Cyberbullying or Drama? What’s the difference and why does it matter: Links, Labels, and Management Strategies for Cyberbullying

By

Ashley Persaud

A research paper submitted in conformity with the requirements For the degree of Master of Teaching Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Copyright by Ashley Persaud, April 2017
Abstract

Ensuring the well-being of students has a myriad of challenges in this modern day of online communication. One challenge is managing and preventing cyberbullying, which can occur from or become another form of conflict called social drama. The purpose of this research is to look at strategies to prevent and address cyberbullying, as well as to explore social drama and its relationship to cyberbullying. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with three educators from the Greater Toronto Area. Findings suggest that while participants try to be proactive, many of the strategies utilized were reactive, and the relationships students have with their teachers influence students’ willingness to report cases of bullying. Participants also unanimously believe there is a link between cyberbullying and social drama, where one conflict can become the other. It is found that there is power with these terms, where it was suggested that social drama is not addressed as seriously as cyberbullying. The power of labels calls into question the language teachers use to speak to youth, which implies that there is more work to be done in developing effective anti-bullying programs.

Keywords: cyberbullying, internet bullying, online bullying, bully, social drama, strategies
Acknowledgements

There are so many people who have helped me along the way and without them this paper would not be possible. Sincerest thanks to my peers in cohort 242, especially Nilab Sidiqi, who was a great partner with me in this journey. Special thanks to my research professor, Dr. Rose Fine-Meyer, and to the teaching assistants in class, in particular Gurpreet Sahmbi. Of course, this would not be possible without the educators who participated in this study – so most thanks to you! Finally, I am very grateful to my family and friends who supported me through this process. Thank you, Tim Phan for editing this MTRP and a last, big thank you to Rachel Lott for lending me your ears and just letting me talk.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Research Context and Problem</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Research Questions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Background of the Researcher</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Overview</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Literature Review</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Introduction</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Understanding Cyberbullying and Interpretations</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 The Problem of Defining Bullying and Cyberbullying</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Labels</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Various Perceptions of Motives</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Social Drama and its Link to Cyberbullying</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.2.1 Defining Drama

24

### 2.2.2 Social Drama’s Link with Cyberbullying and Bullying

25

### 2.3 Teacher Pedagogy

27

#### 2.3.1 Teacher Strategies that Addresses Cyberbullying

27

#### 2.3.2 Barriers in Teaching Technological Skills

30

### 2.4 Conclusion

31

### Chapter 3: Research Methodology

33

#### 3.0 Introduction

33

#### 3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

33

#### 3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

34

#### 3.3 Participants

35

##### 3.3.1 Sampling Criteria

35

##### 3.3.2 Sampling Procedures

36

##### 3.3.3 Participant Biographies

37

#### 3.4 Data Analysis

38

#### 3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

38

#### 3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

39
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Research Context and Problem

*Care* is one of the four themes in the Ontario Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession, which states "members express their commitment to students’ well-being and learning through positive influence, professional judgment and empathy in practice" (Ontario College of Teachers, n.d., p. 1). As such, ensuring the well-being of students becomes challenging when teachers and school leaders cannot protect their students from harm, especially when it originates or proliferates outside of the school. An example of harm that schools try to prevent is bullying, which can occur to various forms and degrees.

In an international bullying study, Rigby and Smith (2011) noted that traditional bullying has decreased in many countries around the world. Traditional bullying is the face-to-face bullying that can be verbal, physical or relational, such as spreading rumours (Chibbaro, 2007). With the advancement of technology, however, a new form of bullying has emerged: cyberbullying. Cyberbullying, or online bullying, can be described as “the use of ICT [information and communications technology] to intimidate, harass, victimise, or bully an individual or a group of individuals” (Bhat, 2008, p. 54). Cyberbullying occurs through electronic means, namely e-mail, text messaging, and social media sites (Sbarbaro & Smith, 2011). Some examples include sending mean and offensive e-mails, making a blog to offend a person, creating online polling booths in order to ridicule another, posting embarrassing photos of someone on Facebook, photoshopping (or doctoring) an individual in an embarrassing scene, or breaking into someone’s Instagram account to post sexual, racist or offensive images (Bhat, 2008; Chisholm, 2014; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). While cyberbullying is more recent than traditional bullying, they "often coexist and closely interact (especially in older children)"
Cyberbullying has a large breadth, as it is a global phenomenon that can occur anywhere at any point of the day (Bhat, 2008; Farrall, 2012; Livingstone, Haddon, Gorzig, & Olafsson, 2011). In fact, when a child returns home from school, they can still receive threats, harassment, and humiliation, in a place they assume will be a safe haven. Indeed, the extent of cyberbullying is not limited to young children. Cyberbullying impacts a larger age demographic than traditional schoolyard bullying; for instance, it can affect college students and adults in the workplace, including teachers (Cowie & Myers, 2014; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Washington, 2015; Williams, 2010). Described as a “21st Century Health Care Phenomenon” by nurses Carter and Wilson (2015, p.115), school-aged youth are more vulnerable to the negative consequences of cyberbullying. Some of these negative consequences include psychological distress, such as depression and feelings of powerlessness, poorer academic performance, and low self-esteem (Beran & Li, 2007; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012; Tokunaga, 2010). The worst outcome is when victims of cyberbullying are unable to cope and choose to end their life. For example, 15-year-old Canadian from British Columbia, Amanda Todd, found no escape to the relentless cyberbullying and bullying experienced in and out of school. Her suicide in October, 2012, thrust cyberbullying into the consciousness of Canadians, mainstream media, and policy makers (Dyck, 2013; Meissner, 2013; Ogrodnik, 2013). Another well-known case is the suicide of Nova Scotia teen Rehtaeh Parsons; her photo from an alleged sexual assault was distributed online, which resulted in
bullying and harassment that Parsons could neither escape nor manage (Dolak, 2013; Newton, 2013).

In Canada, one in five teenagers reported they have seen cyberbullying happen to someone they know on social media sites, and almost one in ten teenagers reported that they have been bullied online (Ipsos, 2013, p.1). Promotion Relationship and Eliminating Violence Network, otherwise known as PREVNet, is comprised of a large team of Canadian research scientists and organizations that serve youth; they found that over "78% Canadians believe that not enough is being done to stop bullying in their communities" (PREVNet, 2015, p. 4). Some teachers may believe banning cell phones and limiting technology-use to teenagers is one solution. For instance, a study that surveyed 1,121 teachers in the United States found that many teachers had fears of inappropriate cell-phone use in class; about 80% of teachers expressed concerns of students cheating, disrupting the class, and cyberbullying if they had access to their devices (Thomas, O'Bannon, & Britt, 2014). A total ban is not feasible since ICTs will continue to permeate our homes and schools, especially where school boards are incorporating digital learning in the classroom and encouraging students to Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) (Chen, Gallagher-Mackay & Kidder, 2014). Former classroom teachers Thomas and McGee (2012) argue that although students can choose to use ICTs inappropriately, it is not the cause of such misbehaviours. They suggest “instead of banning cells in the classroom, teachers and administrators in schools should be modeling the moral and ethical use of cell phone technology” (Thomas & McGee, 2012, p. 28).

Another point of contention is educators and school policies do not necessarily heed adolescent voices and their narratives. Marwick and boyd (2011) suggest that “adults need to start paying attention to the language of youth” (p.1) for success in handling and implementing
anti-bullying intervention. In response, studies aiming to understand adolescents' perception of bullying and online aggression found the term “drama” from conversations with youth (Allen, 2012, 2013, Marwick & boyd, 2011; Marwick & boyd, 2014a). Drama, or social drama, is part of the adolescent colloquial vocabulary, and can be described as a behaviour that uses social media to get attention and manipulate identities of oneself (Marwick & boyd, 2014a). Marwick and boyd (2014a) define it as, “performative, interpersonal conflict that takes place in front of an active, engaged audience, often on social media” (p. 1191). Drama is often seen by students as a “girl thing” (Marwick & boyd, 2014a, p. 1200; Wolf, 2012) since it includes feminine subjects like gossip, dating, and friendships, but Marwick and boyd (2014a) warn that boys too engage in social conflict and gossip that is related to drama.

Allen’s case study (2014) shows that cyberbullying and adolescent social drama do intersect. Some examples include mean tweets on social media site Twitter and hostile comments on Facebook from not only peers but also from anonymous individuals. Those anonymous individuals reported to the girls’ cheerleading coach on the cyberbullying the girls has done (Allen, 2014). Allen’s (2014) case study shows how language and words can be powerful, attacking an individual’s integrity. Also, it found that cyberbullying and social drama are recognizable themes and are connected to one another. Therefore, understanding how cyberbullying and drama are related, and how educators perceive these social aggressions are vital in addressing negative social online behaviour.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

Research suggests that understanding ways teachers are managing cyberbullying are lacking (Bhat, 2008; Campbell, 2013; Cassidy, Faucher, & Jackson, 2013). Moreover, when
adolescents are asked about aggressive online behaviour, usually girls’ online conflict, they instead use the term drama (Allen, 2012; Veinot, Campbell, Kruger, Grodzinski, & Franzen, 2011). It is interesting how these words – cyberbullying and drama – can mean different things to different people, and warrants further studies. The following vignette illustrates the difficulty in identifying cyberbullying and drama:

Jess didn't think anything of it when she texted David, her friend Laura's crush, about the math homework. But when Jess went on Facebook later, her heart dropped. Laura and their friend Allie had created a "We Hate Jess" page, where they accused Jess of moving in on David. Jess's eyes filled with tears. How could her friends post such hateful comments? (Walker, 2013, p. 2)

Is this cyberbullying or drama? Magazine and novel writer Walker (2013) argues the latter since Allie and Laura wanted to retaliate against another student, Jess. However, Walker (2013) also notes that once that conflict becomes public online and others can join in, it is then referred to as cyberbullying. How do teachers and students view the aforementioned situation and what power do these labels hold? Does it change a teacher’s strategy in managing such conflicts? Does drama cushion or minimize the seriousness of an attack made online, especially if it was dismissed as a “girl thing”? Do labels interfere in preventing cyberbullying from occurring?

Expanding on the work of Allen (2012, 2013, 2014) and Marwick and boyd (2011, 2014a), exploring the educator’s viewpoint of such social aggression and conflict is needed. What are effective strategies to address cyberbullying, and does labelling the conflict cyberbullying or social drama matter? Therefore, the purpose of my research is to explore
teacher’s perceptions of cyberbullying in its relation to social drama and vice versa, as well as their strategies in addressing cyberbullying and related social conflicts that may overlap.

1.2 Research Questions

The primary research question guiding this study is: what are effective teacher strategies in managing cyberbullying, and how do labels affect teacher responses?

To help this inquiry further, sub-questions include:

• What are cyberbullying and teenage social drama? How are they related?

• How do teachers’ views of cyberbullying and drama affect their responses and strategies in the classrooms and school?

• What strategies are working and what still needs to be addressed in solving some of the cyberbullying problems in classrooms?

1.3 Background of the Researcher

I struggle to understand social aggression. I actively avoided social drama in my high school years and I consider myself lucky that I have not experienced traditional bullying by peers. However, I became a victim of cyberbullying while attending university when someone created a fake profile of me on Facebook, slandering my character. My friends and I reported identity theft to the Facebook administrators and they quickly removed the false user. I was hurt and angry; the pictures that the user posted were only accessible to a close group of friends in a private album on Facebook but I could not deduce which friend betrayed me. This episode distracted me in school and affected how I interacted with my friends. I wondered if I could report it to anyone else, but to whom and where? I did not know what support I could receive from school. I could
not tell my parents either because I was afraid of the consequences, so I dealt with the situation on my own.

It has been almost 10 years since that incident and I still do not know who or why a supposed friend would want to hurt me. Anonymity is powerful and dangerous. Even a coward in my personal life could feel a sense of superiority by threatening me online. It makes me worried for today’s students, since now they not only have to circumvent social conflicts like bullying and drama at school, but also at home. Sometimes when I tutor my high school students we talk about everyday school life. Before I committed to researching this topic, I had asked a student once if she considered social drama to be bullying. She said, "No, it's different."

I then asked, "What if a girl sends a mean tweet to you?"

She hesitated, and then responded, "It depends on the situation." She differentiated them based on who had the upper hand or power, and this lack of clarity is another reason why I wanted to further research this issue.

From that episode, in my practice teaching placements I have not seen direct links to cyberbullying and social drama firsthand, but they somewhat exposed me to these conflicts. In one placement I heard teachers say there was “drama” between female grade 6 students. I did not overhear students call their own conflict “drama” however. In another teaching placement, my Associate Teacher spent a class on anti-cyberbullying efforts during the Peel School Board’s Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in November. She used an interactive movie called Words Hurt produced by the Government of Canada (2015). The movie is interesting because the girl on the screen reacts to the words inserted in the dialogue by the computer user. The grade 8 class responded excitedly, partially awed that such a interactive movie existed. Soon, when
they made the girl actress cry, they were made aware that their words could be impactful, even across a screen. Watching their reaction and remembering my own experiences with Facebook during university awakens a strong instinct to protect and care for children, and a desire to understanding these conflicts grow.

In my third teaching placement, there was another anti-bullying week and during this time the Anti-Bullying Club sent teachers a small package of small activities to do with students. In one period, my Associate Teacher and I had students make a pledge relating to being a good citizen in the classroom. Another time I used the *Words Hurt* video, which I learned from my first practicum, to elicit a conversation about cyberbullying. Students were engaged to see the girl’s facial reaction like the grade 8 students in my first placement. At the end of the week, the Anti-Bullying Club held an assembly for the grade 4 to 8 students. The Anti-Bullying Club made a mannequin challenge to show different kinds of bullying. Some of the students laughed, perhaps amused by their friends in the skit. However, my Associate Teacher took it seriously and used it as a teaching moment. After the assembly, she had an honest talk with the class to understand what exactly is bullying, why students were laughing, and how the frequency of bullying may be surprising to some students. At the end of the period, some students revealed their own difficult challenges with a bully. The issue of cyberbullying resurfaced. My Associate Teacher explained to students that if they see something they do not like online, they have the power to turn it off and walk away; the power we give to the ringleader, or the bully, can be taken away. I admired my Associate Teacher’s passion and the great relationship she had with her students because many were open to share their stories. At the same time, I questioned how much they were listening and if our efforts had any significant impact.
1.4 Overview

I conducted a qualitative research study that used semi-structured interviews in exploring teachers’ perspectives on cyberbullying, social drama, their relation if any, and strategies teachers find effective. In chapter 2, I review the literature on cyberbullying and drama, touching on bullying as well since it is related to both constructs. I also review the literature on teacher strategies and barriers for managing cyberbullying. In chapter 3, I review the methodology, which involves one-on-one interviews with educators who have had experience in addressing cyberbullying. In chapter 4, I report my research findings, highlighting key discoveries from the narratives of the teachers. Finally, in chapter 5, I discuss the implications of my findings for my peers and educators by sharing various questions raised by the findings and highlight possible areas for future research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I review the literature in the areas of traditional bullying, cyberbullying and drama. I start by reviewing the definitions of bullying and cyberbullying and consider how various definitions depend on the stakeholders. Next, I review research on the relationships between drama, bullying and cyberbullying, taking account of students’ and teachers’ differing perspectives. Finally, I will look at strategies used to address and prevent cyberbullying and overview areas that require more research.

2.1 Understanding Cyberbullying and Interpretations

According to UNICEF's Report Card 11, which compares a child's well-being in 29 of the world's richest countries, Canada’s ranking falls in the middle; in some aspects of child well-being Canada shines, but in other areas like bullying, Canada ranks 21 out of 29 (UNICEF Canada, 2013, p. 7). Compared to other industrialized nations, Canadian children are reported to being bullied at a higher rate (UNICEF Canada, 2013, p. 7) Canada also ranks low in terms of relationships as only 58% of Canadian children find their classmates "kind and helpful" (UNICEF Canada, 2013, p. 8). There are various forms of bullying, and with social media it has altered the way students interact with one another. Not only do victims experience negative outcomes from bullying, but the students who bully do as well. For instance, school bullies are linked to criminality later in life (Olweus, 2011, p. 154). Therefore, understanding what bullying and cyberbullying entails is extremely important in creating policies to address cyberbullying in schools and practical strategies teachers can employ.
2.1.1 The Problem of Defining Bullying and Cyberbullying

Traditional bullying is physical, verbal and social (also known as relational) bullying that occurs without electronic means (Smith et al., 2008). Researcher and professional trainer in bullying prevention, Elizabeth Englander (2013) calls it an “abuse behaviour,” which differs from fighting or an “equal-power conflict” (p.7). In the literature, the common criteria for bullying appears to be: (1) Power Imbalance: there is a power difference of the bully and target, where the bully is physically stronger or more verbally skilled; (2) Repetition: the bully’s actions continue over a period of time; and (3) Intentionality: it is deliberate negative behaviour as it doesn't occur by accident (Englander, 2013, p. 15; Hazler, 1996; Olweus 1993, 2011, p. 151).

Hinduja and Patchin (2009), co-directors of the Cyberbullying Research Center in the United States, describe cyberbullying as “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, or other electronic devices” (p. 5). This definition includes the elements of intention and repetition but does not include power imbalance as found in the traditional definition of bullying. Smith et al. (2008) describe cyberbullying as “an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (p. 376). This definition includes power imbalance and the quantity of bullies. Englander (2013) describes cyberbullying more loosely, stating that “cyberbullying is characterized by a subjective perception of being cruelly targeted through electronic means” (p. 35). Hinduja and Patchin (2012) acknowledges that the various definitions of cyberbullying in the literature is a problem. Some define cyberbullying in the broad sense to include every kind of online experience, while some other scholars only focus on specific kinds of harm like humiliation and insults. For example, Englander (2013) states that although a cyberbullying experience may feel abusive, “the originating incident may lack the
intention, repetition, and/or power imbalance that traditionally define in-person bullying” (p. 35). For example, if a student is harassing another peer online who has the capability to retaliate, is it cyberbullying since they have equal power? The definition is not so clear.

Furthermore, Dooley, Pyżalski, and Cross (2009) note that one of the debates in defining cyberbullying is the importance of including “repetition” in the definition. In accordance with the bullying definition above, a single harmful act such as posting an embarrassing photo on Facebook is not cyberbullying. However, repeated behaviour can be experienced in different ways through social media. First, in traditional bullying there are three main roles: a bully, a target, and a bystander. In contrast, a cyberbullying situation may involve an “active cyberbully, secondary cyberbully, observer, and target” (Bhat, Chang, & Linscott, 2010, p. 38; Bhat, Llewellyn, & Roberts, 2007). The active cyberbully begins the bullying, while the secondary cyberbully views the information, then forwards or discusses it, and the observers are those “who do not view or disseminate the information but are aware of what is happening” (Bhat, Chang, & Linscott, 2010, p. 38; Bhat, Llewellyn, & Roberts, 2007). Since the secondary cyberbully perpetuates the hurtful information and therefore harms the target again, they too are considered a kind of bully. With more bullies exhibiting aggressive behaviour, the potential for harm and harassment increases. Therefore, one single act can be damaging to victims since the effects, such as embarrassment and humiliation, can be recurring to the target, therefore repetitive (Dooley, Pyżalski, & Cross, 2009). Furthermore, since a potentially large audience and further distribution can occur online, cyberbullying is repetitive in this manner (Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010; Slonje & Smith, 2008).

Additionally, a key element of cyberbullying is an individual can remain anonymous or take on a false identity from the target though digital screens (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008, 2009;
Kowalski & Limber, 2007). This anonymity can give the bully feelings of security, of not getting
ccaught or in trouble, or give them a sense of power, which can embolden them to say things they
would not normally say face to face (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Although the internet can
protect a bully's identity, studies have shown that cyberbullies are likely to be someone known in
real-life, such as schoolmates. In a study conducted by Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, and
Solomon (2010), which sampled 2,186 diverse students in grades 6, 7, 10, and 11 across a
Canadian urban center, found 89% of students reported knowing the identity of their online
predator. Most surveyed "indicated that the perpetrator was someone they considered a friend or
a student at the respondent’s school or at another school" (Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, &
Solomon, 2010, p. 365). Similarly, an anonymous Web-based survey by Juvonen and Gross
(2008) found that of 1,454 12-to-17-year old adolescents, 73% of participants were "totally sure"
or "pretty sure" of the identity of the cyberbully (Juvonen & Gross, 2008, p. 501). This does not
support the assumption that adolescents use anonymity to their benefit for bullying purposes
(Juvonen & Gross, 2008).

In terms of power imbalance, an individual’s physical size does not relate to power in an
online environment as in traditional bullying. The smaller or weaker individual can cyberbully,
and arguably the more technologically capable individual may hold power (Law, Shapka, Hymel,
Olson, & Waterhouse, 2011). However, the notion of power imbalance has been questioned.
Englander (2013) asserts that once bullying moves to cyberspace, it can become a more equal-
power fight. Differences in power may not be important in cyberbullying since the target can
stop receiving negative encounters online by blocking or deleting cyberbullies (Dooley, Pyżalski,
& Cross, 2009; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006). For example, another study found that
youth block screen names as a common strategy against online incidents (Juvonen & Gross,
Other tactics include restricting screen names or changing their own screen name, but the authors warn such preventative tactics seem underutilized, reporting one quarter of youth in their large survey never blocked a screen name in response to cyberbullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2008).

Finally, a study found that if the target does not retaliate or bystanders do not come forward, it is often difficult to identify cyberbullying situations (Bhat, Chang & Linscott, 2010). Youth are not likely to report cyberbullying incidents to their parents for fears of restricted internet use or their belief that they need to handle it on their own (Juvonen & Gross, 2008), which is consistent with other studies (Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010; Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000). However, Juvonen and Gross (2008) suggest that cyberspace "extends the school ground" (p. 503) as 85% of youth reported overlap of bullying at school and cyberbullying. Although cyberbullying is not as visible as school-based bullying, the latter can be used as an indicator for aggressive behaviour online.

While general assumptions can be made about cyberbullying, different evidence demonstrates cyberbullying as a complex issue, which warrants further research. There is debate that suggests cyberbullying is a distinct and separate category of bullying (Chisholm, 2014), while others argue it is connected and similar to bullying at school and therefore it should be the school's responsibility to address (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Furthermore, research has found students understand bullying in various ways (Cuadrado-Gordillo, 2012; Frisén, Holmqvist, & Oscarsson, 2008). Students perceive bullying differently from their teachers, such as regarding the act as unintentional, while educators perceive it was more likely otherwise (Cheng, Chen, Ho, & Cheng, 2011). Finally, the way students and teachers understand bullying is different from the way researchers define bullying (Lee, 2006; Vaillancourt et al., 2008). These definition issues
matter because how can educators and researchers help students if they do not share the same perspective? Similarly, how can teachers effectively reach students to prevent cyberbullying from occurring if they value different parts of the definition? What this leads to is another issue, which is the problem of labels.

2.1.2 Labels

There are several concerns with labels. One is the overuse of the word “bullying” (Englander, 2013). Englander (2013) describes that “accidents, fights, assaults, quarrels, malice, and differences of opinion are all mistakenly called ‘bullying’ at times,” which then lessens the impact of the term bullying if it is so often used (p.5). Another problem is the word “bullying” is “emotionally loaded” (Englander, 2013, p. 121). It is a word that can trigger an emotional response, where targets for instance do not want to be associated as victims, and appear weak and lose social status (Marwick & boyd, 2014a), or fear of retaliation (Englander, 2013, p. 7). It is a big word for parents as well. Sometimes parents focus on whether their child is a bully or not, rather than focusing on their children’s behaviour, or parents may use the label of “bullying” so that their children’s problem is taken seriously (Englander, 2013). Englander (2013) suggests if the term “bullying” is used for a situation, then that the correct criteria is used to figure out how the case fits to the term (p.121).

2.1.3 Various Perceptions of Motives

Moving forward in preventing cyberbullying cases, it is important to understand the causes of its occurrences. As the various elements of cyberbullying are a debate, the complexity continues with a diversity of motivational factors. Argued above, the power to be anonymous is one factor to cyberbully. Not getting caught is part of what makes anonymity exciting, but it
enables disinhibition, which means "freed from restraints from your normal behavior" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p. 21). One example of disinhibition is from drinking alcohol; people are less likely to hold themselves back from doing things they wouldn't normally do (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Being in front of a screen and not seeing the person on the other side mean computer users cannot see visual cues, such as scowls or disgusted looks, which may further encourage negative behaviour because users do not receive negative feedback (Englander, 2013). Seeing one's pain through body language and cues can decrease aggression in most situations (Rule & Leger, 1976).

Other motivators to partake in cyberbullying include “jealousy” (Strom and Strom, 2005), “revenge” (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009), “a joke” (Englander & Muldowney, 2007), to "feel funny" (Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010), and wanting to feel good (Wilton & Campbell, 2011). Some cyberbullies do not realize their behaviour is abusive, citing examples like, "I was just messing around" as a reason for their online activity (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p. 71).

While these responses are varied, a more recent Australian study by Compton, Campbell, and Mergler (2014) found that the perceptions of the main motives for cyberbullying and bullying are varied between parents, teachers and students. Teachers suggested cyberbullying occurred because technology was readily available to adolescents, but students said the motive for cyberbullying was to “avoid retaliation from victims or punishment from schools, teachers and parents” (Compton et al., 2014, p. 396). To relieve boredom was also a motive for cyberbullying supported by parents and student groups, but not teachers. As for anonymity, parents believed it was a main motivator, but students and teachers did not agree; instead they suggested that teenagers know an audience of peers is watching on social media (Papacharissi,
These motivational factors for bullying are significant because motivational factors can inform prevention and intervention when dealing with cyberbullies, but the disconnection between adults and teenagers makes it difficult to do so. The disconnection may also misguide teacher practices of how to use technology in the classroom. If teachers disallow the use of technology for fear that its availability is reason enough to cyberbully, then not only are they missing out on a great learning resource, but they are overlooking deeper issues on why students choose to behave inappropriately.

2.2 Social Drama and its Link to Cyberbullying

The 2004 film Mean Girls portrays the drama and conflict of teenagers. Although some students may not identify with the exaggeration of social cliques and competition for popularity portrayed (Allen, 2015), 10 years later Mean Girls still resonates with the audience as it tackles issues still relevant today (Kiang, 2014). Therefore, whether it is addressed in school and how it is related to other forms of conflict remain an important discussion.

2.2.1 Defining Social Drama

Recently, “drama” has been recognized in the literature as having links to cyberbullying (Allen, 2012; Marwick & boyd, 2011, 2014a, 2014b; Veinot, Campbell, Kruger, Grodzinski, & Franzen, 2011). According to Marwick and boyd (2014a), defining drama is difficult. Previously Allen (2012) found these elements to exist within drama from focus groups and interviews: “(1) conflict; (2) excessive emotionality; (3) excessive time and attention; and (4) practices that overlap with bullying, gossip, and aggression” (Marwick & boyd, 2014a, p. 1191).

Marwick and boyd's 4 year study (2014a) involved interviewing teenagers 13 to 19-year-
old students across the United States, with the intention to understand drama. The researchers define social drama as a “performative, interpersonal conflict that takes place in front of an active, engaged audience, often on social media” (Marwick & boyd, 2014, p. 1191). They argue drama is performative since it involves an active, engaged audience, where participation is further provided through social media. For instance, drama, gossip and rumours can thrive on Facebook and Twitter, and can make its way into the school through texts and written notes and then back again on social media (Marwick & boyd, 2014a). A 2011 Teens and Digital Citizenship Survey that sampled 799 teenagers from 12 to 17 years old in the United States found that 68% of teenagers see people starting drama on social media (Lenhart, 2015, p.2). Twitter and Snapchat users are more likely to see drama (Lenhart, 2015). Like bullying, the element of power is involved from status, popularity and competition (Allen, 2015). Power can be achieved through drama and spreading gossip, as gossip too is also identified in Marwick and boyd’s (2014a) study.

Teenagers can encode drama online to perform for certain peers, while limiting what they say to others, excluding the outsiders (Marwick & boyd, 2014b). This can be done through a "subtweet" on Twitter, where the user can choose to reveal part of the drama, not the full story, by using key words certain people would know but are otherwise meaningless to other groups of people. Lenhart et al. (2011) found that teens on social media usually ignore drama or meanness, unless they are close to the person under attack, and are reluctant to report something because it is so visible. If they intervene, they can sometimes cause themselves to become a target as well.

2.2.2 Social Drama's Link with Cyberbullying and Bullying

In Allen’s study (2015), which included over 700 students in survey responses, youth viewed drama as not always the same as bullying, aggression and conflict. Allen (2015) provides
a theoretical framework, which demonstrates that social interactions are “fluid," "interpretative" and "characterized by a social context" based on the schemas and understanding of students and staff members (p. 170). Although cyberbullying has not been explicitly included in the framework, it is still relevant as cyberbullying is a kind of bullying. Interactions can become bullying, or drama, and then later bullying. Allen (2015) describes that drama can change into bullying when actions become “aggressive,” "intentionally hurtful" and "deceitful" (p. 176). In Allen’s study, students generally believed bullying was not present in their school. But largely, students reasoned problematic social interactions were drama (Allen, 2015). This finding was consistent in Marwick and boyd’s (2014a) study where students struggled to differentiate bullying and drama. This is problematic in addressing conflict between students, especially if the abuse is minimized or cushioned by the target or the bully, which should instead be acknowledged and resolved.

Other researchers also support the notion that the “bully” and “victim” does not appropriately describe peer involvement in bullying (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2011). Many cases of drama do not have a “clear perpetrator and victim or an obvious power or status imbalance” (Marwick & boyd, 2014a, p. 1198). Drama incorporates a wide array of conflict; this ambiguity allows teenagers to have some control on their social lives and shape events as unimportant, meaning they can save dignity from being seen as a bully or a victim (Marwick & boyd, 2014a). Therefore, an issue remains. Instead of “bullying”, students describe conflict between peers as social drama (Marwick & boyd, 2014a). Bullying narratives are defined by adults, but teenagers can make their own narratives with the language of drama, which may be a better option to avoid penalty from adults.
2.3 Teacher Pedagogy

A cause for concern is that only a fraction of students report bullying to parents, citing that they feared their parents would take away their devices (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Miller, Burns & Johnson, 2013). Therefore, it is even more important to try to prevent cyberbullying incidents from occurring. Hinduja and Patchin (2012) found that students who said their teacher had talked to them about internet safety were "less likely to report cyberbullying others" (p. 82). At present, the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum in the elementary grades makes some mention regarding internet use. In grade 3, there is a focus on safety and injury prevention, such as student developing "guidelines for safe Internet use" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015a, p. 122). Risks to communication technology and various kinds of bullying make an appearance in the grade 4 section of the curriculum. In grade 7 under Personal Safety and Injury Prevention, students are to describe the benefits and danger of ICTs, such as sexting and cyberstalking (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015a, p. 194). In grade 9, teachers are to engage students in describing skills and strategies "to prevent or respond to situations of verbal, physical, and social bullying and sexual harassment" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015b, p. 107). These are some steps that the Ontario Ministry of Education has incorporated to recognize cyberbullying issues, internet danger, and healthy relationships and have these themes incorporated in the curriculum.

2.3.1 Teacher Strategies that Addresses Cyberbullying

When it comes to both bullying and cyberbullying, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a research-based, reputable intervention program (Juvonen & Graham, 2001). On their website they provide resources, such as Cyber Bullying Prevention Curriculum for grades 3-5 and grades 6-12 (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Englander (2013) suggests using programs
that are led by children; they are most successful because they "reflect children's and teen's perspectives and experiences" (p. 10). Along the same lines, where the message comes from or who the messenger is has impact. Choosing a popular child, or a high-status peer, can increase the effectiveness of the program since they can "influence values about social interactions better than the vast majority of adults" (Englander, 2013, p. 10). For example, when adults lead a discussion about misusing e-mail, a form of communication kids do not really use with their peers, the conversation is well-intended but it lacks impact in delivering the message. Morgan (2013) and Hinduja and Patchin (2009) support this notion, describing that using peer mentoring can be effective since older students are sharing their knowledge with younger students and can be influential.

Other ways teachers can go about teaching cyberbullying issues include presentations; exploiting teachable moments, utilizing classroom activities like "lessons, projects or artwork to increase awareness"; and responding quickly when it happens so the target can feel safe and bullies (as well as the rest of the student population) know there are consequences (Morgan, 2003, p. 148). It is also cautioned that a one-day assembly cannot fully cover cyberbullying (Riedel, 2008). For anime and cartoon fans, there is a Pokémon Learning League educational series that tackle cyberbullying topics in its episodes, which helps extend the exposure to anti-bullying messages (Riedel, 2008).

Only focusing on internet safety skills may also be short-sighted. In response, the Seattle curriculum uses four strategies to guide prevention practices: 1) expose misunderstandings about online behaviour; 2) foster empathy; 3) teach internet safety skills; and 4) teach adolescents strategies to avoid digital abuse (Holladay, 2011). In fostering empathy and responsibility, lessons in core curriculum subjects could cross themes to include bullying and cyberbullying.
For instance, The Cyberbullying Letter Project involving a reading of a novel, The Chocolate War, was proved fruitful (Connolly & Giouroukakis, 2012). In the novel, bullies harass students while the adults look away. Most students thought the adults should have tried to do more. The lesson moves on to cyberbullying, looking at the real-life story of Megan Meier story who committed suicide from a love story; a boy she thought liked him but turned on her as he posted terrible comments to her. The boy wasn't a real boy but the mother of a classmate of Megan's. Students then write letters to pre-service teachers, which involve research, on the dangers of cyberbullying and advice for future practice. Besides building on literacy skills, a benefit Connolly and Giouroukakis (2012) noted is students were linking cyberbullying as discussed in text to real life, making multi-level connections that "deepen their understanding...and empower them to take action" (Connolly & Giouroukakis, 2012, p. 73). In another literacy activity, Cordi & Masturzo (2013) describe how to use story-telling through digital tools to address bullying and cyberbullying. For instance, some students interview other students or adults about their experience and share them through digital means to make bullying stories visible. Students highlight the need of prevention as one student, Kristin shared, "I would say that students would get in trouble for bullying, but we were never taught how to prevent bullying or how to get out of a situation" (Cordi & Masturzo, 2013, p. 24).

In teaching the prevention bullying, surveying students is a good approach to not only learn what students think but to show mindfulness of potential issues, which can guide the educator's efforts (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). Hinduja and Patchin (2012) also recommends to form questions that "describe behaviors and their timeline specifically" (p. 145). For example, instead of "Has anyone ever said anything mean to you online?" be more specific with "Has
someone from your school created a hurtful Facebook page about you in the past 30 days?" (p. 145).

Teaching internet skills is also possible, especially with the ease of such websites like Google Sites. High School teacher Shannon Baldino describes how she implemented a class blog to teach students proper online behaviour, modelling good online use, and enforcing rules and monitoring technology use (Baldino & Fink, 2014). Her goal was, "to teach [students] how to post in a respectful manner that would promote critical thinking and peer interactions" (Baldino & Fink, 2014, p. 30). Although it was a challenge to moderate every entry in the blog, she found students not only writing good comments about one another but also students were positively interacting more in class. One student shared, "I do feel that blogging helped me to be more aware of how I act and respond to things online... Blogging made me more conscious and aware of other people’s feelings online, where it is especially hard to understand others" (Baldino & Fink, 2014, p. 32)

Another suggestion in literature is that educators can invite the police to class to speak to students (and parents) (Beale, 2007). For students who believe their internet activity is inconsequential, a policeman's presence will make the crime of cyberbullying real. Students also need to understand that online actions do leave a digital footprint, which means people can be found through I.P address tracking (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Along the same lines, once something is on the internet it cannot be removed so a lesson on permanence would be beneficial for students (Miller, Burns & Johnson, 2013). Teachers can also distribute or post newsletters to parents to help inform them of new websites, apps, and other ways to help their children (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

2.3.2 Barriers in Teaching Technological Skills
There are several barriers in addressing cyberbullying and prevention strategies. One is that children live in a world where adults do not exactly know what happens online (Englander, 2013). It is possible that when adults see something online, it may look unintentional or a one-time event, but it may actually be a part of the "child-only world" where there is a pattern of abuse and "adult detection is unlikely" (Englander, 2013, p. 28). Some students may also deny that there is a problem. Maybe students fail to detect the meanness or abuse correctly in cases where the target has special needs, or students may downplay the seriousness of the abuse because the target fears retaliation (Englander, 2013, p. 29). Furthermore, adults may be uncomfortable to teach students about technology because their children are often seen as fearless or experts with devices, so adults may think they are knowledgeable enough (Englander, 2013). That is not necessarily true; adults "may be confusing the skill of using technology with the skill of using technology wisely" (Englander, 2013, p. 81). Lastly, the literature that currently exists is limited in addressing these two topics together.

2.4 Conclusion

In this literature review I looked at the research to understand the definition of bullying and cyberbullying, introduced a theme called social drama, and how drama relates to other forms of aggression, particularly to cyberbullying. I also discussed some teacher strategies to prevent cyberbullying from the literature and identified barriers in teaching safe internet skills. This review shows that further research is required to better conceptualize drama, namely in a Canadian context since a lot of the studies examined were American-based. It also raises questions about perspective: are teachers “with-it” to the mindset of their students? Do teachers know that teenagers may minimize their own victimization and call it drama? What seems to be
lacking is a strong understanding of teenage reality that is accurately understood by their teachers. This study therefore is an attempt to address this gap.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe this research which explores preventative cyberbullying strategies and how social drama may be linked to cyberbullying by outlining the general approach of qualitative research through semi-structured interviews. Then I explain teacher sampling and recruitment through convenience sampling. Next, I elaborate on data analysis procedures and review the ethical considerations related to my cyberbullying study. Furthermore, I describe the methodological limitations, such as the limited sample of teachers interviewed, but also identify the strengths of the methodology, namely the teacher participants who were chosen purposefully. Lastly, I conclude the chapter with a concise summary of significant methodological decisions followed by my rationale for these choices.

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

This research study used a qualitative research approach through semi-structured interviews with teachers from Ontario. Described as a “humanistic, interpretive approach” (p. 23), qualitative research is valuable because it involves understanding human experiences (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007). It is also used when a “problem or issue needs to be explored” (Creswell, 2007, p. 56). Qualitative research offers space for open-ended, detailed responses from individuals, in which the data is non-numerical, that is expressed with words, such as “content, conversation, discourse, and narrative analyses” (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007, p. 23). Therefore, through this way of drawing on teachers’ lived experiences and narratives I meaningfully explored teachers’ perspectives and responses to cyberbullying, and its relationship with drama. The experiences from teachers also informed me on the reality of being
an educator in a climate which encourages BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and use of technology. Moreover, if a participant has experienced students erupting into a fight during class, with a series of events occurring afterwards, it is more appropriate to discuss it through qualitative means. The rigidity of the alternative approach, quantitative research, does not allow detailed responses as this study require (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007). A mixed method approach would provide rich data; however it requires more resources that is not available. Therefore, a qualitative method is most appropriate.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Interviews have been used widely in educational research as a means of data collection (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). While there are various kinds of interviews, the primary instrument for data collection in this study is a semi-structured interview protocol. This method can capture knowledge from the “life experiences” of the interviewees (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). The semi-structured nature also allows “more flexibility and responsiveness” for both the interviewee and interviewer compared to structured interviews that are rigid (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007, p. 25). This means I was able to plan a variety of both closed and open-ended questions ahead of time to help build a rapport and a context of the interviewee, control the questioning, and allow room for elaboration on emergent themes or re-direction in areas I have not previously anticipated (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Therefore, it was appropriate for me to conduct three informal, individual interviews in a semi-structured format. I used two recording devices to record the audio of interviews, which are 45 to 80 minutes in length. Then I used the audio recordings to transcribe the interview in a Microsoft Word Document. I used Dragon NaturallySpeaking to help assist me in the transcribing process.
The transcript was then printed so I could code the interviews through repeated words and common themes to uncover findings discussed in chapter 4.

Examples of questions include:

1. What does cyberbullying mean to you?
2. How have you seen bullying behavior change over your teaching career?
3. Have you been in a situation where you label a conflict as cyberbullying or bullying and students call it something else?

3.3 Participants

In any study, determining a sample is important since it is impractical and inefficient to interview the entire teaching population in Ontario (Marshall, 1996). Here I review the sampling criteria I decided for participant recruitment in this study, describe sampling procedures, and provide a brief biography for each participant.

3.3.1 Sampling Criteria

I interviewed three elementary and high school educators who are teaching in the Greater Toronto Area in Ontario, Canada. When selecting participants, the following criteria were used:

1. Teachers who have been teaching for at least 2 years. It would be preferable if teachers entered the teaching profession at different times so they have different length of teaching experience.
2. Teachers who are currently teaching in Canada, and,
3. Teachers who have experience in mediating student-to-student conflict or have taught a lesson(s) relating to cyberbullying.

The first requirement is that teachers have a minimum of two years teaching. In addition, I preferred participants with various lengths of teaching experience for several reasons. One is, for a participant who had a long teaching career, they were more likely to see trends or changes to bullying so perhaps they were more likely to see trends or changes in the school system, school board or with technology compared to a beginner teacher. I wanted to hear voices from experienced teachers – that is, teachers who have been teaching more than 2 years – as they are more likely to have gained insight to student-to-student conflict. These teachers also have awareness in what is lacking, such as support, to prevent cyberbullying occurrences. Teachers who are just beginning their teaching career may not be able to comment on the changes of the school board. Furthermore, having participants who entered the teaching profession at different times could provide information about the teaching education system, such as how it prepared or did not prepare them for dealing with poor behavior online, and if there were improvements to Teaching Colleges. Similarly, I could also compare participants’ teaching style or strategies to prevent cyberbullying or how to deal with conflict and whether they were similar or different. I preferred that participants to be teaching in Canada because I am a Canadian-based teacher. So far, the majority of the current research I found in the literature was American-based; therefore, it is important for me to find strategies to share in a Canadian context. Lastly, since the purpose of this research is to highlight best practices of cyberbullying intervention and prevention, the participants recruited required experience in teaching concepts of cyberbullying, how to be a respectful online citizen, or how to resolve interpersonal conflicts between students.

3.3.2 Sampling Procedures
Two approaches were used in recruiting participants. One was convenience sampling, which involves choosing participants that are accessible, close, and therefore less costly (Marshall, 1996). Through existing connections with teachers and pre-service teachers, I found participants in the Greater Toronto Area, which is convenient for myself and the participants I interviewed. The convenience sample approach was also used with a judgment sample, which is also known as a purposeful sample. This approach is more strategic because participants are selected with purpose to provide deeper understanding and insight on the subject area (Marshall, 1996). Due to the criteria above, the participants in this study was recruited purposefully to provide meaningful data.

3.3.3 Participants Biographies

All participants here have been assigned pseudonyms. Lindsay, Carly and Robyn are female educators in the Greater Toronto Area. Lindsay has been teaching for 7 years. As a high school educator, Lindsay has experience in teaching grade 9 to 12 various academic and applied science courses. Lindsay has experience in handling cyberbullying issues that has spilled into her classroom.

Carly has been teaching over 3 years. Like Lindsay, she is also a high school teacher who has experience teaching grades 9 through 12. Carly has had a cyberbully related drama event occur in her class. Furthermore, Carly has experience in anti-bullying efforts through school events. Carly also tries to weave acceptable technology-use in lessons because technology is a big part of her pedagogical practice.

The final participant, Robyn, is in her third year of teaching. She has taught grade 7 and 8 in the past. Currently, Robyn teaches a grade 4/5 split class. She has experience in facilitating
conflict resolution in classrooms, such as drama and cyberbullying, and aims to teach with a social justice pedagogical lens.

3.4 Data Analysis

By reviewing the transcription of interviews, I found key phrases and themes by coding the transcripts based on the questions asked in the study. This method refers to the template approach, since codes are used to organize text into categories, which can infer major themes (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Such categories are based on research, thereby providing a template for analysis to occur (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). While categorizing the data I was cognizant to discrepancies of findings before discussing the findings.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

For this study, students in the Master of Teaching (MT) program are approved by the Research Ethic Board (REB). This paper, including the development of the thesis, was done with help from such courses as CTL7006: Reflexive Teaching and Research and CTL7015: From Student to Professional, and the assistance of my research professor at OISE/UT, which helped keep me accountable to the REB. I have received consent through a signed consent form (see Appendix A) before completing any interview. The consent form provides permission for the interview to be audio-recorded, as well as an overview of the study, ethical implications, and expectations of participation. For confidentiality purposes, all participants will receive a pseudonym and any identifying details related to students or their school will be excluded. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from participation of this study at any
time. It is possible that a particular question may elicit strong memories, and therefore trigger an emotional response. To minimize risk and to safeguard the vulnerability of participants, I have sent the interview questions ahead of time (see Appendix B), and I have re-assured participants throughout the interview and consent letter that they can pass on answering any question that they feel uncomfortable, as well as re-stating their right to cease participation from the study. I have also sent participants their interview transcripts to review, clarify or retract any statements. All data will be stored on my password protected laptop and smartphone and will be destroyed after 5 years.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

There are several limitations in this study. One is that the sample size is small because three teachers were interviewed. Therefore, the data cannot be generalized to the population because of the lack of scalability. However, since participants were purposefully chosen, interviewees can give a meaningful understanding or perspective of cyberbullying and social drama, compared to if the study were to use random sampling in recruiting participants (Marshall, 1996). In random sampling, the study runs into danger of interviewing a teacher who had no opinion or insight on the matter. Furthermore, an advantage to the small sample size will allow me to listen to the narratives of teachers, so I could look at the data at the micro-level. This is especially useful if big samples are difficult to acquire (Zainal, 2007).

An additional limitation is that only educators are permitted for interview. The study therefore lacks direct voices from parents and students. The REB also does not allow observations or interactions with students. Therefore, this constraint only prohibits the
perspective of teachers. Furthermore, all educators interviewed are female. Perhaps male teachers have alternate perspective, especially if social drama is more likely to occur with females than males.

The researcher effect on the interviewee is another limitation. Hitchcock & Hughes (1995) describes a danger which the “interviewer ‘leads on’ or influences the respondents’ responses” (p.164). I made efforts to control my face expressions and tone, keeping myself neutral as possible.

Next, I am a full-time MT student at OISE when conducting the research and writing this paper, and I also have a part-time job. Therefore, as much as I am passionate about the topic of the welfare of students with respects to preventing cyberbullying, the time I could devote to the paper was limited.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter describes the research methodology conducted for this qualitative study. I started with a discussion of the research approach and procedure by explaining the value of qualitative research. Next, I discussed the primary instrument of data, semi-structured interview method, and then discussed the participants of the study, namely the criteria, biographies and recruitment procedures. I explained how the data will be analyzed, which involves coding to identify major themes and subthemes from transcripts of the interview. Under ethical procedures, I discussed how I have ensured participants will not be harmed; interviewees will sign a consent form and receive questions prior to the interview, as well as being notified of their right to withdraw at any point of the study. Finally, strengths and limitations were outlined, particularly
the small sample size used and how participants were chosen with reason, not randomly. In chapter 4, I report on the findings of the research.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the findings from three interviews that address the main question of this study: what are effective strategies in managing cyberbullying, and how do labels affect teacher responses? Three educators were interviewed in this qualitative study. To ensure confidentiality of participants, pseudonyms have been given to teachers as Lindsay, Carly and Robyn. Two participants, Lindsay and Carly, are high school teachers, while the final participant, Robyn, is a teacher in an elementary school. Each educator has experiences in managing forms of student-to-student conflict, such as bullying, cyberbullying, social drama, or a mixture of these in the classroom. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed for patterns. Some common patterns emerged between the three participants, which were categorized into themes and sub-themes. The main themes that will be explored are: possible causes of cyberbullying; strategies for managing cyberbullying and related conflicts; and exploring areas of needs and existing supports for educators.

4.1 Possible Sources of Cyberbullying

By understanding the causes of cyberbullying, teachers can be better informed in instructional practices or behavioural management strategies. To understand why students engage in such negative behaviours will allow prevention or intervention strategies to become more effective. Looking at the sources of cyberbullying, four sub-themes were identified: differing definitions for cyberbullying; social drama described by teachers; interpersonal relationships amongst peers; and issues that stem from labels.
4.1.1 Differing Definitions of Cyberbullying

Lindsay, Robyn and Carly all had differing definitions of cyberbullying, which were mostly broad and general. Lindsay described cyberbullying as, “anytime a student is uncomfortable from something they have heard from their social group online.” Robyn termed cyberbullying as, “using the internet to bully somebody... when students are picking on someone else through the internet.” While these participants highlighted the harm factor of cyberbullying, they failed to mention repetition, power and intent, which are also elements of cyberbullying (Englander, 2013; Hazler, 1996; Olweus, 1993, 2011).

Carly, on the other hand, described cyberbullying as “the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or target another person...And often I find there’s a degree of anonymity involved in cyberbullying,” though later she acknowledged that it could occur between people who knew each other or who were friends. Carly also reported “[cyberbullying is] quite intentional.” Her description of cyberbullying was more detailed compared to Lindsay and Robyn.

Furthermore, while one teacher reported that students view cyberbullying in the same manner as her, the two other participants felt that students viewed it differently than they did as teachers. Robyn reported that “some of [the students] might see it from a similar perspective as myself, but seeing as a lot of them still partake in it, no. I don’t feel at all we could have the same stance on this.” Carly’s perspective aligned with Robyn’s as she explained, “I think that there is definitely a dichotomy between what teachers perceive is terrible and what students do.” This idea that students perceive bullying differently than their teachers is supported in literature (Cheng, Chen, Ho, & Cheng, 2011). It then highlights a problem where if the two groups –
teachers and students – value different parts of the definition, then how could prevention or intervention strategies be effective?

4.1.3 Interpersonal Relationships amongst Peers

Another possible reason why students participate in harmful behaviour online could be that they are unaware when they are being hurtful. Carly reported that,

[Students are] so immersed in technology [that they] are less conscientious of whether or not something could be considered cyberbullying… it's difficult to pick up tone from that. And I think that makes it more difficult sometimes for students to even realize that they may be engaging in cyberbullying.

Lindsay’s perspective was similar where she explained, “[students are] not getting that emotional backlash… They're not seeing how bad they're hurting the other person… generally.” Carly and Lindsay both identified effects from disinhibition, which is described by Hinduja and Patchin (2009) as “being freed from restraints of normal behavior” where being in front of the screen makes it difficult to see visual cues from the victim that could prevent further negative behaviour from occurring again.

Participants also reported that students have issues regulating their behaviour in ways that adults are better able to. Lindsay described that for teenagers and children, “the frontal cortex is not developed yet… they don’t see long-term consequences in the same way adults do.” She also suggested that adults tend to not respond negatively compared to teenagers, who tend to react or retaliate. For instance, if an adult was brushed past in the hallway in an annoying sense, like bumping into someone, they are likely to shrug it off and ignore it, but teenagers do not “draw the line” in the same way. Lindsay explained that when it came to bullying, “most parents,
teachers and adults would not let it go as far as most kids would.” Carly too shared a similar perspective, as things “have a tendency to snowball when something is posted.” She was also concerned about how teenagers’ jokes, such as funny Snaps from Snapchat, could become mocking or hurtful if the intention of the Snap was unknown to viewers.

Lindsay also reported that perhaps a reason for cyberbullying is for “immediate satisfaction” and not long-term intentions. Lindsay also noted that a reason for cyberbullying may be the lack of supervision and not anonymity because, “in a lot of cases kids know who it is.” Furthermore, parents and teachers are not there online so without supervision, students could behave how they would like with each other. Lindsay described that online, the “rules don’t apply.” This is supported by the literature that children live in a world that is theirs on the internet, which is not governed by adults; therefore abuse can occur without likely detection (England, 2013).

4.1.3 Issues that Stem from Labels

Two participants reported on the power of the word “bullying” or “cyberbullying” in terms of how teachers were expected to respond to it. Lindsay reported that “teachers in general, you know, we’re sort of trained that any bullying is bad.” Similarly, Carly called this kind of conflict “a buzzword in the head of the teacher,” when heard and detected, it is something to be dealt with. If ignored, “you never know what the consequence could be.” She also commented that students also understood the power of the term, which may discourage them from reporting certain incidences to teachers or the administration. Carly explained,

I think that [no student] ever really actually wants to call it bullying…. The idea of labeling it as bullying puts a stigma or label on it that adds a degree of severity that I
think the students might be afraid to come forward and say that because they know …we as teachers take that very seriously.

Robyn instead emphasized the power of the term social drama. In particular, she has heard teachers dismiss social drama, explaining, “I’ll even hear teachers talking about, ‘Oh, the girls in my class are having drama. They’re going through drama again…” The way the three participants described these terms may indicate how teachers in general may respond. When asked to describe social drama, participants gave similar descriptions of social drama being an issue between friends that escalates. Lindsay described social drama as an issue between friends in, “a case of teenagers being teenagers and an argument kind of getting out of hand, or gossip getting out of hand but between two people that legitimately do consider themselves friendly as opposed to antagonist.” Lindsay said she does address it; however, she did not go into detail about how she addresses it. Carly described social drama by breaking the term. She reported “social is the way that people interact with one another. Drama to me involves hyper, emotional response so interactions that are based around conflict or competition can be argumentative in nature.” She also characterized drama to be more associated with female students than male students. Although, Carly does not specifically talk about social drama with students, she did describe proactive ways to avoid conflicts as a way to associate conflict with social drama.

Robyn described social drama as, “kids making a big deal over things that aren’t really a big deal.” It involves, “who is dating who and who is the cool kids and who is the outsider and it’s almost labelling and putting value on people’s position within the community, or within the classroom…” She had spoken about social drama to her grade 7 students in a previous year, and addressed it through restorative circles. While the three participants’ definitions do not completely align with Marwick and boyd’s definition (2014a), participants’ definitions capture
Marwick and boyd’s (2014a) definition in terms of “interpersonal conflict” (p.1191). Allen’s (2012) social drama description includes “excessive emotionality” which is supported by participants’ social drama viewpoints of students making things bigger than they actually are (p.109).

According to Robyn, bullying seems to be a word teachers respond to, but social drama incidents are deemed to be dismissed. Teachers disregarding social drama can be corroborated in the literature with Marwick and boyd (2014a), where social drama is seen as a “girl thing” and dismissed (p.1200).

All participants unanimously reported that cyberbullying and drama are linked. Carly compared the conflicts as, “drama is a catalyst or a trigger for cyberbullying.” Lindsay’s statement also aligned to Carly’s description. Carly reported, “I find often the intent [of] social drama can often be bullying or become bullying, an extension….” Lindsay supported this belief with a narrative. Two female students in her class were friends but had a fallout over certain issues. What began as social drama, “very quickly devolved into bullying of cyber and physical and verbal type.” Lindsay described how she had to physically stand in between the students who tried to physically fight around her. Lindsay also reported that the social drama that led to bullying “flipped back and forth between the two items.” Carly also agreed that drama could occur between people who were good friends, or between people who knew each other, such as peers in a class. These connections of bullying to drama have been described by Allen (2015) in literature. Furthermore, Robyn reported on the discrepancy of the words bullying and drama, cautioning.

Drama is what turned into the cyberbullying and that’s what leads to it. So, to dismiss it is almost irrational, but I feel like sometimes teachers get so sick and tired of hearing
about these issues, you know, whatever the kids are making the social issue, that it’s very easy to dismiss and some people might not realize that it’s that issue that turns into the bullying.

Again, the power of labels emerged. Robyn described teachers’ responsiveness to certain labels but emphasized the problem of dismissing drama. If drama can become bullying of any form, then it can help inform prevention strategies for cyberbullying. Participants in this study said they do address social drama issues, especially Robyn who did partake in it previously as a student. Carly said she did not use the actual language “social drama” when speaking to students. She admitted,

We will talk about the conflict resolution strategies, but never really social drama, like I think those words are kind of known to everyone. Maybe even… [it’s] the elephant in the room because we want to avoid social drama, so we don’t really talk about it as much as maybe we should do.

This admission by Carly highlights that although social drama is a colloquial term known by many, it is a concept that is not directly addressed as it should be. Social drama requires more attention as studies are lacking, especially how it seems this construct is related to other negative peer-to-peer behaviours.

### 4.2 Strategies to Manage Cyberbullying and Related Conflict

When the participants reported on management strategies of cyberbullying, a lot of the data that emerged were not only specific to cyberbullying but cyberbullying related conflict, such as bullying in general, and social drama. Three categories emerged to address strategies to deal
with interpersonal conflict: the relationship students have with the teacher; proactive and preventative strategies; and reactive strategies or intervention. In summary, if students have a positive, trusting relationship with the teacher, according to the three participants, students were more likely to share their negative experiences. In addition, while participants tried to be proactive, much of the strategies utilized by them were reactive.

4.2.1 Interpersonal Relationships with Teachers

All participants expressed the need to build a positive, caring relationship with their students. Carly emphasized showing genuine care and encouraging students to come to the teacher when required. Likewise, Robyn reported creating an open rapport with students. In doing so, she illustrated an experience where a student brought an online issue to light. This student shared an incident that involved another student away on vacation in India “ring-leading this social cyberbullying.” It involved a lot of name-calling back and forth on a forum. She reported that having an inclusive and welcoming classroom was important for students to feel comfortable to come forward to her. An open relationship to allow dialogue to occur is supported in literature (Cassidy & Bates, 2005).

Similarly, Lindsay reported that she tries to establish a “respectful, trustful relationship” so she could offer advice and monitor further situations that may arise. She spoke that students do go to her if they have an issue like cyberbullying. One of her main strategies is to reassure students, reiterating many times in the interview, “[if] you trust me, know that I will handle this.” By giving students advice, such as refraining to respond to things said online, Lindsay helps students remove themselves from situations that have the potential to escalate and become worse. She explained, “I find I can get a lot of it stopped in my classroom by promising them that I will protect them.” For example, in a situation where a female student thought another female student
was being disrespectful to her, Lindsay intervened by distracting her from the student and asking her to trust Lindsay. The student’s mindset began to change, allowing Lindsay to “handle it.” Lindsay explained that she told the student,

I might not handle it the way you would and I might not always handle it instantly, but I’ll try… if you notice something getting out of control for you, that you think she is disrespecting you, please let me know and I will handle it instead of you handling it.

She reported as being someone in “[the student’s] corner.” However, it is the teacher’s obligation to report. Lindsay described, “‘If it’s an actual legitimate danger situation, I am legally obligated to report it.’ I told them that; that’s the first thing I tell them.” Although it doesn’t always work right away, her management style is working for her, sharing, “That solved a lot of problems.” She also believes in connecting with students because, “students need to trust that you got their best interests at heart and that you will try for them.” These positive relationships between students and teachers appear important to the three participants as they acknowledged the difficulty to detect cyberbullying, which occurs online. This finding relates to a study conducted by Parris, Varjas, Meyers and Cutts (2012) that found seeking social support was a coping strategy for high school students experiencing cyberbullying. An authority figure stepping in could help stop the cyberbully, or the victim could gain advice to help deal with the cyberbullying (Parris, Varjas, Meyers & Cutts, 2012).

4.2.2 Proactive and Preventative Strategies

Proactive strategies for cyberbullying diverge amongst participants. Part of the reason is the limitations that prevent educators for employing such strategies, such as the breadth of the curriculum and lack of experience teaching in the Ontario school system, as reported by Lindsay
and Robyn. Lindsay, a science high school teacher, noted that although she often tries to address cyberbullying or related incidents to the class, due to lack of time and curriculum expectations, she is limited. For what she can do, especially relating to inappropriate behaviour, Lindsay reported that it is important to appear a teacher, a figure of authority, at all times. In particular, she felt that a lot of teachers do not stop and pay attention to the things happening outside of the classroom, believing that “…part of our obligation as teachers is that we are still teachers even in the hallways outside of the classroom.” This obligation to be a teacher who pays attention links to the research that explored teacher’s perceptions to cyberbullying (Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2012). In this study, although teachers had ideas to pose possible solutions to cyberbullying, they were unaware to the extent of cyberbullying occurrences amongst students and were disinterested to learn about the student result portion of the study; authors suggested these teachers preferred that cyberbullying remain hidden (Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2012). Even though Lindsay is burdened with the science curriculum, her attitude in being vigilant and cognizant to misbehaviours was important.

Robyn, who has limited years of teaching experience, reported that she would like to embed more social issues in her lessons, but feels overloaded by the curriculum and planning for core lessons. She reported that as she gains more experience in teaching, and feels more prepared with the curriculum, she hopes to find innovative ways to address bullying more often.

In contrast, Carly, who teaches classes such as business, religion, and English, has reported that she tries to be proactive because technology is important to her pedagogy. For example, in her business class she engages with students on the proper use of technology and their digital footprints, which can include cyberbullying. At the beginning of the school year, students sign an acceptable-use policy. During the school year, Carly has class discussions on
what is appropriate to say or do online. She uses an application called Wordle (which makes a word cloud that is organized by the frequency of words) for students to become aware of the kind of language they are using on their social media accounts. This activity also helps students become conscious of how they behave online, which can relate to future job hunts and networking. This connects to Lindsay’s previous notion that teenagers are unlikely to see long-term consequences, but Robyn aims to address this perspective. Carly also talks about the power of words with students, relating it back to religion and being part of God’s community, as well as future prospects of trying to be a professional. She believes these kinds of activities are effective for engaging students, because they can personally relate to themselves. She also commented that it was very eye-opening to students because strangers who look them up online will receive an impression based on what the student had posted, so she asked students “Are you okay with that?” Carly is not sure if these activities are effective, questioning if students internalize the lessons to resist engaging in cyberbullying or bullying. Creating awareness of appropriate and inappropriate online behaviour in students has been supported in the literature (Baldino & Fink, 2014, Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

In terms of school-wide initiatives, both Lindsay and Carly reported on having a speaker come to the school to talk about the proper use of technology, which has been a recommendation in literature (Morgan, 2003). Lindsay mentioned an emphasis on the “evils of Snapchat,” which is a smartphone app that slows the share of video clips, and references to cyberbullying. Carly also made a remark that in her experience Snapchat is a prevalent application where she has seen exchanges of cyberbullying. Lindsay used the opportunity of the speaker’s presentation to talk about such technological issues in class. Carly has commented on its effectiveness to the presentations, remarking, “…maybe students have just sat through one too many bullying
presentation or on too many pledges that they’ve had to sign and… now they think it’s a funny joke.”

Robyn, on the other hand, reported to more likely teach anti-bullying lessons when directed, such as during the week of pink or anti-bullying week in November in her school board. However, as previously mentioned she is worried about covering curriculum and forgets to embed such issues in her lessons during other times of the year. She feels that she can do better when she becomes more comfortable with planning and the curriculum.

Lastly, Carly spoke of a grade 9 retreat at the beginning of the year that targeted bullying prevention. Some of the activities were anti-bullying themed. For instance, Carly described a toothpaste activity to show it is hard to put the toothpaste back in the tube once “it’s out there,” making analogies to online posts. Despite the negative aspects of digital communication, Carly tries to incorporate positive use of technology. She reported that many strategies in schools are reactive; “it’s rarely proactive.” She speculated that it could be due to how quickly technology evolves.

4.2.3 Intervention and Reactive Strategies

After conflict occurs between peers, such as cyberbullying or bullying, there are various actions teachers can take. Some common themes are reacting to the situation and resiliency. For example, Lindsay reported that teachers should not ignore inappropriate behavior, which is a strategy supported by Morgan (2003), and the behaviour should be tackled from a “calm perspective.” Lindsay noted that it is important to remove students from peers in cases of social drama or bullying so they do not have to “posture in front of their peers,” since “students involved in social drama or bullying are very, very conscious about their position in the
hierarchy of the classroom.” Robyn shared a similar strategy of avoiding reprimanding misbehaving students in front of other people and students. Therefore, a classroom management strategy is to get the students who are involved in the negative conflict away from the audience of their peers. This performative nature where students behave to provoke a reaction from the class is supported in the drama definition (Marwick and boyd, 2014a), which illustrates another link to bullying and drama.

Lindsay also imparted that it is important to think about a teacher’s legal obligation, reporting that “[if students are] in actual physical danger, whether from someone else or themselves, it’s an immediate legal obligation to tell guidance, tell [the administration] …tell someone who can actually do something.” In other words, it is important to know next steps if a behavioural incident occur in the classroom.

In terms of resiliency, Lindsay reported on incidents where she tried to “handle things” with students but it did not always work the first time; here she emphasized to keep on trying until the desired outcome has been realized. Similarly to Robyn, Lindsay spoke on her preference for restorative circles, which are designed to allow different members to speak in turn. This strategy does not always work the first few times, but Robyn shared that it is more effective than pointing fingers and reprimanding students. Restorative practices has been mentioned in the literature, where the intention is to illicit the bully’s awareness of the harm occurred to help provoke a sense of remorse (Rigby, 2014).

4.3 Exploring Needs and Existing Support for Teachers
With evolving technology and the complexity of human behaviour, the variables that encompass cyberbullying, or bullying in general, are vast. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the areas where teachers felt supported when handling such issues. It is also important to discuss what teachers do not find very helpful, and likewise, what support is further needed.

4.3.1 Feeling Inadequately Prepared

Two of the three participants clearly expressed that they were ill-prepared to deal with bullying. Carly reported that when a physical fight broke out in her classroom, she “was so shocked.” Lindsay would have liked to know how to “handle it” when she graduated from Teacher’s College and would have liked to learn “real effective strategies.” In Teacher’s College, Lindsay often felt that for situations such as bullying, there was “no framework or flow-charts to follow on,” and “no one was willing to tell you anything because they don’t want to tell you the wrong thing.” She also reported that she would have liked to know legal obligations and policies, and have more concrete materials, which was a need also supported by Carly. Beyond Teacher’s College, Lindsay felt Professional Development opportunities were not helpful. Instead she found support from her colleagues, which was strongly emphasized by Robyn as well. Lindsay reported, “…I found Professional Development in school has taught me almost nothing unless it came directly from another teacher.” Robyn similarly reported she always felt like her colleagues had supported her. For example, she asked both her teaching companion and mentor for advice when a student shared a fight online. Furthermore, Lindsay urged students to go to guidance if she could not help them. “Even though I teach students, you can’t possibly know what to do in every situation.” If students do not want to go to guidance, then Lindsay encouraged students to go to someone else who would be able to help.
Robyn’s response to the effectiveness of Teacher’s College preparation was unclear. While she said that her initial teacher education program did a good job of “dipping your toes in the pool” for her to know what to expect and how to address bullying, she was overwhelmed in her first long-term teaching position. She also reported that she had a social justice lens in Teacher’s College, which may have helped give her a sense of preparedness. She compared her learning to more experienced teachers she worked with who lacked knowledge of social justice concepts. Based on this criteria, Robyn shared she felt better equipped for integrating anti-bullying lessons in class because she touched on these matters, while more experienced teachers do not. However, Robyn admitted to struggling to keep up with planning and the curriculum, so she is glad that teacher education programs have increased from one year to two in Ontario. Finally, she highlighted a need for teachers to learn more about restorative practices.

4.3.2 Reactions to Administrative Intervention

Respondents sounded positive when discussing that administration was helpful in intervening in a cyberbullying issue. When the online situation was brought to light, administration responded quickly and seriously. Lindsay recommended that “a really important thing in teaching is to know when you need help.” Carly also felt positive about administration. For example, when two girls, who made exchanges on Twitter, began to verbally fight in the classroom, administration soon took over. Police became involved, but the focus was on education rather than punishment, such as legal troubles. The girls learned to respect each other; therefore, Carly believes the administration was helpful. Similarly, in previous incidents where students needed to be removed or separated, Lindsay has called the Vice-Principal for support. Police involvement has been a suggestion found the literature (Beale, 2007). Furthermore, Malcom (2016) has found administration to be supportive for educators in times of need.
However, once administration became involved, Lindsay reported that there was a “huge disconnect between the administration and the teachers in the high school.” Lindsay made references to how administration dealt with the two girls fighting in her class. According to what she saw, the issue seemed resolved, and Lindsay understood why she was uninvolved due to confidentiality and legality issues, but she expressed some dissatisfaction that she was not informed. Lindsay explained that when she did not know what happened, managing the situation in class was difficult because she did not know what she was “trying to prevent, or what the trigger might be.” In other words, when administration became involved, there was “zero communication” back to the teacher. For Lindsay, fortunately the two girls in the fight were “happy to give [her] their sides of the story,” which helped her manage the classroom.

Robyn reported a similar sentiment of feeling excluded after administration took over the cyberbullying case that occurred in her classroom. “I felt… almost the responsibility for me to do something was taken away…I kind of… didn’t like that.” Although Robyn did discuss the issue in the classroom, when the principal took over, Robyn felt she was not involved, and did not know the end result of the situation. She too understood the legality of the situation and student’s rights to confidentiality, but she also felt a sense of lost power to deal with the situation on her own. There seems to be a gap in the literature regarding teachers’ perspective on administration handling with cyberbullying and bullying incidents and how this affects teachers moving forward in the classroom.

4.4 Conclusion

In this study, I discuss my findings that attempt to explore cyberbullying and related strategies, and to find the link of cyberbullying and social drama. In general, participants had variable definitions to cyberbullying, and drama. The term social drama was also described by
the participants. Furthermore, participants consistently believed that there was a link to cyberbullying and drama, where drama can become cyberbullying or vice versa. Concerns arose when the power of these labels emerged. Bullying and cyberbullying is taken seriously by educators; however, it seems that social drama is not.

Next, strategies were discussed. There are limitations for teachers to embed social justice issues, for example anti-bullying, into lessons. The participants described creating a positive relationship with their students so that their students could feel comfortable in reporting an incident to them. Next, it was found that schools do have initiatives to try to make aware of bullying issues. One participant was able to embed anti-cyberbullying preventative strategies through courses, which centered on proper-use of technology and digital footprints. Largely, strategies are more reactive than proactive, meaning teachers discussed ways to intervene or manage cyberbullying or related issues after it had occurred.

All participants shared a feeling of unpreparedness to handle or deal with cyberbullying and related conflicts, but found support from colleagues and administration. Participants did admit to trusting the administration to handle issues, however there was a lack of communication with the teacher once administration took over. Some of the participants shared a desire to know what had happened once administration took over to help navigate the classroom. When students had conflict, they were not expected to be friends but they were expected to coexist in the classroom. Knowing how to create harmony was communicated back to the teacher. The implications of the findings discussed in this chapter will be explored in chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Implications

5.0 Introduction

In this final chapter, I begin by re-visiting the purpose of the study, as discussed in chapter 1, with a brief overview of key findings from chapter 4, and general implications for the education community. Implications include the consequences of inconsistent and differing definitions of cyberbullying, the impact on my professional teaching practice, and the areas of incorporating a social drama and technological lens to inform teaching pedagogy. Next, recommendations will be offered in an attempt to address some of the implications. Finally, I suggest areas for future research and present concluding statements about the study.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings

The ways in which children interact with each other through technology can be either positive or negative. Technology communication abuse by students can harm students and make navigating technology in schools more complicated. As teachers, we are responsible in providing a safe place for student learning. Although cyberbullying events may occur online, negative social interactions may occur in the school and in the classroom. Furthermore, cyberbullying can result from social drama between students, or vice versa. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify preventative or management strategies to cyberbullying, as well as to understand cyberbullying links to social drama and how this may impact teacher responses in the classroom. Three main themes identified in chapter 4 include possible causes of cyberbullying, strategies for managing cyberbullying and related conflicts, and exploring areas of needs and existing support for educators.
First, defining cyberbullying produced various responses from all three participants. Teacher participants reported that students view cyberbullying and bullying events differently than they do as educators. In response, teacher strategies included building positive relationships with students, creating lessons that modeled appropriate online behaviour, and participating in anti-bullying school-wide initiatives. For example, one teacher incorporated lessons of students by examining the language students’ use on their social media accounts in order to create awareness of their online identity. Once there was a cyberbullying incident, participants often sought help or support from colleagues or the administration. Although participants appreciated the administration handling the situation, they found a lack of further communication from the administration.

The second part of the study looked at the link between cyberbullying and social drama. All participants strongly believed that cyberbullying and social drama are related. More specifically, they thought one kind of conflict could lead to another, particularly social drama morphing into cyberbullying. The power of labels was also mentioned in various ways. The terms “bullying” and “cyberbullying” are powerful because teachers are trained to be vigilant if students are bullied. However, “drama” is not seen as so seriously by teachers, who can dismiss it as trivial or friends having conflict.

Participants also revealed feeling unprepared at times for dealing with cyberbullying or related student-to-student conflicts and some participants shared that there was a lack of training as pre-service teachers. The following section will delve into the implications of these findings.

5.2 Implications
The numerous findings described in chapter 4 as well as the research in the field resulted in a number of implications. They are divided in two sections: broad implications that reflect inferences relevant to the research community; and more specific implications that are relevant to my professional practice as an educator.

5.2.1 Broad Implications for the Research Community

The varying definitions of cyberbullying from teachers raise some questions. Why do teachers value certain parts of the cyberbullying definition? Do anti-bullying efforts fail to make clear what exactly cyberbullying is? As for students not seeing cyberbullying in the same way as teachers, the study calls into question whether educators take for granted that students know what cyberbullying is and therefore do not go into the minutia of cyberbullying with their students. While these are thought-provoking questions, the definition of cyberbullying matters because what teachers or students choose to focus on can curtail strategies to prevent or manage cyberbullying within the classroom.

It is even more problematic when teachers and students do not agree on the definition of cyberbullying. One danger is when students mislabel their online actions. Sometimes they may believe what they are doing is appropriate, or they want to avoid getting in trouble from adults. For instance, if a student consistently spreads rumours about another student online they may feel they were engaging in social drama, therefore deflecting the seriousness of their actions. Consequently, the lack of a clear definition understood by the parties at school can provide students opportunities to mislabel negative behaviour. When the line is unclear, I speculate blurred definitions may be inviting for students to consciously choose to mislabel their negative behaviour, especially when it could lessen punishment from the school to avoid punishment such as detention, or worse, police involvement.
“Bullying” (p. 176, p. 198, p. 225), “harassment” (p. 182, p. 194), and “cyberbullying” (p. 229) appear in the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum a few times as examples of conflict for teachers to address to students (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015a). “Conflict resolution” skills also appear in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015a, p. 24, p.157). However, “social drama” is not explicitly stated. Although the three participants were able to define their own version of social drama, as one participant called it the “elephant in the room”, it begs the question of the reasons teachers avoid the topic with their students. Furthermore, teachers may be wary to become too involved, and they are cautious of micromanaging students in the classroom. This suggests that social drama requires more attention in the literature, especially as it relates to other negative peer-to-peer interactions. With attention and acknowledgement, perhaps then social drama can be included in future curriculum documents.

5.2.2 Narrow Implications Related to Professional Identity and Practice

This study has two main implications for educators: the consequences of labeling and the breadth of technological lenses in teaching pedagogy. The power of labels was a significant finding from chapter 4. Participants mentioned how the words “bully” and “cyberbully” set off alarms, but “social drama” receives less attention. One participant reported that although she talked to her students about cyberbullying, she made clear that she did not use the language of social drama with students. All participants unanimously agreed that there is a link between cyberbullying and social drama; however, if teachers know conflicts can change to different forms and severity, it raises questions of when and how teachers react to negative behaviour and to what degree. I can only speculate why this happens by looking at how participants described social drama. Generally, they describe social drama as something that happens between two
friends that results in conflict. Relationships at times involve conflict and perhaps educators believe a fight is just a normal thing between friends. Dismissing the social drama may also imply teachers do expect that these friends would resolve whatever issue they are having on their own, or believe it would not escalate to something serious like cyberbullying. However, as some of the participants indicated, social drama can become much more serious and can result in cyberbullying. Therefore, dismissing negative interpersonal conflict, such as social drama, is a danger and should not be ignored by teachers or administrators. I actively avoided social drama growing up, and before conducting this study I may have also dismissed such conflict in my class; however, now I realize it is important not to do so. Although curriculum delivery is significant, the well-being of students is part of an educator’s duty.

Another main implication is the kind of strategies reported by participants, which are categorized by proactive and reactive strategies for managing cyberbullying. Participants mentioned strategies that were not specific to cyberbullying, but instead were intended to develop good classroom practice and build trust. In this way, students were more likely to go to the teacher for help. One participant, who noted that her proactive strategies may be due to her pedagogical lens, suggests that a teacher’s relationship with technology can inform their teaching values and willingness to weave anti-cyberbullying efforts into their lessons. She also mentioned that technology develops quickly, which highlights the need for teachers to keep up with the youth. At present, I am still considered young. I know about Snapchat and Instagram, but maybe one day I would not care so much about social media as I do now, and then lose the “withitness” I may have with students. Technology becomes another responsibility I need to take seriously as a teacher.
While I am aware that students today have grown up with technology at an incredibly young age, I have become more aware of the larger responsibility I have of not just saying bullying/cyberbullying is bad, but to model and show appropriate and inappropriate use of technology. If a school endorses BYOD, technology should be used as a learning tool, and like some of the other tools used in class, there should be time spent on safety. Safety training is already taking place in science classes. Students can find bullying as a “funny joke”, as reported by the participants, so ways to effectively connect with students on this subject matter deserve more thought. Efforts need to happen more than once or they may be seen as disingenuous. For my own teaching practice, while I do take bullying seriously, it is important to be reflective about anti-bullying efforts and to be reflective of our teaching practices in the subjects we teach.

5.3 Recommendations

This study revealed that there is a link between cyberbullying, bullying and social drama, and so there is a need for teachers to not let social drama go ignored, especially when students have access to technology and resort to cyberbullying tactics to retaliate. At the same time, being proactive and modeling appropriate use of technology is important. If teachers feel unprepared to handle bullying or cyberbullying incidents, it is their responsibility to remedy this by seeking professional development training. Social drama awareness should also be incorporated in preventative cyberbullying strategies. If students and teachers colloquially know what social drama is, talking about social drama may be a way to explore interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution strategies. Another recommendation is instead of focusing solely on anti-bullying and cyberbullying efforts, the class could look at various conflicts at once, which may make it easier to include social drama in proper behaviour talks. This may help remove the
power of labels. Also, how we identify a student a bully could be framed in a more sensitive way. For instance, instead of labelling someone a “bully” we could say, a person who bullies, as Englander (2013) described. Instead of calling someone the “victim” we could say “a person who was bullied” to lessen the negative and weak connotation. Maybe this could help alleviate the power of labels.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

One area recommended for further research is for more focus on teaching digital citizenship and its effectiveness to lessen cyberbullying occurrences. Similarly, the effectiveness of anti-bullying week over a long period of time is worth investigating. Furthermore, exploration of social drama would be helpful for educators and how it relates to bullying behaviour. Finally, participants expressed dissatisfaction on the disconnection of conflict situations when administration took over a cyberbullying or bullying issue. Therefore, exploring that dynamic between the administration and teachers is another area for research.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

Cyberbullying is a complicated issue for teachers, especially when it is difficult to detect, as it occurs online. When it becomes more obvious, such as when a student comes forward or when a conflict spills into the classroom, it is the teacher’s responsibility to manage the issue. It has become more important for teachers to implement more proactive and to utilize preventative strategies for cyberbullying, such as through teaching digital citizenship. Teachers also need to be attentive to how students behave with each other – even if it involves friends falling out -
because any inaction may allow room for escalation. Most importantly, it is vital for both teachers and administrators to take the time to evaluate the effectiveness of incorporating regular times dedicated to exploring the topic of bullying in their schools. Each school needs to create new bullying strategies and initiatives each year to ensure that all students feel safe.
References


doi:10.1080/17459430701617879


Thomas, K. M., & Mcgee, C. D. (2012). The only thing we have to fear is... 120 characters. *TechTrends, 56*(1), 19-33. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11528-011-0550-4


Thorne, S. (2015). Data analysis in qualitative research. *Evidence Based Nursing, 3*, 68-70. doi:10.1136/ebn.3.3.68


Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Date:

Dear ________________________________,

My name is Ashley Persaud and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on strategies to prevent cyberbullying. I am interested in interviewing teachers who have had experience in teaching students respectful or appropriate online practices or intervening when it has occurred. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-60-minute interview, which will be transcribed and 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. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I have not used your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

Ashley Persaud

(416) XXX-XXXX
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 from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Ashley Persaud and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ________________________________

Name: (printed) ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Introductory Script:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, and for making time to be interviewed today. This research study aims to learn how you have taught or shown students to behave appropriately online purpose of preventing cyberbullying. This interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and I will ask you a series of questions focused on effective strategies we can from and also how teacher view certain conflicts. I want to remind you that you may refrain from answering any question, and you have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. As I explained in the consent letter, this interview will be audio-recorded.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Okay. Thank you. Let’s begin.

Background Information

1. When did you become a teacher?
2. How many years are teaching full-time?
3. Where have you taught? (For example, in Toronto? Canada? An area in the GTA?)
4. What grades have you taught during your professional practice?

Teacher Perspectives/Beliefs

1. What does cyberbullying mean to you? And what are the main features of cyberbullying?
2. Do you think students see cyberbullying the same way as you? What are the main elements of cyberbullying?
3. How have you seen bullying behavior change over your teaching career?
4. What is social drama to you?
5. Have you talked to your students about social drama?
6. Do you see a link to cyberbullying and drama?

Teacher Practices
1. Have you taught lessons that explicitly focused on conflict, bullying or cyberbullying? Was it one-lesson or a series? When/what grade was this? Was this effective or ineffective?
2. Have your students tell you voluntarily when student-to-student conflict has occurred? What were your next steps, or how did you address their problems?
3. Can you tell me about any experiences where you had to intervene in a cyberbullying episode? (When was this? What was the result?)
4. Can you tell me about any experiences where you had to intervene in a drama episode? (When was this? What was the result?)
5. Have you been in a situation where you label a conflict as cyberbullying or bullying and students call it something else?
6. Do you think labelling students’ conflict (“cyberbullying” or “drama”) affects how you respond as a teacher? Why or why not?
7. Do you think students label situations differently than you? Why or why not? Can you provide any examples?

Supports and Challenges
1. Were there any specific challenges you encountered in either the cyberbullying or drama episode? Did you receive support from the school’s administration or the school board?
2. Is there something lacking in the education system to better prepare teachers to deal with cyberbullying?

Next Steps
1. Do you have any advice or recommendations for teachers, especially beginning teachers, about cyberbullying, drama, labels, or preventative strategies to deal with such conflicts?
2. Regarding student-to-student conflict, such as drama, cyberbullying, or bullying, is there something significant you wished you knew about teaching or the school system that you now know?

Thank you for your participation in this research study. I truly appreciate it!