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Teachers' Perceptions of Kindness at School

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The aim of this research was to examine kindergarten to 12th grade teachers' (N = 257) perceptions of school kindness. Teachers were asked to define kindness, provide examples of kindness they had done and received, identify key agents of kindness, and rate the quality of kind acts within their schools. Findings indicate that teachers define and enact kindness in comparable ways, that most teachers believe they have a strong to moderate influence on shaping students' kindness, and that teachers' perceptions of school kindness varies as a function of the grade they taught.

Keywords: kindness, teacher perceptions, social and emotional learning, student-teacher relationships

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Introduction

Prosocial behaviour is important within school contexts, especially as schools are settings where frequent interpersonal interactions take place among individuals from diverse socioeconomic, social, and ethnic backgrounds and where interpersonal conflict can be prevalent (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2000). The extent to which educational stakeholders engage in prosocial behavior (defined as helping, sharing, comforting, and cooperating; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006; Hay, 1994) can undergird unifying interactions among students, faculty, staff, and the larger school community. The importance a school places on prosocial behavior is typically evidenced by its vision or mission statement - documents declaring the importance of, and expectations for, school-based prosociality.

To uphold these vision and mission statements, efforts are made in schools to promote kindness in and among students; additionally, teachers are increasingly expected to foster students' social and emotional

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competencies alongside the development of students' intellectual development and corresponding academic achievement (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Caprara, Barbanelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Policies are in place to support schools in their pursuit of fostering students' prosocial behavior. As an example of such policy, British Columbia's Ministry of Education, a governing body considered by many to be a vanguard at the forefront of initiatives that see social and emotional learning (SEL) integrated into classrooms at all grade levels, mandates that teachers are to foster socially responsible behaviour in students, including developing skills and dispositions that enhance and enrich the classroom and school community. More explicitly, this governing body expects students to be "...welcoming, friendly, kind, and helpful." (BC Ministry of Education, 2015, p.2).

Policies of this nature hold professional implications for teachers who find their purview of responsibility broadened from a unique focus on academics to developing expertise and instructional competency in bolstering students' social and emotional skills (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). This shift in, or broadening of, the teacher's role is, in part, a response to not only the recognition that students are increasingly arriving to school ill-equipped to navigate the social and emotional demands required for optimal functioning and learning, but also in response to teachers being identified as agents who are able to facilitate the social and emotional development of students (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Jones & Bouffard, 2012: Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, & Cox, 2000; Spivak & Farran, 2012). For some students, especially those living in fast-paced environments with little parental support or community engagement, teachers can often be the primary mechanism, and classrooms the primary context, through which students are socially and emotionally prepared for life's challenges (Downey, 2008).

Jennings and Greenberg (2009), in their examination of the role teachers play in creating prosocial classrooms, have called into question the extent to which teachers themselves possess social and emotional competencies (SEC) and are afforded opportunities to develop such SEL skills. These authors posit that "teachers with higher SEC will implement social and emotional curriculum more effectively because they are outstanding role models of desired social and emotional behavior" (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009, p. 493).

Teachers as Prosocial Behavioral Models

As teachers are uniquely positioned to model prosocial behaviour for students (Frey & Kaiser, 2012; Graham, Phelps, Maddison, & Fitzgerald, 2011; Murray & Greenberg, 2000), such as kindness, it is important to understand both how teachers conceptualize kindness within their professional context and how they enact kindness as part of their professional duties. The extent to which teachers demonstrate prosocial behavior in schools impacts the quality of teacher-student relationships (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; 2006; Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006). Hamre and Pianta (2006) argue that there exist key teacher behaviours that contribute to building close student-teacher bonds. These include: 1) explicitly teaching students about social and emotional development (e.g., building students' emotional vocabulary); 2) participating in frequent social conversations with students (e.g., inquiring about life outside of the classroom; 3) increasing teacher accessibility (e.g., being available to students); 4) valuing students' perspectives and ideas (e.g.,

acknowledging students' ideas during discussions); and 5) the use of behavior management strategies that convey clear expectations for behaviour and support of students (e.g., being fair when responding to student misbehavior). In short, in the bulk of their interactions with students, teachers have opportunities to model prosocial behaviour, especially kindness.

Student-teacher relationships have potentially significant and far-reaching implications for students' school adjustment (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013) as they can influence students': 1) sense of belonging and community (Hawkins & Catalano, 1992); 2) motivation and school engagement (Mulford, 2007; Wentzel, 1998) which, in turn, impact students' intellectual development and learning/achievement (Jones et al., 2013); and 3) development of SEC, including students' prosocial skills and behaviours (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Hirschi, 1969; Redding & Walberg, 2015). The development of students' SEL has long-term implications for later adjustment as evidenced by recent research attesting to the importance of early childhood SEC on later adolescent and adult mental health, substance misuse, and delinquency (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015).

Though students' perceptions of school kindness have been examined (Binfet, in press; Binfet & Gaertner, 2015), a review of the extant psychological and educational literature revealed no studies investigating teachers' perceptions of school kindness. The central objective of this research was to understand and identify how teachers define kindness and how teachers themselves are kind at school. Understanding how teachers think about and enact kindness helps elucidate not only how teachers contribute to upholding a school's vision or mission statement around the promotion of students' prosocial behaviour, but also the different ways teachers model prosocial behaviour for students.

Researching Teacher Perceptions

Though teachers' perceptions of kindness have not previously been studied, the perceptions of teachers have been investigated across a variety of school-related topics, including their perceptions of student mental health (Graham, Phelps, Maddison, & Fitzgerald, 2011), of gender differences and shyness in students (Akseer, Bosacki, Rose-Krasnor, & Coplan, 2014), of their fellow teachers bullying students (Zerillo & Osterman, 2011), and of school climate (Bear, Yang, Pell, & Gaskins, 2014). Thematically aligned with the present study, Buchanan and colleagues (2009) surveyed 263 teachers from 21 elementary and seven middle schools in the Western U.S. on their perceptions of SEL and found that teachers uniformly (99%) acknowledged that SEL is important for students' academic and personal development. Furthermore, almost 70% of participants agreed that SEL should be taught in the classroom. Participants also acknowledged that responsibility for implementing SEL curricula was shared across all faculty members (including administrators) but that the bulk of the responsibility lay in the professional responsibilities of classroom teachers.

Though no empirical work investigating teachers' perceptions of kindness could be found, students' perceptions of prosocial behavior in teachers has however been studied and informs the present investigation. In her seminal examination of perceived pedagogical caring, Wentzel (1997) initially surveyed 375 U.S. middle school students and subsequently followed 248 students (125 boys, 123 girls) from sixth through

eighth grade, administering a scale that assessed students' perceptions of their teachers as caring agents (e.g., '*My teacher really cares about me*,' '*My teacher cares about how much I learn*'). Building on the work of Noddings (1992), one aim of this research was to explore how middle school students characterize caring and supportive teachers. The results revealed that caring teachers were described as using democratic instructional approaches, having expectations for student behaviour, providing constructive feedback, and modeling a caring attitude toward their own work. One component of this study was to examine how students' perceptions of caring teachers related to their academic achievement and findings from this study lend support for the notion that underlying or driving student academic engagement and achievement are supportive student-teacher relationships.

In another study exploring adolescents' perceptions of their interactions with teachers, McHugh, Galletta-Horner, Colditz and LeBaron-Wallace (2013) examined findings from 13 focus groups involving 14 to 20 year-olds. The overarching aim of this study was to identify adolescents' perceptions of their relationships with school-based adults. Participants were recruited from after-school and community programs in three urban U.S. cities with an average of six participants per focus group. Findings from this study revealed that students wanted relationships with teachers in which students ". . . felt known, cared for, and understood . . ." (p. 19). Further, students saw teachers' 'bridging' behaviours, behaviours in which teachers made intentional efforts to connect with and engage students, as key to positive student-teacher relationships.

Perspectives/Theoretical Framework

The study of kindness is theoretically grounded in SEL (Goleman, 1995; Schonert-Reichl & Weissberg, 2014; Zins & Elias, 2006; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). The field of SEL provides a theoretical framework for the current investigation given that kindness is situated within several, if not all, of the cognitive, affective, and behavioural competencies comprising SEL (i.e., relationship skills, social awareness, self-management, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making; CASEL, 2015).

Building upon the definition of prosocial behaviour proffered by Eisenberg and colleagues (2006), it was hypothesized that teachers' definitions of kindness would reflect themes of helping, caring, and sharing. It was further anticipated that teachers' examples of kindness would reflect these same themes and be comprised of prosocial acts that strengthened their existing relationships within their professional communities - relationships with students and with colleagues. Given the amount of time spent in their respective classrooms, it was hypothesized that classrooms would be identified as the kindest location within schools and that the primary recipients of teachers' kindness would be students.

Method

Participants

Recruitment. This research was in compliance with both university and school district research ethics protocols. Participants were drawn from three small-to-mid size adjacent school districts situated in small western Canadian cities. Once permission was obtained to conduct research within each district, stratified

random sampling was used to identify 20% of schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels within each district. Next, surveys were prepared in individual envelopes for each classroom teacher at each of these schools and were hand delivered to each teacher's mailbox. Participants were offered a small incentive ($5.00 coffee gift card) to participate (non-contingent upon completion of the survey). Completed surveys were collected at each school site via a large envelope overseen by the school's secretary and picked up by one of the research team members.

Demographics. Participants were 257 public school teachers (69.7% female), with a mean age of 45.21 years (*SD* = 9.59; range: 24 to 70 years), who had worked an average of 16.89 years as educators (*SD* = 8.92, range: 1- 44 years). The majority of participants had either a Bachelor of Education degree (46%) or a Masters' degree (36.5%) (see Table I). The vast majority of participants were classroom teachers (84.3%), with the remaining participants self-identifying as Learning Assistance Teachers (3.9%), Librarians (1.6%), Resource Teachers (1.6%) or Other (not specified; 8.7%). Of the participants who answered the question "what grade(s) do you currently teach?", 30.9% reported that they taught early elementary grades (i.e., kindergarten to 3rd grade), 31.4% intermediate grades (i.e., grades 4-7), and 37.7% high school (grades 8-12).

Table I. Level of education of participants

Level of education	# of participants	% of participants
Some undergraduate coursework	3	1.2
Bachelor degree (other than B.Ed.)	24	9.3
Bachelor of Education	116	46
Post Baccalaureate Diploma	14	5.6
Masters' Degree (M.A., M.Ed., M.Sc.)	92	36.5
Doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D.)	1	0.4
Other	2	0.8

Measure

In alignment with previous research done by the authors to investigate students' conceptualizations of kindness at school (e.g., Binfet, in press, Binfet & Gaertner, 2015), a teacher kindness survey was developed to capture teachers' perceptions of kindness within the school context (see Appendix). This included querying teachers on their definition of kindness, examples of kindness they had done and had received, and on their insights around the quality and frequency of kindness done in their school.

Procedure

Once schools were identified, all of the teachers at each of these schools received a survey in their school mailbox inviting them to provide consent to complete the survey. Within each district, the participant

response rate was constant, with 75% of the teachers invited to be a part of the study agreeing to participate in the study.

Analyses

Conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), an inductive process that identifies themes and patterns in participant-generated data, was used to identify the prevalent themes within participants' responses. First, for each open-ended question, responses were read by two independent raters who generated global themes – general impressions of key meanings found within responses. Raters then met to compare themes and collaboratively winnow them into categories to reduce redundancy (Wolcott, 1990). Finally, working independently, raters then coded each participant's response using the winnowed coding categories. Separate coding categories were generated for participants' definitions and examples of kindness.

Results

Definitions of Kindness

When asked to define kindness, 96.3% of participants provided a 'codeable', specific response. From participants' definitions, 11 distinct themes emerged (see Table II), with 5 themes accounting for 77% of all responses: caring (25%; "Kindness is caring for the people around you and wanting good things for them", #004), perspective taking / showing empathy (15%; "Striving to understand the feelings and emotional states of others, and doing whatever they need", #071); being respectful (15%; "Kindness is showing respect to self and to others through actions that reveal acceptance of individual differences", #062), helping (11%; "Do things for someone else without being concerned about how it benefits you", #025), and encouraging (11%; "To make others feel good about themselves or their accomplishments", #063). Interrater reliability scores for kindness definition themes and kindness examples themes were strong (Landis & Koch, 1977), κs between 0.87 and 0.98, *p*s < .001.

Locations of Kindness

The most often reported main location of kindness was the classroom, with 81% of participants citing this location. Interestingly, the next most cited 'location' was 'everywhere' throughout the school (7%) (see Table III).

Examples of Kindness

Participants provided examples of kind acts they had recently done at school. From these examples, 11 distinct themes emerged (see Table IV), with 5 themes accounting for 84% of all responses: helping (30%; "Stay after school to sit and help students on course work one-on-one", #131), giving (18%; "Bought shoes for a student of mine in need", #128), caring (14%; "Pull students aside to chat with them if I get the feeling they need to talk to someone", #158), encouraging (11%; "Encouraging a student to do their best by recognizing how hard they worked on their writing assignment", #167), and acknowledging (11%; "I have given out extra 'Gotcha ('being good!') tickets", #161). Of the helping acts of kindness, six subtypes

emerged: general helping such as covering another teacher's class (38%), helping emotionally (20%), helping with lesson planning (18%), helping physically (12%), helping academically beyond regular duties (10%), helping with technology (2%). Of the acts of kindness examples involving giving, most common was giving food (63%), followed by non-food items (19%), and giving time through volunteering (18%).

Table II. Coding manual for kindness definition themes

Themes	Description/ Example
1. Conscientious	Others before self, responsible, going out of your way
2. Generous	Giving
3. Helping	Generic helping with no explanation
4. Caring	Considerate, concern for others, compassion, share love, thoughtful, interested in others
5. Encouraging	Advocating for others, supportive, saying/doing things to make things better, make others happy, improve lives
6. Perspective Taking / Empathy	Accepting, open, understanding, aware of others' feelings, treating others as equals
7. Altruistic	No reciprocation required, being sincere
8. Respectful	Golden rule, fairness, polite, manners
9. Friendly	Saying hello, smiling
10. Patience	Patient
11. Acknowledge	Acknowledging others' hard work

Table III. Locations of kindness reported

Kindness location	Frequency	%
Classroom	203	81
Everywhere	20	7
Hallway	12	5
Other	12	5
Gym / Playground	4	2

Table IV. Coding manual for kindness example themes

Themes	Description/ Example
1. Conscientious	Flexible to students' wishes and needs
2. Generous	2.1 General (e.g., covering shifts) 2.2 With technology 2.3 With lesson planning 2.4 Emotional 2.5 Academic (beyond regular teaching duties) 2.6 Physical (e.g., lift objects)
3. Helping	3.1 Food 3.2 Time (e.g., volunteering) 3.3 Objects
4. Caring	Sharing resources or materials
5. Encouraging	Thoughtful, concerned, listen to others, show interest
6. Perspective Taking / Empathy	Doing acts to say "thank you" for something done to you
7. Altruistic	Holding door open, polite, manners
8. Respectful	Advocating, complimenting, give hug, supporting
9. Friendly	Smiling, saying "hi", eye contact, friendly, recognition of hard work
10. Patience	Consider others' views, understanding, empathy, patience
11. Acknowledge	Including others

Recipients of Kindness

The most common recipients of teachers' acts of kindness were students (64%) and other teachers (31%). The remaining 5% of kind acts were directed towards principals, parent-volunteers, and other adults in the school environment.

Nearly 80% of participants reported that kindness was directed towards them at school 'pretty often' (62.6%) or 'all of the time' (18.1%), with remaining participants responding that kindness was only done to them 'sometimes' (17.7%) or 'rarely' (1.6%). Four main types of kind acts were evident, comprising 75% of the kindness directed towards the participants: some form of help (25%), some form of giving (25%), encouragement (13%), and displays of appreciation for specific acts previously carried out by the participant (12%). The majority of these kind acts were done either by students (42%) or fellow teachers (41%), with the remaining acts of kindness done by others adults within the school (e.g., parent-volunteers, principals, administrators, Educational Assistants).

Frequency of Kindness

Almost all (94%) participants reported that they were kind at school 'pretty often' (63%) or 'all the time' (31%), and almost all participants (90%) indicated that, within the scope of the entirety of their professional responsibilities, promoting kindness was either 'essential' (49%) or a 'high priority' (41%).

Influence on Students

The majority (79%) of participants indicated that they believed their influence on students' kindness was either 'strong' (44%) or 'moderate' (35%); although 20% of participants did indicate they believed they only had 'some' influence on students' kindness. When asked if they considered students to be generally kind, 94% responded in the affirmative. Participants provided examples of kindness that a student had shown recently. Although the kindness theme of "helping" dominated the examples provided (46%), giving (10%), including others (10%) and encouraging (9%) combined with helping accounted for 75% of the examples teachers provided of student kindness. Of the helping acts of kindness by students that participants provided, helping physically was most common (46%), followed by helping academically (24%), generic helping with no type specified (20%), helping emotionally (9%) and helping with technology (1%).

Effects of Grade Level

The grades that the participant taught had a significant influence on the level of influence they indicated they believed they had on students' kindness ($\chi^2(2) = 9.476$, $p = .009$), and on whether they regarded students as generally kind ($\chi^2(2) = 7.606$, $p = .020$). Teachers of early elementary grades were significantly less likely to believe that they had only little or some influence on students' kindness, rather than a moderate or strong influence (standardized z residual = -2.3), and they were significantly less likely to indicate that students were not generally kind ($z = -2.2$).

Agents of Kindness

We also asked participants to think about the adults at their school who showed the most kindness and to indicate the role of the adult who showed the most kindness. Just over half (51%) of the participants indicated that teachers were the main adult agents of kindness at their school (see Table V). Participants also provided us with examples of kindness that this main adult of agent of kindness might do. Four themes accounted for 69% of the responses: showing appreciation (23%), encouragement (21%), acknowledging (15%), and giving (10%).

Quality of Kindness

Lastly, we asked participants to rate the overall quality of the kind acts done in their school, given that some kind acts require more investment of time, materials, thought, preparation and effort than other kind acts do. The vast majority (84%) of participants rated the quality of kind acts in their school as either 'good' (46%) or 'very good' (38%). The remaining responses were nearly evenly split between 'excellent' (7%) at one end of the spectrum and 'poor or fair' (9%) at the other end of the quality spectrum.

Table V. Main adult agents of kindness

Role of adult kindness agent	Frequency	%
Teacher	128	51
Other	46	19
Educational Assistant	30	12
Principal	20	8
Counselor	11	4
Parent-Volunteer	8	3
Custodian	4	2
Librarian	2	1

Discussion

This exploratory study represents an initial step toward identifying teachers' conceptualizations of kindness and how kindness is enacted within the school context. Findings from this study hold implications for our understanding of the variety of kind acts done in schools and elucidate the role that teachers play in contributing to their school communities through their prosocial behaviour.

Understanding Teachers' Definitions of Kindness

Teachers in this study defined kindness in ways that align with Eisenberg et al.'s (2006) definition of kindness that described kindness as helping, sharing, comforting, and cooperating. In their definitions of kindness, teachers described kindness as caring for others, showing empathy, being respectful, helping, and encouraging. Increasingly, teachers are expected to shape both the intellectual and social and emotional lives of their students (Durlak et al., 2011) and how teachers understand kindness influences the expectations they hold for the students in their charge. A future study might examine how conceptualizations of kindness vary as a function of school stakeholders – that is, do teachers, administrators, students, and parents understand kindness in similar ways?

How Teachers Enact Kindness

Teachers' definitions of kindness were mirrored by the examples of kindness they described doing within their schools – that is, how they defined kindness that was brought to life in how they enacted kindness. When asked to describe kind acts they had done at school, the themes of helping (e.g., "Gave another teacher a ride home when her car was in the shop", #060), giving (e.g., "I made dinner for a low income student to take home to his family", #043), caring (e.g., "To always think of those around you at any given time and what you can do to make the life of those around better, thus a better world", #200), encouraging (e.g., "Giving a student who has poor self-esteem an important task to help them feel good", #041), and acknowledging ("Thanking my parent volunteers and fellow colleagues for helping out with the running

club", #179) were evident. In this regard, there was consistency in how teachers conceptualized and actualized kindness. Teachers' examples of kindness are in alignment with Wentzel's (1997, 1998) findings investigating pedagogical caring and lend support for the notion that teachers practice 'pedagogical kindness' – an approach to instruction that integrates academic and social-emotional support. This was evident in our study by both the prevalent themes of teachers' kind acts (i.e., helping, giving, caring, encouraging, and acknowledging) illustrated in teacher-student exchanges and by the identification of students as the primary recipients of teacher kindness.

How Influential Are Teachers?

The majority of teachers acknowledged that they had a *moderate-to-strong* influence on students' kindness, though surprisingly, 20% felt they had only *some* influence. Despite this sizeable subgroup who questioned the influence they had on student kindness, teachers in this study both overwhelmingly identified themselves as being frequently kind and also largely saw being kind an important component of their professional responsibility. These findings are in alignment with the work of Buchanan and colleagues (2009) who found parallel findings in their survey of teachers' perceptions of the importance of SEL and of teachers as key agents fostering SEL skills in students. Closer examination of the findings from this study revealed a curious discrepancy emerge that saw teachers self-identify as being frequently kind and seeing being kind as a professional responsibility, yet one fifth (20%) doubted the influence they had on students' themselves being kind.

Examining trends across grades revealed that teachers of younger grades had more favorable views of both their influence on students' kindness and on their perceptions of students as kind individuals within school. This finding is in concert with findings measuring school kindness that saw a descending trend in students' ratings of school kindness in grades 4th to 8th (Binfet, Gadermann, & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). As teacher-student relationships or bonds are known to weaken from elementary-to-middle-to-high school (Hamre & Pianta, 2001, 2006; Harter, 1996; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997), perhaps this trend is a reflection of the changing interpersonal connections found as students progress through the grades and by students having contact with multiple teachers in the upper grades. As Hamre and Pianta (2006, p. 61) note, "Relationships between teachers and students become less personal, more formal, more evaluative, and more competitive."

School personnel looking to enhance student-teacher rapport and relationships, might turn to initiatives that encourage intentionally kind acts among all school stakeholders – teachers and students alike. Certainly, an implication arising from this study is that there is consistency in how teachers define and enact kindness at school. Teachers' understanding of what it means to be kind at school likely influences their interactions with students and colleagues. Interactions between teachers and students fueled and characterized by kindness, and certainly by teachers practicing 'pedagogical kindness', serve to engender cohesion and, this cohesion, in turn, helps build healthy student-teacher relationships. As Birch and Ladd (1997, p. 75) offer:

> Children who share a close relationship with their classroom teacher may feel better able to utilize the teacher as a source of support in the school environment, and this may result in their being better able to benefit from learning activities in the classroom.

A future study might investigate what constitutes pedagogical kindness and the role it plays in fostering student-teacher rapport.

Limitations

As with all empirical undertakings, this study was not without limitations. Though participants were relatively evenly represented across the three instructional levels of early, intermediate, and high school grades, a larger sample size and the inclusion of support personnel (e.g., educational assistants) and administrators, would have provided a more comprehensive overview of adult perceptions of school kindness. As this was an exploratory study of a topic not widely examined, any claims arising from this study must be viewed as an initial step toward better understanding how teachers understand kindness in school. Inviting participants to share their views on school kindness does, in no way, guarantee that the levels and acts of kindness described by participants have, in fact, occurred. Certainly, additional research is warranted to corroborate the findings identified by this study and to identify how teachers' conceptualizations of kindness translate to their confirmed day-to-day action or behaviour. For example, it would have been interesting had students' perceptions of the teachers been included as part of the design. A future study might also examine the consistency of perceptions of multiple school stakeholders as a means of both fortifying findings and providing a more comprehensive view of school kindness.

Conclusion

This was the first study, to our knowledge, exploring teachers' conceptualizations of kindness in school. As children live in increasingly busy and fast-paced environments, the stability and duration of the contact they have with teachers, positions teachers as especially influential in the encouragement, shaping, and modeling of prosocial behaviour. Teachers' beliefs about prosocial behaviour such as kindness, as well as their enacting of kindness as part of their professional responsibility, has far-reaching implications for teacher job satisfaction, for student-teacher rapport impacting learning, and for overall school climate. Teachers' definitions and examples of kindness are perhaps best captured in the response from participant #54 who, when asked what it means to be kind, responded: "I have your back whether I know you or not."

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Appendix: Teacher Kindness Survey

Understanding Teacher Kindness Survey

1. What does it mean to be kind? (define kindness).

_____

_____.

2. If kindness happens in your school, WHERE does it happen most? (be specific)

Location: _____ (e.g., classroom, gym, hallways, etc.)

3. Are you generally kind at school? **YES / NO** (circle one)

What is an example of kindness YOU have done recently at school? (describe)

_____

_____.

Who was the recipient of your kindness? _____ (No names, e.g., student, parent-volunteer, noon-hour supervisor, teaching colleague, etc.)

4. How often is kindness done to you at school?

Not Very Often Rarely Sometimes Pretty Often All the Time

What is an example of kindness that was DONE TO YOU at school? (describe)

_____

_____. Who did this?_____ (No names here - e.g., student, teacher, administrators, parent-volunteer)

5. How often are you kind at SCHOOL? (circle one)

Not Very Often Rarely Sometimes Pretty Often All the Time

6. When you think of the adults in your school, what is the ROLE of the adult who shows the most kindness? _____ (e.g., classroom teacher, resource teacher, principal, parent-volunteer, secretary, custodian, educational assistant)

What is an example of the kindness this person might do?

_____

_____.

7. Do you consider students to be generally kind? **YES / NO** (circle one)

Give of an example that shows a student was kind recently?

_____

_____.

8. Not all kind acts are the same. Some acts involve more investment of time, materials, thought, preparation, and effort, etc. Rate the overall QUALITY of kindness at your school (circle one response on the scale)

Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent

9. How much influence do you believe you have on children's kindness?

No Little Some Moderate Strong

10. When you think of all of your professional responsibilities, how important is promoting kindness?

Not a Priority Low Priority Medium Priority High Priority Essential

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
Please follow steps on the first page