

Original Paper

Teacher Bullying: A Reality or a Myth?

Kathleen G. Burriss^{1*} & Donald Snead²

¹ Department of Elementary and Special Education, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee, United States

² Department of Educational Leadership, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee, United States

* Kathleen G. Burriss, Department of Elementary and Special Education, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee, United States

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Abstract

The topic of teachers who may bully children is uncomfortable to discuss, but because of the vulnerable nature of children in the classroom context, it is justified. In order to uncover instances of teachers who bully, the purpose of this project is to explore teachers' and students' perceptions of bullying behaviors. This mixed method project involves two data sets. In the first study, classroom teachers (n=186) provided rationalistic data identifying occurrences of observed bullying behaviors. Included in the survey, teachers referenced definitions of emotional, physical, and intellectual bullying. Quantitative analysis showed nonsignificant findings; classroom teachers reported they do not bully and do not observe other educators bullying children. In the second study, teacher education students (n=341) completed an open-ended survey describing any instances where they either observed children bullied by a teacher or where they were victims of a teacher bully. Qualitative analysis described incidents ranging from early childhood through university instruction wherein student-participants observed or were victims of teachers who bullied. The purpose for this project was to begin to reconcile the lack of relevant findings describing teachers who bully. These current data provide evidence for the teacher as bully phenomenon and contribute to the literature by confirming descriptions associated with emotional, physical, and intellectual bullying. Implications discuss the culture of teaching and university teacher preparation.

Keywords

teachers, bullying, vulnerable, social

1. Introduction

This current discussion contributes to the literature by providing additional data describing how teachers demonstrate emotional, intellectual, and physical bullying. Additionally, these data initiate a discussion regarding the contrastingly different perspectives shared between practicing classroom teachers and teacher candidates who are not yet licensed and not accepted as professional educators. Although distasteful, without an honest consideration of all possible indicators for educators who may bully students, children remain vulnerable.

Each school year, children spend more than one thousand hours with their classroom teacher. The social context of the classroom experience, as guided by the teacher, is significant with potential influence on children's sense of self and diverse others. With this understanding of the importance of the social context for children's optimal intellectual learning and emotional development, Vygotsky's (1962) theory of social constructivism underpins the current study. In addition to the instruction of traditional academic content areas, the classroom is perceived as an arena for children's social and emotional constructions of self. Children's emerging self-concept and self-esteem remain integral with respect to their abilities to communicate and interact with others. Developing a sense of self and framing expectations for interacting with others remain as ongoing, active, and dynamic. The child/student is regarded as an information-constructor. From the objective reality, through interpersonal interactions and ongoing feedback, students construct personally subjective meanings of themselves and diverse others. New information is linked to prior understandings. Using the theoretical lens of social constructivism, the authors assume the level of potential development refers to the level at which learning takes place. Still developing, cognitive structures will only mature under the guidance of or in collaboration with others. A teacher who bullies has a profound and long lasting negative influence on a child with respect to their own self-concept and, consequently, influences their future interactions with others. Because social constructivism builds upon a regard for proactive and informed collaboration, a child's ability to establish trust, initiate activity, and ensure industry are contingent on their sense of self and diverse others. Considering the pervasive influence of the classroom teacher on the lives, attitudes, and successes of their students, this current mixed method project warrants consideration in contributing to the understanding of the potential of a teacher as bully phenomenon.

With the vast number and range of diverse educators, researchers believe most teachers practice integrative and compassionate pedagogy. Yet, considering this large number and diverse range of educators, it is also probable to believe some teachers may exhibit bullying behaviors. In order to ensure the emotional, social, physical, and intellectual security for all children, the current research contributes to the literature by describing how different populations define teacher-bullying.

Typically, the first image that comes to mind associated with bullying is a larger and/or older person shoving a smaller/younger person in a remote area of a school or community. This traditional image is

limiting and does not accurately depict the range of potential bullying behaviors. A person calling names or pushing in line may be distressing, but is this bullying?

Bullying is the behavior of someone who seeks power and control over another person who has been determined as weak, vulnerable, or unable to defend themselves. There is premeditation. Potential Victims may come from a non-traditional family, wear different clothes, or have some type of atypical physical or emotional trait. Students targeted as victims of bullying are often socially isolated individuals. Therefore, the difference between simple conflict and bullying is the existence of an imbalance of power between the victim and bully with an intent to cause harm. The harm can be direct and assume face-to-face confrontation (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005).

Bullying refers to a range of different behaviors including physical actions (hitting, pushing, kicking), verbal actions (name calling, provoking, threatening, spreading slander), or other behaviors such as making faces or social exclusion (Fekkes et al., 2005).

Adopting McEvoy's (2005) definition, the current discussion defines bullying as any verbal or non-verbal action intended to intimidate or harass another. Bullying includes negative physical (pushing and inappropriate touching), intellectual (forcing agendas, compelling compliance, ignoring or negating others' views), and emotional (yelling, belittling, threatening) behaviors toward perceived vulnerable others.

The research literature clarifies behaviors associated with children's peer-on-peer bullying, but limited data are provided toward adults who bully. Informal conversations with administrators, teachers, and parents suggest the issue of teachers who bully does exist. For example, it is a common practice for some principals to intentionally not place at-risk students with certain teachers (Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, & Brethour, 2004). Why does this practice occur? This strategy may be understood as a consequence of deficient knowledge with respect to diversity on the part of the teacher, inability of the administrator to insure "best practice", or a veteran teacher receiving administrator favoritism. Such placements could be interpreted as an institutional strategy to diminish the potential for teacher bullying behaviors. The following section discusses the literature describing peer-on-peer bullying and draws the implications for teachers who may bully.

The chronic nature and public display of student peer-on-peer bullying behaviors share similarities with adult bullying. In both peer-on-peer and adult-child bullying behaviors, the bully intends to draw attention by humiliating the victim, which causes the victim to become publically undermined.

There are a range of potential opportunities to support or undermine children during a single day in a classroom. For example, Twemlow et al. (2004) describe teachers reporting bullying students on a frequent basis and admitting to bullying students in isolated events. Additionally, data describe how elementary school teachers were more likely to bully students in or out of the school setting if they had experienced bullying themselves as children. McEvoy (2005) asserts, in many schools, at least one or

more teachers could be identified as abusive toward students.

The bullying scenario, in contrast with popular belief, shows the child peer-on-peer bully does not evidence a lower self-esteem than the non-bullying child (Rigby & Slee, 1993). Furthermore, it is not true that children's bullying behaviors are the consequence of low academic performance or poor school achievement (Olweus, 1993). The bully does not hold low status in the group (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996).

Admittedly, these data describe interactions ages eight through sixteen, but the implications become illustrative when attempting to understand how or why teachers who bully children may remain in the educational system. The existing data, identifying peer-on-peer bullies, negate the argument that bullies evidence low self-esteem, struggle for group status, or exhibit poor academic achievement. Teachers who bully may be established and secure in their positions (McEvoy, 2005). This means, teachers who bully can be self-confident, represent high teacher/administrative acceptance, and demonstrate intellectual capacity. These descriptors help to explain why bullying teacher-behaviors continue; teacher-bullies may be perceived as accepted and leaders in the school community. Exploring why some teachers may bully students warrants a consideration of the demands of the contemporary classroom. Daily, teachers confront a range of students' differences including culture, ethnicity, SES, race, language, ability, sexual orientation, and gender. In many instances, the teacher's history, experiences, and worldview are dissimilar from their students (Whitted & Dupper, 2008). This disparity places daily demands on an individual's knowledge, skills, and dispositions that may result in teachers becoming frustrated, overwhelmed, or threatened (Zerillo & Osterman, 2011).

While most educators do not favor bullying attitudes, teachers in schools with low and high rates of suspensions tend to see fewer differences between bullying and non-bullying teachers than those from schools with medium rates of suspensions. Teachers who experienced bullying as children tend to or are more likely to grow up to bully. Additionally, they are more aware of other bullying adults (Twemlow & Fonagy, 2005).

For both children and adults, bullying can be a social event that involves more than the bully and the victim. Bystanders become part of the bullying interaction (Kaukiainen et al., 1999). In legitimizing bullying as a group process, an understanding of the human experience as a social context is important; societal groups reject victims of bullying behaviors (Salmivalli, 1996). In addition to a bully's taunts, the victim experiences the stress of a group's rejection (Kaukiainen et al., 1999). For the school community, teachers as well as students may fear this rejection. Motivated by a fear of becoming bullied, bystanders become reticent to assist victims (McEvoy, 2005).

McEvoy (2005) argues, if not stopped by an authority figure, the bullying behavior may be interpreted by the victim as acceptable. The victim believes the bully's values are shared by others. Regardless of age, the victim's rejection is highly stressful. Eventually, if the bullying behaviors are not stopped, the

victim begins to assume responsibility for the bully's actions and internalizes a sense of worthlessness (McEvoy, 2005). When teachers publically embarrass, belittle, or humiliate a student, they not only bully the targeted student, but they as well create a hostile and vulnerable environment for all children. In doing so, bullying teachers undermine the potential learning environment for all students.

Educators who bully often use motivation or instruction as a justification for their intimidating behaviors. Teachers may claim to use intimidation as a form of disciplinary response to a student's misbehaviors (McEvoy, 2005). As a result of a teacher's behavior, victimized students may experience confusion, anger, fear, and begin to doubt their social and academic competencies. McEvoy describes how adults, when challenged for their perceived bullying behaviors, attempt to convince the victim they misunderstood or misrepresented the behaviors. Educators who bully also attempt to undermine the credibility of those who challenge their actions (2005). It appears these responses are only an attempt to shift focus away from the bully's inappropriate behaviors. This is an attempt to create an impression that these events are more of a personal misunderstanding than genuine abuse (McEvoy, 2005).

Findings link health issues with the victims of bullying behaviors. Longitudinal data (Copeland, Wolke, Angola, & Costello, 2013) reveal victims of bullying experienced a higher rate of psychological health problems later in life (agoraphobia, anxiety, and panic disorders). Data also describe how victims of bullying experience a higher rate of anti-social behaviors. Victims of teacher bullying are more likely to be rated as less academically capable, less inclined to complete school, and more likely to be involved in high-risk behaviors (gambling, drug use, and under-age drinking) (Delfabbro et al., 2006). Additionally, both those who bully and those who are bullied are more disposed to depression and suicidal ideation than those who are neither bullied nor demonstrate bullying behaviors (Forero, McLellan, Rissel, & Baumann, 1999). Therefore, in planning to maximize proactive professional learning communities, it is critical to examine the potential for children who may be victims of teacher bullying.

Research Questions:

Do classroom teachers exhibit bullying behaviors?

What kinds of bullying behaviors do teachers demonstrate?

Is bullying, as practiced by teachers, a social event?

Which children may be targeted by teacher bullying behaviors?

2. Method

2.1 Study One: A Quantitative Project Describes Classroom Teachers' Reports of Their Bullying Behaviors or Observations of Other Teachers Who Bullied Students

2.1.1 Purpose and Participants

The purpose of Study One was to collect rationalistic data to determine the types and frequencies of teacher-bully behaviors as observed by other practicing teachers. One hundred eighty-six (n=186) early, elementary, middle, and high school teachers (139 females, 30 males, and 17 non-responders) volunteered to complete surveys describing their observance of, or participation in a range of defined bullying behaviors. The definitions were adapted from McEvoy (2005) and included descriptions for emotional, physical, and intellectual bullying. Twenty-six participants did not identify their level.

2.1.2 Instrument

Surveys were passed out at county schools in a large urban area in the Southeastern United States. The surveys included no identifying information. Using a five-item Likert scale 1-5 (1=none of the time, 2=rarely, 3=some of the time, 4=most of the time, 5=all of the time), 186 participants described their workplace experiences as observing or participating in bullying events. Before completing the survey, teacher-participants reviewed definitions of bullying as adapted from McEvoy (2005).

2.2 *Study Two: A Qualitative Project Describing Teacher Candidates' Experiences with Teachers Who Bully*

2.2.1 Purpose and Participants

The purpose of the second study was to collect narrative data to determine the types and frequencies of teachers who bully as reported by teacher candidates. Students preparing to be licensed teachers (n=341), attending a large urban university located in the Southeastern US, responded to a one-open-ended question. The survey asked for any descriptions of events where they observed children being bullied by teachers or instances where they were themselves, victims of teacher bullies. The return rate was 88%.

2.2.2 Instrument

The open-ended nature of the single question allowed participants to consider all possibilities describing teachers who bully. This open-ended response included university students' personal history as a student. Definitions of teacher bullying were not provided for participants to reference. No restrictions were placed upon participants' memories or recall. Researchers did not attempt to validate participants' stories. Students' third-party or hearsay narratives were not included in the qualitative analysis. This means the participant had to either be a victim of bullying or first-hand observed a bullying event. Participants never personally experiencing a bullying event or never observing another student being bullied by a teacher, checked a box describing this "lack of observed bullying behavior". This was done to identify the total population of students who "never experienced bullying."

3. Results

3.1 Study One

3.1.1 Data Analysis

For all measures, participants rated responses less than a score of three ($1.29 \geq 2.37$). Participants reported infrequent involvement in bullying encounters. Cumulatively, 84% of respondents indicated verbal or non-verbal intellectual bullying occurred some of the time, rarely, or none of the time. The mean score for all categories of intellectual bullying was less than 2.43. Smaller numbers indicate absence of bullying. These data indicate intellectual bullying behaviors rarely occurred or were non-existent.

In the category of emotional bullying, a cumulative frequency indicated more than 83% of participants reported non-verbal or verbal emotional bullying occurred some of the time, rarely, or none of the time. The mean score for all categories of emotional bullying was less than 2.37. Data indicate emotional bullying behaviors rarely occurred or were non-existent. With respect to reporting incidents of bullying, cumulatively, more than 89% ($M \geq 1.79$) indicated some of the time, or rarely, taking the responsibility to report incidents of observed bullying behaviors.

When participants were asked whether they had experienced bullying encounters with an instructor/coordinator or university instructor, data indicated cumulatively, 95% ($M \geq 1.55$) indicated some of the time or rarely did they experience incidents of bullying behaviors. Ninety-seven percent of respondents reported either some of the time, or rarely, reporting any incidents of bullying behaviors in this category.

There was less than 2% ($M \geq 1.40$) reporting of any experiences with physical bullying. Finally, data reveal no indication of administrators engaging in nonverbal bullying behaviors. However, bullying was described as a group process 80% ($M = 2.63$) of the time when it did occur.

The data suggest minimal incidents whereby educators were either perpetrators or bystanders to intellectual, emotional, or physical bullying encounters. If these data are to be accepted, classroom teachers are not bullies.

3.2 Study Two

3.2.1 Data Analysis

Narrative data were coded to generate categories emerging from the participants' responses. Content validity was determined by the multiple layers of Constant Comparative analysis (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The two researchers analyzed all surveys using a layered approach. Initially, the two coders independently read through the data multiple times and identified common themes/categories. A range of categories began to represent the teacher candidate-participants' shared bullying stories. The two researchers then read through all data as a collaborative team. Through ongoing discussion, data determined category names by providing participants' narratives as examples. Finally, interpretations

were reviewed for any potential inconsistencies.

In addition to the open-ended response, the survey allowed for participants to initially check one of three descriptors to indicate their perception of how often teacher bullying occurs. A total of 341 completed the survey and responded to the statement to reveal their belief regarding teacher bullying. Sixty-five (19%) students reported they believed teacher bullying occurs rarely while only seven participants (2%) indicated that they had never seen, heard or been a victim of teacher bullying. One hundred-forty (41%) of students indicated that they believe teacher bullying occurs sometimes while 120 (35%) indicated that they believe teacher bullying occurs more frequently than people want to admit. The remaining nine (3%) students did not provide an answer to this statement. Based on these data, roughly three-fourth of respondents indicated, at the least, some degree of awareness that teacher bullying occurs.

In the open-ended section of the survey, students were provided opportunity to comment on their experiences with teachers who bully. Forty-five students indicated that they never observed teacher bullying, while 63 students indicated no personal encounter with teacher bullying. One hundred fifty-two students reported that they had personally experienced bullying directly or indirectly. Consistent with the existing literature, two students equated bullying to “tough love”. This is the case when a teacher is seemingly too hard on a particular student. The remaining respondents did not provide data for this question.

Using the constant comparative analysis, the authors identified three primary categories describing teachers’ bullying behaviors. Within each of the primary behavioral categories, applying the participants’ responses, authors were able to further describe sub-categories of behavior within each of the broader labels.

Primary categories were identified as Verbal, Shaming, and Targeting. Subcategories within each primary category included: calling-out, singling-out, and humor (Verbal); demeaning, embarrassing, humiliating, and belittling (Shaming); and finally power, and differences (Targeting).

For the subcategory “differences”, participants’ comments further delineated subcategories for the ways in which teachers targeted students’ differences. The extended subcategories for the subcategory “differences” included physical appearance, diversity difference, and ability difference.

For the Verbal bullying subcategory “calling out”, one university student-participant wrote: “In elementary school, I remember having a couple of teachers who would call students dumb or stupid in front of the whole class”. Another university student-participant commented: “I’ve witnessed teachers bullying students that aren’t the best of students by making fun of them and always calling them out”. In Verbal bullying subcategory “single out” a university student-participant commented; I have been part of a class where the teacher always picked on one student no matter what that student was doing. The teacher always had something negative to say. Likewise, another university student-participant said:

“I have been bullied by a teacher. I was in high school and this teacher seemed to have it out for me. She would yell at me in front of the class if I asked a question that required her to repeat the instruction.” In the third Verbal bullying subcategory “humor”, a university student-participant said: “I have seen teachers playing jokes with students sometimes that can be taken too far or taken the wrong way”.

Regarding bullying activities within the Shaming subcategory “demeaning”, one university student-participant wrote, “I once had a teacher in fourth grade yelling in my ear for answering a question incorrectly. I’ve seen a teacher give Smarties candy to smart kids and ‘Dumdum’ lollipops to the dumb kids.” In the Shaming subcategory of “embarrassment”, a university student-participant wrote, “I can’t think of an exact time, but I have seen teachers call students out too much. To the point I think, the teacher is purposefully embarrassing the student”. An additional example of a university student-participant’s comment said, “I had a teacher that I knew of who would talk down to the kids and told them that they would not do well in life.” In Shaming subcategory “humiliation”, a university student-participant wrote, “Once my teacher became frustrated. She walked me down to a kindergarten classroom and said, ‘If you don’t understand something this simple, this is the kind of class you belong in’”. Finally, in the Shaming subcategory “belittle”, a university student-participant wrote, “I have witnessed several teachers at a school belittle the students. They would yell at them, they did not consider that sometimes they did not understand what the teacher was saying because they spoke different languages other than English”.

In the third category of Targeting, several university student-participants reported experiencing teacher bullying. In the subcategory “power”, one university student-participant wrote, “There were several instances in high school when some teachers who abused their power and picked on certain students who gave them trouble. Instead of helping a troublesome student, they seemed to target them during class”. Another university student-participant commented, “I’ve noticed before some students getting higher grades if the teacher likes them and others getting lower grades when a teacher does not like them”. Another university student-participant wrote, “Teachers verbally attack students and use their authority to make it seem like it is not bullying. I have had teachers who publically shame students for their personal business and make them feel bad about themselves”. Another university student-participant reported, “I have seen where the teacher will have favorites and if they are not his or her favorites and treat the other students worse and bully them for grades”. An additional university student-participant stated, “In fifth grade a teacher, made fun of me in class. He also threw markers at us for certain reasons”. For the primary category, Targeting, subcategories include “difference” and “appearance”. One university student-participant stated, “My teacher in elementary school used to make fun of how my legs were shaped. He called me turkey legs”. Another university student-participant wrote, “I got bullied because of my big curly hair in middle school”. Another

university student-participant wrote, “When I was in middle school, the PE teacher would make several comments about my weight. That led to students in class saying it too”.

Data also indicated that there were several comments describing diversity with respect to English as Second Language (ESL) students and students who appeared to have ability differences. A university student-participant wrote, “I’ve seen several teachers before mentally bully one student. Unfortunately the students were mainly those students who may have learned a little slower than everyone else or just could not learn what the teacher taught. The teacher would use words as losers or tell the students they were losers or telling the students they would never become anything”.

Third-hand reports of teacher bullying were not included in the analysis. Participants either directly observed the bullying event or were victims of a teacher who bullied.

3.2.2 Limitations

Researchers acknowledge time and memory may be potential mediating influences. Furthermore, researchers acknowledge the two populations for Study One and Two are different and cannot be directly compared. Yet, the question remains why a closed population of “practicing” teachers observed minimal to no observed teacher bullying behaviors, while the second population of university teacher education students described a range of bullying behaviors. In order to maximize the positive learning experiences for all children, authors argue further research identifying and describing teachers who bully is warranted.

4. Discussion

Twemlow et al. (2006) describe teacher bullying as an attitudinal characteristic. Emerging from a coercive power dynamic established during childhood experiences, family roles, and school environments, children, victims of status in-balance, appear to be more likely to be trapped in future bully-victim interactions. Toward improving the lives of children, this would involve changing victim and bully roles as well as being more alert to the bullying of others. Further, Twemlow et al. (2006) also describe reasons for teachers’ bullying behaviors including lack of administrative support, inadequate classroom management strategies, and fear of injury by students, large class sizes, and teacher envy of smart students. These indicators describe the daily reality of the contemporary classroom.

If the findings from Study One are to be accepted, teachers do not verbally or nonverbally harass students, teachers do not threaten or inappropriately compel students’ intellect, and teachers do not compromise the students’ emotional well-being. In collecting data for Study One, a principal denied data collection because she claimed, “the act of bullying among the staff at this school is non-existent and to give this survey is nonsense”. While some administrators may believe their staff members do not demonstrate bullying behaviors, why deny the opportunity to substantiate the claim. This particular

principal's perspective was affirmed by Study One; teachers do not bully children.

Study Two data clearly described the several ways in which teachers bully children. Assuming the lens of the university student-participants' histories and not the classroom teachers' perspectives, Study Two narratives overwhelmingly described how teachers bully children from preschool through university.

Interestingly, although the university student-participants in Study 2 were not previously provided with McEvoy's (2005) definitions of bullying, their open-ended responses consistently aligned with McEvoy's indicators. Additionally, university student-participants' narratives overwhelmingly described how teacher bullying was framed as a public event. The bullying actions were seen and heard by other students and teachers.

Even if a student is not directly targeted as a victim by the teacher, because of the balance of power, all students are vulnerable. Consequently, students are reluctant to support their peers or, as victims, are unable to speak out against the teacher. Students understand the role of teacher to be associated with power, influence, and authority. In several of the university student-participants' narratives, there was an implied reference to power.

There were several descriptions of teachers throwing items at students. One student-participant said that the teacher was frustrated because students were not doing homework, so through his gradebook across the room. This same teacher also through a dry erase marker at a student who was not paying attention and as well threw a chair across the front of the classroom. Another university student-participant stated witnessing a teacher throwing things at students with no specific description of the object.

Furthermore, university student-participants' narratives described teachers targeting students with respect to their appearance, diversity, and ability differences. For a variety of reasons, many children are unable to maintain the grade-level standards. University student-participants' narratives described how students' intellectual capacity, language difference, and/or maturity level became the target for teacher ridicule.

Regardless of individual student difference, the role of the teacher is to support, instruct, and guide students. Negotiating a range of diverse students' needs and abilities is not extraordinary, it is what teachers do. As a professional, teachers do not exhibit frustration, anger, or preference.

Mainstream media and other news agencies (Copeland et al., 2013; Bradshaw, 2013) devoted considerable airtime broadcasting issues related to bullying among school-age students. It is well documented that health issues and suicides among school-age students are closely associated with bullying victimization. Popular media highlighted incidents of peer-on-peer bullying encounters resulting with the mainstream population responding with shock and horror. Parents asked, "How is this possible?"

Students, educators, and administrators have long known children are bullied by other children.

However, not until the recent media focus did the peer-on-peer bullying issue motivate school leaders and officials to create anti-bullying programs. Why were educators, those in the schools each day, not the first to discuss the peer-on-peer bullying issue? Is this similar to what happened in Study One? Once you are a member of the school community, is there a lack of institutional introspection to identify weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and problems within your own profession?

Study One data clearly reported teachers do not bully. Yet, for Study Two, university participants, who were still students, described a range of teacher-bullying from the early years to university. The difference between the two populations, practicing teachers and teacher candidates, provided incongruent and contrasting perspectives.

Is it not reasonable to ask if there are some teachers who are unprepared or ill-equipped to effectively and compassionately interact with diverse student populations? In the future, will it be left to popular media to continue the bullying discussion to include classroom teachers? Alternatively, can practicing teachers and teacher education programs collaborate and monitor the profession?

When children are systematically ridiculed, harassed, or left vulnerable to others, the outcomes are significant and long-term. This is especially devastating when the bully represents authority, power, and influence. Authors believe teachers are responsible, not only for the academic delivery of material, but also are obliged to ensure the emotional, physical, and intellectual safety of all children.

In an effort to understand the teacher bullying phenomenon, the school community is obliged to consider this potential threat to children. Until this discussion begins, children are vulnerable. In order to manage students, some educators praise teachers who use tough language, strong intimidation, and harsh posturing. In contrast, compassionate management and effective instructional behaviors are designed to invite and involve students; bullying disengages children. Yet, in the current study, another reason for lack of reporting of bullying incidents might be because identifying bullies may seem to be an act of anti-collegial behavior. In almost all instances, faculty and staff are expected to support and nurture one another. Reporting wrongful incidents often becomes a silent issue in order to prevent being labeled in a negative or non-supportive manner. In Study One, practicing teachers denied any bullying by their colleagues. This notion teachers may be reticent to “whistle blow” on their colleagues is supported by the literature describing bullying as a social and group experience. Yet, university teacher education students, in Study Two, well described a range of teacher bullying behaviors. Is the difference that, as students, they are not yet “a part” of the system and are more ready to describe the injustice?

5. Contributions

Initially, the purpose of the first study was to describe what teachers reported with respect to different types of teacher bullying behaviors; minimal evidence for teacher bullying was generated from the

teacher data set. Lack of data is not necessarily lack of evidence. Despite the dismissive findings from Study One, researchers were not convinced some educators do not bully students. Researchers wondered, in preparing Study Two, if teacher candidates, not yet professionals in a school community, might be more willing to report events of observed bullying by teachers. Collecting data from this university student population clearly demonstrated examples of teachers' emotional, physical, and intellectual bullying.

Current revisions in teacher education programs, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, systematically incorporate the use of dispositional standards. This means, a teacher candidate may earn an adequate GPA for admission to a teacher education program, but without satisfactory dispositions, may be forwarded for remediation. Findings report that most problems arising in the student teaching semester are a consequence of inappropriate dispositions (Brabeck & Koch, 2013). Teacher education programs scaffold the understanding for planning, instruction, and assessment of learning and teaching, but it is the candidates who must as well inherently possess the core dispositions to consistently respond to their future children with empathy, respect, and regard. A teacher's concept of self, competency in the profession, and ability to relate with diverse others are critical in resolving the issues related to teachers who bully.

Implications for Future Research

Reflecting upon an educator's potential influence on children's academic learning and emotional well-being highlights the need to identify key aspects related to school personnel. For this reason, it is important for public school faculty to be knowledgeable with respect to the range, types, and roles associated with the bullying phenomenon. In order to maintain standards and ensure the protection of children, self-examination and monitoring related to teachers who bully warrant further discussion.

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