children were bullied through online social media networks. Their stories came from all over Canada and represent the struggle and the serious impact cyberbullying can have. Today more than ever children have access to the internet, and more specifically, to social media networks. Without even thinking, it only takes a few seconds to create a tweet, post something on Facebook, or create a hash tag that can become viral instantly.

In 2011 the Canadian Stop a Bully organization conducted a survey of 416 students from grade eight to grade ten and found that “one in five Canadian teens have witnessed online bullying” (Canadian Government, 2013, p.1). An additional, “25% of kids between 12 and 15 have witnessed cyberbullying. 25% of girls and 17% of boys have witnessed online harassment” (Canadian Government, 2013, p.1). Also, “51% of all teens have had negative experiences with social networking. 16% said someone posted an embarrassing photo of them” (Canadian Government, 2013, p.1). Finally, “12% said someone hacked their account” (Canadian Government, 2013, p.1). These numbers give us great insight into the issue of cyberbullying because it clearly indicates the number of students affected by it both directly and indirectly.
I would also like to highlight again that 51% of teens reported having a negative experience concerning their social networking (Canadian Government, 2013).

These statistics are astonishing, and likely to increase if nothing is done to prevent children from becoming victim to cyberbullying. I also believe this statistic will increase if students are not educated about appropriate online use and made aware that their inappropriate actions can potentially be illegal. Essentially, children need to understand what it means to be a Digital Citizen, and this has been defined in the Peel District School Board “as the norms of responsible behaviour related to the appropriate use of technology” (Policy and Regulations, 2013, p.1).

It is important to mention that cyberbullying is not strictly a Canadian epidemic; it is a societal issue that affects communities and schools all around the world (Cole et al., 2006). However in Ontario, many school boards are promoting an initiative that encourages students to bring their personal devices to school for in class use. In 2012 the Peel District School Board began to encourage students to bring their own devices (BYOD) to school, but the potential positive and or detrimental effects of this new policy have not yet surfaced. Despite the good intention of BYOD, it is unknown at this time if the policy will combat or encourage cyberbullying in a classroom setting. It is also important to mention that other implications of this policy have not yet emerged, and therefore it is my hope to explore these effects.

**Purpose of the Study**

Unfortunately research in this area is very limited due to the fact that both cyberbullying and the Peel Boards BYOD policy is fairly new. It is also important to mention that despite the prevalence of cyberbullying here in Canada, Canadian research in this area is even more limited
at this time. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the new Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiative and its implications on cyberbullying in a classroom.

I question if teachers are equipped with the knowledge needed in order to effectively implement this policy in their classroom. If teachers allow their students to bring their devices, how accessible will they be? Will teachers allow students to have access to their device the entire day, or only allow them to be used during designated times?

Ultimately, the role of a teacher comes into question and therefore it is my hope that my research can inform educators by creating an opportunity for them to re-examine their roles and responsibilities with regard to students’ personal devices being used in the classroom. I also hope to shed light on current teacher perceptions regarding the use of personal devices in the classroom and its implications on cyberbullying.

Central Questions

How does the BYOD policy influence cyberbullying in a classroom setting?

Sub-Questions

1. How do teachers define the term cyberbullying?
2. Have teachers experienced cyberbullying in their classrooms?
3. How do a sample of elementary school teachers working within the Peel District School Board respond to the BYOD policy?
4. What initiatives are in place to ensure cyberbullying does not occur, and or is dealt with?

These questions are very compelling and current research has not yet provided insight into them. I believe that this study will provide deeper insight into the role a teacher plays in this technological era that has captivated the world.
In order to respond to these questions, I will conduct a qualitative study and will interview three elementary school educators. The interviews will be held in person and will consist of semi-structured open-ended questions. Also, the same questions will be provided for each interview in order to maintain consistency.

**Background of Researcher**

I recently graduated with an honours degree in Psychology from York University. While in my last year, I conducted a thesis regarding the correlation between an individual’s birth order ranking, and their bullying experiences in school. According to the Canadian Council of Learning, bullying in Canada was rated the ninth highest out of 35 counties around the world (Canadian Council of Learning, 2007). As soon as I saw this statistic, I knew something needed to be done to change this, and with the growing rate of technology, it will only get worse. I believe there is a gap between the growth in technology and the education children receive about what it means to be a good Digital Citizen. Ultimately I am interested in this research because I believe it is not fair for children to be taking their lives due to the torment they face from the use of technology by others. Also, I believe students need to be better educated about how to use the internet. I believe they need to be taught Digital Citizenship because this will allow them to become more aware and responsible for their actions online. I cannot count the number of times I have logged online and read posts that directly discriminate, harass, and belittle someone else.

Technology certainly has many benefits, including making our lives easier in several ways. However, I also believe that technology is dangerous to the extent that it holds such great power in the world. This area of research has also been important to me simply because it breaks my heart to hear stories of children committing suicide. These children have all the potential in
the world, yet their goals and dreams will never be accomplished because of the selfish
cyberbullying by other students and by strangers. As a future educator I believe it is our job to
keep the children in our society safe, and hearing stories of these suicides makes me feel as
though we have failed these children because we did not protect them.

Overview

In chapter 1, I introduce the topic, discuss the purpose of the research study, present the
research questions and elaborated on my background as a researcher. In chapter 2, I review the
literature exploring various definitions of bullying and cyberbullying, pre-service teacher
perceptions regarding cyberbullying, and the BYOD policy. In chapter 3, I describe the research
design used for this study. In chapter 4, I report the research findings that emerged through
constructing the data provided by the participants. Finally, in chapter five, I analyze the findings
and identify the significance of the research in terms of the current literature, as well as the
implications I will draw on regarding my future career as an educator.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As mentioned earlier, research in the area of cyberbullying and the use of technology in a classroom setting is limited at this time due to the fact they are both recent issues. In order to understand cyberbullying, we need to understand the definition of bullying in itself. I begin this literature review by exploring the various definitions of both bullying and cyberbullying. Second, I explore research on the attitudes of pre-service teachers in regards to cyberbullying. Third, I look at what research has to say about the new Bring Your Own Device initiative that school boards are implementing.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a term that is defined in different ways. Also, while a great deal of research has explored this issue, there does not seem to be a consensus in terms of the definition of bullying. Canadian research from Queens University, and York University by Craig et al., (2007) states that, “bullying is a form of abuse at the hands of peers that can take different forms at different ages” (p.5). They go on to state that there are two main factors that are essential in understanding the definition of bullying. “First, bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour imposed from a position of power: children who bully have more power than the children they victimize” (Craig et al., 2007, p.5). The research explains that the power imbalance can be due to elements such as physical size, appeared strength, social status, social class, culture, religion, and sexuality (Craig et al., 2007). The research states that, “the second key element is that bullying is repeated over time” (Craig et al., 2007, p.6). With increased occurrences, the victim experiences emotional distress and a loss of perceived power. The article further explains that there are four
forms of bullying that people typical exhibit or experience, “physical (e.g. hits, pushes, tripping, spitting), verbal (e.g. threats, insults, put-downs), social (e.g. social exclusion, malicious gossip) or cyber-bullying (e.g. threats, insults, demeaning messages spread through the internet or cellphone) (Craig et al., 2007, p.6).” The article continued by mentioning that bullying may be performed directly or indirectly towards another individual (Craig et al., 2007).

However, further research in the area defines bullying a little differently. Researchers Merrell & Isava (2008) from the University of Oregon suggests that there are three main elements to bullying behaviour. They propose that a bully must be performing the act with the intent to harm, the act must be repetitive, and there must be a perceived power imbalance (Merrell & Isava, 2008). This particular research emphasizes the notion of intentional harm, while the other definition does not. This definition by Merrell & Isava (2008) also does not address the four forms of bullying as the first definition by Craig et al. (2007) does.

Interestingly, the description provided by Merrell & Isava (2008) is accepted by Dan Olweus (1995), a Psychology professor and leading researcher in the area of bullying. Olweus (1995) also proposes that there needs to be an intent to harm, however, his work suggests that bullying does not need to be repetitive. Olweus’s (1995) research proposes that someone’s behaviour can be considered bullying even if the behaviour was only exhibited once. Essentially, behaviour does not need to be repetitive in order to be referred to as bullying. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2012) has also defined bullying, and has stated that:

“bullying” means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where, (a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of, (i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to
the individual’s reputation or harm to the individual’s property, or (ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and (b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education (p.2).

By comparing the Ontario Ministry of Education’s definition with the others, this definition describes the specific harm an individual might endure. It also mentions that the person may have property that has been affected, and a decreased academic performance, which the other definitions failed to address.

Research also indicates ambiguity in terms of the perceived definition by teachers. A Canadian research study analyzed teacher perceptions regarding the definition of bullying, and it found that teachers believed bullying entailed physical assaults and verbal threats, however social exclusion, and name-calling were not considered to be bullying behaviour. The study also explained that teacher definitions of bullying varied based on their willingness to intervene in a bullying situation (Smith et al., 2004). Evidently, research in the area of bullying lack consensus in terms of a single definition.

Definitions of Cyber Bullying

As there are different forms of bullying, cyberbullying is the most recent form that has emerged (Kowalski & Agatston, 2008). Cyberbullying is more specific, it involves bullying through the use of electronic devices (Kowalski & Agatston, 2008). The devices can range from
a cellphone, to a computer, and can include anything that transfers information from one device to another. I found it difficult to locate research that explicitly defines cyberbullying. Some have taken up the issue of defining cyberbullying as a component of their research, Bell et al. (2011), for example, found that similar to the term bullying, teachers define cyberbullying differently in accordance to their willingness to intervene in the situation.

Kimberly Mason, (2008) defines cyberbullying “as an individual or a group willfully using information and communication involving electronic technologies to facilitate deliberate and repeated harassment or threat to another individual or group by sending or posting cruel text and/or graphics using technological means” (p.3).

The Ontario Ministry of Education Policy Memorandum 144 defines cyberbullying as “bullying by electronic means” (Program Memorandum, 2012, p.1) and used three very specific actions in order to do so. It mentions that cyberbullying includes:

creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals (Program Memorandum, 2012).

Similar to the definition of bullying, there also seems to be a lack of consistency in regards to the definition of cyberbullying as again, some are more explicit than others. The definition provided by Kimberly Mason (2008), mentioned the notion of repetitive behaviour however, the Ontario Ministry did not specify if the behaviour needs to be repetitive in order to constitute as cyberbullying.
It is also evident that the Canadian Government will need to work on clarifying the term considering they are currently taking this behaviour more seriously, and are charging students for partaking in cyberbullying activities. Research has indicated that the Canadian Government seems to be struggling with this situation and are having a difficult time counteracting the increase in cyberbullying instances (Cassidy, et al., 2011). The largest consensus around the struggle to define cyberbullying seems to be the fact that cyberbullying is a large term that embodies a number of complex elements. There has also been great debate over what is constituted as cyberbullying and what is not.

Pre-Service Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Cyberbullying

While research addressing the attitudes of educators toward cyberbullying is scarce, research on pre-service teachers’ attitudes is more common. Craig et al., (2011), for example, analyzed the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards cyberbullying and found that while they believed that bullying in itself is a serious issue, they believed that cyberbullying was less serious than physical violence and therefore does not require as much attention. However, the study failed to mention how bullying in itself would be addressed if present, considering it was perceived to be more serious than cyberbullying.

Others, like Ryan et al., (2011), found that pre-service teachers understand the effects of cyberbullying but they do not believe it to be a problem in Canadian schools. They also indicated that pre-service teachers feel as though they lack education in the area of cyberbullying, and 49% of them believed it was a topic that was just as important as other topics prioritized in teacher education programs. At the same time, only 15% reported feeling confident
BYOD INFLUENCE ON CYBERBULLYING

about managing cyberbullying as a result of the lack of preparation they felt they were receiving (Ryan et al., 2011, p.12).

**Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)**

BYOD, or Bring Your Own Device, is a new initiative that many school districts are currently implementing. Research suggests that school boards are implementing this policy in order to prepare students for their future (Beach, 2014). It can include anything from the use of a smartphone to the use of a laptop. In the United States, almost all of the schools implement BYOD, and despite the enthusiasm towards implementing technology in classrooms, American research has highlighted problematic issues in doing so (Gurung & Rutledge, 2014).

Research published in the Computers and Education journal, refers to 21st century students as digital learners, and suggests that:

Although their personal use of technology is widespread, digital learners are not equipped with the types of academic skills that are essential for learning. Because so called digital learners are basic technology users having functional skills of game playing, social networking, texting, and surfing information on the Web, their learning engagement is limited lacking technology-mediated productivities such as self-created learning content, research skills, and using computers as cognitive tools (Gurung & Rutledge, 2014, p.3).

The study further explains that implementing BYOD is problematic because students are unable to use technology as a learning tool, and therefore this causes them anxiety and frustration (Gurung & Rutledge, 2014).

Researcher Martha Beach (2014) from Ryerson University, explored BYOD and suggests that this initiative is popular among school boards because it decreases their financial costs in
funding schools with technology, since students are accessing their own personal devices. The study also recognizes that research regarding the educational benefits of using technology in a classroom is limited at this time. However, the article further explains that in 2011 and 2012, the Peel District School Board studied the benefits and challenges of the BYOD initiative (Beach, 2014). After their study was completed, they decided that the number one reason to implement BYOD is to “allow students to use technology they already know how to use, instead of spending valuable class time teaching different programs or tools or platforms, they bring what they are familiar with” (Beach, 2014, p.5). These research findings seem to be contradictory. However, the first article by Gurung & Rutledge (2014) focuses on the lack of student knowledge about how to use technology as an educational tool, and the second study by Beach (2014) looks at the level of student ease with the actual technology they use outside of class and they bring that prior knowledge to the class which may help future learning. The study further points out that teachers may become overwhelmed with having to troubleshoot a variety of devices that are unfamiliar to them but because students have this prior knowledge, they can work with the teacher and reduce the teacher anxiety. The article also suggests that teachers working within the Peel District School Board have many resources provided to them in regards to implementing BYOD in their classrooms, and this classroom support is something the previous article did not address (Beach, 2014).

**Conclusion**

It is apparent that research in the area of cyberbullying, and the use of technology in the classroom is complex and ambiguous at this point in time. It is my hope that my study can contribute to this area of research, and hopefully bring some clarity to the issue.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Nature of this Research

This study will be conducted using qualitative research and semi-structured interviews. A qualitative study allows researchers to “answer the *whys* and *hows* of human behavior, opinion, and experience” (Silverman, 2011, p.5). It further provides information that cannot be obtained through quantitative inquest because qualitative research allows participants to give their individual voice to the issue being explored and quantitative does not. Research has also stated that “practitioners in fields as diverse as anthropology, education, nursing, psychology, sociology, and marketing regularly use qualitative methods to address questions about people’s ways of organizing, relating to, and interacting with the world” (Silverman, 2011, p.5). Qualitative research is valuable because it focuses on thick description and particularly on the process that leads to the outcome, and in this case the process will consist of data from the semi-structured interviews.

I will be using this form of research in order to give voice to my participants and explore their experiences in the world of education. The semi-structure interview will allow me to converse with the participants and gain instant clarification in terms of the meanings they place on certain educational values such as the use of technology in the classroom. After the interviews are conducted, I will critically analyze the data provided and bring forth the themes that emerged through the interviews.

Participants

For this qualitative research I will be using a purpose sample of educators working within the Peel District School Board. The sample has been chosen purposefully, due to the fact that the
participants must meet certain requirements in order to partake in the study. Also, all of the names of the participants have been changed in order to protect their identity. The participants have all been screened to meet the following criteria:

1. The educator must have experience working within a classroom that contains students who consistently bring their own personal devices to class.

2. The educator must have experience interacting with students who use their personal device in class during either instructional or leisure times (such as indoor recesses).

3. The educator must be working in a classroom from either grade three, four, five, or six.

4. The educators must also work within the Peel District School Board.

Materials

In terms of materials, the participants will consent to partake in a forty-five minute semi-structured interview. The interview will consist of several questions that are created to be unbiased and open-ended. Also, the questions will be designed in a way that will elicit personal opinions and experiences within the field of teaching in an elementary environment. The following are a few examples of the questions that will be asked. The full list of questions can be found within the appendix.

1. To what degree do you consider yourself a user of technology?
   a. Do you use it as a teaching resource?

2. In recent years, the Peel District School Board has begun a new initiative where students are encouraged to bring their own devices to use in school (BYOD).
   a. How do you feel about this initiative?
   b. What impact has this initiative had on your classroom?
3. How do you define bullying?

4. How do you define cyberbullying?

5. Have you ever dealt with or heard about cyberbullying in your school before?
   a. If yes how was it dealt with?
   b. If no, how would you deal with it?

Procedure

In terms of the procedure, I first contacted current educators that I am acquainted with and asked if they recommend anyone for the study. Next, I contacted the recommendations provided by my acquaintances, via email. In the email I briefly described the purpose of my study and kindly asked if they would be willing to participate. The three participants that were contacted, agreed to participate. I then emailed the participants to give them notice and suggest that we could meet at any time and place convenient for them. Once we met I thanked them for participating in my study and handed them the consent form to read over. After they read and signed it, I gave them the list of questions and said, “these are the questions that I will ask you, so please take your time to look over it before we begin.” I then waited for the participants to be ready for the interview. After, I told the participant that I would be recording the interview so I could guarantee accuracy when recalling their statements.

I then read each question and allowed the participant to answer while casually engaging in conversation with them. At the end of the interview process I thanked them for their time and for sharing their thoughts with me. Before they left, I reaffirmed the fact that they are able to contact me whenever they like, and that I will follow up with them in the near future in terms of the study.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter consists of the data gathered from the three participants in the study. All of the data has been organized into four main categories and ten subcategories. The categories were created after repeated analysis, and is based on the similarities in responses from the participants, and were further scrutinized for the development of subcategories. It is important to note that all of the participants’ names have been changed in order to ensure their anonymity. For the purpose of this paper, I will refer to the first participant as Riley, the second as Taylor, and the third as Adam. The following are the categories and subcategories that will be explored in this chapter.

Definition and Occurrence

Bullying

Cyber Bullying

Technological Understanding

Teachers

Students

Parents

Communication

Teacher to Student

Teacher to Parent

Impact of Administration on Teacher’s use of Technology

Support

Assistive Technology

Alternative Tool
Definition and Occurrences

Bullying

Bullying is an issue that students may unfortunately encounter in life either in the role of, bystander, victim, or as the bully themselves. In this study I asked all three participants to define the term bullying and their responses were interesting. Riley’s response to this question challenged the perceived definition of bullying, because she believes the definition is problematic and not clearly understood by many people. Riley states, “bullying is persistent, it is trying to cause emotional and physical harm to someone and it happens more than once. However, kicking someone’s hat, is not considered bullying if it only happened during that one instance. That is being mean, not being bullied” (Interview, November 27 2014). Riley further explains that every instance of someone hurting someone else either emotionally or physically, needs to be addressed. Throughout her explanation Riley consistently referred back to the word “repetitive” (Interview, November 27 2014) in order to state that “mean” (Interview, November 27 2014) behaviour can only be defined as bullying when it happens over and over again.

I found it interesting that she believes that people over use the word bullying, and therefore incorrectly label every case of a child being mean to another child as “bullying” (Interview, November 27 2014). She further goes on to state that she has only ever experienced what she defines as “true” (Interview, November 27 2014) bullying once or twice in her entire nine-year career. In addition, she shared the results of a bullying questionnaire given out by the Peel Board in 2013 that teachers, parents, and students all responded to. The results in the study she presented indicated that teachers generally do not think there is a bullying issue in the school, however, almost all of the parents and students do believe there is an issue (Interview, November 27 2014). After reading the results of the questionnaire, she questioned if there is in fact a
bullying issue, and considered the possibility that students are simply not bringing the matter to
the attention of the teachers (Interview, November 27 2014).

Through further discussion, she mentioned that she dealt with a case that she believed
was bullying and with further investigation, it turned out not to be a bullying situation
(Interview, November 27 2014). However, the parent of the child insisted their child was being
bullied, and something needed to be done. A parent of one of her students approached her and
told her that their child was being bullied everyday on the bus. She was instantly concerned and
looked into the matter. Through discussion with the perceived bully and victim, she discovered
that the situation was addressed and, only happened that one specific time. She later spoke with
the parent about the situation and the parent continued to insist that their child was being bullied
despite the fact there was only one occurrence, and it was dealt with prior to her knowledge of it
(Interview, November 27 2014).

Through the interview process with Taylor, it was interesting to see that she agreed with
Riley in regards to the perceived notion of bullying. Taylor mentions that, “the words bully and
bullying are broad terms that are often misunderstood, misused and/or loosely used” (Interview,
December 12 2014). She explains that bullying is aggressive and repetitive behaviour inflicted
on someone else. Bullying is purposeful behaviour that causes harm, instils fear and or distress
towards another person. It can often include physical, psychological, and social harm to the
victim. In order for a child to become victimized, there also needs to be a perceived imbalance in
power between the bully and the victim (Interview, December 12 2014). Although she did not
share any bullying experiences, she agrees that bullying in itself is misunderstood by many
people. Taylor also provided the most concrete definition of bullying in comparison to the other
two participants. Taylor similarly included the notion that bullying needs to be repetitive behaviour.

When Adam was asked to define bullying, he defined it as “repetitive, harassment of another individual whether it be physical or verbal” (Interview, December 12 2014). Although Riley and Adam teach at the same school, Adam mentions that he does deal with bullying a “fair bit” (Interview, December 12 2014). He states, “it is always there, you are always on guard for it. I shouldn’t say it is always there, but your antenna is always up for it” (Interview, December 12 2014). Similarly to Taylor, Adam did not have any bullying stories to share.

Evidently, all three participants agree that a meaningful definition of bullying consists of repetitive harassment towards another person. However, they do not agree on the number of occurrences that actually occur among students.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a term that is becoming more and more frequently used among the 21st century generation. In order to gather data in regards to the perceived notion of cyberbullying, I asked all three participants to define the term.

Through the interview discussion with Riley, she explained that cyberbullying is different from face to face bullying. “It doesn’t necessarily have to be one person doing it repetitively, it can be a whole group of people. For example, one person can say something online, then another person responds, and it can quickly turn into a cyberbullying situation” (Interview, November 27 2014). She further goes on to state that “cyberbullying is different because even one instance of saying something mean to someone else online can trigger other people to say negative things, and that is online bullying” (Interview, November 27 2014). She introduced the notion that
cyberbullying is easier to do; you can say something negative about a complete stranger and not care, because they do not know who you are. “You can be whoever you want to be on the internet, and no one knows” (Interview, November 27 2014).

Riley also shared a recent experience she had with cyberbullying within her grade four class. As part of her Language program, students were required to use a website called KidBlog in order to post and create their own blogs (Interview, November 27 2014). Essentially, students were able to go online to their class blog and post comments and such, as they pleased. She mentioned that the blog was opened to the class and therefore she did not have to approve any material written by students beforehand, as it automatically posted to the site. She also said that she did not think it was necessary to receive emails to approve each child’s post, as they are always held accountable for their own posts and actions online. Unfortunately, a student in her class found the password of another classmate, and went onto the blog posting degrading comments about other students in the class. The child had posted upsetting comments such as you’re stupid and called a few students idiots (Interview, November 27 2014). Regrettably, Riley was unable to identify the cyberbully because they were hiding behind the identity of another child within the class. Riley even went on to state, “for all we know it could have been the sibling of one of the students” (Interview, November 27 2014). Riley indicated that moments such as these are perfect teaching opportunities, and due to this occurrence, she decided to create an entire unit in regards to what it means to be a good Digital Citizen although it is not mandatory in the Ontario Curriculum. Riley also mentioned that she has heard many “horror” (Interview, November 27 2014) stories in regards to cyberbullying issues that have happened within other classes and schools.
Consequently, when Taylor was asked to define cyberbullying she immediately responded by saying, “cyberbullying is EASY! It is easy to target someone from behind a screen. Creating fake accounts and names, makes it so easy to create false accusation and rumors. It is actually quite easy to ruin someone’s life, it is quite scary” (Interview, December 12 2014). She also explained that she is deeply concerned about cyberbullying. Taylor continued by sharing her personal experience being victimized to cyberbullying while supplying in a class. She stated, “I had students who took pictures of me and posted them on social media, and I have even had students airdrop inappropriate pictures to the entire school” (Interview, December 12 2014). As heart breaking as this story was, she also shared another cyberbullying experience that took place while she was supplying in a grade eight class. She states,

Although this class was known for being loquacious, I hadn’t encountered any serious issues. As the students were working on their assigned task, which they were allowed to use their devices for, I noticed that they were being a little too quite so I decided to roam around the classroom. Suddenly, after taking a few steps, the student’s bursted out with laughter. At first, I thought the children were laughing at me, so I of course did a quick body check, maybe I had chalk on my bottom. However, as I looked around the classroom, I noticed that one student, a young Jamaican boy, who the children would often tease, was the only one not laughing. There was a group of girls that often made me suspicious and I was always skeptical of their behaviour. I approached the group of girls and asked them to show me their phones – they refused. I asked them one more time politely to show me their phones before I confiscated them and called the principal. The girls asked me if they would get into trouble if I wasn’t pleased with what I saw, and I told them, “I’ll let you know momentarily!” When the girls unlocked their phones and
showed me what they had done, my jaw dropped. One of the “class leaders” who I would classify as a bully decided to take a picture of the young boy without his consent and created a picture comparing him to an animal. It was very unpleasant. Not only did they send it to the entire class using iMessage, but they also had a very negative comment attached to the image which was also posted on Instagram. Not knowing how to react, I collected all of the students’ devices, gave them a lecture, and subsequently called the principal who later visited the class and suspended the girls who started this ugly trend. That’s right, it was a trend – the girls admitted that they had done it before and they found it harmless and hilarious. The thing that perhaps upset me the most was the fact that one student responded, “But Miss, it was just a joke. We do it all the time!” There this young boy was, sitting at the front of the class, clueless as to what was happening. I felt horrible and incompetent because it literally had happened within seconds during my class time (Interview, December 12 2014).

Taylor’s experience is merely a snippet of the many issues some teachers and students face in terms of cyberbullying in schools. Although she vaguely defined the term, her experience speaks volumes, and provides great insight in regards to the plight some teachers face by allowing their students to use electronic devices in class.

While conducting the third interview with Adam, I also asked him to define cyberbullying and he stated “I guess it is the same as bullying. So, harassing somebody or treating somebody badly with the use of technology” (Interview, December 12 2014). Similarly to Riley and Taylor, Adam also had a cyberbullying story to share. Adam explained that he had a situation where a child figured out how to log on to the school’s online program using a parent account. The child was using this account to send inappropriate messages to other students.
Adam stated, “when things like this happen, it is hard to find out where the messages originated from, but we did. The child was ultimately suspended” (Interview, December 12 2014). Adam also expressed the fact that he believes cyberbullying is something you have to be very vigilant towards.

Evidently, all three participants experienced issues of cyberbullying in their classrooms after the BYOD initiative was implemented. They all share very similar stories in terms how students are cyberbullying one another in the classroom as well.

**Technological Understanding**

**Teachers**

As mentioned in the methodology section, all of the teachers selected for this study regularly used technology in their classrooms. I believe this is important to point out because all of the participants expressed the fact that they enjoy using technology and believe it is essential for students to learn how to use it as a learning tool as well.

Riley considers herself a “moderate” (Interview, November 27 2014) user of technology. She loves learning new things and loves being able to explore new cutting edge technology. Despite her fascination with technology, she typically waits a while before indulging into anything. She willingly expressed her comfort with using technology in her personal life and within her classrooms. According to Riley, she uses technology because she is comfortable with it, and has been using it as a teaching tool for a few years (Interview, November 27 2014). Through discussion, it was evident that she used technology within every subject possible. Students went online to post blogs, share work, present information, organization information, and the list goes on. Not many teachers are comfortable with it and therefore the stray away from
exploring the use of technology in their classrooms because they do not know how to use it as a learning tool for their students (Interview, November 27 2014). Evidently, Riley believes that the more teachers are comfortable using technology in their own lives, the more they will become comfortable using it in the classroom (Interview, November 27 2014).

Taylor’s experience with technology is similar to that of Riley’s, because she considers herself an “active” (Interview, December 12 2014) user of technology. Taylor uses a variety of technology for a number of reasons such as checking her email, creating anecdotal notes and so forth. In terms of her integrating technology into her classrooms, her students were given the opportunity to “make iMovies on iPads, complete quizzes online, and create Prezi’s for presentations” (Interview, December 12 2014). Taylor also expressed that teachers need to feel comfortable using it in their own lives before implementing it within their classrooms. Interestingly, Taylor also expressed the fact that some teachers avoid using technology in their classrooms because of the horrible cyberbullying stories they have either encountered or heard of (Interview, December 12 2014).

In terms of technological usage, Adam has the most experience using technology because before becoming a teacher, he was a computer programmer. Adam also considers himself a “growing” (Interview, December 12 2014) user of technology as he is always looking for new and exciting ways to integrate it into his life and classroom. Adams states, “I love using it, it makes me excited. I am always looking for more, I am not fearful of it at all. I enjoy looking for new ideas and hearing how other people implement into their class” (Interview, December 12 2014). Adam also expressed that teachers may be hesitant to use it in their classrooms because they are not familiar with certain technologies. Adam states, “if you are already interested into computers, then you are going to attack it and solve problems and push through. But, a lot of
teachers just say forget it, because they are unfamiliar with it” (Interview, December 12 2014). He also mentioned that oftentimes, students come into class with devices that have a hard time connecting to the school’s WiFi, and if teachers do not know how to fix the problem, they will likely avoid using it. According to Adam, teachers need to self-teach themselves how to use technology if they would like to use it in their classrooms (Interview, December 12 2014).

Overall, all three participants believe that one’s personal use impacts their likelihood of using technology with their students in their classrooms. If teachers are not comfortable with using it in their own lives, they will likely be uncomfortable integrating it into their classrooms. All of the participants use technology in their daily lives, and therefore have no hesitation using it as a teaching tool with their students.

Students

As mentioned earlier, today more than ever children are being introduced and exposed to a range of technology. The types of technology these students are exposed to differ greatly as some may use a PlayStation, XBox, Nintendo Wii, PSP, Apple device, Android device, computer, and or a tablet, or any combination of these.

All three participants believe that that students need to become better educated in terms of how to use technology as a learning tool. They also need to be better educated in regards to their online actions. Many of them seem to lack the understanding that anything they do online can be traced back to them and therefore nothing they do is anonymous. Riley believes that students in general need to be better educated in regards to what it means to be Digital Citizens (Interview, November 27 2014). She believes that many cyberbullying cases begin because people think that no one can find out who they are, and this seems to be the mentality of some students. By
insulting someone online, they do not have to see how the person reacts to it, and therefore do not have to deal with physically watching someone have their feelings hurt because of their actions. Essentially, it is easy to say something online, close the screen, and pretend it never happened (Interview, November 27 2014).

Taylor’s response was comparable to Riley’s considering she also believes that students do not know how to use technology effectively (Interview, December 12 2014). Both see that many students are not aware of the impact their online actions can have towards another person.

Similarly to Riley, Adam also believes that students lack the understanding in regards to their online usage. Adam states, “they are probably unaware of the fact that they can be found out. There is no one listening, you can be sitting alone, so you feel anonymous. And, I think the younger you get, the more that is true. Some classes don’t even touch upon digital citizenship, because it is not mandatory” (Interview, December 12 2014).

Essentially, all three participants believe that students need to be better educated in regards to their actions, and behaviours online. They need to know that they are not anonymous beings, and everything they do online can be traced back to them.

Parents

Parents play a very important role in the education of their children, however, Riley was the only participant that actually discussed the role parents play in regards to the online usage their children partake in. If parents rarely use technology themselves, then they will be unable to better educate their children in regards to how to use it as an educational tool (Interview, November 27 2014). Riley shared a story in regards to a situation that happened within the school a few years ago. A grade three female student had created a Facebook account and was
communicating with a 20 year old male. The teacher found out about the situation due to the fact that the child had tried to add Riley to her Facebook friend list. At first, she was confused because she did not recognize the little girl due to her provocative picture. The next day the teacher spoke with the girl and found out that the girl had created a Facebook account at home without the knowledge of her parents. The parents were called in immediately, as well as the principal and the police. The parents had mentioned that they did not monitor their child’s actions online because they did not think their daughter knew how to use Facebook (Interview, November 27 2014). After sharing this story, Riley mentioned that oftentimes parents do not know that their child has created certain social networking accounts (Interview, November 27 2014).

### Communication

**Teacher to Student**

Throughout the interview processes, all the participants emphasized the necessity of communicating with their students. Despite the unforeseen circumstances Riley faced, she continues to use technology in her classroom with her students. Riley explains, that as a 21st Century teacher, students need to be taught and given clear, concise guidelines as to how to use technology. We cannot assume they know that their online actions can be traced back to them, we need to teach them. Riley continued by stating, “I now make it clear to my students that cyberbullying is illegal. No matter what you post online, even if you attach your name to it or not, you can be found” (Interview, November 27 2014). Teachers need to make their rules and guidelines very clear for students to understand. In order to hold students accountable for their online actions, Riley has every child complete a class contract that outlines her rules in regards to
how devices can be used in class. The contract includes rules such as, devices are only to be used for educational purposes, no devices are allowed to be used during Nutrition Breaks, and students must always practice being a good Digital Citizen when using any device. Riley does not allow students to use their devices during Nutrition Breaks because she says it is difficult for the lunchroom supervisor to monitor all the students on their devices and therefore she rather be safe than sorry. As mentioned earlier, Riley invests class time to teach students what it means to be a Good Citizen, and therefore she is able to hold them accountable for their online actions. Her previous experiences with cyberbullying is the reason why she now implements a class contract, and this contract is given out during the beginning of the school year. Riley did not specify if the class contract was co-constructed with the class. Interestingly, she mentioned that she has not had any issues now that her expectations are explicit and clear. She also noted, the contract states that if a student violates any of these guidelines, they will lose the privilege of using devices in class (Interview, November 27 2014).

Taylor’s perspective is comparable to Riley’s in that they both believe in the importance of giving students explicit instructions in terms of how their devices should be used in class. Taylor explained that some teachers are not as explicit or strict in regards to the use of devices in the classroom, and as a supply teacher, she has had students tell her that they need their device to listen to music as they do classwork (Interview, December 12 2014). Through her experience she found that primary students better follow instructions and are less likely to disobey the rules, than junior or intermediate students. Although she advocates for technology, she questions how it is being implemented in some classrooms. Evidently, Taylor believes teachers need to have a concrete guideline if they would like their students to have devices in the classroom. If the rules are not explicit, it becomes difficult to monitor 20-30 students using devices (Interview,
December 12 2014). Taylor also brought up the fact that some students are able to use their own data connection and therefore able to access any site on their device, which is also problematic. Essentially, students are able to access whatever they like with their devices if teachers do not give them rules and regulations to follow within the classroom.

In short, Adam believes that students need to be taught how to use technology as an educational tool. He mentions that people today believe students are technological wizards, but that is only true when it comes to gaming consoles. Students love technology because they are able to use it as a gaming tool, but have no idea how to use it as a presentation, learning or research tool for that matter (Interview, December 12 2014). He mentioned that he constantly teaches his classes how to effectively blog and post online and in doing so, helps the students to learn how to use technology effectively and efficiently. Although he believes having a class contract is a good idea, and did so in the past, he did not implement one in his class this year.

He said for his class, online bullying was not the issue, stealing was. He explained that the students keep their devices in their desk and one of the students had their device stolen. In the beginning of the year he explained to the students that their devices are their responsibility, and although he would always leave the classroom door locked, they are bringing their devices at their own discretion. After this instance, it was very difficult to plan lessons that required devices because all of the students were scared to bring them in. It took months before the students felt comfortable bringing back their device to school. He also mentioned that the amount of devices accessible through the school were limited, essentially it was hard getting access to them (Interview, December 12 2014).
Teacher to Parent

Both Riley and Adam discussed the importance of having open communication in terms of their child’s use of devices in class. As mentioned earlier, Riley has all of her students sign a class contract outlining the guidelines for the BYOD policy in her classroom. In order to make sure parents understand how their child’s device is supposed to be used, she also gets parents to sign the contract as well. The first year she introduced to the contract, she did not have parents sign it and found that parents were actually texting their child while they were in class. After these instances, she decided it would be important for parents to also understand the role they play in their child’s use of technology in the classroom. Furthermore, Riley mentioned that every instance of cyberbullying is equally as important as face to face bullying and therefore parents always need to be contacted (Interview, November 27 2014). She believes that having open communication with parents better holds students accountable for their online actions and may in fact decrease the number of cases of cyberbullying (Interview, November 27 2014).

Adam emphasized the fact that students are using their own devices at their own discretion. In the beginning of the school year, he makes it very clear to parents that the school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. He then mentioned that he has encountered many students who have told him that their parents would never allow them to bring their own personal devices to school because they are very costly items. He said it is a very important to discuss this issue with parents because he has experienced lost devices in his class before, and parents have tried to hold him accountable (Interview, December 12 2014). Adam also shares similar views to Riley, because he believes it is important for parents to know how their child is using their devices in class. In the event that a child missuses a device, he believes that parents should be contacted as well.
Impact of Administration on Teacher’s use of Technology

All three participants believe that the Peel Board has not been very clear in regards to the BYOD policy. Riley states, “There have not been any PD sessions about BYOD and maybe that is why many teachers do not implement it. Although they may like to, they probably do not know how to use it. But I am sure there will be once there starts to be issues at a school level” (Interview, November 27 2014). She also mentioned the fact that she is a grade four teacher and therefore she does not think PD sessions regarding BYOD would be available in elementary schools. Additionally, Riley stated that she has interpreted the BYOD policy as being for educational purposes only and this is exactly what she uses it for (Interview, November 27 2014). In essence, she believes that using BYOD only for educational purposes can indeed decrease the likelihood of students’ cyberbullying each other in class.

However, Taylor mentioned that she has experienced BYOD being implemented differently from school to school. Some schools have a no device policy during Nutrition Breaks, while other schools leave it to the discretion of the teacher. Also, in some classrooms, students are allowed to have their devices on them, while in other classrooms all devices are locked up until they need to be used (Interview, December 12 2014). Overall, Taylor discussed how the policy is being interpreted differently from classroom to classroom. While discussing this issue with Adam, he expressed his opinion by stating:

I would like it if we had PD, or if we had more guidance, but that’s technology across the board. They kind of dropped it in, so there has not been any PD. In a lot of ways, my feeling is that they have not done a very good job preparing teachers for this. Many teachers are afraid of it. They are telling teachers that they need to use it, but they are not telling them how to use it. So, yes, teachers need more guidance. I appreciate the
acceptance of technology because it is something that is beneficial. I question some of the Board’s motives, and why they are doing it because they expect other people to handle the costs and liability of it. It was kind of like, we are going to do this and figure it out later. So as of right now, I am feeling mixed about the policy. We weren’t getting clear directives about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so things are…

Technology is being used in different ways. For example, some teachers allow their students to use it for indoor recesses, but I have interpreted the Peel’s directive as it is only for educational purposes, so that is how I allow my students to use it. But again, I appreciate the acceptance of technology, but it was not done correctly (Interview, December 12 2014).

In essence, all three participants believe that the policy was not implemented correctly, and believe there is too much variation in terms of how it is being interpreted.

**Support for Student Learning**

Although their technology programs were very disruptive at first, both Riley and Adam have finally worked out the kinks. Now that they do not have any issues, they are able to use technology for a variety of integrative lessons.

**Assistive Technology**

Riley stated that technology brings out the best in some of her students in a way paper and pen assignments can never compare to. She explains that technology is great for all students, but it specifically allows students with exceptionalities to interact, learn, and share in a way like never before (Interview, November 27 2014).
Alternative Tool for Learning

Both Riley and Adam use technology in their classroom to transform the learning process. They teach students how to blog, how to create presentations, and how to link devices in order to share information. Riley mentioned that she has had a few students who were typically shy in class and would never raise their hand to speak out loud. She wanted to give these students a voice in class and decided to use polling devices and online blogging for these students to share their thoughts and opinions with everyone else. The results were astonishing, these particular students took comfort in expressing themselves online through writing. Riley also mentioned that she often assigns online homework and the students are very receptive towards it because they enjoy working with technology (Interview, November 27 2014).

Adam stated that he believes this new push for technology will capture the attention of many students. Technology is something they are familiar with, and but they are not familiar with using for educational purposes. He continued by saying he loves watching how excited the students get when they know they will be using devices. He also mentioned that he believes this excitement may only be temporary. He believes that giving students more access to technology may in fact decrease the likelihood of cyberbullying because it will soon be a norm to them. The thrill of messaging someone online will no longer be there if they are constantly using technology everyday in school (Interview, December 12 2014).
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, I share my reflections and understandings of the data gathered in chapter four with the research provided in chapter two. I do so by comparing and contrasting the information provided by the participants in hope of discovering insightful information into the issue. I also explore the implications of my key findings in regards to the use of technology in the classroom and its influence on cyberbullying. I then explore the limitations of this study, and end with suggestions for future research in this area. The follow is my construction and understandings of the data collected.

Understanding of Cyberbullying

Through the analysis of the data, it is apparent that the definition of cyberbullying varied among the teachers, as some were more detailed and explicit than others. The participants’ responses coincide with the research, considering the research has also indicated that there is no single consensus in regards to the definition of cyberbullying. It is clear that the definition of cyberbullying needs to be reexamined in order to promote consistency as to what constitutes as cyberbullying behaviour and what does not. Evidently, some teachers may be better educated in regards to the issue, and therefore know what behaviour to look for, while others do not understand the term and as a result, fail to identify the behaviour. Both Riley and Taylor believe that the bullying is a term that is also loosely used by many, and this may be the result of the inconsistent understanding of definition.
Teachers' Experience of Cyberbullying

Evidently, cyberbullying is happening within classroom settings towards both teachers and students. All three participants were able to share a story or experience of cyberbullying happening among their elementary students. Taylor was also able to share two cyberbullying cases, one that was directed towards another student, and another that was directed towards her. In the stories shared by Riley and Adam, the students were taking on the identity of another person and posting inappropriate comments towards other students. In Taylor’s experience, the students were taking photos of her and sending it to the entire school. In the other occurrence, the students were altering a picture of another student by adding degrading comments to it, and posted it for the other students in the class to see, as well as on Instagram. Through this experience she noticed that the students thought their behaviour was harmless, which sheds light on the fact that some students are unaware of the consequences of their online actions. These experiences indicate that cyberbullying can manifest in many ways, and it is an issue that we need to take into consideration before implementing the BYOD policy in our classrooms.

Elementary Teacher Response to the BYOD policy

All three participants agree that technology is important to use with their students, but can become very detrimental if not used correctly. Although they accept the integration of technology, all three of the participants do not believe that the Peel Board integrated the policy correctly. They all mentioned that the policy was implemented with little direction. Essentially, they have interpreted that the technology must be used for educational purposes only, however, other teachers may interpret it differently. Riley and Adam do not let their students use their
devices during lunch time, however, Taylor mentioned that some teachers do allow their students to use it during Nutrition Breaks.

Also, because there has been no professional development provided for them, they believe that teachers need to be comfortable using technology in their own lives if they plan on using it in the classroom. Adam also expressed his frustration by explaining that he felt as though the Peel Board implemented this policy without evaluating the full consequences of what was actually entailed in effectively putting it into place. They implemented the policy with the assumption that teachers already know how to teach through the use of these devices, but this is also not the case. Furthermore, Adam shared similar views to the American research conducted by Gurung & Rutledge, (2014) they both expressed that students are seen as technologically literate, however they can only use technology for features such as games and social networking. He argues that students do not come with the prior knowledge needed in order to use technology as a learning tool. In fact, students struggle to use technology as a learning tool. Adam’s argument continued to follow suit with the American research by Gurung & Rutledge (2014), however, it contradicts the claims made by the Canadian research conducted by Beach (2014).

Evidently, more time and research needs to be done in this area considering the Canadian research by Beach (2014) conflicts with the data provided by this study data, and the American research by Gurung & Rutledge (2014) supports the data finding. Conceivable, there is much we can learn in terms of the American data, as they have more research in the area of BYOD and have been implementing it longer than Canadian schools.
Initiatives in Place to Prevent Cyberbullying

Essentially, all three participants believe that we need to educate our students about the consequences of both posting, and commenting inappropriately online. Adam, also mentioned that the younger students are, the more likely they are to think that they are anonymous beings online, and this may be reason to begin teaching our students about Digital Citizenship at an early age. Riley mentioned that she did not have any issues of cyberbullying once she taught the students about Digital Citizenship, and about the legal effects their online actions can have. I believe she provides great insight, because she also mentioned the importance of having a class contract that outlined the roles and responsibilities of each students’ use of technology in the classroom. Interestingly, Adam implemented the class contract in previous years, but has not done so for this current class. The participants also believe it is important to incorporate parents in the class contract because it allows parents to understand what is constituted as appropriate online behaviour. It is also important to mention that the Ontario Ministry of Education does not make it mandatory for teachers to teach about Digital Citizenship, and therefore this may be something for them to look into in the near future as teachers are highlighting the importance of this education.

Implications/Recommendations:

This research has taught me the importance of teaching students what it means to be a good Digital Citizen. Students also need to know that cyberbullying is illegal and therefore despite how innocent they may think their behaviour is, it may have legal consequences. I believe that our students need to be taught how to use technology because it is something that is continuing to grow rapidly, and our students will evidently need to know how to use technology
in their lives. Although we do not know what the future holds, it is in our best intention to prepare them for it as best as we can, and teaching students how to be respectful Digital Citizens is a good start.

More importantly, this research has given me hope. Before conducting this research, I was very hesitant to allow my students to access their personal devices in the classroom because of the issue of cyberbullying, but now, this research has provided me with avenues to overcome this fear. It has taught me that there are ways to fight the war against cyberbullying. There are ways to prepare our students for the future. And, there are ways to successfully integrate technology in a classroom setting.

**Limitations**

As this research provides great insight regarding the use of technology in the classroom, and its implications on cyberbullying, there are a few limitations that are important to mention. First, this study was conducted using a very small sample of participants, and therefore the results may not reflect the voices of all educators. The small sample size was necessary due to the very specific time constraints I faced in the process of completing this study. Second, it is also important to mention that two of the participants worked within the same school and therefore the results may not reflect the experiences of other teachers in different geographical areas. Also, this study only focused on Peel District School Board teachers, and as a result, may not necessarily represent the voices of teachers across Canada. Moreover, face to face interviews were used for this study, and in the process, the results may reflect participants’ bias. The teachers many have felt pressured to answer the questions in a publicly acceptable way, and therefore left out very important details that may have further shed light on the issue. More
importantly, research in the area of cyberbullying and student use of technology in the classroom is very limited at this time and consequently, the research may not reflect the experience of the majority of educators.

**Further study**

As mentioned earlier, cyberbullying is a current issue that will continue to evolve as society becomes more and more engulfed into technology. Although this study provides substantial information, it is merely a glimpse into the future that teachers may face if they do not teach their students how to be responsible and respectful Digital Citizens. At this time, I question the preparedness of teachers in implementing technology in a safe and effective way. Future research should explore the preparedness of teachers, and their comfort level towards implementing the new BYOD policy, considering the findings of this study indicate that many teachers do not use it apart of their classroom program. Are teachers scared of cyberbullying arising? Are they unfamiliar with the technology being provided? Or, do they simply believe it is not an important skill for students to learn at school? Also, further research should look at the use of co-constructed class contracts that highlight the responsibilities of a students’ use of technology in a classroom. Research in this area may provide us with the solution to cyberbullying. Essentially, it is my hope for future research to explore the different way teachers can proactively combat the issue of cyberbullying across Canada. It is my hope for Canada to lead the fight against cyberbullying, and I believe the solution starts with the education we provide our students in our classrooms. I believe that children are agents of change that are fueled by the knowledge provided by their teacher. Together, we can make that change, and together we can make cyberbullying a thing of the past.
Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Date:

Dear, (Name of Participant)

I am a graduate student at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching student. For the purpose of the research paper I am studying the role a teacher would play if cyber bullying became an issue in their classroom. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

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 45 minute interview that will be audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time.

The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a research 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 question. I will destroy the audio 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 a copy of my notes with you 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 time.

Sincerely,
Felica Kumar

Researcher: Felica Kumar  Phone Number: 416 689 8005  Email: felica.kumar@utoronto.ca

Research Supervisor: Clare Brett  Email: clare.brett@utoronto.ca
Appendix B: Consent

Consent Form

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 Felica Kumar and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature____________________

Name: (printed) ______________________________________________________

Date: ________________________________
Appendix C: Interview Questions

Getting to know you questions

6. How long have you been a teacher?

7. Why did you decide to become a teacher?

8. What grades have you taught?

Technology Questions

9. To what degree do you consider yourself a user of technology?
   
   a. Do you use it as a teaching resource?

10. In recent years, the Peel District School Board has begun a new initiative where students are encouraged to bring their own devices to use in school (BYOD).
    
    a. How do you feel about this initiative?
    
    b. What impact has this initiative had on your classroom?

11. Are teachers responsible for monitoring what students do on their personal devices during class time, in the hallways, or during recess?

Experience with Bully and Cyberbullying

12. How do you define bullying?

13. Have you ever dealt with bullying in your school before?
    
    a. If yes, how was it dealt with?
    
    b. If no, how would you deal with it?

14. How do you define cyberbullying?

15. Have you ever dealt with or heard about cyberbullying in your school before?
    
    a. If yes how was it dealt with?

16. What initiatives are in place to deal with cyber bullying if it were to happen?
a. Has the issue of cyberbullying been raised in PD sessions or by the school administration or the Board?

17. Is cyberbullying an issue that concerns you in schools?

18. Do you feel that cyberbullying will become a more significant issue in schools because of the move to BYOD?

19. Is there anything else you would like to mention in relation to your experience with, or thoughts about, cyberbullying?


References


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Mahoney, J. (2013, Sep 27). Education, not more laws, seen as way to prevent bullying.


