

UNDERSTANDING BYSTANDER PERCEPTIONS OF CYBERBULLYING IN  
INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM SETTINGS

by

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A Dissertation  
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Doctor of Philosophy at George Mason University

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## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated to my husband Curtis, and my four children Ashley, Samantha, Autumn, and Blake. You have inspired me to reach for the stars. I am forever thankful for your love, support, and encouragement.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **UNDERSTANDING BYSTANDER PERCEPTIONS OF CYBERBULLYING IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM SETTINGS**

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George Mason University, 2013

Dissertation Director: Dr. Margo A. Mastropieri

Cyberbullying is a pervasive problem that puts students at risk of successful academic outcomes and the ability to feel safe in school. As most students with disabilities are served in inclusive classrooms, there is a growing concern that students with special needs are at an increased risk of online bullying harassment. Enhancing responsible bystander behavior can be an effective factor in combating cyberbullying. This qualitative case study examined bystander perceptions of cyberbullying of 11 students with and without disabilities and 9 general and special educators from 14 different schools located on the Eastern seaboard. Specifically, a case study analysis including interviews, artifacts, and member checks was completed using a grounded theory and constant comparative method of analysis. Four key themes related to cyberbullying were identified: (a) conditions facilitate cyberbullying among students with and without disabilities in inclusive settings, (b) awareness of cyberbullying influences perceptions, (c) key factors influence bystander perceptions and reactions, and (d) adolescent

bystanders react as active interveners, passive witnesses, and bystander bullies, while teachers are proactive or reactive. Implications for research, policy, schools, and teachers are discussed. Limitations and suggestions for future research are also presented.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides background for the research questions: What are bystander perceptions of cyberbullying of students, parents, and educators in middle school inclusive classrooms? How do these bystanders perceive cyberbullying, both personally and professionally? How do these bystanders react to cyberbullying, both personally and professionally? What factors influence bystander perceptions and reactions? It also provides a context for the literature review provided in Chapter Two. To assist with terminology, this chapter includes a section entitled Definition of Terms. Overall this chapter addresses (a) General Statement of the Problem, (b) Background of the Problem, (c) Rationale, (d) Gaps in the Literature, (e) Purpose of the Study and Research Questions, and (f) Definition of Terms.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Traditionally, our nation's schools have recognized bullying as a behavior that occurs face to face. However, due to the dramatic increase of students' use and access to Internet and cell phone technology, there has been an increase in a serious form of bullying called cyberbullying (Li, 2007). Cyberbullying is defined as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying facilitates anonymity and provides the means by which bullies can reach a wide audience in a short

amount of time. The general consensus of research shows that despite the differences in the two forms of bullying, “online bullying is accounted for within the baseline definition of offline bullying” (Levy et al., 2012, p. 11).

Research suggests online bullying and offline bullying can be related as sometimes victims know the online bully from their offline world (Levy et al., 2012). Findings from a large school-based census on more than 20,000 youths revealed that approximately two thirds of the victims of traditional bullying were also victims of cyberbullying (Schneider, O’Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012). Victims of both cyberbullying and traditional bullying have been found to be at a greater risk of suicidal ideation (Klomek et al., 2009; Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, 2011), especially during middle school years (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b). Moreover, researchers indicate that bullied students can experience psychosomatic symptoms similar to child abuse victims such as inability to sleep, anxiety, bedwetting, abdominal pain, depression, loneliness, low self-esteem, and increased fear for personal safety (Abrams, 2012; Arseneault et al., 2006; Gini & Pozzoli, 2009; Mason, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). Based on a metasynthesis of 25 articles on cyberbullying victimization, cybervictims experience a variety of academic problems such as reduced grades, increased absences, skipping class, detentions, and suspensions (Tokunaga, 2010). Therefore, the research suggests that students who are victimized are at risk of successful academic outcomes and the ability to feel safe in school.

Cyberbullying victimization can effect approximately 20% of middle and high school students (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b). As most students with disabilities are served



in the general education classroom (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2011), there is a growing concern that students with special needs in inclusive settings are at an increased risk of offline and online bullying harassment (Swearer, Wang, Maag, Siebecker, & Frerichs, 2012). Research on traditional bullying indicates that students with disabilities are victimized more often than their general education peers (Rose, Monda-Amaya, & Espelage, 2011). For example, Rose, Espelage, and Monda-Amaya (2009) found that 18.5% of students with disabilities in inclusive settings self-report being victims of bullying. Additionally, approximately 13% of students with and without disabilities in American schools exhibit bullying characteristics (Nansel et al., 2001). Although research suggests that cyberbullying will increase as the influence of technology continues to grow among adolescents (Bauman & Pero, 2011), there is very little cyberbullying research specifically focusing on students in secondary inclusive settings (Tokunaga, 2010).

Even though 48 states have enacted antibullying statutes, 38 of which include some treatment of cyberbullying (Sacco, Silbaugh, Corredor, Casey, & Doherty, 2012), many of the existing school antibullying policies are not successful in reducing bullying in schools (Hong & Espelage, 2012). When the growing problem of cyberbullying is considered, there is limited information on how school policies should address this phenomenon (Levy et al., 2012). However, current state legislation asserts that “harassment, intimidation or bullying and cyberbullying, like other disruptive or violent behavior, are conduct that disrupts a student’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate its students in a safe environment” (School Attendance; Admission; Discipline;

Safety, 2011). As the impact of cyberbullying can be just as harmful as traditional bullying, consideration must be given to cyberbullying, especially as it relates to students with and without disabilities in inclusive classroom settings.

### **Background of the Problem**

Historically, bullying and victimization have been regarded as a rite of passage during adolescence (Carter & Spencer, 2006; Dawkins, 1996; Thompson, Whitney, & Smith, 1994). Today, bullying is one of the most widespread behavior problems in American schools (Rose et al., 2011). Involvement in bullying has been linked to school adjustment problems (Espelage & Swearer, 2003) and poor mental health outcomes during adulthood years (Sourander, 2009). Olweus, a Norwegian researcher, defined the term *bullying* as an intentional aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power, which may be social or physical and perpetrated repeatedly over time (Olweus, 1993). This harmful antisocial behavior negatively impacts the school environment, affecting students' academic and social outcomes, causing emotional and psychological trauma, and in some cases leading to extreme violence and suicidal ideation (Cooper, Clements, & Holt, 2012; David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a; Ybarra, Alexander, & Mitchell, 2005; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).

Initial research on bullying at school was conducted in countries such as Norway, Australia, and the United Kingdom (Olweus, 1993, 1994; Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004); however, bullying at school was not a major national issue in the United States until the Columbine shootings in 1999 (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). The correlation between extreme violence and bullying drew national awareness when the United States Secret

Service and Department of Education revealed that two thirds of the 37 school shootings in the United States between 1974 and 2000 were associated with previous acts of bullying (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2004). The Safe School Initiative government campaign found that approximately 71% of the school shooters had previously been victimized (Vossekuil et al., 2004).

Following the Safe School Initiative, a national survey investigating bully prevalence rates indicated approximately 30% of the school-age population experienced bullying as a bully, victim, or bully-victim (Nansel et al., 2001). In a more recent national study of 2,400 6- to 17-year-olds, findings revealed between 34 to 42% of youths were bullied in the past year (Ybarra, Boyd, Korchmaros, & Oppenheim, 2012). In addition, data from the School Survey on Crime and Safety conducted by the U.S. Department of Education found that nearly 25% of public school principals reported bullying as a daily to weekly occurrence (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, & Snyder, 2009).

Widely publicized incidents involving cyberbullying have recently drawn public attention to a new form of bullying among adolescents. One of the first was reported in 2003 and involved a 13-year-old Vermont middle school student, Ryan Patrick Halligan, who took his own life after suffering severe bullying by peers at school and online. More recently, in 2010, 15-year-old Phoebe Prince, an immigrant from Ireland, committed suicide after she was tormented online and offline by classmates when she arrived as a new girl at her school in Massachusetts (Kennedy, 2010). Although these cases are extreme, they add to a list of several other bullying-related suicides (Cooper et al., 2012) and have caused states to strengthen bullying laws to add specific consequences for

electronic harassment. For example, in 2009, North Carolina passed a law to criminalize cyberbullying, making it a misdemeanor for adolescents under 18 (Alcindor, 2012). As of 2012, 38 states have provided some treatment of cyberbullying in their definitions of bullying (Sacco et al., 2012).

While states move to tighten bullying laws, schools are not yet equipped with effective strategies and interventions to deal with online and offline bullying (Li, 2006). To illustrate, Tylar Sommers, a 17-year-old Freedom High School student from Loudon County, Virginia, chose not to walk with her graduating class to protest her school administration's lack of support when she was bullied online and offline by a group of mean girls from her school. Tylar also has a hearing disability that required her to have an assistant in the room during certain classes, making it impossible to escape the two classes she shared with her bullies (Peters, 2012). Although Freedom High School reports participating in the national bullying campaign, Hero in the Hallway, it is apparent that there is still a need for more effective school intervention and prevention efforts to better protect youth with and without disabilities in inclusive classroom settings (Raskauskas & Modell, 2011).

### **Involvement of Students With Disabilities**

Although proponents of inclusion maintain that inclusive classroom settings offer students with special learning needs greater opportunities for peer supports and friendships (Stainback & Stainback, 1996), recent research shows that students with disabilities have been shown to be at increased risk of being teased and bullied more often by their peers (Luciano & Savage, 2007). For example, in a seminal study

examining victimization rates of 93 students and their demographically matched peers in an inclusive setting, Whitney, Smith, and Thompson (1994), found that 55% of students with mild learning disabilities and 78% of students with moderate learning disabilities experienced victimization levels ranging from moderate to severe. Conversely, these researchers found that only 25% of their demographically matched peer group reported being victimized in the same setting. More recently, Rose et al. (2009) found that 18.5% of students with disabilities in inclusive settings self-report being victims of bullying. In addition, a recent study of 42 youth in 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades revealed students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and/or Asperger's Syndrome experienced greater online and offline victimization (Kowalski & Fedina, 2011). Other studies report that students with learning disabilities (LD) attending inclusive classrooms have been found to be at an increased risk of being bullied by peers (Martlew & Hodson, 1991; Mishna, 2003; Whitney et al., 1994).

Research shows that the risk of victimization is related to deficits in social competence, academic difficulties, disruptive behavior, language impairment, and low self-esteem (Rose, Allison, & Simpson, 2012; Rose et al., 2011). Further, these deficits have been linked to peer rejection, which often prevents students with LD from developing friendships that could protect them from bully perpetration (Luciano & Savage, 2007). However, some researchers suggest that students with disabilities exhibit more bullying and aggressive behaviors than student without disabilities (Hong & Espelage, 2011).

## **Federal and State Legislation and Bullying**

Federal and state legislation on bullying are still evolving. Currently, the laws hold schools responsible for preventing and responding to bullying. They also outline institutional arrangements for policies concerning bullying among state agencies, school districts, and schools. However, it is important to understand that these laws must be taken into consideration with our Constitution as well as civil and criminal laws and regulations (Sacco et al., 2012). For example, federal laws mandate schools' legal and ethical responsibility for preventing and responding to bullying:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination based on disability by recipients of federal financial assistance. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination based on disability by any public entity, including public schools. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) entitles students with disabilities a free and appropriate education. Finally, Title IX of the Education Amendment is applicable when sexual harassment is part of bullying. Title IX is also relevant when a child with disabilities is bullied on the basis of their appearance, behavior, or failure to meet stereotyped notions of gender. (Schoen & Schoen, 2010, p. 70-71)

## **Understanding What Works**

Today, educational policy hinges on accountability. As such, our nation's widespread use of zero tolerance policies, established in the early 1990s as an approach to drug enforcement and later adopted for school violence and bullying, have been evaluated and proven ineffective (Skiba et al., 2006). According the Zero Tolerance Task

Force commissioned by the American Psychological Association, zero tolerance disciplinary philosophies and policies are intended to deter disruptive behavior through the application of severe and punitive punishment (Skiba et al., 2006). Researchers have found that students who were suspended or expelled for reasons that may have included bullying were more likely to repeat a grade, drop out, or be sent to the juvenile justice system. These findings assert punitive responses, such as removing students from school, do not improve educational opportunities, but instead may lead to future behavioral problems and risk factors (Fabelo & Center, 2011).

### **Rationale**

When the growing problem of cyberbullying is considered, there is limited information on how school policies should address online bullying (Levy et al., 2012). In addition, the body of literature is extremely limited concerning cyberbullying intervention and prevention strategies, especially in secondary inclusive settings. Research reveals that victims most often choose to tell a friend or no one and perceive adults to be disengaged and unaware of cyberbullying (Slonje & Smith, 2008). Despite the widespread problem of cyberbullying, most parents, teachers, and peers are taking on the role of the passive bystander (Agatston & Limber, 2011). However, research shows that bystanders, who are the biggest group in school bullying, actually play pivotal roles in the bullying process and can influence the intensity and outcome of bullying (Tsang, Hui, & Law, 2011). Furthermore, antibullying interventions that target bystanders have shown promising results for changing school norms (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010).

Currently, the general education classroom serves more students with disabilities than ever, with only a small proportion receiving more than 60% of their education outside the general education classroom (USDOE, 2011). Research suggests that if students with disabilities are not fully integrated into their peer groups, inclusive settings may maintain or intensify victimization (Martlew & Hodson, 1991). In addition, some researchers show that students with disabilities may develop aggressive behaviors as a coping strategy to frequent victimization (Kumpulainen, Rasanen, & Purura, 2001; O'Moore & Hillery, 1989; Singer, 2005; Van Cleave & Davis in 2006; as cited in Rose et al., 2011). In the inclusive classroom, "teachers are responsible for monitoring student behavior, setting classroom rules, reinforcing positive behavior, and imposing disciplinary consequences for inappropriate behavior" (Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012, p. 353). Moreover, because of their specialized training, special educators play an important role in modeling and encouraging prosocial bystander behavior among adolescents in inclusive settings.

However, research shows that teachers lack knowledge and training in bully prevention (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2012; Li, 2008; Spears, Slee, Owens, & Johnson, 2009; Yilmaz, 2010). As of January 2012, only 10 states required schools or school districts to provide professional development or training on their school district's bullying policy, including reporting and response procedures. In addition, in a recent overview of existing state antibullying laws, 16 states required that school or school districts provide staff with professional development in bullying prevention (Sacco et al., 2012).



As Stueve et al. (2006) assert, bystanders are not limited to students but also include adults such as parents and teachers who not only observe bullying in real time but may also possess information such as overheard conversations, veiled threats, and changes in behavior that suggest bullying is likely. Cyberbullying is rapidly growing among adolescents with and without disabilities in the secondary inclusive classroom. While most students with disabilities are served in the regular education classroom, there is a need for a better understanding of cyberbullying strategies and interventions that encourage positive bystander behavior. Smith, Dempsey, Jackson, Olenchak, and Gaa (2012) assert that cyberbullying must be understood in terms of the contexts that influence and contribute to it. Understanding bystander perceptions and behaviors is particularly important because (a) they normally outnumber the bullies and victims, (b) they can influence the outcome and intensity of bullying, and (c) they can help reduce or even stop bullying. Therefore, bystander perceptions regarding cyberbullying warrant further investigation.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

Most of the research on traditional bullying may well pertain to cyberbullying. However, to date, there is very little research concerning cyberbullying among students with and without disabilities in inclusive classroom settings. Although inconclusive, most of the research on cyberbullying focuses on prevalence rates of the demographic variables of age and gender (Levy et al., 2012), and general characterizations and role identification of bullies, victims, and bully-victims (Law, Shapka, Domene, & Gagne, 2012). As Levy et al. (2012) note, “relatively few U. S. studies focus specifically on the

more detailed role and dynamics of bystanders' actions" (p. 22). One recent study was identified surveying youth ages 12 to 17 on their bystander actions. This study found that 90% of youth report that when they witness online cruelty, they ignore it. This study also found that when witnessing cyberbullying, 80% have defended the victims, 70% told the other person to stop being mean, 67% witnessed others joining in, and 21% admitted they joined with the bullying (Lenhart et al., 2011). However, after a review of the literature base on cyberbullying, no studies were found that specifically focus on the involvement of bystanders among students with and without disabilities in secondary inclusive settings. The emerging body of research on bystanders in online bullying is becoming a subject of increasing interest; however, more needs to be investigated specifically examining the factors that influence bystander reactions.

As teens today are embedded in an online culture in which they constantly communicate through social media, email, and texts, they are increasingly at risk for being involved in cyberbullying (Mason, 2008). Recent research conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Foundation (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010) found that 75% of teenagers between the ages 12 and 17 own cell phones, with 88% of these teens using text messaging to communicate. In fact, these researchers found that one in three teens send more than 100 text messages a day or 3,000 texts a month. Cell phones provide a source of Internet access to underprivileged teens who are less likely to have a computer source in their home. As cell phones have expanded functionally, most teens use them to take pictures, share pictures, exchange videos, instant message, use email, and access their social network sites inside and outside of school settings. While there are

many opportunities and benefits involved with Internet use and the various communication technologies, there has also been an escalating number of cyberbullying incidents that are increasingly becoming a problem for parents, adolescents, and schools (Law et al., 2012).

### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this case study was to describe the experience of being a bystander to cyberbullying, especially from the perspective of students and educators in secondary inclusive classrooms. A bystander of cyberbullying can be defined as someone who has witnessed past or present occurrences of cyberbullying or someone who may possess information (e.g., overheard conversations, veiled threats, changes in behavior, and/or evidence of online aggression which may include screen shots, pictures, or verbal reports of online forms of aggression) (Stueve et al., 2006; Willard, 2007). The following research questions guided this study.

1. What are bystander perceptions of cyberbullying of students with and without disabilities and general and special educators in secondary school inclusive classrooms?
2. How do these bystanders perceive cyberbullying, both personally and professionally?
3. How do these bystanders react to cyberbullying, both personally and professionally?
4. What factors influence bystander perceptions and reactions?

## Definition of Terms

*Bullying*: an intentional aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power, which may be social or physical and perpetrated repeatedly over time toward a weaker peer (Olweus, 1993).

*Bystander*: a witness of bullying or cyberbullying in real time or someone who may possess information (e.g., overheard conversations, veiled threats, changes in behavior, and/or evidence of online aggression which may include screen shots or verbal reports of online forms of aggression) (Stueve et al., 2006; Willard, 2007).

*Cyberbullying*: intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

*Emoji*: an option on most smart phones providing minipictures to be selected in place of a word, usually used to convey emotion.

*Facebook*: a social networking service and website launched in 2004 (“Facebook,” n.d.). Facebook allows people age 13 and up to share pictures, videos, comments, and messages to the public via their personal profile.

*Facebook Chat*: an instant messaging system used directly from Facebook to message one’s friends or groups of friends online.

*Formspring*: a website where the user is allowed to create a page purposely used to receive questions or statements by any anonymous person direct toward the user. The user then is able to respond to the question or statement.

*Hashtag*: a trending topic accompanied by the “pound” (#) sign. When clicking on these, one can see what everyone on Twitter is also saying about the specific hashtag.

*Instagram*: a popular photo sharing application (“app”) where one can post photos with the option of applying a “filter” to edit the image. Users may also “like” and comment on their followers’ photos.

*Like*: A button one can press on Facebook or Instagram to show that a picture or a status update is “liked.”

*Myspace*: a popular social networking website (“Myspace,” n.d.).

*Profile*: a user-created webpage—customized—with the person’s background, interests, and friends reflecting who that person is or how that person would like to be seen.

*Snapchat*: An app in which one is able to send formal or informal pictures from a cell phone to a person or group of one’s choice. These pictures are shown for less than 10 seconds and can be accompanied by a caption. However, the photos are not saved to the sender’s or recipients’ cell phones and are gone forever after viewing.

*Social Networking Websites*: Online services that bring together people by organizing them around a common interest and providing an interactive environment of photos, blogs, user profiles, and messaging systems. Examples include Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

*Subtweet*: a Tweet that directly refers to another person without using his or her name, indicating the Tweet is a subliminal.

*Texting*: sending short messages via cell phone (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

*Text Message App*: an application that enables sending free brief text messages that cannot be monitored through the service holder.

*Twitter*: a social-networking service and website that limits the length of messages one can post to a certain number of characters (“Twitter,” n.d.).

*Types of Cyberbullying*: The following are from Willard (2007):

*Exclusion*: intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.

*Cyberstalking*: creating fear by repeatedly sending offensive messages and engaging in other harmful online activities.

*Denigration*: “dissing” (disrespecting) someone online by sending or posting gossip or rumors.

*Flaming*: online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.

*Harassment*: repeatedly sending offensive and insulting messages.

*Impersonation*: pretending to be someone else and posting material to damage that person’s reputation.

*Outing and Trickery*: disseminating intimate private information or talking someone into disclosing private information, which is then disseminated.

*Voxer*: a voice audio-messaging app where one can send short “walkie-talkie”-like messages to another user.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In an effort to help educators improve prevention approaches that address cyberbullying, the main purpose of this study was to describe the experience of being a bystander to cyberbullying, especially from the perspective of students with and without disabilities and general and special educators in secondary inclusive classrooms. Several studies in the literature indicate that bystanders, the largest group in bullying, can play pivotal roles in the bullying process and can influence its intensity and outcome (Tsang et al., 2011). One objective of this study was to understand what factors influence intervening behaviors of bystanders. Due to the fact that cyberbullying negatively affects students' academic and social outcomes, causes psychological stress, and leads to extreme violence and suicidal ideation, it is important to better understand this phenomenon from the perspective of teachers and students in secondary inclusive classrooms.

This chapter summarizes of the literature related to cyberbullying among adolescents in secondary school. The first section provides information on the literature search procedures. An overview of traditional bullying and cyberbullying, legislation, and school policy is outlined in the second section. The third section addresses ineffective and effective practices for bully prevention. The chapter concludes with a discussion of

the theoretical and conceptual framework used for this study; a rationale for this qualitative case study is presented.

### **Literature Search Procedures**

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across all major educational and psychological databases (PsycINFO, ERIC, Social Sciences Citation Index [SSCI], Dissertation Abstracts, and Digital Dissertations) to identify relevant cyberbullying studies using a combination of keywords, including, for example, *adolescents, aggression, bully, bullying, bystander, coping, cyberbullying, disabilities, educational policy, high school students, inclusive classroom, Internet bullying, learning disabilities, middle school, offline bullying, online bullying, participant roles, peers, prevention, qualitative, secondary school, special education, special education teachers, strategies, students with disabilities, teachers, technology, traditional bullying, victim, victim blame*. In addition, multiple and wildcard versions of these terms were employed. Ancestry and descendent searches were conducted on all collected articles and relevant inclusion review articles. Relevant articles were identified that represented cyberbullying among adolescents since Internet technology was most documented in research in 1998.

### **Growth of Technological Communication Among Adolescents**

The rapid increase of electronic and computer-based communication has changed the way adolescents communicate with one another. Adolescent use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) involves websites, instant messaging, web cams, emails, chat rooms, social networking sites, and text messaging (Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010). In a national study using surveys and focus groups, The Pew



Internet and American Life Project found that over 70% of teens own a cell phone and generally use it for other purposes that do not include placing phone calls (Lenhart et al., 2010). Findings from this study indicated that the frequency of texting was found to have overtaken the frequency of every other common form of interaction among adolescents and their friends. In a more recent survey of 799 teens ages 12 to 17, The Pew Internet and American Life Project found that 95% of teens communicate online and 80% of those online are users of social media sites. In addition, the results revealed that most teens use social network pages on a daily basis, and these sites serve as a medium for social activity that are used in both good and bad ways (Lenhart et al., 2011). This increasing reliance on technology has led to an increase in a new form of bullying called cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is nationally recognized as a pervasive problem affecting youth and their ability to learn and feel safe in school. During a White House conference on bullying prevention held on March 10, 2011, President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services called for more research informing the prevention of cyberbullying (Lee, 2011). In addition, the American Educational Research Association Task Force [AERA] on Bullying recognized cyberbullying as a serious form of bullying which educators need to better understand (American Educational Research Association, 2012). A recent review of the research literature conducted by the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University found limited information on cyberbullying prevention strategies (Levy et al., 2012). As Rose et al. (2012) assert, “one of the most pervasive, yet

neglected, problems impeding the social-emotional development of school-aged children is bully perpetration and victimization” (p. 383). As schools face the rapidly growing problem of cyberbullying, it is important to better understand this phenomenon.

### **Similarities and Differences of Offline and Online Bullying**

The following section defines traditional bullying and cyberbullying and describes their differences and similarities. Understanding traditional bullying will provide a way to better understand cyberbullying. There are various definitions of traditional bullying found in the literature. However, today, scholars generally recognize and accept one baseline definition of bullying at school, developed and introduced in the 1970s by Norwegian researcher Olweus (1994). Olweus developed this three-part definition in response to increased international societal and research interest on the schoolyard-bullying phenomenon. According to Olweus (1994), “a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions” (p. 1173). More specifically, Olweus describes that this definition involves three parts: (a) it is an intentional behavior, (b) it involves a power imbalance between an aggressor (individual or group) and a victim, (c) and it is repetitive in nature and occurs over time (1994; Levy et al., 2012). Olweus’ research on bullying and his antibullying program have been implemented and widely accepted internationally in schools to prevent and decrease bullying (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2006). Furthermore, Olweus asserts that that the definition of bullying does not apply to two individuals of the same physical or psychological ability or size that are engaged in these aggressive interactions (1993).

Multiple types of aggression are accounted for in bullying scenarios. For example, bullying may consist of physical contact, mean words, or obscene gestures (Olweus, 1994). Another unprovoked or goal-directed “proactive” aggression involves a bully who wants to gain power in social status (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). In addition, “reactive aggression” involves a defensive or angry reaction to a threatening or infuriating event (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Other forms of aggression known as “indirect” or “relational” involve rumors, gossip, and social exclusion (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Mishna, Cook, Saini, Wu, & MacFadden, 2010). Moreover, aggression or harassment is also referred to as “bias-based” bullying and involves discriminatory prejudice such as racism, sexism, and homophobic teasing (Russell, Sinclair, Poteat, & Koenig, 2012).

While much is known about the nature of traditional or offline bullying, research is only beginning to understand and define online or cyberbullying. As the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is rapidly increasing among adolescents, there has been a dramatic increase in reports of their use of technology to intimidate, harass, manipulate, and humiliate peers, with implications that this form of bullying may have more severe effects than traditional bullying because it can occur at any time (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Smith et al., 2008; Spears et al., 2009; Willard, 2007; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007).

Currently, the definitions of cyberbullying vary (see Table 1). Previous researchers have defined cyberbullying by adopting the components of the baseline definition of bullying with an addition of the involvement of ICTs (Levy et al., 2012). For example, several researchers define cyberbullying as “an individual or a group that is

willfully using information and communication involving electronic technologies to facilitate deliberate and repeated harassment or threat to another individual or group by sending or posting cruel text and/or graphics through technological means” (Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Ybarra and Mitchell 2004, as cited in Mason, 2008). Tokunaga (2010) suggests that researchers provide participants with an addendum to the definition that includes, “cyberbullying can occur through electronically mediated communication at school; however, cyberbullying behaviors commonly occur outside of school as well” (p. 278).

Table 1

*Definitions of Bullying*

Citation	Definition
Hinduja and Patchin, 2009, p. 184	Intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.
Willard, 2007, p. 1	Sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using the Internet or other digital technologies.
Tokunaga, 2010, p. 278	Any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others.
Patchin and Hinduja, 2012, p. 15	When someone repeatedly harasses, mistreats, or makes fun of another person online or while using cell phones or other electronic devices.
Smith et al., 2008, p. 376	An aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.
Dooley, Pyżalski, and Cross, 2009	Intentional harm through Internet or mobile practices; part of a repetitive pattern of negative offline or online actions; and performed in a relationship characterized by a power imbalance (based on real life power criteria such as physical strength or age and/or on ICT related criteria such as technological know-how and anonymity).

Today, technology makes bullying easier. Three specific characteristics inherent in ICTs increase the likelihood that they will be exploited for bullying purposes: (a) electronic bullies can remain virtually anonymous, (b) supervision is lacking in cyberspace, and (c) electronic devices allow individuals to contact others at all times and in all places (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006, p. 154). In a matter of seconds, anonymous, cruel, and harassing rumors can be spread throughout a school through a cell phone text message, with devastating effects on the victim (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Cyberbullying can be carried out in many ways through the use of computers and cell phones. Obscene, slanderous, and insulting pictures and/or messages can be sent through email, chat rooms, online bulletin boards, voting/rating web sites, blogging sites, virtual worlds, online gaming, instant messaging, social networking sites, text messages, and cell phones (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Mason, 2008). Common forms of cyberbullying among adolescents include cyberstalking, exclusion, flaming, harassment, and impersonation, and physical threats (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, Willard, 2007). Levy et al. (2012) report that bullying occurs more online than through phone calls and text messages.

According to Levy et al. (2012), comparing traditional and cyberbullying is difficult due to definitional issues because minimal research has focused on how the baseline component “intentional” applies to online bullying. In addition, some researchers argue that “imbalance of power” and “repetition” do not apply in cyberbullying (Levy et al., 2012). However, despite the differences, there is an overall consensus in the literature that “online bullying is accounted for within the baseline

definition of offline bullying” (Levy et al., 2012, p. 11). Furthermore, online and offline bullying often overlap and online victims tend to know their bully from the offline world (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Levy et al., 2012). According to Didden et al. (2009), “bullying may occur in traditional and electronic forms” (p. 147). In addition, research shows that traditional bullying and cyberbullying are correlated (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). For example, Hinduja and Patchin (2009) found that youth reporting bullying others offline were more than 2.5 times as likely to report bullying online.

Cyberbullying has unique characteristics that differentiate it from traditional bullying such as (a) anonymity and pseudonymity, (b) disinhibition, (c) lack of supervision, (d) viral nature, and (e) limitless victimization risk (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). The anonymity of the bully is one way that cyberbullying has been revealed as different (Levy et al., 2012), and often intensifies the threat of bullying, causing victims to feel powerless (Dooley et al., 2009). Cyberbullies can hide their identity when using cell phones and computers to bully, which relieves the bully from the constraints of society, conscience, morality, and ethic. Pseudonyms can be used in temporary email accounts, social networking websites, chat rooms, and other Internet venues. Malicious words that an individual would normally be ashamed or embarrassed to use in real life are no longer off-limits, even if that person is within close physical proximity of the victim (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). These researchers have found that cyberbullies are capable of “extreme viciousness and unconscionable textual violence” (p. 21). However, recent research suggests that anonymity of the bully is not as prevalent in online bullying. For example, findings from an anonymous survey on 1,400 teens ages 12 to 17 revealed

that approximately 73% of victims of cyberbullying knew their bully's identity (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). According to Ybarra and Mitchell (2004), approximately 84% of offenders knew their victim in person, while only 31% of victims knew their bully in person, indicating that power is exerted online through the ability to keep the offender's identity unknown (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).

Disinhibition frees the bully from the restraints of their behavior, often enabling them to hide behind a screen and interact more boldly with others (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Furthermore, disinhibition makes it more difficult to control impulse behavior and deal with immediate emotional, psychological, and physical effects of traditional bullying on their victim. Finally, there is no immediate feedback such as body language or facial expressions guiding the bully to know when enough is enough.

Furthermore, there is a lack of supervision of personal messages (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Malicious text messages and emails are often only viewed by the sender and the recipient. Computers and cell phones are increasingly in the private environment of the adolescent bedroom. As a result, parents are often unaware their child is involved in cyberbullying.

The viral nature of cyberbullying enables bullies to reach a large number of people in a short period of time (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Technology expedites sending slanderous rumors and obscene pictures. For example, text messages can be sent to an unlimited amount of people in seconds. A more recent type of cyberbullying called sexting provides the means for a student to send sexually explicit content of themselves and of other people to another student through digital means (Taylor, 2012). In addition,

pictures can be posted to websites and/or sent out to an entire school via email.

Unfortunately, online bullying is not confined to the school day or school campus and can make victims suffer through bullying that seems unending (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Also, the victimization risk is another difference in cyberbullying. Today, adolescents are inseparable from their cell phones, however this inseparability may also make them a perpetual target for victimization (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). In addition, coordination of a cyberbullying assault by multiple aggressors is also more convenient and unconstrained by a physical space. Therefore, even if the victim is careful to avoid the path of the bully, this does not prevent the chances he or she will be cyberbullied.

Another difference between online and offline bullying is power. While power in traditional bullying might be physical or social, research suggested that online power can stem from proficiency in utilizing technology (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). In addition, unlike offline bullies, online bullies often feel a reduced sense of responsibility and accountability (Schneider et al., 2012). However, some researchers suggested that power is not a component of cyberbullying because negative online interactions can easily be terminated by the victim, unlike bullying in the schoolyard where victims cannot easily escape their perpetrators (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006). Nevertheless, Wolak et al. (2007) indicated that episodes of online victimization cannot be easily terminated because of the difficulty involved with removing information from the Internet. The ubiquitous nature of cyberbullying suggests that its effects could be equally, if not more



detrimental than traditional bullying; however the evidence to establish whether cyberbullying is more or less harmful is limited.

### **Prevalence and Effects of Cyberbullying**

The following section discusses the prevalence and effects of cyberbullying. The research literature indicated that traditional bullying has been associated with harmful outcomes, “ranging from academic deficits and school avoidance to difficulties with depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, and social relationships for victims” (Rose et al., 2012, p. 383). Similar effects have also been revealed in studies investigating cyberbullying (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Schneider et al., 2012). Although the research is limited, studies indicated that cyberbullying is a prevalent form of bullying inside and outside of school (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2007; and Ybarra, Boyd, Korchmaros, & Oppenheim, 2012). The research literature is also inconclusive concerning the prevalence of gender and age in cyberbullying among adolescents (Levy et al., 2012). Based on the most current review of the literature, Levy et al. (2012) concluded it is yet to be determined whether gender can be linked to the frequency of perpetration or victimization of cyberbullying. However, some researchers suggested that girls are more involved in cyberbullying than boys (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). While some researchers (Tokunaga, 2010; Williams & Guerra, 2007) have suggested that cyberbullying is more prevalent among middle school ages, Levy et al.’s (2012) review of the literature found that the research was inconclusive and inconsistent on the ages at which cyberbullying was most prevalent (Levy et al., 2012). The following studies investigated the prevalence and effects of cyberbullying among adolescents.

Beran and Li (2005) investigated the frequency and reactions of cyberbullying among 432 seventh to ninth grade adolescents in nine middle schools located in Canada using a 15-item survey which included both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Results indicated that 35% of participants reported being cyberbullied at least once or twice, 23% reported being cyberbullied several times, and 42% reported never experiencing cyberbullying. Of the 23% of students who had been cyberbullied several times, 57% reported feeling angry, and 36% reported feeling sad and hurt. Regarding how students were affected by cyberbullying, more than half of the victims (57%) stated that they felt angry on several occasions, and about one third (36%) reported feeling sad and hurt. In fact, several victims of cyberharassment indicated feeling anxiety and fear that may have impaired their ability to concentrate and succeed academically. This study suggested that cyberbullying is a problem in school settings and indicates the need to raise the awareness of the effects of cyberbullying in middle schools (grades 7 to 9) and involving effective cyberbullying prevention and intervention strategies.

In another study, Hoff and Mitchell (2009) examined 351 students using a mixed method survey design with limited choice, scaled response, and open-ended questions. Participants were first- and second-year undergraduate students attending a public university in the New England region of the United States. These participants reported on cyberbullying incidents that they experienced in precollege years. Of the participants, 60% were female and 40% were male with an average age of 19 years.

Findings revealed that cyberbullying affected approximately 56% of the students and 89% knew someone who had been a target of cyberbullying. In addition, victims

reported experiencing several negative psychological effects as a result of cyberbullying that fell into two main categories. One category included negative psychological effects (fear, powerlessness, and sadness), and resulted in students becoming more withdrawn. Students reported feeling a loss of confidence, disassociation from friends and school, and a general sense of uneasiness. Conversely, some students experienced high levels of anger and indicated feeling more aggressive and had tendencies to threaten, become meaner, and spread nasty rumors. Negative effects were heightened when the student had no idea who was doing the bullying, which increased the feelings of powerlessness and fear among targets. These researchers also found that students reacted in different ways to cyberbullying. Some students avoided the cyberbullying and admitted that this strategy actually allowed the cyberbullying to escalate. These students provided evidence of reduced physical and emotional well-being. Other students, who were mostly male, revealed retaliatory behavior and reported reacting by physically assaulting the bully. In addition, most students were less likely to report to school officials because they believed that they would not take it seriously, would not handle it confidentially, or would do nothing about it. Students were more open to talk to parents about it but were reluctant for fear of losing technology privileges. Hoff and Mitchell's (2009) study indicates that cyberbullying can affect students' schoolwork, friendships, and lead to dangerous self-destructive behavior. Furthermore, the results highlight the need for school leaders and teachers to better understand cyberbullying. These researchers suggest that schools need to train teachers, counselors, and administrators to become safe contacts for students who need to report cyberbullying.

Spears et al. (2009) examined the experiences and understanding of covert and cyberbullying among 20 adolescent students, 10 teachers, and 6 school counselors from Australian schools through qualitative methods. Student participants were aged 12 to 18 years. Covert bullying was defined in this study as “typically repeated behaviors which are concealed, secret or clandestine, that inflict psychological/emotional harm through indirect/relational/social means where the target feels helpless and unable to retaliate” (p. 189). Participants in this study had firsthand experiences with covert and cyberbullying and recounted their stories.

Results of this study corroborate what previous studies have found about the negative emotional impact of cyberbullying (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Beran & Li, 2005). Four key themes emerged revealing the impact of cyberbullying on adolescents. One theme revealed an effect of strong negative feelings and emotions that included anxiety, embarrassment, unhappiness, loneliness, sadness, powerlessness, depression, and increased aggression. Another theme reflected that students felt an overall fear of going out, leaving home, going to school, invasion of privacy, and safety. A third theme reflected that students felt an impact on self that included loss of face, reputation damage, public humiliation, damage to self-esteem, impact on schoolwork, and rejection. A fourth theme indicated that students felt a disruption at different levels which was described as students who left the school, moved out of town, moved out of house, left boyfriend/girlfriend, and avoided others. Finding of this study illustrate the depth of the impact of cyberbullying on individuals and families and suggest the magnitude of psychological and emotional effects. Some students experience the physical impact

involved with cyberbullying by not attending or changing schools, moving towns, and breaking up relationships.

According to Spears et al. (2009), research suggests that teens tend to minimize the harm associated with online bullying. Results of a 3-year study conducted by the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety in Australia investigating the effects of cyberbullying indicated that mental health problems, including anxiety and depression, were found more prevalent among victims of cyberbullying than traditional bullying (as cited in Robinson, 2012). However, the students reported that they felt cyberbullying was not as bad as traditional bullying. Similar results were found among students in a study conducted in the United Kingdom who reported that although cyberbullying affected their confidence, self-esteem, and mental well-being, the most common answer to how it affected them was “not at all” (O’Brien and Moules 2010, as cited in Robinson, 2012).

In another study, Hinduja and Patchin (2010) surveyed 1,963 students in 30 middle schools in one of the largest school districts in the United States on their experiences with traditional and cyberbullying and their thoughts about suicide. Participants were approximately 50% male and 50% female. The dependent variable used in this study was suicidal ideation and the four items representing this construct were adapted from the American School Health Association’s National Adolescent Student Health Survey.

Findings indicated that 30% of students reported they had been victims of cyberbullying at least twice within the past month, and 22% of students reported that they had participated in cyberbullying others during the same time span. Moreover, results

indicated that experience with traditional and cyberbullying is associated with an increase in suicidal ideation. Students who experienced traditional or cyberbullying, as an offender or victim, revealed higher scores on the suicidal ideation scale than those who had not experienced these types of peer aggression. Furthermore, bullying and cyberbullying victimization was a stronger predictor of suicidal thoughts and behaviors than was bullying and cyberbullying offending. In addition, White participants scored significantly lower than non-Whites on the suicidal ideation scale. Regarding cyberbullying affects, victims were 1.9 times more likely and cyberbullying offenders were 1.5 times more likely to have attempted suicide than those who were not cyberbullying victims or offenders. The results provide evidence that adolescent aggression must be taken seriously in school and at home. Moreover, the findings suggest that a suicide prevention and intervention component should be incorporated in schoolwide bullying response programs. These researchers assert that educators should be cautious to not expose students to ideas pertaining to suicide as way to solve relationship problems. Hinduja and Patchin (2010) point out that other emotional and social issues also impacted several of the teenagers who committed suicide after experiencing bullying or cyberbullying and that it is unlikely that experience with cyberbullying by itself leads to suicide.

These studies suggest that intensified psychological effects may be unique to cyberbullying. The studies also reveal how cyberbullying victimization can lead to dangerous and unproductive reactive behavior. Moreover, the evidence from the literature implicates that cyberbullying is prevalent among adolescents internationally and affects

students in negative ways, which include fear, anger, powerlessness, sadness, and suicidal ideation. Results of these studies implicate that up to 58% of students have been victims of cyberbullying at least once, up to 89% have witnessed others being cyberbullied, and approximately 22% have participated in cyberbullying perpetration, suggesting that cyberbullying is a prevalent phenomenon among adolescents. A limitation of the studies reviewed is that most of the studies rely on quantitative surveys. As suggested by Spears et al. (2009), the range in terms of prevalence of cyberbullying among studies may be due to how some teens tend to minimize the effects of cyberbullying when self-reporting. According to Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2008), the prevalence of cyberbullying may vary among studies due to the various definitions of cyberbullying used across research studies. Given that all studies suggest that students are affected in several negative ways by cyberbullying, it is important to consider which students are mostly at risk for involvement in cyberbullying.

### **Bullying in Inclusive Settings**

As most students with disabilities are served in the general education classroom (USDOE, 2011), there is a growing concern that students with special needs in inclusive settings are at an increased risk of offline and online bullying harassment (Swearer et al., 2012). Although “proponents of inclusion maintain that inclusive educational settings provide greater socialization opportunities for students with special learning needs, in addition to reducing stigmatization and promoting self-determination,” recent research shows that students with disabilities are teased and bullied more often (Luciano & Savage, 2007, p. 15). Students with disabilities who are victimized for long periods of

time may develop aggressive characteristics as a defensive method to combat victimization (Rose et al., 2011). The following section explores the research literature related to students with and without disabilities and their involvement in traditional and cyberbullying.

Approximately 13% of students with and without disabilities in American schools exhibit bullying characteristics (Nansel et al., 2001), especially as it relates to the general education classroom (Swearer et al., 2012). According to Rose et al. (2009), 18.5% of students in inclusive settings report being victims of bullying. However, research indicates that students with disabilities are at greater risk for bully victimization and more likely to become bullies and bully-victims than their nondisabled peers.

In a seminal study examining victimization rates of 93 students and their demographically matched peers in an inclusive setting, Whitney and colleagues (1994) found that 55% of students with mild learning disabilities and 78% of students with moderate learning disabilities experienced victimization levels ranging from moderate to severe. Conversely, these researchers found that only 25% of their demographically matched peer group reported being victimized in the same setting.

Didden et al. (2009) conducted a study examining the prevalence of cyberbullying among children with developmental disabilities in special education settings. These researchers found that among 114 students, ages 12 to 19 with intellectual and developmental disabilities, 7% reported having been cyberbullied over the Internet, and 4% reported being cyberbullied through text messaging.



Kowalski and Fendina (2011) examined the prevalence of both traditional and cyberbullying among 24 male and 18 female students ages 10 to 20 with ADHD and Asperger's Syndrome attending a summer camp in the United States with a survey assessing the social, psychological, and health effects of online and offline bullying on participants. Results indicated that all 42 participants reported high rates of offline and online bullying victimization. The most prevalent form of cyberbullying reported was instant messaging followed by social networking. In addition, findings indicated that parents and children disagreed on several issues related to using the Internet, indicating the need for better communication. Furthermore, participants reported a high rate of involvement in cyberbullying as victims, a higher rate than that indicated among individuals without special needs (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). These findings support previous research indicating that students who report online harassment have less-developed social skills (Wolak et al., 2007). These researchers assert that it is important to focus on students with special needs in cyberbullying prevention and intervention efforts, given the increased amount of time these populations spend online because of difficulties in face-to-face interactions. Results emphasize the need to focus on cyberbullying prevention and intervention efforts.

More recently, Swearer et al. (2012) conducted a study investigating the involvement of bullying among students with and without disabilities with 816 students from ages 9 to 16 in nine Midwestern elementary and middle schools from one school district in the United States using the Pacific-Rim Bullying Measure. This measure included six types of bullying behavior, which included bullying by use of computer,

email, and phone text message. All students received services in the inclusive classroom. Participants included the following three disability groups: observable (speech language impairment, hearing impaired, and mild mentally handicapped,  $n = 36$ ), nonobservable (specific learning disability,  $n = 51$ ), and behavioral (behavioral disorder and other health impaired,  $n = 43$ ). In addition, 686 students without disabilities were included. Results indicated that students with behavioral disorders reported the highest levels of bullying perpetration and victimization. Moreover, students with observable disabilities were more likely to bully others and to be victimized compared with students in general education. These results were consistent with previous research among students with disabilities in traditional bullying (Doren, Bullis, & Benz, 1996). In addition, previous studies indicated that some students react aggressively as a result of cyberbullying and suggested that students with disabilities who are easily frustrated with the experience of victimization might be more apt to engage in bullying behavior as a form of revenge (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Rose et al., 2011). Conversely, students with a nonobservable disability in this study reported similar levels of bullying and victimization compared to students without disabilities. The researchers suggested that their nonobservable disability protected them from being bullied, which was inconsistent with previous research indicating that students with learning disabilities bullied others more (Whitney et al., 1994) and were victimized more than peers without disabilities (Martlew & Hodson, 1991).

Consistent with previous research, the results indicated that students with disabilities engaged in fewer prosocial behaviors and were more socially isolated than students without disabilities (Rose et al., 2011), which could suggest their increased risk

of experiencing cyberbullying and its negative effects (Beran & Li, 2005; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Spears et al., 2009). Consequently, these results suggest that students with disabilities could also be more at risk of cyberbullying victimization, which has important implications for general and special educators working with students in the inclusive classroom. While promoting prosocial behavior among students with and without disabilities is important, these findings implicate the importance of providing effective bully prevention and intervention strategies that include cyberbullying awareness and prevention. As Swearer et al. (2012) assert, the lack of attention on students with disabilities—especially those with high-incidence disabilities such as learning and emotional and behavioral disabilities who tend to exhibit bullying characteristics such as impulsivity and aggression—can result in increased offline and online bully perpetration and victimization.

The evidence from the literature suggests that students with and without disabilities are at risk of becoming involved in cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. These findings support the need for student and teacher education in cyberbullying intervention strategies. If both students and teachers lack an understanding of the negative impact or prevalence of cyberbullying, they may be less likely to intervene or know of effective ways to address it. Thus the current study sought to utilize qualitative methods to better understand students' and teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying.

### **Perceptions of and Reactions to Cyberbullying**

Examining student and teacher perceptions of cyberbullying can provide insight into how their understanding of their awareness, intervening strategies, and factors influence their responses to the issue. The following sections explore several studies that have investigated students' and teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying. Table 2 summarizes the seminal studies.

Table 2

*Teacher Perceptions of Cyberbullying*

Study	<i>n</i>	Method	Results
Li (2008)	154 preservice teachers; 88 female, 75 male	Survey (Canada)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Although a majority of the preservice teachers believe cyberbullying has a significant effect on students and are concerned about cyberbullying, most teachers do not think it is a problem in schools.</li> <li>(2) Despite teacher concern about cyberbullying, the majority of teachers did not feel confident in handling cyberbullying.</li> <li>(3) Most preservice teachers expressed a need for school commitment on combating cyberbullying.</li> <li>(4) Less than 4% of the preservice teachers indicated that they have received cyberbullying training, despite expressed interest to learn more about it in their university teacher education program.</li> <li>(5) While most teachers believed that schools should develop policies on cyberbullying, discuss it with parents, and train staff about this problem, only half of the teachers believed cyberbullying should be addressed through curriculum, classroom activities, or schoolwide activities.</li> </ol>
Yilmaz (2010)	163 preservice teachers; 88 female, 75 male	Survey (Turkey)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Most preservice teachers were concerned about cyberbullying and were aware of its negative effect on students' lives.</li> <li>(2) Approximately half of the teachers were confident in both identifying and managing cyberbullying.</li> <li>(3) Most teachers believed policy development, talking with parents, and training educators should be a school responsibility.</li> <li>(4) Most teachers strongly supported involving cyberbullying prevention in classroom activities, schoolwide activities, school counseling, and curriculum.</li> <li>(5) Approximately half of preservice teachers believe their teacher prep program does not provide sufficient education on how to manage cyberbullying.</li> <li>(6) Most teachers were willing to learn more about cyberbullying.</li> <li>(7) Female preservice teachers (a) perceived cyberbullying was a more serious problem than males, (b) were more persuaded about the effects of cyberbullying, and (c) were more concerned about the effects of cyberbullying.</li> <li>(8) Male preservice teachers felt more confident in identifying and managing cyberbullying as opposed to females.</li> </ol>

(continued)

Table 2. Teacher Perceptions of Cyberbullying (continued)

Study	<i>n</i>	Method	Results
Eden, Heiman, and Olenik-Shemesh (2012)	328 general and special education elementary, middle, and high school teachers; 88.4% female, 11.6% male	Survey (Israel)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Teachers were (a) very concerned about cyberbullying, (b) had low confidence in managing cyberbullying problems, (c) believed that the school was obligated to deal with cyberbullying, and (d) believed cyberbullying was an important issue to study.</li> <li>(2) Female teachers were (a) more concerned than male teachers about cyberbullying, (b) expressed a stronger belief in the school's obligation to deal with cyberbullying, and (c) had more belief in the importance of learning about cyberbullying.</li> <li>(3) Teachers' education level and the age of the student taught affected their level of concern about cyberbullying.</li> <li>(4) Special education teachers were more concerned than mainstream teachers and more likely to believe that cyberbullying needed to be confronted.</li> <li>(5) Teachers of students with learning disabilities were more confident in managing cyberbullying as compared to teachers of students with severe disabilities.</li> </ol>
Noah (2012)	6 female middle school teachers	Qualitative Interviews (United States)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Teachers lack knowledge of the prevalence of cyberbullying on campus.</li> <li>(2) Teachers lack knowledge of the school's procedure for handling cyberbullying.</li> <li>(3) Teachers have had varied experiences managing cyberbullying.</li> <li>(4) Teachers are more confident that they can identify cyberbullying than manage it.</li> <li>(5) Teachers perceive themselves as having a definite role in preventing and responding to cyberbullying.</li> </ol>
Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, and Ferrin (2012)	66 high school teachers; 59% male, 41% female	Survey (United States)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) While most teachers believed that cyberbullying had negative and long-lasting effects on students, approximately 60% of teachers were either unsure about or against implementing a formal bullying program in their school.</li> <li>(2) Teachers were found most likely to report cyberbullying to administrators when it occurred at school and were less likely to report it when it occurred off school grounds.</li> <li>(3) Teachers did not indicate a willingness to report incidents to parents.</li> <li>(4) Teachers indicated increased parental involvement as the most helpful prevention strategy.</li> <li>(5) Teachers perceived schoolwide antibully assemblies and classroom antibully lessons as the least helpful strategy in cyberbullying prevention.</li> </ol>

## **Teacher Perceptions**

Teachers' perceptions play an important role in teaching and the way teachers develop their teaching practices and knowledge concerning cyberbullying (Yilmaz, 2010). As Eden et al. (2012) indicate, "teachers and educators are on the front line in dealing with many forms of adolescent aggression, including cyberbullying" (p. 2). Previous studies have investigated teacher perceptions of cyberbullying (Eden et al., 2012; Li, 2008; Noah, 2012; Stauffer et al., 2012; Yilmaz, 2010). The few studies that have explored teacher perceptions of cyberbullying have yielded mixed results.

Research by Li (2008) was conducted in Canada examining a convenience sample of 154 preservice teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying using a 26-item paper-based survey. The survey was based on an existing, field-tested instrument measuring teachers' attitudes about bullying (Siu, 2004 as cited in Li, 2008). Responses for the preservice teacher perceptions were measured on a 3-point Likert scale. The internal reliability of the survey was reported to be 0.88. Based on the previous instrument and the reports of a panel of five experts, the content validity of the measure was considered good. The survey investigated two major areas: (a) preservice teachers' demographic data and (b) preservice teachers' perceptions about cyberbullying and about their educational experiences in relation to cyberbullying. The teacher participants were enrolled in a 2-year postdegree teacher education program at a Canadian university. Of these participants, 23.7% were males and 76.2% were females.

Several important findings were revealed in this study. First, most teachers (over 65%) agreed that cyberbullying affected children and approximately 50% were concerned

about cyberbullying. However, the majority of teachers did not think that it was a problem in the schools. As Li (2008) suggested, this finding might be due to teachers' inability to see visible evidence of cyberbullying, therefore making it difficult to identify. A second significant finding revealed that the majority of teachers were not confident in identifying or managing cyberbullying problems. This finding indicated a need for more teacher training in cyberbullying. A third significant finding indicated that most preservice teachers expressed a need for school commitment on combating cyberbullying. A fourth significant finding was that less than 4% of the preservice teachers indicated that they had received cyberbullying training, despite expressed interest to learn more about it in their university teacher education program. In addition, teachers believed that schools should develop policies on cyberbullying, discuss it with parents, and train staff about this problem. However, only half of the preservice teachers believed cyberbullying should be addressed through curriculum, classroom activities, or schoolwide activities.

Yilmaz (2010) replicated Li's (2008) study in Turkey and investigated 163 preservice teachers on their perceptions of cyberbullying and extended the study to include gender-related differences among teacher participants. Yilmaz (2010) adapted Li's Survey on School Cyberbullying for Preservice Teachers (2008) and added a section that provided participants with information about cyberbullying to set up a general understanding. The instrument's Alpha coefficient for internal reliability was 0.88. Two experts translated the instrument into Turkish. The translations were compared and translated back to English to ensure there was no loss of meaning. Responses to 21 items



related to teacher perceptions and their experiences about cyberbullying were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The instrument also included a demographic section and one open-ended question asking participants to provide further comments about cyberbullying. Data were collected over 3 weeks using a web-based survey sent out to through listservs to preservice teachers from seven different state universities in Turkey. Out of the 840 preservice teachers requested to participate, 163 preservice teachers, of whom 88 were female and 75 were male, participated in the study.

Yilmaz's (2010) results both supported and contradicted the results of Li's (2008) study. Similar to Li (2008), most preservice teachers were concerned about cyberbullying and were aware of its negative effect on students' lives. Unlike Li, (2008), results indicated that approximately half of the teachers were confident in both identifying and managing cyberbullying. In terms of the issue of school commitment, preservice teacher beliefs in this study were similar to Li (2008) in that they believed policy development, talking with parents, and training educators should be a school responsibility. However, as opposed to Li's (2008) participant sample, preservice teachers strongly supported involving cyberbullying prevention in classroom activities, schoolwide activities, school counseling, and curriculum. Another finding from this study indicated that approximately half of preservice teachers did not receive sufficient education on how to manage cyberbullying. However, unlike Li's (2008) findings, preservice teachers in this study were willing to learn more about cyberbullying.

Several findings revealed gender-related differences among teacher participants. According to Yilmaz (2010), female preservice teachers (a) perceived cyberbullying was a more serious problem than males, (b) were more persuaded about the effects of cyberbullying, and (c) were more concerned about the effects of cyberbullying. However, male preservice teachers felt more confident in identifying and managing cyberbullying than females.

Eden et al. (2012) examined 328 teachers (88.4% female and 11.6% male) from elementary, middle, and high schools, which were randomly selected from 700 schools in the central Israel area. Teachers were then randomly selected from different grade levels, content teaching areas, and years of experience. The mean age of teachers was approximately 37 years. Most of the teachers held a bachelor's degree, while others held a master's or doctorate. The average years of teaching experience was approximately 11 years. This study is unique because teachers who were investigated included homeroom, special education, and subject matter teachers. These researchers adapted the cyberbullying survey developed by Li (2008) from preservice to inservice teachers and added questions relevant to the current research. The internal reliability of the instrument was 0.88. The survey included 39 items, with 13 items that addressed teachers' demographic data and 26 that investigated their perceptions of cyberbullying in a global sense and about personal experiences in relation to cyberbullying. Responses for items were on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Specifically, the questionnaire included the following four indexes: (1) teachers' concern about cyberbullying, (2) teachers' confidence in managing cyberbullying problems, (3)

teachers' belief in school's commitment to deal with cyberbullying, and (4) teachers' belief in the importance of learning about cyberbullying.

Results based on the survey's four indexes indicated (1) teachers were very concerned about cyberbullying, (2) teachers had low confidence in managing cyberbullying problems, (3) teachers believed that the school has an obligation to deal with cyberbullying, and (4) teachers believed cyberbullying was an important issue to study.

Findings regarding the teachers' gender indicated female teachers were (a) more concerned than male teachers about cyberbullying, (b) expressed a stronger belief in the school's obligation to deal with cyberbullying, and (c) had more belief in the importance of learning about cyberbullying.

In addition, the teachers' professional backgrounds indicated that the teachers' education level and the age of the student taught affected their level of concern about cyberbullying and how reliable they felt their about school's commitment to act. For example, the younger the student, the more concern was expressed by teachers. Although teachers of younger students indicated they were more confident about their ability to identify and manage cyberbullying, they believed they needed to learn more about it. Eden et al. (2012) suggested that teachers thought that older students were more capable of dealing with cyberbullying and that teachers of elementary students could be more focused on their students' well-being as compared to high school teachers who are more concerned with the subject matter.

Eden et al.'s (2012) research is of particular importance because it investigated differences between types of teachers. Findings indicated that special education teachers were more concerned than mainstream general education teachers and more likely to believe that cyberbullying needed to be confronted. Further, the researchers examined differences between teachers of students with severe disabilities and teachers of pupils with learning disabilities. Results indicated teachers of students with learning disabilities were more confident in managing cyberbullying as compared to teachers of students with severe disabilities. Eden et al. (2012) suggested that this finding could be attributed to more frequent exposure of cyberbullying among students with learning disabilities as compared to students with severe disabilities who are less apt to be as socially competent.

Several interesting findings were also revealed from Eden et al.'s (2012) study. First, half of the teachers reported that their students complained of cyberbullying. Second, some teachers reported being cyberbullied. Finally, a pattern was found between teachers, students, and cyberbullying indicating that the more teachers were exposed to cyberbullying and the more students' complaints they received, the more concerned and anxious they were about the issue—indicating that personal involvement increases awareness and concern. However, one limitation was that it was unknown whether the special education teachers taught in mainstream or self-contained settings. Another limitation was that the study relied on the self-report of teachers.

A recent dissertation (Noah, 2012) has been conducted investigating middle school teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying in one public middle school within a suburban school district in a western region of the United States. Specifically, this study

explored teachers' and school leaders' experiences managing cyberbullying, their confidence to address cyberbullying, and their perceptions of their role in preventing and responding to cyberbullying using semistructured qualitative interviews. Maximum variation sampling was employed to select six teacher participants and three school leaders, which included a principal, assistant principal, and school counselor. School district policy documents were also analyzed for their inclusion of cyberbullying-specific policies and procedures. Five key findings resulted from this investigation: (1) teachers lack knowledge of the prevalence of cyberbullying on campus, (2) teachers lack knowledge of the school's procedure for handling cyberbullying, (3) teachers have had varied experiences managing cyberbullying, (4) teachers are more confident that they can identify cyberbullying than manage it, and (5) teachers perceive themselves as having a definite role in preventing and responding to cyberbullying.

Stauffer et al. (2012) examined 66 high school teachers' perceptions regarding cyberbullying in one urban high school located in the Western United States using a survey designed by the school district administrator and the primary author. The survey was based on a traditional bullying survey previously administered by the school district. At the time of this study, state legislature mandates required all school districts to implement policies addressing bullying and cyberbullying. Specifically, this survey investigated (a) teachers' perceptions of the severity of cyberbullying in schools, (b) the effect of cyberbullying on victims, (c) where cyberbullying occurs, (d) the perceived need for prevention programs, (e) the effectiveness of prevention strategies, and (f) the

likelihood of intervening with a variety of intervention strategies. The majority of survey responses utilized a 5-point Likert scale and also included three open-ended questions. Participants were approximately 59% male and 41% female. The majority of teachers held a bachelor's (39%) or master's degree (53%). Several teachers worked with students in both general and special education. Specifically, 91% reported working with students in inclusive general education classrooms, 27% reported working with students in special education classrooms, and 8% reported working in "Youth in Custody" programs. The average teaching experience of participants was 15.5 years. The participating school served an economically diverse population, with approximately 35% of students qualifying for free lunch and 11% qualifying for reduced-price lunch. The ethnic makeup of the school consisted of 1.18% Native American, 1.34% Black, 1.77% Asian, 2.42% Pacific Islander, 25.18% Hispanic, and 67.76% White.

Results indicated that most teachers believed that cyberbullying had negative and long-lasting effects on students. However, approximately 60% of teachers were either unsure about or against implementing a formal bullying program in their school. Stauffer et al. (2012) suggested that this finding may have been because teachers did not see bullying as a problem at their school or they were unsure about the need of a formal bullying prevention program. These authors also suggested that teachers' perceptions may have been negative due to "resentment for top-down mandates that increase teacher responsibility" (p. 364).

In addition, Stauffer et al.'s (2012) findings indicated the types of strategies that teachers used when they witnessed cyberbullying. Teachers were found most likely to

report cyberbullying to administrators when it occurred at school. Teachers were somewhat likely to talk with the cyberbully or the victim and to take away the bully's privileges. However, when cyberbullying occurred away from school, teachers reported being only somewhat likely to address the victim or report it to administrators. In addition, teachers did not indicate a willingness to report incidents to parents. Stauffer et al. (2012) suggested that teachers in this study did not see it as their responsibility to intervene other than report it to administrators; they may have been apprehensive about parental and student retaliations for behaviors that do not occur on school grounds; and they may have strongly opposed taking on more responsibility involving monitoring and responding to cyberbullying that occurs off school grounds.

Another finding indicated which prevention activities teachers believed were most helpful in reducing cyberbullying. Teachers in the study indicated increased parental involvement as the most helpful, followed by increased consequences and warning students about the consequences of cyberbullying. Teachers also perceived schoolwide antibully assemblies and classroom antibully lessons as being somewhat less helpful than other strategies that included increasing parental involvement, warning students about the consequences, and increasing consequences for cyberbullying. Stauffer et al. (2012) suggested that teachers believed students should be warned about consequences by parents rather than teachers and administrators.

Of the 66 teacher participants, 39 provided responses to the open-ended questions, one of which requested teachers to share their ideas about what works to decrease cyberbullying. Results indicated that approximately 30% of the comments supported

educating students about the consequences of cyberbullying and how to respond to cyberbullying. Approximately 22% of the comments suggested limiting student access to electronic devices at school and home, while 7.5% of the comments recommended increased parental support. In addition, only 7% of the comments suggested school-based interventions, which consisted of vague recommendations such as, “punish cyberbully,” or “strong consequences.”

**Synthesis.** The previously outlined studies are summarized in Table 2. The results have several indications for teacher perceptions of cyberbullying. Overall, findings indicate that most teachers were aware of the negative effects of cyberbullying on students and were concerned about cyberbullying. There were several additional important findings. First, four of the five studies revealed that most teachers expressed a need to learn more about cyberbullying prevention. These studies included preservice and inservice teachers, indicating a need for more education and teacher training on cyberbullying in university teacher education and school professional development programs. Second, four of the five studies revealed that most preservice and inservice teachers were not confident in managing cyberbullying among students. This suggests a need for more teacher preparation in cyberbullying intervention strategies and schoolwide support in the form of cyberbullying prevention programs and training. Third, only one out of the five studies revealed that teachers believed that schoolwide antibullying prevention programs were the least helpful in preventing cyberbullying. This study was conducted with high school teachers in the United States and suggests that some teachers do not perceive themselves as having a role in preventing and responding to



cyberbullying, indicating a need for more teacher buy-in and awareness of effective evidence-based cyberbullying prevention strategies. This study also reveals that schools in the United States lack effective evidence-based schoolwide antibullying programs that include cyberbullying prevention. Fourth, two of the five studies investigated how teacher gender affects perceptions of cyberbullying and both studies found that female teachers were more concerned about the effects of cyberbullying than male teachers. These results suggest a need for more teacher training on cyberbullying awareness. Fifth, one out of the five studies investigated differences in perceptions among special and general educators and found that special educators were more concerned than mainstream teachers and more likely to believe that cyberbullying needed to be confronted. This suggests that special educators may be more aware of the effects of cyberbullying than general educators, indicating a need for more teacher education in cyberbullying awareness.

This synthesis establishes an overview of the current literature and research regarding preservice and inservice teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying among students in elementary, middle, and high school grades. It also reveals the need for additional studies on teacher perceptions of cyberbullying. Additional research is also needed on teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying in secondary inclusive classrooms in the United States. According to Yilmaz (2010), "teachers' perceptions and beliefs play an important role in teaching and in their teaching practices with regard to developing and managing skills and knowledge about cyberbullying" (p. 264). The few studies conducted on teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying indicated that they do not believe they are

sufficiently prepared to address cyberbullying (Eden et al., 2012; Li, 2008; Noah, 2012; Stauffer et al., 2012; Yilmaz, 2010).

Also of note is the lack of research on general and special education teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying. According to Kennedy, Russom, and Kevorkian (2012), "the role of teacher perceptions of the seriousness of bullying is recognized as being predictive of the likelihood of intervention in bully incidents" (p. 3). Pivik, McComas, and LaFlamme (2002) suggested that increasing awareness, understanding, and acceptance among all students and teachers decreases the risk of involvement in bullying for students in special education. The following section addresses the research conducted on student perceptions of cyberbullying.

### **Student Perceptions**

According to Hinduja and Patchin (2009), "there exists a great disconnect between what youth are doing in cyberspace and what adults know about what youth are doing in cyberspace" (p. 182). Research indicates that students do not perceive teachers as being knowledgeable about how to address cyberbullying (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2007; Cassidy, Jackson, & Brown, 2009; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). In addition, research indicates students do not feel that school officials are helpful in addressing cyberbullying (Agatston et al., 2007; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). This section addresses the research examining students' perceptions of cyberbullying. Table 3 summarizes the seminal studies.

Table 3

*Cyberbullying Research Studies Investigating Student Perceptions*

Study	<i>n</i>	Method	Results
Agatston, Kowalski, and Limber (2007)	148 middle and high school students	Focus Group Interviews (United States)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Students were unlikely to report cyberbullying to the adults at school.</li> <li>(2) Students felt adults at school could not help them with cyberbullying.</li> <li>(3) While students more likely to report to parents, they were reluctant for fear of losing online privileges.</li> <li>(4) Females felt cyberbullying was more of a problem than males.</li> <li>(5) Students were aware of a few strategies.</li> <li>(6) Students were not aware of how to respond as helpful bystanders.</li> </ul>
Cassidy, Jackson, and Brown (2009)	365 elementary to high school students in sixth to ninth grades	Survey (closed and open ended) (Canada)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Students were more likely to be cyberbullied because of differences or disabilities.</li> <li>(2) Most students reported cyberbullying starts at school and continues at home by the same students.</li> <li>(3) Most students believed cyberbullying was more of a problem now than 1 year ago.</li> <li>(4) Most students prefer reporting to friends rather than parents and police; the least number keep to themselves.</li> <li>(5) Solutions preferred anonymous reporting and punitive measures.</li> <li>(6) Solutions suggested were longer-term relationship-based solutions focusing on school culture, student's self-esteem, and modeling by adults.</li> <li>(7) Students are more likely to report to school officials or friends if they witnessed cyberbullying.</li> </ul>
Mishna, Saini, Solomon, (2009)	38 students, 17 males and 21 females, fifth to eighth grades	Focus Group Interviews (Canada)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Students felt children use online communication at a younger age.</li> <li>(2) Cyberbullying is a form of bullying comparable to traditional bullying.</li> <li>(3) Cyberbullying could occur everywhere and anywhere.</li> <li>(4) Students expressed concern about the many types of cyberbullying.</li> <li>(5) Adults are oblivious to students' cyberworld and to the problem of cyberbullying.</li> <li>(6) Students did not tell parents because they feared loss of online privileges and felt adults cannot find evidence or identify bullies online.</li> </ul>

(continued)

Table 3. Cyberbullying Research Studies Investigating Student Perceptions (continued)

Study	<i>n</i>	Method	Results
Parris, Varjas, Meyers, and Cutts (2012)	20 students, 15 to 19 years old, 13 males and 12 females	Qualitative Interviews (United States)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Most students used <i>avoidance</i> (deleting messages, deleting online accounts, blocking numbers, or ignoring the situation) to cope.</li> <li>(2) Some students used <i>acceptance</i>, acknowledging cyberbullying as a part of life.</li> <li>(3) Almost half of students used <i>justification</i>, and evaluated and determined reasons cyberbullying should not bother the student (discredit bully).</li> <li>(4) Almost half of students <i>sought social support</i> and got advice from others: students, parents, or police to stop the cyberbullying.</li> <li>(5) More than half of students <i>talked in person</i> to avoid miscommunication.</li> <li>(6) All students used <i>increased security and awareness</i>: being careful about whom they shared personal information with online.</li> <li>(7) Almost half of students perceived there was no way to prevent cyberbullying.</li> </ul>

Agatston et al. (2007) investigated 148 middle and high school students using same-gender focus group interviews to determine their perceptions of cyberbullying and their schools' use of prevention strategies. Focus group interviews were conducted at two middle schools and two high schools within one public school district located in the state of Georgia in the United States. Students were from a diverse socioeconomic status and ranged from 12 to 17 years old. In addition, the researchers supplied a definition of cyberbullying for the students as "using the Internet or other digital technologies such as cellular phones and personal digital assistants to be intentionally mean or to harass others." (p. S60).

Results indicated students were unlikely to report cyberbullying to the adults at school because using cell phones during school hours was against the rules; however, students admitted to placing text messages and using cell phones during school. Students also indicated that adults at school could not help them with cyberbullying. In addition, students were more likely to report cyberbullying to parents, but were sometimes reluctant to do this for fear of losing online privileges. Another finding was that female students felt that cyberbullying was a more of a problem at their school than male students.

Findings regarding students' use of strategies indicated that students were aware of a few strategies for dealing with cyberbullying (e.g., block the sender or ignore the message), but not of others (e.g., removal of websites). Students also indicated that they were not aware of how to respond as helpful bystanders when witnessing cyberbullying online. Results of this study indicate that students lack knowledge of effective strategies to manage and prevent cyberbullying as well as an understanding of how to be helpful bystanders when witnessing harassing behavior online.

Cassidy et al. (2009) surveyed 365 Canadian students from elementary and secondary schools from 11 to 15 years old on their perceptions of their cyberbullying experiences and practices. Specifically, participants were in sixth through ninth grade and from three elementary and two secondary schools located in a large metropolitan region of British Columbia, Canada. The survey was divided into five sections: (a) demographics, (b) victims of cyberbullying, (c) friends or other students who have been cyberbullied, (d) solutions to cyberbullying, and (e) opinions about cyberbullying. The

survey included 192 variables comprised of closed-ended questions and 10 open-ended questions.

Results from the open-ended question regarding the types of individuals that are most likely victimized revealed that 95% of both male and female students from all age ranges and across all ethnic backgrounds perceived that students were “more likely to be cyberbullied because of specific attributes such as special needs, academic abilities, unpopularity, physical appearance, physical and mental disabilities, unfashionable clothing and ethnicity” (Cassidy et al., 2009, p. 389). Most students (64%) reported that they felt cyberbullying started at school and then continued as home by the same bullying students. Another finding revealed that 75% of students believed that cyberbullying is more of a problem now than it was 1 year ago.

In regard to reporting practices, 74% of students would tell their friends, 57% would tell their parents, 30% said they would tell the police, and 25% said that they would not report it to anyone. Several reasons were indicated by students for not reporting cyberbullying to school officials which included: (a) fear that the cyberbully would get revenge (30%), (b) belief that cyberbullying was the student’s problem, not the school’s (29%), (c) belief that school officials are not be able to stop it (27%), (c) concern about getting their friends in trouble (26%), (d) concern that parents would limit online privileges (24%), and (e) concern that other students would perceive them as a tattler (20%). This study also addressed students’ solutions to cyberbullying and found that anonymous reporting and punitive measures for bullies were most preferred, however,

students also suggested longer-term relationship-based solutions that focused on school culture, student's self-esteem, and modeling by adults.

In addition to examining students' reporting practices, Cassidy et al. (2009) also examined students' bystander behavior. Students were asked what they would do if they witnessed hurtful cyberbullying taking place, and to whom they would report such incidents. Results indicated that reporting an incident to police, even if someone was being hurt, was the least preferred option for participants. In addition, students were more likely to report to school officials if they witnessed cyberbullying versus if they had actually experienced it (52% versus 47%), and were less likely to tell their parents (45% versus 57%). Students were most likely to tell their friends than an adult (70%). Few students who witnessed cyberbullying kept it to themselves.

Mishna, Saini, and Solomon (2009) conducted seven focus group interviews with 38 students between the fifth through eighth grades, which included 17 boys and 21 girls from five schools located in an urban school district in Toronto, Canada. Students were asked about their perceptions of cyberbullying, which specifically included how often it occurs, what forms it takes, who does the bullying, who is bullied, who knows, and whether and who they tell. Seven mixed-gender focus group interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately one hour.

Findings revealed five major themes: (a) technology embraced at younger ages and becoming the dominant medium for communication, (b) definitions and views of cyberbullying, (c) factors unique to cyberbullying, (d) types of cyberbullying, and (e) telling adults.

Regarding the first theme, technology embraced at younger ages, students felt that the age at which children use online communication was becoming younger. The second theme, definitions and views of cyberbullying, was explained by the participants' belief that cyberbullying was a form of bullying comparable to traditional bullying, with similarities that included spreading rumors, and making threats and derogatory comments. The third theme, anonymity or perceived anonymity, represents the students' perception that cyberbullying could occur everywhere and anywhere and that cyberbullying was mostly anonymous. The fourth theme, types of cyberbullying, reveals the many types of cyberbullying that students articulated which included posting, coercing and backstabbing, and masquerading. Overall, this theme reveals the complex realities of the students' online communication and suggests that students feel unable to trust anyone. For example, many participants described how students cyberbully their own friends. The fifth theme, telling adults, depicted the students' perceptions that adults are oblivious to their cyberworld and to the problem of cyberbullying. Students reported that they did not tell their parents or other adults about experiences of cyberbullying because they feared losing online privileges and felt adults could not find evidence or identify the cyberbully.

In a more recent study, Parris, Varjas, Meyers, and Cutts (2012) examined 20 students between 15 and 19 years old from one suburban public high school located in a Southeastern public school district of the United States using semistructured qualitative interviews. Student participants were 13 males and 7 females, with an average age of



17.5 years. Participants were interviewed using semistructured open-ended questions to discuss student experiences and perceptions of coping with cyberbullying. Definitions of cyberbullying and other aspects related to cyberbullying were not provided in order to obtain participants' definitions and examples in their own words. Interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes and were conducted by three female graduate research assistants.

Results revealed three themes that reflected the ways students coped with cyberbullying: reactive coping, preventive coping, and no way to prevent.

The first theme, reactive coping, included the following strategies: avoidance, acceptance, justification, and seeking social support. According to Parris et al. (2012), students used these strategies in an attempt to respond to cyberbullying after it had occurred to end or lessen the negative consequences of cyberbullying. Of the 20 students, 18 reported using *avoidance* and described actions associated with this strategy as deleting messages, deleting online accounts, blocking numbers, or ignoring the situation. The next strategy, *acceptance*, was used by 7 participants and involved acknowledging cyberbullying as a part of life. Students described this strategy as believing that cyberbullying is going to occur regardless of actions taken and explained how this helped them to focus on more positive aspects of life. The third strategy, *justification*, was reported by 9 students and involved evaluating cyberbullying and determining reasons why cyberbullying should not bother the targeted student. These students often discredited the cyberbully's use of electronic devices versus using face-to-face methods to bully. The final strategy, *seeking social support*, was mentioned by 8 students and

involved getting advice from another person, such as other students, parents, or police who would help stop the cyberbullying.

The second theme found in this study was preventive coping and was described as coping mechanisms that may decrease the likelihood of being cyberbullied. Students used preventive coping to protect themselves from possible cyberbullying. Strategies included *talk in person*, which was explained by 12 students as talking face-to-face in order not to miscommunicate. Another strategy included *increased security and awareness*, which was mentioned by all 20 student participants and was explained as how students described they needed to be careful about whom they shared personal information with online.

The third theme was no way to prevent cyberbullying. The 9 students using this strategy stated that there was no way to stop or prevent cyberbullying from occurring. These students expressed that nothing could be done about cyberbullying and often referenced the anonymity of the cyberbully and the lack of consequences for behaviors.

**Synthesis.** The previously outlined studies are summarized in Table 3. The results have several indications for student perceptions of cyberbullying. Overall, the results of these studies indicate that students perceive cyberbullying as a problem that they are exposed to in and out of school; however, most students felt that teachers or adults at schools were unable to help. In addition, most of the students in these studies suggested a fear of reporting cyberbullying to parents because they might lose online communication privileges. Taken together, the literature suggests a need for adult education in

cyberbullying intervention and prevention. As Mason (2008) suggests, an important element in prevention and intervention efforts of cyberbullying involves school, families, and community.

Based upon the finding of these studies, several indications about student perceptions of cyberbullying were discovered. First, all studies revealed that most students were attempting to come up with ways to deal with cyberbullying on their own. Three out of the four studies used qualitative methods in the form of focus groups and semistructured interviews to investigate students' perceptions of cyberbullying. These studies revealed students' various reactions and coping strategies to cyberbullying, which were self-taught, suggesting that students lack effective strategies to deal with cyberbullying and are not guided in any way by adults at home or school to learn about managing cyberbullying. One important finding discovered through an open-ended survey question indicated that students felt that students were more likely to be cyberbullied because of "specific attributes such as special needs, academic abilities, unpopularity, physical appearance, physical and mental disabilities, unfashionable clothing and ethnicity" (Cassidy et al., 2009, p. 389). This finding suggests that there are similarities in targets of traditional and cyberbullying. As cyberbullying is becoming a growing issue among students, a major limitation is the lack of studies that have been conducted examining diverse groups of students that include students with special needs, students with various ethnicities, and students with physical and mental disabilities.

Taken together, the studies investigating students and teachers suggest that there is a gap between students' and teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying. While most

students were aware of and experienced cyberbullying, they indicated a lack of confidence in their teachers' ability to help them problem-solve cyberbullying. Overall, students did not feel that teachers were knowledgeable or capable of addressing cyberbullying. This lack of confidence prevents students from reporting cyberbullying to teachers. However, teachers differed in their perceptions, with some teachers reporting that they were confident in both identifying and managing cyberbullying, and other teachers reporting they were not. In addition, teachers differed in their perceptions of involving cyberbullying intervention in curriculum and classroom activities. Generally, teachers revealed a lack of knowledge of cyberbullying intervention and prevention strategies as well as their school's procedure for handling cyberbullying. It is important to note that these studies indicate that both teachers and students were not aware of how to respond as helpful bystanders. Research shows that bystanders, the largest group in bullying, play pivotal roles in the bullying process and can influence its intensity and outcome (Tsang et al., 2011). As Stueve et al. (2006) assert, bystanders are not limited to students but also include teachers who not only observe bullying in real time but may also possess information such as overheard conversations, veiled threats, and changes in behavior that suggest future bullying is likely. The current study sought to examine students' and teachers' bystander perceptions of cyberbullying within the context of the inclusive classroom.

### **Bystander Effect on Bullying**

Although bullying definitions typically focus on the aggressive behavior of individual students, bullying is actually a group phenomenon that operates in a social

context (Salmivalli, 1999). Furthermore, peers are present as bystanders during bullying and play pivotal roles in its prevention or promotion (Tsang et al., 2011). For these reasons, researchers highlight that bullying should be understood along a continuum, instead of through categorical labels such as bullies, victims, and the remainder of adults and students as uninvolved (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Several studies indicate that bystanders can reduce bullying. Ross and Horner (2009) recently implemented a schoolwide bullying intervention program reinforcing bystander behavior among students in traditional bullying that resulted in a decrease in bullying perpetration. These results suggest that bystander intervening could also decrease cyberbullying perpetration. Although research shows that bystanders, individually and as a group, can effectively stop and reduce bullying situations (Gini, Tiziana & Lara 2008), most school bullying prevention programs only focus on victims and bullies (Tsang et al., 2011). As Swearer and colleagues (2012) assert, effective interventions lead to a positive and inclusive school climate. Moreover, Pivik et al. (2002) suggest that increasing awareness and fostering understanding and acceptance among all students and teachers reduces the risk of involvement in bullying for students in special education.

### **Cyberbullying and School Involvement**

Currently, the laws hold schools responsible for preventing bullying. The U.S. Department of Education (2010) mandates that schools adhere to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act, all of which prohibit discrimination. Although 48 states have enacted antibullying statutes, 38

of which include cyberbullying (Sacco et al., 2012; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009), many existing school antibullying policies are proven unsuccessful (Hong & Espelage, 2012).

Cyberbullying has powerfully negative effects involving decreased mental health that involves stress, emotional problems, and suicidal ideation. Evidence from the research literature indicates that students with and without disabilities are at risk of this new form of bullying, which can negatively affect academic achievement. Therefore, schools are responsible for establishing effective preventative and intervention strategies regarding cyberbullying. Most school bullying intervention and prevention programs focus on controlling inappropriate behavior rather than promoting a supportive school climate that focuses on positive relationships with peers and adults (Skiba et al., 2006). National bullying programs have been dominated by the philosophy of zero tolerance which has been proven ineffective by the Zero Tolerance Task Force (Skiba et al., 2006). This philosophy is based on consequences that are often severe and punitive and intended to be applied despite the seriousness of behavior or the circumstantial context (Skiba et al., 2006). As Skiba et al. (2006) assert, effects of these policies are “related to student shame, alienation, rejection, and breaking of healthy adult bonds...and may create, enhance, or accelerate negative mental health outcomes for youth” (p. 10).

However, there are many evidence-based programs that are effective and can prevent unintended negative consequences (Levy et al., 2012). Evidence-based programs are determined through rigorous evaluation methodology and demonstration of a positive impact, “such as improved attitudes about bullying, improved bystander actions, or

reduced rates of bullying victimization” (p. 39). As Levy et al. assert, “programs that aim to change how bystanders respond to bullying situations present opportunities to change school-wide social norms” (p. 34). Although research shows that teen bystanders, individually and as a group, can effectively stop and reduce bullying situations (Gini et al., 2008), most school bullying prevention programs only focus on victims and bullies (Tsang et al., 2011). Thus the present study sought to better understand bystander perceptions of teachers and students in inclusive classroom settings. Based on the prevalence of cyberbullying among our youth and the lack of research on teachers’ and students’ perceptions of this phenomenon, there is a need to understand better understand perceptions regarding cyberbullying. To date, no studies have been conducted examining bystander perceptions of students with and without disabilities and general and special educators.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The National Crime Prevention Council (n.d.) relates the bystander effect in cyberbullying to the 38 witnesses of the 1964 attack and murder of Kitty Genovese, pointing out that witnesses of cyberbullying fail to intervene due to an overwhelming fear of being victimized themselves. Genovese was brutally attacked and murdered close to her home, while approximately 38 witnesses heard or observed the attack but did not intervene. Latane and Darley (1969) suggest that when many bystanders are present, a “diffusion of responsibility” exists that reduces the likelihood that an individual is to help because they feel that others will intervene. Like the bystanders of the Genovese murder, bystanders of cyberbullying feel that there are many people who witness it and therefore

are available to help the victim. Latane and Darley (1969) also suggest that social influence impacts individuals' likelihood to react. This applies to bystanders in cyberbullying as they are less likely to get involved if they do not see other intervening bystanders.

The current study was informed by the following theories that inform bystander actions. The first theory was based on research examining how bystanders respond during emergencies and the complexity of the judgment process on the part of the bystanders (Latane & Darley, 1969). As emergency situations are often unfamiliar and ambiguous, they require complex judgments. According to Latane and Darley (1969), bystanders must complete a five-step decision-making process before intervening. Latane and Darley's theoretical model suggests that bystanders must (a) notice that something is happening, (b) interpret the situation as calling for intervention, (c) assume personal responsibility for intervening, (d) decide what to do, and (e) possess the necessary skills and resources to act. In addition, this model posits that bystanders can be deflected from acting at each stage of this process. For example, bystanders might misperceive, misinterpret, disavow responsibility, and/or lack a plan or the ability to follow through with their plan. This theoretical model is therefore especially relevant for understanding why students and teachers are often reluctant to intervene in cyberbullying situations.

Another theoretical model that contributed to informing bystander perceptions was Weiner's attribution theory. This theory assumes that people generally try to determine why others do what they do in order to attribute causes to behavior. Attribution involves a three-stage process where "behavior (a) is observed, (b) determined to be



deliberate, and (c) attributed to internal or external causes” (Gini et al., 2008). In the case of witnessing harmful events, bystanders may blame others in order to distance themselves from the thoughts of becoming a victim. Often times, bystanders judge victims to be bad, which help them to justify not getting involved or intervening on behalf of the victim.

### **Summary**

This chapter examined the literature concerning online and offline bullying at school, with a focus on the perceptions of teachers and students. In addition, effective prevention strategies and the involvement of the school were discussed. Taken together, the literature suggests that teachers and students were typically not aware of how to respond as helpful bystanders when witnessing cyberbullying. Teachers were often not helpful bystanders due to (a) a lack of knowledge of cyberbullying strategies, (b) a lack of confidence in managing cyberbullying, and (c) a lack of feeling responsible. Students were often not helpful as bystanders due to (a) a lack of trust in reporting to teachers, (b) a belief that teachers were unable to help, and (c) a belief that there was no way to stop cyberbullying. It is important to note that there is a lack of research investigating teacher and student perceptions of cyberbullying, especially as it relates to the inclusive classroom population. Understanding student and teacher perceptions regarding cyberbullying may inform cyberbullying prevention and intervention strategies that focus on intervening behavior.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

The organization of the methods chapter is as follows: (a) research design, (b) data collection and data sources, (c) issues of validity, and (d) ethical issues. Each section of the methodology is described individually.

### **Research Design**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experience of being a bystander to cyberbullying, specifically from the perspective of students and educators in secondary inclusive classroom settings. A bystander of cyberbullying was defined as someone who has witnessed past or present occurrences of cyberbullying or someone who may possess information such as overheard conversations, threats, changes in behavior, and/or evidence such as screen shots, pictures, or verbal reports of online forms of aggression (Stueve et al., 2006; Willard, 2007). Specifically, the following research questions were examined:

1. What are bystander perceptions of cyberbullying of students with and without disabilities and general and special educators in secondary inclusive classrooms?
2. How do these bystanders perceive cyberbullying, both personally and professionally?

3. How do these bystanders react to cyberbullying, both personally and professionally?
4. What factors influence bystander perceptions and reactions?

Previous studies conducted by Li (2008), Yilmaz (2010), and Eden et al. (2012) about preservice teachers and practicing teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying utilized quantitative survey methods. Only one study, conducted by Noah (2012) about middle school teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying, utilized qualitative methods. In addition, only a few studies, conducted by Agatston et al. (2007), Cassidy et al. (2009), Mishna, et al. (2009), and Parris et al. (2012), have investigated student perceptions of cyberbullying, two of which utilized focus group interviews, one which utilized survey methods, and one which utilized qualitative interviews. However, none of the previous studies have focused on teachers' and students' perceptions of cyberbullying in secondary inclusive settings.

The limited research, purpose of the study, and certain aspects of the research questions guided the decision to use a qualitative case study approach. According to Stake (2006), case study is "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi). Therefore, investigating the complexity of bystander perceptions helped uncover "multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon" (Merriam, 2009, p. 50) of cyberbullying, and revealed more about bystanders' "self-centering, complexity, and situational uniqueness" (Stake, 2006, p. 6).

## **Contributions of Prior Experiences and Pilot Studies to Design**

Previous personal and research experiences influenced creation of the current qualitative case study. Maxwell (2005) discusses that personal and research experiences contribute to our own understanding of the topic. This section describes personal experiences and research experiences that helped form the intellectual goals for this study.

**Personal experiences.** As a parent of an adolescent daughter who experienced extreme cyberbullying during middle school, I witnessed the resulting harmful physical, psychological, and academic effects of this type of bullying, which are consistent with the literature on cyberbullying. Through this experience, I developed valuable insights into how victims and bystanders (peers, parents, teachers, and schools) react to cyberbullying. Although I provided my daughter with the tools to communicate online, I lacked awareness of the prevalence of cyberbullying and knowledge of prevention and intervention strategies. Like most parents described in the literature, I was unaware that my daughter was being victimized online until I noticed changes in her physical and emotional behavior. She became withdrawn and depressed and did not want to attend school and as a result her grades began to suffer. Her school lacked awareness of prevention and intervention strategies and her friends were unwilling to get involved. This unique closeness to cyberbullying has allowed me to form key insights into this particular phenomenon, shaped my researcher subjectivity, and guided my selection of participants for this study.

Research experiences. Maxwell (2005) discusses that previous research experiences are relevant because of what the researcher has learned from them. To learn more about intervention and prevention strategies for cyberbullying, I attended Cyberbullying: Best Practices for Addressing Bullying Behaviors, a workshop presented by leading researchers in the field of bullying, Dr. Susan Limber and Dr. Patricia Agatston. I gained valuable insights regarding federal and state laws, prevention strategies, and resources addressing this growing problem behavior. This workshop led to my development of a cyberbullying problem-solving strategy that involved self-determination.

In 2012, a colleague and I conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of that cyberbullying problem-solving strategy. We implemented a single-subject multiple baseline design across three teenage girls who had experiences with cyberbullying (Guckert & Evmenova, 2012). Our study investigated whether the cyberbullying problem-solving strategy would increase their ability to solve hypothetical cyberbullying scenarios. Results indicated that implementation was functionally related to an increase in the quality and number of parts of written responses to hypothetical cyberbullying situations. In addition, we observed an overall increase in participants' self-determination and knowledge of the problem-solving strategy. However, the limitations of this study provoked further research questions. Although all participants improved in their problem-solving responses to cyberbullying scenarios, we realized that it was not known whether participants would continue to use the strategy in actual cyberbullying experiences. In addition, I realized that participants may have been influenced by researcher

expectations. We realized that we needed to know more about the participants' perceptions to understand their actual reactions to cyberbullying experiences. Consequently, these research limitations inspired the research questions for a second study.

In 2013, we conducted a pilot case study exploring bystander perceptions of cyberbullying among seven adolescent girls, three of whom had previously participated in my cyberbullying problem-solving strategy intervention (Guckert & Evmenova, 2013). This pilot case study investigation was designed to explore whether adolescent girls who were aware of the problem-solving strategy were more willing to intervene when they witnessed cyberbullying. A secondary purpose of this study was to field test potential interview questions for my dissertation. Specifically, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences as bystanders in cyberbullying and offer input on improving interventions to address the problem of cyberbullying. Results of this study helped me better understand the reasons bystanders choose to intervene. Specifically, findings revealed three primary bystander themes: (a) *active interveners* actively intervened by supporting the victim and confronting the bully, (b) *passive bystanders* passively stood aside and stayed neutral, and (c) *avoidant interveners* avoided intervening due to lack of personal responsibility. A particularly interesting finding of this study was that the one participant who fell into the Avoidant Intervener category was also a participant in the previous cyberbullying problem-solving intervention. This finding encouraged my deeper investigation of theories informing bystander behavior.

As the researcher of the current study, my goal was to provide a deeper understanding of bystander perceptions in order to contribute to the body of knowledge and discourse about effective ways to strengthen response and prevention in cyberbullying, especially in secondary inclusive classroom settings. As such, I assumed the role of interpreter and gatherer of interpretations and viewed the realities of my participants through a constructivist lens (Stake, 1995). Constructivism consists of the primary assumption that the human world is uniquely experienced by each individual (Patton, 2002). Thus, the aim of this research was not to discover, but to construct a clearer and more sophisticated reality, one that may withstand disciplined scrutiny and skepticism (Stake, 1995, p.101). Furthermore, providing thick descriptions and interpretations of bystanders most knowledgeable about the case may enable readers to make generalizations about the phenomenon of cyberbullying (Stake, 1995).

### **Rationale for Case Method**

This investigation provided particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic case studies by which rich and thick descriptions allowed for discovering a new meaning of bystander perceptions of cyberbullying (Merriam, 2009, p. 44). Specifically, data collection involved semistructured interviews with teachers and students from middle and high school inclusive classroom settings who had experiences with cyberbullying.

The use of a qualitative case study offered “a means of investigating complex social units” that helped to better understand the phenomenon of cyberbullying (Merriam, 2009, p. 50). Stake (1995) asserts that the primary concern of the case study is to generate knowledge of the particular; Stake (1995) supports using case study to discern and pursue

understanding of the fundamental issues specific to the case itself. Given the background as presented in the literature, the statement of the problem, and the research questions proposed for this investigation, case study was appropriate for the research design.

The case study methodology was chosen because I sought to determine answers to how or why questions, had limited control over events under investigation, and the object of study was a contemporary phenomenon situated within a real-life context that involved multiple sources of evidence (Schwandt, 1997). Several characteristics of the research questions influenced the decision to employ the case study method. First, I was interested in bystanders of cyberbullying within inclusive classroom settings for both uniqueness and commonality. Second, the instrumental case study, bystanders of cyberbullying, was of secondary interest and played a supportive role which facilitated an understanding of cyberbullying among adolescents in middle and high school inclusive classroom settings (Stake, 1995). Third, insights into bystander perceptions and reactions to cyberbullying played an important role in advancing the literature on cyberbullying and informing prevention and intervention strategies (Merriam, 2009).

In addition, the different groups of people representing bystanders within the cyberbullying phenomenon (i.e., students with and without disabilities, and general and special educators) necessitated the use of a multicase study method. Multicase research, as described by Stake (2006), supported the conceptualization of multiple cases existing within the overall case study of bystanders of cyberbullying. In this multicase research study, the single case was of interest because it belonged to a particular collection of cases. The individual cases shared a common characteristic or condition. The cases in the



collection were somehow categorically “bound together...members of a group or examples of a phenomenon” (pp. 5-6).

Stake (2006) refers to this group, category, or phenomenon as a “quintain” and describes that the process of multicase research starts with understanding of the single cases within the quintain, with the overall goal of understanding the broader case (p. 6). Therefore, the explanation of single cases within the overall case study was an employed research strategy in this multicase study design. Each bystander group stood on its own as a case which was studied carefully for its complexity and contribution to the understanding of the meaning of the overall case study, which according to this research design was to understand the experience of being a bystander to cyberbullying, especially from the perspective of students and teachers. According to Maxwell (2012), “adequate causal explanations in the social sciences depend on the in-depth understanding of meanings, contexts, and processes that qualitative research can provide” (p. 655).

### **Access to Sites**

The unit of analysis for this case was bystanders of cyberbullying within secondary inclusive classroom settings. Specifically, this unit of analysis included 11 students with and without disabilities, and 9 general and special educators from 14 different schools located in 5 different counties in 2 states on the Eastern seaboard. Bystanders in cyberbullying within secondary school inclusive classroom settings were chosen because the literature revealed that cyberbullying was more prevalent during this timeframe. In addition, bystanders were cited as the group that has the most potential to reduce and impact cyberbullying.

As the researcher, my unique closeness to cyberbullying stemmed from the personal and professional experiences described above. These experiences influenced my insight into this particular phenomenon and shaped my researcher subjectivity and selection of participants (Patton, 2002). Subjectivity is an essential element of understanding and is defined as having meaning partly unique to the individual observer (Stake, 1995). Although I recognized the subjective nature of this case study was enhanced by personal and professional experiences (Stake, 1995), I also understood the importance of making a deliberate effort to disconfirm my own interpretations and provide my readers with a report of the data that assisted in their recognition of subjectivity (Stake, 1995). My intent was to be aware of my intellectual shortcomings. Thus there were several ways that I gained access to these particular bystanders for my study.

First, permission was obtained to access students with and without disabilities and special educators through a parent training and advocacy listserv which provides support, education, and training to families, schools, and other professionals dedicated to serving children with and without disabilities, including traditionally underserved, rural, and low-income populations in one state located on the Eastern seaboard. This organization also supports African-American and Latino populations. I was professionally affiliated with this association through my graduate study research experiences in the special education program.

Second, permission was obtained to access students with and without disabilities through my relationship with Girl Scout leaders in the Girl Scouts of America. I was

personally affiliated with this organization through my experiences as a parent of daughters who were Girl Scouts. However, my relationship with Girl Scouts and their parents was professional as I was not personally familiar with the particular leader and troop that I worked with during this research study. The specific troop I worked with included 17 adolescent females who attended local, public middle and high schools. These schools were located within a large metropolitan school district, with more than 150,000 students, in a state located on the Eastern seaboard.

Third, access to general and special educators affiliated with a large public university located in a metropolitan area in one state located on the Eastern seaboard was obtained. My relationship with these educators was based on my professional relationship as a Ph.D. student and as a Graduate Research Assistant in one university. Specifically, permission was obtained to access three listservs within the education program of my university. I had a professional relationship with all participants.

### **Selection of Participants**

Purposeful sampling was used to select information-rich cases strategically and purposefully, as “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). According to Merriam (2009), to begin purposive sampling, one must first determine the selection criteria that are essential in choosing the people to be studied. Therefore, a list of attributes essential to the study was created prior to finding/locating the participants (LeCompte and Preissle, as cited in Merriam, 2009).

Participant selection was based on specific criteria and dependent on the research questions (Merriam, 2009). The selection process was both critical and distinguishable from the sampling strategy. As Reybold, Lammert, and Stribling (2009) explain, the selection process occurs through the lens of subjectivity; therefore “there must be an accounting for the relationship between the researcher and those chosen to represent a reality” (p. 6). In addition, “the product of a study must be consciously attentive to the relationship between selection choices and findings” (Reybold et al., 2009). These considerations were important given the sensitive nature of this study. It was also important that participants had experiences and were aware of cyberbullying and communicated their experiences in such a way that led to an in-depth understanding of the case. In order to get to know and understand bystanders of cyberbullying, part of the research strategy was to get close enough to each of the participants and their circumstances to capture what really happened to them when they were exposed to this form of bullying (Patton, 2002).

Four cases were selected for this multicase study: general educators, special educators, adolescents with disabilities, and adolescents without disabilities. Each case was studied to understand bystander perceptions of cyberbullying in middle and high school inclusive classroom settings. Selecting cases was based on the following criteria: (a) the case was relevant to the overall case of bystanders of cyberbullying, (b) the case provided diversity across contexts, and (c) the case provided good opportunities to learn about the complexity and contexts of cyberbullying in the secondary inclusive classroom. The binding concept, bystander perceptions of cyberbullying, needed to be prominent in

all of the cases (Stake, 1995). Therefore, the criteria for all participants included that they had witnessed past or present occurrences of cyberbullying or possessed information such as overheard conversations, threats, changes in behavior, and/or evidence such as screen shots, pictures, or verbal reports of online forms of aggression.

In addition, a diversity of attributes across the four cases was necessary. However, the most important consideration in selecting cases was being relevant to the overall case of bystanders to cyberbullying and the opportunity to learn more about their perceptions and reactions to cyberbullying (Stake, 1995, p. 26).

Specifically, the selection of participants within each case was based on the following criteria and dependent on the research questions (Merriam, 2009). Potential participants who were students with and without disabilities included any young adult student (male or female, with or without disabilities) who was between the ages of 11 and 17, was attending an inclusive classroom setting in grades 6 through 12, and who had experienced cyberbullying. Experiences with cyberbullying included being a victim, bully, or bystander in cyberbullying. Bystanders in cyberbullying were those students who had witnessed cyberbullying. Experiences with cyberbullying were currently happening or occurred in the past. Specific participant selection criteria included: (a) adolescents who were regular users of social digital media, (b) adolescents who varied in terms of their bystander experiences (e.g., intervening, non-intervening), (c) adolescents who reflected an array of experiences with different types of cyberbullying (e.g., sexting, rumor spreading, impersonation) and (d) adolescents who reflected diversity in demographic description (e.g., race, age, grade, and disability status).

Participants who were general and special educators were currently teaching in a middle or high school inclusive classroom setting in grades 6 to 12 and had students who had experienced cyberbullying incidents. The teachers could be of any age, gender, ethnic background, and/or health status. Specific participant selection criteria included the following: (a) varied in terms of their bystander experiences (e.g., intervening, nonintervening), (b) varied in terms of their school settings, (c) reflected an array of experiences with cyberbullying, and (d) varied in terms of their knowledge of cyberbullying interventions.

The above criteria were important because they ensured: (a) a keen understanding of the factors that influence bystander perceptions and reactions, (b) the ability to convey concerns about prevention, (c) the ability to convey valuable insights informing interventions, and (d) the ability to convey interpretation and understanding of the problems and issues involved with cyberbullying among adolescents in middle and high school inclusive settings. However, when selecting cases, it was important to understand that not all cases work out well. Therefore, I was prepared to make early assessments to determine if the case should be dropped and another selected (Stake, 1995). According to Flyvbjerg (2006), testing of hypothesis relates directly to the question of generalizability, and this in turn relates to the question of case selection. Generalization was increased by the strategic selection of cases that allowed for the richest information.

### **Variation Sampling**

In addition, variation was included in the sampling process to determine whether there were central themes that cut across the bystanders of cyberbullying. According to

Patton (2002), when selecting a small diverse sample, data collection and analysis will yield two kinds of findings important in qualitative inquiry: “(1) high-quality, detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniqueness, and (2) important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity” (p. 235). This study’s use of variation in purposeful sampling was based on the following criteria: Participants (1) varied in terms of their bystander role and (2) reflected an array of influential factors that impacted their experiences with cyberbullying.

### **Snowball Sampling**

Finally, a snowball sampling technique (Patton, 2002) was employed to allow participants to recommend other participants who had experiences with cyberbullying. This technique provided a means to locate other participants who met the participant criteria.

### **Adolescent Participants**

This qualitative investigation included 11 adolescents, 5 without disabilities and 6 with disabilities attending inclusive classrooms in grades 8 through 11. All participants ranged from 13 to 17 years and attended schools along the East coast of the United States. Participation was elicited through two listserv announcements that invited students with and without disabilities who had experiences with cyberbullying (see Appendix A). The listserv in which the announcements were sent included a large parent advocacy listserv and a Girl Scouts of America troop listserv. A snowball sampling technique (Patton, 2002) was employed and adolescent participants recommended other

adolescent participants who had experiences with cyberbullying to be interviewed.

Interviews were audiotaped and conducted in person in various settings that included coffee shops, private homes, and cafes. Follow-up questions were answered through email after the interview process. Three different transcribers transcribed all interviews. Five out of the 11 adolescent participants provided artifacts during or after the interviews that were examples of cyberbullying or examples of strategies that they may have learned at school. Demographic data on all students was collected during the interview.

Demographic included the following information: age, grade, gender, ethnicity, disability status, and prior cyberbullying role(s). In order to protect the confidentiality of all participants in this study, the demographic data was not specifically reported for each student. The following section provides a summary of the demographic information on all students. Demographic data is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Student Demographics*

Student	Age	Disability
1	15	No
2	15	No
3	15	Yes
4	14	No
5	16	Yes
6	14	Yes
7	15	No
8	16	No
9	17	Yes
10	13	Yes
11	13	Yes

*Note.* All identifying demographic information was omitted to protect confidentiality of participants.



## **Student Demographic Summary**

Student participants included 6 females and 5 males who ranged in age from 13 to 17 years with a mean age of 15 years. Students ranged from 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade, with a mean grade of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Six of the 11 participants had disabilities. The disabilities among participants included ADD (attention deficit disorder), ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and LD (learning disabilities). Student participants' races included White, Black/White, Japanese/White, and Hispanic. All students were attending schools in suburban settings. Of the 11 students, 7 had a prior role as a victim of online and/or offline bullying, while 5 had a prior role as a bystander. Student participants were from seven different schools. Students reported using Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, cell phone texting, texting applications, Instagram, Voxer, and Xbox to communicate with friends. Students ranged in their time spent daily on social media from 1 hour to 16 hours, with a mean of 4 hours. Student interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 70 minutes, with a mean of 60 minutes.

## **Teacher Participants**

This qualitative investigation included nine practicing teachers, of whom five were special educators and four were general educators teaching in grades 7 through 12. All teachers were teaching in schools located on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. All teachers were working in inclusive classroom settings or working collaboratively with inclusive teachers and classes.

Participation was elicited through listserv announcements that invited practicing general and special educators with cyberbullying experiences (see Appendix A).

Specifically, the announcements were sent through three listservs within a large public university located in a metropolitan area of a state located on the Eastern seaboard. The listservs accessed the university education program. In addition, a snowball sampling technique (Patton, 2002) was employed and teacher participants recommended other teacher participants who had experiences with cyberbullying to be interviewed.

Interviews were audiotaped and conducted in person in various settings that included coffee shops, private homes, and cafes. If interviewees were unable to meet in person, the interview was held via Skype. Follow-up questions were answered through email after the interview process. Teachers provided artifacts during or after the interviews that were examples of strategies, lessons, or school antibullying policies or programs. Three different transcribers transcribed all interviews.

Demographic data on all teachers was collected during the interview.

Demographic included: years taught, gender, ethnicity, highest degree held, school setting, classroom description, type of teacher, and disabilities represented in the classroom. In order to protect the confidentiality of all participants in this study, the demographic data was not specifically reported for each teacher. The following section provides a summary of the demographic information on all teachers. Demographic data is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Teacher Demographics*

Teacher	Type
1	Special Educator
2	Special Educator
3	Special Educator
4	Special Educator
5	General Educator
6	Special Educator
7	General Educator
8	General Educator
9	General Educator

*Note.* All identifying demographic information was omitted to protect confidentiality of participants.

**Teacher Demographic Summary**

Teacher participants included five special educators and four general educators who ranged in age from mid-20s to mid-60s, with the mean age range of mid-30s. Teachers ranged in years of teaching experience from 2 to 16 years, with a mean of 6 years. Teachers' ethnic origins included Black and White. Teachers ranged in their level of education from bachelor's to master's to doctoral degrees, with the mean holding a master's degree. Teachers were from suburban, urban, and rural school settings, with the mean from suburban settings. Teachers taught grades 7 through 12. Disabilities that were represented in teachers' classrooms included: ADD, ADHD, AS (Asperger's syndrome), AUT (autism), ED (emotional disorder), HI (hearing impairment), ID (intellectual disability), LD (learning disability), OHI (other health impairment), and VI (visual impairment).

## **School Descriptions**

The following section provides a description of the 14 schools at which the participants attended or taught. Each school description also provides a description of the type of bullying program that is in place. All school names are pseudonyms.

**Frasier Middle School.** This middle school was located in a large suburban area on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 919 seventh and eighth graders (51% male, 49% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (62.9%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (17.7%), Hispanic (10.3%), Other (4.6%), and Black (4.5%). Of these students 13.06% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented 13.7% of the school population.

Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings. In addition, comprehensive services for students with emotional and behavioral disorders were also available at this school. Students had access to an on-staff crisis intervention counselor, psychologist, and social worker. The school also participated in a schoolwide positive behavior intervention and supports program (PBiS) which provided a basic structure for behavioral support regarding school-identified guidelines of responsibility, respect, and safety for all school activities. A new antibullying policy was integrated within the schoolwide PBiS program which included prevention strategies for traditional and cyberbullying.

**Clinton High School.** This high school was located in a large suburban area on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The high school student body was comprised

of 2,830 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (50.29% male, 49.71% female). The demographic data regarding ethnicity included a diverse student body of White (40%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (32%), Hispanic (15%), Black (09%), and Other (04%). Of these students 22.19% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented 12% of the school population.

Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings in the school. The school also participated in a schoolwide antibullying program which focuses through the year during the students' study hall period. These lessons include character development, decision making, and restorative justice. Through the various lessons, students learn how their actions and decisions impact not only their peers but also the school as a whole.

**Riverview Secondary School.** This secondary school was located in a large suburban area on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The high school student body was comprised of 4,067 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (49% male, 51% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (60%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (17%), Hispanic (11%), Black (5%), and Other (7%). Of these students 12% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented approximately 12.27% of the school population.

Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings in the school. There was no reported schoolwide antibullying program mentioned on the school website, however a link was provided to access the county's violence prevention and intervention resources.

**Fillmore Middle School.** This middle school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 1,044 seventh through eighth graders (48% male, 52% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (63%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (23%), Hispanic (6%), Black (3%), and Other (5%). Of these students 8% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented approximately 13% of the school population.

Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings in the school. In addition, this school included an additional continuum of services for students with emotional and specific learning disabilities that were planned with long-term outcomes. Students had access to an on-staff crisis intervention counselor, psychologist, and social worker. There was no reported schoolwide antibullying program mentioned on the school website, however a link was provided to access the county's violence prevention and intervention resources.

**Salem High School.** This secondary school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 2,907 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (47% male, 53% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (52%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (17%), Black (16%), Hispanic (9%), and Other (6%). Of these students 16% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented approximately 13% of the school population.

Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings in the school. In addition, this school included an additional continuum of services for students with emotional and specific learning disabilities that were planned with long-term outcomes. Students had access to an on-staff crisis intervention counselor, psychologist, and social worker. There was no reported schoolwide antibullying program mentioned on the school website, however a link was provided to access the county's violence prevention and intervention resources.

**Oakdale High School.** This high school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 2,398 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (50% male, 50% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (62%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (21%), Hispanic (7%), Black (5%), and Other (5%). Of these students 8% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented approximately 11% of the school population.

Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings in the school. In addition, this school included an additional continuum of services for students with emotional and specific learning disabilities that were planned with long-term outcomes. Students had access to an on-staff crisis intervention counselor, psychologist, and social worker. There was no reported schoolwide antibullying program mentioned on the school website, however a link was provided to access the county's violence prevention and intervention resources.

**Camden High School.** This high school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard region of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 2,669 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (50% male, 50% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (58%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (22%), Hispanic (10%), Black (6%), and Other (4%). Of these students 13% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented 14% of the school population.

Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings in the school. In addition, this school included an additional continuum of services for students with emotional and specific learning disabilities that were planned with long-term outcomes. Students had access to an on-staff crisis intervention counselor, psychologist, and social worker. There was no reported schoolwide antibullying program mentioned on the school website, however a link was provided to access the county's violence prevention and intervention resources.

**Hill Ridge High School.** This high school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 1,949 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (48% male, 52% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (73%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (11%), Hispanic (6%), Black (3%), and Other (7%). Of these students 8% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented approximately 14% of the school population.



Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings in the school. In addition, this school included additional comprehensive of services for students with emotional disabilities and specific learning disabilities that were planned with long-term outcomes. Students had access to an on-staff crisis intervention counselor, psychologist, and social worker. There was no reported schoolwide antibullying program mentioned on the school website, however a link was provided to access the county's violence prevention and intervention resources.

**Lincoln High School.** This high school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard region of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 2,066 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (49% male, 51% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (69%), followed by Black (20%), Hispanic (5%), Asian or Pacific Islander (2%), and Other (4%). Of these students 21% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals.

Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings in the school. In addition, this school included additional comprehensive services for students with emotional, learning, and intellectual disabilities that included inclusion and self-contained programs. Students were assigned to case managers who monitored progress. There was no reported schoolwide antibullying program beside a “non-bullying” policy in the school's parent/student handbook.

**St. Mary's High School.** This private high school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The high school student body was comprised of 1,157 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (50% male, 50% female). Additional

demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (83%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (6%), Hispanic (6%), and Black (5%). Of these students 0% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals.

Students with intellectual disabilities were served in inclusive education through a special program that provided student mentors who supported independence skills. Transition coaches were provided to support job placement. Students with learning disabilities were accommodated through a special Student Assistance Plan. The student handbook provided guidelines and rules pertaining to bullying. No formal antibullying program was described on the school website.

**Chatum High School.** This charter high school was located in an urban area within the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The charter school student body was comprised of 319 students in grades 6 to 9. Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily Hispanic (69%), followed by Black (29%) and Other (2%). Of these students 91% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented 10% of the school population.

Lessons on bullying prevention were taught and accompanied by videos that included topics such as awareness of bullying and cyberbullying. Bullying topics were discussed in small group settings.

**Forest Glen Middle School.** This middle school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard region of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 1,949 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (47% male, 53% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was

primarily White (62%), followed by Hispanic (22%), Black (15%), Asian or Pacific Islander (0%), and Other (1%). Of these students 56% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented 7.79% of the school population. Students with disabilities were provided with a school social worker on site.

**Sunrise Valley High School.** This high school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard region of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 1,949 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (47% male, 53% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (70.9%), followed by Hispanic (13.7%), Asian or Pacific Islander (4.3%), Black (4.1%), and Other (7%). Of these students 9% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented 10.6% of the school population.

**Rydell High School.** This middle school was located in a large suburban area within the Eastern seaboard region of the United States. The middle school student body was comprised of 1,949 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders (51.95% male, 48.05% female). Additional demographic data regarding ethnicity included a student body which was primarily White (42.96%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (35.76%), Hispanic (11.69%), Black (4.2%), and Other (5.39%). Of these students 9% were eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Students with disabilities represented 7.79% of the school population.

Students with disabilities were served in the least restrictive environment with access to all educational settings in the school. In addition, this school included additional comprehensive services for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Students

had access to an on-staff crisis intervention counselor, psychologist, and social worker. There was no reported schoolwide antibullying program besides the county's violence prevention and intervention resources.

### **Schools' Counties' Prevention and Intervention Policies**

The schools in this study represented five different counties located within three states on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The school county prevention and intervention policies and state laws are described next. All county names are pseudonyms.

**Frater County.** Bullying is part of the health and counseling curriculum. Lessons are provided to help students better recognize bullying. Definitions of types of bullying are: (a) bullying is physical, verbal, emotional teasing, or intimidation that occurs over a period of time; (b) bullying includes encouraging other students to exclude or shun another student; and (c) cyberbullying is the use of technology (e.g. e-mail, texting, social media sites) to degrade or humiliate another person or group. Students are taught how to report bullying behaviors if they experienced or witnessed it.

Under state law, intent to coerce, intimidate, or harass someone using a computer network or to communicate obscene, vulgar, or indecent language or threaten any immoral or illegal act may be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Specific consequences for cyberbullying are outlined in the student responsibilities booklet, which states that cyberbullying taking place during school hours, on the bus, or using school equipment, is subject to disciplinary action. However, schools are not responsible for regulating cyberbullying if the student was not under school supervision. Parents and/or guardians

who report cyberbullying occurring from home are referred to the police to file charges if desired.

Principals base consequences for bullying on the circumstances involved and use discretion based on age of students, intent, and other factors. When bullying is reported, school administrators are directed to take immediate action to investigate and respond. Parents and/or guardians are contacted and consequences range from a conference to recommendation for expulsion. Incidents involving substantial threats or assault will also be reported to the police.

School administrators, counselors, psychologists, or social workers work with all involved students and intervene with the student who engaged in the bullying behavior, with the target of that behavior, and with the bystanders who witnessed the behavior. The primary goals of these interventions are (a) to ensure that the student who bullied understands that such behaviors are unacceptable, and understand the potential harm and impact of the behaviors; (b) the safety of the target is ensured, and the target will feel safe, supported, and learn some positive approaches to dealing with this type of behavior; and (c) the bystanders learn that they have a responsibility to report such behavior to adults, and will learn effective strategies for intervening when they see bullying behavior in the future.

**Prince County.** Bullying is part of the Social Studies and counseling curriculum as well as through the “Code of Behavior” and based on the Olweus antibullying program. Students are able to better recognize the inappropriateness of bullying through the Character Education program. Definitions of types of bullying are: (a) bully/victim

violence occurs whenever a student intentionally, repeatedly, and over time inflicts or threatens to inflict physical or emotional injury or discomfort on another's body, feelings, or possessions; (b) a person is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons; (c) cyberbullying is the use of technology (e.g. e-mail, texting, social media sites) to degrade or humiliate another person or group. Students are taught how to report bullying behaviors if they experienced or witnessed it.

In response to bullying, all students are to be informed of their right to protection against bullying behaviors and the right to file a complaint if they believe they have been the victims of bullying behavior. School administrators are responsible for investigating each complaint, determining if the complaint is legitimate in accordance with the above definition, and taking appropriate corrective action. Any student may initiate a complaint by talking to an administrator or completing a complaint form, and returning this form to a school administrator. All school staff members are to be informed of a student's right to initiate a complaint and shall be able to advise students as to how such complaints are initiated.

School administrators respond to the bullying complaint by meeting with the complainant and affirming the complaint is legitimate. The administrator will in all confidentiality: (a) ascertain basic information, (b) ask for a written statement and also for any witnesses, (c) assure safety and offer any counseling, and (d) file an incident report with Risk Management and Security Services.

School administrators, counselors, psychologists, or social workers work with all involved students and intervene with the student who engaged in the bullying behavior, with the target of that behavior, and with the bystanders who witnessed the behavior. During the intervention with the bully an administrator will (a) explain the seriousness of their bullying behavior, (b) explain follow-up procedure and caution against retaliation, and (c) take appropriate disciplinary action.

If a student is found guilty of bullying behavior, corrective action is to be taken in accordance with established disciplinary procedures. Corrective action may range from admonition to suspension or expulsion depending on the seriousness of the incident, prior incidents, and the need to protect the victim and other students from future bullying.

**Briar County.** A bullying prevention program is not described in this County's Schools website. The County defines bullying as any negative behavior intended to frighten or cause harm, which may include, but is not limited to verbal or written threats of physical harm. Cyberbullying is defined as using information and communication technologies, such as cell phone text messages and pictures, Internet email, social networking websites, defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites to support deliberate, hostile behavior intended to harm others. The subject of bullying is discussed with all students at the beginning of every school year during the review of the County's "Code of Student Conduct." Students are required to report bullying to a staff member as soon as they are aware of it.

Understanding how emotionally painful bullying can be to a child, Briar County Public Schools' staff remain committed to preventing this type of harmful activity during

the school day and at school-related activities. In response to bullying, school psychologists, social workers, and school counselors routinely consult with teachers, parents, and school administrators around issues of bullying and work with students identified as requiring behavioral intervention or counseling support. For the bully, school psychologists conduct threat assessments to determine the type of social/emotional support that needs to be provided to the student who bullies another student in addition to a discipline consequence since the goal is to change the behavior of the bully.

Students who threaten to cause harm or harass others will be referred to the principal or assistant principal for appropriate disciplinary actions, which may include suspension and/or recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion. Students are also reminded of state laws and the consequence of bullying through the website which provided the following state laws. State Code Ann. Sec. 18.2-152.7:1 states,

If any person, with the intent to coerce, intimidate, or harass any person, shall use a computer or computer network to communicate obscene, vulgar, profane, lewd, lascivious, or indecent language, or make any suggestion or proposal of an obscene nature, or threaten any illegal or immoral act, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

State Code Ann. Sec. 18.2-60 states that if a threat is written, signed or unsigned, and contains a threat to kill or to do bodily injury to an individual or member of his/her family, it is a Class 6 felony. This would include written threats to kill or to do bodily harm that are communicated via electronic communication.



**Dillard County.** Dillard Charter Public schools define bullying as the severe or repeated use by one or more students of verbal, written, or electronic communication or a physical act or gesture, or exclusion, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of (a) causing physical or emotional harm, (b) placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to themselves or damage to him or herself or of damage to his or her property, and (c) materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited on school grounds; property immediately adjacent to school grounds; at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions, or programs whether on or off school grounds; at school bus stops; on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased, or used by the school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school district.

All staff members are required to report any bullying or harassment they see or learn about. The schools will promptly and reasonably investigate all allegations of harassment, including bullying. The principal and dean of students will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for implementation of this policy, including (a) a student complaint process and reporting process for staff, (b) an investigation process and communication with parents/guardians, and (c) recording and reporting the bullying.

The principal will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment or bullying. Disciplinary actions regarding the applicable laws will take place in the bully's punishment. Retaliation against a person who provides information during

an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying, is prohibited.

Dillard County Charter Schools' Plan and the policies incorporated into it are intended (a) to prevent bullying and cyberbullying among students, (b) to encourage students and their parents to have confidence in the school's policies and procedures and to come forward promptly whenever a student is subject to conduct that is prohibited by this or any other school policy, and (c) to implement appropriate discipline and other corrective measures when they are found to be warranted.

**James County.** The James County Board directs the superintendent to establish training and other programs that are designed to help eliminate unlawful harassment and bullying and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community. Definitions of bullying are any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that (a) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or (b) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's or employee's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

As funds are available, the Board will provide additional training for students, employees, and volunteers who have significant contact with students regarding the Board's efforts to address harassment and bullying and will create programs to address these issues. The training or programs should (a) provide examples of behavior that constitutes harassment or bullying, (b) teach employees to identify groups that may be the

target of harassment or bullying, and (c) train school employees to be alert to locations where such behavior may occur, including locations within school buildings, at school bus stops, and on cell phones and the Internet.

Employees are required to report any actual or suspected violations of this policy. Students, parents, volunteers, visitors or others are also strongly encouraged to report any actual or suspected incidents of harassment or bullying. Reports may be made anonymously, and all reports shall be investigated in accordance with that policy. The Board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person for reporting or intending to report violations of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy, or participating in the investigation of reported violations of this policy.

After consideration of the nature and circumstances of the reprisal or retaliation and in accordance with applicable federal, state, or local laws, policies, and regulations, the superintendent or designee shall determine the consequences and remedial action for a person found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation. These consequences are referred to in the County's "Code of Conduct" section on bullying and/or hazing.

### **Procedure**

Approval for this research study was secured through the completion of the researcher's university's Human Subject Review Board (HSRB) (see Appendix A). Approval for the listserv announcements inviting special educators through the university's education department listservs were obtained (see Appendix A). A listserv approval inviting special and general educators through two department listservs, were

obtained and were included in a review board amendment form. Another listserv announcement inviting students with and without disabilities through a parent advocacy and training association was approved (see Appendix A). In addition, permission was obtained to access students with and without disabilities through Girl Scout leaders in the Girl Scouts of America and included in an HSRB amendment form (see Appendix A). Finally, approval for the Ph.D. in Education Dissertation was obtained from all members of the Dissertation committee to conduct interviews, transcriptions, and analysis of data (see Appendix A). All consent and assent forms were signed by participant teachers and students prior to all interviews.

The qualitative case study was conducted over a 14-week period from November 2012 to February 2013. Prior to the actual interviews with students and teachers, the researcher solicited, qualified, and scheduled interview participants. Data collection was conducted through a sequence of specific processes during the study. In the middle of November 2012, teachers and students were solicited for participation through approved listserv announcements. Once a participant responded, the researcher qualified that each participant met the participant selection criteria via a personal phone call, email, or text. Once each participant was qualified and agreed to participate, an individual interview was scheduled. Interviews were scheduled from the middle of November through the beginning of February. At the conclusion of each interview, teachers and students were asked to provide artifacts. If the participant did not have an artifact at the time of the interview, the researcher agreed to accept the artifact via email or text. Follow-up emails were sent to all participants following the interviews for member checking.

## **Data Collection and Data Sources**

Data sources included (a) semistructured teacher interviews, (b) semistructured student interviews, (c) teacher artifacts, (d) student artifacts, and (e) member checks. According to Maxwell (2005), triangulation of data involves collecting information from a variety of sources, which reduces the risk of systematic biases and increases the validity of a study. In this study, triangulation was used during and after data collection. Maxwell (2005) emphasized that triangulation allows the researcher to acquire an in-depth understanding of issues investigated as well as providing the most credible conclusions. Therefore, triangulation of the data was employed to prove a complete and accurate understanding from all sources of evidence.

### **Semistructured Interviews**

Student and teacher participants were interviewed about their bystander perceptions of cyberbullying using semistructured interviews with follow-up probes (Patton, 2002) (see Appendices B and C). As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) point out, “interviews produce rich data, filled with words that reveal respondents’ perspectives” (p.104). Brantlinger et al. (2005) explained that quality indicators of qualitative research included: (a) carefully selected participants who were purposefully identified, (b) clearly worded interview questions, and (c) interview questions that were suitable for exploring the researcher’s domains of interest. These quality indicators were taken into consideration during the interview process of this study.

All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed into a Microsoft Word document (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Students with and without disabilities were solicited through

listserv announcements and through announcements made through a local Girl Scouts of America troop. Once each student responded and agreed to participate, an interview was scheduled at the students' convenience for a specific date, time, and location. For student participants, informed assent and consent forms were distributed and obtained once they agreed to participate in the study. Forms were distributed in person to each participant by the researcher. Participants and parents were asked to sign the assent and consent forms, indicating that they read the forms and agreed to participate. Double assent and consent forms were issued for all participants: one for the project file and one for their personal files. The researcher personally collected the forms prior to the start of the interview. The semistructured interview included 19 open-ended questions about perceptions of cyberbullying and seven demographic questions (see Appendix B). Follow-up probes provided a chance for elaboration and clarification of information. Specifically, the students were interviewed with a researcher-developed interview guide that provided one example of a cyberbullying scenario and cyberbullying screen shot followed by interview questions to prompt participants about their personal bystander perceptions of cyberbullying. For example, after reading the cyberbullying scenario, students were asked, "If you were Lindsay's best friend, what might you say or do to help?" Follow-up probes were used during the interview to encourage participants to elaborate on their experiences and provide more detail (Patton, 2002).

For general and special educators, informed consent forms were obtained in person prior to conducting interviews. The consent form was read to the participant and the participant consented by signing the consent form prior to participating in the

interview. The semistructured interview included 22 open-ended questions about perceptions of cyberbullying and eight demographic questions (see Appendix C). Follow-up probes provided a chance for elaboration and clarification of information. Once each teacher responded and agreed to participate, an interview was scheduled at the teachers' convenience for a specific date, time, and location. The type and length of interviews are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6

*Participant Interview Schedule*

Type of Participant	Name	Length of Interview
Special Education Teacher	Teacher 1	70 min.
Special Education Teacher	Teacher 2	77 min.
Special Education Teacher	Teacher 3	66 min.
Student without disabilities	Student 1	60 min.
Student without disabilities	Student 2	72 min.
Special Education Teacher	Teacher 4	66 min.
Student with disabilities	Student 3	38 min.
General Education Teacher	Teacher 5	45 min.
Student without disabilities	Student 4	54 min.
Student with disabilities	Student 5	47 min.
Student with disabilities	Student 6	60 min.
Special Education Teacher	Teacher 6	60 min.
Student without disabilities	Student 7	60 min.
General Education Teacher	Teacher 7	45 min.
Student without disabilities	Student 8	30 min.
Student with disabilities	Student 9	45 min.
General Education Teacher	Teacher 8	40 min.
Student with disabilities	Student 10	40 min.
Student with disabilities	Student 11	60 min.
General Education Teacher	Teacher 9	71 min.

**Artifacts.** In addition, artifacts were collected from teachers and students that included various documentary data such as school newspaper reports, antibullying strategies and lessons, and social media pages that provided evidence of cyberbullying (see Appendices D and E). According to Patton (2002), “multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective on the program” (p. 306). Eight of the nine teacher participants and 5 of the 11 students provided artifacts in this study.

**Researcher Memos.** After each interview was conducted, analytic researcher memos were written. These memos provided descriptive and reflective notes that added



additional information regarding the participants' perceptions. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest that researcher speculation is an important and productive process that leads to the development of ideas in qualitative analysis.

### **Quality and Validity**

Qualitative researchers discuss the issues of trustworthiness and rigor when referencing the traditional terminology of validity and reliability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2009). Patton (2002) also prefers to use trustworthiness and authenticity when describing the credibility of qualitative research and asserts, "any credible research strategy...requires that the investigator does not set out to prove a particular perspective or manipulate the data to arrive a predisposed truths" (p. 51). To achieve rigor, Anafara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) recommend "analytic openness" concerning strategies employed during qualitative analysis that "provide enough description and details to allow validity judgments to be made by the reader" (p. 29). The following section describes the strategies that were employed to assure the credibility and trustworthiness of this study.

### **Member Checks**

Member checking was defined as systematically soliciting feedback about the findings from participants (Maxwell, 2005). In this study, this method was employed by continually checking back with interviewees to request whether narrative and quotations accurately represented the interview. This method established the validity of an account by providing a way to rule out the possibility of misinterpreting the participant's words and his or her perspective on the phenomenon. Member checking also provided a way to

identify my own biases and misinterpretations of the data. According to Polkinghorne (2007), “validation of generated texts can also be improved by use of the iterative process of returning to participants to gain clarification and further exploration of questions that arise during the interpretive portion of the research” (p. 482).

### **Negative Cases**

Another method employed to check the validity of data was searching for negative cases. According to Patton (2002), searching for negative cases is a process “where patterns and trends have been identified and our understandings of those patterns and trends is increased by considering the instances and cases that do not fit within the pattern” (p. 554). For example, there may be cases that do not fall in line with or contradict the major findings. Once the negative cases were identified, they assisted in revising and fine-tuning hypotheses and conclusions (Patton, 2002). This provided information that was necessary for a reexamination of the data and explained why a case did not fit, which led to a richer and more complex theory. According to Maxwell (2005), exploring negative cases is a key part of the logic of validity testing. Negative cases accomplished the identification of important defects in an account when instances could not be accounted for by a particular interpretation. In addition, exposing the unique complexities posed by negative cases enhanced the credibility of the study. According to Flyvbjerg (2006), “falsification is one of the most rigorous tests to which scientific proposition can be subjected: If just one observation does not fit with the proposition, it is considered not valid generally and must therefore be revised or rejected” (pp. 227-228).

## **Researcher Bias**

Validity threats were addressed and credibility was established by reporting my researcher bias or subjectivity. It was important to include this information because I was the research instrument in this qualitative inquiry. According to Maxwell (2005), researcher bias is defined as the process of explaining how the researcher's values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusions of the study. Acknowledging my bias increased the integrity of this study. My personal experiences with cyberbullying stemmed from my experiences as a parent of an adolescent victim of cyberbullying. My professional experience included research interventions and qualitative interviews with adolescents with previous experiences with cyberbullying. It was important to report how my personal and professional experiences affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation for the users of the findings (Patton, 2002). Prior to the start of this study, I anticipated finding several results. Findings that I expected to emerge from the student participants included: (a) student bystanders would differ in their reactions to cyberbullying; (b) students with disabilities would be less likely to intervene, while students without disabilities would be more likely to intervene; (d) students who had victim experiences would be more likely to intervene; (e) students with bystander only experiences would be less likely to intervene; and (f) students would feel school and teachers were unable to help prevent cyberbullying. Findings that I expected to emerge from the teacher participants included: (a) special educators would be more aware of cyberbullying than general educators and would have more knowledge of laws, policies, and strategies concerning cyberbullying; (b) all teachers would not be knowledgeable

about strategies specific to cyberbullying prevention and intervention; and (c) teachers would feel unable to prevent cyberbullying. As Maxwell asserts, “qualitative research is not concerned with eliminating the variance between researchers in the values and expectations they bring to the study, and avoiding the negative consequences” (p. 108). Throughout this study, I acknowledged my orientation and engaged in a systematic search for alternative themes, divergent patterns, and rival explanations in order to increase credibility (Patton, 2002).

### **Reactivity/Reflexivity**

Potential validity threats of the study were addressed through the method of reactivity and reflexivity. According to Maxwell (2005), reactivity is defined as “the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied” (p. 108). My goal was to understand my influence and use it productively. I accomplished this in several ways. First, I established trustworthiness with my participants by taking time to build a relationship during the interview process. Spending time with participants encouraged candid responses (Patton, 2002). Second, I took extensive field notes after all interviews to measure the reactive effect. This provided a way for me to examine how my presence affected what happened in the interview. Third, I was self-aware and acknowledged my importance in the research process. This means that I was aware of how possible influences from my prior knowledge and experiences with cyberbullying masked other possibilities that arose from the data. This method helped me understand how I influenced what each participant said and how it affected the validity of the inferences that I drew from the interview data (Maxwell, 2005).

## **Rich Data**

Credibility and external validity were achieved through collecting rich data. According to Becker, rich data is defined as the long-term involvement and extensive interviewing that enables a collection of data that are detailed and varied enough to provide a complete reflection of what is going on (as cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 110). In addition, rich data increased the credibility of the trustworthiness of the findings. According to Polkinghorne (2007), since interview texts are cocreated, the task of the researcher is to produce “articulations that lessen the distance between what is said by participants about their experienced meaning and the experienced meaning itself” (p. 482). Confidence in texts was achieved by my researcher descriptions of how I handled differences in participants’ meanings and text. I allowed time for participants to explore and reflect on their felt meanings during the interview process. In addition, I was open to accept felt meaning without judgment (Polkinghorne, 2007).

## **Ethical Issues**

In this section, my ethical obligation as a researcher throughout this study is discussed by defining ethical terms and procedures that were applied in this research study. According to Haney and Lykes, “ethics is concerned with the conduct and care of morals, that is the study of principles and methods for distinguishing right from wrong, good from bad, and just from unjust” (as cited in Lutrell, 2010, p. 108).

**Technical ethics.** Technical ethics included contemporary institutional guidelines on research with human subjects and listed obligations of the researcher. There were several steps involved in ensuring technical ethics were followed in this study. Prior to

implementing this study, the researcher completed CITI online training which ensured that the researcher was knowledgeable about federal policy for protection of human subjects. In addition, the researcher obtained approval for this study through the university's review board. In order to protect participants, all identities were strictly maintained and kept confidential. Participants were notified of foreseeable risks or benefits from their voluntary participation in the study. According to Haney and Lykes, "the concept of informed consent assumes the transparency of a social and psychological reality that enables researchers to provide full and accurate information about the research to autonomous subjects who are able to make rational, informed choices" (as cited in Lutrell, 2010, p. 128). The protocol for informed consent involved giving a full, comprehensive, and accurate description about the research to participants who were able to make rational and informed choices.

**Relational ethics.** Ethics in dealing with participants involved a well-developed professional identity, which resulted in behavior that stemmed from a conscious and deliberate commitment to be responsible in my role as a professional researcher (Patton, 2002). I exemplified responsible engagement and self-regulation during this study. I made reflective and consistent decisions when confronted with problems that arose during the interview process and throughout the research study. All participant identities were strictly maintained and kept confidential. Participants were informed of any foreseeable risks or benefits from their voluntary participation in the study. I assured all participants that my role in the study was that of the professional researcher.

## **Summary**

This chapter provided a description of the case study methodology used to examine secondary teacher and student bystander perceptions of cyberbullying. Five sources of data were collected: teacher interviews, student interviews, teacher artifacts, student artifacts, and member checks. A detailed description of the instrumentation was provided, as well as the methods for data collection and quality and validity. Chapter Four provides a detailed description of the data analysis and findings of this study in relation to the research questions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

This case study examined bystander perceptions of cyberbullying among general and special educators and students with and without disabilities. In particular, this study addressed the following four research questions:

1. What are bystander perceptions of cyberbullying of students with and without disabilities and general and special educators in secondary inclusive classrooms?
2. How do these bystanders perceive cyberbullying, both personally and professionally?
3. How do these bystanders react to cyberbullying, both personally and professionally?
4. What factors influence bystander perceptions and reactions?

A qualitative case study (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006) was utilized wherein five data sources were employed: teacher interviews, teacher artifacts, student interviews, student artifacts, and member checks. Twenty semistructured in-depth interviews were conducted with 9 teachers, of whom 5 were special educators and 4 were general educators, and 11 students, of whom 6 were students with disabilities and 5 were students without disabilities. Participants were from 14 different schools located in 5 different counties across 3 different states on the Eastern seaboard of the United States.



This chapter presents a description of the analysis of all data and the results of the study. The first section provides a detailed description of how the data was analyzed. The second section provides results of the investigation based on the case study design (Stake, 2006) using a grounded theory and constant comparative method of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The third section provides a description of the resulting themes found from the collected data. The last section provides a synthesis of the major findings based on the inductive method of data analysis that revealed an in-depth understanding of bystander perceptions of cyberbullying.

### **Data Analysis**

The following section describes the procedures involved in analyzing the data. Specifically, data analysis and interpretation were conducted throughout the process and after the completion of data collection using a multicase design (Stake, 2006) that utilized a grounded theory and constant comparative method of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Triangulation of all data sources was done for categorization and synthesis of common themes throughout the case study analysis. Data sources included interviews and artifacts. As each data source was analyzed, it was compared to other data sources to reveal connections and identify similarities and differences. Once similarities and differences were revealed, the data was synthesized into categories and then into common themes. Nvivo 10 qualitative software was used to code, categorize, and collapse all interview data. Triangulation was used during and after data collection as well as in the final analysis to reduce the risk of validity threats.

## **Case Study Analysis**

Two stages of analysis, a within-case followed by a cross-case analysis, were conducted (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006). This study included the separate cases of (a) students with disabilities, (b) students without disabilities, (c) general educators, and (d) special educators from inclusive classroom settings in grades 6 through 12.

During the within-case analysis, each case was treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself. Then the case of bystanders of cyberbullying in inclusive classroom settings was analyzed as a whole. The procedures used to analyze each case are described next.

## **Grounded Theory**

Following each interview, researcher memos were written. Then the process of grounded theory was developed through explicit descriptions of the new and relevant issues that arose during each interview. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), “in order to not miss anything that may be salient, the investigator must analyze the first bits of data for cues” (p. 6). Table 7 lists the salient issues that arose during interviews and were incorporated into interviews that followed.

Table 7

*Salient Interview Issues*

Salient Issues	Description/Theme
Salient Issue 1	Technology allowed in the classroom increases risk
Salient Issue 2	Students with disabilities learn bullying behaviors
Salient Issue 3	Harsh punishment prevents teacher reporting
Salient Issue 4	Students with disabilities are unaware
Salient Issue 6	Students with disabilities are at risk of serious adverse effects
Salient Issue 7	Boys are more involved in cyberbullying as bullies
Salient Issue 8	Cyberbullying is mostly girl drama
Salient Issue 9	Students with disabilities are victimized more

**Interview Data**

Twenty individual interviews (9 teachers and 11 students) were audiotaped, transcribed, and coded. Each individual interview transcript was read several times to become familiar with teacher and student responses. As each interview was read, potential common codes and categories were identified. The coding procedures involved open coding, axial coding, and selective coding that resulted in theory development that was grounded in the data and generalizable (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Interview transcriptions were analyzed and collapsed for themes and phrases that were recorded as potential coding categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Then a generated list of themes was developed. Nvivo 10 qualitative software was used to code, categorize, and collapse all interview data. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), “the procedures of grounded theory should explain as well as describe a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study” (p. 5). A systematic and sequential procedure of data collection and analysis captured “all potentially relevant aspects [of cyberbullying] as soon as they [were] perceived” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.

6). Additionally, constant comparisons of the data guarded against bias as all previous data was constantly compared and challenged with fresh data. A continuous process of data reduction occurred as relevant themes were further collapsed within developing themes and categories.

### **Artifacts**

Artifacts were collected during and after interviews from students and teachers (see Appendices D and E). These artifacts were used as data sources in this study. Examples of antibullying policies, strategies, and lessons were collected from teachers; evidence of cyberbullying such as screen shots of texts and social media were collected from students. Eight of the 9 teacher participants and 5 of the 11 students provided artifacts in this study. Analysis of artifacts provided additional evidence to substantiate and corroborate relevant themes that were discovered from the interviews.

### **Analysis Across Data Sources**

After each transcription was coded, an analyst case report was written (Stake, 2006) (see Appendix F). Individual case reports were developed from the generated list of initial themes and categories. Next, relationships and patterns within cases and across all cases were identified. A cross-case analysis was conducted after all data was coded (Stake, 2006). Worksheets were used to facilitate and organize the analysis of multicase data (Stake, 2006) (see Appendix G). These worksheets facilitated the organization of themes that emerged once the data were coded (see Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4). In particular, students with and without disabilities, and general and special educators, represented individual cases as well as the case of bystanders of cyberbullying in inclusive classroom

settings as a whole. Stake (2006) describes specific strategies for data analysis from multiple sources and asserts, “it is best that the issues of the individual Cases not merge too quickly into the main research questions of the overall multicase study” (p. 46). As such, the data analysis process was based on the following aspects of Stake’s cross-case analysis procedure:

The main activity of cross-case analysis is reading the case reports and applying their findings of situated experience to the research questions.... These research questions guide the multicase study of the program or phenomenon. The analysis is not simply a matter of listing the case findings pertinent to each research question, the findings need to keep their contextual meaning during the authoring of the multicase report. (p. 47)

### **Triangulation**

Triangulation of all data sources was conducted to ensure the internal validity and the trustworthiness of the conclusions. Multiple sources of evidence established a chain of evidence that produced patterns within the overall case of bystanders of cyberbullying. Triangulation of the interviews with artifacts, as well as triangulation with one another (general education teachers to special education teachers to students with disabilities to students without disabilities) resulted in a holistic understanding of the phenomenon and its converging conclusions. Table 8 details evidence of the multiple sources of data collection as well as the multiple voices of teachers and students that were used to triangulate the data for this study. This table reveals the major findings of this study listed

under four categories and four sources of data. Each data source provided corroborative evidence to verify information obtained from the different sources.

Table 8

*Triangulation: Major Findings Listed by Categories and Data Sources*

Major Finding	Source of Data							
	TI		SI		TA		SA	
	SE	GE	SE	GE	SE	GE	SE	GE
<b>Category 1: Conditions Facilitate Cyberbullying</b>								
1. Technology in the classroom increases the risk of online and offline bullying inside and outside of school	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
2. Peer Culture impacts peer acceptance and the likelihood of occurrences of cyberbullying	X	X	X	X			X	X
3. School Culture impacts prevalence of cyberbullying	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4. Adolescents are immersed in Social Media Culture	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
<b>Category 2: Bystander Awareness of Characteristics Influence Perceptions</b>								
1. Awareness of unique aspects of cyberbullying	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
2. Awareness of types, causes and effects of cyberbullying	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Awareness of prevalence	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4. Teachers lack awareness of school procedures, state laws, and cyberbullying strategies	X	X	X	X				
5. Aware that school prevention and intervention needs to be improved	X	X	X	X				
<b>Category 3: Bystanders of Cyberbullying Appear in Different Roles</b>								
Students react as Active Interveners	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Students react as Passive Witnesses	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Students react as Bully Bystanders	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Teachers are Reactive	X	X	X	X				
Teachers are Proactive	X	X	X	X				
<b>Category 4: Key Factors Influence Bystander Reactions</b>								
Feeling Responsible	X	X	X	X				
Morals and Values	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Prior Roles	X	X	X	X				
Emotions	X	X	X	X			X	X
School Culture	X	X	X	X				
Evidence	X	X	X	X			X	X
Social Media Awareness	X	X	X	X			X	X

Note. TI = Teacher Interview, SI = Student Interview, TA = Teacher Artifact, SA = Student Artifact, GE = General Education, SE = Special Education.

### **Negative Cases**

Negative cases were identified and assisted the researcher in revising and retaining conclusions for each research question. The search for negative cases provided necessary information for a reexamination of the data and led to a richer and more complex theory. Table 9 provides a summary of the identified negative cases.



Table 9

*Negative Cases*

Category/Theme	Nonconfirming Case Descriptions	Action Taken	Rationale
Technology in the classroom increases risk	2 GE teachers unable to give response/not teaching in school allowing technology 2 SE teachers and 1 GE teacher gave specific information to confirm but were uncertain 1 student without disabilities uncertain	Retain Conclusion	Supporting data saturation, no discussion provided, discrepant data not persuasive
Students with disabilities are involved as victims and bullies	1 student without disabilities—no experiences	Retain Conclusion	Supporting data saturation, no discussion provided
Teachers in schools without schoolwide antibullying programs are not proactive	1 GE teacher and 1 SE teacher disconfirmed 1 student with disabilities confirmed	Revise Conclusion	Supporting data persuasive
Teachers in schools with schoolwide antibully program are proactive	1 SE teacher disconfirmed 2 students without disabilities disconfirmed	Revise Conclusion	Supporting data persuasive
Proactive and Reactive Teachers	1 GE teacher and 1 SE teacher disconfirmed	Revise Conclusion Operationalize Definition	Supporting data persuasive
Students are Active Interveners, Passive Witnesses, and Avoidant Onlookers	1 student with disabilities fell in Avoidant Onlooker	Revise Conclusion/Combine Categories: Passive Witness and Avoidant Onlooker	Lack of data saturation in the Avoidant Onlooker Category
Teachers in schools with resources and schoolwide antibullying programs feel confident about managing cyberbullying	2 SE teachers disconfirmed 2 GE teachers in schools that did not allow technology/no description provided	Revise Conclusion	Supporting data persuasive, lack of data saturation, no discussion provided
Some teachers are not involved in prevention because they are less aware of prevalence	1 SE teacher provided more description in member checks	Retain Conclusion but revise for rationale for specific teacher	Supporting data persuasive, teachers provided more description of perception of prevalence through member checking

*Note.* GE = General Education, SE = Special Education.

## **Research Question One Results**

The first research question for this study was, “What are bystander perceptions of cyberbullying of students with and without disabilities and general and special educators in secondary inclusive classrooms?” The following section provides an analysis of the major theme that was discovered across all teachers and students regarding research question 1.

### **Theme 1: Conditions Facilitate Cyberbullying Among Students in Inclusive Settings**

All teachers and students described how conditions in the inclusive classroom facilitated the occurrence of cyberbullying. Commonalities expressed across cases included (a) technology in the classroom increases risk, (b) peer culture impacts peer acceptance and the likelihood of occurrences of cyberbullying, (c) school culture impacts prevalence of cyberbullying, and (d) adolescents are immersed in social media culture. Each category was well developed and all the categories were conceptually linked to support this main theme. In addition, each bystander case was examined to see whether new ideas were consistent with what was already known about the entire case of bystanders. Several examples of conditions that facilitated cyberbullying were revealed through participant descriptions of personal and hypothetical cyberbullying scenarios and cyberbullying artifacts, making the selection of the categories clear and providing adequate representation within each category. Each data source provided corroborative evidence to verify the information and neutralize researcher bias. In addition, the search for and identification of discrepant data and negative cases was involved in this process.

A detailed description of the how the theme was collapsed and representative across cases is provided followed by a description of how each case was unique. Table 9 shows the synthesis of common codes that were identified under the major categories that were found common across students and teachers.

Table 9

*Data Reduction for Commonalities Across All Cases*

Commonalities	Conditions Facilitate Cyberbullying	
	Teachers	Students
Technology in the classroom increases risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of harsh punishment</li> <li>• Risk offline bullying extends to online bullying</li> <li>• Risk cyberbullying occurs inside and outside of school</li> <li>• Risk of inappropriate behavior</li> <li>• Risk students with and without disabilities are targeted</li> <li>• Risk of increased stress and anxiety among students</li> <li>• Risk of peer victimization</li> <li>• Risk of distraction in the classroom</li> <li>• Risk of increase in cyberbullying involvement</li> <li>• Risk of negative side effects</li> <li>• Risk of psychological impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of distraction</li> <li>• Risk of online communication during class</li> <li>• Risk of more drama</li> <li>• Risk of offline bullying</li> <li>• Risk of rumor spreading across school</li> <li>• Risk of increased cyberbullying</li> <li>• Risk of ease of bullying</li> <li>• Risk of humiliation</li> <li>• Risk of impacting academic progress</li> <li>• Risk of losing friends</li> <li>• Risk of making school more stressful</li> </ul>
Peer culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of effecting academic progress</li> <li>• Students with and without disabilities involved</li> <li>• Students lack good judgment skills</li> <li>• Students with disabilities unaware they are bullied</li> <li>• Boys and girls involved in cyberbullying</li> <li>• Students afraid to intervene</li> <li>• Pointing out differences</li> <li>• Discuss social media</li> <li>• Students with disabilities that are victimized turn into bullies</li> <li>• Girl drama online</li> <li>• Boy aggression online</li> <li>• Social exclusion online and offline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys and girls involved in cyberbullying</li> <li>• Cyberbullied because of differences or disabilities</li> <li>• Students with disabilities are unaware they are bullied</li> <li>• Cyberbullying is a part of life</li> <li>• Discussing cyberbullying at school with friends</li> <li>• Sharing screen shots and videos during school</li> <li>• Victims become more aggressive</li> <li>• Students with disabilities that are victimized turn into bullies</li> <li>• Girl drama online</li> <li>• Boy aggression online</li> <li>• Social exclusion online and offline</li> </ul>

(continued)

Table 9. Data Reduction for Commonalities Across All Cases (continued)

Commonalities	Conditions Facilitate Cyberbullying	
	Teachers	Students
School culture impacts prevalence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrators see cyberbullying as problematic</li> <li>• Schools lack specific cyberbullying strategies</li> <li>• Schools lack professional development and teacher training</li> <li>• Chain of command unclear</li> <li>• Lack of parent training</li> <li>• Teachers uninvolved because of lack of time</li> <li>• Unprepared</li> <li>• Lack of schoolwide antibullying program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools do not help</li> <li>• Lack of trust in school</li> <li>• Lack of schoolwide antibullying program</li> <li>• Antibullying program not enforced</li> <li>• Teachers do not talk about cyberbullying</li> <li>• Not safe in school</li> <li>• School provides strategies</li> </ul>
Students immersed in media culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media used for good and bad</li> <li>• Monitoring student use is impossible</li> <li>• Students numb to cyberbullying</li> <li>• cannot keep up with constant changes</li> <li>• Students constantly online</li> <li>• Technology rules students' lives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping up with changing technology</li> <li>• Enjoy spreading information</li> <li>• Constantly connected with all friends</li> <li>• Exposed to multiple people all the time</li> <li>• Communicate at any time</li> <li>• Accustomed to instant communication</li> <li>• Acknowledge lack of human interaction</li> <li>• Numb to cyberbullying</li> <li>• Depend on social media</li> </ul>

The following section describes each of the categories through quotations from the teacher and student responses that were identified within each category.

**Technology in the classroom increases risk.** Students and teachers shared common beliefs about how students' use of technology during school increased the risk

of cyberbullying. Overall, most teachers and students expressed concern about the many risks involved with students bringing their own technology into the classroom. Table 10 provides a description of the similarities and differences in perceptions of students and teachers.

Table 10

*Similarities and Differences Regarding Technology in the Classroom*

Technology in the Classroom	
Teachers	Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling unable to prevent</li> <li>• Concerned and aware about the increase in cyberbullying</li> <li>• Concerned and aware of the increase of inappropriate behavior</li> <li>• Concerned about not being able to monitor or control</li> <li>• Concerned that students who do not own technology are bullied by those that do</li> <li>• Aware that some teachers are more lenient with student technology use</li> <li>• Provides evidence needed to discipline cyberbullies if happens on school grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling teachers cannot prevent</li> <li>• Aware of the increase in cyberbullying</li> <li>• Aware of the increase of inappropriate behavior</li> <li>• Concerned teachers are not able to monitor or control</li> <li>• Aware that their peers without technology are teased</li> <li>• Aware that technology in the classroom causes distractions</li> <li>• Feel that some teachers do not care</li> </ul>

**Teachers.** Seven out the nine teachers were from public schools that allowed students to bring their own technology into the classroom. These teachers expressed concern that allowing students to bring their own devices in the classroom could increase the risk of cyberbullying and inappropriate online behavior. The other two teachers were teaching in schools that did not allow students to bring their own devices into the classroom and were unable to give a response to this issue.

*Risk of inappropriate behavior.* Teacher 3 explained reservations about the new county policy that allowed students to bring their cell phones in the classroom.

I think that this is a can of worms. Frankly, because they think that the technology is being used for research, it's being used for instructional purposes but it's for listening to music and it's for texting your friends. I think that they are going to see that there is going to be cheating going on. I think there's going to be just an overall, you know, just conversations going back and forth. I mean, why are you on the phone in the middle of a school day if your friend is down the hall and you're going to have lunch with them in 45 minutes.

Similarly, Teacher 8 expressed concern about how students' use of technology in the classroom increased the risk of cyberbullying:

I know it happens. You're not even safe in class, you know because you could do something and somebody Tweets it. I mean it's not like you're safe anywhere. I know that the bullying, the cyberbullying, I know that they don't clock in and clock out when school happens. I know that they are doing it throughout school and might publish it when they leave school. They're smart enough to know that, but you know that they are gathering all their info while they're at school.

Teacher 1 expressed concern about technology in the classroom and explained the challenges involved for teachers.

As we move into the technology age and students are so plugged in, they're now able to bring their phones and laptops and iPads and Kindles and Nooks and everything into the classroom and one of the issues we're having right now is how

does one teacher make sure that every single student is on the right page educationally, socially, emotionally. Are they doing what they're supposed to be doing? Whether or not they go to sites they shouldn't be, or whether or not they are trying to text somebody or do something that's not always appropriate, so that's a huge brand new wave in our county this year. And no one knows yet, how this is going to look. It opens up a huge window of opportunity for students to access social media or access their text messaging or access those things and say and do things that we can't possibly see or control. And as more school systems incorporate [allowing] devices into their classrooms—this is going to be a huge issue for schools, administrators, teachers, parents, and communities. Because monitoring all this is almost impossible. So it's actually, I feel like it's making them face...something that they've been avoiding.

Teacher 1 further elaborated about how students' use of technology in the classroom also facilitated traditional bullying among students and described how students were at risk of being bullied for not owning the latest technology.

It also opens up a whole big void for the “have and have not” situation with the students who have all of these devices and have all these toys, and then the students who don't have any, and that's difficult. It's difficult as a teacher, it's very difficult to see and watch. And we try to incorporate a little bit, with you know, sharing those devices and we have some devices at school but it's not the same as the kid who takes out his iPad or iPhone 5 and you're, you still have a flip phone. So you're not gonna bring that into class. You know, they'll get



completely torn up by that. You know, other students will make fun of them and say, “Oh, you don’t have an iPhone,” Or, you know, “we’re gonna work on this project with my device and you can go read the book or get the....” And you can see another avenue where having technology and not having technology is another form of bullying. I mean, you can see it coming. I mean, it already happens but you can see it just, exploding. And in the classroom, again as a teacher, you’ve gotta be aware of what’s going on. You’ve gotta try to contain that as much as you can and be a positive role model and.... But you don’t always see it and you certainly don’t always hear it if they’re texting. And they don’t always know how to get it. And unfortunately, technology’s there. Fortunately, it’s there for us to use but also it’s unfortunate that they don’t know what the limits are. They don’t really understand the consequences and the limits of their actions. They think it’s funny. They think it’s, you know, it’s the cool thing to do.

Similarly, Teacher 9 explained,

There’s definitely that going on. I think for the most part it’s not as serious as some of the other cyberbullying that could go on, but there are definitely situations that I’ve witnessed where people have talked about, “Oh, you don’t have the iPhone 5 yet?” or “Well, your parents must not have enough money to get it for you” or kind of like, short little digs like that to a student could really cause a lot of damage. You see that even then with people that have smart phones and people that don’t have smart phones because when a teacher allows them to do research or something like that in the classroom then we have a small

percentage of kids that can't because they have an older phone that is just for phone calls or texting. I mean, I feel like it's good to have that technology at your fingertips, but at the same time, it causes a lot of problems. Especially since it's so immediate, so when kids are asked to do research and they ask if they can use their phones, and all of the kids with smart phones break it out and they get the answers and they're you know, rolling down this path and making progress and doing work for the teacher. Then you've got that small percentage of kids that don't and they can't and then you either now have to pair them with another student that does or find some other way for them to get the same accessibility.

Teacher 8 also expressed fear and concern over students' access to technology.

It does scare me because you can get a random text from somebody, who just keeps texting you or they can Tweet something and you can't get away from it and I can see why in the last few years ago, why there's such a rise in suicides...I think those kids get overwhelmed.

Similarly, Teacher 9 expressed fear and explained:

You know, when you have such a big student body, and you're trying to make sure that kind of stuff isn't going on; the Internet and technology is so fast paced and so fast moving that it becomes like, this big thing you know, this big cloud over top of our heads, trying to make sure our kids are being respectful and not cyberbullying each other.

Two teachers, Teacher 6 and Teacher 2, expressed their uncertainty about students bringing their own technology to school and how it might add more bullying.

Teacher 6 stated:

I haven't heard of an increase in it happening, but that does not mean that it is not.

I will say, I've seen students on their phones more, but I really don't know if it is adding to it or not. It very well could. I think that only time will tell.

Similarly, Teacher 2 stated, "I think it's just hard to tell.... I don't know if cyberbullying is going on....I can't access their social media, and I can't read their texts." Teacher 2 also noted that the school "realized that disciplining the kids for being on their cell phones in the hallway and also during lunch was more trouble than it's worth so now they're allowed to text and do whatever in the halls and at lunch."

Teacher 2 also shared information about an example of the types of things kids were doing that involved inappropriate behavior and social media use in school:

There was a situation last year and it went down on Facebook and there were four boys in my current school, who I have this year, and they were telling me about this situation. They were selling pot, at school, and they were doing a lot of their deals on Facebook and on Facebook chat. So, apparently they were having these chats, and one of the student's moms figured out what was going on. And so she printed out all the chats, but erased her son's name from the chats and the three other kids got caught, and like, had to go to juvie [juvenile hall] for a month, for selling pot at school.

Similarly, Teacher 4 was uncertain that technology in the classroom increased the risk of cyberbullying, but provided examples of students' inappropriate use of technology.

Considering they are allowed to have them on them at all times, I think the inappropriate use is a lot less than you'd think. They are pretty good about keeping it in their pockets during classrooms or during class activities or class lecture but I think teachers are more lenient with them now days, like they'll let them use when they are doing individual work. You know, "Go ahead get your phone out, listen to your iPod, just stay quiet."

However, Teacher 4 mentioned witnessing inappropriate behavior and explained, "I mean, we had some instances last year you know that students would leave school and they'd Tweet pictures of themselves...skipping."

In addition, Teacher 6 reported:

I know when they think that bullying has occurred during the school day, they are able to handle that much differently than bullying that occurs outside of the school day. So, in some ways if devices are allowed in the school and it does allow for bullying within the school, it does give the administration more of an opportunity to discipline that student. So, I guess in some ways, that can be seen as a positive because I know that their hands can be tied more legally when it occurs off of school grounds or out of school hours.

Two teachers worked in schools that did not allow technology in the classroom or schools. For this reason, these teachers felt that cyberbullying was less of a problem during school.

Teacher 7 worked in a rural middle school that did not allow cell phones and provided students with a restricted school-monitored technology. Teacher 7 described the county technology policy:

My county has set up a thing this year that is very similar to Facebook but it has stricter restrictions and we as teachers control it. And we set it up and we accept our students, we give them a link and a password to get into it and we can accept them and put them in the class and nobody else from outside can get in. Umm, like they can't invite their friends from other schools to get in. It's only our classes. And they can talk to each other in like, chat rooms on there but it's very school specific, teacher specific to that classroom. That's the only way that I really encourage online stuff for my kids. I don't really encourage Facebook, 'cause I know there have been some issues in the past with some of my students and Facebook.

Teacher 5 taught in an urban charter middle school and reported, "they are in the same classroom all day; they don't change classes; the teachers change classes. We have limited space and usually it happens after hours, after school."

***Students.*** Similar to the teachers, the students in this sample shared common beliefs about the use of technology in the classroom and the increased risk of inappropriate behavior and cyberbullying. However, unlike the teachers, the students

noted that technology use was a distraction in the classroom and that teachers were mostly unaware.

Student 1 described that students' use of technology in the classroom was distracting and reported, "a lot of people can bring their laptops in the class and like type and stuff too which is really distracting. Yeah, and like sometimes they are not even like taking notes or whatever, they are like playing games." Student 1 further elaborated about the teachers and pointed out, "So...yeah and they don't like have a way to monitor it because it's not on the school network so it's kind of like pointless."

Like the teachers, Student 1 also described how students might be teased for not owning the latest technology, and reported:

If you don't have an iPhone you're like, oh, like, "You don't have an iPhone!"

And like they might be kidding, but then like, there's some kids who I know who take it to heart and definitely feel bad about it because they can't...their parents can't afford to get them one.

Student 11 described witnessing peers' inappropriate use of technology:

I mean, it's not infrequent that you'll see someone.... I sit in the back of the classroom a lot of times so I can see over a lot of people's shoulders and you can tell. Their eyes are just kind of, flicking from the teacher to down in their, their desk. And you can tell and it happens frequently.

Similarly, Student 5 shared, "I see people do it all the time. Like under their desk or...some people are so good they can text without even looking." Although Student 5 noted the increase in distracting behavior, this student stated, "I wouldn't say there's

necessarily an increase” in cyberbullying. “I just say it makes it easier if someone were to want to do that.”

Like Student 5, Student 6 did not think that school rules on use of technology prevented students from spreading mean messages and reported,

There are occasional teachers that are; they see the kid looking down. Like, there’s nothing to look at down by your, your knees during class. So there are occasional teachers that will call somebody out but, usually it’s really easy to get away with it.

Likewise, Student 4 stated, “like, they’re not supposed to but they can if they really wanted to. ’Cause the teachers don’t check but if your phone goes off you’ll be told to put it away.”

Similarly, Student 3 reported that sometimes mean messages about someone were “forwarded to a whole bunch of people,” and felt that school rules on technology did not prevent cyberbullying, “because they let you use cell phones in school and that’s a good way to spread rumors and stuff.”

Two students described firsthand experiences with cyberbullying in the classroom. Student 2 described:

Well, probably a month or two ago there was a fight at our school and it was before school and by second period there was already a video on YouTube about it. And like everyone, like it, posted it online and um everyone was kind of like posting about it and laughing at it and thought it was like funny that the people

were fighting and my teacher was furious that they, it had already been posted like an hour later.

Student 9 described witnessing peers' reactions to cruel texts in class:

People have started like crying during school if they see a cruel text while they are at school, they just start bawling. I think so because if they're at school and they are seeing stuff like that during school that is what they are thinking about. And if they are upset, then they're not going to focus on what they're being taught.

However, Student 9 felt that teachers did not usually notice when this happens.

Student 7 felt that when teachers were lenient with technology rules, there was more of a chance for cyberbullying.

Some teachers will let you during study block just do whatever you want...to like, go on your iPod and play games and stuff and look up something and play music.... Like I have a study block teacher that doesn't let you do that and he makes sure that we're doing work like, at all times. But if someone would let you go on Facebook during class and you know there's more of a chance that you can say something or about the person during school.

Although Student 10's school made students sign a contract ensuring cell phones were only used for school appropriate work, Student 10 reported, "I'll go over sometimes and see them playing a game on it or maybe texting a friend or something." Student 10 further explained:



Most of the kids, if they wanted to text their friends, regardless of whether or not their smart phone was approved, they'd probably just sneak it under the desk or something. So, no I don't think that that really affects it because if they want to do something, they'll usually get it done, whether or not it's against the rules.

Although Student 8 expressed that most of the time, "students are just checking their text messages," this student was uncertain whether "they were going on Twitter or anything like that." Student 8 expressed that "most of the time they [would] get in trouble and they have to put their phones away, so most people don't do it." However, Student 8 shared, "sometimes people screen shot a lot of stuff and like send it to other people, or they'll show their friends the next day the screen shot."

**Peer culture impacts the likelihood of cyberbullying.** All students and teachers shared common beliefs concerning how peer culture in the inclusive classroom impacts the likelihood of occurrences of cyberbullying. The following section describes commonalities among the teachers. Table 11 provides a synopsis of the similarities and differences in perceptions of students and teachers.

Table 11

*Similarities and Differences Regarding Peer Culture*

Peer Culture	
Teachers	Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students in inclusive settings are bullied/cyberbullied</li> <li>• Students with disabilities learn bullying behavior from students without</li> <li>• Students with disabilities bully/cyberbully students with disabilities</li> <li>• Male students with learning disabilities ADD/ADHD/ED are more aggressive and have bullying tendencies</li> <li>• Students with disabilities become victims</li> <li>• Students with disabilities who are victims develop aggressive bullying behaviors</li> <li>• Students with disabilities are unaware they are bullied</li> <li>• Students with disabilities are unaware of the definition of cyberbullying and unaware when they are cyberbullying</li> <li>• Students without disabilities bully students with disabilities</li> <li>• Smarter and more technologically savvy students are cyberbullies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students in inclusive settings are bullied/cyberbullied</li> <li>• Students with noticeable disabilities are victims</li> <li>• Students with disabilities bully/cyberbully students with disabilities</li> <li>• Male victims develop aggressive behaviors and bully others</li> <li>• Students with learning disabilities such as ADHD become victims</li> <li>• Students are bullied for making low grades and receiving teacher support</li> <li>• Students with disabilities become violent bullies</li> <li>• Students with disabilities bully/threaten teachers</li> <li>• Students with disabilities bully students with disabilities</li> <li>• Students with differences are bullied (artistic, athletic, and lifestyle choices)</li> </ul>

**Teachers.** All teachers discussed relationships among students with and without disabilities in the inclusive classroom and explained ways that they perceived they were involved in online and offline bullying behaviors. The next section describes how teachers perceived that students with disabilities learn bullying behavior.

*Students with disabilities learn bullying behavior.* Teacher 1 explained perceptions about the reasons that peers were involved in online and offline bullying:

I think in the inclusive classroom it's happening with both. Because you have students at the general education level that aren't the popular kids or the athletic

kids, whatever group you want to call them and they're, you know, they're bullied probably just as much as some of the students with disabilities are. And some of the students with disabilities are bullying right back, because they can. And they do, and they've learned—it's behavior that is learned. I don't think the students I see that are lower functioning are...but I definitely think the kids in the inclusive classroom are. And I go back to that modeled behavior. If that's what you see the kids doing and you want to be just like everybody else, you're gonna do it too.

Teacher 1 further explained:

At the same time I know we've had incidences where students with disabilities try desperately to belong to a group and they will use, they will do something inappropriate because they want to be part of that group or they are modeling behavior that they see from the general education students. So they're modeling this behavior without always understanding the repercussions or what some of the things they are saying or texting mean. It goes back to...everybody wants to be liked, everybody wants a group and our students struggle with the social appropriateness and if they feel that what they are doing is what everybody else is doing, whether it's right or wrong...they're going to do it. And they want to be like everybody else. And everybody wants social acceptance.

Teacher 6 agreed and stated,

I think that they will join in more, I absolutely think that they will join in more. And again, I think it is because it's easy. It's easy to just feed one more person in a comment. If there are 10 comments, I think to them it's like one more person

adding it in, and now they're a part of the group. I do think it's easier for them to join in. In terms of being the ones that are bullied, I think it just depends on the situation...I don't know.

Teacher 3 described, "I think it depends on the student, I can think of about two [who would] very readily mimic what they see because they want so much to be part of the typical peers." Teacher 3 also explained how students with ED were involved in online and offline bullying.

Last year there was a young lady who had gotten involved with one of the students in the ED center, both of 'em having emotional disability issues. Pretty little girl, very desirable looking and so forth, got involved with this young man who has a history and had left another high school because of stalking and being too possessive of the girl. This is the young man I told you about that has no empathy. Right, it's all about what he wants and what he needs. Um ended up having restraining orders that he cannot approach this girl. Moved him to a different high school, got involved with a young lady that I know at our school. Romance was on and off on and off. She would get kind of fed up with his possessiveness and then try to break up and he would, you know, he would seek her out and she of course having emotional disabilities, when he wouldn't, when he wouldn't approach her she would, you know, try to pull him back in again. It was this need; there are emotional issues going on here. The girl was part of a clique of two other girls. So you have girl A who is the girlfriend, girl B, and girl C. Well the girl B and C kept telling girl A, "get away from him, get away from

him he's bad news." The boy did not like B and C saying "get away" so he started Facebooking them and you know just, you know, causing problems for them. The one girl, girl B liked horses and had owned a horse. He was sending pictures to her of mutilated horses, horses that were hit by cars and in the front, you know crashed through the windshield of the car to shock her and for whatever reason he thought, he thought it was funny but for a girl who's passionate about horses that's the last thing she wants to look at. Girl B um got very upset and the, you know, this became very traumatic in the school with regard to this, the three girls and on and off and on and off, 'cause girl A wanted to be with the boy but he didn't, they got fed up with her always going back to the boy and so there was this riff constantly between the three of them who were friends and who were not. Girl A ended up in a psychiatric hospital and could not finish out the school year because of the threats and the harassment that the boy was presenting at school, bumping into her, following her around, waiting for her around corners. She couldn't go anywhere and it ended up [with her] having an emotional breakdown and leaving school. Girl B with the horse, her year went downhill. She became worse and worse in her behaviors and ended up having to go to a day school.

Similarly, another special education teacher, Teacher 1 stated, "And I've seen students with disabilities bullying students with more severe disabilities."

Teacher 4 also discussed a specific student with special needs who was bullied by other students with special needs:

She was kind of small, frail. She was on track team. Super bright. Honestly, I wish all my special education students were like her. She had some sort of audiovisual discrimination; fine motor skills, something along those lines. I can't remember, thinking back about her file. But I mean, four kids from my other classes were bullying her during PE [physical education]. No physical, just verbal. You know, "you're special ed." That kind of stuff. So they did pick at the fact that.... And you know what's funny? It was other special ed kids picking on her being special ed.

Similarly, another special education teacher, Teacher 1 stated, "And I've seen students with disabilities uh, bullying students with more severe disabilities."

Other teachers also discussed how they perceived that students with disabilities learned bullying behavior. Teacher 9, a general educator, described:

I think they do a little bit, yes. And I think probably too, it can be a defense mechanism for them. I've witnessed a couple different kids that are in our special ed program and the teachers that work with them are great and try to integrate them into the regular classrooms. But I feel like sometimes in different situations, their defense mechanism almost becomes you know, a bullying sort of façade that they put on, almost. So that they get the feeling, you know, that they are just as good as the next person you know. Or that, that sort of attitude that you know.... Well, they can do that too. So I guess to try to fit that mold that the other students are doing.

Similarly, Teacher 7, a general educator, described a student with disabilities who was bullied who developed aggressive behaviors,

Probably, because in seventh grade, you tend to have one or two leaders and everybody else kind of, follows them and usually they are our worst bullies. And we actually had an incident of bullying at school. It wasn't cyber, it was actually at school that one boy made another boy cry so hysterically that they had to call the mother to come pick him up. They couldn't get him to calm down. And umm, my son was actually talking about it that night and he said that he felt like the boy that was picking on the other one was doing it because there are other kids at our school who pick on that kid. So I really feel like bullying is a chain kind of thing. I feel like most people who are bullied don't have any control and are trying to get some kind of control by picking on somebody who is weaker than them.

Other teachers described how students with disabilities learned bullying behaviors from being victims and as a result were more likely to become involved in cyberbullying. Teacher 7, a general educator, expressed that students with disabilities were "very likely, 'cause they bully each other all the time face to face. I can't imagine why that they wouldn't do it over the computer as well." Teacher 7 went on to describe peer culture in the classroom and explained,

I think it depends on the personality because in my specific special education class, I have both. I have those that are bullied and I have those that are the bullies, and there are two personalities to those children. You've got the ones that are...for lack of a better term "raised redneck," tough, backwoods, country

people. And they just have a hard life and they are not going to let anybody push them around and most of them probably get picked on at home so they pick on other people who are littler than them. And then you've got the lower [functioning] kids that that don't even realize half the time they're being picked on.

In addition, Teacher 5, a general educator, explained:

I could see that, because I have some students that have learning disabilities so whether it's true or not because the educational system, for poor kids and minority kids, they are grouped in the special education and may not really have a disability but they can't manage or they've had years of school office [visits, so], it could be a way they can feel pride and a way for control. Then you have some in special education that are tough, rough kids from the neighborhood that think that "it's easier to have people scared of me than to really let people know I'm really challenged and if someone makes fun of me I'm going to go after them."

*Students with disabilities unaware.* Several teachers described students with disabilities as unaware. Some of the ways that students were unaware included: students with disabilities unaware when they were cyberbullying or bullying, students with disabilities unaware they were bullied, and students with disabilities unaware of the consequences of cyberbullying.

Teacher 1, a special educator, described the following experience involving students with disabilities that were perceived as unaware:



You know, I had an incident in my classroom yesterday where a student texted another student an inappropriate comment about being retarded.... And again, you take the student out of the classroom, you take them down to administration, you know, you sit with them and [he] had no idea that, he honestly did not realize that that word was so offensive to the other student. Well, I mean, the one student who called the other student “retarded,” that was a student with learning disabilities. The other student was also, that happened two days ago. I mean [it] opened up this discussion for me to be able to talk to them about what that really means and why it’s not appropriate and why it’s painful.

Similarly, Teacher 9, a general educator, described how students with disabilities were unaware of consequences:

I think they are very likely to become involved and probably not understand the ramifications of certain things as someone without disabilities might. If they are participating in doing the cyberbullying, I think that they, you know, things that they may say or post might be even more harmful because they don’t even know or understand the true ramification of the actual cyberbullying. And then I think too, that it can happen the opposite way, to where they are the ones that are targeted....

Teacher 2, a special educator, also explained how students with learning disabilities were unaware of their impulsive behaviors:

It almost seems a lot of the time like the students, particularly boys with learning disabilities and ADHD, tend to act out more, and bully people. They’re louder,

they're more aggressive, umm, more likely to say stuff like "that was a stupid comment" when somebody asks a question because they don't have impulse control, and they don't understand, I don't think they understand how their social behavior affects other people. So I tend to see more the special ed kids bullying...the general ed kids. And the gen ed kids are kind of like, you know, they let it go, they kind of...get it, but I don't know.

Some teachers described how students with disabilities were unaware when they were bullied. For example, Teacher 7 described, "and then you've got the lower [functioning] kids that are elementary and that don't even realize half the time they're being picked on."

Teacher 9 shared a personal experience concerning the peer culture among students with and without disabilities:

I have a kid who, in my opinion should be in our special education program and he's not because his parents don't want him to be, which is a challenge in itself because he's currently going undiagnosed. He has, from what I've experienced as a teacher, I believe he has a little bit of Asperger's going on. Umm, he's very socially awkward and I think because he's going through puberty and high school, he's very all about the girls. Umm, and so he's very disruptive in my classroom usually and I have to tell him to sit and refocus and...I mean, like 15 to 20 times a class. But I have sort of overheard, I haven't actually witnessed it on any sort of social media or cyber-, you know, actually seeing it. But I do know that the kids have talked about him and they're not always positive remarks. So I have had to

pull a couple of my kids out in the hallway and have a discussion with them and say “Okay what’s, you know, why are these things being said? You know, are they being posted on Facebook or Twitter or that sort of thing” and I don’t think it’s gotten to the level where anybody else has necessarily gotten to know about it, like administration or anything, but I do know that there is conversation happening about this kid...but I feel like my kids almost have almost targeted him that way because he’s not diagnosed. And they don’t...you know, it’s not widely known that he is a kid with disabilities and so they feel like, “Okay this kid’s just weird. We’re going to kind of, make fun of him” or something like that.

When asked if this particular student was aware he was being bullied, Teacher 9 did not know if he was online and assumed that his lack of social awareness due to his disability status prevented his awareness of being bullied.

When discussing students without disabilities, Teacher 8, a general educator, expressed similar perceptions and stated, “I think when they don’t understand a person, I think they tend to do more of that kind of, ‘Oh, he’s weird’ and they feel more open that they can kinda make fun of kids are that way.” Similarly, Teacher 2 perceived that “there’s always vulnerable populations” and explained how a student in a class with Asperger’s was targeted because “it’s pretty severe and socially she’s not totally with it.”

Teacher 3 shared perceptions about students with emotional disabilities:

[It] becomes even more apparent where they’re not skilled on how to deal with, you know, their emotions, how to problem solve conflict so they lash out and go

after if they got the technology, and I think that's especially if the parents are not in tune to what they're doing at home.

*Cyberbullying among students with and without disabilities.* Teacher 8 expressed, I honestly think the kids, that are the smarter kids, are the ones that tend to be the most mean involved. I think kids that don't have all the technology or the savvy, I think they are probably more outward about the bullying or making fun than the kids that have the resources and are smart. They know how to not get caught.

***Students.*** After responding to interview questions based on hypothetical cyberbullying scenarios involving students with and without disabilities, students were asked to describe times that they witnessed someone in their class or school who was harassed online or offline because of a difference. All students discussed situations among their peers with and without disabilities in the inclusive classroom and explained ways that they perceived peers were involved in online and offline bullying behaviors.

*Students with disabilities or differences are unaware.* Similar to teacher perceptions, Student 3, Student 7, and Student 4 described how students with disabilities were sometimes unaware that they were bullied online and offline by students without disabilities. Student 3 stated, "they make fun of a kid in my biology class because he's autistic and he always has outbursts and stuff. They call him annoying and stuff online. I don't think he has a Facebook to see it." Similarly, Student 7 discussed a teammate with autism who was unaware of being bullied:

I have never seen him really get upset. The only time I've ever seen him get mad is if someone in the locker room would be like, touching his shoulder constantly.

He'd look over and they'd be gone and they'd keep doing it and keep laughing and then he'd just get aggravated 'cause he's just annoyed that someone's doing that. He's not aware of the fact that they're laughing at him. I don't think he's getting mad about that. He's more mad that someone's actually bugging him. Like, you know, he's kind of mad about the physical part of it, not like....

Student 4, too described how a particular student with differences was unaware he was bullied:

We have a group that the eighth graders at our school made and all the eighth graders joined and someone posted a picture that they drew of some stupid-looking kid. Like it wasn't like, it looked really dumb and he said, "Look, I drew this person." I've seen things about him but he doesn't.... I'm not sure if he has a Facebook and I don't think he has anything that he goes online to. So I don't think that he would know if anyone's doing anything mean to him like, online sources.

*Students with obvious disabilities as victims.* Student 6, Student 5, and Student 11 discussed instances of bullying involving peers with obvious disabilities. Student 6 explained:

This kid in my class who's in a wheelchair and can do this crazy thing with his leg, like put it behind his leg and he flops around on the ground like a fish but he's actually really sweet and...but people would like, some of the girls would make fun of him like, "Oh, he's a freak!" and "He's so weird." And he can't help it, he's got a wheelchair. He can't move his legs.

Student 6 further described, “we have blind people at our school and so sometimes people will come, like ‘they’re so weird!’ and I’m like, ‘they’re not weird, they just can’t see anything! You would be like that too if you can’t see.’”

Student 6, a student with disabilities, felt that her peers did not have empathy for peers with disabilities and described:

[They] don’t know what it’s like to be in a wheelchair all their life. They don’t know what it’s like to have those days, and have ADD or the words mixed up or to have dyslexia or anything like that. They don’t know what it’s like. They don’t know what it’s like to be colorblind. They just think, they just think it’s immune. And they’re just like, make fun of them. They don’t know how it works.

Like Student 6, Student 11 expressed:

Some of the kids at our school are hearing impaired and they have hearing aids, [and] I have seen and heard people say, “Why is that kid wearing a hearing aid? Have they got some problem or something?” And it’s usually more curiosity than anything else, but there are a few instances where people kind of, make a remark that they think is funny about it. A lot of the times, some people, like when some of the hearing-impaired kids are giving a presentation or something and they have to stand up in front of the class and talk; they have trouble pronouncing words sometimes....

Student 5 stated, “I heard a rumor that somebody pushed a blind kid down the stairs. And that got me really, I don’t know, really mad actually ’cause that, I mean like who, who does that?”

*Students without disabilities targeting students with differences.* Student 9 and Student 2 described situations where students without disabilities targeted students with differences. Student 9 described an online scenario revealing how students with artistic differences were cyberbullied in school and peers Tweeted mean things, “Like not being able to tell the art kids are in costume” Similarly, Student 2 described,

There’s a kid in our school named John and he acts very feminine and stuff and so a lot of guys make fun of him and call him gay and other words like that and I think they might have, like, at once like had a physical confrontation with him too.

Similar to the cyberbullying scenario, Student 2 described a friend who was targeted online by peers who “pretended to be his friends.”

Student 5, Student 11, Student 9, and Student 10 described how peers were targeted because of athletic ability. Student 5 explained:

I’ve seen like people make fun of one of the quarterbacks on the football team ’cause he would get sacked all the time and I don’t think anybody really meant anything by it but sometimes it got so elevated that you weren’t sure. Like you couldn’t tell if it was a joke at some point. And you laughed ’cause you were thinking it was a joke but in the back of your mind, you weren’t sure. ’Cause it was so harsh the way it was said. Sometimes people would Tweet about him. They just said things about him. But yeah, like I said, you weren’t sure it was a joke. They would use his name and then a name of a play, and they would combine them together and that play would mean that you instantly lost 20 yards

or threw an interception. It was just, making fun of his physical ability in the sport.

Similarly, Student 11 described:

I have heard people calling other people, especially during PE, fat, or unathletic, or weak. It's usually not they walk up to them and call them fat or they walk up to them and call them weak but they kind of talk to their friends about it and laugh. Like, "look at him, he can only do five push-ups" or something pointless like that...so I think it does transfer online. Like, "Did you see Jake today during PE? Yeah, he can only do like five push-ups. Ha ha. What a loser."

Student 9 added, "A lot of times people are already fighting online, and then they throw something in...it is just kind of a low blow, like throwing something in about 'you suck at this sport anyway,' or 'you suck at this....'" Like Student 5, Student 11, and Student 9, Student 10 explained,

In gym class if some kids aren't as athletic as others, they might not be as good at a sport as some others. They might, someone might post something like, "Ha ha. Did you see so-and-so? He failed so many times at trying to catch the ball" or whatever.

*Students with learning disabilities as victims.* Student 4, Student 2, Student 9, and Student 8 discussed students with ADHD and learning disabilities who were targeted by peers without disabilities. Student 4 explained:

There are two people I can think of...one that I know has a disability. It's like ADHD or something. And then one that I'm not sure if she does but she seems



like it. I'll start with the one that has the ADHD. A lot of people think that he's annoying and I mean, I think he's annoying too but I like him because he's cool like that. He's just a nice person. So a lot of people just ignore him he was in my science class last year and he would get frustrated at a lot of things and like, yell out when he got frustrated and a lot of people were like, "why does he have to do that?" like, "it's just a waste of time to have to deal with how he's, when he does this" like, "why does he do that?" he's not like, like a lot of people like him though 'cause he's a nice person like I said. So it's not like it's that big of a deal—there's no one that openly dislikes him but there's a lot of people that think that when he gets into his like, ADHD mode, it's a little weird. And then, the girl; she went to my elementary school and she's a little weird and she does a lot of weird things. And a lot of people make fun of her. And I feel like, there's a bunch of girls that are supposedly her friends, but really I feel like she's alone and she doesn't really have that many friends. And if she does, there are like, only a few, so I feel like they both know that people think that they're like, weird.... But they don't really...care. Because they know that they are different. They're not part of like, the popular people.... 'Cause there's like a group of popular people that don't really get targeted as much, 'cause they have more friends I guess, they could, they're at least acquainted with them but these people are like, lower and everyone knows who they are but they're not really; they don't have as many friends that can like, support them.

Student 8 described students who are at risk and have learning disabilities who were victimized online:

I've only seen someone calling a girl stupid because she makes bad grades or something like, "Oh, I know that you got an F on that test, like you're so stupid, you're never going to get into any colleges or anything." And then that really upsets the other people. Yeah, I don't know if they actually have learning disabilities but they very well could. Yeah, they get really upset and especially if someone calls them stupid or something, like it really affects them. They don't know what to do and they take it to heart because they know they are not doing well in school. Even if they reported it to the school, there is not really a way to figure out like who sent it because it's usually anonymous.

Similarly, Student 9 expressed, "My friend had a learning disability, and people would always make jokes about her or like laugh at her when she asked a question [in class]. She got really upset that everybody was talking about it and laughing." Student 2 also described:

Oh people call them teacher's pet or something or they're mean to them 'cause they didn't have as good of a grade or anything in class. I mean it happens, like it depends on the person and the bully whether they're outright with it or not. But it happens online.

Student 2 also described a guy within a group of friends "that is not as smart as the rest," and explained:

Sometimes if we're talking about school, they'll make fun of him if he has to go to like get help from the teacher and they'll call him retarded and slow. It's usually over text that they say things like that. I mean I'm sure they don't necessarily think that it's exactly being mean 'cause we are friends but probably just 'cause he's the one with the worst grades in the group.

Student 2 described the bullies as, "outgoing, smart and popular" and explained, "They're not usually that athletic and like some of the guys might have had a little jealousy 'cause he got to like dress with the varsity and they didn't."

*Students with disabilities bullying other students.* Student 6, Student 5, and Student 2 explained their perceptions of students with disabilities as bullies. Student 6 described an extreme situation where a student with disabilities bullied peers, threatened a teacher online, and brought a gun to school:

She scared me a lot, sometimes she would trip me, I had to go to the nurse...but she's gone now so... she didn't realize that bringing a gun to school that was loaded was a bad thing. Like some people are just so upset over something that they just don't care anymore. They give up. They're just done.

Student 6 further explained the characteristics of the bully:

She was scary, she was very big and she had [different] colored hair all the time. I saw her walk back into school one day and like, a couple of weeks after she had been suspended to talk with a policeman. And she was posting stuff online after that happened. She posted like online on her Facebook like, "Goodbye, I won't miss you" and telling people who she was going to shoot and what she was going

to do and it was scary. She was going to shoot a teacher, but then they took her Facebook away.

Similarly, Student 5 described a boy in his class who had behavior problems and attacked both peers and the teacher:

The teacher would tell him to sit down. He'd be really disrespectful to her. Then after class he would always talk, like say really rude things about her. Umm, it was just nasty things. I mean, he called her out for like, umm like, her age and like her, she had short hair at the time so.... He called her out for looking, umm bisexual.

*Victims of bullying develop aggressive behaviors.* Student 4 and Student 7 described male peers who had developed aggressive behaviors. Student 4 described a victim of bullying, and stated that he “became really aggressive because of the way people treat him and he acts kinda mean to people.” Further,

I know that people definitely change once they get attacked and they're no longer the same person, like this friend that I have, I bet he was really nice before and he wasn't as mean, but he's mean to people because that's just the way that he's adapted to getting attacked. And so, I kinda wish I had helped him out [because] he would be a nicer person and then he'd have more friends.

Similarly, Student 7 described:

Usually there's this kid that gets bullied a lot and because he gets bullied a lot, he retaliates and he says a lot of hurtful things to other people. He wants to make

friends so bad but he keeps saying hurtful things back because a lot of people have said mean things to him so it's making it worse for him to make friends.

**School culture impacts cyberbullying.** Students and teacher participants were from 14 schools located on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. All students and teachers shared common beliefs concerning how school culture impacts the likelihood of occurrences of cyberbullying. Table 12 provides a synopsis of the similarities and differences in perceptions of students and teachers. The following section provides perceptions of the teachers.

Table 12

*Beliefs About How School Culture Impacts the Likelihood of Cyberbullying*

Negative	School Culture	
	Teachers	Students
Focus on standardized testing prevents schoolwide bullying program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher 8 “there’s no way that this is going to be made part of a curriculum in our county, because everything is so test driven...I think we need to have more programs.”</li> <li>Teacher 6: “And a lot of times we’re told that we cannot take instructional time, so until it comes from higher up, I don’t think it will become a yearly program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student 7 “They’re more focused on the actual schoolwork than...and they just teach it to us and you know they don’t care about like, what we do.”</li> </ul>
Lack of education on specific definitions and examples of cyberbullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher 1: “they’re shown ‘oh, don’t do this,’ once or twice, but without a deep discussion on what this looks like and what the consequences are what, you know, at their level, they’re shown a book at the beginning of the year and we have maybe one discussion on it, but it’s not pervasive.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student 5: “But I think it’s, I think everyone would have kind of, a different definition, I guess like I imagine that people who are involved with it would say that what they’re doing isn’t considered harassment. But other people who are seeing it, they would clearly think that it is.”</li> </ul>
Lack of relationship building between school staff and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher 6: And I will say, it is not always well received by the staff, and again, it’s because we’re taking instructional time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student 3: “I don’t really know my counselor that much because he’s never there, my principal is kind of mean so I try to avoid him, I don’t really talk to teachers that much.”</li> </ul>
Teachers do not discuss cyberbullying strategies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student 2: “I mean there’s usually supposed to be a discussion but the teachers usually kind of just push it off cause they think we need to do home- work or they want to give us free time so they don’t really usually enforce it too much. I feel like they only do it like as cause they have to not necessarily cause they really want to prevent it. They go grade quizzes or whatever.”</li> </ul>

(continued)

Table 12. Beliefs About How School Culture Impacts the Likelihood of Cyberbullying  
(continued)

Negative	School Culture	
	Teachers	Students
Unsupportive administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher 2: “This girl left the school because of the bullying that was happening to her, mostly online, and the parent contacted the school and said, ‘hey, here’s what’s going on and...’ and they basically said, ‘we can’t do anything about it.’”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student 9: “It’s basically like a homeroom kind of thing, but they show videos about all different kinds of things, like cyberbullying and stuff like that. So, it does not really do anything because nobody sits there and pays attention to it...they all just do their own stuff like their homework. They are required to show the videos, but nobody listens to them.”</li> <li>Student 1: “They need to be qualified to handle these situations and there should be like seminars or something that everyone has to go to on being an adult in a cyberbullying situation because I just think they don’t know what to do.”</li> <li>Student 8: “I’ve never actually seen the school get involved with anything involving cyberbullying.”</li> </ul>
Parents, community, students, and staff lack morals and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher 7: “I have actually had a fellow employee talk about me this year on Facebook and I think the parents in this community set a very poor example for their children in the way that they act because there was at least 3 other parents that commented to that post and a lot of these parents are friends with a lot of these children because a couple of weeks after that, I actually had a student get upset with me and he posted a comment on Facebook And the same mother who had gotten in trouble for posting, also posted to his comments.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student 11: “I think the school has given them the knowledge and the tools, the availability I guess, the opportunity more, to do what they need to do and it, it really when it comes down to it, it’s the kid. And I don’t know how much more the school can do, because it’s the kid and how they’ve been raised and what they think.”</li> </ul>

(continued)

Table 12. Beliefs About How School Culture Impacts the Likelihood of Cyberbullying (continued)

Positive	School Culture	
	Teachers	Students
Relationships between teachers, administration, and students are important and can help prevent cyberbullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher 9: “Our administration, our teachers they really make a point of knowing everybody, even if you don’t have that kid in class. So it’s really kind of this like, really interesting, one of a kind thing that’s happening there that I feel like, you know, kind of lessens the possibility of cyberbullying.”</li> <li>Teacher 5: “All teachers, we kind of started to think about especially since my role is really, a lot of kids do talk to me. How can you stay away from drama? How can you protect yourself if you see somebody who is a friend? So we have those conversations in class.”</li> </ul>	
Rules, strategies, resources, support makes students in large schools feel safe and encouraged to report cyberbullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher 4: “There’s a huge support system. You have the social workers. School psychologists, we have everything.”</li> <li>Teacher 1: “I’m fortunate to be in a school that has a crisis resource counselor and I’ve got school psychologists and social workers available to me at all times.”</li> <li>Teacher 3: “Our school has a big campaign on it. In fact at the beginning of the school year, they pulled in girls you know freshman girls one day, sophomores the next and they pulled ’em all in and went over bullying, cyberbullying.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student 6: “Well, I don’t feel anxious about getting bullied because I feel like cause to me, my school feels like a really safe environment.”</li> <li>Student 10: “My school does a very extensive job teaching how to stop the effects of it and just basically all about all types of bullying, especially cyberbullying since this is an evolving digital age. So they teach it I think twice a year and a school counselor comes in and has a presentation set up and they just give us ways to stop it.”</li> </ul>



**Teachers.** The teacher participants represented six different schools located in urban, suburban, and rural school districts. Teacher 4, Teacher 8, and Teacher 6 were from a large school located in a suburban school district. This school allowed students to bring their own devices into the classroom. At the time of the study, the school did not provide a schoolwide antibullying program. Teacher 8, a general educator, and Teacher 6, a special educator, felt that their school was not open to a schoolwide bullying program because they were too focused on standardized testing. Teacher 8 stated, “there’s no way that this is going to be made part of a curriculum in our county, because everything is so test driven...I think we need to have more programs.”

Teacher 8 further explained:

One of the reasons I teach this grade—I don’t have a standardized test in there. I love [my students] but I don’t have to teach to a test. I know that I’m getting the skills that they need to know but I don’t have to teach to a test and I think about the poor history teacher that has to get so much in by that time, they don’t have time. It doesn’t mean that they’re not empathetic wonderful people. When they get a printout of all their school life, of what their kids and their class got on the state standardized test, it reflects on them, it doesn’t show “oh, this kid has empathy” or “this kid’s not a bully.”

Similarly, Teacher 6 expressed:

It’s the pressures of what we have to get in every year educationally, and I understand that, especially for a math teacher or a teacher that has to get certain concepts in by a certain date. In English, we can work it in. We do work it into

our education every year, so for us, it's a little different. So maybe working in through a certain department would be the answer.

Teacher 6's class organized a bullying awareness week that included a school assembly and awareness program that involved cyberbullying. However, some teachers chose not to get involved with bullying awareness week because it took away from their instructional time. When asked if whether the whole school needed to involved in this, Teacher 6 explained:

Yes, there was a big movement, started by my government class, trying to get into the classrooms and get more involved with bullying awareness. And we call it Awareness more so than antibullying because I think you can say we need to stop bullying until you're blue in the face, but it's never going to stop. But the whole having the awareness of it and the awareness of the new issues with cyberbullying. The problem is that, because of the weight of testing, state testing and IB [International Baccalaureate] testing, teachers really feel like every educational minute has to go towards preparing for those tests, and they are under a lot of pressure for their students to do well. So, because of that, any time there is any sort of additional requirement being put on a teacher, they have a hard time with that. So, for us, we tried to do it in the spring after testing was going on, and it was still a really tight window, but I absolutely think if it was coming from the state and they were saying that you need to do this, that teachers would listen. When it's just coming from government class, they don't tend to want to do that. And I understand, and like I said, it's the pressures of the tests.

Teacher 6 felt discouraged about how there was no time this year for the antibullying program and stressed the school's limitations due to instructional time.

We've tried. We've tried to do a lot of different things. This is actually the first year where we may not be able to touch on this topic. Because of what happened at Sandy Hook, we are talking about random acts of kindness, but I am hoping to maybe incorporate this as well. And I will say, it is not always well received by the staff, and again, it's because we're taking instructional time. And a lot of times we're told that we cannot take instructional time, so until it comes from higher up, I don't think it will become a yearly program.

Teacher 4 discussed how there had been some involvement in bully awareness through the assemblies planned by the student government class:

We're not at that time of year yet, but I mean, in previous years, I mean, we have assemblies where we have speakers come and all teachers are encouraged to bring their classes to the assembly and that way the teachers and the students see firsthand accounts of bullying.

Although some teachers chose not to take their classes to the bullying assemblies because of lack of time, Teacher 4 noted that the school provided many resources,

That's the nice thing about having a school that big. There's a huge support system. You have the social workers. And I mean the social workers can pull kids out of class whenever they want and kids can go to social workers whenever they want. Just to talk about things. School psychologists, we have everything.

Teacher 1 was a special educator at a school located in a large suburban school district. At the time of the study, the school had integrated a schoolwide antibullying program including prevention strategies for traditional and cyberbullying within their schoolwide positive behavior program. Teacher 1 assisted in developing the antibullying program and felt that it was especially critical, considering the county's new technology in the classroom policy. Teacher 1 explained the schoolwide antibullying program:

I'll let you know briefly about the program. We started it last year. We wrote a grant and got funding to start an antibullying program at our school. And so we got funds and we do some really fun activities and some more difficult discussion activities with our students once a month during special time. It's as much as we could get our teachers to do right now because it's very difficult to find time in the school day but it's so critical and we've incorporated it with our positive behavior program so that, you know, again we've got pink pledges all over the school now. The kids all get a t-shirt, they did a diorama contest for standing up for your [peers] using [our special] logo. And that's been hugely popular and successful. We've had a lot of positive response. We always talk about how not be a bystander and to stand up for friends and the people at the school. We call it standing up for your [peers]. Also, I'm very active right now with a program at our school, which is the technology aspect, and we just introduced bring your own device to school. And part of the bring your own [technology] is that we incorporate that with our [antibullying] program and so it's a discussion on how to behave appropriately with your devices in school....

Teacher 1 also described how the school offered many resources and stated, “I’m fortunate to be in a school that has a crisis resource counselor and I’ve got school psychologists and social workers available to me at all times.” Despite the available resources and the implemented antibullying program, Teacher 1 expressed concern and stated,

We’ve come up with posters and incorporated our positive behavior plans but I don’t think we’ve seen what’s going to happen, for instance, on the posters around the school, it says no social media and students have already been caught using social media in the classrooms and have [had] discipline referrals for it.

Teacher 2 taught at a school located in a large suburban school district where students were allowed to bring their own technology into the classroom. Teacher 2 described that the school’s technology policy placed rules on where and when students were allowed to have their phones turned on and explained, “At our school, they’ve realized that disciplining the kids for being on their cell phones in the hallway and also during lunch was more trouble than what it’s worth so now they’re allowed to do that.”

Teacher 2 also noted that the school implemented weekly character education advisory groups led by teachers that discussed “types of social problems in the school like, sexting, cyberbullying, and any of the topics that you can’t cover in your normal curriculum.” In addition, there were posters at the school that had students pose for pictures, “like the quarterback of the football team is on a poster and it’s him with all this stuff and it says, ‘this is a bully free zone.’” However, Teacher 2 explained, “I don’t

know that the school is as concerned about cyberbullying as what they can actually see going on at the school.”

Teacher 2 was also a coach at another high school located in a large suburban school district. Teacher 2 was uncertain about whether an antibullying program was in place at this school due to a recent experience involving a cyberbullying incident that occurred between girls on the team. This teacher found out that the school administration did not do anything to resolve it and the victim left the school. Teacher 2 explained that other cyberbullying incidents at that school were not handled by the administration and resulted in students leaving the school.

Teacher 9 was a general educator at a school that did not have a schoolwide antibullying program but was focused on building relationships among teachers and students. The school population was “a little bit better than your general high school. Our numbers are much lower, so it’s kind of a homegrown situation I feel like.” Teacher 9 expressed,

If things were going on like cyberbullying and stuff, I think it could get much more out of control at a larger school because there is no personal relationship with the kids and the administrators and teachers and, and all of that. Our administration, our teachers, they really make a point of knowing everybody, even if you don’t have that kid in class. So it’s really kind of this like, really interesting, one-of-a-kind thing that’s happening there that I feel like, you know, kind of lessens the possibility of cyberbullying from going on almost. I feel like, even if you know, an allegation was made, or somebody accuses somebody else

of cyberbullying, our administration, or at least probably one, I know probably at least a teacher, if not the administration would pull both kids aside and say, “Look, what’s really going on?”

Teacher 3 was a special educator at a school that allowed students to bring technology into the classroom. This teacher described the school culture as very proactive and explained that the school provided many resources mainly because it was an emotional disabilities (ED) center school. Teacher 3 felt that the school psychologist, the social worker, the department chair, and Assistant Principal were all very proactive. This teacher felt that the students felt comfortable opening up about cyberbullying problems. Teacher 3 explained,

Our school has a big campaign on it. In fact at the beginning of the school year, they pulled in girls, you know, freshman girls one day, sophomores the next and they pulled ’em all in and went over bullying, cyberbullying. There was an hour-long discussion on it, question and answer. Girls went to one area, boys went to the other, and they just went over it very deeply. You know it’s handled in our school.

Teacher 7 was a general educator in a school where students were not allowed to bring their own devices into the classroom and reported that the school had made changes to their policy due to prior cyberbullying experiences among students. Teacher 7 described:

We had actually done something at school prior to that because that is the same year that they really started pushing for the changes in the [state] law. Now it’s a

misdemeanor. You can be arrested for it and the guidance that year brought the kids all into the media center and they watched a video on bullying and the effects of bullying. And they talked about it and they talked about the consequences of it and explained to them that just because you are doing this at home, you can still get in trouble at school. We had this big old thing about it.

Throughout the interview, Teacher 7 explained how the two guidance counselors provided lessons on bullying for the entire school; however, Teacher 7 described other incidents of bullying and cyberbullying that involved students, teachers, and parents. Teacher 7 described one specific incident that illustrated the culture among parents, students, and teachers in the school:

I have actually had a fellow employee talk about me this year on Facebook. A fellow employee posted something about my classroom on Facebook this year and she got in trouble with the county for it. She had an issue with her son in my classroom. He didn't turn in something and he [was] a [gifted] student. And when he didn't turn in something, she couldn't believe that it was his fault that he didn't turn it in and it was all my fault. And she wanted to know why I didn't call her and I explained to her that school policy is we have to call if they are failing or if they have excessive zeros. One zero in a 93 average, I'm not required to call. That's a little blip, he's seventh grade, things are gonna happen. And I was trying to explain to her that I couldn't call 95 students every single night. I just couldn't. I have a family of my own and she completely turned that around to, "If you can't handle 95 students, then you shouldn't be a middle school teacher." And so she



was actually in trouble for that. The county office called her and she got reprimanded and had to delete the post. Oh, yeah. Her son, other students, and parents commented to it. It was bad. That's the reason I'm having like, so much issues with my class this year, is because of that one parent that has gotten other parents involved. And convinced other parents I'm the one doing something wrong. So if anything happens in my classroom, that group of parents is calling me going, "Well, this shouldn't be happening." I think the parents in this community set a very poor example for their children in the way that they act and the things that they do because there was at least three other parents that commented to that post and a lot of these parents are friends with a lot of these children. Yeah, because a couple of weeks after that, I actually had a student get upset with me and he posted a comment on Facebook. And the same mother who had gotten in trouble for posting, also posted to his comments. He was upset because he thought I had changed something about a rubric, when all I actually did was reworded it. And instead of coming to me asking questions, he just posted a comment to Facebook and the mother started asking, "Well why did she pass out the wrong rubric?" and all this other stuff. I can't remember exactly what was in it but she just started posting all this other stuff to it after she had already gotten in trouble once. And in the friends of the student, there were a lot of other students that had commented to his post. So there was at least five other students in my class that saw the stuff that she had posted in that comment so I know for sure the students saw those comments. I have just left it alone in my classroom,

trying not to stir up any more trouble for myself this year. The county has completely dealt with it, with her.

Teacher 5 was a general educator teaching seventh grade history in a small charter school located in an urban school district which did not allow cell phones in the classroom. According to Teacher 5, experiences with cyberbullying among students influenced the school administration to change their bullying policy. Teacher 5 explained,

A lot of our parents, a lot of the students are first generation here so a lot of the parents can't speak English. A lot of the parents are not equipped with technology. Most of them use the technology on the phone so I'm not sure how much they know about Facebook.

Teacher 5 expressed concern that parents were unaware of cyberbullying and shared insights regarding the cyberbullying incident that resulted in a change in policy:

Well actually, last year we had an incident where a student was bullying, they call it Twitter me; bullying a person on Twitter, calling them names, saying you know, "ho," you know, calling names and that student came and didn't report it to me but did report it to the social worker and we all got involved, and actually it prompted our school to change policy. Our Code of Conduct this year, if you are engaged in cyberbullying outside of school that doesn't affect in school, that you can still get suspended. It's a charter school, so they're a little more flexible with the rules. So that student ended up getting suspended and they were able to work with the social worker team on this situation. It was a negative situation but positive experience but it still happens. After that, I kind of talked about how we

could protect ourselves when you go on Facebook. All teachers, we kind of started to think about, especially since my role is really, a lot of kids do talk to me. How can you stay away from drama? How can you protect yourself if you see somebody who is a friend? So we have those conversations in class. The social worker team did come around and did a presentation to all the classes and in fact we did start this year with cyberbullying videos about students who were guilty of suicide behind these things. So that prompted a conversation at the beginning of the year. Reinforcement, we're doing this because we don't want anybody to feel, we see kids that are very emotional about it to those videos. Things they failed to see, so they said "oh, this is not good, we won't do that." We see the positive from this. They had a well-planned-out lesson, they came around to all the classrooms.

Teacher 5 went on to describe that because of the school culture, students in the class felt comfortable sharing their problems. This teacher shared recent experiences with students:

Actually I feel that a lot of kids that have come to our school have shared their experiences, in fact Friday we were talking about peers. A student shared his experiences of being bullied at another school, being kicked off a swing, so things like that and how at this school he actually gets some respect so even though it's a small school, we really, really try to cope with it anyway. You cannot bully here, it happens, but they have to be very, very sneaky about it.

***Students.*** Similar to the teachers, students described how they perceived school culture impacted cyberbullying.

Student 5, Student 6, Student 8, and Student 3 were from schools that allowed students to bring their own devices into the classroom. At the time of the study, their particular schools did not provide schoolwide antibullying programs. Student 5 described the school culture regarding cyberbullying and explained,

it's reinforced a lot. It's generally the counselors. They go and talk like, earlier this year everybody in the school met with their counselors during, I think it was history and they just played a PowerPoint about what to do if you're being harassed or something or what can happen if you are harassing; what trouble you can get in...suspension, possible expulsion, involvement with the law, law enforcement.

Student 5 discussed prevention strategies and was taught by the school, "If you see it, say something; if you're involved with it, try not to make it worse; go talk to somebody if it keeps happening, but nothing to stop it from the get-go." Student 5 further explained,

They didn't show examples of it. But I think it's, I think everyone would have kind of, a different definition, I guess like I imagine that people who are involved with it would say that what they're doing isn't considered harassment. But other people who are seeing it, they would clearly think that it is.

Student 5 shared that school resources and staff provided a sense of safety, despite recent threats of violence.

I mean like, the counselors, their job is like, to kind of, listen to whatever they have to say and offer advice. I think I feel like that would be sufficient. Umm, just

kind of, anybody that has something they wanna say, they can just come in and say it. I don't think it would change much. I mean, I feel like they do a pretty good job. Like the whole gun thing, when that girl brought the gun to school, she apparently posted on Facebook that she was going to kill a teacher umm, and they found her with a gun the next day. So I mean they wrapped that up pretty nicely, I think. I mean, it still got to school and something bad could have happened but they still stopped, they still stopped it.

Student 6 explained, "Well, I don't feel anxious about getting bullied because I feel like, 'cause to me, my school feels like a really safe environment." Student 6 went on to say,

It would be different if I was maybe somewhere else but I feel safe here and I really don't have anybody that I feel would actually try to bully me. And over the years I have gotten strong enough that if they did bully me I know what to do and I could handle it myself.

Student 6 explained,

Yeah, they also told us if you ever see somebody being bullied, just to tell somebody. It's not like they used to tell us when we were little; "don't tattletale, don't tattletale." But it is something like, that if it's hurting somebody emotionally like during this age that could really hurt them in the future. Then they should tell the teacher.

Student 3 felt differently about school and conveyed distrust in teachers, counselors, or the principal when it came down to bullying issues. Student 3 stated, "I

don't really know my counselor that much because he's never there." Student 3 also noted, "My principal is kind of mean so I try to avoid him." When asked if comfortable discussing cyberbullying with teachers, Student 3 expressed, "Not really, because I don't really talk to them that much." Student 3 added, "if they see someone with their phone out they usually tell them to put it away or take it away or something. But I feel like sometimes, like, they'll just ignore it and not care that much." Student 3 also suggested that the school provided little to no information on bullying, "we had like, a handbook at the beginning of the year that addressed it I'm pretty sure. Or like the consequences of it and how to deal with it. I'm not sure; I don't remember what it says."

Student 8 had similar perceptions to Student 3 and did not feel that the school got involved with cyberbullying and stated,

I've never actually seen the school get involved with anything, which is surprising. And a lot of times other people make like [fake] [school name] Twitters, which I would think the school would maybe even like suspend the person because they're using the school name in like saying things. But they never do, I don't know.

When discussing teachers, Student 8 expressed feeling uncomfortable talking with "a few of them, not all, because it's just, like, I'm closer to some teachers and it's easier talking to some than others. Definitely like one or two, I would feel comfortable talking to them about it."

Student 1 attended a school that allowed students to bring their own devices into the classroom. Although the school provided strategies on cyberbullying, this student felt that the school was not helpful in preventing or intervening in cyberbullying.

They tell you what to do if you're cyberbullied in school. There's a million PowerPoints about it every year.... They do like, address it and they, it's a felony. Like, we have a learning seminar and then it's like a character education session, and each character education session's like a different thing, but no sitting there in class at seven in the morning like, are people really like listening to what they are saying? Do they care? And they do it in like, such a repetitive way that you're like, this is the fifth time I've heard this, in the past like, two weeks.... They're not helping. Because kids can still sit there and tune them out like they tune everyone else out. My counselor, I have no idea what he's doing. They need to be qualified to handle these situations and there should be like seminars or something that everyone has to go to on being an adult in a cyberbullying situation because I just think they don't know what to do. Which is why nothing is being addressed directly because I'm sitting there and explaining something that's happening and they're like, I'll take care of it, and it doesn't get taken care of.

And like a lot of adults like, don't necessarily understand technology to the point where they are like, "what is this?", like "how are people doing this?" and "how is it occurring so often?" So you see a lot of it is because they just don't know what's going on with these cell phones.

Student 2 had similar opinions regarding the school prevention of and intervention in cyberbullying.

Unfortunately not every like class has a TV and stuff so they try to do these civic lessons during [study hall], where they like make us watch a video or something, but like my first two periods don't have TVs or any way to like watch them, so we don't really get to hear about them. Yeah, I mean, there's usually supposed to be a discussion but the teachers usually kind of just push it off 'cause they think we need to do homework or they want to give us free time so they don't really usually enforce it too much. I feel like they only do it like, as, 'cause they have to, not necessarily 'cause they really want to prevent it. They go grade quizzes or whatever.

Student 2 further described teachers in the school:

I think they don't always try to help right away, they always kinda don't think it's that big of an issue and they wait until they think that it's like good enough to be handled or whatever and all that time is like wasted 'cause the person is feeling hurt.

Student 4 described that the school was not very informative about cyberbullying and stated,

They talk about it but they don't really have [any specific strategies]for getting cyberbullied or if you see someone getting cyberbullied, do this. But they do have an all-around bullying form that you can fill out on Blackboard...that's like, "where is the bullying happening?" and I guess you could say, "Online."



Student 7 attended a school that allowed cell phones in the classroom and described the prevalence of cyberbullying among athletes, which prompted a recent assembly on cyberbullying.

We had an assembly the first month of school about online bullying and stuff. But it was mainly like the wrestling stuff. Because they said the wrestling team they have like, chat rooms and stuff where people like, really get into it and they're really competitive and they trash talk the other team and stuff and I played on two different sport teams. They took all the sports teams to the auditorium for an assembly. And they said "you can't post something on any social media sites like, bashing the other team." Like, if you're the basketball team and you say like, "Oh, they suck!" and you put it on Facebook or Twitter—the school can see that and like, you can get into like, really big trouble. Like, taken off the team, so....

Apparently like, it was happening a lot so....

Student 7 also described relating to younger teachers was easier, and explained:

I mean, there's some teachers that I'm really comfortable with it and there's some teachers that I don't think would understand. Like some teachers are too old to realize what it means to be bullied online, and some teachers are young enough to like realize the kind of affect that it has on teenagers. So I'd probably trust them more.

However, Student 7 perceived that teachers in high school were generally not very involved or interested.

My teachers are less involved in that kind of stuff in the class because they're more focused on the subjects. You know like, what they're teaching. They care about that a lot more than what my peers are doing in between, with each other. They're more focused on the actual schoolwork than...and they just teach it to us and, you know, they don't care about like, what we do. I think that's more of like the student activity coordinator and like the guidance counselor. I think they're more interested in that than the teachers, you know.

Student 9 attended a school that allowed cell phones in the classroom. Similarly, this student felt the school was uninvolved and uninterested. Student 9 expressed:

During school, they show videos during our [study hall]. It's basically like a homeroom kind of thing, but they show videos about all different kinds of things, like cyberbullying and stuff like that. So, it does not really do anything because nobody sits there and pays attention to it...they all just do their own stuff like their homework. They are required to show the videos, but nobody listens to them.

Although some of teachers followed Student 9 on Twitter, Student 9 stated, "sometimes teachers know what is going on but a lot of the time, they just have a general idea—like these people don't like each other, but they don't actually know everything about it." Overall, Student 9 felt that the schools' rules on technology were ineffective because the school did not get involved at all.

Student 10 and Student 11 attended a school that allowed technology in the classroom. These students expressed similar perceptions about their school culture being

proactive. Student 10 described, “They have a process where you can get it [cell phone] certified by the school and you have to sign a contract that it will only be used for school-appropriate work and school-related work on the school grounds.” Student 10 felt safe in school and described,

My school does a very extensive job teaching how to stop the effects of it and just basically all about all types of bullying, especially cyberbullying since this is an evolving digital age. So they teach it I think twice a year and a school counselor comes in and has a presentation set up and they just give us ways to stop it.

Student 11 also discussed how the school was supportive of teaching about cyberbullying prevention. However, Student 11 noted that students have a responsibility too.

Yeah, I think that the school gives people opportunities to listen and opportunities to learn because we have bullying seminars, assemblies, but some kids, it’s just their willingness to participate. I think the school has given them the knowledge and the tools, the availability I guess, the opportunity more, to do what they need to do and it, it really when it comes down to it, it’s the kid. And I don’t know how much more the school can do, because it’s the kid and how they’ve been raised and what they think.

In summary, teacher and student participants discussed both negative and positive aspects of their culture as a condition that influenced their perceptions. The negative aspects or challenges to cyberbullying prevention that teachers and students identified included: (a) focus on standardized testing prevents schoolwide bullying program; (b)

lack of education on specific definitions and examples of cyberbullying; (c) lack of relationship building between school staff and students; (d) teachers do not discuss cyberbullying strategies; (e) unsupportive administration; and (e) parents, community, students, and staff lack morals and values. Positive aspects identified by teachers and students included: (a) relationships between teachers, administration, and students are important and can help prevent cyberbullying; and (b) rules, strategies, resources, and support make students in large schools feel safe and encouraged to report cyberbullying.

**Adolescents immersed in social media culture.** Students and teachers shared common beliefs about the social media culture and how it influences the risk of cyberbullying. Table 13 provides a description of the similarities and differences in perceptions of students and teachers.

Table 13

*Social Media Culture*

Social Media Culture	
Teachers	Students
<u>Similarities</u>	
Connected at all Times	Connected at all Times
Constantly Changing – Hard to Keep Up	Constantly Changing and Keeping Up
Dangerous Tool	Dangerous Tool
Used for Entertainment	Used for Entertainment
Used for Good	Used for Good
Provides a Sense of Entitlement	Provides a Sense of Entitlement
<u>Differences</u>	
Not Prepared to Monitor Social Media	Social Media should be allowed most of the time in school
Recognizing cannot prevent social media use	School rules on technology do not stop use of social media or risk of cyberbullying
Concerned about the dangers involved	No Rules on Social Media can prevent focus on schoolwork
	Recognize lack of face to face communication human connection

**Teachers.** All teachers in this study perceived that the social media culture increased the risk of cyberbullying. While teachers expressed that students were always connected to social media, they also realized that it was impossible to monitor.

Teacher 1 and Teacher 4 expressed that teachers needed to come to terms with teens’ use of social media. Teacher 1 shared that there were “a lot of teachers who have the ‘NO technology’ outside their classroom all the time. And students are still using it, because it’s their lives. They are connected all the time.” Like Teacher 1, Teacher 4 stated, “I think if we were to try to not let them use them at all, it’d be impossible, because it is so prevalent, it almost consumes their life.”

Teacher 2 also shared,

I don't know how many of them even really talk to their friends anymore face to face. I feel like it's all done through texting and Twitter. Um, and, I mean at least several times a day I'll hear, "oh, I am going to Tweet about that later" or something will come up and they will mention that they're gonna Tweet it.

Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 4 also expressed concern for students involved in online interactions. Teacher 1 stated:

It's online, it's on the phone, it's texting. It's not; it's almost like make believe for some of them. That's what I'm saying. They don't understand the repercussions of their actions. They don't understand how hurtful or harmful what they are saying might be.

Similarly, Teacher 2 discussed a new way that teens communicate called "Snapchat," and explained:

you can like, take a screen shot and you see it in 3 minutes. But it's kind of like, that, to me that's a very dangerous tool for these people who are cyberbullying to have because then it's kind of like, for someone who's being bullied, "well, they could have something up about me at any time but then it's gone and everyone's seen it but I haven't."

Teacher 4 described:

I mean, you post one wrong thing and then everyone can be...everyone either chooses one side or another. And it's a slippery little slope you got there. You just go on, type something up, and boom, it's there for everyone to see. Not that Facebook's any different, but I think Twitter's more efficient. I haven't heard the

administration talk really about negative things going on through social media but I'm sure it happens with 42 or 43 hundred kids... it's bound to happen.

Teacher 9 explained:

I think that social media and everything that the kids have access to these days is just like, almost ridiculous to the point that we can't keep up with it and especially in public school, I mean we're, you know, we don't try to integrate technology into our classroom as much as we can but when it comes to the social media and kids on Facebook and Twitter and all of that, it's just so much bigger than what's going on in the public school system that there's no way to regulate it, almost. Or even monitor it for that matter.

Teacher 8 also understood the risks teens faced using social media and described:

I know I was bullied in high school and when you leave, when you go home it was, you weren't engaged anymore, you know, they couldn't get you at home. You are not safe anywhere, you can't get that kinda release of getting away from school, and I think the technology has made a nation of cowards almost where you are able to bully and be nameless and faceless and be just as destructive I think.

Teacher 3 was also concerned about how teenagers lack the ability to discern right from wrong and explained:

Yeah. I know. These kids these days they don't really don't understand what they have. The entitlement? Oh and that's the Facebook too. It's all the attention-getting on Facebook. I mean all the posts. I think Facebook is going to be, I don't

want to say the downfall of civilization but it's definitely it's the worst is yet to come with Facebook. It really is...there are too many traps in Facebook for our kids that they don't know as teenagers how to get themselves out of. They don't even know what they're walking into half the time. Teenagers are not the best for thinking. Synapse pruning.

Teacher 7 felt that online bullying led to offline bullying and stated, "I don't think it is an off-grounds issue. I think if they'll bully them online, they will bully them at school too. I think the two worlds meet." Teacher 6 also advocated for educating students and expressed,

I think a big part of it is educating students. Before the Internet, when people would gossip and say things behind other's backs, I think people held back more because there was always the concern that someone would overhear you and say something to you. But I think that people are able to hind behind their words online, and they aren't questioned. You don't have someone coming up to you and saying "that was wrong." I think that kids feel safer online, being able to say whatever they want to say and think that there is not going to be any repercussions from it. So, I think within the classroom, we really have to teach students that anything you say, no matter if it is online, to someone's face, or behind their backs is going to affect people. And when you are displaying it for the whole world to see, it is even worse.

Teacher 5 also felt that social media was another way for bullying but also expressed that we should also focus on the positive:



I think it is just a different space. I think traditionally it's just more confrontational but I think online creates more bullies because you can be big and bad on Facebook and big and bad on Twitter and there is no direct repercussions so I think that is because more people may not have not said something to someone's face, to say it but it still causes hurt feelings, people to be afraid to go to school, but it's also an advantage to, you know, Twitter could be used learning-wise. Twitter and Facebook can be used as educational tools which ninth graders at our school, it would be good if they could check trend and topics, news topics, so in a way it could be used for good.

***Students.*** All students in this study perceived that the social media culture increased the risk of cyberbullying. Unlike teachers, students were accustomed to constantly changing technology and depended on social media to connect with friends. Despite the risk that was involved in social media communication, students seemed numb to cyberbullying and willing to accept that it came with the territory of communicating online. In fact, most students saved screen shots of cyberbullying to share with friends the next day at school.

*Connected at all times.* In the student interviews, all students discussed how they were constantly connected with social media. Student 3 stated, "I usually check my phone every hour or so to see who has texted me."

Student 6 elaborated as follows:

Some of my friends text back really fast and I'm like, "Oohhhh!" and they have an iPhone, so they know when you read it and you just take a minute to like, you

know, whatever you're doing, it's just...it's funny though because they like don't stop texting you. They text you nonstop. Sometimes it's really annoying. Because well, I like to multitask so I'll like, be doing homework and texting people or like relaxing on the couch and texting people or something like that and so it'll just, sometimes it'll interrupt me.

Student 7 also explained:

I'll usually text them 'cause a lot of my friends text back and forth. And we like, I usually only call people if like, I have to explain something like, in detail or like, for something like, a big situation. And usually only call like, my closest friends, not like, just a random or maybe just like not that good of a friend. I wouldn't call, you normally like, text. It's kind of like, less...it's easier to text because you know, you can kind of, you don't have to break through like an umm, awkward phase where you don't know what to talk about.

Similarly, Student 11 expressed:

I mean text, like conversations could go on for a couple of hours but actually on my phone I guess, collectively would only be half an hour spent texting but uh, but the conversation could go on for a period of hours and hours. But after school, it's almost.... I mean, you get together sometimes but it's almost always over text. Or, I mean my friend got an Xbox and I've been talking to her recently over the Xbox. It's kind of, just there and I guess the biggest thing is like I said, it's convenient because you don't have to be next to the person.

Student 4, Student 5, Student 11, Student 10, Student 2, and Student 6 also explained that students were connected in school, despite rules on technology use. Student 4 stated, “during school, you’re not supposed to but sometimes people will text.” Student 5 also explained,

Kids do it all the time. Like under their desk or...some people are so good they can text without even looking. Yeah, they get their hands there and they just send a text, yeah. No, they don’t even look. It’s really cool.

Student 11 also stated,

you can get it [cell phone] certified, but you can’t, it’s never for texting your friend. Umm, people still do it though. I mean, it’s not infrequent that you’ll see someone.... I sit in the back of the classroom a lot of times so I can see over a lot of people’s shoulders and you can tell.

Student 10 also expressed,

A lot of times if it’s a smart phone or a tablet, I’ll go over sometimes and see them playing a game on it or maybe texting a friend or something. Usually most of the kids, if they wanted to text their friends, regardless of whether or not their smart phone was approved, they’d probably just sneak it under the desk or something. Yeah, they, they would send a text or post something even if it wasn’t allowed in the classroom.

Student 2 explained,

I mean, a lot of people text in class. Now we’re allowed to text in the hallways at my school. So I don’t know why the people thought that ’cause I mean I think

they thought they were going to turn us off and then turn it back on for 7 minutes in the hallways and turn it back off. I mean, more people text during class now and like half the people don't pay attention in class so they always text, like one of my, one guy admits to the teacher that he texts all during his classes. I don't know why.

Student 1 explained,

It's fast, and it's easier 'cause I know that it's going to get to them like instantly and it's not a risk like passing notes and the teacher like picking it up and reading it out loud and stuff like that.

Student 6 elaborated,

Oh, I see people text in class all the time. There's some people that I know, they text a lot. Like, it's that texter...like the teacher isn't going to let them text during a test or other things in class. Some teachers even allow us to text, I mean, I guess every once in a while I do text my friends. I'm not going to lie. I do text my friends sometimes during class but, not usually.

At times, Student 6's comments implied a belief that students should be able to use their cell phones anytime during school:

I mean I actually personally think that we should be allowed to use our phones, except during tests. Like during a test, don't use it and then during like, but like, once we're finished with our tests, we could probably pull it out.

Student 6 elaborated further and explained:

Like I don't think there's anything wrong during lunch or anything like because it's a free period. We're just like, eating lunch. We could probably have our iPod out. I believe that they should stop and just tell us, "Yeah, you can use your phone during lunch."

However, Student 7 suggested that if teachers allowed it, students would not get their work done.

Some teachers will let you during study block just do whatever you want. To like, go on your iPod and play games and stuff and look up something and play music...like I have a study block teacher that doesn't let you do that and uh, he like makes sure that we're doing work like, at all times.

*Keep up with changing technology.* Student 6 and Student 1 conveyed that teens keep up with changes in social media. Student 6 stated, "I don't usually use Facebook anymore but I sometimes use like, Snapchat or Voxer." Student 1 described, "I guess Instagram because Facebook's dying now...people don't have Facebooks. But what they do now is they create Twitters and they call them like, "[Schoolname] TMZ" and then they'll just say mean things about people."

*A form of entertainment.* Interestingly, Student 6 and Student 1's comments indicated that social media was not just a form of communication but it was also a form of entertainment. Student 6, Student 9, and Student 2 described how social media was entertaining and sometimes involved sharing screen shots of cyberbullying with one another during school. Student 6 described, "I like Snapchat because it's like, I can send her like, a really funny face and she just starts laughing. It just cracks her up." Student 6

also shared, “I guess, well sometimes if I see it [cyberbullying] like on my phone I’ll take a screen shot of it and I’ll show it to my friend the next day.”

Similarly, Student 9 explained, “We talk about it with each other. We will screen shot it, and then show it to them in person.” In addition, Student 2 expressed, “Yeah like if it’s a video or something, they’ll show it to you, um they can text you about it, show you the screen shots.” Student 2 elaborated:

Well um not too long ago probably a month or two ago there was a fight at our school and it was before school and by second period there was already a video on YouTube about it. And like everyone like it posted it online and um everyone was kind of like posting about it and laughing at it and thought it was like funny that the people were fighting.

*Dangerous tool.* Student 5, Student 2, Student 4, Student 3, Student 6, Student 7, and Student 1 expressed their perceptions of how social media use might increase the risks of cyberbullying. Student 5 expressed,

I wouldn’t say there’s necessarily an increase in that. I just say it makes it easier if someone were to want to do that. Actually a little while ago, there was one Twitter [related to cyberbullying] that I remember, it was called “[Schoolname] Problems.”

Like Student 5, Student 2 explained,

And now there’s a new app that’s called Snapchat and you can just send a picture and it’s actually not created for the best reasons. You take a picture and you set how long they can look at it for and it’s up to like 10 seconds and then if you

screen shot it tells you so that you know they have the picture, I mean some people use it for like sexting and stuff which isn't very good thing.

Student 4 expressed that school rules did not prevent students from using technology in dangerous ways:

Honestly the bully isn't gonna care if the school is gonna like, they, I guess they don't think that it's gonna affect their school...how it happens, online is gonna affect school. And so they're just like, "I'm gonna do whatever I want online because I guess it won't really matter."

Student 3 expressed concern and stated,

Yeah, I feel like it's going to start happening more now that we have cell phones and stuff that we can bring into school...because they let you use cell phones in school and that's a good way to spread rumors and stuff.

Student 7 elaborated:

If someone would let you go on Facebook during class and you know there's more of a chance that you can say something about the person during school. I mean, I don't know. It might not be that big of a deal but like you could take a picture of someone at school and maybe, and you know it'd be like, an embarrassing moment and then put it on Facebook. And they wouldn't want something like that to be seen 'cause usually when something embarrassing happens to someone at school or something, the best part about it is that it's over and that you know, people are going to forget about it eventually. But if it's like photo evidence of it, like if someone takes a picture of it and puts it on Facebook,

it's like, never going to go away. So...even if they delete it, it's still on there.

Like, if someone saved it to their photo pile, then they have it forever, you know?

Student 1 pointed out the danger involved in a recent new social media application called Snapchat:

Now like the big thing is Snapchat so you take a picture and you can have like a little message in it and then you just like send it, and then after 10 seconds or however many seconds you choose it's like gone forever, and a lot of different people use that. But you can only, like, if someone like sends out a mean Snapchat about someone else they can send it to everyone but you'd only know that you got it.

*Used for the positive.* Most students suggested that social media should be allowed and suggested the different ways it could be used for the positive. They were annoyed and believed that it would be better to allow social media use at all times. Student 6 explained,

We should use like, iPads and computers more because they would save a lot of paper. I mean, kids are already compelled to go on the Internet and stuff like that so why make it so they can't use it during study hall or at lunch. We're not allowed to use our phones for any part of that. They could at least allow us to do that. We're not allowed to. They'll get mad and tell us to put it away.

Student 2 also explained, "I mean, 'cause they'll be like, 'everyone take out your smart phone and do the assignment on your phone' and sometimes they don't have one and so people kinda expect everyone to have them now."



Student 5 described how the school was beginning to use social media to make athletic announcements and described how the principal had a Twitter that many students followed. Student 5 expressed the positive use of social media:

Everything online that I've seen isn't all negative. Like I've seen some positive things like somebody'll post like, the suicide hotline number like, "Pass this around, it could save somebody's life" or something or like, [Schoolname] actually put on the morning announcements like, "you can go on Twitter and take a picture of yourself in your car with your seatbelt on" and they call it Seatbelt Safety to try and encourage wearing your seatbelt. So it's not all negative. A lot of it is but it's not all negative.

Similarly, Student 2 described positive uses of social media:

Yeah now we're allowed to bring iPads and Kindles if they help with your learning and stuff so you can share whatever you want with people during classes. They were trying to get us to use our smart phones for like polls and stuff and history class and so we're just allowed to take our phones out during class and I think it's a lot easier for people to take pictures of people and stuff when [they don't know it] 'cause.

*Sense of entitlement.* While discussing their use of social media, students revealed how it provided them with a sense of entitlement. Student 7 described how anonymity fostered disinhibition and enabled a sense of entitlement.

I think sometimes when people are online, they can say stuff, a lot more stuff, than when they are talking to them face-to-face because like, you don't like, you

don't...you can say pretty much whatever you want because you're not like right next to them. You can kind of like, since you have your computer in front of you, you can like, have the freedom to like, you know...it's just typing stuff on a keyboard and it's not actually saying it so you don't have the risk of like, seeing the other person's reaction or emotion or whatever so you, it gives you like a sense of entitlement to like, say whatever you want.

### **Discussion of Results for Research Question One**

In summary, research question one asked, "What are bystander perceptions of cyberbullying of students with and without disabilities and general and special educators in secondary inclusive classrooms?" The main theme that was identified to answer this question was: Conditions Facilitate Cyberbullying Among Students in Inclusive Settings. All teachers and students described how conditions in the inclusive classroom facilitated the occurrence of cyberbullying. Commonalities expressed across cases included (a) technology in the classroom increases risk, (b) peer culture impacts peer acceptance and the likelihood of occurrences of cyberbullying, (c) school culture impacts prevalence of cyberbullying, and (d) adolescents are immersed in social media culture.

Teacher and student participants shared common beliefs about how students' use of technology during school increased the risk of cyberbullying. Similarities among the teachers and students included: (a) teachers were unable to prevent cyberbullying, (b) teachers and students were aware of the increase in cyberbullying, (c) teachers were unable to monitor cyberbullying, (d) students who do not own technology are teased and bullied in the classroom, and (e) some teachers are lenient with technology use.

Differences among teachers and students indicated some teachers felt that technology can be used to reveal evidence of cyberbullying during school. Some students expressed that (a) technology in the classroom caused distractions, (b) teachers did not care when students used their cell phones during class time, and (c) technology can be used for the good.

Teacher and student participants shared commonalities about how peer culture influences cyberbullying. Similarities among teachers and students included: (a) students with and without disabilities in inclusive settings are involved in cyberbullying as victims, bullies, and bystanders; (b) students with noticeable disabilities and differences are targeted as victims; (c) students with disabilities bully/cyberbully students with disabilities; (d) male students with ED, LD, ADD/ADHD, and at-risk characteristics are aggressive and are perpetrators of online and offline bullying; (e) students with learning disabilities are targeted as victims; (f) victims with disabilities develop aggressive bullying behavior; and (g) students with autism are unaware they are bullied. Differences indicated teachers felt that students with disabilities were (a) unaware when they were behaving as cyberbullies, (b) unaware of the consequences of cyberbullying, and (c) unaware of cyberbullying definitions.

Teacher and student participants both discussed negative and positive aspects of school culture as a condition that influenced their perceptions of cyberbullying. Teachers and students identified negative aspects that included: (a) focus on standardized testing prevents schoolwide bullying program; (b) lack of education on specific definitions and examples of cyberbullying; (c) lack of relationship building between school staff and

students; (d) teachers do not discuss cyberbullying strategies; (e) unsupportive administration; and (e) parents, community, students, and staff may lack morals and values. Teachers and students identified positive aspects that included: (a) relationships between teachers, administration, and students are important and can help prevent cyberbullying; and (b) rules, strategies, resources, and support make students in large schools feel safe and encouraged to report cyberbullying. Overall, participants discussed more negative aspects than positive aspects, suggesting that most schools in this study lacked effective antibullying programs targeting cyberbullying.

Teacher and student participants shared commonalities regarding students' social media culture. Both teachers and students perceived that: (a) students were connected at all times, (b) social media was constantly changing, (c) social media can be a dangerous tool, (d) social media is used as entertainment, (e) social media can be used for the good, and (f) social media provided a sense of entitlement. Differences indicated that teachers (a) did not feel prepared to monitor social media, (b) recognized their inability to prevent social media use in school, and (c) were concerned about the dangers involved with social media use. In contrast, some students felt that (a) social media use during school should be allowed, (b) no rules on social media use prevents focus on schoolwork, and (c) social media use limits face-to-face communication.

### **Research Question Two Results**

One of the main goals of this research study was to determine what influences bystander perceptions of cyberbullying. The second research question for this study asked: "How do bystanders perceive cyberbullying both personally and professionally?"

The main theme that was identified to answer this question was: Bystander Awareness of Cyberbullying Influences Perceptions. Four categories were systematically integrated to provide a clear analysis of this theme: (a) awareness of characteristics; (b) awareness of laws, policies, and strategies; (c) awareness of prevalence; and (d) awareness of tools, types, causes, and effects. Each category was well developed and all the categories were conceptually linked to support this main theme. In addition, each bystander case was examined to see whether new ideas were consistent with what was already known about the entire case of bystanders. Several examples of awareness of cyberbullying were revealed through participant descriptions of personal and hypothetical cyberbullying scenarios and cyberbullying artifacts, making the selection of the categories clear and providing adequate representation within each category. Each data source provided corroborative evidence to verify the information and neutralize researcher bias. In addition, the search for and identification of discrepant data and negative cases was involved in this process. A summary of the results of each category is discussed next.

### **Bystander Awareness of Characteristics of Cyberbullying Influence Perceptions**

Teachers and students shared common beliefs about the characteristics of cyberbullying. Overall, most teachers and students described cyberbullying in similar ways. However, students differed in that they described cyberbullying in more detail and therefore revealed more characteristics than teachers. Table 14 lists the teachers' description of characteristics. Table 15 lists the students' description of characteristics.

Table 14

*Teacher Bystander Awareness of Characteristics*

Teacher Bystander Awareness of Characteristics of Cyberbullying	
Characteristic	Teachers
Online and Offline	Teacher 3: "He would follow her around and she would go to shopping at the mall. Somehow at the mall, somehow he knew about it and I think it's because she might have said something on Facebook or something to the other girls. He would follow her on Facebook and then go wherever she was going to be just to watch her."
Disinhibition	Teacher 5: "I think it is just a different space. I think traditionally it's just more confrontational but I think online creates more bullies because you can be big and bad on face book and big and bad on twitter and there is no direct repercussions."
Permanence of Abuse	Teacher 6: "Absolutely, because it never stops. When I left school that day, the bullying ended. When these students go home and turn on their computers, it's right in front of their face, and it's there 24 hours a day. A message that was written three days ago is still going to be there."  Teacher 9: "It was more prominent or more hurtful, in a sense because you couldn't get rid of it, even after it was done. So if hurtful words were said, you would pull up that box again. You'd have to go through that all over again."
Entertainment	Teacher 1: "I think on some level, for some of these students, they think it's like watching TV."  Teacher 1: "It's online, it's on the phone, it's texting, it's almost like make-believe for some of them."  Teacher 4: "They'd Tweet pictures of themselves skipping. Or, they'd put on their Facebook status, 'hey, I'm not at school right now, I'm going to do something for SGA.'"
Evidence	Teacher 2: "Have you heard of snap chat? What happens is, you can post a comment, or show a picture and it's gone in three minutes. So it's only posted for three minutes and then it's gone forever. I just feel like this is like the future of bullying...."
Power	Teacher 3: "It's a power play. I mean you got the jocks that you know that will hassle other jocks about their performance or whatever but there is girl drama and I think that girls can be, girls and guys can have their own type of drama."  Teacher 6: "Whether it's a girl bullying another girl because she is jealous of her or doesn't like her, or whether it's a boy doing the same thing. It's typically going to be if a student doesn't like another student, they are going to be bullying them online."

(continued)

Table 14. Teacher Bystander Awareness of Characteristics (continued)

Teacher Bystander Awareness of Characteristics of Cyberbullying	
<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Teachers</u>
Anonymous	<p>Teacher 6: “Because again, I think that kids can hide behind it. I think that kids can do it any time of day, anytime they want, anywhere they want.”</p> <p>Teacher 8: “I think because of the, they can be so anonymous and the proof that has to happen, you know I think it’s very hard.”</p>
Social Outing/ Exclusion	<p>Teacher 2: “They called her a slut and like, they would go and do fun things and post pictures all together and say, “oh like we’re having such a good time’ and so it was just, ...I don’t know how else to describe it...but just this purposeful leaving out of something you used to be a part of....”</p>
Explicit	<p>Teacher 5: “We also had this person who actually he was a male student who texted something inappropriate to, this was two years ago to a girl who showed her thong and they reported to the school and the young man was suspended.”</p>
Anytime	<p>Teacher 6: “I think that kids can do it any time of day, anytime they want, anywhere they want.”</p>

Table 15

*Student Bystander Awareness of Characteristics*

Student Bystander Awareness of Cyberbullying	
Characteristics	Students
Online and Offline	Student 9: "Yeah. Sometimes on Twitter, some boys are all like, 'are you trying to fight me now?' But never really girls. There have been a lot of boys that were like 'I'm going to beat you up.'"
Disinhibition	Student 6: "So I mean, it's a lot different than doing it face to face, but then again, it's a lot easier to do it than face-to-face. Because you could just be a really, self-conscious person, you're just trying to be big. It's easy to hide behind a computer screen but it's not as easy to say it to somebody's face."
Permanence of Abuse	Student 6: "I think it's absolutely one of the worst bullying cases because it's online, everybody can see it. And once it's out there, you can't take it back."  Student 7: "If it's like photo evidence of it, like if someone takes a picture of it and puts it on Facebook, it's like, never going to go away. So...even if they delete it, it's still on there. Like, if someone saved it to their photo pile, then they have it forever, you know?"
Entertainment	Student 2: "Well um not too long ago probably a month or two ago there was a fight at our school and it was before school and by second period there was already a video on YouTube about it. And like everyone like it posted it online and um everyone was kind of like posting about it and laughing at it and thought it was like funny that the people were fighting."
Evidence	Student 7: "If it's like photo evidence of it, like if someone takes a picture of it and puts it on Facebook, it's like, never going to go away. So...even if they delete it, it's still on there. Like, if someone saved it to their photo pile, then they have it forever, you know?"
Power	Student 1: "But like, like you can only like if someone like sends out a mean snapchat about someone else they can send it to everyone but you'd only know that you got it."
Anonymous	Student 8: "The only thing is the Formspring....like when they do anonymous questions and one person has an account, and you can write whatever on there, so a lot of times if someone's not well liked, there is a lot of anonymous and cruel things posted"
Social Outing	Student 5: "Well, on Twitter a lot somebody will, they would, they would like, say something about them but not mention them in the Tweet. So like, everybody could tell who it was about but they didn't mention the person by name."
Explicit	Student 4: "A lot of people if they're not friends with them, and they don't like the person they'll post like, negative things about them and they'll say negative things about them. Umm, I've seen cursing about them too so there's been like, like people will say that so-and-so is such a jerk because this and this happened, or umm, 'I think so-and-so is blah, blah, blah.'"

(continued)



Table 15. Student Bystander Awareness of Characteristics (continued)

Student Bystander Awareness of Cyberbullying	
Characteristics	Students
Pretend Cyberbullying	Student 6: "I don't know how they, why they do this but I have, I have like two friends. They'll be like, in the room and just like, 'I hate you' and like, 'You too' but some people will be like.... It's just a joke. They're just being, that's just the way that they are going to like it but then sometimes it's real but we don't know that so I think that's why most people say it and it keeps going. We're not exactly sure whether it's real or fake.
Unable to detect emotion	Student 3: "You can't tell like, how they mean it when you're talking to them. Like they could be angry when they're saying it or they could be happy."
Large Audience	Student 3: "Some are like forwarded to a whole bunch of people and they'll like, send it to people."  Student 8: "They were harassing the guy online on Twitter, there were a lot of people like sub-tweeting, and they actually get like invites and they start tagging each other so the other person can see it, so that happens a lot."  Student 9: "Oh, that's just like hash tags, like if you add the number thing in front of it and tweet something without any spaces, once you click on it, it links to everything that has that same hash tag."
No Evidence	Student 2: "And now there's a new app that's called snap chat and it's you can just send a picture it's it's actually not created for the best reasons. It's a you take a picture and you set how long they can look at it for and it's up to like ten seconds and then if you screen shot it tells you so that you know they have the picture. That's why it's I mean some people use it for like sexting and stuff."  Student 1: "Now the big thing is snapchat so it's like you take a picture and you can have like a little message in it and then you just like send it, and then after 10 seconds or however many seconds you choose it's like gone forever, and a lot of different people use that. People can be mean on it too because then you have no proof and its gone."

In summary, students were similar to teachers in their list of characteristics, however, because they experienced more aspects of cyberbullying as bystanders, they listed additional characteristics: pretend or fake, unable to detect emotion, large audience, and no evidence. In addition, students provided artifacts that included cyberbullying screen shots that were coded to provide rich data in support of the characteristics that

were identified. Overall, teachers and students were similar in perceiving cyberbullying as a more dangerous

**Teacher awareness of laws, policies, and strategies.** Teachers were asked about their knowledge of their state's laws, school procedures, and strategies concerning cyberbullying. All teachers discussed their awareness of state laws, school procedures, and strategies. Of the nine teachers, only one had knowledge of a specific state law on cyberbullying. Four out of the nine teachers did not know their school's procedures on cyberbullying. Six out of the nine teachers did not have in-depth knowledge of cyberbullying strategies. Table 16 lists the teachers' description of awareness of laws, policies, and strategies.

Table 16

*Teacher Awareness of Laws, Policies, and Strategies*

Teacher Awareness of Laws, Policies, and Strategies			
Participants	State Laws	School Procedures	Strategies
Special Education Teachers			
Teacher 4	"I have absolutely no idea what they are."	"In the circumstances where it's really bad, they need to go directly to an administrator. Other than that, we haven't really had that many steps put into place."	"I mean, other than to come tell me? It's kind of, subjective, you're dealing with it how you see best—I can't really think of a good answer to that other than I tell them that if they witness it, they need to come tell me."
Teacher 1	"No idea, I mean I do know that it's not legal...but nobody's gone to jail."	"I'm very fortunate at school...to have a lot of different people—depending on the infraction is, it would start with the counselors and the psychologist and move on to administration. Our school isn't so much a zero-tolerance because we're a center we've got the resource people and we tend to do in-school suspensions."	"In our program, one of the things we definitely talk about is bystander behavior and we show some pretty basic videos on bystander behavior and that is to, if you can, safely, stand up...and be involved, whether it's to say no to the person. As far as the cyberbullying, umm, we don't have much."
Teacher 3	"I'm sorry, I don't know."	"There's a channel that we go through in the school system. At least that's my understanding. They are very proactive. They school psychologist, the social worker, the department chair, and my AP [assistant principal], because they are in an ED center."	"Well just, you know to report it, to tell parents, to make your sites more private. To help kids to privatize their sites."
Teacher 2	"I don't know. I have no clue."	"I don't know them. I don't know that the school is as concerned about cyberbullying as what they can actually see going on at the school."	"None."

(continued)

Table 16. Teacher Awareness of Laws, Policies, and Strategies (continued)

Teacher Awareness of Laws, Policies, and Strategies			
Participants	State Laws	School Procedures	Strategies
Teacher 6	“Ooo, that’s probably terrible that I’m not sure what they are.”	“I don’t know the complete definition of what the administrators do. I know that they are limited to again, when the bullying occurs, if it is during school hours or during a school event. Beyond when it occurs out of those hours, I don’t know what they are allowed to do.”	<p>“Teaching empathy, and that when you’re bullying someone, you don’t know what that person has gone through.”</p> <p>“Letting kids know they are not alone because I think a lot of students think that they are the only ones that it is happening to and when they see that they are not, I think that is empowering.”</p> <p>“Bringing in articles about situations that had occurred with cyberbullying and where there have been suicides because of it and had the kids discuss what had occurred and how they would have acted differently or how they may have intervened.”</p>
General Education Teachers			
Teacher 9	“I don’t know if I know those actually.”	<p>“If it’s to the point where I feel like administration needs to get involved, they too have the rights to go in you know, with the police officers and look at the content on the phone. Usually when it’s handed over to administration, they try to handle it verbally with the child first. Then if it proceeds or if it happens again, then parents are contacted and brought in for a meeting with the administrator and the principal to address what’s going on.”</p>	<p>“I do know that the teachers that are first coming into the county and so far I’ve been teaching for two and a half years now, and this was two and a half years ago I got this training. It was interesting because it was included in essential misconduct training. But they talked about cyberbullying and not only teachers online with students but students with students too. They discussed a little bit about different prevention methods but that was only that one time and I haven’t heard anything else since. So that was two and a half years ago.”</p>

(continued)

Table 16. Teacher Awareness of Laws, Policies, and Strategies (continued)

Teacher Awareness of Laws, Policies, and Strategies			
Participants	State Laws	School Procedures	Strategies
Teacher 7	"I don't know exactly what it states but I do know that this year, threatening somebody through a cyberbully is a felony. A misdemeanor, I don't know why I said felony."	"The part-time guidance counselor comes around once a month and she talks to the kids. And a couple of months it's been about different types of bullying and different things about bullying. Like, one month she came and it was about cyberbullying."	"No—not really."
Teacher 8	"Uncertain."	"I don't know if there is any in place. I think it depends on the Administrator. I don't have any specific examples as administrators but I know, I think there are administrators that probably would take it seriously and be proactive and I think that then there are some that would, I think that all administrators understand that this is a problem, but I think we tiptoe around so much you know because there has to be parents involvement and how big it can get. I think a lot of times they try to handle it without it getting big and I think sometimes it has to get big."	"It's the idea of creating empathy in connections with kids is that they have to realize that what they're doing, how it can affect someone."
Teacher 5		"Our Code of Conduct this year if you are engaged in cyberbullying outside of school that doesn't affect in school that you can still get suspended. It's a Charter school so they're a little more flexible with the rules."	"Protecting themselves on Facebook in terms of making sure you are an advocate for friends, making sure that you keep your profile private."

In summary, teachers lacked knowledge of laws, policies, and strategies. Only two teachers, one general educator and one special educator, out of the nine teachers were somewhat knowledgeable of their state laws. Of the five special educators, only two discussed bystander behavior as a prevention strategy for cyberbullying. It is interesting to note that the one special educator who revealed knowledge of effective antibullying

strategies involving bystander behavior still felt lacking in knowledge of strategies specific to cyberbullying. In addition, only two out of the five special educators and two general educators reported knowledge of their school policy on cyberbullying.

**Student awareness of strategies.** Students with and without disabilities discussed the strategies they had learned about to problem solve cyberbullying and where they learned these strategies. Student 3, Student 5, Student 1, Student 7, and Student 8 (5 out of 11 students) were similar in their responses and discussed that they had learned about the trouble that one can get in for being involved in cyberbullying from their respective schools. Students discussed strategies such as avoiding social media, deleting social media, reporting to an adult, and talking in person to the bully.

Student 10 and Student 11 were unique in their responses in that they reported bystander strategies. Both students reported learning many ways to prevent cyberbullying that included bystander strategies. Student 10 stated, “And if you’re a bystander they say, you might if you think it’s appropriate, you might want to tell them to back off or lay off.” Similarly, Student 11 explained, “I’d definitely step in and do it some way and stick up for the person that’s being cyberbullied in some way.”

Table 17 provides a synopsis of the strategies that students reported.

Table 17

*Student Awareness of Strategies*

Participants	Strategies
Students With Disabilities	
Student 3	<p>“Our school would get together and talk about it to us.”</p> <p>“They tell us to tell adults and stuff whenever we see it.”</p> <p>“They were telling us cyberbullying is illegal or something or it’s the same as bullying and you can get in a lot of trouble for it. I mean I don’t want to get in trouble like everyone else, so I just delete them.... So I don’t get involved.”</p> <p>“We had like, a handbook at the beginning of the year that addressed it I’m pretty sure. Or like the consequences of it and how to deal with it. I’m not sure; I don’t remember what it says.”</p>
Student 5	<p>“It’s just generally the counselors. They go and talk like, earlier this year everybody in the school met with their counselors during, I think it was history and they just played a PowerPoint about what to do if you’re being harassed or something or what can happen if you are harassing; what trouble you can get in like Suspension, possible expulsion, involvement with law enforcement—there wasn’t much on prevention. Telling somebody is another strategy.”</p>
Student 6	<p>“To ignore it, show them that you don’t care like, that he’s doing it. Like you don’t laugh about it because then he thinks, ‘Oh this is fun?’ You just show them that you don’t care and that it doesn’t bother you. Walk away. Walk away from the situation. Leave everything behind. If they ask you a question, don’t say anything and walk. I think the last resort would be like tell a teacher or tell a parent or guardian or something like that because if none of those strategies are working then you need to tell someone.”</p>
Student 9	<p>“Tell people about it, like one of our parents or an adult that we’re comfortable with. There is always the option to report it.”</p>
Student 10	<p>“A lot of times if you’re the person being bullied, they tell you to immediately block that person so, and anyone else that might uh, jump in, and try to harass you. And if you’re a bystander they say, you might if you think it’s appropriate, you might want to tell them to back off or lay off, but not if you think it might get you in a hurtful situation.”</p>
Student 11	<p>“If it continues and it’s hard to get away from, then I’d kind of, ignore it. Maybe block the person, if possible. And if it still continues, and it gets to the point where you can’t handle it on your own, then talk to a parent or someone else. If it continued, before I went to an adult, I’d probably try to take it up with the person myself, face-to-face. I feel like if the school didn’t provide those steps I guess the process of doing it, then I might not do it that exact way. But I feel like I’d definitely step in and do it some way and stick up for the person that’s being cyberbullied in some way.</p>

(continued)

Table 17. Student Awareness of Strategies (continued)

Participants	Strategies
Students Without Disabilities	
Student 1	“Well you know privacy settings are always good to like keep people that you don’t know from seeing your stuff and commenting on it and then if you see something hurtful they do have like a report buttons and you could just always try to delete things you think are hurtful. I mean they have like things on Facebook that show you and they tell you um you should have these settings and stuff ’cause they’re not responsible for what happens. They tell you what to do if you’re cyberbullied in school. There’s a million PowerPoints about it every year.... They do like, address it and they, it’s a felony.”
Student 2	“Well you know privacy settings are always good to like keep people that you don’t know from seeing your stuff and commenting on it and then if you see something hurtful they do have like a report buttons and you could just always try to delete things you think are hurtful. I mean they have like things on Facebook that show you and they tell you um you should have these settings and stuff ’cause they’re not responsible for what happens.”
Student 4	“Well, you could go to an adult and if that still doesn’t clear things up then you could just keep trying to tell the person who’s doing the bullying that they’re not doing the right thing.”
Student 7	“I think we had an assembly like, the first month of school about like, online bullying and stuff. If you’re the basketball team and you say like, “Oh, they suck!” and you put it on Facebook or Twitter you know, whatever, they, people like, the school can see that and like, you can get into like, really big trouble. Like, taken off the team.”
Student 8	“Just don’t go on, just don’t check it or subject yourself to being like, I guess draw attention to yourself online so they don’t like harass you. Because they’ll just say whatever, and nobody knows who it is and they don’t care, and most of the time, they don’t get in trouble or anything for it. So, just avoid it all.”

In summary, students varied in their knowledge of strategies. Strategies discussed were reporting, avoiding, ignoring, and blocking. Four students, two with disabilities and two without, discussed that they were mostly taught about the punishment for cyberbullying. Of these students, one student with disabilities and one student without disabilities each discussed that they felt that it was best to avoid all cyberbullying. Of the



11 students, only 2 students with disabilities reported learning about strategies that involved bystander intervening behavior.

### **Aware of Prevalence**

Teachers and students discussed their awareness of the prevalence of cyberbullying. All nine teachers expressed that students at their schools had been victims, bystanders, or perpetrators of cyberbullying. In addition, eight out of the nine teachers had direct experience in dealing with cyberbullying among students in their school. One teacher had heard about cyberbullying experiences with students at the school from other teachers. However, some teachers were more aware than others about the prevalence of cyberbullying in their schools. Similarly, all 11 students expressed that they were aware of the prevalence of cyberbullying in their schools. All 11 students knew of fellow students who had been victims, bystanders, or perpetrators of cyberbullying. In addition, 2 of the 11 students had personally been a victim of cyberbullying.

**Teachers.** Three out of the five special educators described that even though they did not see cyberbullying happening, they were aware and certain that students were involved in it all the time.

Teacher 1, Teacher 3, and Teacher 6 felt that cyberbullying was very prevalent among students in their classrooms. Teacher 1 stated,

I mean, it already happens but you can see it just, exploding. And in the classroom, as a teacher, you've gotta be aware of what's going on. You've gotta try to, you know, contain that as much as you can and, and, and be a positive role

model and.... But you don't always see it and you certainly don't always hear it if they're texting.

Teacher 1 further elaborated:

Well, as an educator, I mean over the past 2 years I've probably witnessed a, numerous incidences with the cyberbullying. And to include sexting, photographs, I had to refer a student who was looking at inappropriate pictures of another student, to the administration. I've had to have very in-depth discussions with students with counselors and our crisis resource counselor for a student who was being bullied via text messaging.

Similarly, Teacher 6 stated, "Yes, absolutely, because it never stops. When these students go home and turn on their computers, it's right in front of their face, and it's there 24 hours a day." Teacher 3 expressed, "you know there are too many traps in Facebook for our kids that they don't know as teenagers how to get themselves out of."

In contrast, Teacher 4 and Teacher 2 were less aware of the prevalence of cyberbullying among students in their classroom. Teacher 2 described, "I don't know if cyberbullying is going on because I don't live in the virtual universe." Teacher 4 echoed, "I haven't seen negative things on Twitter, at least not from my students and I haven't heard the administration talk really about negative things going on through social media but I'm sure it happens." Teacher 4 also felt that many students were not as involved because they were well behaved.

All four general educators were aware that students in their classrooms were involved in cyberbullying. However, Teacher 5 felt that since the school did not allow

technology in the classroom, it was less prevalent at school. Although one teacher had not personally dealt with cyberbullying, that teacher was very aware of the prevalence and the chances that students could be involved. Teacher 8 described,

It's really scary how they can get to kids now and it does scare me, because you can get a random text from somebody, who just keeps texting and texting you or they can Tweet something and that's there and you can't get away from it and I can see why in the last few years ago why there's such a rise in suicides where kids, there's and I think those kids get overwhelmed.

Similarly, Teacher 7 explained, "I am sure that it happens with the way that they talk to each other at school sometimes. And knowing that they do spend most of their time on Facebook."

**Students.** All 11 students expressed that they were aware of the prevalence of cyberbullying in their schools. The students knew of fellow students who had been victims, bystanders, or perpetrators of cyberbullying. In addition, 7 of the 11 students had been victims of cyberbullying. However, 2 students with disabilities were not as aware of the prevalence at their school.

Two students with disabilities, Student 11 and Student 10, had witnessed cyberbullying, but were less aware of the prevalence among students in their school. Student 11 described,

they can only use the devices for communication with permission, they're not allowed to text, get on Facebook, social networking, anything like that in class. But again, they still do but it's nothing. Like, they can't really carry on a good

conversation because they have to put it away every time the teacher comes by us so it's hard. But it, I don't really think it does [occur] any more than usual."

Student 10 explained, "They umm, have a process where you can get it [cell phone] certified by the school and, you have to sign a contract that it will only be used uh, for school-appropriate work and school-related work on the school grounds."

In summary, students and teachers were aware of cyberbullying among students in their schools. Teachers differed in their awareness of cyberbullying from students in that they were unable to see what goes on inside the virtual world of social communication among students, especially outside of the context of school. All students believed that students were involved in cyberbullying, but two students differed in their level of awareness and felt that they were less aware of its prevalence during school because of the restrictions placed on use of technology in the classroom at their respective schools. Similarly, although one teacher was aware of the prevalence among students, that teacher reported that since the school did not allow technology, it was less prevalent among students during school. All teachers believed that their students were involved in cyberbullying as witnesses, victims, and bystanders; however, three teachers felt that they were uncertain whether it goes on among the students in their classroom because (a) their students were well behaved, (b) they could not see what was happening on their students' phones, and (c) their school had strict rules on the use of technology during school.

## **Aware of Tools, Types, Causes, and Effects**

When discussing their awareness of cyberbullying, teacher and student participants described their awareness of the types, causes, and effects of cyberbullying. All teachers and students expressed similar knowledge of the types, causes, and effects of cyberbullying. Table 18 provides a synopsis of the similarities of teacher and student participant perceptions of the types, causes, and effects of cyberbullying.

Students and teachers differed in their awareness of the tools used for cyberbullying. While all students were very aware of the latest tools used for cyberbullying, some teachers were not. Only one out of the nine teachers mentioned the newest tool teens used for cyberbullying, called Snapchat. Teacher 2, a special educator, described Snapchat as the “future of bullying.” Teacher 9, a general educator, described teachers who were younger and technologically savvy as more aware of the various tools and how they might be used for cyberbullying:

I think that there is a generation of teachers, and I hate to say it can be around some teacher’s age, but I do not necessarily think it’s the age of a teacher as much as it is their technological awareness. If they don’t understand how Twitter and Facebook works, or even online blogs and those kinds of things, they are not going to understand how students can use them in that way. So, I think there can be a gap in their understanding in what a child is going home and facing, and why they might not want to study for a test because they are depressed on how they are being treated. So, absolutely, I think that can be...and I think as a whole, teachers understand what’s going on, but I think they feel helpless to controlling it.

Table 18

*Awareness of Tools, Types, Causes, and Effects*

Tools	Types	Causes	Effects
<b>Teachers</b>			
Twitter	Sexting	Desire social acceptance	Weight Changes
Facebook	Stalking	Girl Jealousy/Drama	Skippping School
Texting	Rumor Spreading	Power imbalance	Faking Sick
Instagram	Violent Threats	Attention seeking	Lower Grades
Snapchat	Veiled Threats	Entertaining	Depression
Online Blogs	Ganging up on one person	Prior Victim	Anger
MySpace	Cruel Messages	Criticizing	Fear
	Attacking Appearance		Low Self-Esteem
	Aggressive Fighting		Suicidal Thoughts
	Between groups		Emotional Instability
	Athletic cyberbullying		Stop Eating
	Social Outing		Overdosed
	Rude Insults		Losing weight
			Aggression
			Changing Schools
<b>Students</b>			
Twitter	Sexting	Desire social acceptance	Weight Changes
Facebook	Stalking	Girl Jealousy/Drama	Skippping School
Texting	Rumor Spreading	Power imbalance	Faking Sick
Instagram	Violent Threats	Attention seeking	Lower Grades
Snapchat	Veiled Threats	Entertaining	Depression
Online Blogs	Ganging up on one person	Prior Victim	Anger
MySpace	Cruel Messages	Criticizing	Fear
Xbox	Attacking Appearance		Low Self-Esteem
Snapchat	Aggressive Fighting		Suicidal Thoughts
YouTube	Between groups		Stop Eating
	Athletic cyberbullying		Losing weight
	Social Outing		Aggression
	Rude Insults		Changing Schools
	Teacher bullying		

**Summary.** All teachers and students expressed similar knowledge of the technological tools, types, causes, and effects of cyberbullying. However, students and teachers differed in their awareness of the technological tools used for cyberbullying. While all students were very aware of the latest tools and how they could be used for

cyberbullying, most teachers were not. Only one out of the nine teachers mentioned Snapchat.

## **Discussion of Results for Research Question Two**

In summary, the second research question for this study asked: “How do bystanders perceive cyberbullying both personally and professionally?” The main theme identified to answer this question was: Bystander Awareness of Cyberbullying Influences Perceptions. Four categories were systematically integrated to provide a clear analysis of this theme: (a) awareness of characteristics that describe the unique aspects of cyberbullying; (b) awareness of laws, policies, and strategies; (c) awareness of prevalence; and (d) awareness of tools, types, causes, and effects. Teachers described the characteristics of the unique aspects of cyberbullying as: online connects to offline, disinhibition, permanence of abuse, evidence, entertainment, power, anonymous, social outing, explicit, and any time. Students were similar to teachers in their list of characteristics, however, because they experienced more aspects of cyberbullying as bystanders, they listed additional characteristics: pretend or fake, unable to detect emotion, large audience, and no evidence. All teachers lacked specific knowledge of state laws on cyberbullying. Some teachers lacked knowledge of their school policies on cyberbullying. Teachers varied in their knowledge of strategies to prevent or intervene in cyberbullying. Of the five special educators, only two discussed prevention strategies including bystander behavior, two special educators described reporting as a strategy, and one was unaware of strategies. Of the four general educators, two were unaware of specific strategies, while one discussed encouraging empathy for the victim, and the other

discussed advocating for friends and privatizing profiles. It is interesting to note that one special educator with knowledge of effective antibullying strategies involving bystander behavior still felt unable to effectively prevent cyberbullying. This teacher felt that there were no evidence based intervention and prevention strategies specific to cyberbullying. In addition, students varied in their knowledge of strategies. Strategies discussed were reporting, avoiding, ignoring, and blocking. Four students, two with disabilities and two without, discussed that they were mostly taught about punishment for cyberbullying. Of these students, one student with disabilities and one student without disabilities discussed that it was best to avoid all cyberbullying. Of the 11 students, only 2 students with disabilities discussed getting involved as a bystander.

### **Research Question Three Results**

The third research question for this study was, “How do bystanders react to cyberbullying, both personally and professionally?” The following section provides an analysis of the major theme that was discovered across all teachers and students regarding research question 3.

### **Theme 3: Bystanders of Cyberbullying Appear in Different Roles**

The main theme that was identified to answer this question was: Bystanders of Cyberbullying Appear in Different Roles. After an analysis of all data, two distinct groups were identified among the teacher participants: Proactive and Reactive. Of the nine teachers, six teachers were Proactive and 3 teachers were Reactive. Of the 11 students, 6 students were identified as a Passive Bystander, while 5 students were identified as an Active Intervener. In addition, a third role, Bully Bystander, was



identified through interviews and artifacts with teachers and students. Each category role was well developed and all the categories were conceptually linked to support this main theme. In addition, each bystander case was examined to see whether new ideas were consistent with what was already known about the entire case of bystanders. Several examples of the unique roles were revealed through participant descriptions of personal and hypothetical cyberbullying scenarios and cyberbullying artifacts, making the selection of the roles clear and providing adequate representation within each bystander role. Each data source provided corroborative evidence to verify the information and neutralize researcher bias. In addition, the search for and identification of discrepant data and negative cases was involved in this process. The following sections provide a detailed description of teacher and student roles and well as their suggestions for change.

#### **Teachers' bystanders' position taking roles.**

***Proactive.*** Proactive ( $n = 6$ ): Teachers who are visionary thinkers, aware and knowledgeable of effective antibullying strategies, and involve prevention as well as intervention in their classroom. These teachers described the missing link in antibullying strategies and programs and what needed to be added to prevent cyberbullying. They took time to develop and involve cyberbullying prevention in their classroom curricula and were involved in developing strategies to prevent cyberbullying. Three out of the six teachers were special education teachers and three general educators.

Teacher 1 was a special education teacher who was very proactive and had recently implemented a schoolwide antibullying program that included positive bystander behavior. Teacher 1's school provided many resources and this teacher was involved in

development of the school's recent antibullying program. When describing being a bystander in bullying with students, Teacher 1 explained, "as a teacher, you've gotta be aware of what's going on. You've gotta try to, you know, contain that as much as you can and, and, and be a positive role model." Teacher 1 further described:

We always talk about how to not be a bystander and to stand up for their friends and the people at the school. We call it standing up for your [peers]; we'll talk about the program later. Umm, those are some of the topics. Also I'm very active right now with a program at our school which is the technology aspect and one of the things we talk about is...and we just introduced this year, is bring your own device to school. And part of the bring your own [technology], we incorporate that with our bystander bullying program and so it's a discussion on how to behave appropriately with your devices in school....

Teacher 1 focused on prevention and was adamant about educating students and making them aware of what cyberbullying was and stated, "if we don't have positive and proactive programs and models and discussions, you know, the bystanding will continue. Students will not think that that's bullying."

Similarly, Teacher 3 was a special educator from a proactive school with many resources and a schoolwide antibullying program. Teacher 3 felt that it was important to monitor be watchful of cyberbullying and explained,

I will monitor and look for any signs if it reoccurs, or if there's any fallout, if the child seems unstable and may need to go to the a psychologist and talk to them if

I see that they're, you know, getting agitated what's going on, you know, and then get to the route and then send them on if they need to speak to a professional.

Teacher 3 also reported that students were very comfortable talking about anything and explained, "I had that nicely lit room without the florescent lights, I have the Jolly Ranchers sitting on my desk, I have that soft voice that says, 'come on in, guys, come on in.' Everybody, they love my room." Due to prior involvement with a cyberbullying experience, Teacher 3 also felt it was important to involve lessons in the classroom that supported social acceptance among peers and stated:

What happened last year was the incentive I had for building a lesson plan, for teaching the kids coming in you know, making them more aware. It made it makes me listen a little bit closer to the friendship circles. You know I watch the friendship circles going on and seeing what conflict is going on within that circle. Who's friends one day, who's on the out, and what kind of reaction do they have to each other. You know what what's the body language between them, what's the verbal feedback that I'm hearing between them and whether or not it needs to be watched even more closely. How many absences are going on, if there's a conflict, who's not eating lunch. You know if [a] girl stops eating, you know, then there's this emotional thing that we watch during conflict, you know, the two girls are fighting and one stopped eating, you know. It's just because of what happened there with the girl started losing weight, she overdosed, she had to go to a psychiatric hospital, couldn't come back. All those, all those symptoms were

coming on during the stalking and the bullying and everything else. So all of that to me is like red flags. She was missing a lot of school.

Teacher 3 also felt very responsible and described that the teacher role was “to foster responsible behavior, to encourage the protection of the innocent victim, to seek help for the person that is maybe upset and venting in an inappropriate way. You know, teaching appropriate behaviors, appropriate use of media.”

Teacher 6 was a special educator. Although the school in which Teacher 6 worked had many resources available, it did not have a schoolwide antibullying program in place. Despite the school’s lack of a schoolwide antibullying program, Teacher 6 was very proactive and developed and involved cyberbullying awareness with students in the classroom. When asked about the role of the teacher in helping students through a cyberbullying problem, Teacher 6 responded:

I think consistently checking in because I think even following the [cyberbullying] incident, I spoke with her several times within the class because the one girl was not removed from our class immediately. So I told the girl who had been bullied, I said, “I want you to be comfortable in this class.” And she was very honest with me about how she felt, and said that she felt comfortable. I kept them apart from having any contact with each other within the classroom, and she said that made her feel comfortable. I told her to let me know if she ever felt uncomfortable, and as the year went on, I think that things actually got better, mainly because so many students came to her defense. And then the next year, this year, even when she had interaction with the boy, she came up to me and felt

comfortable enough to tell me he was going to be involved in the program, and I asked if she was comfortable with that because “we will remove him if you’re not.” And she said “no, I’m fine, I actually think it’s a good thing for me to be involved.” So, we’ve had a constant, open communication about it.

Teacher 6 further explained:

I think a big part of it is educating students. Before the Internet, when people would gossip and say things behind other’s backs, I think people held back more because there was always the concern that someone would overhear you and say something to you. But I think that people are able to hide behind their words online, and they aren’t questioned. You don’t have someone coming up to you and saying “that was wrong.” I think that kids feel safer online, being able to say whatever they want to say and think that there is not going to be any repercussions from it. So, I think within the classroom, we really have to teach students that anything you say, no matter if it is online, to someone’s face, or behind their backs is going to affect people. And when you are displaying it for the whole world to see, it is even worse. A lot of times we talk about...we try to bring about articles where people have committed suicide or reacted in a negative way because of something that was said online and bullying that was done online, so that kids can see that this is what can happen, even when you don’t think it is going to happen. We’ve talked about...actually a few years ago when there was the situation at a university where the boy was videotaped having relationships with his boyfriend, we talked about that and we talked about how that is an

invasion of privacy, and you are putting yourself out there in a way that you never should. So, I really think it is just educating kids on really what happens afterwards and how it can really affect someone for life, and you don't realize it.

Teacher 5 was a general educator teaching at a school that did not allow technology in the classroom. This teacher reported that the school was very proactive with cyberbullying and had recently changed their school policy due to students who were involved in cyberbullying. Teacher 5 described specific reasons lessons on cyberbullying were important for students in the classroom.

I think especially with the lesson that we did at the beginning of the year that they saw the kid thinking about committing suicide, that was one of those YouTube clips where they hold the cards up that say, "I would do this, I was teased because I was gay," they saw how bullied and how that affected him and kids at this age are very empathetic and for them seeing that I don't think they realized the consequences of it. Quite a few kids said they can't have a Facebook account yet. I think it's a small group of kids that can pull the wool over their parents' eyes. We haven't had an incident yet this year, so I hope that will continue.

Teacher 5 expressed the teacher role in getting involved with cyberbullying and stated, "Just being there to listen to them and referring them to services, how they can protect themselves from people, you know, somebody is going to say this and that."

Teacher 5 also felt comfortable getting involved with parents of students and explained:

I think that's the key part because a lot of parents like I say may not, they're working, they have limited skills, a lot of parents, they just don't know but most

parents care about education, particularly some of my parents have not had a chance to go past second or third grade. You know we've literally had parents that have crossed the border in the past year but that's the type of school that it is. They value education, when their child gets suspended it is a big deal. Whatever we do doesn't compare to the shame they bring their family by messing up their school.

Teacher 8 was a general educator. Although the school in which this teacher worked provided multiple resources, it did not have a schoolwide antibullying program in place. Teacher 8 described the responsibility and role of the teacher regarding cyberbullying:

I tend to think that things get lost sometimes which I think is very sad. I also think that as teachers, my job is not a teacher solely. I worry about the kids in our class and we're their surrogate [parent], we're their counselor, we're their, psychologist, like we're doing all this and trying to get them all these resources.

Teacher 8 also discussed the importance of involving cyberbullying discussions in class and stated,

You know we talk about social commentary, something that's so great can be used in such evil ways and they talk about [it too]. We [discuss how] you can have a cell phone that can save your life if you are ever in a dangerous situation and that cell phone can also be a tool to do such damage.

Teacher 7 was a general education teacher at a school that did not allow cell phones in the classroom. According to Teacher 7, the county

had set up a thing this year that is very similar to Facebook but it has stricter restrictions and we as teachers control it. They can talk to each other in chat rooms but it's very school specific, teacher specific to that classroom.

When describing the teacher role regarding cyberbullying, Teacher 7 stated:

I believe it is more important now for teachers to be active in it because we're seeing more and more that the parents aren't. The parents aren't teaching the kids that this isn't acceptable from what I've personally experienced this year and so I feel now that it's our job. Even more so now to get them to see that this isn't acceptable and this isn't the way that everybody is going to accept you acting like. It ain't going to work like this in the real world.

***Reactive.*** Reactive ( $n = 3$ ): Teachers who intervene when they are made aware of cyberbullying, but do not provide prevention lessons regarding cyberbullying in the classroom were classified as reactive. Two out of the three teachers believed it was not their role to discuss or support prevention efforts in the classroom due to the amount of students and lack of time. Their involvement was conditional and based on whether sufficient evidence was provided. The main strategy they discussed was punishment and zero tolerance. The third teacher intervened when made aware of cyberbullying, but did not provide prevention lessons in the classroom due to lack of knowledge of prevention strategies specific to cyberbullying. Two out of the three were special educators and one a general educator.

Teacher 2 was a special educator teaching in a school with an antibullying program in place. However, Teacher 2 felt that the school was not as concerned about



cyberbullying. Teacher 2 was also a coach at another school. In the teaching role, Teacher 2 was reactive, while in the coaching role Teacher 2 was proactive. Teacher 2 was not comfortable getting involved with cyberbullying in the classroom, and explained,

I can't access their social media, and I can't read their texts, so it would all be hearsay and me kind of like, "thinking" something was going on that I could never prove. So I don't know in the classroom, I mean beyond kind of, talking about cyberbullying and saying that it's bad and not to do it. I don't feel very comfortable, only because again unless it's explicit.

Further,

As a teacher, to get involved and say "here's all this evidence" or "here, here's the evidence of bullying," it's a big deal. To accuse someone of being a bully now days is a really big deal and it has really harsh consequences. So you have to have a lot of evidence and it would have to be, you have to be a hundred percent sure, and again I just I don't know that beyond referring information to the higher-up people, I don't know if a student came up to me and said, "I'm being bullied online. All these people are being really mean to me. They're making mean comments about me." I would probably say, "You need to go and tell the assistant principal about that. Print it out and tell the assistant principal," because although that student is in my class, maybe a lot of the other people that are involved...are even in other schools.

Teacher 2 contrasted the teaching role with the coaching role and described:

I think it's harder to...like, the reason that I pick up on the cyberbullying with the coach...with the team that I coach is because I have access to their Facebook accounts and to their Twitters. So I know, like I can look and see what's going on and I spend more time with them in a setting that's not as formal.

Teacher 4 was a general educator at a school with many resources, but without a schoolwide antibullying program in place. When it came to cyberbullying, Teacher 4 said, "that's the nice thing about having a school that big. There's a huge support system." Teacher 4 reported being willing to intervene anytime students reported they were involved in cyberbullying. However, Teacher 4 did not feel responsible for involving cyberbullying lessons or discussions in the classroom:

I mean, state testing is such a big issue. We're so worried about them passing, the only thing we focus on in content classrooms is getting the curriculum taught to them. Because we would like to think we have more important issues to kind of, handle. I don't know that we necessarily cover it in [subject matter classes]. So we definitely had that conversation and ultimately it just comes down to all the conversations revolve around, "you guys know what's right and wrong and you know what you should be doing on social media."

Teacher 4 also discussed perceptions of student bystander behavior:

I think that's a select few. I don't, I don't see the majority of the student population intervening. I think they're, I almost think they're scared. You know, they don't want to overstep their boundaries, and I think it's good that they don't really intervene all that often because they have trouble controlling their

emotions. And I think things would get blown out of proportion, if they intervened on a consistent basis. Now granted, you have those students who are more mature and have that control over their emotions and they are capable of stepping in and kind of mediating....

Teacher 9 was a general educator at a school that did not have a schoolwide antibullying program in place. This teacher described how being a younger teacher made relating to students easier.

You know, I do and I'm not trying to toot my own horn or anything, but I am a younger teacher and I'm coming from going to school when technology was booming and going forward from that I got my undergrad in graphic design. So, that puts me at another level for understanding computers and how they work and the programs that kids use online and how to advertise online and that sort of stuff. So I do feel like I have a closer relationship and an understanding on what goes on with the kids and how they're using those things online to communicate with each other.... Whether that be bullying or not. I also feel like because I'm younger too, kids, kids feel more comfortable coming to talk to me. You know, if things really are going on, umm you know, somebody will pull me over in the hallway and say, "Look, this person really upset me and said this online or sent me this text message." I mean, I've had multiple students do that to me on occasion, you know when it's just high school drama going on. Umm, so I feel like, I feel like my age does give me somewhat of advantage to understand what is going on.

Although Teacher 9's school provided many resources and valued relationships with students, there was not an antibullying program in place in the school. However, Teacher 9 described that how relationships with students were valuable and felt responsible to get involved unconditionally in any cyberbullying situation:

Me as an individual teacher, I don't feel there is a need for it to be that actual evidence. If somebody has enough power inside of them to say, "I need to say this to somebody else that somebody's bullying me on the Internet," I think that is a serious enough offense to you know, call in the accused parties, even if it's not true, to have a discussion about what is really going on. I feel that my administration feels the same way. I think too, because we have low cost numbers, low attendance, we're able to have that kind of, more personal relationship with all of our students. And so, if something like that were to happen, I feel like they wouldn't waste any time bringing in anybody who was accused or involved in a situation like that to have a conversation and figure out what really was going on. Probably from there we would try to gain evidence and find actual things that were happening online or, or things like that to proceed further into like, disciplinary action.

Teacher 9 was very involved with building relationships with students and felt that enabled awareness of issues that might arise with cyberbullying. Teacher 9 was also the technology teacher at the school, however, did not provide lessons or discussions specifically focused on prevention strategies in the classroom. When asked about providing cyberbullying awareness and prevention, Teacher 9 stated,

Yeah you know, we probably should. This is the first year I have taken on this role [of technology teacher] and it's only a part-time role. So I really tried to get to that level but we haven't quite gotten there yet in understanding it. And I'm not sure if the woman before me had done that or not.

**Students' bystanders' position taking roles.** After a thorough analysis of teacher interviews, student interviews, student and teacher artifacts, three unique bystander roles became evident among the student participants. Bystanders of cyberbullying appeared to take on roles that included: Active Intervener, Passive Witness, and Bully Bystander. Of the 11 students, 5 were identified in the bystander role of Active Intervener, while 6 were identified in the bystander role of Passive Witness. Although the Bully Bystander role was identified from the analysis of student and teacher interviews, student interviews, and cyberbullying artifacts, no students within this sample were identified in this bystander role.

The Active Intervener included bystander actions and qualities such as confronting the bully, comforting the victim, feeling responsible, empathetic, help-seeking, and self-determined. The Active Interveners can be described as those bystanders who responded to cyberbullying by offering support during and after the bullying takes place and were not afraid take risks and tell the bully that their actions were wrong. Their words revealed that they felt responsible to intervene when they witnessed cyberbullying.

Conversely, students in the Passive Bystander role expressed that although they believed that cyberbullying was wrong, they were reluctant to intervene and help. Passive

bystanders included bystander actions and qualities such as avoiding and deleting cyberbullying, fear of becoming targets, conditional involvement, feeling helpless, unable to prevent, and not responsible. Despite sympathy for the victim and occasional help seeking responses, they generally expressed that they avoided cyberbullying altogether. Another bystander position taking role was identified through interviews and artifacts from students and teachers. Bully bystanders were described as bystanders that sustained the bullying by offering positive feedback, joining in on the side of the bully, and actively reinforcing the bully through various encouraging gestures. These bystanders were described in detail by the participants' descriptions of firsthand experiences with cyberbullying and were also identified in student cyberbullying artifacts that included screen shots of actual cyberbullying.

Table 19 shows the traits that were identified within each bystander role. The following sections describe each of these bystander roles through using quotations of participants that provide descriptions in their own words.

Table 19

*Data Reduction for Student Bystander Roles*

Active Intervener	Passive Witness	Bully Bystander
Confronts Bully Online	Fear of Getting in Trouble	Lack of Empathy
Confronts Bully Offline	Not Responsible	Agrees With Bully Online
Defends Victim	Sympathy for the Victim	Entertained by Cyberbullying
Comforts Victim	Victim Blaming	Joining In With Bully
Reports Cyberbullying	Unable to Prevent/Help	Victim Blaming
Feels Responsible	Reluctant to Get Involved	Peer Pressure to Agree With Bully
Empathy for the Victim	Fear of Becoming Target	Fear of Becoming Target
Moral Strength	Makes Excuses	Lack Morals and Values
Courage	Refers to Cyberbullying as Drama	View Cyberbullying as a Joke
Help Seeking	Avoids or Deletes Cyberbullying	Reinforce Bully
Take Sides With Victim	Sometimes Empathetic	Fear Losing Friendship With Bully
Problem Solving	Conditional Involvement	Fear of Having No Friends
Self-Determined	Perceive Involvement Will Make it Worse	
	Perceive Victim Does Not Want Help	

**Active intervener.** Based on the conversations regarding intervening reactions to hypothetical cyberbullying scenarios and firsthand cyberbullying experiences, 5 out of the 11 students participating in this study were identified in the bystander role of Active Intervener when witnessing cyberbullying. Of these 5 participants, 3 were students with disabilities and 3 were students without disabilities. Students within this group felt responsible for mobilizing personal resources to help reduce or stop the cyberbullying. They consistently expressed an empathetic concern for the victims involved and revealed their ability to perspective take when describing cyberbullying. Their voices exposed that they felt passionate about intervening. For example, Student 6, a student with disabilities, expressed, “I don’t wanna just like, help prevent it a little bit, I wanna like, completely

get rid of it. I just wanna tear bullying away from the entire world.” Student 6 further explained feelings of responsibility to intervene.

People are always like, “No, don’t get involved, that’s stupid,” but if it’s something like this and you know it’s happening but you don’t know the person very well but you know they’re hurting from this, you should definitely just get involved to help them. Even if they might not think that they need the help they, you know that they should, that you should just help them.

Similarly, Student 4, a student without disabilities, expressed feelings about getting involved on behalf of the victim, and explained, “You know like, you’ve gotta be the kind of person that’s different and that helps out the people that are getting bullied.” Student 4 went on to explain,

I definitely would not just witness it and not do anything about it, they should tell an adult or just at least, tell the people who are doing the bullying to stop and help get other people to tell them to stop.

Student 11, a student with disabilities, described,

I don’t have a problem with it at all if someone is being harassed. I’ve had situations where they were being harassed and I didn’t really know the person and I didn’t like them that much but I still get involved. And it may be something as subtle as the person that’s harassing them is my friend and I just try to start a conversation with them to direct their attention to something else. Or it may be something where I stand right in front of them and I say, “You need to stop right now.” Umm, but it usually never escalates to something else. I don’t have any



problem getting involved even though I'm a small [person] and I don't care how big the other [person] is. I'm going to stand up for...the [peer] that [person's] bullying. Umm, 'cause I feel like it's wrong and one way or another it needs to stop.

Student 11 also explained how past experiences influenced the willingness to intervene.

I've been harassed and it's usually not online but uh, it's just the way it makes you feel. And you don't, I feel like I don't want anyone else to have to go through that and it, the one thing that you want most, or that I wanted most was to have someone to stand by me and help defend me. Uh, and so that's what I, I try to give that person and I try to tell them that whatever the bully is saying or doing is not true and that it's nothing. And I try to help them and make them feel better as best I can.

Student 1, a student without disabilities, described a personal experience intervening for a girl who was targeted.

Yeah. I actually did [intervene]. There was a girl younger than me; this other girl was like attacking her on something and I was like, "look, like this isn't mature, like you can talk to her in person but you don't need to put it out there for the world to see and get everyone to like, hate on her too." And like, "if you have a problem with her like, you can handle that personally, like you don't need everyone else to try and make her feel bad about herself." Because things get out

of control and things like, end up being said that shouldn't be said and like people could end up hurting themselves.

Student 10, a student with disabilities, explained,

A lot of the time umm, I try my best to get involved umm, because I really don't think that that's right. Umm, I was bullied at school in first, second, and third grade. And so any form of bullying I really think is wrong. And I try my best to get involved without it, without umm, endangering myself from being attacked.

When asked whether staying neutral and not intervening during a cyberbullying episode helps the bully or victim more, the Active Interveners expressed the importance of intervening by explaining that neutral bystanders were silently consenting to the bullying.

***Passive witness.*** The Passive Witnesses discussed feeling reluctant due to fear of the bully, feeling helpless, and conditional involvement. Often present in the Passive Witness role was a lack of awareness of strategies and fear of being targeted. The students in this role simply reflected the perception that they did not feel personally responsible for intervening when witnessing cyberbullying. Although they did report they felt cyberbullying was wrong, they did not feel that their bystander input could really make a difference. The rationale behind Passive Witness' neutral bystander behavior often centered on reasons they felt justified for not intervening.

Often noted were their reasons not to intervene, which included a fear of being targeted and a preference to stay out of it. For example, Student 3 stated, "I mean, I don't feel very responsible for helping them because there's not much that I can do without

getting in trouble or bullied by them too.” Similarly, Student 7 expressed a preference to stay out of it:

If I see someone getting harassed online umm, I mean I want to help but sometimes it, it’s kind of, hard for me because if I don’t know the person at all, it’d be hard for me to kind of, reach out and have them, you know or just talk to them about it. But if I knew the person I think I would have enough courage to say something. But I, it just depends ’cause you know, sometimes it can be really hard if you don’t know the person.

Student 7 also explained a personal experience and stated, “I like, I looked at the page and looked at the people’s comments back and forth but I didn’t really, I didn’t like, you know, tell anybody. I just kind of, ignored it.”

Further evidence was provided that explained reasons why the Passive Witness was reluctant to intervene which included a lack of empathy for the victim and a lack of personal responsibility.

When asked about engaging in bystander behavior, Student 5 described choosing to stay out of it or “watch it and then talk about it later with other people who saw it.”

When asked about getting involved when someone was harassed online, Student 5 stated, “I tend not to want to.”

Student 9 described a personal experience witnessing cyberbullying on Twitter among students in the school, “Like not being able to tell the art kids are in costume, so...they just Tweet like mean things like that. Like “‘Jill’ blows harder than 2014 girls.” When probed about responding to this, Student 9 responded, “Yeah, I just ignore it.”

Further evidence was provided that explained reasons why the Passive Witness was reluctant to intervene which included a lack of empathy for the victim and a lack of personal responsibility.

Student 8 described, “I probably may not say anything...I wouldn’t even look at the website probably. I just wouldn’t bother. If the victim ever tried to talk to me, I would talk to her or something if she needed.” When asked about whether bystanders that did not get involved helped the bully or the victim more, Student 8 stated,

I guess they’re helping both because they’re not doing anything to prevent it but they are not doing anything to start something else. So, I guess it’s more of a...it’s definitely not helping the situation but it is not making it worse.

Student 2 also explained, “I think it’s you still wanna help, but it’s a lot harder to like know what to do cause you’re not real good friends with them.”

In addition, students in the Passive Witness role had a tendency to blame the victim. When discussing a cyberbullying scenario, Student 3 stated, “but she couldn’t have done that much to make them hate her.” Similarly, Student 7 described, “I don’t know the reason she got beat up so it.... Still, I mean even if she, if she deserved it, per se, you know, if she did something really bad.” Like Student 7, Student 9 described a real cyberbullying experience in which a girl in school was involved as a victim and stated, “she already had a really bad reputation, like everybody would call her a slut, she just had that reputation.”

## **Bystander Bully**

This category was identified through the student and teacher participants' personal experiences described in interviews and through cyberbullying artifacts that provided evidence to corroborate this category. Bystander bullies actively engaged in assisting or cheering the bully on and encouraged the behaviors of the cyberbully. Although no students in this sample were classified in this category, students who were in this role were described by participants as people who were willing to go along with the bully in order to be accepted.

Teacher 9 explained her personal experience coaching students who were involved in cyberbullying and stated,

two or three original kids and then you know, as it went on throughout a couple of days, umm more and more of the kids that were involved in the...team actually kind of ganged up and got in. I don't know if they were being peer pressured by the other ones.

Similarly, Student 8 explained the role of people on Facebook who post that they "like" what the cyberbully says, "Well, that's pretty bad, too. It's them just kind of subtly saying that they agree and this is okay without necessarily getting involved or saying anything." Student 9 also expressed,

In a way, they are trying to not be as involved with it by adding something to it. But just by liking it and giving that person support, it's kind of like an incognito way of saying they agree without actually commenting on it and saying something. So, it doesn't drag them into it as much.

**Expressing regret.** Students also expressed regret for not helping someone who was victimized online. Two students without disabilities, Student 4 and Student 7, expressed regret for not intervening at all times when their peers with disabilities were bullied. Student 7 expressed:

Yeah I think there's been times with the Autistic kid on the [sport] team where I could have said something. There has been times where I said something in the locker room, saying, "You know, that's not funny. You know, you shouldn't joke him about that" or I just say something small. Not like get into this huge, big deal thing but there's been instances where I haven't said anything and I just kind of watched it and I kind of, regret that probably.

Similarly, Student 4 described:

I know that people definitely change once they get attacked and they're no longer the same person and then, umm, like this friend that I have. He's not like, I bet he was really nice before and he wasn't as mean in like, fifth grade, but he's kinda mean to people because that's just the way that he's adapted to getting attacked. And so, I kinda wish I had helped him out and he, he would be a nicer person and then he'd have more friends.

### **Student and Teacher Suggestions for Change**

Teacher and student participants were asked to provide suggestions for what they would change in the way schools handle intervention and prevention of cyberbullying. The following section provides the suggestions for change from teacher and student participants.

## **Teacher Suggestions for Change**

All teacher participants were asked, “If you had the power to change the way your school got involved in preventing and intervening in cyberbullying, what would you make different?” Teachers expressed several suggestions for changes that included the following: developing and providing teachers with a standard set of policy guidelines; involving and educating parents; embedding lessons in the curriculum; providing tools to monitor behaviors; implementing comprehensive schoolwide prevention programs for every school in county; involving bystander strategies focusing on reporting; involving teacher training on cyberbullying strategies; providing anonymous reporting places for students, teaching administration, teachers, and students; bystander strategies; teaching students how to identify cyberbullying; involving community awareness; providing professional development on cyberbullying; teaching strategies encouraging empathy and disability awareness; and teaching students about responsible social media use.

Teacher 1, a proactive special education teacher from a school with a schoolwide antibullying program, discussed what was missing in the school and provided many suggestions for change. This teacher expressed deep concern that students were unaware and uneducated about consequences involved in cyberbullying and stressed that students were rarely exposed to information regarding cyberbullying. Although the school had several resources available as well as a schoolwide antibullying program, Teacher 1 expressed,

We have nothing. We’re making things up as we go along. We’re not sure that it’s even going to work. You know, we’ll pull from different sites and information

but, we're not trained or given anything that I've seen, research based, at all for cyberbullying.

Teacher 1 further explained.

They're shown "oh, don't do this" once or twice, but without a deep discussion on what this looks like and what the consequences are at their level; they're shown a book at the beginning of the year and we have maybe one discussion on it, but it's not pervasive. It's not something that...and it's starting too late. It's not specific enough and it should be earlier. They should be getting some kind of message at a much younger age. Kids have technology; first, second, third grade. It's almost like you need to have those lessons embedded. Just like you do social skills or anything else, you know, how do you do certain things, and the technology has to be part of that.

Teacher 1 also addressed the importance of being proactive and what that meant as well as what was still missing in the school. Teacher 1 considered it a problem that needed urgent attention.

This is now. Everybody needs to be aware. Now's the time to be proactive with it because the reactive stuff isn't working. To be reactive to students, reactive to behaviors, isn't working and it's not changing behavior. And the students doing it don't always understand it and the students receiving it don't always understand it.

Teacher 1 shared that although the school provided a schoolwide antibullying program, lessons regarding cyberbullying needed to "embedded in what we teach," and



there needed to be “much better lessons, more information, and teacher training,” specific to cyberbullying. Teacher 1 further explained,

That’s what I hope we are able to do. Is to take that 80% that think that bullying is just hitting and tripping somebody and be able to help them recognize that that is not the only type of bullying.

Teacher 1 felt that it was critical to focus on prevention and discussed the reasons why this was important for students and provided suggestions for improvement.

If we can stop it, then you won’t have all those other things that you have to deal with and those don’t take up your time as much as the educational impacts of this so, it’s, critical that we have prevention programs. It’s critical that we have educational programs, and it’s critical that we have community programs involving moms, dads, churches, scout groups, all those types of people.

Everybody who uses the school, sports teams, scout groups.

Teacher 1 also described the “huge” missing link in antibullying programs.

Cyberbullying should become more of the focus in antibullying programs. As far as cyberbullying, we don’t have much; it’s not something that we hit on often.

We need tools for teachers and students and staff to monitor the behaviors, especially now that we are throwing all these devices into the classroom. Positive modeling programs that demonstrate how to tools for kids so that number one: Students are aware of what cyberbullying looks like, what it sounds like, the impacts of it; and then they also need the tools of what to do if they witness that because if I have other students in the classroom, who see something and

are...have the confidence to come and tell me, then I can do something. But if they're not educated as to number one: What it looks like, number two: What to do with that information, and number three: They don't feel confident enough to be able to come to me and tell me.

Teacher 1 elaborated further and described that students who are bystanders of cyberbullying in the classroom need to understand what to do and need to be provided with way to report cyberbullying anonymously.

And we need to help students; if I'm sitting next to somebody and I see that they are texting the girl across the hall and calling her, inappropriately, as a student, I need that student to know what to do. Right now, I don't feel that student knows what to do. We don't have any lessons or tools yet to help students understand that if you do see something inappropriate, you've got to tell somebody, you know you've got to reach out to an adult, an administrator, a counselor.

Similarly, Teacher 3, a proactive special educator from a school with an schoolwide antibullying program stated, "I believe in parental control." Although Teacher 3 reported integrating discussions and awareness on cyberbullying in the classroom, Teacher 3 suggested that teachers at the school needed to be more informed and reported, "some of [the teachers at the school said], 'I just don't get involved, I don't have time for it.' So I try to give you know an argument, a counterargument, on why they were wrong."

Teacher 7, a proactive general educator from a school that did not allow technology in the classroom, also felt that reaching out to parents was important.

I think the parents need to be more aware of what's going on. They [kids] have computers in their rooms now. Their parents are not watching them. These kids are up at 11:53 at night, posting things to each other. And I really think the parents are completely oblivious to it. I think that we should be doing something more with the parents because the kids are going to listen to them more than they are gonna listen to us. They're their number one role model and I think that we should do something with our parent involvement to get them to see that this really is a problem. I don't think the parents think it's as big of a problem as we do.

Teacher 6, a proactive special educator from a school that did not have an antibullying program, advocated changes in the county and the administration to promote teacher buy-in.

I think that it has to come from the administration and from the county. It has to come from the higher-ups. If they aren't telling us that you need to intervene, you need to get involved, I think that some teachers might not do it. I would 100% have a program that we all implement into our classrooms, whether it be one subject area that focuses on it. But I would definitely make a schoolwide program that every school in the county can follow, both a schoolwide program for education, and also a schoolwide program for understanding how to intervene. Whether it be a bystander, a teacher, or an administrator, but making sure that all of us are on the same page about reporting these behaviors because I really think it's the reporting that needs to be done more often. And until we can increase a

student reaching out and saying that this is wrong and I need to show somebody what's going on, it's not going to get any better.

Similar to the other teachers, Teacher 6 also felt, "we really need to get information out to all of the parents."

Teacher 8, a proactive general educator from a school that did not have a schoolwide antibullying program, stressed that more programs were necessary.

I think we need to have more programs. I think it takes a while but there should be more programs, workshops, even, you know it would be nice if the freshman that were coming into [our school] had some sort of orientation and they talked about kids with disabilities and they talked about bullying and kind of as they are entering school they had like the tools and the resources and empathy, even doing workshops for a couple of days where they get to know each other and know how to get help and know what's acceptable at [our school] and what isn't.

Teacher 5, a proactive general educator, described a need for more professional development and involving lessons for students that make them more comfortable with reporting.

I feel like we need some type of professional development studies because I feel like we just scratch the surface, but as a staff we could be doing a lot more, especially when students get older. The next step would be to have a lesson on how do you report it without feeling like you're a snitch, another problem kids face is "I don't want to tell, it is confidential." The school is pretty good about not

telling who told something, but I think the kids need to know that they [administrators] would never put them in a compromising position.

Teacher 9, a reactive general educator who was teaching in a school without a schoolwide antibullying program, felt that students needed more education on how to use social media wisely and felt that teachers needed to be involved in monitoring it.

I think I would because of the direction that technology is going, and how popular Facebook and Twitter and all of that is, especially to high school-age kids, I feel like I would try to put in place some sort of program that would you know, show the kids how to use those programs in a positive way but also protect themselves from putting too much information on, on Facebook and Twitter. You know like, especially personal things. Maybe even it could be as simple as getting your wisdom tooth out and your face swells up like a balloon and that gives somebody an opportunity to say something negative about that and kind of, bully you about that specific situation in your life. So I think if, I think if the teacher was more involved not only with monitoring, but knowing what's going on online then I think less of it would happen and the kids would be more aware that these programs aren't bad but you have to understand and know how to best use them so that people don't get hurt in the process.

When managing cyberbullying among students, Teacher 4, a reactive special education teacher from a school without a schoolwide antibullying program stated:

I just deal with it how I see best. It's kind of by the seat of your pants almost and I'm not sure that's the best way. Well, we're not necessarily told how they handle

it. We could probably do a little bit better job. You know, I think it'd be beneficial for administration to inform the entire faculty, you know, "This is how we handled the situation," and that way the other faculty members would have a set of standard guidelines for, you know, "if you ever witness this, these are some steps you can take to handle the situation," so they don't feel lost if they were to ever witness cyberbullying. I mean, everyone feels better with a list of things that they can do to make a situation better even if it's just kind of, something that they can kind of look at and manipulate it on their own to come to their best decision. But I mean, you need that, it's kind of like, a comfort.

Teacher 4 also added, "I think we could inform everyone a little bit better, like parents, the outside stakeholders."

Teacher 2, a reactive special education teacher from a school with an antibullying program, explained that more tools were needed to monitor social media.

Well I think that the only way to know if it's going on is to have access to their social media accounts. But is that a feasible plan to have every student in the school join a Facebook page or let, you know, let the school follow them on Twitter? But then there are also privacy settings so...you can block what people can see. So it can still be going on even if you did something like that there's ways to you know hide it. And who's going to monitor 3,000 kids' daily Tweets and Facebook stuff? I think it would be helpful if when teachers confiscate a phone, if they could look through it, particularly if you think that there's something inappropriate being said. And all of this I know is because it's a breach

of their privacy, but I mean there has to be limits, I mean there has to be some type of way to monitor what's going on and right now I think we're kind of helpless in terms of what we can do because we're not in their virtual worlds.

### **Student Suggestions for Change**

All student participants were asked, "If you could change the way teachers got involved to help stop cyberbullying, what would that look like?" Students expressed several suggestions for changes that included the following: more teacher awareness and involvement, bystander strategies involving peer intervening behaviors, places to report anonymously, encouraging bystanders to provide evidence, parent involvement, emphasizing morals and values, more schoolwide assemblies and speakers, school monitoring of social media, punishment for cyberbullying that includes losing social media privileges, and sending cyberbullies to counselors.

**Active interveners.** Student 1, a student without disabilities from a school that provided an antibullying program, discussed that while the school made an effort to provide awareness on cyberbullying, it was not effective because the students in the school did not care. Student 1 felt that the school needed to focus more on bystander strategies that included standing up for victims.

I don't know 'cause that's so hard, like 'cause people are taking the time to make the PowerPoint, like do all that stuff, like they are trying, it's just not working... I don't think they are leaving anything out. I think they are making it known that it's not acceptable.... People just don't care. It's like there's, there's stop signs and, but people roll through the stop signs all the time. People just don't care most

of the time they take like a passive-aggressive approach to the bystander role and say like, “go tell a teacher” rather than like, “go start standing up there” and go like, “look, what you’re doing is unacceptable, you need to stop.” I don’t know, I think that that’s more effective than like behind the scenes, maybe like going to administration. ’Cause like maybe by then like that incident is already done. Like, the damage has already happened. Like, if it happens online, that kid still has all of that night and the next day to react to what they just experienced. Whereas if they do, if they say something right away, that could change what happens right away.

Student 6, a student with disabilities from a school without a schoolwide antibullying program, expressed that there needed to be ways for students to report cyberbullying anonymously.

I guess it would probably like, change the way that they [teachers] just don’t assume things like, ’cause when teachers do get involved they get a little crazy. I think that teachers should, when they know about something they usually like do a bunch of stuff about it and then they make an announcement about it when something happens they overreact way too much. I mean, which it’s a big problem and stuff, but they should...if the person doesn’t want it to be publicized, let it be kept quiet. Just don’t let it get around.

Student 4, a student without disabilities from a school that provided an antibullying program, suggested that if teachers were aware of cyberbullying, they should try to get bystanders involved in providing evidence.



I think that they should...if they know that someone's being online harassed they could ask a student that's like in, that can see it to go on and like get the message out. Like print out a paper copy, 'cause if you get a paper copy then you know that it's there and it's proof that they're doing it so that they have proof that there's cyberbullying. Well if they knew that it was happening, and then they could, I would try and change the way that they are able to react to it and get the information that there is cyberbullying going on.

Student 11, a student with disabilities from a school with a schoolwide antibullying program, expressed that schools could only do so much and suggested more parent awareness. Student 11 also felt that morals and values had a lot to do with it.

They can't really take away the student's phone unless it's in school and then their parents can just come and get it back and they can't take away the computers. So they can't really stop it at the source, but they can give them counseling and contact the parents, which I know they do, so, just from lack of my knowledge, I don't know what I would change. I think the school has given them the knowledge and the tools, the availability I guess, the opportunity to do what they need to do and it really, when it comes down to it, it's the kid. And I don't know how much more the school can do, because it's the kid and how they've been raised and what they think.

Student 10, a student with disabilities from a school with a schoolwide antibullying program, had similar feelings about the school's ability to resolve cyberbullying. This student concluded that peers needed to learn how to resolve their

problems and felt that encouraging more bystanders to stand up for the victim was important.

That's a hard one. A lot of the times there's not a lot that schools can do to help. A lot of the issues need to be resolved by the students because it's harder for the school to get involved with things like this. Like, they might be able to take someone out of a class where someone's being mean to them but they can't force a student to delete a Facebook account or force a student to not post things mean on a online site. So I think that the schools should do what they think is appropriate but they shouldn't try to get directly involved. I'd probably try to encourage more people to step in.

**Passive witness.** Student 2, a student without disabilities from a school that provided an antibullying program, felt that teachers needed to be more aware and ready to intervene quickly. This student also expressed that teachers needed to be more involved in discussing cyberbullying strategies.

Well sometimes I think they don't always try to help right away, they don't think it's that big of an issue and they wait until they think that it's like good enough to be handled or whatever, and all that time is like wasted 'cause the person is feeling hurt and when they do those like videos and stuff, like, they should make sure that we watch them and they kind of enforce them, I know they kind of don't really. I feel like they only do it because they have to, not necessarily because they really want to prevent it. They don't make the teachers actually do it. I mean, they could have us all come to the auditorium or like sit in the stands and have

like a serious thing or like show that they want to stop it, but I mean when they made it a big thing and they had a speaker come in, it actually did do something. But these like videos; they're not really helping anything.

Student 3, a student with disabilities from a school without a schoolwide antibullying program, suggested that bystanders who defend the victim were important as well as teachers being aware of the warning signs. Student 3 described that cyberbullying could be stopped if "there are more people trying to defend the person than agree with the person." This student also felt that teachers should be aware "if they see someone missing a lot of school, then, they can talk to them and ask them what's happening and stuff."

Student 7, a student without disabilities from a school with an antibullying program, expressed that since students had access to social media through the school Internet system, the school should monitor students' social media sites to prevent cyberbullying.

I don't think Facebook is blocked like on the school network. I think that if you connect to the school Wi-Fi, then Facebook is still on there. They used to block every website like that but now you can go on YouTube and you can go on everything. So, if they want to prevent cyberbullying, then they should kind of, keep more of an eye on like things people post on Facebook or Myspace, not Myspace or Twitter or whatever. And I remember like, in middle school like the police officer from the school; he had his own Facebook account and he would like, he had the ability to see, even if he wasn't friends with the kids at school, he could be able to see what they post.

Unlike the other students, Student 5, a student with disabilities from a school without a schoolwide antibullying program, did not have any suggestions:

I don't think it would change much. I feel like they do a pretty good job. Like the whole gun thing, when that girl brought the gun to school, she apparently posted on Facebook that she was going to kill a teacher and they found her with a gun the next day. So I mean they wrapped that up pretty nicely, I think. I mean, it still got to school and something bad could have happened but they still stopped it.

Student 8, a student without disabilities from a school without an antibullying program, expressed that students who cyberbully should be punished by the school and have their social media accounts deleted.

I would make it so the people that are cyberbullying others would actually get in a lot of trouble, and maybe have like all of their accounts deleted until they can straighten their acts up. I really don't like cyberbullying.

Student 9, a student without disabilities from a school without an antibullying program, expressed that students behaving inappropriately online should have to go to the school counselors, and that schools were unable to stop it.

I don't think they could physically do anything like suspend them for it because it's not happening at school, but I feel like it would be a good thing if people who were constantly starting fights and stuff, if they just called them into the counselor and talked to them about it. Even that is intimidating.

### **Discussion of Results for Research Question Three**

In summary, the third research question asked: “How do bystanders react to cyberbullying, both personally and professionally?” The theme that was identified to answer this research question was: Bystanders Appear in Different Roles. Two distinct groups were identified among the teacher participants: Proactive and Reactive. Proactive teachers were focused on prevention and intervention strategies, while Reactive teachers were mostly focused on intervention strategies. Of the nine teachers, six teachers were Proactive and three teachers were Reactive. Two distinct groups were identified among the student participants: Active Intervener and Passive Witness. Active Interveners were willing to intervene on behalf of the victim, while Passive Witnesses avoided getting involved. Of the 11 students, 6 students were identified as a Passive Bystander, while 5 students were identified as an Active Intervener. Although no students were classified in this category, a third role, Bully Bystander, emerged from the data. Bully Bystanders supported the bully and added to the cyberbullying.

Teacher and student participants also expressed suggestions for change. Teacher suggestions included: developing a standard set of policy guidelines; involving and educating parents; embedding lessons in the curriculum; providing tools to monitor behaviors; implementing comprehensive schoolwide prevention programs for every school in county; involving bystander strategies focused on reporting; involving teacher training and professional development on cyberbullying strategies; providing anonymous reporting places for students; teaching administration, teachers, and students bystander strategies; teaching students how to identify cyberbullying; involving community

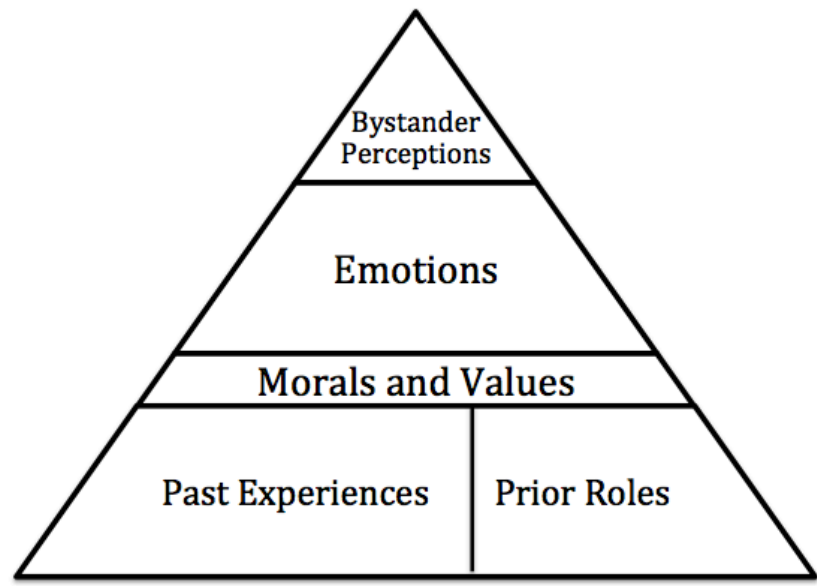
awareness; teaching strategies encouraging empathy and disability awareness; and teaching students about responsible social media use. Students suggestions included: more teacher awareness and involvement, bystander strategies involving peer intervening behaviors, places to report anonymously, encouraging bystanders to provide evidence, parent involvement, emphasizing morals and values, more schoolwide assemblies and speakers, school monitoring of social media, punishment for cyberbullying that includes losing social media privileges, and sending cyberbullies to counselors.

#### **Research Question Four Results**

The fourth research question for this study was, “What factors influence bystander perceptions and reactions?” The following section provides an analysis of the major theme that was discovered across all teachers and students regarding research question four. Each category was well developed and all the categories were conceptually linked to support this main theme. In addition, each bystander case was examined to see whether new ideas were consistent with what was already known about the entire case of bystanders. Several examples of the key factors were revealed through participant descriptions of personal and hypothetical cyberbullying scenarios and cyberbullying artifacts, making the selection of the categories clear and providing adequate representation within each category. Each data source provided corroborative evidence to verify the information and neutralize researcher bias. In addition, the search for and identification of discrepant data and negative cases was involved in this process.

The factor of prior roles emerged as a factor that influenced bystanders’ ability to take a perspective and willingness to intervene. Another factor, past experiences, also

emerged as a factor that influenced bystanders' ability to take a perspective and willingness to intervene. A third factor, moral values, emerged and influenced bystander perceptions and intervening behavior. Participants who perceived cyberbullying actions as morally and ethically wrong were more willing to intervene, versus participants who were more concerned about getting in trouble. All factors equally influenced bystanders' emotions, another factor that emerged and resulted from prior roles and past experiences with cyberbullying. These factors culminated in the creation of individual bystander perceptions toward cyberbullying. Figure 1 conveys the relationship between these key factors.



*Figure 1.* Key factors influencing bystander perceptions.

#### **Theme 4: Key Factors Influence Bystander Perceptions and Reactions of Students and Teachers**

**Prior roles.** Teachers and students discussed how their prior roles played a factor in influencing their bystander perceptions of cyberbullying. Seven out of the nine teachers had been a victim of online and or offline bullying, while 7 out of the 11 students were victims of online and or offline bullying. Teachers described their victim experiences and related that they felt this influenced them to understand how students who were victims of cyberbullying felt. In addition, four out of the nine teachers had experienced being a victim of cyberbullying. These teachers described how they understood their students' perceptions of cyberbullying. The six students who were victims of cyberbullying expressed that ability to take a perspective and feel empathy for the victims of online and offline bullying. In addition, some students who were bystanders openly expressed feeling regret for the times when they had not intervened in cyberbullying.

**Past experiences.** All students and teachers had past experiences with cyberbullying in which they had either witnessed or been involved as a victim. These experiences were key factors that influenced teachers and students' decisions to intervene. All teachers had past experiences with cyberbullying, except for one teacher who had knowledge of cyberbullying among students and school and through a fellow team teacher.

**Emotions.** All student and teacher participants expressed emotion as they described their prior roles and past experiences with cyberbullying. Teachers revealed the



emotions of anger, fear, empathy, and confidence, while students revealed the emotions of anger, fear, empathy, sympathy, shame, regret, frustration, embarrassment, anxiety, helplessness, aggression, hate, jealousy, disappointment, trauma, and apathy.

**Morals and values.** The teacher and student participants expressed morals and values as a factor that influenced their bystander perceptions and their willingness to intervene. All teachers reflected morals and values in their conversations about feeling responsible to intervene. Students varied in their reflecting of morals and values. While all students felt that it was morally wrong to bully someone who had disabilities, some students did not reflect the same morals and values about a student without disabilities. Overall three students stood out in their description of how morals and values influenced their decision to intervene. Student 10, Student 11, and Student 4 discussed how they believed that students' willingness to intervene was based on morals and values. Student 10 explained,

if there's someone in one of my close friends' group and something like that happens, which it usually doesn't, then everybody will kind of try to figure it out, to sort it out and try to help them make up because fighting's not really, and keeping secrets isn't really something I value and my friends value.

Similarly, Student 11 described:

But when it gets down to it, there is, there are cases of textbook bullying where it is just like they described it but I feel like, most of the time, it's something that you can't really prepare anyone for. It's just kind of, out of the blue. It happens and really, you just have to react the way that you were taught to by your parents

and how you are as a person. And when it comes down to that, it's the kid, not the teacher that is responsible.

Likewise, Student 4 stated:

You know like, you've gotta be the kind of person that's different and that helps out the people that are getting bullied. I consider myself kind of, an outgoing person and I usually try to help someone if they're feeling bad. And umm, it's just kind of, a value or a trait that if someone's feeling bad and there's something I can do I usually umm, want to do that because it makes me feel bad if not everyone is happy.

#### **Discussion of Results for Research Question Four**

A final goal of this research study was to determine factors that influenced bystanders' perceptions and reactions. The fourth research question for this study asked: "What factors influence bystander perceptions and reactions?" The main theme identified to answer this question was: Key Factors Influence Bystander Perceptions and Reactions of Students and Teachers. Four categories were systematically integrated to provide a clear analysis of this theme: (a) prior roles, (b) past experiences, (c) emotions, and (d) morals and values. Teachers and students reported and discussed their prior roles in online and offline bullying and how they influenced their willingness to intervene when they were aware of cyberbullying. All students who were willing to intervene (Active Interveners) had been prior victims of online or offline bullying. Most students who avoided intervening (Passive Witness) only reported being a bystander to online or offline bullying. All teachers except for one reported experiencing being a victim of

online or offline bullying. The one teacher who reported being a bystander only was reactive in the teacher role and focused mostly on intervening strategies. All participants described their past experiences witnessing cyberbullying with a range of emotions. A fourth factor, morals and values, was identified as a category that could independently influence bystander perceptions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE. DISSCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experience of being a bystander to cyberbullying, specifically from the perspective of students and educators in secondary inclusive classroom settings. The research questions were: (a) What are bystander perceptions of cyberbullying of students with and without disabilities and general and special educators in secondary inclusive classrooms? (b) How do these bystanders perceive cyberbullying, both personally and professionally? (c) How do these bystanders react to cyberbullying, both personally and professionally? (d) What factors influence bystander perceptions and reactions? This chapter will summarize the key findings and discuss them in light of previous research and theoretical frameworks. In addition, implications and suggestions for future research are discussed. Finally, limitations of this study are addressed.

### **Overview**

A synthesis of the key findings that address each research question is provided in this chapter. As such, one can begin to better understand the nature of the cyberbullying phenomenon and determine how to proceed in developing prevention and intervention strategies that will address the needs of educators and students. Four key findings were identified from the comprehensive list of findings: (a) conditions facilitate cyberbullying among students in inclusive settings, (b) bystander awareness of cyberbullying influences

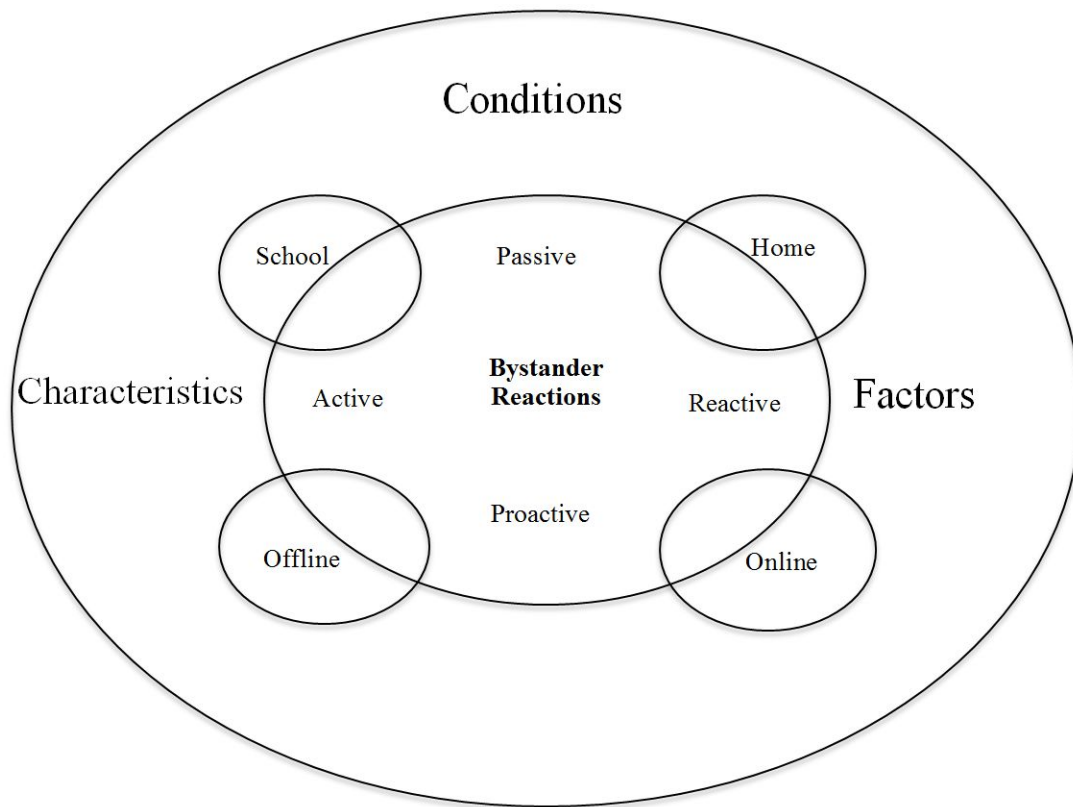
perceptions, (c) bystanders of cyberbullying appear in different roles, and (d) key factors influence bystander perceptions and reactions of students and teachers. Following a discussion of the four key findings, connections to theoretical frameworks will be presented. Finally, implications for school programs and professional development will be described.

## **Discussion**

Based on the analysis of data from interviews, artifacts, and member checking, a conceptual framework was developed to show how categories and themes were interrelated (Figure 2). Conditions, characteristics, and factors that influence perceptions of cyberbullying are depicted in the background and indicate the contextual categories, which are ever-present in today's adolescent online and offline culture. The conditions included the adolescents' peer culture, school culture, and social media culture. The characteristics involved the unique aspects of cyberbullying, the prevalence of cyberbullying, and the accessibility of technological tools. The factors included the adolescents' prior roles and past experiences with cyberbullying. The center circle overlaps the smaller circles, which represent the different segments of an adolescent's culture: school, home, online, and offline. The challenges and obstacles encountered in school related to cyberbullying by adolescent bystanders were no different than those experienced in the other three areas: home, online, and offline. In response to cyberbullying experiences, bystanders in this sample took on different roles. Students were active interveners or passive witnesses, while teachers were proactive or reactive. Latane and Darley's (1969) theoretical model informed this conceptual framework as it

posits that social influences affect individuals' likelihood to react. This theory applied to student bystanders in this study as they were less likely to get involved if they did not see other intervening bystanders. In addition, student and teacher participants indicated a "diffusion of responsibility" due to the many bystanders who were involved in cyberbullying. For example, some teachers felt that it was not their role to get involved. According to Latane and Darley (1969), this "diffusion of responsibility" reduces the likelihood that an individual is to help because they feel that others will intervene. Another theory that informed the resulting conceptual framework was Weiner's attributional theory, which assumes that people attribute causes to behavior (as cited in Gini et al., 2008). In this study, student bystander attributions were related to their emotional and motivational drives. For example, when some students described cyberbullying situations, they blamed victims for their fate, which allowed them to distance themselves from thoughts of suffering the same plight. Weiner's theory informed in that the student observers of cyberbullying who justified their passive behavior attributed the cause of the behavior to victim.

Figure 2 shows a model displaying these interrelationships.



*Figure 2.* Linking categories and concepts in a model of bystander perceptions and reactions to cyberbullying.

### Synthesis of Research Questions

#### **Theme 1: Conditions Facilitate Cyberbullying Among Students in Inclusive Settings**

The first finding indicated that four main conditions facilitated cyberbullying among adolescents in inclusive classroom settings: (a) technology in the classroom, (b) peer culture, (c) school culture, and (d) social media culture. All teachers and students in this study were aware of the prevalence of cyberbullying and the conditions that influenced it. Teachers felt unable to prevent cyberbullying and students were concerned

that teachers were unable to monitor their use of technology in the classroom or prevent cyberbullying. This finding corroborates past research conducted by Li (2008) revealing that only 11% of preservice teachers felt confident in their ability to manage cyberbullying. Similarly, the findings supported results of Eden et al. (2012), which indicated that teachers were very concerned about cyberbullying, but had low confidence in managing cyberbullying problems. These findings also corroborated past research conducted by Agatston et al. (2007) who found that students felt that teachers at school were unable to help them with cyberbullying problems. Similar to Mishna et al. (2009), most students felt that cyberbullying could occur anywhere. For the students and teachers in this study, training in cyberbullying intervention was limited. Some teachers in this study were also teaching in schools that had recently adopted a new technology policy which allowed students to bring and use their own technological tools in the classroom. Teachers from these schools were more concerned about the risk of increased cyberbullying than teachers from schools that did not allow technology in the school or classroom. These findings raise a serious concern that schools are promoting and allowing technology in the classroom before implementing schoolwide antibullying programs that provide teacher training on cyberbullying prevention and intervention strategies. Proactive schoolwide interventions should be implemented so that students and teachers are aware of how to identify and manage all types of bullying including cyberbullying. Rose et al. (2011) indicated that an important school factor in examining bullying perpetration was teacher awareness and intervention.



Peer culture among students with and without disabilities was indicated as a condition that influenced cyberbullying perceptions. Student and teacher participants within this study indicated that peer culture impacted the likelihood of cyberbullying. Participants indicated that cyberbullying among students with and without disabilities occurred. This finding was supported through previous research by Nansel et al. (2001) indicating that approximately 13% of students with and without disabilities in American schools exhibit bullying behaviors. Some teacher participants reported that students with disabilities learn bullying behavior from students without disabilities. This finding is corroborated by Rose et al.'s (2011) findings that indicated that bullying behaviors could be a possible reaction to prolonged victimization or a lack of social skills for students with disabilities. Similar to teacher participants, student participants in this study reported that their peers with LD, ADD, or ADHD had developed bullying behaviors as a result of prolonged victimization. Some participants in this study reported witnessing violent bullying behaviors in students with LD and ED that included online and offline stalking, online and offline threats, vandalizing the victim's home, and bringing a gun to school. This finding raises the concern that bullying behaviors can escalate over time, putting students with disabilities at risk of increased likelihood of association with the juvenile justice system (Taylor, 2012). In addition, this finding provides more evidence that teachers in inclusive classroom settings must take a proactive role in decreasing perpetration and supporting victims (Rose et al., 2011). Similarly, Martlew and Hodson (1991) indicated that if students were not fully integrated into peer groups, inclusive settings may support or increase victimization.

Another important finding regarding peer culture suggested that students with disabilities were unaware they were bullied online and offline by students without disabilities. This finding is supported by previous research that indicated students with disabilities are victimized more often than peers without disabilities (Rose et al., 2011; Taylor, 2012). It also suggests that because students without disabilities believe that their peers with disabilities were unaware they were bullied online and offline, the bullying behavior was more acceptable. Some students expressed that they regretted not intervening when their peers with disabilities were bullied online or offline.

Overall, students with and without disabilities were involved in both online and offline bullying. Most of the participants discussed how offline and online bullying were connected. Students often shared and discussed screen shots of other peers who were cyberbullied in school. Teachers and students reported that their students with and without disabilities who were victimized skipped school, experienced changes in appetite, exhibited signs of depression, and had suicidal ideation that led to hospitalization. These effects were also supported in the research literature on cyberbullying and indicate that students with and without disabilities who are involved in cyberbullying are at risk of not having successful academic outcomes (Mason, 2008).

## **Theme 2: Bystander Awareness Influences Perceptions**

One of the goals of this research study was to determine what influences bystander perceptions of cyberbullying. The first finding indicated in this theme revealed that teachers and students were aware of the characteristics of cyberbullying and perceived it as a more dangerous and mysterious form of bullying that was often

connected to offline bullying. This finding is corroborated by the research literature on cyberbullying, which includes similar characteristics in its definitions of cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Smith et al., 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). In addition, Noah (2012) reported similar findings from interviews with six teachers from one middle school. This author noted that teachers expressed similar characteristics, which included intent to harm, anonymity, issues of power, and a broader audience. However, one difference found between teacher participants versus findings presented in Noah (2012) is that none of the teachers expressed that online connected to offline as a characteristic. The finding that revealed students reported that online and offline bullying were often connected supported Cassidy et al. (2009).

The second finding indicated in this theme revealed that teachers lacked knowledge of laws, policies, and strategies concerning cyberbullying. This finding is corroborated by the previous research studies investigating teacher perceptions of cyberbullying (Li, 2008; Noah, 2012; Yilmaz, 2010). Li (2008) found that teachers expressed a need to receive more training on how to manage cyberbullying. Noah (2012) also found that teachers lacked knowledge of the school's procedures for handling cyberbullying. In addition, Yilmaz (2010) found that teachers indicated a need for cyberbullying training. This finding indicates that schools often do not provide schoolwide antibullying policies, effective professional development regarding cyberbullying specific strategies, and teacher training in state laws.

The third finding indicated in this theme revealed that students lack knowledge of prevention and intervention strategies. Students in this study indicated that they were

mostly warned about the trouble that was involved with cyberbullying. Strategies discussed by student participants were reporting, avoiding, ignoring, and blocking. Students indicated they were so fearful of the trouble involved that they did not want to get involved as bystanders. These findings support the research literature indicating that most bullying intervention and prevention programs tend to focus more on controlling inappropriate behavior versus promoting a supportive school climate (Bickmore, 2010).

Only 2 out of the 11 student participants revealed they had learned effective prevention and intervention strategies involving prosocial bystander behavior at school. These findings are corroborated by previous research investigating student perceptions of cyberbullying (Agatston et al., 2007; Cassidy et al., 2009; Mishna et al., 2009; Parris et al., 2012).

The fourth finding in this theme indicated that all teachers and students were aware of the prevalence of cyberbullying. All participants expressed that students in their schools had been victims, bystanders, or perpetrators of cyberbullying. This finding differs from Noah (2012), who found that six middle school teachers lacked knowledge of the prevalence of cyberbullying. The finding is corroborated by previous research investigating teacher and student perceptions of the prevalence of cyberbullying (Eden, 2012; Stauffer et al., 2012; Yilmaz, 2010).

The fifth finding in this theme indicated that all teachers and students expressed similar knowledge of the types, causes, and effects of cyberbullying. While all students were very aware of the latest tools and how they could be used for cyberbullying, most teachers were not. These findings are supported by a previous research study

investigating teacher awareness of tools, causes, and effects of cyberbullying (Noah, 2012). This finding is also corroborated by the research literature on cyberbullying, which includes students' similar knowledge of the types, causes, and effects of cyberbullying (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). However, this study revealed students' knowledge of the latest technology used for cyberbullying.

### **Theme 3: Bystanders of Cyberbullying Appear in Different Roles**

One important contribution of this theme was identifying teacher and student bystander roles in cyberbullying. Findings indicated that teacher participants were either Proactive or Reactive and students were identified as Passive Bystander, Active Intervener, or Bully Bystander. Perceptions, characteristics, and behaviors unique to each role supplied evidence to inform cyberbullying prevention research. For example, some of the characteristics identified of the Active Intervener included confronts bully, defends victim, feels responsible, is unconditionally involved, and is empathetic. In addition, teachers in the proactive category were more willing to investigate effective cyberbullying strategies and involve them in their classroom lessons. Students identified in this study in the Passive Witness role avoided getting involved, ignored the bullying, blamed the victim, and did not feel responsible. Although no students in this study were identified in the Bystander Bully role, these bystanders were described in detail by the participants' descriptions of firsthand experiences with cyberbullying and were also identified in student cyberbullying artifacts that included screen shots of actual cyberbullying.

Figure 3 illustrates the student bystander roles.

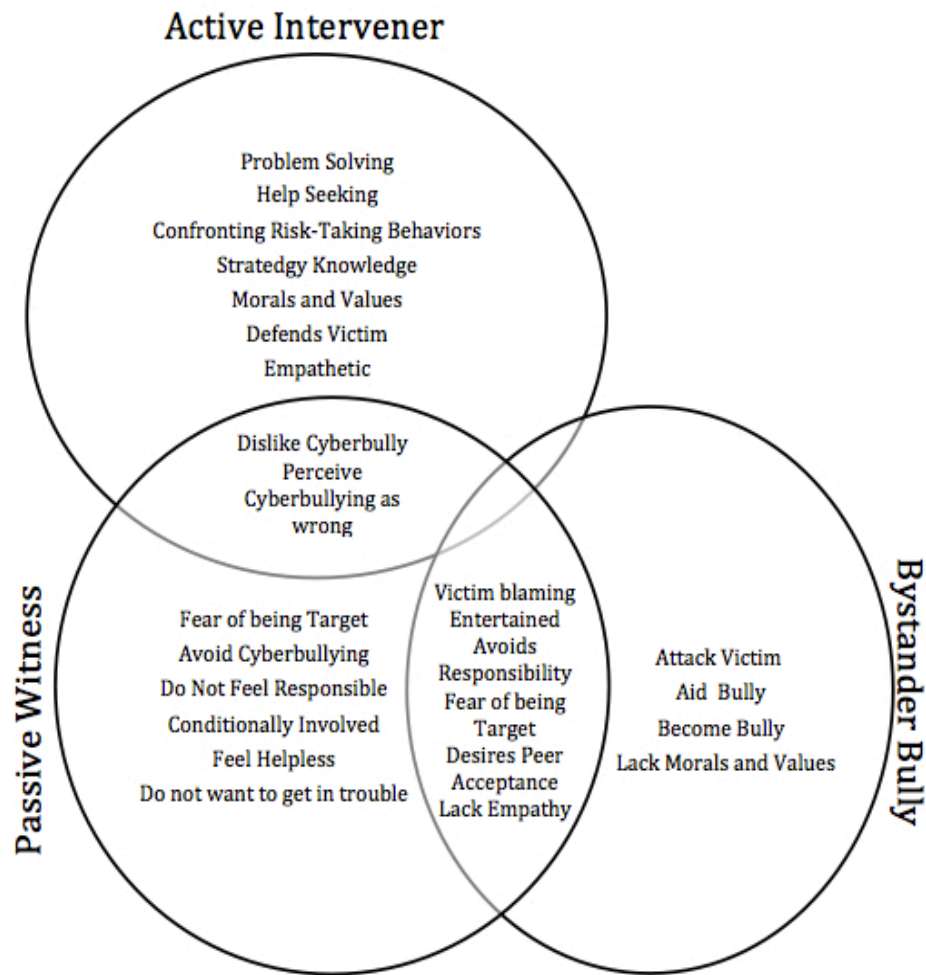
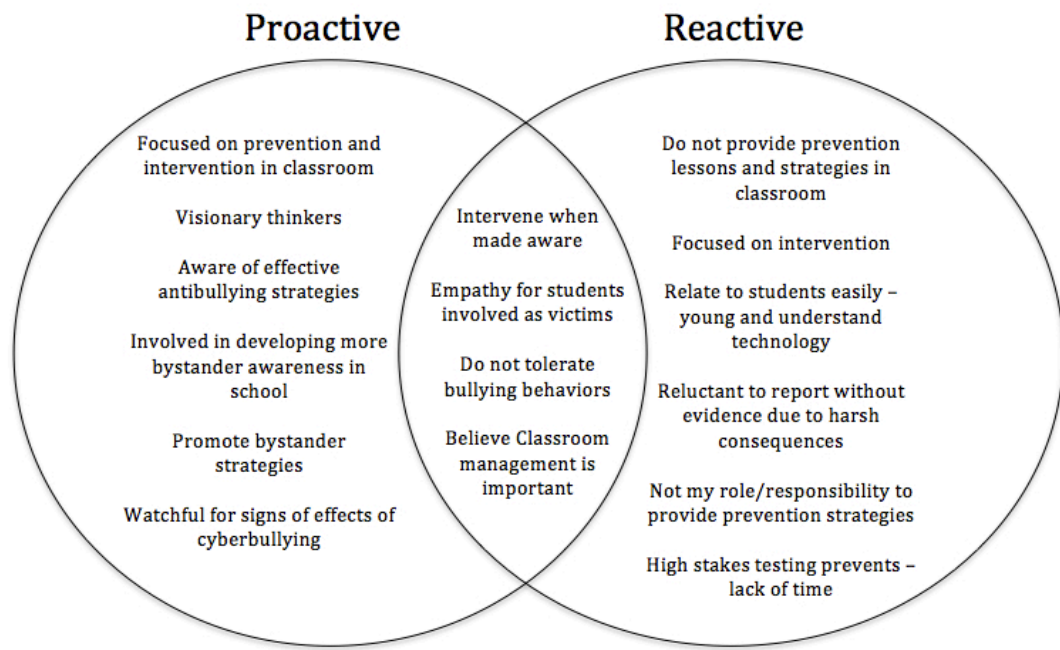


Figure 3. Student bystander roles.

These unique student bystander roles revealed why some adolescents were more willing to intervene in cyberbullying and added to the literature on cyberbullying by further explaining the reasons some adolescents were more likely to use avoidance strategies when exposed to cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). For example, findings from this study indicated that Passive Bystanders feared becoming targets of cyberbullying, while Active Interveners confronted the bully and defended the victim.

Tsang et al. (2011) explained that various social factors such as the availability of protection or role modeling from teachers influenced bystander role taking. These researchers indicated that peer bystanders influenced both the intensity and outcome of cyberbullying. Findings from this study were supported by previous research. Guckert and Evmenova (2013) found female adolescent bystanders of cyberbullying in different roles. For example, female bystanders felt responsible to intervene, were reluctant to intervene, or avoided intervening. Nickerson et al. (2008) examined adolescents who identified themselves either as defenders who intervened or outsiders who stood by passively, and determined that empathy contributed to defending and intervening bystander behaviors. Results of Polanin et al.'s (2012) meta-analysis of school-based bullying prevention programs' effects on bystander intervention stressed the importance of raising awareness of prosocial bystander behavior and intervention in school prevention programs.

Figure 4 illustrates the unique teacher bystander roles.



*Figure 4.* Teacher bystander roles.

The unique teacher bystander roles identified in this study revealed the differences and similarities in teachers' bystander perceptions of cyberbullying. Findings from this study revealed the reasons teachers were Proactive or Reactive bystanders. For example, Proactive teachers felt responsible for involving prevention in their classroom lessons, while Reactive teachers either did not feel that providing prevention in the classroom was their role or felt that there was not enough time. Findings from this study support previous research. Kennedy et al. (2012) found that teachers felt that bullying prevention should be a part of school curriculum and desired more professional development in bullying prevention. Conversely, Stauffer et al. (2012) found that some teachers were neutral or disagreed about cyberbullying having long-lasting negative effects and found that teachers were unsure about or against implementing a formal



bullying prevention program in their school. It is possible that Reactive teachers in this study were teaching content courses that involved high-stakes testing preparation which prevented taking time to focus on prevention. In addition, it is possible that Reactive teachers did not see it as their responsibility to get involved in prevention because they were from schools that provided many resources to support students who might experience cyberbullying.

#### **Theme 4: Key Factors Influence Bystander Perceptions and Reactions of Students and Teachers**

A fourth theme identified in this study was: key factors influence bystander intervening behavior. Four categories informed this theme: (a) emotions, (b) morals and values, (c) prior roles, and (d) past experiences. Conclusions from this theme indicated that teacher and student intervening behaviors were influenced by their prior roles and past experiences with cyberbullying. All students who were active interveners had prior roles and experiences as both a bystander and a victim, while most participants who were passive witnesses had only experienced cyberbullying as a bystander. This finding suggests that the perspective taking and empathy may influence positive intervening behaviors. Nickerson, Mele, and Princiotta (2008) found that empathy was a significant predictor of defenders who actively intervened to stop bullying. All teachers except one had prior roles as victims with online and/or offline bullying and had experiences with cyberbullying; all teachers felt responsible to actively intervene in cyberbullying. Strong emotions were expressed as students and teachers described their experiences with cyberbullying, reflecting concern for their sense of safety in intervening for students and concern for the sense of safety for students from teachers. Cassidy et al. (2009) indicated

in their study that students expressed fear that the cyberbully would get revenge, which prevented their reporting of cyberbullying. Gini et al. (2008) found that students' sense of safety was impacted students' bystander behaviors at school, which suggests that teacher and student display of emotions can influence bystander intervening behaviors. Finally, some students and teachers suggested that morals and values influenced the choices of the intervener regardless of knowledge of strategies, prior roles, and past experiences. Tsang et al. (2011) suggested that increasing moral and social competence may help bystanders to understand the important role they play in cyberbullying.

### **Limitations**

A strength of this study was including a range of participants from 14 different schools across the Eastern seaboard. Participants included students with and without disabilities ranging from ages 13 to 17, and general and special educators. This variability in sampling provided a range of perceptions of cyberbullying. However, the small number of participants impacts external generalizability. Perceptions of the study's 20 participants are not necessarily representative of other larger groups. Even though the participants in this study were selected purposefully, there is no assurance that the findings extend to all populations. As I was the research instrument of this study, I realize that despite my best efforts to analyze data objectively, my researcher bias was always present. While results of this study provide new information on student and teacher perceptions of cyberbullying, it is important to note that this study reflects this particular time and place. Another limitation of the current study may be that student and teacher

participants who agreed to participate had more experiences and awareness, and/or an agenda to present on cyberbullying, compared to the rest of the population.

### **Implications for Intervention and Prevention**

Adolescents today are immersed in an online culture in which they constantly communicate through social media, email, and texts. While schools across the nation are embracing the educational use of technology, students are now going to school with their smartphones, iPads, and other digital tools. Although access to these tools provides innumerable possibilities for academic support and educational growth, more recent attention has focused on understanding the potential risks of cyberbullying as adolescents spend most of their time communicating online. Recent research reveals that cyberbullying has become a prevalent form of bullying among adolescents in middle and high school grades (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b).

Presently, very little cyberbullying research has focused on students with and without disabilities in inclusive classroom settings. Espelage and Swearer (2004) asserted that bullying can only be understood in relations among individuals, families, peer groups, communities, and cultures. Rose et al. (2011), in a literature review of bullying perpetration and victimization in special education, found that teacher awareness and intervention is a significant factor in bully perpetration. They also noted that teachers can reinforce or maintain perpetration if they are unaware and do not effectively intervene. These researchers proposed suggestions for targeting intervention programs for students with disabilities, which include: (a) multifaceted programs and policies; (b) schoolwide prevention; (c) individualized supports for victims and perpetrators; (d) proactive

prevention strategies for at-risk student populations; (e) cultural competence and diversity awareness; (f) integrating prevention into curriculum; and (g) school policy endorsing collaborative practices among administration, school personnel, students, families, and community agencies to meet individual student needs. Moreover, Rose et al. (2011) asserted that teachers must take a proactive role in decreasing perpetration of cyberbullying and support victims in their classroom by being aware of social interactions among students with and without disabilities. Mason (2008), in a review of literature on cyberbullying, recommended the following prevention measures: (a) developing acceptable use policies for technology, (b) incorporating cyberbullying lessons, (c) integrating empathy training and perspective taking, and (d) educating bystanders how to intervene and speak out.

In this study, perceptions of cyberbullying among teachers and students varied depending on the antibullying policy and program in place, culture of the school, peers, and the surrounding community. Implications for prevention and intervention discussed here reflect the needs of teachers and students from 14 different schools across the Eastern seaboard, as voiced by participants in this study.

Teacher and student participants in this study had personal experiences with cyberbullying that have made them very aware of its harmful effects. However, most student participants in this study felt that teachers lacked awareness and were unwilling to get involved, while teacher participants indicated a lack of knowledge of laws, policies, and strategies pertaining to cyberbullying. Teachers in this study reported that they felt change would not happen until it comes from the administration. To address this

issue, schools and administrators need to understand that teachers are standing on the front line with students and are often the first to become aware of cyberbullying situations. Thus, administrators need to provide a comprehensive and standardized set of procedures and guidelines for teachers to follow when managing cyberbullying. These procedures should be routinely addressed and reviewed at faculty meetings throughout the school year. In this way, teachers would have a better understanding of their role in responding to cyberbullying and how to advise students when incidents occur. Teachers should also educate their students on their school policy so that they know how it will be addressed. Several teachers in this study indicated that they had not received any type of training or professional development regarding cyberbullying and they were unaware of what happened to a student involved in cyberbullying once reported to the administration. It is critical that teachers are trained to understand their school procedures and have guidelines to follow when addressing cyberbullying. In addition, teachers should be provided with continuous professional development workshops and information sessions on cyberbullying. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) suggest workshops that show teachers how to design assignments and integrate cyberbullying discussions in their classroom.

A second recommendation regarding this issue is schools need to adopt schoolwide antibullying prevention programs that encourage prosocial bystander intervention, specifically targeting bystander attitudes and behaviors. Polanin, Espelage and Pigott (2012), in a meta-analysis of school-based bullying prevention programs' effects on bystander intervention behavior, pointed out that effective antibullying programs need to emphasize changes in school climate, raise awareness about participant

roles, encourage active prosocial behavior, and provide opportunities to role-play and practice bystander intervention. These researchers asserted that it is not enough to only define prosocial bystander behaviors, such as walk away, get help, or stand up for the victim. Instead, programs and interventions need to shift attitudes toward a willingness to intervene through consistent intervention messages and support from adults and administrators.

Third, teachers and students in this study also reported that cyberbullying was occurring among peers with and without disabilities in the classroom. With the support of administrators, teachers should implement classroom-based educational programs to strengthen positive peer bystander behavior (Tsang et al., 2011). Tsang et al. (2011) provided an outline of a cyberbullying unit from Project P.A.T.H.S., a positive youth development program assisting students in their growth and development. This unit suggests integrating self-efficacy, positive identity, and self-determination with effective intervention skills to help students to take a prosocial stand against bullying. In addition, these researchers emphasized the integration of social and moral competence to help students learn to use wise and responsible bystander behavior. Specific learning targets should include: (a) to know the tremendous harm that cyberbullying can cause; (b) to investigate the proper attitude for bystanders in cyberbullying incidents; (c) to understand that everyone has their own limitations and is different from others; and (d) to learn to understand, tolerate, and accept those who are different from us. It is recommended that teachers involve these types of lessons in their classroom in order to ensure a positive peer culture and prevent cyberbullying.

Fourth, teachers in this study expressed that students with disabilities were often unaware of the definition of cyberbullying and were unknowingly cyberbullying their peers. This indicates that students with disabilities are at risk of breaking the law without knowing they are doing so, and as a result are at risk of harsh punishment. It is the job of the school to inform teachers of their state's laws on cyberbullying. In turn, teachers need to involve ongoing discussion with students about specific cyberbullying examples, definitions, and laws. According to Levy et al. (2012), 38 states have provided some treatment of cyberbullying in their definitions of bullying. In addition, all states have criminal laws that apply to bullying behaviors. However, there has been a trend among states toward criminalizing certain bullying behaviors. For example, antibullying laws in three states have created the crime of cyberbullying. According to the U.S. Department of Education, state legislation and policy addressing school bullying is moving away from being under the control of the school system and toward treating bullying as criminal conduct that must be handled by the criminal justice system (Levy et al., 2012). This suggests that teachers need to be aware of their state laws and—more importantly—knowledgeable about cyberbullying prevention strategies.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The present study aimed to understand bystander perceptions of cyberbullying among teachers and students in inclusive classroom settings. Based on the findings, the following suggestions are provided for future research. Many teachers in this study indicated uncertainty in how administrators handled cyberbullying. Teachers also suggested that their administration did not focus on involving antibullying programs due

to lack of time. Future research is needed concerning administrators' perceptions of cyberbullying. Such research should include an investigation of administrators' awareness of cyberbullying and effective prevention programs. Since several participants in this study indicated that schoolwide antibullying programs were not in place, it would also be beneficial to investigate the barriers involved in implementing a schoolwide antibullying program.

Another area for future research may be to conduct a case study on a school that provides a comprehensive schoolwide antibullying program that emphasizes positive bystander behavior and includes components as described by Rose et al. (2011) such as (a) multifaceted programs and policies; (b) schoolwide prevention; (c) individualized supports for victims and perpetrators; (d) proactive prevention strategies for at-risk student populations; (e) cultural competence and diversity awareness; (f) integrating prevention into curriculum; and (g) school policy endorsing collaborative practices among administration, school personnel, students, families, and community agencies to meet individual student needs. Perceptions of administrators, teachers, and students should be investigated through surveys and qualitative interviews. Survey data could provide a quick synopsis of participants' prior roles and involvement in cyberbullying and awareness and knowledge of laws and strategies. Interview data could provide an in-depth exploration of the participants' perceptions of cyberbullying. Such a study would provide findings regarding what is working and what still needs to be improved in effective schoolwide antibullying programs.



A final area for future research pertains to understanding parent perceptions of cyberbullying. Participants in this study felt that parents played an integral role in helping to prevent cyberbullying. Teachers in this study advocated for involving parents in parent education on cyberbullying. Students in this study suggested that parents were often unaware and did not monitor their children's social media. Future research is needed to understand parent perceptions of cyberbullying awareness, laws, and strategies.

## APPENDIX A. HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD SUBMISSION

### Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB)

#### New Submission Checklist

To avoid delay in the processing of HSRB applications, please ensure that the following are included in your application. Applications cannot be reviewed until all of the following checklist items are submitted.

YES	NO	N/A	ITEM
x			Application with <b>ALL</b> sections completed (including check boxes on first page)
x			Application signed by Principal Investigator
x			CITI Training completed by all researchers including research assistants
x			<b>Proposed Consent Form</b> (See Template Consent and Consent Guidelines)– All instructional language removed, written at the appropriate reading level for participants
x			<b>Proposed Assent Form</b> (If minors are involved) – Written at the appropriate reading level for the age group (Contact ORSP for a sample of a 6 <sup>th</sup> grade Assent Form)
x			<b>Instrumentation</b> – All surveys, questionnaires, standardized assessment tools, interview questions, focus group questions/prompts or other instruments of data collection
x			<b>Recruitment Materials</b> – Letters to potential participants, advertisements, flyers, listserv postings, emails, brochures, SONA postings, telephone scripts, presentation scripts, etc.
		x	<b>Grant Applications</b> – If the research is funded, include the grant application as submitted to the funding agency (Please note that the HSRB application title must match the grant application title.)
		x	<b>Debriefing Form</b> – If the study proposes to use deception or incomplete information to participants
		x	<b>Cultural Contact Information</b> – If the study is being conducted outside the US, the HSRB must inquire about the conduct of research in that country. Submit the name and contact information of an individual who can provide that information.

Applications can be reviewed without the following items, but if they are applicable to the study, they must be submitted before approval can be given.

		X	Research in Classrooms – Submit permission from the instructors when course credit is given
		X	Research in School Systems – Submit approval letter from the school district Human Subjects Review Board
		X	Research in Universities – Submit approval letter from the University Human Subjects Review Board
		X	Research in Hospitals – Submit approval letter and approved consent document from the hospital Human Subjects Review Board
		X	Research in Institutions/Organizations without Human Subject Review Boards – Submit permission letter from the institution/organization
		X	If the university is primary recipient of funding, submit Human Subjects Review Board approval from subcontractors conducting human subjects research
		X	Psychology Department – Sign off by the Chair of the Department
		X	School of Management (SOM) – Submit SOM routing form with all approval signatures
		X	Other Committee Oversight- If your study involves the use of blood or other human biological specimens, submit <b>Institutional Biosafety Committee</b> approval. If your study involves sources of ionizing radiation or Xray producing devices, submit <b>Radiation Safety Committee</b> approval.

## Review Board Application for Human Subjects Research Review

Please complete this cover page AND provide the Protocol information requested on the back of this form. Forward this form and all supporting documents to the Office of Research Subject Protections. If you have any questions please feel free to contact

<b>Project Title:</b>		
	<b>Principal Investigator (Must be Faculty)</b>	<b>Co-Investigator / Student Researcher*</b>
<b>Name</b>		

<b>Department</b>		
<b>Mail Stop</b>		
<b>Phone</b>		
<b>Email</b>		
*Student researchers should provide a mailing address rather than campus address. Additional researchers should be listed on a separate page.		
<b>Type of Project:</b>	Faculty/Staff Research Doctoral Dissertation X Masters Thesis Student Project (Specify Grad or Undergrad): Other (Specify):	
<b>VULNERABLE POPULATION:</b>	<b>PERSON IDENTIFIABLE DATA:</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN:</b>
Fetuses/Abortuses/Embryos	Audio taping yes	Questions on harm to self or others
Pregnant women	Video taping	Questions on illegal behavior
Prisoners	Data collected via email yes	Deception
Minors	Data collected via Internet yes	Human/computer interaction
Mentally disabled	Confidential electronic records	Collection/analysis of secondary data
Emotionally disabled	Coded data linked to individuals	Funding: No
Physically disabled	Human biological materials	Source:
Undergrad student pool (Psych/SOM)	Biosafety Project #:	OSP Proposal #:
Other: Young adults ages 11- 17 - yes	(If yes, please attach a copy of the grant application)	
I certify that the information provided for this project is correct and that no other procedures will be used in this protocol. I agree to conduct this research as described in the attached supporting documents. I will request and receive approval from the HSRB for changes prior to implementing these changes. I will comply with the HSRB policy for the conduct of ethical research. I will be responsible for ensuring that the work of my co-investigator(s)/student researcher(s) complies with this protocol.		
Principal Investigator Signature _____		_____ Date

## **ABSTRACT**

1. Describe the aims and specific purposes of the research project and the proposed involvement of human participants.

### **Understanding Perceptions and Bystander Behavior of Cyberbullying in the Inclusive Classroom**

Bullying in secondary school inclusive educational settings has been documented as a widespread problem in American schools (Rose, Monda-Amaya, & Espelage 2011). Due to the dramatic increase of students' use and access to internet and cell phone technology in the classroom, there has been an increase in a serious form of bullying called cyberbullying (Li, 2007). Cyberbullying is defined as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Cyberbullying is a particularly detrimental phenomenon as it is not location or time specific and can occur day or night and in any environment (Smith, Dempsey, Student 11, Olenchak, & Gaa, 2012). Victims of cyberbullying are found to experience psychosocial problems, emotional distress, and depressive symptoms (Ybarra, 2004; Ybarra, Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2007). There has also been an increase in teen suicides that have been connected to cyberbullying experiences (Collier, 2010).

According to Whitted and Dupper (2005) high rates of bullying may affect the entire school population, creating an unsafe environment of fear which can disrupt academic learning. As students with disabilities in inclusive settings already struggle with learning, being targeted for bullying can lead to increases in academic, social, and emotional problems (Mishna, 2003). Although "proponents of inclusion maintain that inclusive educational settings provide greater socialization opportunities for students with special learning needs, in addition to reducing stigmatization and promoting self-determination," research shows that students with disabilities are teased and bullied more often (Luciano and Savage, 2007, p. 15). However, Rose et al. (2011) reveal that victimization rates between students with and without disabilities in inclusive settings yield comparable results.

Research shows that teen bystanders, individually and as a group, can effectively stop and reduce bullying situations (Gini, Pozzoli, Borghi, & Franzoni, 2008). According to Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli, and Cowie, enhancing responsible bystander behavior is suggested to be an effective factor in combating cyberbullying (cited in Huang & Chou, 2010). In the inclusive classroom, "teachers are responsible for monitoring student behavior, setting classroom rules, reinforcing positive behavior, and imposing disciplinary consequences for inappropriate behavior" (Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2102 p. 353). Because of their specialized training, special educators play a crucial role in modeling and encouraging prosocial bystander behavior in the inclusive classroom setting.

The purpose of this research project is to examine bystander perceptions of cyberbullying. Specifically, the bystander perceptions of special educators and students (with and without disabilities) in secondary school inclusive classroom settings will be investigated. In addition, this research project seeks to gain an understanding of

secondary school students' (with and without disabilities) and special educators' perceptions of cyberbullying and how these perceptions influence their bystander behavior.

This research project will employ 2 interviews. First, the research project will employ an interview that asks special educators questions about their perceptions of cyberbullying, bystander behavior, and intervening strategies. The interview will be conducted in person. The interview will consist of two parts. The first part is an exploratory interview with open ended questions that are followed by probes to obtain more specific examples and description. The second part is composed of closed ended questions concerning participant demographics. Second, the research project will employ an interview that asks students their perceptions on cyberbullying and bystander behaviors. The interview will consist of two parts. The first part is an exploratory interview with open ended questions that are followed by probes to obtain more specific examples and description. The second part is composed of closed ended questions concerning participant demographics.

2. Describe the characteristics of the intended sample (number of participants, age, sex, ethnic background, health status, etc.).

The interview participants are special education teachers who are currently teaching in a secondary school inclusive classroom setting and secondary school students (with and without disabilities) who are enrolled in an inclusive classroom setting. All participants will have had experiences with cyberbullying.

The teachers can be any age, sex, ethnic background or health status.

The students will be between 11 and 17 years of age and can be any sex, ethnic, disability, or health status. Only participants that provide student assent and parental consent forms will participate in this study. At this time, the exact number of participants cannot be identified. However, it is anticipated that at least 10 teachers and 10 students will participate in the study. This information will be included in the final report.

3. Identify the criteria for inclusion or exclusion. Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of participants (children, prisoners, pregnant women, or any other vulnerable population).

Any young adult student (male or female) (with or without disabilities) that is between the ages of 11 and 17, is attending an inclusive classroom setting in grades 6 through 12, and who has experienced cyberbullying will be included.

Experiences with cyberbullying include being a victim, bully, or bystander in cyberbullying. Bystanders in cyberbullying are those students who have

witnessed cyberbullying. Experiences with cyberbullying may be currently happening or may have occurred in the past.

Any special educator that is currently teaching in an inclusive classroom setting in grades 6 – 12, and who has students that have experienced cyberbullying incidents will be included.

4. Describe your relationship to the participants if any.

None

### **PROTOCOL – Involving Human Participation**

1. If there are direct benefits to the participants, describe the direct benefits and also describe the general knowledge that the study is likely to yield. If there are no direct benefits to the participants, state that there are no direct benefits to the participants and describe the general knowledge that the study is likely to yield.

There are no direct benefits to the interview participants other than furthering the knowledge of cyberbullying perceptions on bystander behavior and intervening strategies in the inclusive classroom setting among students with and without disabilities. The knowledge the interview will likely yield is a current understanding of special educators' perceptions of cyberbullying and how these perceptions influence bystander behavior. In addition, the interview with students in the inclusive classroom setting will yield a current understanding of their perceptions of cyberbullying and how these perceptions influence bystander behavior.

2. Describe how participants will be identified and recruited. Note that all recruitment materials (including ads, flyers, letters to participants, emails, telephone/presentation scripts, SONA postings) for participants must be submitted for review for both exempt and non-exempt projects.

Special Educators will be recruited through the University College of Education and Special Education Program listserv announcement which will be sent out through an email (see Appendix A). All special educators that respond to the email announcement and agree will be included in the study.

Students between the ages of 11 and 17 attending secondary school in inclusive classroom settings will be recruited through an email announcement that will be distributed through the parent advocacy listserv (see Appendix A). A snowball sampling technique will be used to recruit other students that can be identified as secondary students with and without disabilities that are in inclusive settings. Inclusion for students will be based on an informed assent form signed by the

students and an informed consent form signed by a parent. Only those participants who respond and agree to participate will be included in the study.

3. Describe your procedures for obtaining informed consent. Who will obtain consent and how will it be obtained. Describe how the researchers will ensure that subjects receive a copy of the consent document.

For student participants, informed assent and consent forms will be distributed and obtained once they agree to participate in the study. Forms will be distributed in person to each participant by the researcher. Participants and parents will be asked to sign the assent and consent forms that will indicate that they have read the forms and agree to participate. Double assent and consent forms will be issued for all participants: one for the project file and one for their personal files. The researcher will personally collect the forms prior to the start of the interview.

For special educators, informed consent forms will be obtained in person prior to conducting the interview. The consent form will be read to the participant and the participant will respond to consent by signing the consent form before participating in the interview.

4. State whether subjects will be compensated for their participation, describe the form of compensation and the procedures for distribution, and explain why compensation is necessary. State whether the subjects will receive course credit for participating in the research. **If yes**, describe the non-research option for course credit for the students who decide not to participate in the research. The non-research option for course credit must not be more difficult than participation in the research. Information regarding compensation or course credit should be outlined in the Participation section of the consent document.

Participants will not be compensated for participating in the study.

5. If minors are involved, their active assent to the research activity is required as well as active consent from their parents/guardians. This includes minors from the Psychology Department Undergraduate Subject Pool. Your procedures should be appropriate to the age of the child and his/her level of maturity and judgment. Describe your procedures for obtaining active assent from minors and active consent from parents/guardians. Refer to the Guidelines for Informed Consent for additional requirements if minors from the Psychology Subject Pool are involved.

All student participants will be provided with a copy of the informed assent form and parents' informed consent forms. Both consent and assent forms, will be



personally distributed by the researcher prior to the beginning the interview. The researcher will explain to participating participants the purpose of this research project prior to the beginning of the interview. The researcher will personally collect the signed forms prior to the start of the interview.

6. Describe the research design and methods. What will be done to participants during the study? Describe all tests and procedures that will be performed. Include an estimate of the time required to complete the tests and procedures.

For students, the interview consists of approximately 25 open ended questions and 6 closed ended demographic questions. It is estimated that the interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. The interviews will be conducted in person and will be audiotaped. The interviews can take place in the participant's home, a coffee shop, or the interviewer's home. The interviews will occur at a time that is convenient to the student and will not occur during school hours or on school grounds.

For teachers, the interview consists of approximately 23 open ended questions and five closed ended demographic questions. It is estimated that the interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. The interviews will be conducted in person and will be audiotaped. The interviews can take place in the participant's home, a coffee shop, or the interviewer's home. The interview will occur at a time that is convenient to the teacher and will not occur during school hours or on school grounds.

Counseling referrals will be provided to all participants after the interview, which will consist of the following.

Crisis provides 24-hour confidential listening, crisis intervention, information and referrals

1-800-273-TALK –national crisis hotline for any age

County Mental Health  
24-Hour Emergency Services  
Public Contact Info:

1-800-say-teen—Alternative House Teen  
Crisis Hotline

7. Describe how confidentiality will be maintained. If data will be collected electronically (e.g. by email or an internet web site), describe your procedures for limiting identifiers. Note that confidentiality may have to be limited if participants are asked questions on violence toward self or others or illegal behavior. Contact the Office of Research Subject Protections for assistance.

All data gathered from personal interviews will be kept confidential. Each student and teacher will receive a pseudonym. Pseudonyms will be used on all the data collection sheets. Codes corresponding with the pseudonyms will be assigned to participants' interview responses. Only the researcher will have access to the codes. All person-identifying information will be deleted, so that not one including individual students or their families can be identified. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, to which only the researcher will have the keys.

Respondent's names will not be included in the collected data or in the write up of research.

8. Describe in detail any potential physical, psychological, social, or legal risks to participants, why they are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits and what will be done to minimize the risks. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for ensuring medical or professional intervention in case participants experience adverse effects. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for monitoring data collection when participants' safety is at risk.

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study as participants for this study will be discussing bystander perspectives and are not required to report situations regarding their direct involvement. For student participants, the interview questions concerning cyberbullying may result in psychological distress, depending on his/her involvement with the problem at the time. If the student were to reveal any information related to harassment, abuse or violence, then the researcher would have to refer this to the proper legal authorities that would need to take action.

For special educators as participants, there are no foreseeable physical, psychological, social, or legal risks.

9. If participants will be audio-or video-taped, discuss provisions for the security and final disposition of the tapes. Refer to Guidelines for Informed Consent.

Participants, if willing, will be audio taped. The audio tapes will be kept confidential and in locked cabinets. The tapes will be disposed of in one year following the final research project completion.

10. If participants will be misinformed and/or uninformed about the true nature of the project, provide justification. Note that projects involving deception must not exceed minimal risk, cannot violate the rights and welfare of participants, must require the deception to accomplish the aims of the project, and must include a full debriefing. Refer to Guidelines for Informed Consent.

Participants are informed of the true nature of the project's intent.

11. Submit a copy of each data collection instrument/tool (including questionnaires, surveys, standardized assessment tools, etc.) you will use and provide a brief description of its characteristics and development. Submit scripts if information and/or questions are conveyed verbally.

Please see attached.

12. **INFORMED CONSENT:** Attach appropriate Proposed Informed Consent document(s). **See Guidelines for Informed Consent and the Template Informed Consent Document for additional information.**

13. **APPROVAL FROM COOPERATING INSTITUTION/ORGANIZATION:** If a cooperating institution/organization provides access to its patients/students/clients/ employees/etc. for participant recruitment or provides access to their records, Attach written evidence of the institution/organization human subjects approval of the project.

### **PROTOCOL – Involving Existing Records**

For the study of existing data sets, documents, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.

1. Describe your data set.
2. Provide written permission from the owner of the data giving you access for research purposes at University if the data set is not publicly available.
3. Describe how you will maintain confidentiality if the data set contains person identifiable data.
4. Describe what variables you are extracting from the data set.

## SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Background Form:

**Subject Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Race:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disability Category:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 1: Communicating with Peers

1. How do you normally contact or communicate with your friends when you want to talk or share news?

- Probe: can you give me an example, tell me more about this.

2. How much time do you usually spend communicating this way?

- Probe: (can you give me an example of how many times you talk to your friend this way daily, weekly, etc.)

3. What do you like/dislike about communicating this way?

- Probe: can you tell me more about this?
- Probe: are you able to talk to more people at once?

4. Tell me about how get to know people from your school or other schools that you haven't met through online communication?

- Probe: can you tell me more about this?

5. How can you help other people know more about you through online social networking?

- Probe: can you give me some examples?

6. How can you show you are not friends with someone online?

- Probe: can you give me some examples?

7. What are some ways that you have seen other people show they do not like someone or disagree with someone online?

- Probe: can you tell me more about that?

## **Part 2: Bystander Behaviors**

8. Has someone else you know ever been hurt by something someone said online? (for example: spreading pictures or videos or sharing embarrassing comments)

- Probe: can you tell me more about that?

9. How do friends normally support or stick up for others online when this happens?

- Probe: in what ways?

10. How do you feel about getting involved when a friend is hurt by something someone else said online ?

- Probe: How about when it is someone you do not know well?

11. Can you give me some examples of some things you have witnessed others do to intentionally hurt someone else online?

- Probe: Can you tell me more about that?

12. How responsible do you feel for helping someone when they are bullied online?

Probe: If so, how do you help? How do you feel about this person?

Probe: Have ever posted positive messages in response to negative messages?

13. Describe the type of person that normally is treated this way or the kinds of things that cause someone to be targeted negatively online?,

14. Tell about why you may have wished that you helped someone or regretted not helping someone who was being attacked or harmed online?

15. What do you think your role is when you witness a friend, acquaintance or someone you don't know well get hurt by one person or a group of people online?

16. If you were at school and saw (or knew) someone being harassed by someone online, what would you do?

17. How do you feel about standing for a victim of traditional bullying verses standing up for them in online bullying?

18. What would your definition of cyberbullying be? Give me examples

19. Tell me about the kinds of strategies you have learned about to handle cyberbullying.

Probe: where have you learned about these strategies?

20. How many times a day/week do you observe cyberbullying in school and out of school?

21. How do you and your peers talk about or share knowledge about cyberbullying episodes at school?

22. If you can change the way you and your peers play a role in stopping cyberbullying, what would that look like?

23. If you asked an adult at school or home for help when witnessing cyberbullying, how confident are you that they would help?

24. How do you think adults' (parents and/or teachers) should get involved when you or your friends are being harassed, hurt , bullied by other people online that are in school?

25. If you could do something to change the way your teachers/school helps people deal with bullying online, what would you change?

**ORIGINAL HSRB**

**Semi Structured Educator Interview Protocol**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade/Subject Taught:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Years of Experience Teaching :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Education:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Race:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disability Category represented in classroom:** \_\_\_\_\_

Research Question 1: What are bystander perceptions of cyberbullying of general and special educators in secondary inclusive classroom?

What types of behaviors do you feel constitute online harassment cyberbullying and should be reported?

How comfortable do you feel your students feel in reporting online harassment or cyberbullying to you?

When do you feel it is appropriate to report cyberbullying

What are the things you do to attempt to stop behavior with students that are involved?

How do you feel this form of bullying affects your students' ability to learn and focus in the classroom?

How do you feel your students with disabilities are affected by online harassment when they are involved as the bystander?

The victim?

The bully?

Do you feel that they are pressured to



students with disabilities a

How does it affect their self esteem?

1. What are some things that you do to encourage a socially accepting and supportive environment among students in your classroom?
2. How do you
2. What do you think students' attitudes are towards their peers with disabilities?
3. What do you think students with disabilities attitudes are towards their peers without disabilities?
4. How do you feel your relationship with students affects their attitudes towards one another in the classroom?
5. How do you think online interactions affect student's attitudes towards one another?
6. What are some things that you do to encourage positive online behavior/interactions among peers?
7. What are some things that you think cause the development of negative online behaviors among peers with and without disabilities?
8. How would you define cyberbullying?  
  
Probe: Can you give me some examples?
9. Describe cyberbullying in school/classroom?
10. Have you ever been approached by a student concerning an issue with cyberbullying?  
  
If so, how many times? (a day, week)
11. How do you interpret negative behavior among peers in cyberbullying?

12. What do you do when you are aware of cyberbullying with students in your classroom?

13. How do you prevent negative online behavior among peers?

Give an example of how you've supported positive online behavior, interrupted negative behavior, prevented negative behavior in the classroom concerning bullying or cyberbullying?

14. What kinds of training have you received in bullying strategies?

15. What kinds of training have you received in cyberbullying strategies?

16. What is your opinion about cyberbullying as being considered an "off grounds" issue?

Probe: What is your opinion about whether administrators should get involved?

17. How comfortable do you feel reporting cyberbullying to administrators in your school?

Probe: When reporting cyberbullying to administrators, what actions have been taken?

18. How do you feel about reporting incidents of cyberbullying to parents involved in cyberbullying incidents?

19. How involved are parents in helping students mediate cyberbullying situations?

20. How responsible do you feel for reporting and monitoring cyberbullying incidents in your classroom?

21. How do you think cyberbullying affects the climate of your classroom/school?

22. What kinds of strategies and interventions concerning cyberbullying does your school use?

**RECRUITMENT EMAIL FOR LISTSERV**

**Attention Special Education Teachers of Grades 6-12:**

**Please Help Provide Insight into Cyber-Bullying and its Effects: Voice Your Experiences with Cyber-Bullying**

**Cyberbullying and its effects are of serious concern among adolescents. Students with disabilities are especially at risk for either engaging in or experiencing incidents of cyber-bullying or cyber-threats that are devastating and harmful in many ways. Your experiences with cyber-bullying are important in helping to understand the physical, psychological and educational effects of this form of bullying.**

**As an educational researcher and PhD student at this University, I would like to ask how you feel this has affected your student's emotional and psychological well-being.**

**Please contact me to share your experiences with cyber-bullying in a personal interview.**

**This Research Study has been approved by the Human Subject Review Board at this University and is being conducted by a PhD student at this University. All personal identifying information will be kept confidential by the researcher. Please contact me at**

**ORIGINAL HSRB LISTSERV ANNOUNCEMENT APPROVAL**  
**Parent Advocacy Listserv**

**Mary Guckert**

Feb 20

to

Hello,

My name is Mary Guckert and I am a graduate research assistant. I am currently investigating cyber-bullying and students with disabilities. I would like to ask your permission to use your listserv to send out an announcement requesting participation from teachers, parents and students who would be willing to share their perceptions of cyber-bullying and social media aggression through a brief survey and an interview. I am also investigating the effects of a cyber-bullying problem solving strategy with students with disabilities that are in grades 5-8. I have attached an example of the list serve announcements.

Thank you,

Feb 21

to me

Mary,

We would be happy to send this out. Just to clarify, there is no cost to participate?

**CONFIDENTIAL**

This message is meant for the exclusive use of the intended recipient and may contain information that is privileged, confidential or legally exempt from disclosure. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately by e-mail or by telephone at and delete message.

**From:** Mary Guckert [mailto:[mary.guckert@gmail.com](mailto:mary.guckert@gmail.com)]

**Sent:** Monday, February 20, 2012 3:00 PM

**To:**

**Subject:** Permission to use the LISTSERV

**Mary Guckert**

Feb 23

to

Hello,

Thank you for supporting the research! That is correct, there is no cost to participate. Also, do not send out the attachments in the previous email as I am having everything approved by HSRB before I begin. I will send you another email with the attachments as soon as I have approval.

Thank you,

Mary Guckert

**ORIGINAL HSRB  
LISTSERV ANNOUNCEMENT APPROVAL  
SPECIAL EDUCATION LISTSERV**

Inbox

**Mary Guckert**

Feb 17

to

Hello,

I am currently investigating cyber-bullying and students with disabilities. I would like to ask your permission to use your listserv to send out an announcement requesting participation from teachers, parents and students who would be willing to share their perceptions of cyber-bullying and social media aggression through a brief survey and an interview. I am also investigating the effects of a cyber-bullying problem solving strategy with students with disabilities that are in grades 5-8. I have attached an example of the list serve announcements.

Thank you,

Feb 17

I will let you use the listserv. You should say in your documents who has approved the study. M.

**Guckert**

Feb 20

to

Thank you! I will definitely add specific HSRB approval in the documents and will send them to you once I have approvals.

I appreciate your support in my research!



# ***University***

## **Student Assent Form**

### **Understanding Cyberbullying**

Mary Guckert

You are invited to take part in a research study about using cell phones and the internet to talk to your friends.

The reason for this study is to understand cyberbullying.

This study is being conducted by Mary Guckert. I am a student at University. I am doing this study to complete my doctoral degree.

If you agree to participate, you will participate in an audio taped interview in person. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. You will take the interview at a time that is best for you.

The content of the interview is about using things like cell phones and Facebook to talk to friends and get to know other people. It is also about cyberbullying.

**Risks**

There are few risks involved in participating in this study. However, you will be sharing information concerning cyberbullying. If there are questions that you are uncomfortable with answering during the interview, you may decide to stop participating. You may choose to skip some questions, but can continue to participate. In the event that you tell me that you plan to harm yourself or someone else in any way, or if you tell me about someone abusing or harassing you in some way, then we will stop the interview and I will contact your parent and a professional that can help you.

**Benefits**

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant. However, you will be sharing your knowledge about how teenagers your age are affected, in good and bad ways, by using digital technology.

**Confidentiality**

All data from personal interviews will be kept private. Your name will be replaced by a fake name or pseudonym. Pseudonyms will be used on all the data collection sheets. Codes corresponding with the pseudonyms will be assigned to your responses. Only the researcher know the codes. All person-identifying information will be deleted so that no one can be identified. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Only the researcher will have the keys.

The interview tapes will be kept safe by the Principal Investigator and the researcher, Mary Guckert.

The audio tapes will be kept in a safe place until the end of the study. Once the study has been completed, the audiotapes will be destroyed in one year.

**Participation**

*You may participate in this study if you are between the ages of 11 and 17 and in grades 6 through 12.* Your participation is voluntary. You may choose to stop interviewing at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to be a part of the interview at any time, there will be no penalty.

**Contact**

If you have any questions, you can contact Mary Guckert, PhD student at or at [mary.guckert@gmail.com](mailto:mary.guckert@gmail.com). Dr. may be reached at or. You may contact the Office of Research Subject Protections at if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

If you agree to participate in the study, please sign below:

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ORIGINAL HSRB

## ***University***

### **Parent Consent Form**

**Mary Guckert**

**Email:**

mary.guckert@gmail.com

**Dear Parents,**

My name is Mary Guckert and I am a student at University. In order to complete my degree requirements, I am conducting a research study investigating perceptions of cyberbullying among students in the middle school inclusive classroom setting. This study seeks to better inform the current research on intervention and prevention of cyberbullying in the inclusive classroom.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of my research is to examine the perceptions of special educators and students in secondary school inclusive classroom settings in order to better understand perceptions of cyberbullying and how they influence bystander behavior among peers in inclusive classroom settings. This study is in response to the rise in teens use of technology to use social media for bullying purposes. My interest in this topic stems from working with middle school students as a special and general educator and as a parent of a secondary school aged child who has had experiences with cyberbullying.

**Participants:**

I will be interviewing 6th through 12th grade students with and without disabilities in the inclusive classroom setting *that are between the ages of 11 and 17*. Only those students that return a signed parental consent form will be considered for participation in this study.

**Procedure:**

Students who agree to participate will be interviewed individually in person at their convenience and will be asked questions about their perceptions of how teens their age communicate via social media and about cyberbullying. Each student will have only one interview lasting approximately 60 minutes. **If the student indicates at any time that they want to stop the interview, they will be thanked for their participation and the interview will not continue.**

**RISKS**

There are minimal risks associated with your child's participation in this study. One aspect is that the interview questions concerning cyberbullying may result in psychological distress for the interviewee, depending on his/her involvement with the problem at the time. Another risk is that if your child were to reveal any information related to abuse or violence, then the proper authorities would have to take action. At any time during the interview, your child may skip questions, but may continue participating or may stop participating completely. Reports of your child of harm to self or others or of abuse or harassment will be reported to the parents and legal authorities.

**BENEFITS**

Although it may seem that your child will not benefit directly from participation, the data collected from this interview may increase educators' awareness of how to intervene and find better strategies to prevent cyberbullying and encourage prosocial social media behaviors. This research relies on and values teens' perceptions and seeks to empower them as the expert in the cyberbullying phenomenon. There are no benefits to participants for taking part in the research.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

The data in this study will be confidential. All data will be coded so that no one, including individual students or their families, can be identified. Pseudonyms will be used on all the data collection sheets. Codes corresponding with the pseudonyms will be assigned to your interview responses. Only the

researcher will have access to the codes. All person-identifying information will be deleted, so that no one can be identified. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, to which only the researcher will have the keys.

The audio tapes will be kept in a safe place until the completion of the study. Once the study has been completed, the audiotapes will be destroyed in one year.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Your child's participation in this project is voluntary. You may withdraw your child from the study at any time and for any reason. There is no penalty for not participating or withdrawing. There are no costs to you or any other party.

### **CONTACT**

Mary Guckert, a PhD student from University will carry out this research. She can be reached at [redacted]. Additional questions can be directed to her professor, at [redacted] or the Office of Research Subject Protections at [redacted] if you have questions about being a part of this research.

This research has been reviewed according to University procedures governing your participation in this research.

You received two copies of this consent form. If you choose to have your child participate, please sign below. Please keep one copy for your records and return the other.

**I have read this form and agree to participate in the study.**

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student's Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent Signature)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**ORIGINAL HSRB**

**RECRUITMENT EMAIL FOR LISTSERV**

**Attention Parents of Teens in grades 6 -12 who have Experiences with Cyberbullying:**

**In order to better understand cyberbullying and its harmful effects, this research study is seeking a teen perspective on cyberbullying.**

**If you have a child between the ages of 11-17 that attends an inclusive secondary classroom and would like to voice their experiences with cyberbullying, please contact me for a personal interview.**

**Cyberbullying and its effects are of serious concern among adolescents. Students with and without disabilities are especially at risk for either engaging in or experiencing incidents of cyberbullying or cyber-threats that are devastating and harmful in many ways. In order to better understand this phenomenon, the teen perspective is necessary.**

**As an educational researcher and PhD student at University, with your permission, I would like to ask your teen about their experiences with cyberbullying.**

**This Research Study has been approved and is being conducted by a PhD student at University. All personal identifying information will be kept confidential by the researcher.**

**Please contact me at**

**ORIGINAL HSRB**

**RECRUITMENT EMAIL FOR LISTSERV**

**Attention Special Education Teachers of Grades 6 - 12:**

**Please Help Provide Insight into CyberBullying and its Effects:  
Voice Your Experiences with CyberBullying**

**Cyberbullying and its effects are of serious concern among adolescents. Students with disabilities are especially at risk for either engaging in or experiencing incidents of cyber-bullying or cyber-threats that are devastating and harmful in many ways. Your experiences with cyberbullying are important in helping to understand the physical, psychological and educational effects of this form of bullying.**

**As an educational researcher and PhD student at University, I would like to ask how you feel this has affected you or your student's emotional and psychological well-being.**

**Please contact me to share your experiences with cyber-bullying in a personal interview.**

**This Research Study has been approved and is being conducted by a PhD student at University. All personal identifying information will be kept confidential by the researcher.**

**Please contact me at**



## **TEACHER CONSENT**

Original HSRB

***University***

### **Teacher Consent Form**

#### **Understanding Cyberbullying**

Mary Guckert

Email:

[mary.guckert@gmail.com](mailto:mary.guckert@gmail.com)

You are invited to take part in a research study investigating bystander behaviors in cyberbullying among students with and without disabilities in inclusive classroom settings. This study seeks to better inform the current research on intervention and prevention of cyberbullying.

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of my research is to examine special educators' perceptions of bystander behaviors of cyberbullying. Specifically, this research study seeks to understand special educators' perceptions of bystander behavior in cyberbullying among peers in grades 6-12 in inclusive classroom settings. This study is in response to the rise in teens use of technology to use social media for bullying purposes. My interest in this topic stems from working with middle school students as a special and general educator and as a parent of a secondary school aged child who has had experiences with cyberbullying.

If you agree to participate, you will participate in an interview that will be conducted in person with the researcher, Mary Guckert. It will take approximately 60 minutes. The interview will take place at a time that is most convenient for you. The interview can be conducted in your home, my home or in a coffee shop. The interview will be audiotaped.

#### **RISKS**

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

## BENEFITS

There are no benefits to participants for taking part in the research.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. All data will be coded so that no one can be identified. Pseudonyms will be used on all the data collection sheets. Codes corresponding with the pseudonyms will be assigned to your interview responses. Only the researcher will have access to the codes. All person-identifying information will be deleted, so that no one can be identified. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, to which only the researcher will have the keys. The audio tapes will be kept in a safe place until the completion of the study. Once the study has been completed, the audiotapes will be destroyed in one year.

## PARTICIPATION

If you are a special educator in an inclusive classroom setting in grades 6 - 12, you may participate in this study. Before participating in this interview, the consent form must be signed.

There is no penalty for not participating or withdrawing. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose to stop interviewing at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to be a part of the interview at any time, there will be no penalty. There are no costs to you or any other party.

## CONTACT

If you have any questions, you may contact Mary Guckert, a PhD student from University at Albany. Additional questions can be directed to her professor. You may contact the University Office of Research Subject Protections at if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

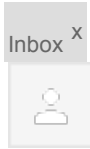
This research has been reviewed according to University procedures governing your participation in this research.

If you agree to participate in the study, please sign below:

Special Educator signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## PERMISSION TO USE LISTSERV FOR RESEARCH STUDY



**Mary Guckert**

Sep 13 (1 day ago)

to

**This message may not have been sent by: Mary.guckert@gmail.com**  
Hello:

Hello Dr.

My name is Mary Guckert and I am a PhD student investigating teachers' perceptions and concerns about cyberbullying for my dissertation research this semester.

I would like to ask permission to use the Secondary Program and listserv to send out an announcement requesting participation from teachers who would be willing to share their perceptions of cyberbullying through a personal interview. If you are not the right person to contact for this information, could you please send me the correct contact information.

Thank you,  
Mary Guckert  
PhD Candidate  
[Mary.guckert@gmail.com](mailto:Mary.guckert@gmail.com)



Sep 13 (1 day ago)

to me

If you have an announcement then please send it to me with your contact info in the message and I'll send it out. Please understand the students in this list are not practicing teachers but rather are studying to be teachers.

Sent from my iPhone



**Mary Guckert** mary.guckert@gmail.com

Sep 13 (1 day ago)

to

Thank you Dr. I will send the announcement once I have completed my dissertation proposal in October.

Mary Guckert

---



Sep 13 (1 day  
ago)

to me

Wonderful. Best to you on your research.

Sent from my iPhone

---



## REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO USE LISTSERV FOR DISSERTATION RESEARCH STUDY

Inbox x



**Mary Guckert** Mary.guckert@gmail.com

Sep 12 (2 days ago)

Hello

I hope you're doing well. I am investigating teachers' perceptions and concerns about cyberbullying for my dissertation research this semester. I would like to ask your permission to use your listserv to send out an announcement requesting participation from teachers who would be willing to share their perceptions of cyberbullying through a personal interview. I have attached an example of the listserv announcement.

Thank you,



Sep 12 (2 days ago)

to me

Mary,

Yes, we can distribute this for you, but please know that our list is only for the 400 doctoral students, and not for all students in the College, which probably numbers another 2000 (no, I don't know how to reach them, sorry).

Sep 17 (3 days ago)

me

THANK you - this is FABULOUS!

Mary - I have a troop of 17 8th graders, mostly who I will definitely share this with. How timely, we have been discussing the differences between bullying and being "mean" and snarky. This will be a great project. No, the Girl Scouts do not have any guidelines or restrictions, only the parent needs to sign a permission slip that their daughter can participate like other Girl Scout events.

Thanks



**Mary Guckert** Mary.guckert@gmail.com

Sep 13 (1 day ago)

Hello

Thank you for permission and the edit! I will send you an email with the listserv announcement once I have defended my proposal.

**Attention Teens in grades 6 – 12**

***Please Help Prevent CyberBullying!***

Provide Valuable Insight and Voice your Experiences and  
Concerns with the Growing Problem of ***Cyberbullying*** among  
Teens

As an educational researcher and PhD candidate in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], I am conducting research to examine cyberbullying  
from the perspective of teens in grades 6 -12. The information  
from this research may be utilized to increase awareness and  
help in the development of preventative strategies.

If you are interested in participating, I would like to invite you  
to share your experiences in a personal interview concerning  
cyberbullying.

**Please contact me at 703-930-0367 or  
[mary.guckert@gmail.com](mailto:mary.guckert@gmail.com)**

**Your experiences are valuable and will help inform school  
bullying interventions and educational policies!**

**Note:** This Research has been approved by the Human Subject Review Board at  
[REDACTED]. All personal identifying information will be kept confidential by the  
researcher.

## **APPENDIX B. STUDENT SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

### **Background Form:**

**Subject Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Race:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disability Status:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Warm up questions:**

1. Tell me about the way you contact or communicate with your friends during and after school.
2. Tell me about what you like about communicating this way.

Probe:

What do not like about communicating this way?

3. What are some of the ways you stay informed about what is happening with your friends (social events, parties, birthdays, etc.)?
4. Tell me about approximately how much time you spend communicating via cell phone and Internet daily.
5. What are some of the ways that you have seen others show that they do not like someone or disagree with someone during cell phone or Internet communication?

### **Section 1: Describing Perceptions of Cyberbullying**



**Part 1: Please read the following scenario and then I will ask you some questions:**

Lindsay has just moved to town from Oregon and enrolls in the local middle school. Very pretty, outgoing, and funny, she quickly wins the attention of a number of the school's football players--much to the chagrin of the school's cheerleaders. Bonnie, the head cheerleader, is concerned about Lindsay stealing away her boyfriend Johnny, who plays quarterback. With the help of her cheerleader friends, Bonnie decides to create a "We Hate Lindsay" Web site, where girls can post reasons why they hate Lindsay and why they think she should move back to Oregon. Soon, the entire school becomes aware of the site's Web address, and many others begin to post hurtful sentiments about Lindsay. Desperately wanting to make friends in a new town, Lindsay is crushed and begins to suffer from depression and a lack of desire to do anything aside from crying in bed.

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2009)

1. If you were Lindsay's friend, what might you say or do to help?

Probe: How would you address the mean girls?

What would you do if you were aware of the Web Site but did not know Lindsay very well?

What might prevent you from getting involved?

2. What are some situations like this that you or someone you know has experienced?

Probe: What are some of the things you did during this situation?

What are some of the things that your peers did?

What are some of the things that you did to problem solve the situation?

What are some of the things you did to support/help this person?  
What are some of the things you did to address the person that was doing the harassing?

3. Tell me about any strategies you know about to solve online harassment?

Probe: Where did you learn these strategies?

When did you learn them?

In your opinion, are most of your peers aware of these strategies?

Since you have learned about these strategies, tell me about how they influence your willingness to intervene or get involved when you witness online harassing and cruel behavior.

**Please read the following Scenario and I will ask you some questions:**

James has recently been friended on Facebook by some of his peers in class. However, when he goes on one of their Facebook pages, he recognizes that he is being joked about in a mean way because of his disability. The jokes are making mean comments that have to do with the extra help James receives in the classroom. Apparently, his peers were making fun of him and just pretending to be his friend. James is frustrated and saddened by the online comments his high school peers are making about his disability. He is embarrassed and humiliated and does not want to go to school because he will have to face them as well as others in the class that see it on Facebook too.

4. If you were James's friend, what might you say or do to help?

Probe: How would you feel about James?

What is your opinion about getting involved in this type of situation?

What are some of the things you would say to the peers pretending to be James' friend?

What are some of the things you would you do if you saw this but did not know James very well?

5. What kinds of situations like this have you or someone you know experienced?

Probe: In your opinion, why do you think this student was targeted?

In your opinion, why do you think the other students are harassing him?

What are the kinds of things you did to problem solve the situation?

What are the kinds of things you did to support or help this person?

What are the kinds of things your peers did during this situation?

**Please look at the following screen shot and tell me what you would do if you were witnessing this online?**



Retrieved from: [http://media.tumblr.com/tumblr\\_lp4roxgzA41qan36k.png](http://media.tumblr.com/tumblr_lp4roxgzA41qan36k.png)

6. How would you react if you saw this and were familiar with Stormie and the people involved that are putting up the hateful messages about Stormie?

Probe: What are the kinds of things you would do or say to any of the participants involved in this scenario?

How would you feel about Stormie?

How would you feel about the mean girls?

What are the kinds of things you would do to help Stormie?

Tell me about the role of the people that have “liked” this message.

What if this happened to someone in your class/school that you do not know very well?

7. Can you describe a screenshot like this that you have witnessed online?

Probe: How did you feel when you saw it?

What are the kinds of things you did when you saw it?

How do peers that are online normally respond to this type of situation (e.g., log off, stay silent, make a comment)?

What are the ways you normally respond to situations like this?

8. Tell me about times that you have witnessed someone in your class/school that was harassed online because of his or her ability (e.g. academic, athletic, artistic)?

Probe: Describe the characteristics of the person that was doing the harassing? (e.g. personality, ability, size, race, gender, difference)

Describe the characteristics of the person that was harassed (the victim) (e.g. personality, ability, size, race, gender, difference)?

Why do you think the person was a target of online harassment?

Why do you think this person harassed the person because of his or her ability?

9. Can you describe or tell me about a time that you have witnessed someone in your class/school that was harassed online because of a difference or disability?

Describe the characteristics of the student that was targeted?

Describe the characteristics of the student that was harassing and being mean (the bully)?

Why do you think this person was a target?

Why do you think this person was harassing (bullying)?

Retrieved from: [http://media.tumblr.com/tumblr\\_lp4roxgzA41qan36k.png](http://media.tumblr.com/tumblr_lp4roxgzA41qan36k.png)

## **Section 2: Describing Bystander Reactions**

10. How do you feel about getting involved when you see someone harassed online or via cell phone?

Probe: How do you feel others should get involved? (e.g. teachers, parents, peers)

How do you feel about the person who is doing the harassing?

How do you feel if this is an acquaintance or someone you do not know very well?

11. Do you think that peers that don't get involved help the bully (person harassing) or victim more and why?

Probe: Why do you think some peers stay out of it or don't get involved?

Why do some peers get involved?

12. Describe some ways you see peers stand up to peers that are harassing others online.

Probe: What happens when peers support the victim?

What is your opinion about posting positive messages in response to negative messages? (supporting the victim online)

How do you think this makes the person harassing (bully) feel?

13. What ways have you seen people "gang-up" on other people online?

Probe: Can you describe examples?

Can you tell me why this happens?

14. How do you and your peers talk about or share knowledge about cyberbullying episodes at school?

Probe: Tell me about ways cruel messages are spread online during school.

In your opinion, do you think that school rules on use of technology prevent students from spreading mean cruel messages or rumors about other students?

15. How do you feel about a classmate that is getting hurt or harassed online?

Probe: How responsible do you feel for helping them?

### **Section 3: Describing Factors That Influence Bystander Perceptions**

16. Think about your own experiences with online harassment/bullying and describe how these experiences influence how you do or do not get involved when you witness someone else that is harassed through computers, cell phones, or other electronic/digital devices.

Probe: Can you give me more details?

How do your personal experiences influence how you get involved?

17. Tell me why you may have wished that you helped someone or regretted not helping someone who was being attacked or harmed online?

Probe: Describe the person that you wished you would have helped?

Why do you think this person was the target of online bullying?

18. In your opinion, what prevents peers from getting involved when they witness online harassment or negative online behaviors among peers?

19. What is your opinion, about how teachers/school should get involved to help students who are being targeted by online cruelty and harassment?

20. How do you think you can help reduce cyberbullying?

21. If you can change the way you and your peers play a role in stopping cyberbullying, what would that look like?

22. If you could change the way teachers, school counselors got involved to help stop cyberbullying, what would that look like?

Probe: What would you change about how parents get involved?

23. Can you provide cyberbullying documentation or evidence such as social networking, email, text documentation, and/or newspaper articles that may contain cyberbullying perceptions and viewpoints?

## APPENDIX C. SEMISTRUCTURED GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Demographic Section

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Grade/Subject Taught: \_\_\_\_\_
3. General or Special Educator \_\_\_\_\_
4. Years of Experience Teaching: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Education: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Race: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Disability Category represented in classroom: \_\_\_\_\_

***Prior to conducting the interview: read this definition and tell the participant that this is the how a bystander is defined in this interview.***

**Definition of bystander of cyberbullying:** someone that has witnessed past or present occurrences of cyberbullying or someone who may possess information (e.g., overheard conversations, veiled threats, changes in behavior, and/or evidence of online aggression which may include screen shots, pictures, or verbal reports of online forms of aggression).



## **Section 1: Describing Perceptions of Cyberbullying Experiences**

1. Tell me about an online/cyber bullying experience or experiences you have witnessed with students in your classroom?

Probes:

Describe the characteristics of the student that was targeted?

Describe the characteristics of the student that was the bully?

Why do you think this student was a target?

Why do you think this student was a bully?

2. Describe how bystanders (teachers, students, school personnel, etc.) reacted to the cyberbullying incident?

Probes:

How did these bystanders get involved or stay uninvolved?

What is your opinion about this type of involvement?

What were their reactions to the victim?

3. Tell me about how you got involved in this particular cyberbullying incident?

Probes:

How did you address the bully?

How did you address the victim?

How did you address the bystanders?

4. Describe the types of cyberbullying in which your students are involved?

Probes:

Can you give me an example?

What is your opinion of how you should address this in your classroom?

5. Tell me about some experiences in which you have witnessed students who are involved in both forms of bullying (online and offline).

Probes:

Can you describe this more?

What is your opinion about why this occurs?

6. What is your opinion about the likelihood that students with disabilities become involved with cyberbullying?

Probes:

As victims?

As bullies?

As bystanders?

Can you give me an example or provide more detail?

7. How are peers with and without disabilities in your classroom involved in online bullying as bystanders?

Probes:

What do they do when they witness cyberbullying?

What do peers with disabilities do as bystanders?

What do peers without disabilities do as bystanders?

## **Section 2: Describing Bystander Reactions to Cyberbullying**

8. Describe what types of online bullying behavior you are most likely to report?

Probes:

When do you feel you should report/get involved?

How comfortable do you feel reporting/getting involved?

What influences your decision to intervene/report.  
What actions do you take when you do intervene/report.

Describe to whom you report these behaviors?

Can you give me an example of this?

9. How do you feel about intervening when your students experience cyberbullying situations?

Probes:

How do you feel about the victim?

How do you feel about the bully?

How do you feel your bystander behavior impacts your students' behavior?

10. What do you think your role is in helping your students through a cyberbullying problem?

How do feel about reporting online rumors, gossip, etc.?

Can you describe this more?

11. What do you think about contacting parents of victims and bullies?

Probes:

Can you explain this more?

12. Describe who handles cyberbullying problems in your school.

Probes:

Can you how this person handles cyberbullying?

13. What is your opinion about encouraging students to report cyberbullying episodes?

Probes:

How do you support reporting cyberbullying in your classroom?

How comfortable do you think your students feel in reporting to you?

### **Section 3: Describing Factors That Influence Bystander Perceptions**

14. Think back to your prior personal experiences with bullying and describe how they influence how you react when witnessing cyberbullying among your students.

Probes:

Can you describe this more?

15. Think back to your prior professional experiences with bullying and describe how these influence how you react when witnessing cyberbullying among your students?

Can you describe this more?

16. What are some things that you do to encourage a socially accepting and supportive environment among students in your classroom? (peer acceptance)

Probes:

How do you think this affects cyberbullying among students with and without disabilities?

Do you involve cyberbullying in class discussions/lesson time?

17. What do you believe your role is in influencing and/or encouraging your students to be proactive bystanders? (students that to stand up to the bully and support the victim)

Probes:

How about your role in encouraging other teachers?

How about your role in encouraging other parents?

Do you feel that bystanders that choose to stay out of it help the bully or the victim more?

Can you describe why?

18. Describe your school's policies and programs on cyberbullying.

Probes:

Can you give me some examples?

Can you tell me what anti-bullying policies they are based on?

Can you tell me about any staff training you have received?

19. Describe your awareness of your state's laws on cyberbullying?

Probes:

How did you become aware of these laws?

20. Can you describe some strategies you have learned about to help your students prevent or problem solve cyberbullying?

Probes:

Where did you learn these strategies?

21. How do you feel students with and without disabilities are affected by cyberbullying? (as victims, bullies, and bystanders)

Probes:

How about in terms of academic progress?

How about in terms of social acceptance among peers?

How about in terms of self esteem?

22. If you had the power to change the way your school got involved in preventing and intervening in cyberbullying, what would you make different?

## APPENDIX D. STUDENT ARTIFACTS

hes ugly, hate him

idk him who is that

14 days ago

your so ugly. i hate you. all you do is talk shit like get over yourself already.

Freshman hate you hahaha sucks. You care so much about what everyone thinks

okay? what you said made no sense and nahh really i dont care what you or anyone else says especially when your writing crap on my formspring

Tweets

Following

Followers

Favorites

Lists

Tweet to **Hot or Not**

**Hot or Not**

@

57 TWEETS

66 FOLLOWING

83 FOLLOWERS

Follow

Tweets

**Hot or Not**

Not Hot

Expand

**Hot or Not**

Not Hot

18 Apr

17 Apr

EJKWHGFGHDO'KW FUGLLYY BITCH

dude i know :( sucks

If youre a sophomore slut...thats cool with me. You slut.

Expand

5h

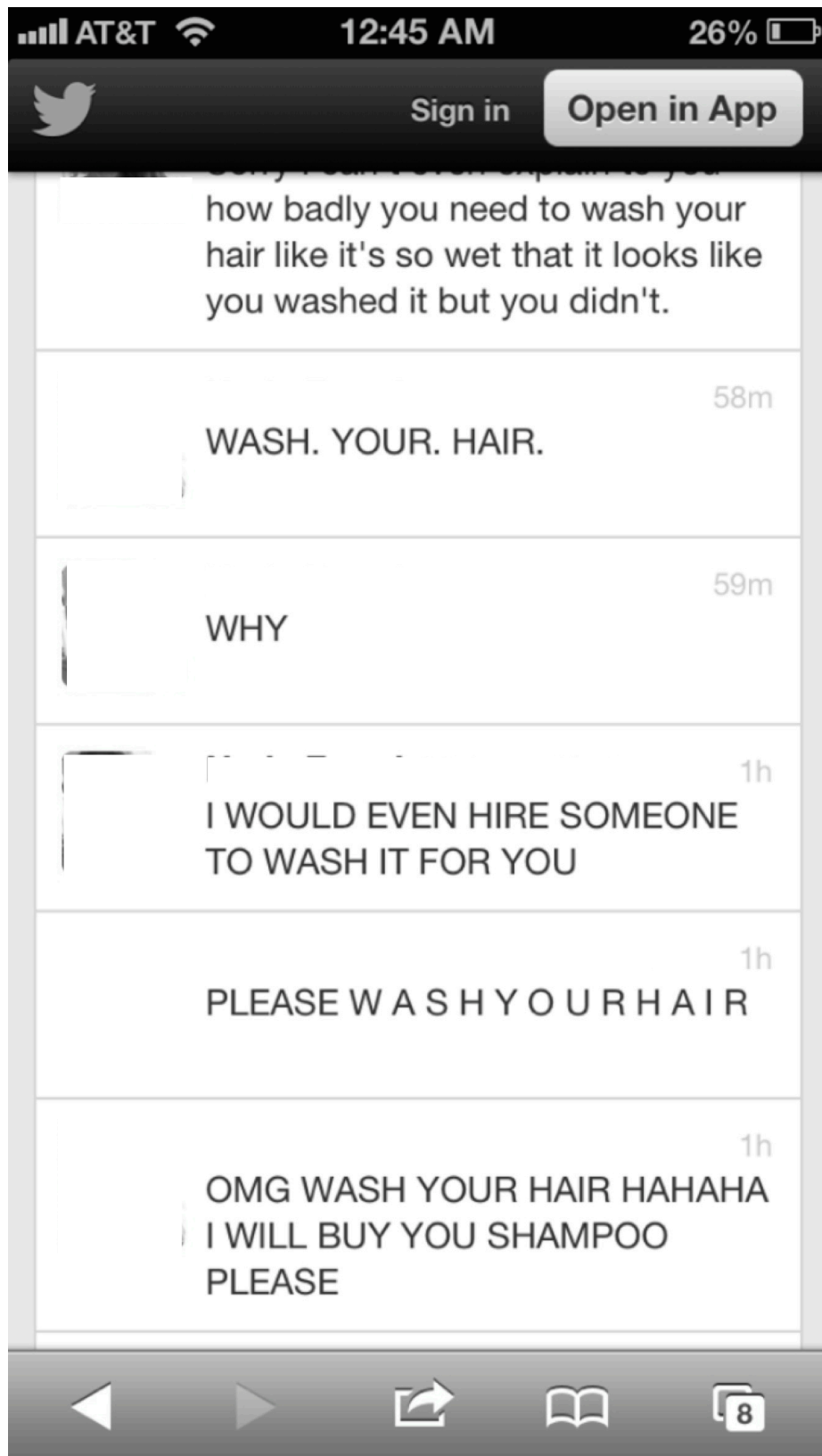
you have no friends and everybody hopes you move because legit nobody is your real friend.

why do you think of your self as "cool"? your not at all cool you suck at cheer you suck at lex WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE TO CONSIDER YOUR SEKLF COOL AS YOUR UGLY AS HELL!!!!!!!

you are a slut

336

















Profile summary

1

TWEET

135

FOLLOWING

10

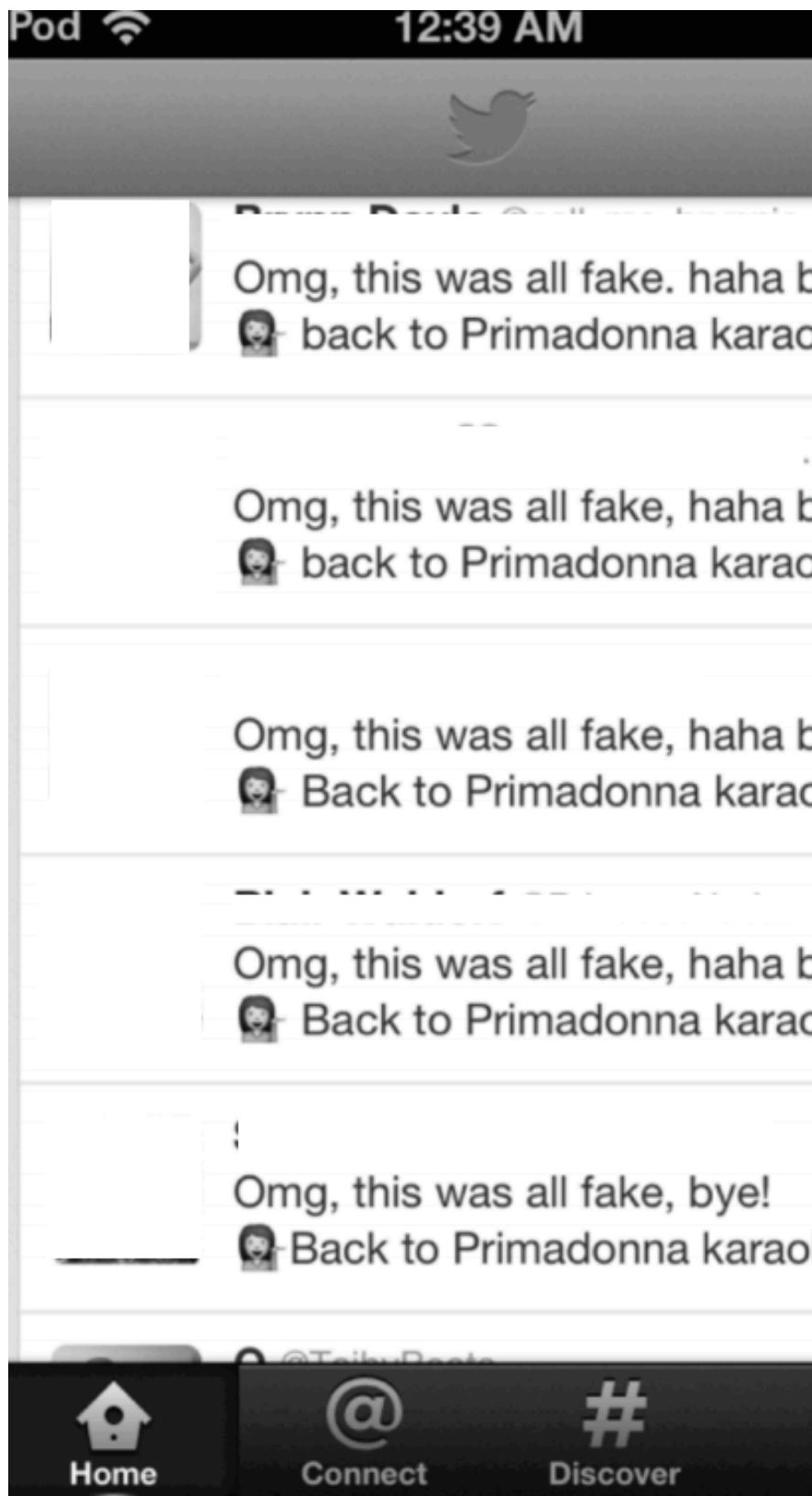
FOLLOWERS

Follow

3h

Each grade has a group of sluts.. It just happens to be the juniors have 3x as many in there group then all the other grades combined! #hoes

Details



## APPENDIX E. TEACHER ARTIFACTS

### **Stand Up To Bullying Week**

#### **Schedule:**

#### Tuesday

- Show the clip:
- [http://www.standupday.com/08/participants/index.php?target=pages&page\\_id=intro](http://www.standupday.com/08/participants/index.php?target=pages&page_id=intro)
- Start to answer the discussion questions (e.g., questions 1 and 2).

#### Wednesday

- Finish discussion questions (e.g., questions 3 and 4).

#### Thursday

- Complete follow-up activity on steps bystanders can take.
- Review pledge students will be asked to sign tomorrow.

#### Friday

- Wear pink day and sign a pledge to be an active bystander.

### **Stand Up To Bullying Week**

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Review the definition of bullying:
  - a. What is bullying?
    1. It is aggressive behavior or intentional harm-doing.
    2. It is carried out repeatedly and over time.
    3. It occurs within an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power.
  - b. What are some examples (i.e., forms) of bullying?
    - i. Tripping, hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting
    - ii. Name calling, teasing , verbally putting down others
    - iii. Telling lies about others or spreading rumors or gossip about others
    - iv. Purposely leaving someone out of activities
    - v. Intimidating/threatening behavior
    - vi. Having money or other things taken or damaged
    - vii. Cyber bullying



2. What are the harmful effects of bullying?
  - a. Being afraid to come to school or inability to focus on school work
  - b. Poor grades
  - c. Feelings of hopelessness and sadness
  - d. Difficulty sleeping at night
  - e. Excessive worrying
  - f. Negative self-image
  - g. Health problems (e.g., stomach aches, headaches)
3. Are there consequences of bullying at school?
  - a. **YES!** As stated in the HANDBOOK: The following violations shall result in disciplinary action (at the discretion of the principal):
  - b. **Regulation (Page 19)** “Conduct, including fighting, making threats, stalking, or intimidating, including bullying, that endangers the well-being of other students or school staff members.”
4. Reviewing the role of *bystanders*:
  - a. What did the students in the video clip do as *bystanders* to bullying?
  - b. What is the definition of a *bystander*?
    - i. On lookers to bullying who can help the person being bullied.
  - c. What actions can you take as a *bystander* to bullying?
    - i. “To reduce bullying, it is important to change the climate of the school and the social norms with regards to bullying. It must become “uncool” to bully, “cool” to help out students who are bullied, and normative for staff and students to notice when a child is bullied or left out.”
      1. Let the bully know it is not ok (e.g., verbally, not laughing [as well as not engaging in other non-verbal or more subtle cues], offering to help the person being bullied).
      2. Encourage other bystanders to be active by sending the same message that it is not ok.
      3. Report the behavior.
        - a. Review emphasis on telling an adult-this is a good strategy for bystanders, as well as kids who believe they are being bullied.
        - b. Review difference between tattling/telling on someone and reporting.
          - i. **Tattling or Telling on Someone** is done with the intent of getting someone in trouble (e.g., telling the teacher that another student did not complete his/her homework).

- ii. **Reporting** is done to keep you or others safe (e.g., I saw another student intentionally push someone in the hallway).

- 1. Parents
- 2. Trusted family member
- 3. Teacher
- 4. Administrator
- 5. Counselor
- 6. Social Worker
- 7. School Psychologist
- 8. Nurse
- 9. Support Staff
- 10. Police

**Stand Up To Bullying Week**  
**Specific Steps of Bystanders:**

Ask students to put what they have learned to use.

- 1. Come up with specific steps that students can take as bystanders.
- 2. It may be helpful to have students come up with different actions they can take based on various scenarios (i.e., referring to different forms bullying can take) they come up with:
  - i. Tripping, hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting
  - ii. Name calling, teasing , verbally putting down others
  - iii. Telling lies about others or spreading rumors or gossip about others
  - iv. Purposely leaving someone out of activities
  - v. Intimidating/threatening behavior
  - vi. Having money or other things taken or damaged
  - vii. Cyber bullying
- 3. If students are struggling, it may be helpful to get them started with examples:
  - i. Example 1: At lunch you see a group of students tell another student that he/she cannot sit next to them and now the student is sitting alone at your table-how can you help?
  - ii. Example 2: You see a student trip another student and he/she drops all of his/her books-how can you help?

## **Cheerleading Contract 2012-2013**

**As a member of the Cheerleading program I agree to the following:**

### **Personal Conduct**

- All Cheerleaders will be held to the standard set forth in the Parent Student Handbook.
- Any violation of the guidelines and regulations of the Parent Student Handbook could lead to dismissal from the Cheer Program.
- Students must meet all requirements set forth by for academic eligibility
- All athletes must “friend” Cheerleading on Facebook and represent themselves on social networking sites in a manner that is congruent with the standards set forth in the Parent Student Handbook.
- Please review the Expectations hand out

### **Points to Remember**

- Be ready at all practices, wearing proper shoes and practice clothes, and with hair tied back.
- Have running shoes, ankle weights, poms, and any necessary braces with you at all practices.
- Arrive 15 minutes before all scheduled events.
- If you are going to be late, notify your coach and a team captain via text message or phone call.
- Turn off your cell phones before any cheer event begins.
- No gum or jewelry. All piercings must be taken out for events and practices.
- Attitudes must be positive and upbeat! You must always be willing to work and cooperate at both practices and games.
- Everyone must have a solid working knowledge of all cheer, chants, and dance routines.
- Be an active listener and accept constructive criticism.

### **Attendance**

- All practices, games, and fundraising events are **MANDATORY**. This includes **ALL SUMMER PRACTICES AND PRACTICES OVER WINTER BREAK**.
- Cheerleaders must be in attendance at school to be eligible to participate in practice or performances. The only excused absences are medical (requires note from doctor) and school activities.
- All absences, other than if you are ill, must be prearranged through the coach **AT LEAST ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE**. **Athletes must discuss the absence with a coach and a note from a parent is required** (emails are fine).
- If you get sick during the school day and are sent home by the school nurse, you must notify the coach that you will not be attending practice before the start of practice that

day (call, text message, or email). **If you are not sent home, you are expected to come and watch practice.**

- Doctor's appointments and work commitments **ARE NOT an excusable reason** for missing any cheerleading event. Schedule appointments and work around the cheerleading schedule. Note: We understand that some doctor's appointments are difficult to schedule—if that is the case please let us know ONE WEEK in advance if a doctor's appointment will conflict with practice or a game.
- **Those missing practices that have valid excuses can still be removed from a routine, position or stunt, due to not physically being available to practice.**

### **Materials/Camp**

- All participants are required to purchase all mandatory materials/camp costs for the 2012-2013 cheer season.
- Each parent will be responsible for writing a \$150 returnable check for the cheerleading uniform. Proper care and return of the uniform is expected in order to get the check back at the end of the season and not have it cashed. They need to be SPOTLESS to get the check returned.
- You may not lend your uniform to anyone for any reason.
- You may not wear your issued uniform for any reason other than for a sponsored cheerleading event. (ex: Halloween)
- Camp and materials payments are **NON-REFUNDABLE**. Under no circumstance will money be refunded—we have to pay for everything upfront and costs are based on the number of people we have in the program.

### **Game Expectations**

- Arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled meeting time.
- Have complete uniform **at all games**. This includes all bows, warm-ups, poms, shoes, gloves, bloomers etc. If you do not have the proper uniform, you may be benched during the game.
- Remain in the cheering area during the game. You may take care of personal business during halftime.
- **DO NOT** socialize with players or crowd members during the game.
- Absolutely no cell phone use during the game.
- Varsity Game Team – You must be able to do a standing back handspring to cheer at games. You will not be allowed to cheer games until you can perform the skill safely.

### **Tumbling**

- All Cheerleaders will attend a mandatory tumbling class each week on the scheduled day and time.

- Members will show the same respect for the tumbling coaches as they would to any other coach/ administrator.
- All Cheer program policies will be upheld even at an off campus practice.
- The monthly rate for attending tumbling is \$60 per month and **MUST BE PAID ON THE ASSIGNED DATE** (see attached handout regarding payment schedule).

### **Fundraising**

- **ALL TEAM MEMBERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES.** We fundraise as a program and participation in fundraising is key to the continued success of the program.
- **JV TEAM MEMBERS** will fundraise for the first half of all home Varsity football games. They will sit together in the stands for the remainder of the game and support the football team.
- **NO ONE IS PERMITTED TO FUNDRAISE ON THEIR OWN**

**I have read and understand this contract. I have also reviewed all calendars and will attend all cheerleading events.**

Athlete's Signature	Date
Parent or Guardians Signature	Date

DATE:	PAYMENT
<b>JV Tumbling is on Thursdays from 4 – 6pm</b>	
<b>SEPTEMBER 6<sup>th</sup></b> <small>No Tumbling on 9/27 due to a game</small>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>OCTOBER 11<sup>th</sup></b> <b>No Tumbling on 10/4 due to a game</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>NOVEMBER 1st</b> <b>(Gym closed 11/22—Thanksgiving, no practice)</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>DECEMBER 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$195</b>

**PAYMENT DATES—Varsity Game Team 2012**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>PAYMENT</b>
<b>Varsity Game Team Tumbling Mondays 4-6pm</b>	
<b>SEPTEMBER 10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>OCTOBER 1<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>NOVEMBER 1<sup>st</sup></b> <b>For basketball season – Varsity Game Team will</b> <b>tumble on Thursdays</b> <b>(Gym closed 11/22—Thanksgiving, no practice)</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>DECEMBER 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$210</b>

**Optional Tumbling Classes Over the Summer for JV/Varsity Game Team:**

**6 Classes on Tuesdays from 1 – 3pm starting June 26, 2012 – July 31<sup>st</sup>.**

**\$15 Per class (pay when you arrive) or**

**Optional Discount Payment: \$80 onetime payment for all 6 classes due June 26, 2012.**

3 hours ago via mobile

×

don't be a middle school teacher if u cant handle having 90 students to deal with!!!

Like · Comment · Share

2 people like this.

Amen

3 hours ago via mobile · Like

Which one is it?

2 hours ago via mobile · Like

×

2 hours ago via mobile · Like

I have an issue with one too. She made carter show the class his magic mike dance move in gym and then sent him to ISS for vulgar actions. He's 13! They're all that way at 13!

2 hours ago via mobile · Like

wouldn't b too happy about that either

2 hours ago via mobile · Like

Write a comment...

Wednesday via mobile

Activity Recent

liked

is going to A Day To Pray.

is now friends with 10 other people.

More Recent Activity

31

Events December

Joined 1 Event

Christmas Celebration

With 22 other guests

8 hours ago

Come join me and lets eat breakfast — at

Can you provide any cyberbullying artifacts such as screen shots of the cyberbullying that you witnessed or any school laws, rules that your school lists about cyberbullying. (any names will be kept confidential)

County resources:

<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/index2.html>

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/cyberbullying/index.aspx>

[http://www.isafe.org/about?ch=op&sub\\_id=media\\_cyber\\_bullying](http://www.isafe.org/about?ch=op&sub_id=media_cyber_bullying)

<http://www.brainpop.com/technology/computersandinternet/digitaletiquette/>

<http://www.cyberbullyhelp.com/>

They also offer other bullying resources here:

here is also a link to our code of behavior that is examined by teachers and presented to students the first week of school:



**Anti-Bullying Contract  
Student Agreement**

Everyone has the right to feel physically and emotionally safe at school. I will do everything I can personally, as a member of my school's community, to create and preserve a physically and emotionally safe environment.

**Student's responsibility:**

I commit that I will not bully my peers. When I witness bullying, I will report it to an adult!

---

Student's Name

---

Grade

**Start Fresh, Stay Fresh checklist:**

- ☐ I put my hand on the banner to let others know that I will stop bullying
- ☐ I attended the Bullying assembly, and am now aware of the seriousness of bullying.

**PRIZES!**

- Signing this contract and putting your hands on the Start Fresh, Stay Fresh banner gives you a wristband.
- Attending the assembly or attending the mixer earns you a pair of sunglasses.

### **Classroom Activities Bullying Discussion**

- 1.) What were your thoughts on the toe the line activity? Were you surprised to see what you and your classmates shared in common?**
- 2.) How did you feel when there were other classmates on the line with you?**
- 3.) Do you think this school has a bullying problem?**
- 4.) Why do you think people bully others?**
- 5.) What can we do as a school to prevent bullying?**

### **Toe the Line Questions**

**To the line if you...**

**Ate breakfast this morning**

**If you are wearing jeans**

**Have a sibling**

**Listen to Drake**

**Play a sport or are in a club at Robinson**

**Come from a family of divorce**

**Or someone you know are or has been in an abusive relationship**

**Have lost a loved one**

**If you know someone who has/had cancer**

**Are or know someone who is/has been depressed**

**Know someone who attempted suicide**

**Have ever discriminated for your race, gender or religion**

**Have you ever felt bad for the way you treated someone**

**Know someone in this hallway has ever made you feel inferior**

Hello! Student Government is starting an anti-bullying campaign called Our objective is to raise awareness of the growing bullying problem, both nationally and here in our own school. In order to do so, we are hoping to hear anonymous first-hand encounters with bullying from students across the school. Please take a couple minutes to answer the following questions. Give as much or as little information as you wish.

Have you ever witnessed bullying? What happened? What role did you play (bully, bystander, the one being bullied)? Where did this incident take place?

Again, feel free to write as much or as little as you wish. Once you have completed your answer, please check one of the answers below, sign the bottom and staple this sheet on top.

☐ I give permission for my writing to be used for educational purposes, including my name and grade IF provided.

☐ I give permission for my writing to be used for education purposes, but do not release my name or grade.

☐ I do not give permission for my writing to be used for educational purposes.

Also, please check the following if it applies:

☐ I am interested in sharing my story in a public venue, whether it be during an assembly or recorded.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Bullying Examples

### Verbal:

- Teasing/Taunting/Mocking
- Name-calling
- Spreading Rumors
- Harsh comments (including in joking situations)
- Sexual comments

### Physical:

- Pushing/Shoving
- Kicking
- Causing intended physical harm
- Sexual harassment

### Emotional:

- Ignorance
- Any form of verbal bullying
- Racism/Sexism

### Cyber:

- Spreading online rumors
- Harsh comments (including on pictures of others)

### **Bullying Targets:**

- Race/Ethnicity
- Sexuality
- Age
- Gender
- Religion

Student Government is hosting a bullying-awareness campaign called “.” Our objective is to raise awareness of the growing bullying epidemic, both nationally and here in our own community, and become agents for change!

**Monday, February 7 (Blue Day)**

- *Class Activity* - A representative from SGA will be visiting your room during 3<sup>rd</sup> period this week to discuss the issue in a smaller venue
- *Lunchtime Activity* - Sign the banner outside the cafeteria for a Wristband!
- Buy a *Carnation-Gram* at lunch!
  - All grams will be delivered the following Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup> (Valentine’s Day!). Send one to your best friend, significant other, favorite teacher or to make amends!

**Tuesday, February 8 (Gold Day)**

- *Class Activity* - A representative from SGA will be visiting your room during 3<sup>rd</sup> period this week to discuss the issue in a smaller venue
- *Lunchtime Activity*- Sign the banner outside the cafeteria for a wristband!
- Buy a *Carnation-Gram* at lunch!
  - All grams will be delivered the following Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup> (Valentine’s Day!). Send one to your best friend, significant other, favorite teacher or to make amends!

**Wednesday, February 9 (Blue Day)**

- *Class Activity* - A representative from SGA will be visiting your room during 3<sup>rd</sup> period this week to discuss the issue in a smaller venue
- *Lunchtime Activity* - Sign the banner outside the cafeteria for a wristband!
- Buy a *Carnation-Gram* at lunch!
  - All grams will be delivered the following Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup> (Valentine’s Day!). Send one to your best friend, significant other, favorite teacher or to make amends!
- *Club Cooperation Mixer*
  - Learn about other clubs that are passionate about anti-bullying or are frequent targets of bullying
- *7<sup>th</sup> Period Assembly*
  - Featuring speakers, inspirational clips and ways that you can stop this national issue
  - Receive a pair of sunglasses for attending - encourage your 7<sup>th</sup> period teacher to attend!

**Thursday, February 10 (Gold Day)**

- *Class Activity* - A representative from SGA will be visiting your room during 3<sup>rd</sup> period this week to discuss the issue in a smaller venue
- *Lunchtime Activity* - Sign the banner outside the cafeteria for a wristband!
- Buy a *Carnation-Gram* at lunch!
  - All grams will be delivered the following Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup> (Valentine’s Day!). Send one to your best friend, significant other, favorite teacher or to make amends!

**Friday, February 11 (Blue Day) -BLUE OUT!**

- *Blue Out*- Wear blue, your wristbands, and sunglasses to demonstrate your commitment to end bullying!
- *Class Activity* - A representative from SGA will be visiting your room during 3<sup>rd</sup> period this week to discuss the issue in a smaller venue
- *Lunchtime Activity* - Sign the banner outside the cafeteria for a wristband!
- Buy a *Carnation-Gram* at lunch!
  - All grams will be delivered the following Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup> (Valentine's Day!). Send one to your best friend, significant other, favorite teacher or to make amends!
- *7<sup>th</sup> Period Assembly*
  - Featuring speakers, inspirational clips and ways that you can stop this national issue
  - Receive a pair of sunglasses for attending - encourage your 7<sup>th</sup> period teacher to attend!

**MIDDLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES NEXT WEEK!**

•

## Toe the Line Lesson Plan

### OBJECTIVE:

It can be difficult for students to open up in front of their peers and their teachers. The Line Game gives students the opportunity to speak volumes without ever saying a word. Sharing information builds community within the classroom and students discover commonalities where they least expect them.

### ACTIVITY/PROCESS:

1. Before you begin the game, establish ground rules so that students feel more secure about revealing their vulnerabilities. Students should not talk, make faces or gestures, interact with each other, or share specific details in between the questions. Everyone must stand, everyone must participate, and everyone must walk to the line when it is relevant.
2. Move all chairs and desks against the wall to create space within the classroom. The activity may also be completed outside or in the hallway. Perform the activity where there is a line to use as a visual.
3. Separate the class randomly into two groups. Have the two groups create parallel lines facing one another across the center line.
4. Explain to the students that a series of questions will be asked. If the answer to the question is “yes”, the student should toe the line. If the answer is “no,” than no movement is required.
5. Follow the sample statements in order from the list provided. Questions progressively become more personal to allow time for students to become comfortable with the game.

### Question Sets:

1. Set One: Day-to-Day activities
2. Set Two: School, Family, Community
3. Set Three: Personal Experiences and Sensitive Subject Matter\*

\*PERSONAL EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS: When asking these personal questions, phrase the question by saying “You or someone you know...”

- a. Example: Have you or someone you know ever been cyber-bullied?

## Follow Up: Journaling

1. Have students complete a journal regarding the activity.

Prompt: How did you feel standing on the line? How did you feel when there were only a few people on the line? Were you ever by yourself, and if so, how did you feel? How did you feel if someone else was alone on the line? What did you learn about yourself and others from participating in this activity?

### **Line Game Questions**

Toe the line if:

#### **Day to Day Activities:**

1. You ate breakfast this morning.
2. You pressed the snooze button on your alarm clock this morning.
3. You like Lady Gaga/Eminem/Tao Cruz?
4. You have a dog. Cat? Reptile?
5. You have a secret crush on someone.
6. You have a boyfriend or girlfriend.
7. You like the show "Jersey Shore".
8. You have seen "Avatar".
9. You love Chipotle.
10. You love McDonald's French fries.
11. You like the Redskins/Red Sox.

#### **Set Two: Community, School, Family**

1. You have at least one brother or sister.
2. You were born in another country.
3. You live with only your mom or only your dad.
4. You have an adult in your life you trust.
5. You have ever been judged because of your ethnicity or religion.
6. You will be the first in your family to graduate high school or college.
7. You speak another language at home or a parent speaks another language at home.
8. You have been received an award!
9. You have or will try out for a sports team at Robinson.
10. You play an instrument or sing in chorus.
11. You acted in a play.
12. You are an artist.

#### **Set three: Personal Experiences: Highly Sensitive**

1. You have ever done something you knew was wrong just to impress your friends.
2. You have a family member or a close friend who has a disability. (This can include yourself.)
3. You know someone who has been either emotionally or physically abused.
4. You have lost a close friend or family member.
5. You have ever wished you were somebody else.
6. You or someone you know has been picked on or bullied.
7. You have family member who is overseas involved in a war conflict.



8. You have feared for the safety of a friend or family member.
9. You do not get along with a family member.
10. You come from a family of divorce.
11. You or someone you know has had or has cancer.
12. You have felt bad for the way you treated someone.
13. You have had a friend or family member live with a harmful disease or condition.
14. You have had a friend involved in drug or alcohol abuse.
15. You have ever been threatened.
16. You have felt like you were alone.
17. You have ever wished to be noticed or heard.
18. You are scared of losing friendships.
19. You've wished you could start over on something or with someone.
20. You have lost a pet.
21. You wish you had a better relationship with your parents.

Bullying Survey Questions

1. Are you a boy or a girl? Boy      Girl
2. Have you been bullied? Yes      No
3. Have you witnessed bullying? Yes      No, I have not witnessed bullying
4. If yes, did you do anything about it? Yes      No
5. If you witnessed bullying, who would you seek help to? Teacher/Counselor  
Student      Parent

Which type of bullying have you witnessed and or experienced? Verbal   Physical  
Cyber

Below is an example of a lesson sent from our Dean of Students:

Bullying and more recently cyber bullying have been a topic of discussion in small groups and with individuals more often than not. A well known social network- Facebook has unfortunately has been the root of gossip, unpleasant postings and chaos among many students that has navigated itself into our classrooms and impacted the learning environment for some.

Today's advisory will be centered around the following clip: <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6343317n&tag=related;photovideo>.

Please play the clip twice and open the floor for discussion surrounding the effects of bullying, how we can prevent it and so forth. Several students think that Facebook is private, which it is not and the postings and pictures can lead to not being accepted into college. After the discussion, please read the article: *Students applying to college may want to check out their facebook page first*.

## APPENDIX F. SINGLE CASE WORKSHEET

### Worksheet 3. Analyst's Notes while reading a case report

Case ID

\_\_\_\_\_

Synopsis of case:	Case Findings: I.  II.  III. IV.
Unique:	Possible excerpts for cross-case report: Page Page Page
Relevance of case for cross-case Themes: Theme 1 _____ Theme 2 _____ Theme 3 _____ Theme 4 _____ Theme 5 _____ Theme 6 _____ Theme 7 _____	
1.	
Commentary:	

## APPENDIX G. CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Worksheet 5. A Map on which to make Assertions for the Final Report

Merged Findings	From Which Cases	1	2	3	4
Merged Finding 1:					
Merged Finding 2:					
Merged Finding 3					
Merged Finding 4					
Merged Finding 6					

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## REFERENCES

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Mary Guckert grew up in Smithfield, North Carolina. She received her Bachelor of Individualized Study in American Literary History from George Mason University in 2008. She went on to receive her Master of Science in Educational Psychology from George Mason University in 2010. She has coauthored several research publications during her graduate studies at George Mason University.

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