“Nobody can hurt me without my permission” – Mahatma Gandhi: How Teachers Can Prevent Bullying in the Elementary Classroom

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Description of Teaching Context

Working as a Professional Development School Intern through Penn State University, I am student teaching in a fifth grade classroom for the 2010-2011 school year. My school takes pride in the district wide mission statement, to prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education. The elementary school’s students and staff possess friendly, warmhearted attitudes in this thriving, dynamic community. The curriculum is based on a collaborative team effort designed to incorporate community service and technology in any way possible.

My classroom, self-contained during all academic periods except mathematics, consists of 21 students. In the beginning of the year, a few students who had been going to the same school together since kindergarten were having issues with bullying. I noticed students feeling excluded, teased, name called, harassed, and also experienced an issue with bullying through text messaging. By November, during Anti-Bullying Week, I felt I was able to manage the classroom and the students were building relationships that had been previously damaged. The community in our classroom was at an all-time high and my students were showing exemplary attitudes with one another. However, after a lunchroom bullying issue came to my attention, soon enough I found myself looking for resources that could help lead the way to a more unified classroom and state of mind for my students.
Wonderings

Main Wondering

After feeling hopeless about regaining the community that we once had in my classroom, I started looking for different resources and strategies I could use that would help prevent bullying in my classroom.

After a successful Anti-Bullying Week in November, I felt that my next step was having discussions and activities with my students that allowed them to share their ideas and work together as a team. When winter break came and went, a few students who had difficulty with friendships earlier in the year came back with negative attitudes towards one another and the community we had built was beginning to crumble. When it was brought to my attention that one of my students was being taunted by three other students because of the food he ate at lunch, I felt defeated. I knew something needed to change and my lack of experience directed me to ask for advice from other teachers in my building.

I combined my desire to learn more about effective strategies in preventing bullying with my desire to learn where I could find these resources and their availability to ultimately identify my main inquiry wondering: What tools or strategies do teachers use to prevent bullying in their classrooms?

Sub-wonderings

- What resources do teachers think are most effective in stopping bullying?
- How do teachers define bullying?
- Which strategies and resources/tools could teachers use in any type of school setting?
- How can teachers make students more aware of what bullying is and when they’re doing it?
- How does the way a teacher uses discipline affect students from bullying?

**Data Collection**

Before collecting my data for my inquiry I needed to decide what types of data would give me the best results in answering my main question. I knew that I wanted to form this inquiry around a teacher’s perspective instead of the students’. My main goal was to discover what strategies different grade level instructors feel work best for them and their students when trying to prevent bullying from occurring in the classroom. I felt the best way to collect this type of data was by interviewing teachers from different grade levels and possibly different schools to get a more diversified collection of data. I discovered this when I researched the best data collection strategies and found that, “asking people to report on something that’s happened to them, by observing that change has happened” makes any claim stronger (Cooper, Sanfilippo, & Urbano, 2009). I wanted to get a notion as to what teachers thought bullying was and what forms of it were presented to them in their classrooms. I hoped this would give me a better understanding of questions to ask them during interviews.

My goal was to collect data pre-interview stage to see what questions and what opinions teachers had about bullying. I then would take this data and use it to formulate questions for my survey that would give me the best understanding of what strategies teachers used, what types of discipline they performed in their classrooms, and what steps they have taken to prevent bullying and how successful it has been for them. Most importantly, I wanted to discover what resources they used and how accessible these resources would be for a teacher in any part of the world.
experiencing similar issues. In total, I used three types of data collection including a survey, observations, and interviews.

**Surveys:**

Prior to conducting my interviews with teachers, I composed a survey, which was sent to all teachers in an elementary school in the district as well as two teachers at another elementary school in the district. This survey asked questions that gave me an understanding of what forms of bullying occurred in classrooms, where it was occurring outside of the classroom, what resources teachers used when dealing with bullying issues, and how their strategies benefited their students if at all (Appendix B). This survey contained seven questions in which four required a written response. The other four were multiple-choice. The survey was distributed online using Survey Monkey on February 15, 2011 and the last submission was entered February 16th. The number of total responses to the survey was seven (Appendix B).

**Observations:**

Observations were a key asset to my inquiry process. The interviews were based on bullying behaviors that I observed in each classroom or class activity and allowed me to elaborate on what types of responses I was looking for from the teachers or instructors. I used a chart to keep my systematic observations of bullying by writing down or making a note when I saw teasing, name-calling, physical contact, pointing, eye-rolling, and left space for any extra notes I felt were worth writing down (Appendix C). I tried my best to make note of who made the remarks or gestures and who they made them towards. This allowed me to narrow down any patterns depending on gender, grade level, or reasoning behind the form of bullying. I was also
able to take notes when I saw a teacher handle a bullying type situation to see discipline strategies and how receptive the children were.

**Interviews:**

The majority of my data consists of responses to interviews and observations. I used my observations of students in various classrooms in order to decide what questions I would ask the teachers once my observations were completed. Therefore, the observations I made during this time period were the driving force behind what questions would be asked during the interviews. I interviewed three teachers in an elementary school including a kindergarten, fourth, and P.E. instructor. One first grade teacher at another elementary school was interviewed as well as a principal at the first elementary school. My interviews were completed the weeks of March 4th-March 17th (Appendix D).

**Data Analysis**

The data I acquired over the course of my inquiry provided me with a surplus of information. I was able to use my pre-interview data to give me an understanding and reasoning for my research. It also allowed me to formulate how I would go about acquiring data during the inquiry process. By the end of my inquiry I collected data from a survey, four observations, and five interviews.

I started my inquiry by first sending a survey out to twenty-six teachers in the district. I asked seven questions that required four written responses. The rest of the questions were multiple-choice (Appendix B). After two weeks passed I checked back to see the responses. Seven teachers responded to the survey. I printed the questions out and start formulating patterns between the teachers’ responses. The first pattern I noticed was how almost 86% of teachers felt bullying occurred in their classrooms. The second pattern brought to my attention was how seven
teachers felt the bullying was not that bad in their classroom. This immediately made me curious as to why these teachers knew there was bullying in their classrooms, but it wasn’t “bad enough” to be classified as a problem. Based on my wonderings from the survey, I formulated questions for my interviews and started thinking of what I needed to look for in my observations.

For my observations, I chose to observe a kindergarten, first grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade class. I wanted to make sure I was able to see bullying situations from all different age groups. As I observed each class, I made a table that looked for various forms of bullying. I thought of the forms myself and what my opinion of bullying was. As I observed, I filled in the table and used letters to represent students’ names (Appendix C). Once my observations were finished, I would interview the teacher based on what I saw. When I looked at the table after it was complete, I began noticing many patterns. I realized I was only writing down situations when there was an issue between students and one student was not happy with the teasing, name-calling, exclusions, etc. These made me realize there is a fine line between fooling around and bullying and I began to notice that the observations I made were bullying, not fooling around. Once my observations were complete, I used what I saw to ask questions for my interviews.

The questions I formulated for the interviews were derived from my survey responses and my observations. I asked questions about what I saw and what the teacher would have done if they’d seen the issue. I also asked about classroom rules, discipline styles, and how a bullying situation is treated with that particular teacher. This gave me a better insight into how discipline could serve as a strategy because it may prevent students from bullying. My interviews also allowed me to ask teachers where they learned bullying prevention strategies. I soon discovered many teachers felt they learned strategies by watching others. The first grade teacher I interviewed felt she learned her strategy, “Probably a lot from watching my mentor and some of
it from my mom who is a teacher” (Appendix D). By the end of my interviews, I began to notice that most teachers had specific definitions for bullying, which I never thought about before. I also realized that most strategies teachers used were from personal experience and by watching others. At this point I was ready to start making claims. I knew I wanted to discuss how bullying can be viewed differently, but there is a definition I was able to use based on what the teachers told me. I also knew that teachers used one another for guidance when looking for strategies, but had to use trial and error when making sure it fit their students’ personalities. Lastly, I wanted to make a claim about how discipline was a strategy that teachers were using. Based on my observations, I witnessed many occasions where teachers controlled the bullying from continuing to occur by disciplining the student in various ways.

**Explanation of Findings**

After meticulously analyzing my data from the surveys, observations, and interviews mentioned above, I identified patterns and outcomes that allowed me to make my own claims regarding strategies or tools teachers could use to prevent bullying in their classrooms. I was able to gain a lot of insight as to what strategies work, different types of discipline, and where resources could be located. I felt that by the end of my inquiry, I was able to formulate a general claim that there are strategies and tools teachers can use. I also could identify what bullying truly is and how important it is to have teachers define and explain it to students.

**Claim One:**

*Most teachers identify bullying as malicious acts that are repetitive.*

I came to this conclusion at the end of my inquiry, which also helped me understand more about the teachers who completed my survey and why they answered certain questions the way they did. When I first sent out my survey I was shocked at some of the responses I received
about acts of bullying in teachers’ classrooms. For example, many teachers witnessed in their classrooms, “Not including students in a game during recess, making fun of others, prolonged use of a specific marker if someone else wants to use it, and messaging someone in SCoodle with unkind words” (Appendix B). At the end, I asked teachers to rate how bad the bullying was in their classroom, yet no one ranked it higher than “not that bad” (Appendix B). This was somewhat shocking for me because I saw any type of bullying as bad, and these teachers did not feel the same way. Then, as I gave my interviews and talked to more teachers I began to understand their reasoning behind this response to the question. They felt that although they experienced issues in their classroom where students were picked on, teased, or made fun of, it was not something done more than once or twice. Also, it was usually done as a reaction to someone or something else caused them to act this way. In my survey a teacher responded to the question about what forms of bullying do you see in your classroom with, “I have seen students interact in unkind ways with one another at times, but I believe bullying is when it is repeated picking on one student, which I have not seen in my classroom” (Appendix B). In *Bully Free Classroom*, Allan Beane writes, “Before you can solve (or prevent) a problem, you first have to define it” (Beane, 1999). I knew this is what I had to do. He goes on to state that a common definition for bullying that teachers use with their students should include, “when a stronger, more powerful person hurts or frightens a smaller or weaker person deliberately (on purpose) and repeatedly (again and again).” The teachers I interviewed who told me that bullying to them was a malicious act done more than once supports Beane’s definition. The P.E. instructor said that, “I see bullying as purposefully hurting someone in a repetitive situation in other situations besides my class like at lunch, in the classroom, bathrooms, and hallways. That’s a deliberate attempt to hurt someone.” The teachers’ responses also correlated with the definition I found on
bullying.org, which states, “in bullying there is a **difference in power** between those being hurt and those doing the hurting, bullying involves hurtful behaviors that are **repeated** and **intentional**” (Belsey, 2011). The first grade teacher I interviewed even said that for her students, “It’s a tricky concept for them because I don’t think they really have experience as to what a bully would really be.” All of the teachers agreed that any type of bullying (teasing, name-calling, hitting, etc.) is talked about and discussed with their students, but there is a fine line between fooling around and actual bullying. The first grade teacher told me, “That’s why I like to call attention to it and say did you realize you were doing this” so students understand when they are bullying and when they are fooling around. The main constancy is that bullying is reoccurring and done by a student who purposefully has the intention of hurting someone else.

**Claim Two:**

*The majority of teachers use colleagues and trial and error as a resource when learning how to prevent bullying in their classroom.*

I found that every teacher I interviewed stated that they learned strategies from other teachers or from strategies they tried and saw as a success or failure. They also made it clear that every strategy may not necessarily work because it depends on your students meaning you need to adapt strategies so that they work for you and your class. The principal from the elementary school I interviewed was a classroom teacher for many years before she became an administrator. When she started teaching she felt that college had not prepared her for dealing with bullying in the classroom. When asked about where she learned her strategies she stated, “I would say that I would go to the experienced teachers when I was younger. Could I replicate it exactly? No, because it was class dependent, but you could at least mold it into what would work for you.”
The kindergarten teacher agreed with this philosophy, which was apparent when she told me, “I learned everything from experience. When I went to school there were no strategies for behavior management, but since we started PDS and had morning meeting and First Six Weeks of School to develop situations that you can work on building that community and understanding the importance of building community and understanding expectations with each other and the classroom.” This is another example of a teacher who used trial and error as well as other teachers as a resource for handling bullying and behavior issues.

What was also consistent with these educator’s responses was that you must adapt certain strategies so that your students benefit from them. You cannot expect all of your students to be receptive of a strategy just because it worked in the classroom down the hall. You must take into consideration your students, how they react to certain behaviors, and what they need in order to change for the better or be more aware. When interviewing the P.E. instructor he felt that what he learned about bullying was, “Definitely not in class. It kind of came natural to me. I feel like a very structured, safe environment is very important for a child.” This teacher supports the claim that most teachers use trial and error to find strategies that work for them.

In Allan Beane’s, Bully Free Classroom, he feels that, “if you think that a student is being bullied or might be at risk, share your concerns with other teachers or staff” (Beane, 1999). Not only can it be beneficial to get ideas from other teachers, but also “other adults may be aware of events in the student’s life that could indicate a bullying situation” (Beane, 1999). Although I went into this inquiry process looking for a concrete strategy, resource, or tool that I could present to others, I think the answer I received is just as beneficial. It shows us that teachers need to use one another to learn from and I’m most importantly impressed by the
teachers who were aware that you must take your students into consideration and if a strategy
doesn’t work it doesn’t mean you failed, you just haven’t found the right strategy for them.

Claim Three:

*The varying discipline styles that teachers use in the classroom influences bullying in the
classroom.*

Once my survey responses were all submitted, I started breaking down each question to
better understand the minds of the teachers who put effort and thought into their responses. This
is when I began realizing that when most teachers explained how they dealt with bullying in their
classrooms these explanations often included how they disciplined students as well. How they
discipline students was, therefore, a strategy. This claim is supported by my interview data. I
became better informed about different teacher’s discipline strategies and how they dealt with
bullying situations. I began to see that teachers also used expectations for students and classroom
rules as a strategy that taught the students what the consequences would be if a bullying type
situation occurred (Appendix B, Question 4).

First of all, I defined a strategy to mean, “plan, method, or series of maneuvers or
stratagems for obtaining a specific goal or result, which was very important for me to understand
in order to find what types of strategies teachers used” (Dictionary.com). I now knew that when
teachers were disciplining students it was because their goal was to prevent that behavior from
occurring again. For example, when I observed the 4th grade class at recess, I noticed the teacher
reprimand a student for pushing another student down. She gave him a warning and told the
student that if he used physical contact again, he would be taken out of the basketball game.
When I asked her about her discipline strategy, or plan, she explained, “I think you need to start
setting examples by taking out kids who are doing it the worst. My discipline action would be pulling them out.” The specific goal she was working towards was also similar to her classroom rules including, “keeping hands and feet to yourself and treating others with respect.” Later on in the interview when I asked her what strategies she used to prevent bullying she responded with, “Apologizing first, getting parents involved, principal, and having consequences.” She did not mention how she handled the recess situation I had observed earlier, which made me realize that I do feel the way teachers discipline in their classroom helps prevent bullying situations from occurring whether they realize this or not.

In Appendix B, Question 3, teachers shared their disciplinary actions for when a bullying situation occurs. More than half of the teachers I surveyed used the same type of strategy as they would with any type of problem in their classroom that dealt with behavior. The kindergarten teacher told me, “We have a management system and so if they get three cards, green, yellow, and red. This program really is the backbone of behavior and expectations. This program also carries over into specials. And it many years it really has helped.” This teacher’s strategy for disciplining students that aren’t acting appropriately in school also carries over into a bullying type situation. If she finds a student is displaying an act of bullying, she uses the behavior management system to get the situation under control. Other teachers use the I-message or discussions right after a bullying situation occurs.

**Reflections and Future Practice**

The inquiry process has overall, been a great learning experience for me. I feel like I have grown as a person and as a teacher in many ways. I also feel like I learned how to handle situations when they occur in my classroom and I want to take action to change something. By
the end of my inquiry process I felt that most of my questions had been answered, however, I most importantly learned that not every question could be answered. One of my teaching beliefs is that students will succeed more if teachers take risks and model for the students that it’s okay to make mistakes. My inquiry project is similar to this belief because I learned that although you may put in a great deal of effort into getting a question answered, sometimes you have to accept that you tried your best but you cannot feel defeated if you don’t find the answer you were looking for. I learned a lot about myself and my beliefs about teaching and discovered where or whom I can go to, to get more information. Now that I have finished my inquiry project, I feel as though inquiry is never completely over. I will be practicing inquiry for the rest of my teaching career and this experience has given me the opportunity to make use of it to its fullest extent.

I was able to find many tools and strategies that teachers can use to prevent bullying in their classroom and was able to make several claims. I also discovered a strategy that most teachers didn’t think to talk about, which relates to discipline strategies. By talking with teachers and learning more about their views on a specific subject I was able to become more comfortable with going to others for guidance. I made a claim about how teachers use each other as a resource for learning strategies and that is exactly what I was able to accomplish through my interviews. The strategies I discovered that could be useful for teachers are read alouds, classroom rules, class discussions, management systems, and building a strong classroom community throughout the year.

I was not able to make a claim about resources in any school setting being available to teachers, however, I did learn enlightening ideas about it. The majority of the teachers I interviewed have only worked in one district, but they did tell me about how important it is to have a guidance counselor available to them if needed. This taught me that using others in your
school building for help could be very effective. You can even use parents, the principal, or fellow teachers.

I still wonder about how teachers can make students aware of what bullying is and when it’s occurring, but I think that’s a tough question to answer. Most teachers told me that their students had trouble understanding that fooling around is teasing once in a while without the intention of hurting a child’s feelings, however, bullying is repetitive and malicious like my first claim states. Therefore, teachers have a definition to provide their students, but it’s hard to give concrete examples. What teachers struggled with was conveying to students how it feels to be bullied and why it can be dangerous and hurtful. I hope to continue learning about bullying and look at it from a student’s perspective instead of the teachers. This could answer questions I have now and hopefully better me as a teacher in the future.

I truly enjoyed the inquiry experience and I hope to continue using inquiry in future practices. I think it can be used as a tool when trying to uncover more about an issue or specific topic. Even though not every question I had was answered, I still feel like I have made a difference within myself and within my community. I improved relationships with my colleagues and learned how to use them as a resource like they use each other for guidance. I know inquiry will serve to be a great tool I can use in my teaching career and I look forward to future wonderings.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: INQUIRY BRIEF

Context:

I am an intern at Ferguson Township Elementary in the State College Area School District. I work in a 5th grade classroom with twenty-one students. Out of the twenty-one, twelve are females and nine are males. Our classroom is rather small, however, we’ve designed our classroom in the best way possible to seem more spacious. We have a carpet where the students will meet various times throughout the day. Their desks are set up in rectangle clusters of six to eight desks. The students all work very hard throughout the day. We usually manage to get lessons completed along with follow-up activities. I’ve found my class works well together when assigned partners. My mentor and I have witnessed a couple issues with partners, however, we’ve always managed to settle them.

We have had issues of bullying since the first month of school, however, we’re working on controlling these issues currently. Some issues we’ve encountered are teasing, eye rolling, physical contact, and name-calling. We also had an incident where text messaging was involved outside of school between two of our students. To control these issues we have had numerous class discussions, I led various activities during anti-bullying week in November, and we have had our guidance counselor come in to talk to the students. Our class has many “groups.” The groups have changed since the first week of school however, they still exist. Students have expressed serious concerns about feeling rejected, left out, picked on, and it has led to numerous discussions with the class. The majority of the day my mentor and I feel the students are always getting along and working well together, but we have found the bullying is very secretive and
done without our knowledge. Our goal is to help our students form better relationships and find ways as teachers to prevent bullying from occurring in the school environment.

**Rationale:**

What led me to my main wondering is an incident that occurred in my classroom dealing with bullying. During anti-bullying week in November, my mentor and I decided it would be something fun for me to take charge of. I made up scenario cards for my students and we did a read aloud and art project. We even had an open discussion about times we’ve all felt bullied and insignificant. It was amazing to see them express such personal experiences with one another. I really thought we were making positive changes.

An incident occurred recently where a Korean student in my class was being picked on for the food he ate at lunch. Students were pulling their shirts above their noses and telling him it smelled badly. He was so overwhelmed with feeling bullied that he angrily came up to our Para-Professional during lunch and told her what was going on at the lunch table. As my mentor and I talked to the boys who made him feel bullied, one of them had a breakdown and apologized for his behavior. The other two boys said nothing. It made me start wondering why do students bully? They know it’s wrong and the one boy showed me he was clearly aware of how much it could hurt someone.

The purpose of this inquiry is to find out what tools and resources teachers in this district use to help prevent bullying from occurring. I hope to find many great tools that will help my students as well as future students who may be from a different school setting. I also expect to find tools that not only prevent bullying, but also make students aware of its consequences.

**Main Wondering:**
What tools or strategies do teachers use to prevent bullying in their classrooms?

Sub-Questions:

- What resources do teachers think are most effective in stopping bullying?
- Which strategies and resources/tools could teachers use in any type of school setting?
- How can teachers make students more aware of what bullying is and when they’re doing it?
- How does the way a teacher uses discipline affect students from bullying?

Timeline:

Pre-Data Collection

- Week 1 (February 7-12):
  - Research more books, find survey questions to ask teachers about bullying in their classroom
  - Introduce comment box in classroom
- Week 2 (February 14-18):
  - Send out survey to 14 Ferguson teachers grades K-5 and 2 teachers from EP via Survey Monkey

During

- Week 3 (February 21-25):
  - Analyze data from survey:
    - Categorize bullying situations, how often they occur, where they occur, and how teachers deal with them
    - Break categories down into which classrooms seem to have worse issues especially how far the discipline went for these issues (parents involved, principal involved, minor talking to, went unnoticed)
  - Choose 3 teachers to interview/observe at F and 1 teacher at EP who experience issues with bullying in their classrooms based on survey monkey data and the principal at an elementary school
  - Three teachers: (K), (4th), (1st), Principal, and P.E. instructor
  - Have guidance counselor come in and talk to class more about bullying (Date still pending on when she’s available)
- Week 4 (February 28th-March 4th):
  - Set up and schedule interviews and observations with 4 teachers and 1 principal
  - March 1st- Observe and interview P.E. instructor at 1:10 Tuesday with 5th grade class (Observe how Andy disciplines students if bullying occurs, in what situation did the bullying occur, how did the students react, how did the teacher react? Do you feel it occurs at a particular time in the day? Ask about how he handled incident two weeks ago where my student hit another student on her back with a stick)
  - March 2nd- Observe and interview 1st Grade Teacher at 9:00AM (Observe for bullying situations, how the teacher handles the situation if at all, how the teacher disciplines students in general throughout the course of the morning, ask about resources teacher uses to prevent bullying from occurring)
March 3rd - Observe and interview 4th Grade Teacher Thursday at 12:30 during Recess (Observe how she uses discipline with students who misbehave, how students treat one another, if bullying occurs how the students and the teacher handle the situation, do you feel it occurs during particular times of the day or activities?)

Analyze observations and interviews that have been completed
- Look for any similarities or differences
- Look at how teachers discipline if any
- Analyze what strategies/resources teachers use if they encounter bullying issues
- Ask both, do you feel there are any common patterns for bullying during P.E./Lunch time?

March 4th - Interview Principal (8:00 AM) Ask questions:
- What is bullying to you?
- What experiences do you have as a teacher where bullying occurred?
- How about a principal?
- How do you handle bullying situations?
- What tools/strategies do you use if at all?
- Do you think the school setting has an impact on what tools are available to you?

Week 5 (March 7-11):
- Spring Break!

Week 6 (March 14-18):
- Continue visiting classrooms and taking observations of teachers this week (Pay attention to how they discipline students/respect/bullying) depending on data from survey
- March 14th - (2:10 PM) Observe and interview Kindergarten teacher (Observe students during “Choice Time”, observe for bullying situations, how the teacher handles the situation if at all, how the teacher disciplines students in general throughout the course of the morning, ask about resources teacher uses to prevent bullying from occurring)

Analyze observations and interviews that have been completed:
- Categorize strategies teachers use: any similarities/differences
- Take notice of differences in grade levels
- See if strategies/resources teachers say they use are actually taken into action
- Make a list of resources
- Categorize how available the resources would be to a teacher

Week 7 (March 21-25):
- Continue to organize and analyze data from observations and interviews
  - Break down into discipline category and what disciplinary action is used
  - What observations I made of bullying occurring (when, where, what provoked it)
  - How teachers deal with bullying
  - What resources/strategies teachers use as mentioned in their interviews
- Continue any observations/interviews, if needed
Wrap-up data by March 25th

**Post-Data**

- **Week 8 (March 28- April 1st)**
  - Continue to organize and analyze data by pre, during, and post data
  - Have draft done by April 1st
- **Week 9 (April 4-8th)**
  - **4/8** Inquiry paper draft due to PDA
  - Get prepared for inquiry presentation
- **Week 10 (April 11-15th)**
  - Make corrections to paper
  - Prepare presentation
- **Week 11 (April 18-22nd)**
  - Make corrections to paper
  - Prepare presentation
- **Week 12 (April 25-29th)**
  - **4/25** Practice Inquiry presentation
  - **4/30** Inquiry conference
  - **5/1** Final Paper due to PDA
- **Week 13 (May 2-6th)**
  - Make final adjustments to paper
- **Week 14 (May 9-13th)**
  - Make final adjustments to paper
  - **5/13** Final Paper due to Bern/website

**Data Collection:**

I expect to collect data that provides me with numerous tools and resources that help teachers prevent bullying. I also want to find ways that teachers can make students more aware of the effects of bullying. I hope the strategies I find also carry into children’s homes and outside activities. I’ve been reading a book about discipline and how that can help teachers keep bullying under control if there are consequences that ensue if one bullies. My main goal is to find strategies that are effective and can be used in any classroom setting. I plan on using observations and interviews with teachers to provide me with information on how teachers deal with discipline in their classrooms. A lot of my data will be based on personal opinion, however, I hope to come across many similarities in responses.
The interviews are going to provide me with the answers to most of my sub-wonderings depending on the teacher. They will provide me with the information I need to tie into my observations. As I observe the students and how the teacher disciplines them or deals with bullying issues, I can see how their interview responses correlate. They will also give me the teachers’ opinions on what strategies work and what resources they go to, to help them deal with bullying issues in their classroom. I will be meeting with four teachers including a Kindergarten, 4th grade, and a P.E. teacher and a 1st grade teacher. These teachers were chosen because all four expressed issues of bullying in their classroom as “not bad” in the survey, however, it still occurs. The P.E. instructor was especially chosen because in the survey, most teachers said bullying occurs during specials like P.E. where the students have more freedom. I will interview over the course of three weeks and be looking for substantial data on what strategies teachers use, what resources they look to for help, how it works for them, where they got their resources or strategies from, and how they deal with bullying in their classroom, for example, how they discipline. Each interview will last about 15-30 minutes or until all questions have been answered and discussed. I will also interview the principal of Ferguson to hear her perspective on bullying, how she handles it if it is brought to her attention, as well as how she’s handled it in the past as a teacher. I’m curious to find out what tools she’s used as well as how her discipline would differ from a classroom teacher if at all. My interview questions will vary depending on the observations. Some basic questions I plan to ask are:

1. What forms of bullying did you notice today?
2. I saw ____________ if you had seen this, what would you have done?
3. When __________ happened, you _____________, why did you do this?
4. Where did you learn your discipline strategies?
5. How do you feel they help you with bullying?
6. Do you make students aware of when they’re bullying and when they’re just fooling around? Is there a difference to you?
7. Have you ever worked in a different school?
8. Did you have the same issues?
9. What tools/strategies did you use? Were they available here?
10. The survey will be given first before I start collecting my data from interviews/observations.

It will help me see what issues teachers consider bullying, where they feel it occurs most, how they deal with it, and provide me basic insight into what strategies and resources they use that work for them. The questions I asked were:

1. Have you ever witnessed bullying in your classroom?
2. What types of bullying have you seen?
3. How have you dealt with bullying situations?
4. What tools did you use to help the situation?
5. Where have you seen bullying occur the most?
6. Where did you learn certain strategies to prevent bullying in your classroom?
7. How bad do you think the bullying is in your classroom?

Observations will be a great asset to my inquiry project. They will help me see any instances of bullying as well as analyze how teachers deal with it if they do at all. I plan on observing the four teachers I choose to also interview. I can compare what I observe in their classroom with how they responded to interview questions. I will observe during the three weeks I will also be doing interviews. I’m hoping to see various forms of bullying as well as when the teacher takes notice and addresses the situation. I will be observing 4 teachers including: Kindergarten, 1st, 4th, and a P.E. instructor with 5th graders. I plan to observe each teacher for approximately 30-45 minutes. One teacher I intend to observe during recess to see how students’ behavior may differ when outside of the classroom setting. The 1st grade teacher will be from another building which will help me collect data on more diverse students at a younger age. I am curious to see if discipline and strategies differ depending on the school you teach in. Each observation session will be followed up with an interview. Observations will be systematic and I created a chart that breaks different forms of bullying down into specific categories. The categories are name-
calling, teasing, pointing, eye-rolling, and physical contact. I will tally how many times I see these forms of bullying occur and then use this data to follow-up with an interview.

Appendix B: TEACHER SURVEY

Survey Monkey: “Bullying in Your Classroom”

Date Given: February 15\textsuperscript{th}
Last Submission: February 16\textsuperscript{th}
Number of Responses: 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Have you ever witnessed bullying in your classroom?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What types of bullying have you seen?
   1. I have seen students interact in unkind ways with one another at times, but I believe bullying is when it is repeated picking on one student, which I have not seen in my classroom.
   2. Name calling, making fun of others
   3. -Not including students in a game during recess. Students saying that they don't like someone else. Verbal bullying - name calling
   4. kids saying unkind things to each other; some rough housing (pushing or kicking)
   5. taking toys, getting in front of someone in line, prolonged use of a specific marker if someone else wants to use it
   6. exclusion, teasing
   7. verbal -- namecalling, demeaning comments. computer -- through SCoodle...(messaging section) name calling.....talking about fellow classmates in a negative way..

3. How have you dealt with bullying situations?
   1. In situations of unkind interactions I have pointed it out to the individual and discussed how they can fix the situation and what they can do differently next time. I try to get the student to explain what they should do differently, rather than me telling them what to do.
Often they recognize the offense and how to fix it, but need some "coaching" and someone to hold them accountable.

2. If I catch it in the act I treat it the same as I would physical violence. Trip to the office and phone call home for the aggressor, then a follow up with the victim.

3. There are different ways to handle bullying depending on the situation. If it is just two or three students who may be saying mean comments to one another, I will get the students involved together to discuss the situation and share feelings. Other times I have done whole group lessons to address certain situations. I have also had students act out bullying scenarios that they may be familiar with and then have a discussion afterwards.

4. Talking to the child, bringing it up at a class meeting

5. discussion between those involved, go through our "kindergarten promises", have the children be play buddies during choice time, Ms. W does a weekly program to help resolve conflicts

6. discussed it with the whole class, had the counselor do class lessons, discussed it with the children involved, had students write about what happened, role play

7. spoken directly to the student in the hallway......had them fill out a thinking it out sheet where they describe the behavior and what they plan to do differently next time....If it's really bad -- parent signs it. Computer situation -- Principal and parents were involved.

4. What tools did you use to help the situation?

1. I teach my students how to use the "I message" so that they have a way to respond when in a situation where they don't like how they are being treated. I have also called the involved students over together and encouraged them to give their "I message" in front of me, which usually encourages an appropriate response from the offender or clears up misunderstandings. In these situations I try to act as mediator as I want the students to learn how to work out their differences on their own.

2. I feel bullying is a result of the atmosphere the students are in. Sure, some students are more likely to tease and to be disrespectful than others, but the atmosphere dictates its prevalence. I have seen a group of students have issues with bullying one year, and not the next. The only variable is a the atmosphere (different teacher/ teaching style, rules etc) If a positive learning environment is developed and maintained with clear rules and consequences bullying should be none existing. Communication between teachers is also important. A minor issue in one class is a major issue if it is happening in other classes too. Calling someone a name in the classroom may seem like a minor issue, but combine that with name calling in music, art , pe recess, lunch and in the hallway, now you have a bullying situation.

3. Read aloud books, bullying scenario cards, and i-messages.

4. Sometimes I will reinact the situation using my classroom puppets and we talk about ways to handle the situation.

5. establish promises (rules) with children at the beginning of the school year and refer to the regularly, puppet shows involving situations that have happened in the classroom, Ms. W's program

6. counselor, role-playing, discussion

7. None
5. Where have you seen bullying occur the most?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. In your classroom</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Lunch</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. P.E. or other specials</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Cyberbullying</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other:
1. Recess, on the bus to/from school
2. Hallways and bathrooms
3. Recess
4. Playground
5. recess
6. Recess / Bus/ unstructured and unsupervised times

6. Where did you learn certain strategies to prevent bullying in your classroom?
   1. I think building a classroom community through class activities, such as morning meeting, and creating a positive classroom environment helps to prevent bullying in the classroom. Also, in the classroom environment the teacher knows each student well and is present to monitor student interaction. This is in contrast to the lunch, bus, and recess environment where close monitoring is more difficult and where my students have said they've experienced bullying.
   2. I just use common sense and I demand that everyone treats each other with respect or there will be strong consequences. Then I follow through with consequences for even minor bullying events. (calling someone a name etc)
   3. From other colleagues, graduate courses, counselor.
   4. Through reading, and also our school initiative
   5. professional reading, courses w/Jim Nolan
   6. ideas from the counselor, reading books/articles, ideas from other teachers
   7. parenting

7. How bad do you think the bullying is in your classroom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Very Bad</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix C: OBSERVATION NOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Teacher</th>
<th>5th Grade</th>
<th>1st Grade</th>
<th>4th Grade</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Tuesday, March 1, 2011</td>
<td>Wednesday, March 2, 2011</td>
<td>Thursday, March 3, 2011</td>
<td>Friday, March 18, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Subject/Period | P.E. (1:10-1:50) Volleyball | 9:00-11:00 Morning Meeting, Reading Centers | 12:30 Recess with 3rd grade (Basketball game) | Choice Time |

| Teasing       | 1. G→J, “you’re not getting the ball” | Girl→Girl “Your hair’s kind of crazy” | 1. Boys throwing to other boys not on their “team” because their teammates not the “best” | Boy to another boy during block time: “No, no, no! You’re not doing it right!” Then boy grabs blocks from other boy M to other girl, “If your mom calls my mom for a play date I have the final say and I say no.” |
|              | 2. J→G “just shush” | | | |
|              | 3. G→C “Just hit the ball” | | | |

| Name-Calling  | 1. G “She sucks” | 1. “ball hog” | | |
|              | 2. J→S “Why did you catch it dummy” | | | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2-Bad</th>
<th>0.0% (0)</th>
<th>0.0% (0)</th>
<th>0.0% (0)</th>
<th>0.0% (0)</th>
<th>0.00</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-Not too bad</td>
<td>100.0% (6)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- I haven't seen any problems in my classroom</td>
<td>100.0% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Physical Contact | 3 occurrences of Pushing out of Way | Boy grabbed other boys neck during lunch count | 1. Boy holding on to other boy’s arms, trips him with foot  
2. Boy pushes other boy, teacher gives him a warning | Boy grabbed other girls face and another girl grabbed her arms and pulled them behind her back  
Girl screams, “I’m not playing anymore!” because she didn’t get her way and throws marble on ground |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pointing</td>
<td>1 occurrence G→J</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Eye-Rolling | 1. C→CL  
2. G→Team  
3. G→J and said “what the heck”  
4. J, “you didn’t get the ball”  
5. G, “Duh”  
6. C→A for hitting her with the ball | 1. Girl handed birthday girl a card and birthday girl said, “just go put that on my desk”  
2. Girl gave eye roll to autistic girl for sitting too close to her on carpet, girl beside her joined in and eye rolled | 1. When teacher picked captains, numerous boys rolled their eyes | Girl comments on other girls picture but not M’s so M says, “Hey, you didn’t say anything about mine!” Rolls her eyes and leaves table to sit alone |
| Exclusion | 1. J switched spots in line so he could be placed with JS for teams  
2. S left out of group of girls, sits by herself | | Boys without anyone that picked them on their team; teacher then picked teams to make it “fair” | |
| Extra Notes | 1. G got angry when people missed the ball, however, when her “best friend” in the class missed, she laughed | Bullying more innocent and done without intention of being hurtful, but most was playing around | As soon as the boys reached the basketball court, I noticed everyone scatter into groups with their friends. I noticed other classes were in groups of 2-4 and played a particular game. Boys all joined in for basketball and complained about how aggressive it was, however, they stayed in the game and continued | All boys either playing alone or in pairs with blocks or army figures in isolated areas. Girl all working at coloring table (Gossiping) only two girls not at table and working wit blocks |
Appendix D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What forms of bullying did you notice today?

I saw _______________. If you had seen this, what would you have done?

When __________ happened, you ______________. Why did you do this?

Where did you learn your discipline strategies?

How do you feel they help you with bullying?
Do you make students aware of when they’re bullying and when they’re just fooling around?

Have you ever worked in a different school?

Did you have the same issues?

What tools/strategies did you use? Were they available here?
Bibliography


There are numerous chapters dedicated to resources teachers can use to prevent bullying in their classroom as well as strategies to use with the students. The book begins by talking about how to create the most positive classroom atmosphere as possible, which goes along with my inquiry and a strategy teachers use which includes creating a close classroom community. It helps teach educators and parents how to help students, or victims, who are being bullied. It also helps deal with the bullies and how to aid them because they’re obviously bullying for a reason and that reason needs to be uncovered and dealt with. The book concludes with resources for adults, children, videos, and web sites that can be accessed by anyone. This book is very crucial to my inquiry because it incorporates answers to most of my questions.


This website is great! It has a great message and reasoning behind it’s creation. The creator, Bill Belsey, updates the webpage with articles and events concerning bullying. There is a page dedicated to providing facts about bullying and even a course you can take on bullying. There’s even a page where you can upload any ideas/projects you think helped you, your child, and even your students. It’s meant for parents, students, teachers, and anyone interested in becoming more informed about bullying who wants to stand up to it and make a difference. I think this website is a great tool that teachers can use and recommend to parents. It would be something anyone could access with the addition of having Internet service. It taught me a lot about bullying and made me more aware of the resources available to anyone on the Internet.


This book is more focused on how teachers can discipline students when they act out. It also focuses on how you can change their behavior for the future, not just the time you have them in your classroom. There are a wide variety of prevention strategies any teacher can use for
different settings and circumstances. This would be very beneficial for me because one of my sub
wonderings is how the type of school setting you are in affects different tools teachers can use to
prevent bullying. It helps you pick out which interventions will be effective and which will only
worsen the situation. It ranges out to student misbehavior, oppositional defiant disorder, ADD,
and anger management, which I’m not so much focused on, however, I think the overall idea of
the book will help me talk to teachers about different interventions and if they’d be willing to use
them or if they already have. It's really focused on building positive relationships with other,
which is very important for my inquiry question.

4.) Child Development Project, Initials. (1996). Ways we want our class to be. Oakland,

CA: Developmental Studies Center.

This book is about how to build community within your classroom. It offers various ways
teachers can get their students to build connections with one another and feel like your
classroom is a safe environment they can open up and comfortably be a part of. The main focus
of the book is on class meetings. The different types of meetings help teachers discover their
purpose, the environment they should be set up in, as well as discussion strategies. This book
makes a great connection to number 4 because in order to successfully have these meetings,
students must respect one another and the guidelines they set up for their meetings. Children
learn how to listen to one another’s concerns or ideas and respect them. For my inquiry, I think
this book could help me when I have discussions with teachers. Maybe they have a meeting each
week, which helps their class sort out their concerns and open up to their peers about them. I
also think it could help them become closer and learn more about how they should respect each
other’s opinions. It would be something I could look for during my observations; how does each
teacher stress the importance of respect in their classroom?

from http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-39-spring-2011/bully-bullied

bystanderand-beyond

This article was very helpful for me and it was a resource actually given to me by a
teacher. She recommended this magazine and said that she uses many of the issues to help with
ideas that she can use with her class. I started looking at their Spring magazine and found many
articles related to bullying that could be useful for my inquiry. This particular article was
interesting to me because it looks at not only the bully but also the victim and the bystander. It
had a lot of great insight into each role and how each person feels.

I used this website to gain more knowledge on how I should collect my data. I discovered there are many ways to collect data in inquiry and surveys can be a great start because they give you a baseline. I then learned that observations could be the best way to get evidence of your wondering and interviews give you a better understanding of what you saw. I knew immediately I wanted to use all three of these data collection tools.


I love this book because it focuses on the relationships between students. It’s about managing the classroom through respect and academic success. These authors believe that if students understand each other, work well together, and develop responsibility for their own actions students can be more successful in the classroom. Although it also focuses on strategies and interventions for students who have severe disciplinary problems, I like how the authors stress the importance of respect. I truly believe a lot of issues in my classroom derive from lack of respect. I’ve seen it among my students as well as towards my mentor and me. There is even a survey in the back that asks students questions about how they deal with certain situations in the school, how they do their work, and how they interact with their peers. It might be useful for me because I can share it with the people I interview and get their opinions on it.


I used dictionary.com to help me find the meaning behind the word “strategy.” Since my paper is about me finding strategies teacher use to prevent bullying, I wanted to be able to put that term into words so that I could visually see what it means and not go off of the definition I have used in my head and assume it means. I think having the actual definition is beneficial because it also helps my readers see how I’m defining a strategy and how what I’ve seen in my interviews and observations is considered a strategy and in the end the main goal is to prevent bullying.


In this article, bullying is related to the movies and television industry. People are now realizing the impact it is having in schools with the main focus being cyber bullying. They also
now understand that the stereotypical bully no longer exists; it can be anybody. Not only do students have to deal with bullying at school, but it also continues once they’re home through email, instant messaging, and texting. It provides 7 tips students can follow when dealing with bullies including talking to an adult, being responsive, talking to parents, and intervening. The article concludes with a statement about how Pennsylvania is trying to spread more anti-bullying programs in schools. It’s not just about educating students, but also staff members so that everyone feels like they are working and participating in a safe environment. I like this article because it pertains to anti-bullying in Pennsylvania. It’s something I can talk to teachers about and get their opinion on how their state is providing bullying assistance and aid.


This book is about the different experiences children go through at different ages. It starts at age four and ends at age 14. This book interested me because I could see how social skills compare from ages 8-10 and then 10-12 when they reach middle school. It breaks the growth patterns down into categories like language, cognitive, social, physical, and even subject areas. I think this book would be very interesting to compare ages and the different behaviors between each age. There could be reasons why students start bullying more so during their late elementary and early middle school years. The author makes it clear that his main goal in education was to understand how students learn best. He studied students’ behaviors and his book is based solely on observations in the classroom.