

DEACREASING BULLYING BEHAVIORS THROUGH DISCUSSING YOUNG-ADULT
LITERATURE, ROLE-PLAYING ACTIVITIES, AND ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL-WIDE
DEFINITION OF BULLYING IN ACCORDANCE WITH A COMMON SET OF RULES IN
LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATH

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Abstract

This action research report was conducted at a middle school from August 30, 2010 to December 17, 2010. The purpose of this research project was to decrease bullying behaviors through discussing young-adult literature, role-playing activities, and establishing a school-wide definition of bullying in accordance with a common set of rules. There were four teacher researchers and student participants consisted of 190 students who were in 6th or 7th grade in language arts and math class.

To document the problem they used a teacher survey, a parent survey and student survey along with a map. The teacher survey showed that a total of 95 behaviors were checked by the 25 teachers who participated. The six most checked bullying behaviors were kicking/hitting, calling people names, teasing, dirty looks, leaving people out and gossiping. The parent survey showed that a total of 448 behaviors were checked by the 91 parents who participated. The three behaviors selected the most by the parents were calling people names, teasing and kicking/hitting. The student survey showed that a total of 476 behaviors were checked by the 119 students who participated. The most common behavior was kicking/hitting, followed by teasing, calling people names, dirty looks and gossiping.

During the research project, the teacher researchers used several intervention strategies to decrease bullying behaviors. First, the teacher researchers lead students through a series of discussions to determine a common definition for bullying that described both the intention of bullying and the behaviors that are exhibited during bullying. Once a common definition was in place, students created posters and pledge sheets for students to sign. Then, the teacher researchers began looking at examples of bullying found in literature with which students were familiar and unfamiliar. While reading literature, students were able to empathize with different characters facing difficult bullying situations. Students then began role-playing through a several skits bullying situations; these situations had students acting out how bullying situations develop and can be defused. After role-playing written skits, students created their own and presented these to the class; to help the class understand real situations students have faced.

One of the most notable changes was the increase in the number of students who often or always felt safe at school. This in turn resulted as a noticeable decrease of the amount of students who sometimes or never felt safe at school. Another noticeable change was the increase in the percentage of bullying in the gym and locker rooms. Also in turn, this resulted in a decrease in the percentage of bullying occurring in the classroom. Students appeared to decrease in their responses to bullying situations. They were also very inconsistent in distinguishing bullying behaviors. Although the numbers do not reflect it, the students seemed to be more aware of bullying behaviors as seen and heard in their peer interactions.

Chapter 1

Problem Statement and Context

General Statement of the Problem

This action research project was conducted by four teacher researchers from a sixth through eighth grade school located in a northwest suburb of a major Midwestern city. Bullying behaviors such as, name calling, teasing, and physical altercations were taking place in the classrooms of the teacher researchers on a daily basis. These actions prevented the teacher researchers from focusing on the content being taught and created a strained environment for many students in the classroom. These behaviors interfered with group work and individual learning experiences. The teacher researchers used a Teacher Survey, Parent Survey, Student Survey, and a Student Map Survey during their research.

Immediate Context of the Problem

Four teacher researchers conducted this action research project. The teacher researchers taught in the same middle school, in grades six through eight. This section details information regarding the school's demographics, curriculum, and physical structure in the subsections below. All information in this section was obtained from the 2009 Illinois School Report Card, unless otherwise noted.

The school's student population was 825, with 392(47.5%) females and 433(55%) males. The low income rate was 24 % (School secretary, personal contact, 2009). The free and reduced lunch eligibility was 20.7% which was significantly lower than the state average at 44.1 % (School secretary, personal communication, 2009). The school had a 5.7% mobility rate compared to the state rate of 13.5%. As seen in Table 1: *Racial/Ethnic Background by*

Percentage, the school was predominately Caucasian (79.1%), with the Hispanic population being the next largest ethnicity.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Background of Students by Percentage

	Caucasian	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	African American	Multiracial/ Ethnic	Native American
School	79.1	14.6	1.8	0.7	3.8	0.0
State	53.3	20.8	4.1	19.1	2.5	0.2

The school had an average class size of 33.5 which was 35% larger than the state average of 21.8. Shown below in Table 2: *Average Class Size*, are the school and state comparison averages. At each grade level the average class size was significantly larger than the state average. The district student to teacher ratio was 20.6 to 1 with the state student to teacher ratio being 18.4 to 1 due to the fact that the school's student to teacher ratio included all certified staff.

Table 2

Average Class Size by Grade Level

	6	7	8
School	31.4	28.7	32.8
State	22	21.1	21.4

The school employed 53 certified teachers. Their ethnic background was 94% Caucasian and 5.7% Hispanic. The average years of experience was 9.25 years compared to the

state average of 12.5 years (School secretary, personal communication, 2009). The average salary was \$53,035 which was less than the state average of \$61,402. The average administrative salary was \$83,749 which was significantly less than the state average of \$106,217. The school staff structure can be viewed in Table 3: *School Staff* (School secretary, personal communication, 2009).

Table 3

School Staff

Position	Number	Position	Number
Paraprofessionals	10	Translator	1
Nurse	1	Administration	3
Custodians	5	Certified Teachers	53
Secretaries	2	Cafeteria Staff	8
Speech Language	2	Social	3
Pathologists		Workers/Physiologists	

The school's daily schedule consisted of four 60-minute core classes including math, science, social studies, and language arts. Core class lengths were comparable to state averages in math, science, and social studies. Language arts classes were approximately 40 minutes less (39%) than the state average of 98 minutes. Students also attended two 40-minute exploratory classes each day, which rotated every nine weeks to include music appreciation, foreign language, health, art, problem based learning, physical education (PE), and technology. Special Education assistance was offered at each grade level in all curricular areas. Special education

teachers assisted in science and social studies general education classrooms with self contained language arts and mathematics taught in small group settings. Two paraprofessionals at each grade level assisted students in all four core classes, exploratories and PE. Certified teachers provided 90 minutes of homework assistance each day after school (School secretary, personal communication, 2009).

The school assessed students using yearly Illinois Standard Achievement Tests (ISAT). Students at each grade level were assessed in reading and math. Seventh grade students were also tested in science and eighth grade students were tested in writing. The number of students meeting or exceeding state standards was 84.7% compared to the state average of 79.8%. Table 4: *ISAT Scores by Grade Level for 2008-09 School Year*, displays ISAT scores in reading and mathematics in grades six through eight and science in grade seven. The average math scores in sixth and seventh grade were significantly higher than state scores (5.7%) with the exception of eighth grade which decreased (1.3%). Sixth and eighth grade language arts scores were comparable to the state; however, seventh grade was significantly higher than state scores.

Table 4

ISAT Score by Grade Level for 2008-09 School Year

	6 th grade		7 th grade			8 th grade	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Science	Reading	Math
School	80.6	87.1	81.9	89.4	89.8	84.3	80.4
State	79.9	82.4	77.5	82.8	79.5	83.6	81.7

Social clubs, academic clubs, and athletic clubs were all available at the school. Social clubs included: chess, snowball, drama, art, Program for Academic and Leadership Skills (PALS), student council, builders, yearbook, and spirit. Academic clubs were: homework help and eighth grade math tutors. Athletic clubs were: cross country, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, pom-poms, cheerleading, track, and soccer.

The school was located within a northwest suburb of a major Midwestern city. It was located away from the road with large open fields that were used for recreational purposes and physical education. The school was divided into three grade levels, including two basic skills classrooms, a structured educational setting, five unified arts classrooms, and physical education. The school was divided both by grade levels and by teams. Sixth and seventh grade classrooms were located in the center of the building with eighth grade classrooms located on a separate wing closest to the office. The majority of the Unified Arts classrooms were grouped together. Band, chorus, and physical education were located in a separate wing. Technology access in the school was somewhat limited. The school contained one computer lab housing 20-30 computers, along with a traveling computer laboratory. The teachers had an average of two to three computers in each classroom. Throughout the school day, each grade level switched classes at different times. Offices for the social workers, physiologists, speech language pathologists and the translator were located in various locations throughout the building (School secretary, personal communication, 2009).

Local Context of the Problem

All information in this section was obtained from the 2006-2008 U.S. Census, unless otherwise noted. The school resided in a community located within a northwest suburb of a major Midwestern city. The community had a total population of 25,764. Of the total

population, males made up 50.4% of the population and females 49.6%. The average household size was 2.7. The median age for residents of the community was 34.4. Refer to Table 5 to view the age distribution of the community.

Table 5

Age Distribution of the Community

	Under 5 Years	18 years and over	65 years and over
Percentage	7.6	73.8	11.1
Total Number	1,952	19,025	2,870

The ethnicity of this community consisted of 84.4% Caucasian which was higher than the state average of 71.4%. The African-American population in this community was significantly lower at one percent compared to the state at 14.61%. The breakdown of race/ethnicity in the community compared to the state can be viewed in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Race/Ethnicity of the Community

Ethnicity	Total population in the community	Percentage of the community's population	Percent of the state's population
Caucasian	21,746	84.4	71.
African American	248	1.0	14.61
American Indian and Alaska Native	50	0.2	.2
Asian	448	1.7	4.3
Two or More Races	660	2.6	1.6
Hispanic or Latino	1,527	7.1	14.9

The community's median household income for 2008 was \$63,299, which was higher than the state median income of \$55,935. The median family income was also higher than the state average. The community median family income was \$73,003, while the state average was \$68,296. The percentage of individuals below poverty was 10.3%, which was higher than the state poverty rate of 8.9 %. The percentage of families below poverty level was 9.6%. The percentage of people who were unemployed was 6.5%. The community had a crime index of 169.5 which was dramatically less than the United States average crime index of 320.9. From 2007 to 2008 there was a decrease of 2.2% in overall reported crimes in the community.

The most common types of employment in this community were sales and office occupations at 30.4%. Approximately 29% of the community was employed in a management or a professional occupation. Refer to Table 7 for the types of employment in this community.

Table 7

Types of Employment

	Total Population	Percentage
Management, professional, and related occupations	3,793	28.5
Service occupations	1,781	13.4
Sales and office occupations	4,040	30.4
Construction, extraction, maintenance and repair occupations	1,511	11.4
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	2,165	16.3

The community was founded in the early 19th Century during the Black Hawk War. It became a county seat in 1844. The town became known as a resort destination because of its location along a major river. Early settlers were attracted to summer cottages and marine recreation. The village was incorporated in 1872. Industrial opportunities were presented in a nearby city after World War II, allowing residents to live in and commute to work from this community. This led to the population of the city increasing over 300% from 2,080 to 6,772 within the years of 1950 to 1970 (Reiff, Keating, & Grossman, (Eds.), 2005).

The community contained 35 local parks and playgrounds. There were three state parks located throughout the community as well. Separate boat launches were located along the river as well as along a chain of lakes. Special events and recreational programs were available to both children and adults. These programs included organized athletics leagues, swimming, horseback riding, dance and preschool. There was a neighborhood resource center and a library available to local students (The City of McHenry, Illinois Website, 2009).

The community school district was comprised of six elementary schools and two middle schools. The district administration included one superintendent, an administrative assistant, and a receptionist. The district's attendance areas were determined by address location, with one magnet school drawing from all areas of the community. The district mission statement read as follows: "The mission of the district will be to strengthen positive communication and respect among students and staff along with implementing reading and writing strategies in all subject areas (McHenry School District 15 Website, 2009)."

The property taxes made up 74% of the district revenue. The 2006 Equalized Assessed Evaluation per Pupil was \$279,909. The 2006 Total School tax Rate per \$100 was 2.57. The 2007-08 Expenditure per Pupil was \$5,151. The 2007-2008 Operating Expenditure per Pupil was \$8,091. The school district passed a tax referendum in March of 2006. If the referendum had not passed, there would have been many positions and activities that would have been cut, including special education assistants, after school programs, all field trips, elementary physical education, and more. Since the community supported the referendum, the school-district was able to lower class sizes and secure the positions that were provided by the district.

National Context of the Problem

Ma (2002) reported that, contrary to popular belief, bullies did not struggle with self-esteem, poor grades, or academic failures. Beale and Scott (2001) found that the bully's main goal was to gain control over another person and that bullies had a lack of empathy for the person they were hurting. The researchers also reported that children are three times more likely to break the law by 30 if they were identified as bullies at the age of eight. Of the bullies identified in grades six through nine, 60% had a criminal record at the age of 24. Van Schoiack-Edstrom, Frey, and Beland (2002) reported that the other long term consequences of childhood aggressive behavior included, "substance abuse, depression, school dropout, and early parenthood."

The bullies' victims demonstrated low self-esteem and suffered from social anxieties (Ma, 2002). Young, Hardy, Hamilton, Biernesser, Sun, & Niebergall, (2009) reported that the psychological distress caused by bullying also included poor social adjustment and isolation. Bandyopadhyay, Cornell, and Konold (2009) reported that victims also had higher levels of student absenteeism and poor academic achievement. The researchers also found that many of the issues faced by middle school bullying victims also persisted into high school contrary to Swearer and Cary, 2003.

Reflection

We, the teacher researchers, feel that there are several aspects of our school that contribute to the amount of bullying that occurs. One factor is the average class sizes range from 28.7 to 32.8. This is notably larger than the state averages which range from 21 to 22. It is more difficult for teachers to provide adequate supervision in classrooms with a high student-teacher ratio. Although two teams at each grade level have an additional special education teacher or

aide in their classroom, one team at each grade level has no aide in the classroom. These teams include the school's English as a Second Language population. Having these students on those teams without an aide requires the teacher to spend markedly more time helping these students. This leaves more opportunities for students to act out or engage in bullying of other students.

Another factor that may contribute to the amount of bullying in our school is the fact that the average years of teaching experience is 9.25, compared to the state average of 12.5. As teachers spend more time in the classroom and experience new situations, they develop a better understanding of student behavior and acquire solutions for the unpredictable behaviors that may occur in the middle school classroom. An inexperienced teacher may be more concerned about the planning and presentation of the content material than about acquiring additional classroom management strategies. A lack of classroom management can lead to tension among the students.

A third factor is the socioeconomic demographics of the students at our school. The below poverty average at the school is 10.3%, which is higher than the state average of 8.9%. There have been several situations when the economic issues the students are dealing with at home have affected their interactions at school. Based on student conversations with students, often they are worried about their home life and that leads to them acting out in school. Acting out includes inappropriate participation due to a lack of preparation as well as conflict in social situations. Although the median household and family incomes are higher than the states average, the percentage of individuals in the community below poverty rate is also larger. This suggests a polarization of socio-economic groups in the community which could lead to bullying.

We also feel that there are several aspects of our community that contribute to the amount of bullying that occurs. One factor is the small percentage of non-Caucasian members of the community. This could lead non-Caucasian students to feel isolated from other students, which could lead them to become a target of bullying behavior.

The most notable aspect of the community is the higher than average crime rate. This crime rate may signify that students feel unsafe out of school. This vulnerable feeling may make students feel pressured to defend themselves which in turn could lead to aggressive preventative behavior. The lack of consequences for crime outside of school may also make students feel that they will not be held responsible for their actions within the school setting.

Chapter 2

Problem Documentation

Evidence of the Problem

In pre-documentation the teacher researchers wanted to determine if the students, parents, and teachers at the school knew the definition of bullying and where they had seen it occurring. As the ramifications of bullying can be staggering to both bullies and victims it is pivotal to improve a communities' understanding of bullying behaviors and the schools understanding of where to improve their preventative efforts. The teacher researchers collected data from a Teacher Survey, Parent Survey, Student Survey, and a Student Map Survey. The teacher researchers collected data from 25 teachers, 119 students, and 91 parents. The data was collected between the dates of Tuesday, August 31, 2010 and Tuesday, September 7, 2010.

Teacher Survey.

One of the tools used by the teacher researchers was the teacher survey. The purpose of this instrument was to establish data on the teachers' definition of bullying, where they witness bullying in the school, and how often they witness bullying. The survey contained four questions. Three of the questions were multiple-response items and one of the questions contained a likert scale of *never*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *always*. On August 31, 2010, the teacher researchers distributed the teacher survey (n=56) to teachers via their mailboxes in the teacher's workroom. Teachers were asked to return completed surveys to the teacher researchers' via the mailboxes in the teacher's workroom by September 7, 2010. Twenty-five teachers returned completed surveys which resulted in a return rate of 44.6%. A copy of the teacher survey can be found in Appendix A.

In the first question of the teacher survey, teachers were asked to check the boxes of all the behaviors that they viewed as bullying. A total of 95 behaviors were checked by the 25

teachers that participated. The six most frequent behaviors selected by teachers were: kicking/hitting, calling people names, teasing, dirty looks, leaving people out, and gossiping and these six behaviors account for 91% (n=86) of the total. The physical behavior of kicking/hitting was the most frequent behavior (18% ; n=17) while the other physical behavior of giving dirty looks accounted for an additional 15% (n=14). These physical behaviors account for 33% (n=31) of the behaviors considered bullying; excluding the three inconsistent behaviors, physically bullying behaviors would account for 36% of behaviors considered bullying. The verbal behaviors include calling people names (16%, n=15), teasing (15%, n=14), leaving people out (14%, n=13), and gossiping (14%, n=13), which account for 58% (n=55 of 95) of the behaviors considered bullying. Of the nine behaviors listed, three behaviors (arguing with a friend, talking during class, and giving a wrong answer) were listed to help the teacher researchers understand the misperceptions when defining bullying. These three behaviors are inconsistent with the research's definition for bullying; however, these behaviors were 9% (n=9) of the observed bullying behaviors made by teachers.

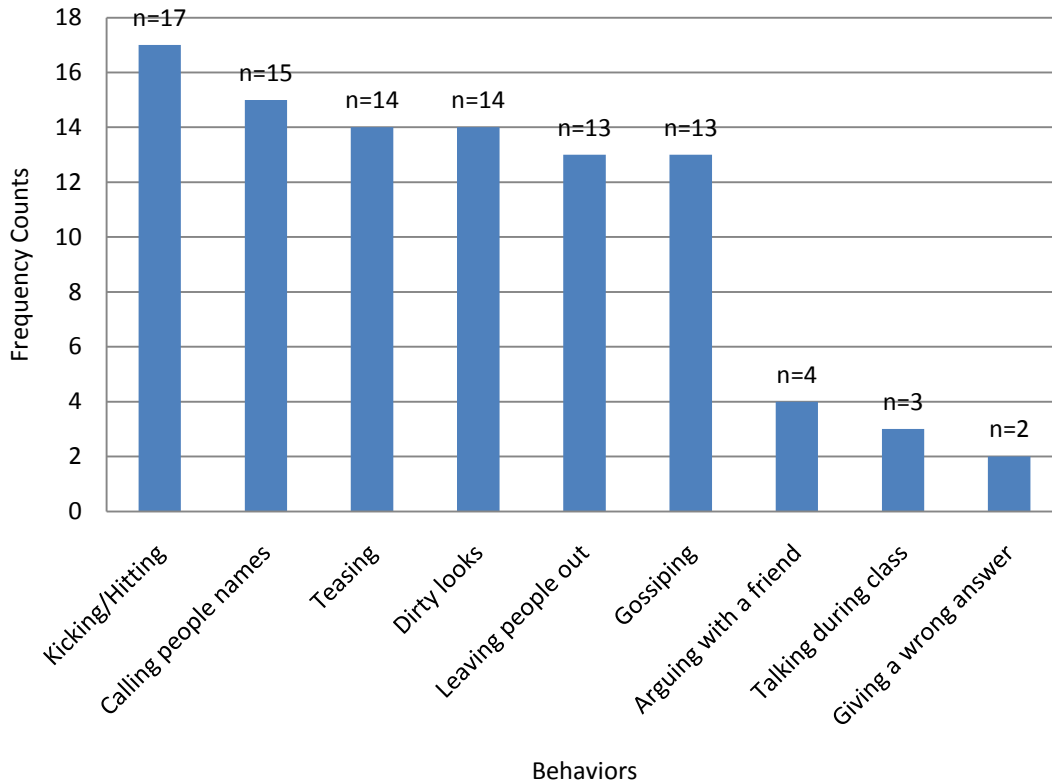


Figure 1. Teacher survey results for question one (n=95)

The second question asked the teachers to chart on a map where they commonly saw these behaviors in school during the past year. The 25 teachers that participated were given one week to reflect on the past year and represent each bullying incident observed by using tally marks on a multiple-response map. A total of 139 behaviors were observed. Figure 2 shows that the most common location that bullying behaviors took place was in the hallway (66%;n=92). No bullying behaviors were recorded by teachers in the classroom or bathrooms.

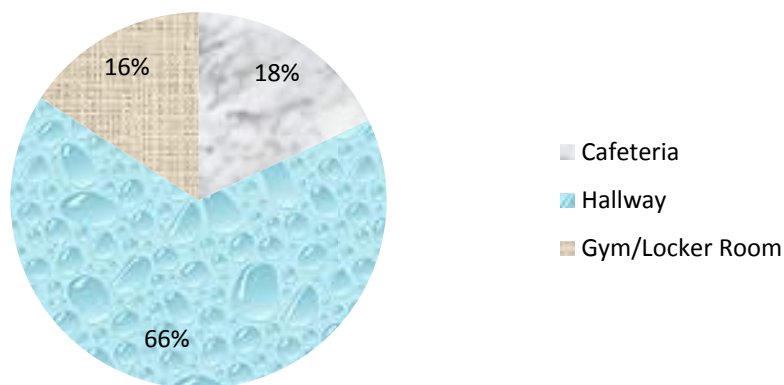


Figure 2. Teacher survey results for question two (n=139)

Parent Survey.

Another tool used by the teacher researchers was the parent survey. The purpose of this instrument was to establish data on the parents' definition of bullying, how they perceived their children responded to being bullied, their children's responses to witnessing bullying, and if they felt their children were safe at school. The survey contained four questions. Three of the questions were multiple-response items and one of the questions contained a likert scale of *never, sometimes, often, and always*. On August 31, 2010, the teacher researchers distributed the parent survey (n=165) to students to take home. Parents were asked to return completed surveys to the teacher researchers' via the students in sealed envelopes by September 7, 2010. Ninety-one parents returned the completed surveys which resulted in a return rate of 55%. A copy of the teacher survey can be found in Appendix B.

In the first question of the parent survey, parents were asked to check the boxes of all the behaviors that they viewed as bullying. A total of 448 behaviors were checked by the 91 parents that participated. The three most frequent behaviors selected by parents were: calling people names (19.2%, n=86), teasing (18.9%, n=85), and kicking/hitting (18.5%, n= 83) and accounted for 57% (n=254). The verbal behavior consisted of 72% (n=323) of behaviors considered

bullying. The physical behaviors identified consisted of 45% (n=200) of behaviors considered bullying by parents. Of the nine behaviors listed, three behaviors (arguing with a friend, talking during class, and giving a wrong answer) were listed to help the teacher researchers understand the perceptions about what bullying actually is. These three behaviors are inconsistent with the research's definition for bullying; correspondingly, only 3% (n=15) of parents considered them to be bullying.

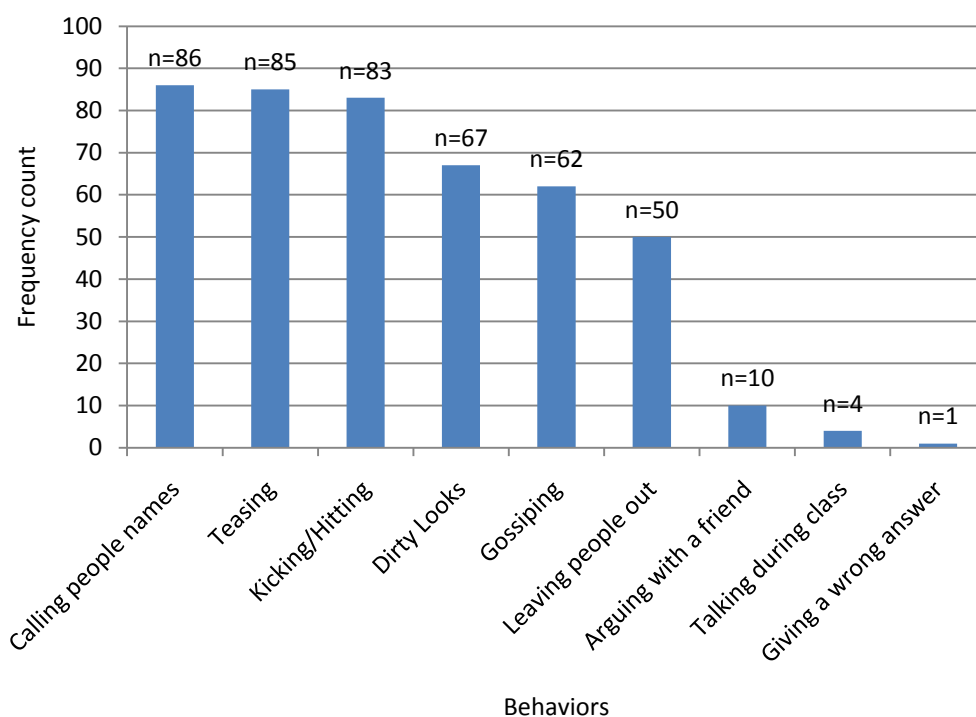


Figure 3. Parent Survey Results for Question One (n=448)

Next, parents were asked to identify the responses they would like their children to have after being bullied. Parents were able to check the box of all the responses they would like their child to have. Of the 226 responses, 38% (n=86) demonstrated a parents desire for their student to talk with an adult. Staying home from school as a response to bullying was clearly not an approved approach to bullying with 0% (n=0) of responses.

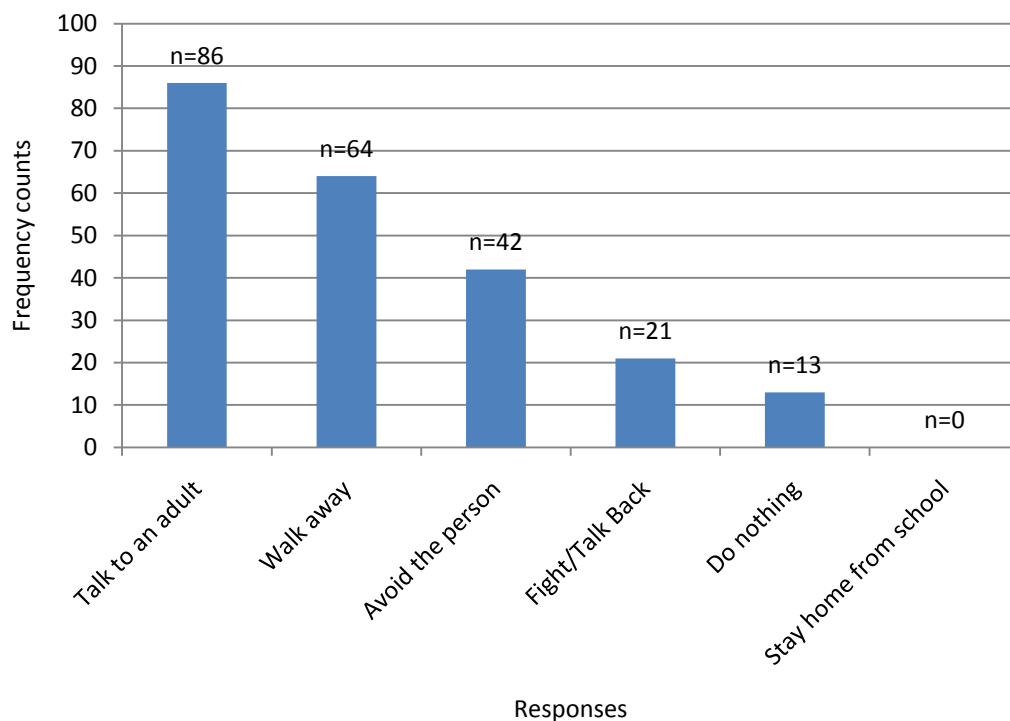


Figure 4. Parent Survey Results for Question Two (n=226)

Parents were asked in the third question to check all of the boxes next to responses they would like their children to have when observing another person being bullied (n=214). Forty-one percent of responses (n=87) indicated a desire to have their child tell an adult. Seventy-four or 35% of response indicated the parent wanting their child to talk with the victim. None of the parents reported a desire for their student to laugh along or do nothing/watch with the bullying of another student. The least desirable of the checked responses were to walk away, 5% (n=5), and to tell their friends, 8% (n=7) (Figure 5).

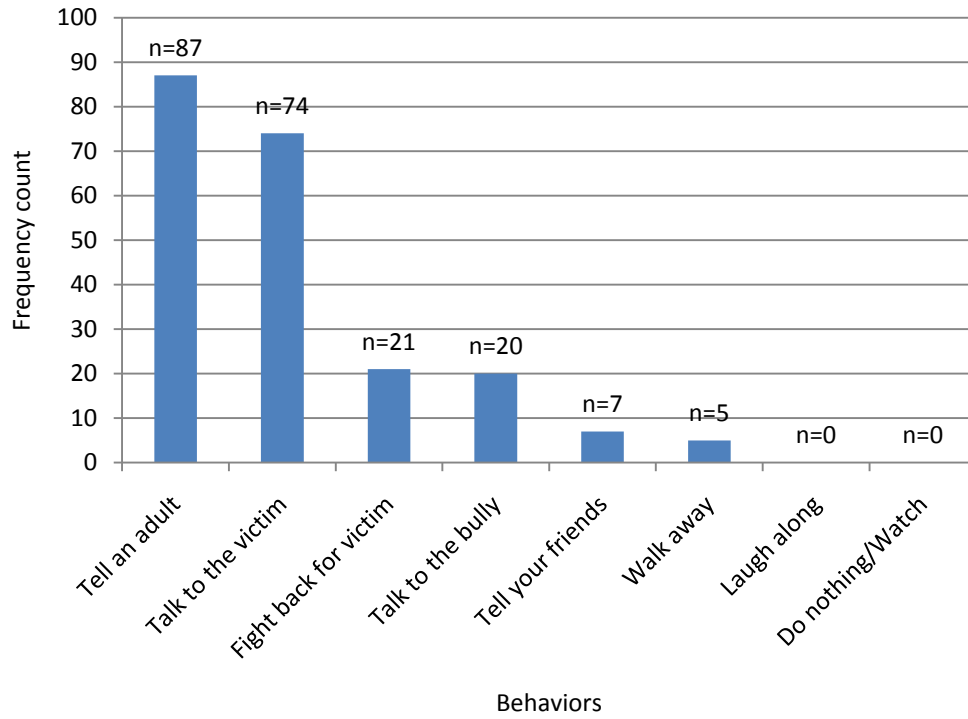


Figure 5. Parent Survey Results for Question Three (n=214)

The fourth question asked the parents how often they feel their child is safe at school.

Figure 6 shows 87% (n=79) felt their child often or always felt safe. Please refer to Figure 6.

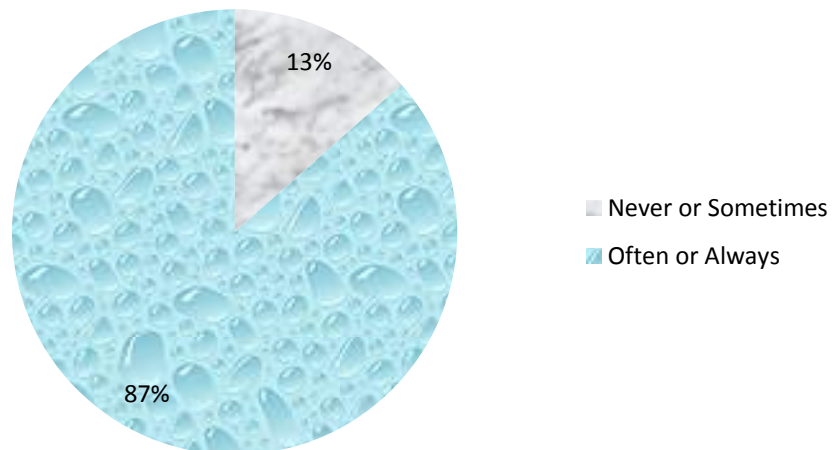


Figure 6. Parent Survey Results for Question Six (n=91)

Student Survey.

Another tool used by the teacher researchers was the student survey. The purpose of this instrument was to determine the student's definition of bullying, their responses to being bullied, their responses to witnessing bullying, and if they felt safe at school. The survey contained four questions. Three of the questions were multiple-response items and one of the questions contained a likert scale of *never, sometimes, often, and always*. On August 31, 2010, the teacher researchers distributed the student survey to 165 students during class. Students were asked to return the completed surveys to the teacher researchers' by placing it in a designated bin in the classroom by the end of class. One hundred nineteen students of the 165 given a survey returned the completed survey which resulted in a return rate of 72%. A copy of the student survey can be found in Appendix C.

In the first question of the student survey, students were asked to check the boxes of all the behaviors that they viewed as bullying. A total of 476 behaviors were checked by the 119 students that participated. With kicking/hitting being the most common listed behavior of bullying (24%, n=113), teasing (21%, n=99), calling people names (15%, n=70), dirty looks (14%, n=65), and gossiping (13%, n=60) accounted for 86% (n=407) of the behaviors checked. Of the nine behaviors listed, three behaviors (arguing with a friend, talking during class, and giving a wrong answer) were listed to help the teacher researchers understand the perceptions about what bullying actually is. These three behaviors are inconsistent with the research's definition for bullying; correspondingly, only 4.8% (n=23) of students considered them to be bullying.

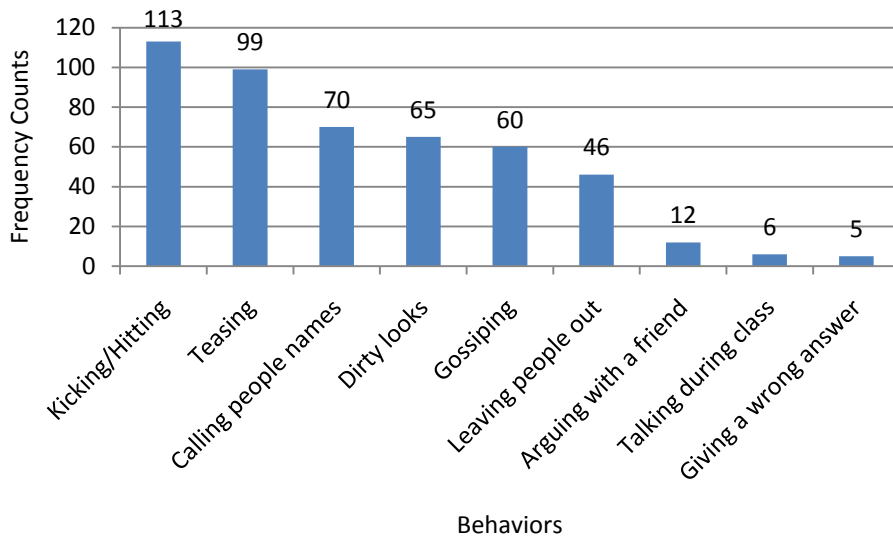


Figure 7. Student Survey Results for Question One (n=476)

In the second question, students were asked to place a check next to the box that described what their response was after being bullied. With walk away (30%, n=84) being the most common box checked, talk to an adult (27%, n=75) and avoid the person (26%, n=73) were also commonly chosen. These commonly chosen responses represented 83% (n=232) of the responses given.

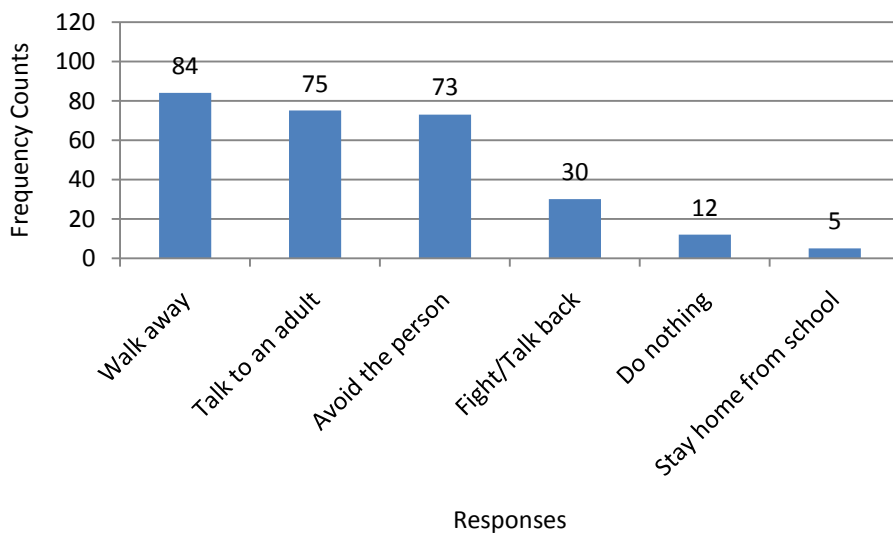


Figure 8. Student Survey Results for Question Two (n=279)

In question three, the students were asked to place a check in the box that best described their response after witnessing someone being bullied. After tell an adult (36%, n=98), talk to the victim (21%, n=58) was the next most commonly checked box and together accounted for 72% of the responses (n=195). Thirty-three percent of responses (n=19) wanted to talk with the bully than talk to the victim and 41% less responses (n=40) wanted to talk with the victim instead of an adult. Talk to the bully (14%, n=39), fight back for the victim (11%, n=29), walk away (7%, n=20) and tell your friends (7%, n=18) were ranked close in checked responses with do/nothing (3%, n=8) and laugh along (0%, n=0) not being desirable responses.

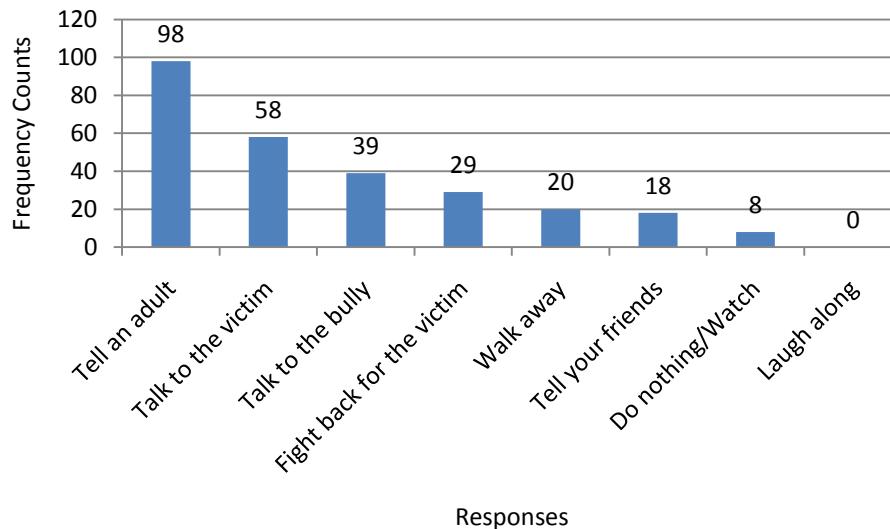


Figure 9. Student Survey Results for Question Three (n=270)

Students were asked in the fourth question to circle how safe they felt at school with the choices being *never*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *always*. Over three quarters of the students (80%, n=96) agreed that they often or always felt safe at school with only 20% (n=23) feeling safe never or sometimes.

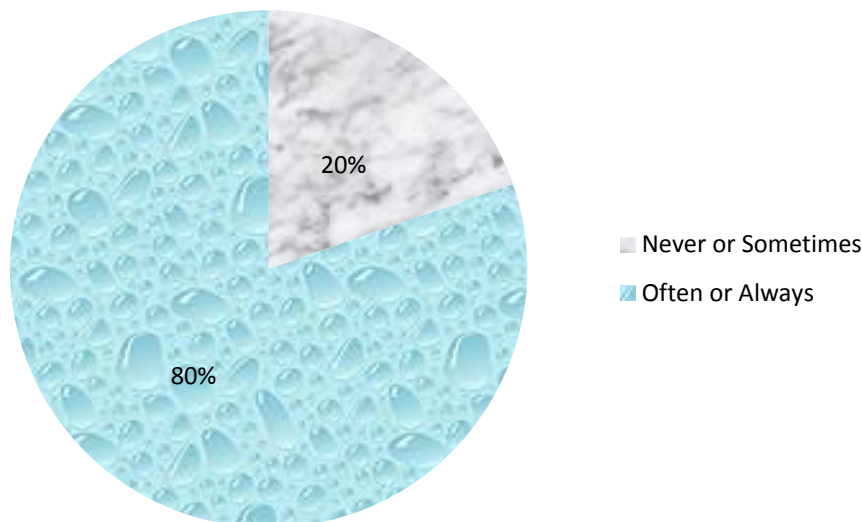


Figure 10. Student Survey Results for Question Four (n=119)

Student Map Survey.

The fourth tool used by the teacher researchers was a student map survey. The purpose of this instrument was to determine where the students witnessed bullying in the school and how often they witnessed bullying. The only question on the survey was a multiple-response item that asked students to identify on a map where they had witnessed bullying at school with a tally mark for each time they witnessed it. On August 31, 2010, the teacher researchers distributed the student map survey (n=165) to students in class. Students were asked to return the completed surveys to a designated area in the classrooms that day. One hundred nineteen students returned the completed surveys which resulted in a return rate of 72%. A copy of the student map survey can be found in Appendix D.

In student map survey, students were asked to place a tally marks in each of the locations where they had observed bullying behaviors during the last school year. They were instructed to place one tally for each of the bullying incidents they had observed. Students could place tally marks in classrooms, cafeteria, hallways, gym/locker room, and bathrooms. Of the 760 bullying

behaviors, 35% (n=263) were observed inside classrooms. The hallway accounted for 18% (n=136) of the observed behaviors and the gym/locker room 16% (n=125). The cafeteria had the second highest frequency with 27% (n=203) of bullying incidents occurring there.

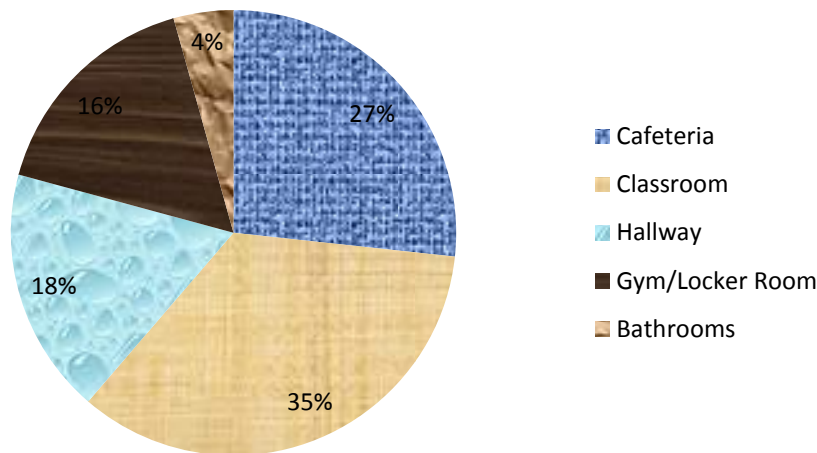


Figure 11. Student Map Survey Results (n=760)

Summary

Based on the data collected, teachers, parents, and students viewed bullying as a problem. All of the groups were able to identify physical and verbal bullying behaviors (Figures 1, 3, & 7). Parents viewed name calling as the most frequent bullying behavior (Figure 3); parents and students viewed kicking/hitting as the most frequent bullying behavior (Figure 1 & 7). Teachers felt that bullying most frequently occurred in the hallways, then the cafeteria, and then the gym/locker room as shown in Figure 2; the classroom bullying was not recorded by teachers. Students felt bullying most frequently occurred in the classroom, then cafeteria, and then hallways as shown in Figure 11. In Figure 4, parents felt students should responded to being bullied by speaking with an adult most frequently (38%; n=86) and walk away with the second most frequency (28%; n=64). In Figure 8, students viewed walking away with the most

frequency (30%; n=84) and talking to an adult with the second most frequency (27%; n=75) when being bullied. Both parents and students felt that when witnessing someone being bullied that telling adult was the first priority (Figure 5 & 9). In figure 6 and 10, the data shows that both students and parents feel that students are safe in school.

Reflection

We, the teacher researchers, based on the data, believed that bullying was an apparent problem in our school (Figure 11). One concern that we saw as the teacher researchers was that there were misunderstandings on the definition of bullying. Based on the first question in the Teacher Survey (Figure 1), Parent Survey (Figure 3), and the Student Survey (Figure 7), there was an inconsistent definition of bullying throughout these populations. We felt that a common definition of bullying needed to be constructed throughout the school and communicated with the parents as well. Based on the Student Map Survey (Figure 11), we felt that students were being bullied in the classrooms and the cafeteria more than other locations listed in the school. From this data and our research, we felt that strategies to deal with bullying needed to be implemented. Since most students answered *walk away* to question two on the Student Survey (Figure 9), we felt it was necessary to teach students other strategies to deal with bullying in school in order to change the outcome of situations that include bullying.

Probable Causes

The current literature review states that bullying or acts of aggression were found in all school climates and environments. Swearer and Cary (2003) suggested that bullying behavior tends to peak in middle school and generally decreases with age. The increase in bullying behavior occurs when students make the transition into middle school. Galen and Underwood (1997) reported that bullying was commonly found in two forms, physical aggression and social aggression. They stated that physical aggression referred to the direct infliction of harm on

another through physical means. Social aggression referred to multiple behaviors that damaged, “another’s self esteem, social status, or both, and may take direct forms such as verbal rejection, negative facial expressions or body movements, or more indirect forms such as slanderous rumors or social exclusion” (p. 590). Galen and Underwood (1997) go on to state that aggressive behavior must be an intentional act by the aggressor with the aim of hurting the victim to be classified as bullying.

Age level.

The transition from elementary school to middle school is a difficult time for most students. “It is a time typically characterized by increased academic demand, decreased personal attention in school, increased stressors, and a shift from adult-focused to peer-focused relationships” (Eccles, 1999, Elias, Gara, & Ubriaco, 1985, Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997, as cited in Nansel, Haynie, & Simons-Morton, 2003, p. 333). An important part of middle school is a student’s development of healthy peer relationships. A student’s peer relationship at school can either be a supporter or stressor in the adjustment to middle school (Birch & Ladd, 1996, Ladd & Price, 1987, & Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman, 1997, as cited in Nansel et al., 2003). Peer relationships that are stressors often involve bullying. Difficulties in healthy peer relationships are directly related to feelings of self-concept and self-worth which can often link to bullying (Fenzel, 2000, & Haynes, 1990, as cited in Nansel et al., 2003). According to a national study of U.S. youth in grades 6th-8th, bullying occurs more frequently among 6th-8th grade students. Both being a bully and being a victim represent poor peer relationships during the middle-school transition (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, & Simons-Morton, 2001, as cited in Nansel et al., 2003). Students are more likely to be involved in bullying during the transition from elementary school to middle school because of the importance of peer relationships during this stage of their

life (Birch & Ladd, 1996, Ladd & Price, 1987, & Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman, 1997, as cited in Nansel et al., 2003).

According to Gregroy Green, author of “Bullying: A concern for survival, “It is generally believed that incidences of bullying are quite common among middle school students because many of these students must make swift and sometimes many transitions before entering high school” (Green, 2007, p. 333). The transitions along with the vast hormonal changes that adolescents go through during puberty can result in negative behaviors towards peers. During puberty adolescents’ bodies are taking on many hormonal changes, which can be difficult for adolescents in middle school (Green, 2007). Middle school students are looking for acceptance and praise from their peers at a time their bodies are changing drastically. When students lack acceptance from their peers in middle school, they are often targets of bullying (Green, 2007).

Gender.

Gender is a crucial part of peer interaction for adolescents. “Gender is probably the most crucial variable for preadolescents. Gender is widely recognized as an important determinant in peer interaction (Maccoby, 1988, 1998, as cited in Dijkstra, Lindenberg, & Veenstra, 2007). Starting in elementary school, students feel a belonging with their gender group; therefore want to be accepted by this group. Since it is crucial for adolescents to be accepted in their gender groups, bullying within these groups can be devastating. Boys predominantly use physical abuse and verbal threats to hurt other boys while girls will bully other girls verbally (Safran, 2007). During a study, researchers found that male bullies victimize younger males to cover their own insecurities or helplessness. By bullying younger or smaller males, they hope for more power in their gender group. In contrast, females will over-dramatize situations and promote competition within their gender groups. Females will focus on petty differences among other females to

display power (Safran, 2007). Relationships between females are primary; therefore bullying attacks are usually done within a close relationship in order to give power to the bully and weakness to the victim. Unlike males, females willingly deal with the bullying within close relationships because relationships play a crucial role in their own development. Females will often remain in an abusive friendship in order to avoid social isolation (Safran, 2007). While female adolescents are more likely to experience relational victimization, male adolescents are more likely to experience direct physical and verbal victimization (Felix & McMahon, 2007).

Sexual harassment is considered a gender-related form of peer bullying. Physical and verbal bullying can take on a sexual tone when it is directed toward the opposite sex. For example, when a male student makes a comment about a female student's appearance, this would be considered bullying, or sexual harassment. This form of bullying becomes more common when adolescents progress through puberty and are more aware of the opposite sex (Felix, & McMahon, 2007). During middle school, bullies make degrading comments to the opposite sex, or make unwanted gestures or signals that are considered a form of sexual harassment (Felix, & McMahon, 2007). As students are becoming more aware of their own sexuality, they can bully others by verbally harassing same-sex or opposite-sex peers. Like other forms of bullying, students can be victimized by same-sex peers, or opposite-sex peers (AAUW, 1993, Olweus, 1994, & Roscoe, Strouse, & Goodwin, 1994, as cited in Felix & McMahon, 2007).

Popularity.

In late elementary school, children form hierarchical social structures in which some individuals and peer groups are more popular and central than others (Adler & Adler 1996, Farmer & Rodkin 1996 as cited in Estell et al., 2009). Taunting, teasing, direct confrontation, and physical attacks are forms of aggression that children (particularly boys) use to demonstrate

their prowess and to establish and protect their positions in the social structure (Adler & Adler 1996, Farmer 2000, Pellegrini 1998, and Rodkin & Hodges 2003, as cited in Estell et al., 2009).

According to Dijkstra, Lindenberg, and Veenstra (2007), children will be rejected when their behavior is dissimilar to that in their peer group context (they deviate from the group norm), but not if they display behavior similar to that of their peers. Their studies showed that this was not always the case when the student who was perceived as popular acted different from their peer group. They found that the bullying behaviors by these students lost their negative connotations because the behaviors were occurring to achieve a valued goal.

Estell et al. (2009) conducted a study on a group of students that were labeled by three categories consisting of general education students, gifted students, and students with mild disabilities. Their studies found that because they are socially vulnerable (Frederickson & Furnham 2004, Gresham & MacMillan 1997, & Sale & Carey 1995, as cited in Estell et al. 2009), students with mild disabilities may be susceptible to being bullied and may compensate by bullying others and by affiliating with peers who support this behavior. Austin and Draper (1981), and Schneider et al. (1989) stated that academically gifted students tend to be fairly well accepted in late elementary school (as cited in Estell et al. 2009).

Sexual orientation.

A recent nationwide survey of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) youth reported that nearly 40% indicated experiencing physical harassment at least once because of their sexual orientation and 64.3% reported feeling unsafe at their school because of their sexual orientation (Kosciw, 2004, as cited in Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). Studies report that LGB youth become aware of their same-sex attraction between 10- and 12-years of age (D'Augelli et al., 2008; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993 as cited in Birkett et al., 2009).

The average student of diverse sexuality hears eight homophobic insults per day with one third from faculty and staff. Although many of the insults, especially from faculty and staff, are implicit, it does not excuse them or defray the hurtfulness felt by the recipient (Sweet, & DesRoches, 2007). Name-calling in the form of homophobic bullying is used to refer to anything that does not fit the norms of masculine or feminine, and is used to build in-group and out-group identity (Thurlow, 2001, Sharpe, 2002, Warwick et al. 2002, as cited in Minton, Dahl, O' Moore, & Tuck, 2008).

Location.

In examining international differences between bullying incidents, Forbes, Zhang, Doroszewicz, and Hass (2009) found a difference between three geographically distinct countries. Each of these countries did demonstrate a difference in aggression levels in most instances, with China showing less direct and indirect aggression and the United States generally demonstrating the most aggression. However, the researchers indicated no locational reasons for the differences but rather the philosophy generally held by the nation as the cause for differences. The United States is highly individualistic, China is highly collectivistic, and Poland is balanced in between the two (Forbes et al., 2009).

Pickett, Iannotti, Simons-Morton, and Doastaler (2009) compared the United States with Canada to examine physical aggression among students. Their research found that although students in the United States felt more at risk than Canadian students the differences were small. The researchers in this study also indicated no locational reasons for the differences between the two countries but did cite social environment differences between where bullying takes place. (Pickett et al., 2009)

School size and setting do not seem to be significant factors in predicting bullying behaviors (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000, Nolin, Davies, & Chandler, 1995, & Whitney & Smith, 1993, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001). Although, rural area students are bullied more than suburban and urban area students in a study conducted by Nansel and associates (2001), as cited in Milsom and Gallo (2006). Yet, the climate or environment of the school was found to effect instances of bullying (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2009). Aggression was more likely to take place in schools with lower or no perceived consequences for bullying and increased passivity in bystanders (Unnever & Cornell, 2003, as cited in Bandyopadhyay et al., 2009). The school climate also influenced how often victims reported bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2000, as cited in Bandyopadhyay et al., 2009).

On a closer scale, bullying frequently occurs in classrooms, hallways, and at gym (Swearer & Cary, 2003). Pickett et al. (2009) found that when in conflict without attentive adults around students can turn to physical violence. The proximity of adults to students does make bullies more cautious for fear of punishment (Green, 2007). However, since many factors influencing aggression are created outside the classroom, to fully understand the bullying we must remember to examine the social environment that students face outside of school (Pickett et al., 2009).

Froeschle, Mayorga, Castillo, and Hargrave (2008) found that bullying has increase due to technology. Cell phones and text messages have created a new way to spread rumors or instantly harass bullying victims. Cyber-bullying has created challenges for adults wanting to protect students from bullying (Feinberg & Robey, 2008, as cited in Young et al., 2009).

Parents.

Many different events happen to children during their childhood. Bullying is included as one of those events and some people feel it is a natural stage of development (Bauman & Hurley, 2005). Parents are a key contributor to their children's development including the relationships that they have with peers. Parents can affect their child's development both directly and indirectly. When parents help their children to develop relationship skills they are paving a direct pathway, and when their own attitudes and actions are considered it is an indirect pathway (Ladd, 1992, as cited in Holt, Kaufman, & Finkelhor, 2009). This information lends itself for people to believe that it is more likely than not that parents have some kind of influence on their child's involvement with bullying. Bullying behaviors can then be associated with little to no involvement from parents (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003, as cited in Holt et al., 2009).

When children spend a little amount of time with adults they are more likely to bully peers (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000, as cited in Holt et al., 2009). Although spending time with adults can decrease a child's need or want to bully, the adult encounters need to be positive. Bullying behaviors that occur both at home and in school have been linked to family environments that are full of animosity and conflict (Duncan, 1999, as cited in Holt, et al., 2009).

While the lack of positive parental influence and poor family environments can greatly affect bullying, 53% of sixth graders, 28% of seventh graders, and 50% of eighth graders have all reported that they have been bullied at home by a sibling (Swearer & Cary, 2003). Research and studies have found that when violence is present in the home there is a greater risk of children having difficulties interacting with their peers (Jacobson & Straker, 1982, Nugent, Labram, & McLoughlin, 1998, as cited in Holt et al., 2009). Children who have been maltreated

have also been found to be bullied by their peers (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001, as cited in Holt et al., 2009).

There have been many studies done on the similarities between bullying and generations and one study showed that fathers who bullied their peers while they were in school were more likely to have sons who would follow in their footsteps and also bully their peers. There has been strong evidence to support the association between family characteristics and bullying (Farrington, 1993, as cited in Holt et al., 2009). In order to get a better understanding of bullying in the home and the associations that are made with it, parent and child reports should, and can be, used to create a solid foundation of information (Holt et al., 2009).

Summary

More than ever, bullying is an unavoidable issue. While there is probably no way of ever knowing what exactly causes bullying, this chapter discussed some of the reasons that may lead to why students bully their peers. Some important indicators that should not be ignored include the student's age, their gender, their popularity status at school, their sexual orientation, the geographic location of where they live, and their parents and home life situations. By making people aware of the different possible underlying causes that contribute to bullying, people can ban together and try to put an end to all of the negative attitudes and behaviors.

Chapter 3

The Solution Strategy

Review of the Literature

While researching the topic of bullying, we found many sources describing the causes of why students get bullied, but not as many sources describing the solutions. The solutions that research does support include compiling a common definition, using literature and role-playing, and peer mediation. Research supports using these tools to decrease bullying in classroom. Research supports implementing the solutions throughout the school and being consistent throughout the grade levels.

Common definition.

One of the most common and possibly serious forms of school violence has been characterized as bullying (Batsche, 1997; Larson, Smith, & Furlong, 2002, as cited in Elinoff, Chafouleas, & Sassu, 2004). The frequency and severity of this problem leads to the need to be able to define and fully understand what it actually is (Elinoff, Chafouleas, & Sassu, 2004).

Bullying is commonly known as a student, or group of students, physically or verbally harassing other students without reason (Hazler, 1992, as cited in Ma, 2002). “Bullying is typically defined as aggressive peer-to-peer behavior in which (1) there is an intention to harm or disturb the victim; (2) the aggression occurs repeatedly over time; and (3) there is an imbalance of power, with a more powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one” (Olweus, 1993, as cited in Nansel, Haynie, & Simons-Morton, 2003). Bullying can take on many different forms from actually physically attacking someone else by hitting, kicking, or pushing them, verbally abusing them by saying mean things, or teasing and leaving people out and not including them in a group or activity.

The three most common and general types of bullying include physical, verbal and social. Physical bullying takes place when physical and violent force is used against the victim, verbal bullying takes place when there is name calling and hurtful words passed from one person to another, and social bullying takes form as spreading rumors and purposely excluding others (Unnever & Cornell, 2002). Bullying is not only classified when it is happening between students when they are at school, but it can also be present anywhere on the school grounds and even going to or leaving school (Swearer & Cary, 2003). Information and material on preventing bullying is becoming more and more readily available for educators. This increase in awareness may be a good start and a valuable opportunity to be able to promote a school-based bullying prevention system (Nansel et al., 2003).

In general, students that have fallen victim to bullying have voiced a concern when it comes to how the adults at school are responding when they encounter bullying situations. Students feel that appropriate actions are not taken quickly enough and enough is not being done (Bauman & Hurley, 2005). Some reasons that may hinder or slow the response of teachers intervening when they are faced with bullying include their own confidence in intervention skills or a lack of knowledge, and their overall attitudes towards bullying. These reasons may affect their willingness to act or respond when faced with a difficult situation (Suderman, Jaffe, & Schieck, 1996, as cited in Bauman & Hurley, 2005). Sometimes people do not respond or intervene in bullying situations because they do not believe what they are witnessing is actually a form of bullying. Students believe that adults do not step in soon enough and should have intervened long before they actually do (Garbarino & DeLara, 2003).

Teachers and adults need to be able to fully recognize bullying and when it is occurring before they will be able to step in and take action or prevent it. Research states that many

teachers do not have the skills or knowledge to be able to recognize when bullying behaviors are being displayed between their students (Allen, 2010). Clarke and Kiselica, 1997, as cited in Ma (2002) have recommended an intervention approach that would be school-wide. This approach would include educating not only students but also teachers, administrators and parents. A school-wide assessment that is consistent should be put in place as well as providing training and counseling. The school counselors also play a huge role when it comes to decreasing bullying situations at school (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Roberts & Coursol, 1996, as cited in Ma, 2002).

With that being said, the necessary steps that need to be taken in order to deal with bullying must be provided to staff members by administrators so they can be trained and feel confident to handle situations that may arise. A plan should then be made where all staff members can easily follow it (Green, 2007). Schools that are effective in dealing with and preventing bullying encourage their students to have positive relationships with their teachers and have strict and tough rules against bullying. In order to see positive changes towards bullying, there needs to be tougher discipline, accelerated supervision, counseling for students and training for teachers (Barone, 1997, as cited in Ma, 2002).

Drama/role-playing.

When a student is involved in role playing, they take over someone else's perspective in different situations. By doing this, students gain a better understanding of others' perspectives and ways of thinking and learn to empathize (Enz, Zoll, Vannini, Schneider, Hall, Paiva, & Aylett, 2008). Since research shows that bullies frequently lack a sense of empathy and experience no sense of remorse for hurting another child, drama and role-play can help prevent and stop bullying (Marano, 1995, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001). According to social learning theory, students can attain knowledge and skills by watching other students and events without

actually engaging in the performance themselves (Corsini & Wedding, 1995, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001). Drama can be an effective way to stop bullying while students are performing the skits, and also when students are observing their classmates engaging in the role playing.

A school should work with both the bully and the victim while doing the dramatization. Before doing the role-playing throughout the entire school, the drama teacher, counselors and all of the teachers should be contacted to create a school-wide anti-bullying program through drama. The teachers should create packets that explain to the students what bullying is and then have students help to create skits about different bullying situations that they can perform (Beale & Scott, 2001). The situations that are chosen to be performed should be believable and realistic for middle school students so they can easily identify with the different characters (Beale & Scott, 2001). The dramatizations that involve bullying help students learn verbal defense strategies with their peers and help students understand what to do in bullying situations. Students will become aware of what bullying looks like and what they should do if they're ever involved in bullying or observe a bullying situation (Sharp & Cowie, 1994, as cited in Jeffrey, Miller, & Linn, 2001).

Role-playing and dramatization that involve bullying can develop a powerful discussion based on the situation students are acting out (Vernon, 1999, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001). Students can discuss alternative solutions and interventions instead of what took place in the dramatization while feeling safe because they are discussing fictional characters without having to share their own personal feelings or experiences (Beale, 2000, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001). As students discuss what they have seen in the drama, they are interacting with students that have similar problems and they can share alternate ways of solving conflicts. Students will

be able to see other students' point of views through the discussion that unfolds (Beale & Scott, 2001).

Video programs/children's literature.

The use of video programs and children's literature has also been used in bullying prevention. By integrating video programs and literature into class activities, students will be taught social skills and empathy towards other students (Froeschle et al., 2008). Improving social skills can reduce a victims chance of being bullied (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997, Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003, Macklem 2003, Rigby, 2002, & Roberts & Cousol, 1996, as cited in Lorimer, 2006). These activities will also create a format for discussion and written work about bullying, a critical component of a bullying prevention program (Schoen & Schoen, 2010; Safran, 2007; Hillsberg & Spak, 2006). These discussions are most beneficial when students make connections to bullying incidences that have occurred at school (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006).

Engaging students in activities is always beneficial to learning. When students connect with the material by identifying the characters and relating the plot to their own experiences they will gain a stronger level of comprehension (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997, as cited in Hillsberg & Spak, 2006). When using videos in the classroom, incorporating film clips from popular movies that showcase situations that deal with bullies and the character traits of those involved can get students very engaged (McCaffrey, 2008). These high interest clips can be used in coordination with class discussions and other activities (McCaffrey, 2008). Young adult literature that students feel connected to in some way will also help student comprehend more of the story (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006). By using the appropriately leveled literature for students they will also see the relevance to the lives (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006), bullies may be able to empathize with a character in the story (Pikas, 1989, as cited in Hillsberg & Spak, 2006), and victims may

gain a sense of comfort (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006). When students are able to identify and connect with the emotional experiences of characters in literature and videos, they can emotional grow (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006). Teaching empathy to bullies has shown to reduce bullying (Hazler, 1996, Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003, Macklem, 2003, & Sullivan, 2000, as cited in Lorimer, 2006). Stories used in video programs and literature activities should be chosen that have “memorable protagonists, engaging plots,” and a story “that empowers victims of bullying” (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006, p. 25).

Video programs and children’s literature create a starting point for other guidance lessons that identify feelings, points of view and perspective, appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, the need for self-control, and the importance of personal boundaries (Froeschle et al., 2008, Hummell, 2007, & Young et al., 2009). Bullying prevention programs should have students also identify and discuss effective coping skills, when adult professional help is required, how to report bullying, and perceptions and attitudes towards bullying (Ma, 2002, Young et al., 2009; Hummell, 2007; Swearer & Cary, 2003). Programs should aim to teach the social problem solving, decision making skills, and stress management skills (Weissberg & Caplan, 1994, & Caplan et al., 1992, as cited in Van Schoiack-Edstrom et al., 2002).

Prevention programs should aim to improve social competencies, interaction skills (Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Social Competence, 1994, & Weissberg & Greenberg, 1997, as cited in Van Schoiack-Edstrom et al., 2002), and coping skills (Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Social Competences, 1994, as cited in Van Schoiack-Edstrom et al., 2002). Using children’s literature and video programs can communicate the anti-bullying message without directly engaging in bullying behaviors themselves (Corsini & Wedding, 1995, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001). By using video programs and literature teachers can also

educate students on the role of a bystander (Wolfgang, 2002, as cited in Simmons et al., 2009). “Anti-bullying programs are not just for the victims and the bullies, but also for the majority of students who are passive and who stand by and watch it occur (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006, p. 26).

Peer mediation.

Schools are increasingly implementing peer mediation programs. Peer mediation is a process in which students that have been taught a structured, step-by-step model assist others to peacefully negotiate solutions to their interpersonal conflicts (Casella & Gerber, 1999, as cited in Theberge & Karan, 2004). Mediation has been identified as a resource that promotes positive peer interactions and reduces school violence (Bell, Coleman, Anderson, Whelan, & Wilder, 2000, Debaryshe & Fryxell, 1998, Powell, Muir-McClain, & Halasyamani, 1996, as cited in Schellenberg, Parks-Savage, & Rehfuss, 2007). It is a process that depends on the active participation of students, both as mediators and as disputants (Theberge & Karan, 2004).

Student mediators are trained in negotiating and conflict resolution techniques (Guanci, 2002, as cited in Schellenberg et al., 2007). According to studies, peer mediation programs have taught students how to respond to conflict situations in more socially acceptable ways and have possibly reduced rates of school violence (Bell et al., 2000, Graham & Pulvino, 2000, Hanson, 1994, Humphries, 1999, Johnson & Johnson, 2001, Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, & Acikgoz, 1994, Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, & Magnuson, 1995, Johnson et al., 1996, & Powell et al., 1996, as cited in Schellenberg et al., 2007).

One such process is called the Peace Pal program. This program follows the social learning theory. Social learning theory contends that children will duplicate peer responses in social situations, assimilate and accommodate peer interaction patterns, and thereby develop new cognitions for future interactions (Bandura, 1969, 1977, 1986, 2001, Bandura & Jourden, 1991,

Piaget, 1970, & Schellenberg, 2000, as cited in Schellenberg et al., 2007). A three year study of an existing peer mediation program in a diverse, suburban elementary school was examined and seemed to create a significant reduction in the number of out-of-school suspensions over the 5-year period after its implementation, which indicates a constant decrease in schoolwide violence over time (Schellenberg et al., 2007). This long-term drop in violence includes both physical and verbal conflict and is consistent with the findings of previous exploratory studies (Bell et al., 2000, Johnson et al., 1994, & Powell et al., 1996, as cited in Schellenberg et al., 2007).

Peer mediation is a complicated process and has been shown to be difficult to implement in schools. There are several factors that need to be in place to ensure a successful program. All members of the school community need to work together and be committed to using the program (Theberge & Karan, 2004). Also, administrators need to provide support by ensuring that faculty members have the time to make the program work effectively (Daunic, Smith, Robinson, Miller, & Landry, 2000, as cited in Theberge, & Karan, 2004).

Summary

Understanding bullying and its various forms is the first aspect of reducing bullying behaviors. Students, parents, and school faculty can only prevent and/or intervene in bullying situations if they are able to recognize them. To accomplish the task of decreasing bullying situations, experts suggest a comprehensive school-wide approach. Early intervention strategies can improve social skills and academic performance.

Social learning theory is the process by which students learn knowledge and skill by watching other students and events. Drama, video programs, and children's literature like reader's theater, are all methods of getting students engaged and motivated. Students can

emotionally connect with the characters while also building background for powerfully guided discussions.

Project Objective and Processing Statements

As a result of discussing young- adult literature, role- playing activities, and establishing a school-wide definition of bullying in accordance with a common set of rules during the period of September 13, 2010 through December 17, 2010, the students of Teacher Researcher A, Teacher Researcher B, Teacher Researcher C, and Teacher Researcher D were to decrease bullying behaviors within the classroom.

Prior to implementing these interventions, the teacher researchers needed to accomplish the following tasks:

- Choose literature that pertains to bullying which will be read and discussed in class.
- Prepare pre-reading and post-reading activities.
- Develop short skits or situations for students to act out relating to bullying.
- Create discussion questions that correspond to the skits.
- Compile survey information to create a common definition of bullying to be presented to the school.
- Develop skits that include bullying and non-bullying situations

Project Action Plan

The following action research plan outlines the data collection procedures and interventions necessary to complete the action research project. It lists necessary tasks to be completed each week.

Preparation

- ___ Copy teacher surveys, parent surveys, student surveys, and student map surveys
- ___ Copy parent cover letters and consent forms
- ___ Copy student cover letters and consent forms
- ___ Send home parent consent forms on Tuesday, August 17, 2010
- ___ Collect all parent consent forms by Tuesday, August 24, 2010

Pre-Documentation

Week 1: August 30-September 3, 2010

- ___ Send home parent surveys on Tuesday, August 31, 2010
- ___ Distribute teacher surveys in mailboxes on Tuesday, August 31, 2010
- ___ Administer and collect student map surveys on Tuesday, August 31, 2010
- ___ Administer and collect student surveys on Tuesday, August 31, 2010

Week 2: September 6-10, 2010

- ___ Collect parent surveys by Tuesday, September 7, 2010
- ___ Collect and analyze teacher surveys on Tuesday, September 7, 2010
- ___ Analyze results of student surveys

Intervention*Week 3-4: September 13-24, 2010*

- ___ Meet with the students for a whole class discussion to discuss their definition of bullying based on the student survey results
- ___ Each classroom will create a common list of bullying behaviors
- ___ Meet with teacher researchers to compile the results
- ___ Share the common list with each classroom and discuss
- ___ Teachers will produce posters that will display the common list of bullying behaviors

Week 5-6: September 27-October 8, 2010

- ___ Discuss rules that correlate with the definition of bullying
- ___ Make copies of the rules for individual classrooms and hand them out to the students
- ___ Send a copy of the rules home to be signed by students and parents

Week 7-8: October 11-22, 2010

- ___ Reinforce the definition and rules of bullying via the poster and discussions
- ___ Ask the whole class what stories they've read in the past that include bullying
- ___ Students will develop a book talk about a book that they've read that related to bullying

Week 9-10: October 25- November 5, 2010

- ___ Continue to reinforce the definition and rules of bullying
- ___ Complete pre-reading activities
- ___ Read stories that includes bullying situations
- ___ Discuss the different character perspectives
- ___ Complete post-reading activities

Week 11-12: November 8- November 19, 2010

- ___ Continue to reinforce the definition and rules of bullying
- ___ Distribute skits about bullying to students to read in groups
- ___ Student groups perform skits
- ___ Discuss the different situations faced in the skits
- ___ Students journal about how they felt during the skit

Week 13-14: November 22-December 3, 2010

- ___ Continue to reinforce the definition and rules of bullying
- ___ Discuss different bullying situations that students witnessed or were involved in
- ___ Students will create bullying skits in groups to be presented to the class
- ___ Group performances
- ___ Class discussion about the different situations
- ___ Give bullying and non-bullying situations to students to read
- ___ Students determine if bullying has occurred in each situation

Post –Documentation

Week 15: December 6-10, 2010

- ___ Re-administer student surveys on December 7, 2010
- ___ Re-administer student map surveys on December 7, 2010

Week 16: December 13-17, 2010

- ___ Analyze student surveys
- ___ Organize research materials and informal observations

Methods of Assessment

The purpose of the student survey was to determine the students' definition of bullying, responses to being bullied, responses to witnessing bullying, and if they felt safe at school. During the week of December 7, 2010 the researchers administered the Student Survey to 190 students. The results of the post-documentation of the Student Survey were compared to the pre-documentation of the Student Survey, which was administered during the week of August 31, 2010, to note any changes concerning the students' definition of bullying, responses to being bullied, responses to witnessing bullying, and if they felt safe at school. A copy of the student survey can be found in Appendix C.

The purpose of the student map survey was to determine where the students witnessed bullying in the school and how often they witnessed bullying. During the week of December 7, 2010 the researchers administered the Student Map Survey to 190 students. The results of the post-documentation of the Student Map Survey were compared to the pre-documentation of the Student Map Survey, which was administered during the week of August 31, 2010 to note any changes in where the students witnessed bullying in the school and how often they witnessed bullying. A copy of the student map survey can be found in Appendix D.

Chapter 4

Project Results

The problem area researched was bullying in the middle school classroom. The bullying behaviors included name calling, teasing, and physical altercations that were taking place in the classrooms of the teacher researchers on a daily basis. Interventions that were implemented included discussion of young-adult literature, role-playing activities, and establishing a school-wide definition of bullying in accordance with a common set of rules. The teacher researchers collected data from 25 teachers, 119 students, and 91 parents. The students were in the sixth and seventh grade. Pre-documentation began on Tuesday, August 31, 2010.

Historical Description of the Intervention

Description.

In the first week of pre-documentation, August 30 -September 3, 2010, we had a very positive response from a majority of the students while filling out our surveys. The students showed a lot of interest in the project and asked a lot of questions. We did have an issue with one of the student's parents not believing that the students should have to use class time to discuss bullying. It was explained to her that bullying has always been discussed in the classroom, but that the progress of the discussions would now be documented. We were disappointed in how many students simply chose not to participate.

In the second week of pre-documentation, September 6-10, almost all of the parent surveys of students participating were sent back. This was a much higher turnout than we expected. We were slightly disappointed at the low amount, one third of teacher surveys were returned. One positive result was that many of the teachers had already completed a similar survey in the previous year, so there were not any questions about what to do.

In the third and fourth weeks, September 13-24, we began discussing the definition of bullying with our students. We then completed a Think-Pair-Share activity in which the students began with creating their own definition. They then shared them with a partner, and finally with a small group. We collected the small group definitions and combined them to form one common definition. The students included a lot of behaviors that we had thought they would not know were bullying behaviors. One issue we had was that many of the definitions were very long, so we had to summarize them all together. It was a lot harder to come up with one definition than we thought.

In the fourth and fifth weeks, September 27-October 8, we discussed rules that correlated with the common definition of bullying. In each individual class we created a list of classroom rules that go along with the definition of bullying. We then created a poster with the rules and hung it in each classroom. The students enjoyed seeing their work on a poster in the classroom. We also compiled the rules as a handout and sent the handout home to get signed by the student and the parents. One student chose not to participate because they felt uncomfortable based on a prior bullying experience they had been through.

In the seventh and eighth weeks, October 11-22, we went over the poster and reinforced the rules that were posted in the classroom. We asked the class and discussed stories that they had read in the past that included bullying. Students developed book talks about a book of their choice that included bullying in the story. Some students returned signed rules sheets this week as well. These rule sheets described rules to live by to avoid bullying with goals like: include others whenever possible, respect others even when I disagree, and not give hurtful looks to others. Most students did not have this sheet signed on time, so we had many students hand them in late.

During weeks 9 and 10, October 25- November 5, we continued to reinforce the rules and the common definition that we agreed upon through in-class discussions and while addressing bullying situations. We then completed pre-reading activities that related to stories we were going to read that included bullying situations. The pre-reading activities included anticipatory sets, questionnaires, and vocabulary activities. In each of our classes we read stories that included bullying situations and had many discussions about how the characters handled each situation. During the reading we also had students journal about how they related to the characters in the stories and about how they felt each situation was handled in the story. Overall, students had a lot to say when we discussed each story and some even included personal stories that correlated with the bullying situation in the story.

During weeks 11 and 12, November 8-19, we continued the reinforcement of our bullying definition and rules. We also explored bullying situations through skits. Students read the skits in groups then performed the skits and had group discussions and independent journaling. Students enthusiastically participated in skits and enjoyed the performance process. However, some of the teacher researchers noticed that students were less interested in writing in their journals about their ideas on the bullying situation. Overall, the students were very receptive to bullying skits and had great discussions following their performances.

During weeks 13 and 14, November 22-December 3, we continued reinforcing our rules and definitions for bullying. We discussed the real life bullying situations that students had observed. Students were then separated into groups to create a skit that discussed a bullying situation, either non-fiction or fiction. Students performed their skits to the class and following the skits we discussed the situation and appropriate responses. Students were also provided with additional bullying and non-bullying situations and were asked to determine if bullying had

occurred. Reading different social scenarios to determine if bullying occurred was a great review of the overall concept of bullying. Students responded well to creating their own skits and definitely felt a sense of ownership in the story. The classes responded enthusiastically to watching other groups perform.

During week 15, December 6-10, we began the post-documentation process and re-administered the student survey and student map survey. Although the survey process was nice for the teacher researchers and not time consuming, students seemed to take the surveys less seriously. During the initial surveys at the start of our research project students seemed to feel the importance of documenting bullying so we could learn about their perspective on bullying; however, students seemed less interested in recording their bullying situations they had experienced in the last 14 weeks. They completed the surveys much more quickly during post-documentation and did not appear to read through each question as thoroughly.

During week 16, December 13-17, we began analyzing the student surveys. As we began analyzing the data we found some interesting initial data and were excited to continue looking for patterns and trends. Overall, our initial thoughts are that we definitely increased students' awareness.

Interventions.

The first intervention we implemented was identifying a school-wide definition in accordance with a common set of rules. This intervention was designed so all students would be exposed to the same information. We modified our curriculum and lesson plans by allowing time for independent thinking and class discussions to create a list of rules. We also hung bullying posters on the classroom walls for each child to see. We asked questions such as, "What actions do you think are considered bullying?" and "What rules would you like to see in

our classroom to help prevent bullying?” See Appendix E for the poster that were created by students.

The next intervention we implemented was reading and discussing young adult literature about bullying. We chose this intervention so students could relate their own experiences to characters in a story thus furthering their comprehension of different situations. Students were exposed to these various situations, examples, and resolutions, which will help them to make positive choices when faced with difficult choices. After reading the literature some questions that were discussed were, “Who was the bully and who was the victim?” “What was the conflict?” and “Can you relate to any of the characters?” We modified our regular literature stories with books specifically about bullying to build on our school character education. See Appendix G for a list of young adult literature that was used.

The last intervention that was implemented was role-playing activities. We chose this intervention so students would be enthusiastic about leaning and be able to relate to different characters in different situations. Students were given a character from a play and required to read their part off of a script. At the end of each play we had a class discussion asking such questions as, “Did you think your character acted appropriately?” and “What would you have done differently if faced with the same situation?” We modified our lesson plans by allowing time to prepare for the roles, read and perform the script and discuss, which all went along with our drama unit. To conclude this intervention we also gave students bullying and non-bullying scenarios to categorize. See Appendix H-J for a copy of each play and Appendix K for bullying and non bullying scenarios.

Reflection.

I, Teacher Researcher A, came into this research project thinking that students knew more about bullying and how to deal with it than they actually do. I found it interesting that most of my students did not think giving dirty looks or leaving someone out was bullying. I learned to not assume that students know the definition of bullying because just by going over the definition helped them understand how their actions affect others. Through this project I also learned to be more direct when talking to my students instead of using sarcasm. During our discussions about how bullying can affect someone I observed that students misconstrue conversations often, so being sincere and direct with them would be more productive. Looking at our survey results I noticed that many of the bullying situations that were observed by students were seen in the cafeteria or gym. I am a lunch supervisor at school, so these results really impacted me. Now I walk around more and try to be more attentive while in the lunchroom because it is an unstructured situation for students. The intervention that benefited my students the most was the literature that included bullying situations because it seemed that the discussions that stemmed from the stories were genuine and cleared up any misconceptions students had about what to do in a bullying situation.

I, Teacher Researcher B, came into this research project knowing that bullying is a huge issue among middle school students but not really knowing how to handle it, prevent it or even discuss it with my students. I was very interested in getting to know more about the topic and how I could implement strategies into the curriculum and my lesson plans. Throughout this project I feel that I really grew as a teacher because I got to know my students on a different level and see a side of them that would not usually come out during normal academic instruction. I learned to relate to them and take a step back and really focus on the bullying that is happening

all around us that is not getting the attention it deserves. I feel that I have become closer with my students and that they have a trust in me and feel safe in my presence. As a teacher researcher I got a huge awakening on how bullying is affecting students' lives everyday and the drastic measures that some are willing to take to avoid it. I found the literature to be fascinating and full of useful information that I could use to help spot out or handle bullying situations. I feel that this project has really changed me as a teacher, teacher researcher, and a colleague. I feel more comfortable about approaching students who I feel are being bullies as well as talking with students who appear to be bullied. I also feel more confident asking my colleagues for advice and working with a group. Overall, I feel this project was a success because it brought about awareness and helped students to understand causes and effects of bullying and the right and wrong ways to handle it. I do not believe there will ever be an end to bullying but I now feel that awareness is key and I will do all I can to stay up to date on the literature and help students to make positive choices.

I, Teacher Researcher C, have found while implementing this research that students in my class have become more comfortable in my classroom. Students have opened themselves up by participating in class more and being more aware of their actions. As a direct result of the efforts in my classroom, I have students more frequently come to talk with me about situations they are facing outside my classroom. I was surprised how our discussions really relaxed some students and made them more confident to participate. To me, getting students to not bully is similar to how I approach other classroom expectations. If I make students aware of what actions I am and am not looking for, practicing those skills, and consistently expecting students to use those skills they will be the most successful. I have really enjoyed seeing the final results of our research and that our time was productive at decrease bullying while building awareness.

I am very happy to see that students feel safer at our school. I plan on continuing to reinforce the skills learned in these activities this year and continuing with them in the future. I enjoyed this action research project and will definitely continue this type of process in a less formal way in other areas of my teaching career. The friendships created with my fellow teacher researchers during this project have already become irreplaceable.

This research project has taught me, Teacher Researcher D, several things. The first thing that I learned from this project is the power of exposure. I have always addressed the topic of bullying in my classroom each year. Per this project, I made it a point to refer to and make obvious the idea of bullying. I found that using the term bullying more often made students a lot more aware of bullying behaviors. I learned as a teacher researcher that research may not always yield the intended result, but can teach another lesson instead. While our project did not necessarily decrease bullying behaviors, it did increase awareness of bullying behaviors and possible responses. I also learned the importance of working together in both a cohort and a group. Our group relied a lot on our cohort to compare our project ideas and setup. It was good to get an outsiders point of view to help correct our mistakes and get new ideas. Working in our research group really helped me to stick to our project schedule. We were often reminding each other what week it was and checking in on how our interventions were working. It was comforting to know that my colleagues were going through some of the same struggles that I was at times. This project truly taught me the importance of research strategies, how difficult it is to conduct such an extensive project, and the positives of working with a group of colleagues.

Presentation and Analysis of Results.

The purpose of this research project was to decrease bullying behaviors through discussing young-adult literature, role-playing activities, and establishing a school-wide

definition of bullying in accordance with a common set of rules. The student participants consisted of 190 middle-school students who were in 6th or 7th grade in language arts and math class. The teacher researchers administered two surveys to test the changes that occurred during the research project. The first tool was a student survey that was consistent with the student survey given during the pre-intervention phase. The Student Survey included a checklist of behaviors that students related to bullying. The second tool was a student map survey that asked students to tally the location and number of occurrences they have observed bullying taking place. Both the Student Survey and the Student Map Survey were administered during the first week post-documentation, which was the week of December 6, 2010 to December 10, 2010.

Student Survey.

During post-documentation the teacher researchers administered the Student Survey. The purpose of this instrument was to determine the student's definition of bullying, their responses to being bullied, their responses to witnessing bullying, and if they felt safe at school. The survey contained four questions. Three of the questions were multiple-response items and one of the questions contained a likert scale of *never*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *always*. Question one asked the students to check the boxes of all the behaviors they considered bullying. On December 7, 2010, the teacher researchers distributed the student survey. Students were asked to return the completed surveys to the teacher researchers' by placing it in a designated bin in the classroom by the end of class. A copy of the teacher survey can be found in Appendix C.

In the first question of the teacher survey, teachers were asked to check the boxes of all the behaviors that they viewed as bullying. A total of 458 behaviors were checked by the 119 students that participated. With kicking/hitting (18%, n=81) being the most common listed behavior of bullying, teasing (17%, n=77), gossiping (16%, n=72), dirty looks (15%, n=68),

leaving people out (14%, n=63), and calling people names (13%, n=60) accounted for 92% (n=421) of the behaviors checked. Of the nine behaviors listed, three behaviors (arguing with a friend, talking during class, and giving a wrong answer) were listed to help the teacher researchers understand the perceptions about the differences in bullying. These three behaviors are inconsistent with the research's definition for bullying; correspondingly, they accounted for only 8% (n=37) of the behaviors checked. Figure 12 shows the results from pre-documentation compared to the post-documentation.

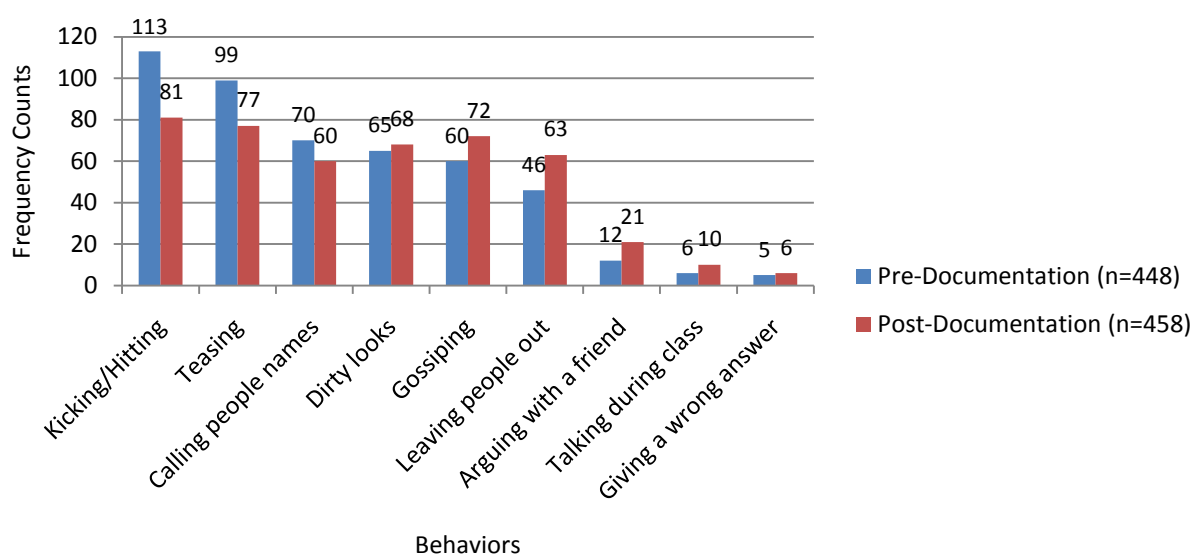


Figure 12. Student Survey Results for Pre-Documentation and Post-Documentation of Question One (n=906)

The number of students who checked kicking/hitting during pre-documentation went down from 113 students to 81 students. The number of students who checked teasing during pre-documentation also went down from 99 students to 77 students. In contrast, the number of students who checked gossiping during pre-documentation went up from 60 to 72 students along with leaving people out going from 46 to 63 students.

In the second question, students were asked to place a check next to the box that described what their response was after being bullied. With talk to an adult (33%, n=70) being the most common box checked, walk away (29%, n=62) and avoid the person (23%, n=49) were also commonly chosen. Figure 13 shows the results from pre-documentation compared to the post-documentation results.

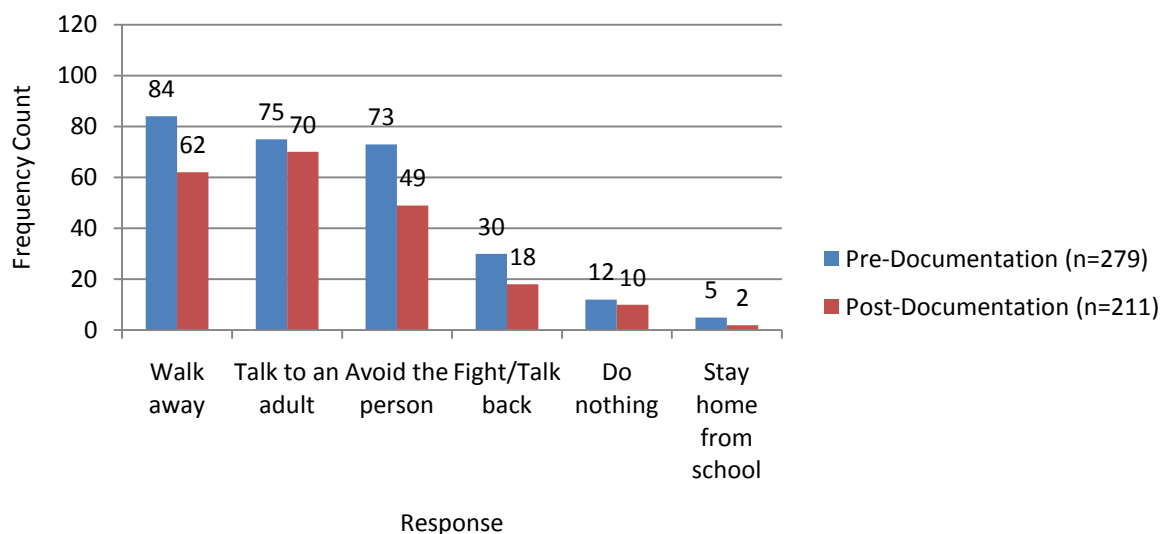


Figure 13. Student Survey Results for Pre-Documentation and Post-Documentation of Question Two (n=490)

Each possible response went down from pre-documentation to post-documentation. The largest decrease in response was the number of students that would stay home from school, with a decrease of three students (60%); however, this is the smallest frequency response. Fighting/Talking back also decreased by 40% (n=12); however, this was also a smaller frequency response. Two of the largest frequency response, walking away and avoiding the person decreased at a noteworthy rate, 26% (n=22) and 32.8% (n=24) respectively.

In question three, the students were asked to place a check in the box that best described their response after witnessing someone being bullied. After tell an adult (34%, n=71), talk to

the victim (22%, n=46) was the next most commonly checked box. Talk to the bully (14%, n=28), fight back for the victim (12%, n=25), walk away (7%, n=15) and tell your friends (7%, n=15) were ranked close in checked responses with do/nothing (2%, n=5) and laugh along (0%, n=1) not being desirable responses. Figure 14 shows the results from pre-documentation compared to the post-documentation results.

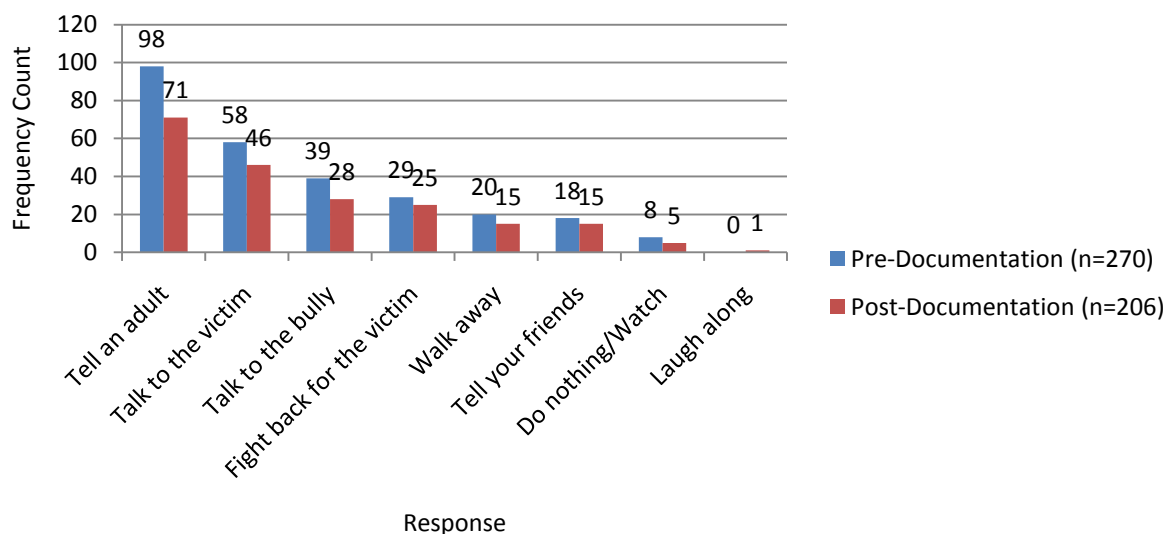


Figure 14. Student Survey Results for Pre-Documentation and Post-Documentation of Question Three (n=476)

Each possible response went down from pre-documentation to post-documentation. The highest frequency response to this item was again tell an adult (n=71); however this response did show a decrease of 27.5% (n=27). Talking to the victim (n=46) and the bully (n=28) also showed a decrease in frequency with 21% (n=12) and 28% (n=11) respectively. The only response to increase in frequency was to laugh along with the bully which in pre-documentation had no response and had one response in the post-documentation.

In the fourth question, students were asked to circle how safe they felt at school with the choices being *never*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *always*. Well over half of the students (n=80%)

agreed that they often or always felt safe at school with only (n=20%) feeling safe never or sometimes. Figure 10 shows the results from pre-documentation compared to Figure 15, showing post-documentation results.

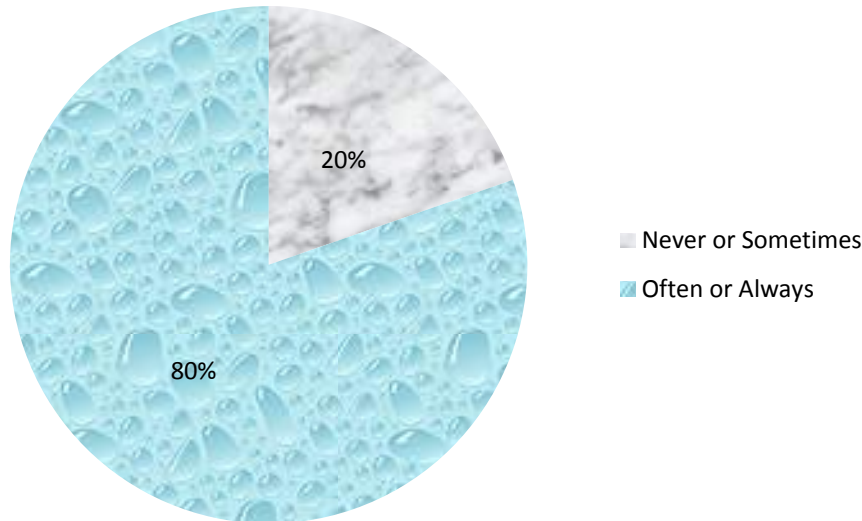


Figure 10. Pre-Documentation: Student Survey Results for Question Four (n=119)

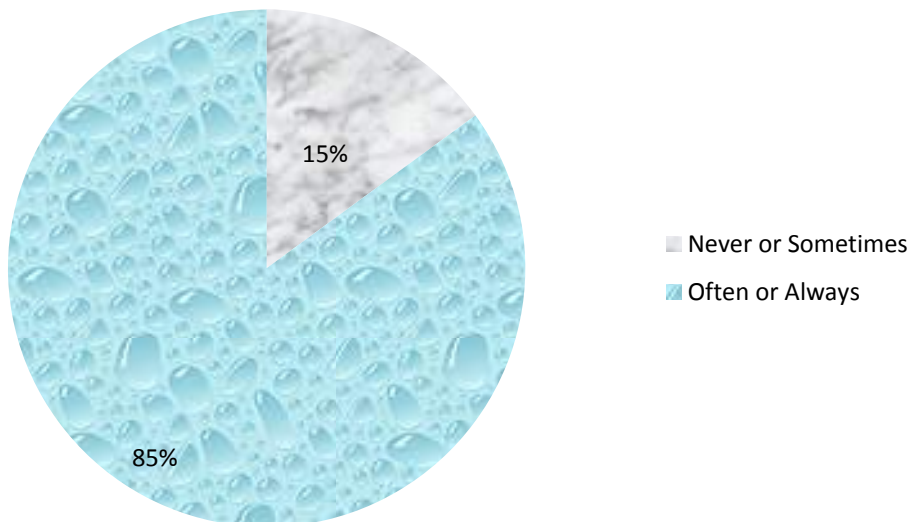


Figure 15. Post Documentation: Student Survey Results for Question Four (n=119)

The percentage of students who circled that they often or always felt safe at school in pre-documentation (n=80%) increased in post-documentation (n=85%). As a result, the percentage

of students who circled that they never or sometimes felt safe at school in pre-documentation (n=20%) decreased in post-documentation (n=15%).

Student Map Survey.

In student map survey, students were asked to place a tally marks in each of the locations where they had observed bullying behaviors during the last school year. They were instructed to place one tally for each of the bullying incidents they had observed. Students could place tally marks in classrooms, cafeteria, hallways, gym/locker room, and bathrooms. As seen in Figure 16, of the 566 bullying behaviors recorded, 31% (n=175) were observed in the gym/locker room. The hallway accounted for 18% (n=103) of the observed behaviors, and 25% (n=142) were observed inside classrooms. The cafeteria had the second highest frequency with 26% (n=144) of bullying incidents occurring there. Figure 11 shows the results from pre-documentation for comparison to Figure 16, showing post-documentation results.

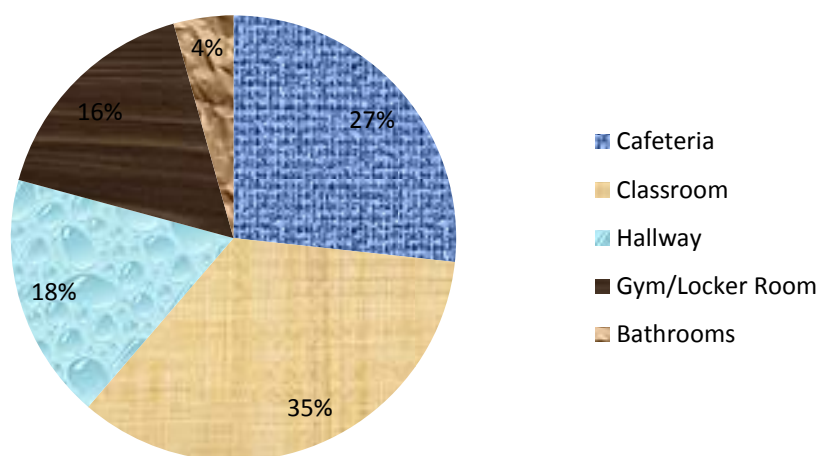


Figure 11. Pre-Documentation: Student Map Survey Results (n=760)

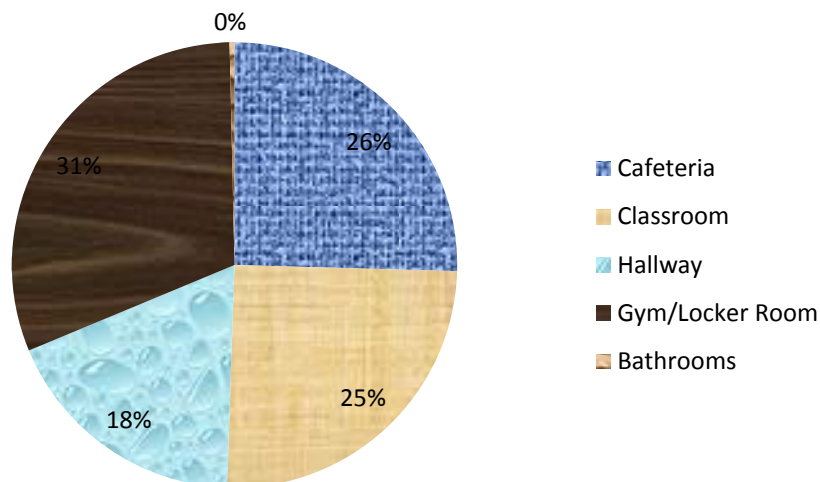


Figure 16. Post-Documentation: Student Map Survey Results (n=566)

The frequency of bullying behaviors marked in the classroom in pre-documentation (n=35%) decreased in post-documentation (n=25%). In contrast, the frequency of bullying behaviors marked in the gym/locker room (n=16%) increased in post-documentation (n=31%). Overall, there was a decrease of 25% (n=194) in the total number of reported bullying incidents on the Student Map Survey.

Summary

During the post-intervention period, the teacher researchers observed that more students felt safe at school than before they implemented the intervention strategies. After compiling the Student Survey results, the teacher researchers recorded that 85% of students marked *often* or *always* when asked if they felt safe at school (Figure 15). This was an increase because during pre-documentation only 80% of students marked *often* or *always* when asked if they felt safe at school (Figure 10). The post-documentation also shows that more students understood the definitions of bullying after the inventions were implemented (Figure 12). The Student Survey (Figure 13) also showed that students knew how to handle different bullying behaviors after

working through the different interventions that the teacher researchers incorporated into their classrooms.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions.

The results of the student surveys demonstrated some interesting changes. When examining the behaviors that are perceived as bullying, in *Figure 12*, students showed an increase in frequency in the behaviors that were non-bullying behaviors and decreased the behaviors that were bullying behaviors. We attribute the increase in frequency for non-bullying behaviors to an overall understanding of bullying being small actions that affect others. However, it is unclear why the bullying behaviors perceived as bullying behaviors decreased. We noticed a notable change in students' increased understanding of bullying behaviors that were perceived as bullying behaviors, (for example "dirty looks", "gossiping", and "leaving people out").

In *Figure 13*, we also noticed a decrease in the behaviors related to how they would handle bullying situations. The largest decreases were related to "avoiding the person" and "walking away". The data also shows a decrease in "doing nothing" and "staying home from school". The decrease in these categories represents students moving away from passive avoidance actions.

Examining the data from *Figure 14*, we noticed a significant decrease in the actions they would take against bullying or after bullying has occurred. One of the possible reasons for this decrease could be that we spent the majority of the time discussing the definition for bullying and actions that are considered bullying and less time focusing on the actions to take after bullying has occurred.

In *Figure 15*, we were ecstatic when we noticed a decrease in the number of students that feel safe “sometimes” or “always” at school. This decrease could be related to students’ feeling more confident in making positive choices and speaking with teachers about these situations. The 5% decrease could be attributed to all aspects of this research project.

We noticed a notable change in where bullying behaviors occurred in *Figure 16*. The data demonstrates a shift from bullying behaviors from the classroom to the locker rooms. One of the possible reasons for this shift could be that one-third of the students in the locker room were not participating in these interventions. Another possible reason for this decrease is students understanding how closely the teacher researchers are watching for these bullying behaviors. Overall, the data still demonstrates that students are more likely to be involved with bullying behaviors during unstructured times.

Recommendations.

We would like to continue these interventions with a few modifications. We feel that having the students create the common definition worked really well. It gave them a sense of responsibility and gave them the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and opinions with the other students. It also helped them clarify previous assumptions about bullying behaviors. The bullying stories also produced a very positive response from the students. They enjoyed pointing out the different types of characters in the book and discussing the situations presented after reading. It gave them solid examples of bullying situations that they may have experienced in the past. One thing that we would change is to add more discussion about possible reactions to bullying situations. Our third intervention, bullying skits, produced an even more positive response from the students. They took a lot of pride in portraying the different character roles to

really represent the feelings of those characters. This again helped the students to have a visual of different bullying situations instead of hypothetical ones.

If this project were to be completed again we would change our surveying process. The students did not seem to take the same care in responding to our post-surveys as our pre-surveys. We also felt like our questions were slightly too open-ended for this age group. The possible responses seemed overwhelming for them. We would also be more specific in our day-to-day documentation. It was difficult to reflect on our results with less detailed notes. We feel that possibly adding some sort of writing component, such as journaling, would help us to see a more specific increase or decrease in response to our interventions. It would also help to see specifically which interventions the students responded to more than others.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

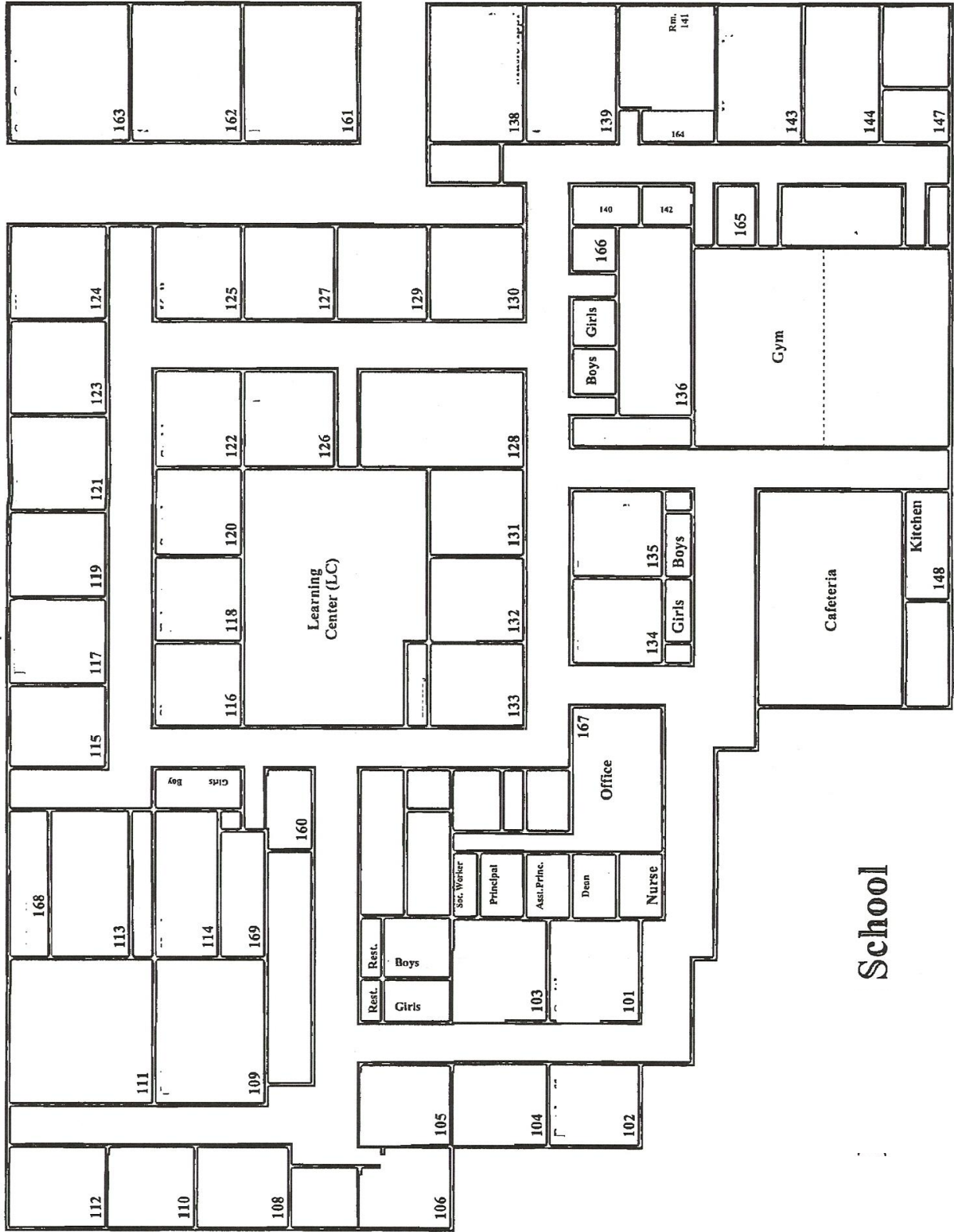
Faculty Survey**Question 1:**

Directions: Check the box next to each action that you consider bullying.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kicking/Hitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking during class | <input type="checkbox"/> Calling people names |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving people out | <input type="checkbox"/> Gossiping | <input type="checkbox"/> Dirty Looks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arguing with a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Teasing | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving a wrong answer |

Question 2:

Directions: Using the map on the back of this paper, place a tally mark in each area you have witnessed bullying at Parkland in the last year. Make sure to put a tally mark for each time you have witnessed bullying in the last year. For example: If you have seen bullying in front of a particular classroom twice, you would place two tally marks on the map in that spot.



Appendix B: Parent Survey

Parent Survey**Question 1:**

Directions: Check the box next to each action that you consider bullying.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kicking/Hitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking during class | <input type="checkbox"/> Calling people names |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving people out | <input type="checkbox"/> Gossiping | <input type="checkbox"/> Dirty Looks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arguing with a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Teasing | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving a wrong answer |

Question 2:

Directions: Check the box next to each response you **would like your student to have after being bullied by someone.**

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fight/Talk back | <input type="checkbox"/> Walk away | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to an adult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid the person | <input type="checkbox"/> Do nothing | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay home from school |

Question 3:

Directions: Check the box next to each response you would **like your student to have after witnessing someone else being bullied.**

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fight back for the victim | <input type="checkbox"/> Do nothing/Watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Tell an adult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walk away | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to the bully | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to the victim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laugh along | <input type="checkbox"/> Tell your friends | |

Question 4:

Directions: Please circle your answer.

How often do you feel your child is safe at school?

Never-----Sometimes-----Often-----Always

Appendix C: Student Survey

Student Survey**Question 1:**

Directions: Check the box next to each action that you consider bullying.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kicking/Hitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking during class | <input type="checkbox"/> Calling people names |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving people out | <input type="checkbox"/> Gossiping | <input type="checkbox"/> Dirty Looks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arguing with a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Teasing | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving a wrong answer |

Question 2:

Directions: Check the box next to each response you have had **after being bullied by someone**.

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fight/Talk back | <input type="checkbox"/> Walk away | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to an adult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid the person | <input type="checkbox"/> Do nothing | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay home from school |

Question 3:

Directions: Check the box next to each response you have had **after witnessing someone else being bullied**.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fight back for the victim | <input type="checkbox"/> Do nothing/Watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Tell an adult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walk away | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to the bully | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to the victim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laugh along | <input type="checkbox"/> Tell your friends | |

Question 4:

Directions: Please circle your answer.

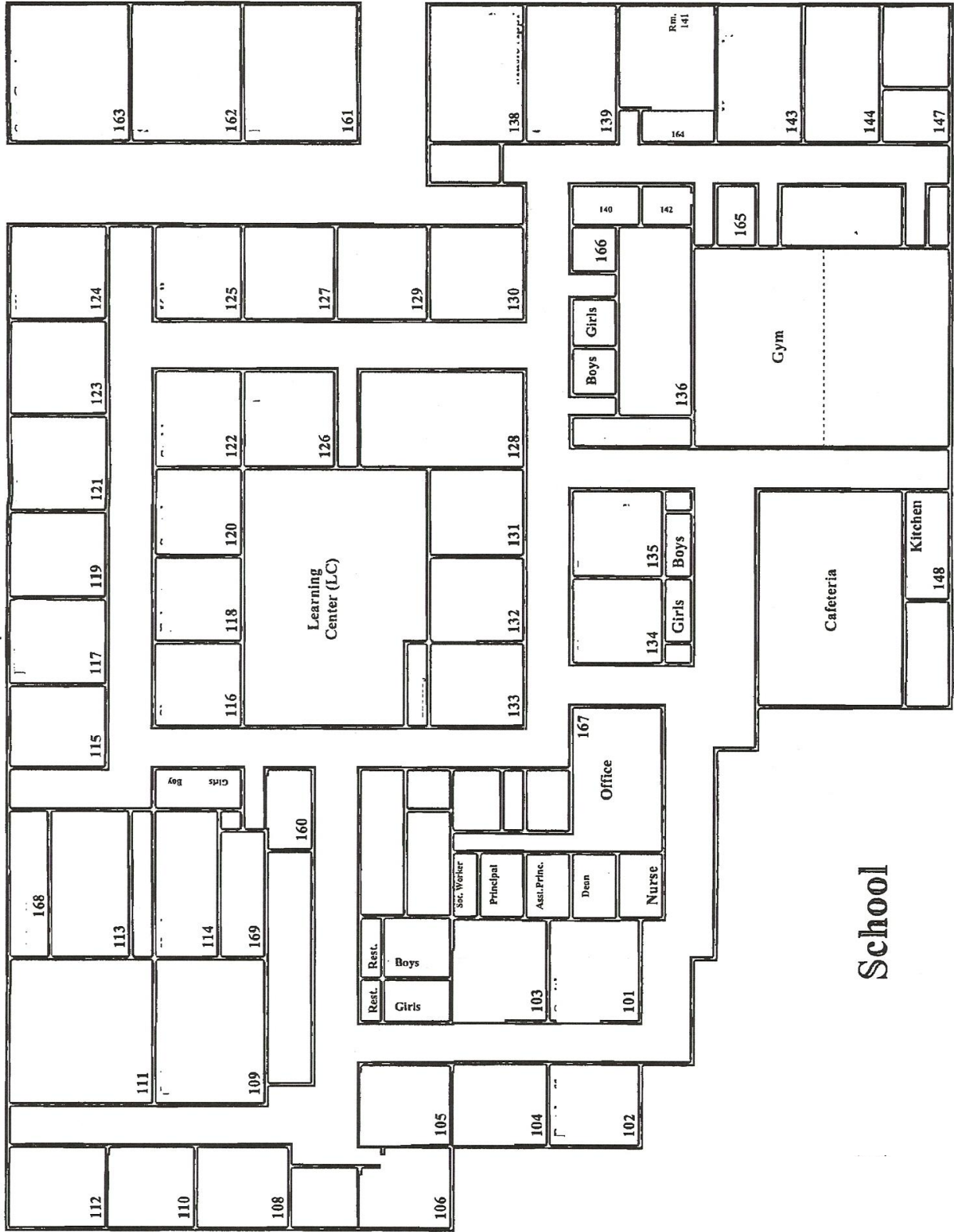
How often do you feel safe at school?

Never-----Sometimes-----Often-----Always

Appendix D: Student Map Survey

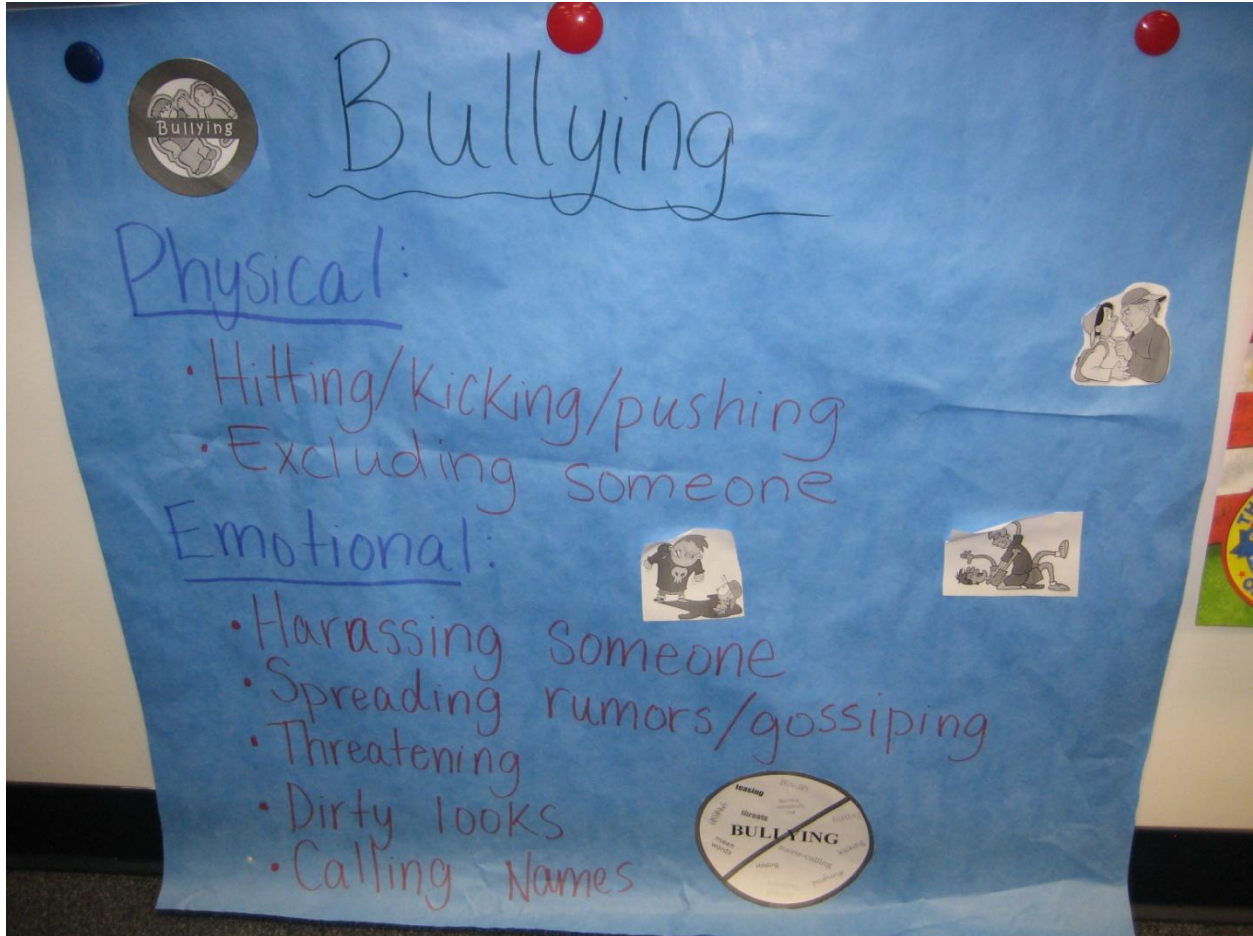
Student Map Survey

Directions: Using the map of your old school on the back of this paper, place a tally mark in each area that you witnessed bullying or been bullied. Make sure to put a tally mark for each time you witnessed bullying or been bullied. For example: If you were bullied once in one room and you have seen someone else bullied once in that room, you would place two tally marks on the map in the locker room.



School

Appendix E: Bullying Definition Poster



Appendix F: Bullying Pledge

Bullying

Rules I choose to live by.

I am going to try my best to:

- Think before I act.
- Be nice to those around me.
- Keep my hands to myself.
- Include everyone when I can.
- Respect others opinions even if I disagree.
- Take time to think and calm down when speaking with some I disagree with.
- Not spread rumors, gossip, or call names.
- Tell an adult if I hear threats immediately.
- Not give hurtful looks to others.
- Keep my thoughts to myself if they are hurtful to others.

This is the pledge I make to put a stop to bullying.

My signature

My Guardian's/Parent's signature

Appendix G: Bullying Books Bibliography

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Appendix H: Bullying Play: Scrabble

1**SCRABBLE®****A PLAY FOR STICK PUPPETS**

By Barbara Roy

AUDIENCE: Appropriate for elementary school students.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS NEEDED:

Puppets: Download a print copy of each member of the Club Crew from PACER.org/bullying/bpaw/schoolsab.asp. Cut out each member of the cast and attach to a craft (Popsicle) stick.

Letters: Print out block alphabet letters on 3x3 cardstock.

Stage/Theater: Create a stage by turning a large table on its side. Students can draw and color a setting for the front of the table. The setting could include the name of the play or a scene. Actors hide behind the table, and the puppets appear over the edge.

PURPOSE: The role play is an interactive method designed to creatively engage elementary school children to learn options for handling bullying situations.

GOAL: Children learn what to do when they see bullying or are bullied.

CAST: Mrs. Bridge, Carmen, Chandra, Molly, Sally, Shannon, Brad, Jay, Matt, Mickey, Nick, and Pip.

THE PLAY

(The crew is in the classroom.)

MRS. BRIDGE: Good morning, Crew!

CREW: Hey, Mrs. B!! Good Morning! Hi!! What's up for today??

MRS. B: Today we are going to solve a puzzle by playing the game Scrabble®.

MATT: Huh? Say what???

PIP: SQUEAK??? *(meaning, "what's Scrabble®?")*

MRS. B: Scrabble®. It's a word game.

CHANDRA: I know that game! Everyone gets some letters, and you try to make words out of them.

MRS. B: That's right. I'm going to give you some letters, and you see what sort of words you can find using them.

MATT: And the winner is whoever makes the most words!! That will be me!! Super Matt!!

(The Matt puppet "flies" around.)

MRS. B: Well, not exactly, Matt. In this version of the game, everyone can win, if you figure out the words correctly.

BRAD: What kind of game is that? Games have to have winners and losers . . . like baseball . . . which I rock at, by the way!!

SHANNON: *(yawns)* Let's start, OK? I'm falling to sleep here.

CARMEN: I think it sounds like fun! Let's do it!!

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MRS. B: I will get the letters.

BRAD: (*whispers to MATT and SHANNON*) You guys can be my posse, and the three of us can rule in this silly

game!! Grab all the letters you can! (*MATT and SHANNON agree.*)

MRS. B: Here are your letters, Crew. Remember EVERYONE can win this game.

Now everyone take a letter. Get ready, get set . . . (*But before she can say “go”—MATT, BRAD, and SHANNON*

grab the most of the letters and retreat to the far side of the stage.)

CHANDRA: Hey! You guys took more than your share of the letters . . . come back here!

MATT: No way!! We’re going to win this game!

SHANNON: Yeah. You still got a few letters. (*laughs*)

BRAD: Just buzz off and work with the letters you have.

MATT: Make some teeny tiny words! While we make the big winning words over here! Super Matt strikes again!!

(*The other crew members are on the far side of the stage, they look at their few letters—they hold them up . . .*

all are vowels. Meanwhile, on the other side of the stage ---)

SHANNON: OK. Here’s a good word-FSSR. That spells “fi sher”.

MOLLY: Shannon, that doesn’t spell “fi sher”.

JAY: That doesn’t spell anything.

NICK: It’s just sounds . . . fssssrrrr

MICKEY: It sounds like a balloon running out of air . . . fssssrrr.

BRAD: Well, there must be some good words here in all these letters. How about this one --- GNS.

JAY: What does that spell?

BRAD: It doesn’t spell anything exactly. It’s an abbreviation for Great! No School . . . GNS!!

ALL: (*Laugh at Brad . . .*)

BRAD: Shut up, losers!

SALLY: You know what the problem is? You guys don’t have any vowels. That’s the trouble.

MOLLY: That’s right. You can’t make words without vowels. Right, Mrs. B?

MRS. B: I’m afraid that’s right, Molly.

CHANDRA: And, look. We have only vowels on this side.

MICKEY: We better team up and work together!

MRS. B: Great point, Mickey! And here’s another clue. If you put all your letters together correctly, it will spell

out one very important sentence. Can you solve the puzzle?

MATT: I got a better idea. How about you guys just give us your vowels.

JAY: No way, Matt. Let’s do this by working together . . . the whole crew.

SALLY: I’m sure it will be easier that way, too. Sharing is the best way.

BRAD: I don’t know . . .

(*But, the two sides of the stage are moving to the middle.*)

NICK: Look...if we use your letters and this “I” from our side, we can make S-I-N-G. Sing.

BRAD: OK.

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SHANNON: And, we can put these together and make H-U-R-F-S . . . hurfs?

MATT: That's it! HURFS SING!! That's the answer!!

MICKEY: What's a hurf???

CARMEN: No. That's not it.

MATT: See? This isn't working? Just hand over your letters and let Super Matt do this!!

NICK: No, let's not give up. I think I see a word . . . F-U-N. Fun.

BRAD: Are we on the right track, Mrs. B?

MRS. B: You are, Crew. Fun is one of the words.

JAY: Here's I and S . . .

MICKEY: Is!!

CHANDRA: Blank .IS FUN . . . what letters are left?

MOLLY: H S G N R and I

SALLY: S-H-R-I-N-G . . . shring?

CARMEN: Shring is fun? Are you sure there aren't any more letters?

SHANNON: Everybody look around. See if we dropped any letters.

(PIP pops up carrying the letter A.)

MICKEY: Pip!!

PIP: Squeak? Squeak?

ALL: (laugh)

CHANDRA: I see, not "shring" but . . . S-H-A-R-I-N-G

NICK: Sharing is fun!!

MATT: Is that it, Teach?

MRS. B: That's it, Crew!! You did it by working together and sharing your letters and your brains!! Wasn't it easier

when everybody cooperated?

PIP: Squeak!!

BRAD: No, Pip, you really weren't much help this time!! *(All laugh.)*

ALL:

Playing Scrabble® helped us see

That "I" is not as good as "WE."

The Crew will show you when you're done,

Everyone knows that SHARING IS FUN.

THE END

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POST PLAY ACTIVITY:

Play Scrabble® like the crew! Decode these sentences.

FERCEESDIFN REA OCOL (Differences are cool.)

ULYNGILB RTSUH (Bullying hurts.)

SENSDIKN SI TNTPROAMI (Kindness is important.)

POST PLAY DISCUSSION: Students can benefit from group discussion about the how the bullying scenario was handled

in the play and by brainstorming other methods to handle the situation. Questions for the group could include:

- What was the bullying scenario in the play?
- Who was involved in intervening in the situation? What did they do?
- What are other options for handling the situation?

In discussing options, it is important to note that students often will decide on “direct confrontation,” such as telling the person

bullying “to stop.” This can be effective, but for many students it is the most difficult method to implement. Encourage students

to reflect on indirect options—such as asking the other student to play or telling them “that no one deserves to be bullied.”

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awareness and teaches effective ways to respond to bullying. Visit PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org.

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Appendix I: Bullying Play: Masks

MASKS**A PLAY FOR STICK PUPPETS**

By Barbara Roy

AUDIENCE: Appropriate for elementary school students.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS NEEDED:

Puppets: Download a print copy of each member of the Club Crew from PACER.org/bullying/bpaw/schoolsab.asp. Cut out each member of the cast and attach to a craft (Popsicle) stick.

Masks: Download the “Masks” file from PACER.org/bullying/bpaw/schoolsab.asp; print on cardstock. Place tape or glue on the back so that the mask will stick to the puppet.

Stage/Theater: Create a stage by turning a large table on its side. Students can draw and color a setting for the front of the table. The setting could include the name of the play or a scene. Actors hide behind the table, and the puppets appear over the edge.

PURPOSE: The role play is an interactive method designed to creatively engage elementary school children to learn options for handling bullying situations.

GOAL: Children learn what to do when they see bullying or are bullied.

CAST: Mrs. Bridge, Carmen, Chandra, Molly, Sally, Shannon, Brad, Jay, Matt, Mickey, Nick, and Pip.

THE PLAY

(The crew is in the classroom)

SHANNON: *(raises her hand and calls)* Mrs. Bridge? *(louder)* Mrs. BRIDGE???? *(louder yet...insistent)* MRS. BRIDGE!!!!!!!

CHANDRA: Gee whiz, Shannon! Pipe down. Can't you see Mrs. Bridge is busy feeding Pip?

SHANNON: *(angry)* Be quiet, four eyes!! Nobody is talking to you!

SALLY: So Chandra wears glasses, Shannon. Big deal. It's not cool to call her a name like that just because you are angry and impatient.

SHANNON: Right! Like I am going to listen to someone like you! You can't even walk! Am I right, Molly?

MOLLY: *(shyly)* Hey, everybody. Let's not fight, please.

MATT: I think Shannon is right. Chandra's got bug eyes and her brother's nothing but a dummy!! STUPID!! BUG EYES!!

(Now the whole class erupts into a loud argument. Some support Shannon and some support Chandra.)

MRS. BRIDGE: Class! Stop it this minute!! This isn't like you at all!! You know it's not cool to call people names. *(thinks)* Hmmmm. I have an idea. Here—everybody put these on.

(All puppets, including Pip, duck down and come up wearing masks.)

BRAD: Yo? Mrs. Bridge? What's with the masks? It's not even Halloween. What's with the disguises?

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MICKEY: I think Halloween ROCKS!!

CARMEN: You got that right! This year for Halloween, I got this HUGE, GIANT bag of goodies and . . .

(The whole crew chimes in with their own Halloween stories.)

MRS. BRIDGE: *(regains order)* Quiet, quiet . . . I know it's not Halloween. We're playing a message game. Here's how

it goes: First, everybody look around you. Look at the crew member next to you.

JAY: Hey!! Everybody's wearing a mask. Even Pip!! *(Everyone laughs.)*

PIP: *squeak, squeak*

MRS. BRIDGE: That's right, and we all look pretty much the same. Now, everybody act like this: hands down in front

of you, feet together, and look straight ahead. *(Everybody does this.)* Good. Now, everybody talk like a robot and say, "I like pizza."

ALL: *(robotic voice)* I like pizza.

MRS. BRIDGE: Now, use the same voice and say, "I like dogs."

ALL: *(robotic voice again)* I like dogs.

PIP: Squeak! *(in protest)*

MRS. BRIDGE: *(laughs)* OK, Pip, I hear you!! Robots, all say, "I like hamsters."

ALL: *(robotic voice)* I like hamsters.

MICKEY: This is boring.

MATT: Yeah. This could get old really fast.

PIP: Squeaks! *(in agreement)*

MOLLY: Mickey's right! So is Pip!! *(All laugh in agreement and chime in that it is boring.)*

MRS. BRIDGE: Do you see, Crew? If we all looked and stood and sounded exactly the same, if nobody was any

different from anyone else, what would the world be like?

SHANNON: Not much fun.

MATT: Man. That is true. Me, I'd be sound asleep. *(snores)*

ALL: *(laugh at Matt)*

MRS. BRIDGE: That's right. Remember—differences are cool. Everybody's different in some way and that's a great

thing. So, let's be really careful from now on to remember that and not call each other names.

MOLLY: Names hurt people's feelings.

SALLY: Names can make you to lose a good friend.

SHANNON: I'm sorry, Chandra and Sally. I hope we can get along.

MATT: I'm sorry, too.

CHANDRA: Hey, it's OK. We're all still part of the Crew, right? And differences are cool!

ALL: Right!!

JAY: Mrs. Bridge?

MRS. BRIDGE: Yes, Jay?

JAY: Can we all decorate our own masks in a different way?

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MRS. BRIDGE: That’s a great idea!! Let’s all make our own special and different masks.

PIP: Squeak!

MRS. BRIDGE: Yes, of course, you too, Pip!!

ALL: *(laugh)*

MRS. BRIDGE: *(or everyone)*

Here’s a special thing for all to do,

Make a mask that is just about you.

Remember at home or at the school,

Crew Kids say, “Differences are cool!”

THE END

POST PLAY ACTIVITY: Download the “student mask” file from PACER.org/bullying/bpaw/scripts.asp. Invite each student to create his or her own special and unique masks.

-OR Invite

each student to choose his or her favorite Club Crew member, print a copy from

PACER.org/bullying/bpaw/

scripts.asp, and write something special about themselves or the Club member

POST PLAY DISCUSSION: Students can benefit from group discussion about the how the bullying scenario was handled

in the play and by brainstorming other methods to handle the situation. Questions for the group could include:

- What was the bullying scenario in the play?
- Who was involved in intervening in the situation? What did they do?
- What are other options for handling the situation?

In discussing options, it is important to note that students often will decide on “direct confrontation,” such as telling the person

bullying “to stop.” This can be effective, but for many students, it is the most difficult method to implement. Encourage

students to reflect on indirect options—such as asking the other student to play or telling them “that no one deserves to be bullied.”

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Appendix J: Bullying Situations

A boy raises his hand in class to answer a question. He is told by the teacher that the answer is incorrect.

A girl is walking through the hallway when she trips over a book in front of someone's locker.

A boy is walking past another student's desk, when they smile and stick their foot out. The boy trips and falls.

A girl raises her hand in class to answer a question. Another student laughs when the teacher tells her that it is not the correct answer.

Two students are playing basketball in P.E. class. They both jump up to try and rebound a basketball, when they collide and fall.

Two students are playing basketball in P.E. class. A boy from one team throws the basketball at the back of a boy from the other teams head when he isn't looking.