

Cyberbullying: Victimization Through Electronic Means

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Cyberbullying is a 21st Century phenomenon that represents a problem of significant magnitude in schools across the country. It is most prevalent in middle schools and is rapidly increasing among adolescents who exist in a "wired" culture. Schools have not been equipped with appropriate ways to deal with this new form of aggression which often takes place outside of school, yet it can disrupt the victim's education and feeling safe at school. School districts are now being challenged to develop policies to address this issue as it has been noted that it can cause psychological damage that has been equated to violence on school grounds and has been reported as the cause of teen suicide. This review of literature will describe various forms of cyberbullying, a portrayal of victims and offenders, prevention programs, and policy implications for school districts.

In the late 1960s problems with school yard bullying became a significant issue among teachers, parents, and the mass media in Scandinavian countries. In 1982, it was reported in a Norway news publication that three young adolescents committed suicide, which was believed to be the result of severe bullying (Olweus, 1993). Dan Olweus, who was born in Sweden, has been recognized as the Founding Father of research on bully/victim problems and has spent nearly 30 years researching this topic. His 1970 research project is "regarded as the first scientific study of bully/victim problems in the world," (Clemson University, 2003, ¶ 2) and he is the creator of the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* (OBPP). The definition of bullying or victimization supplied by Olweus is "A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself" (1993, p. 7). Students who bully desire power over another and take pleasure in causing others to suffer; while students who are bullied may experience depression, low self-esteem, health problems, poor grades, and suicidal thoughts. Additionally, bullies are more likely than non-bullies to get into frequent fights, steal and vandalize property, drink alcohol and smoke, report bad grades, perceive a negative climate at school, and carry a weapon (OBPP, ¶ 4).

Today's young adolescents are often referred to as being "wired" as they appear to be constantly connected to a computer, cell phone, iPad®, gaming device, and other various technologies. This generation, often referred to as the *Internet Generation*, has spent their entire lives with the World Wide Web. Whereas bullying is not a new phenomenon, cyberbullying has become the newest form of bullying. Cyberbullies reach their victims through emails, text messaging, cell phones, chat rooms, camera phones, web sites, blogs, interactive gaming, or other electronic means (Brown, Jackson, & Cassidy, 2006; STOP cyberbullying, 2011). Several researchers (Beasley, 2004; Berson, Berson, & Ferron,

2002; Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000, 2001; Patchin, & Hinduja, 2006; Trolley, Hanel, & Shields, 2006; Willard, 2005; Ybarra, & Mitchell, 2004a, 2004b) (as cited in Mason, 2008) have offered descriptions to define cyberbullying "as an individual or a group 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 using technological means" (¶ 2). Willard (2010) offered a more current definition by defining cyberbullying as "the use of electronic communication technologies to intentionally engage in repeated or widely disseminated acts of cruelty towards another that results in emotional harm" (¶ 1).

Combined, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and Willard (n.d.) identified six common forms of cyberbullying and electronic aggression. They both listed *Harassment* as repeatedly sending messages that are considered rude, offensive, insulting, nasty, or mean. *Denigration* has the purpose of damaging someone's reputation by posting derogatory gossip and rumors about a person. *Flaming* is considered online fighting by sending/posting messages with angry and vulgar language. *Outing and Trickery* includes sharing embarrassing information or images online and tricking the target to reveal embarrassing information, and then the bully forwards it online. *Impersonation* is when the bully pretends to be someone else by breaking into an email or social networking account and posts vicious or embarrassing material to get the person in trouble or danger. Willard's other form of cyberbullying included *Exclusion* which is intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.

Researchers and web sites focusing on cyberbullying (OBPP, n.d.; Media Awareness Network, n.d.; Beale & Hall, 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a [as cited in Brown, Jackson, & Cassidy, 2006]; Kowalski & Limber, 2007) exposed cyberspace anonymity as a unique characteristic which traditional schoolyard bullying did

not have. In polls taken by Netbullies.com with close to 2000 students ages 9 to 14, showed that more than half of the respondents experienced netbullying or had a close friend who did or had netbullied another. The STOP cyberbullying web site lists two types of cyberbullying: direct attacks, which are messages sent directly by the bully; and cyberbullying by proxy, which engages others to help cyberbully without the accomplice's knowledge. It was written that "cyberbullying by proxy is the most dangerous kind of cyberbullying because it often gets adults involved in the harassment and people who don't know they are dealing with a kid or someone they know" (p. 1, ¶ 1).

Cyberbully Research Studies

In a study on electronic bullying at the middle school level conducted by Kowalski and Limber (2007), gender differences and grade level differences were found between and among the participants. The researchers found that more girls than boys were victims of bullying. Of the 1,915 girls participating in the study, 15.1% reported being bullied; whereas of the 1,852 boys participating, 7% reported being a victim to bullying. When the participants were asked if they had electronically bullied others at least once in the past two months, 4.6% of the boys and 3.6% of the girls answered in the affirmative. Their study also exposed that just over 12% of the 8th and 7th graders were bullied, and just over 8% of 6th graders. Additionally, just under 5% of 8th graders responded they were the bully; just over 4% of the 7th graders, and just below 3% of the 6th graders. This study showed that victims were most frequently bullied through instant messaging, followed by chat rooms, e-mail messages, and websites. The bullies reported using instant messaging most frequently, followed by chat rooms and e-mails. The authors of this study also found that more than half of the victims did not know the identity of the person(s) who bullied them. They stated, "not knowing who is doing the bullying may leave a child wondering if each person he or she meets was potentially the perpetrator" (S28 ¶ 4), and they expressed, "the enemy we know is often less frightening than the enemy we do not know (S28 ¶ 4).

A research study by Wolak, Mitchell, and Finkelhor (2007) included 1,499 young adolescents (ages 10 – 17) with the purpose to compare youth harassed by peers they knew (known peers) and those harassed by people they met online but did not know in person (online-only contacts). The study revealed that 9% of participants had been harassed online within the past year; 43% were harassed by known peers, and 57% by online-only contacts. Although gender of many of the online-only contacts was unknown, the authors reported that 45% of known peer harassers were female, compared to 16% of online-only contacts. Results from the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), which was included in their study, indicated that those harassed by known peers were also "more likely to report high conflict with parents, physical or sexual abuse, offline interpersonal victimization, and aggressive behavior and social problems as measured by the CBCL" (S54, ¶

3). Their study also identified a two year age difference between the harassers and the ones they harassed. Additionally, they reported that messages posted or sent for others to see were done by more of their known peers, 58%; as compared to 18% by online-only contacts.

Research conducted by Juvonen and Gross (2008), reported that of 1,454 young adolescents (12 – 17 year olds), 72% experienced at least one incident of bullying in cyberspace. Those bullied 1 – 3 times online over the last year was 41%, 13% reported 4 – 6 incidents over the year, and 19% experienced 7 or more incidents. It is noted that this investigation recruited its participants through a teen Web site where they were invited to answer questions about their communicating experiences using the Internet and cell phones. Additionally, the authors did not use the word "bullying" or "cyberbullying" in their questions; rather they used "mean things" which was defined as "anything that someone does that upsets or offends someone else, including name-calling, threats, sending embarrassing/private pictures, and sharing private information without permission" (p. 499). Respondents described online forms of mean things as insults (66%), password thefts (33%), threats (27%), privacy violation – cutting and pasting (25%), and sharing embarrassing pictures (18%). Instant messaging and message boards were the two most used tools in communicating mean things, and "73% were 'pretty sure' or 'totally sure' of the identity of the perpetrator. Additionally, 51% reported experiencing online bullying by schoolmates, 43% by someone they knew from online only, and 20% by someone known off-line but not from school" (p. 502).

Cox Communication in partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children®, and John Walsh conducted a survey (2009) with 655 teens (13 – 18 year olds) in the United States which included questions focusing on cyberbullying. Their findings revealed that 59% of the girls would fit the profile of a cyberbully compared to 41% of boys. Cyberbullies spent 38.4 hours per week on line as compared to 26.8 hours for teens overall. They stated that 19% of their participants reported being bullied, 10% indicated they bullied someone else, 27% reported having seen or heard of a friend who was bullied, and 16% reported having seen or heard of a friend who bullied others. Victims were bullied more by online communications than cell phones, and 26% agreed that popular people were more likely to get bullied online than unpopular people. The study revealed that 34% of those who had engagement with cyberbullying activity had been bullied, and had also been a bully to someone else. This report showed that 75% of victims thought it was done to be mean, however just 14% of those who bullied others declared this to be the reason. The report indicated that 56% of the victims thought the reason they were bullied was for the bully to have fun, yet only 28% of bullies attributed it to fun. Additionally, 32% of victims believed it was for the bullies to show off to their friends, while 11% of bullies attributed it to showing off. On the other side, 58% of bullies said they did so because the victim deserved

it, but just 5% of those bullied believed this to be the case. Additionally, 58% of the bullies said they did so to get back at someone, whereas 32% of victims thought this was the case. Other categories for reasons behind bullying included: (a) being dared, (b) out of jealousy, and (c) to embarrass. The Cox Survey reported that 81% of teens agreed bullying was easier to get away with than the traditional bullying in person; and while 46% of victims stated that their bully was caught, 72% of the bullies stated they themselves had not been caught. Lastly, 75% of the participants agreed there should be stricter rules about bullying online, and 49% believed there are serious legal consequences if someone is caught.

In a study (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008) to identify characteristics of typical cyberbullying victims and offenders, an online survey was utilized to collect data from 1,378 young adolescents. Prior to taking the survey, the participants were informed that “online bullying can include: bothering someone online, teasing in a mean way, calling someone hurtful names, intentionally leaving persons out of things, threatening someone, and saying unwanted sexually-related things to someone” (p. 138). The results revealed the respondents spent an average of 18 hours per week online, engaging in over five different online activities. The authors noted that 32.7% of the boys reported being a victim, and 18% stated they had been an offender; 36.4% of the girls responded they had been victims, and 15.6% stated they had been a bully to others online. The two most prevalent locations, other than the category “any location,” where bullying took place was in a chat room (23.8%) and by a computer text message (17.9%). The authors pointed out there was no statistically significant difference between genders as an offender or victim, and noted, “this is contrary to traditional schoolyard bullying (especially physical bullying), which has largely been a male-dominated affair” (p. 142). The researchers found results, which mirrors the findings found by the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, that respondents who identified themselves as offenders and victims, also reported “recent school problems, assaultive behaviors, or substance use” (pp. 143-144).

Mishna and MacFadden (2008) at the University of Toronto conducted research on cyberbullying with 2,186 students. Grades 6 and 7 represented 47% of the respondents, with 53% in grades 10 and 11; and, there were 10% more girls than boys. The results of their study showed that 21% of the students had been bullied online in the past three months, and some reported being bullied more than once. The frequencies listed in the researchers’ tables referred to the number of bullying incidents rather than the total number of students participating in the study. The three largest number of bullying incidents were name calling to make the victim feel bad, followed by spreading rumors, and lastly, identity impersonation. The majority of incidents were committed by MSN Messenger, followed by email, Internet game sites, and social networking sites. The majority of victims said that it did not bother them; but others said it made them feel angry, embar-

assed, sad, and scared. The majority of the students did not do anything about it; but others confronted the bully, told a friend, a parent, or a teacher. On the other side, 35% of the students reported they had bullied other students online, and some of these students bullied more than once. The three largest categories of incidents were name calling to make them feel bad, identity impersonation, and spreading rumors.

Another study conducted in Canada by researchers Beran and Li (2005) included 432 students in grades 7 – 9 who responded to a 15-item survey on cyber-harassment. Their findings showed that 23% of students experienced victimization at least a few times, and 35% were victimized once or twice. The study produced no main effects between genders. Additionally, 22% of students admitted to using electronic communications to harass their peers once or twice; and, 4% reported harassing peers several times or more often. As with the victims, there were no main effects between genders. Students were also asked how the harassment made them feel, and 57% indicated they felt angry, while 36% felt sad and hurt. Others reported that the harassment lowered their school achievement, affected their concentration, and increased their rate of absenteeism. The study stated the greatest number of harassments was committed using email and instant messaging, followed by the Internet, and lastly cell phones.

Researchers (Katzner, Fetchenhauer, & Belschak, 2009) from Germany and the Netherlands conducted a study focusing on bullying in Internet chatrooms from the victims’ perspectives. They had a total of 1,700 5th to 11th grade students, with 10% more girls than boys with an average age of 14.09 years from various types of German secondary schools. They completed an instrument that was based on the short version of the The Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. Their findings showed that “34.7% of chatters reported being abused or insulted every few months to more than once a month; 31.6% reported being harassed for no apparent reason every few months to more than once a month; and 12.3% reported being teased” (p. 29). They also found that boys were more likely to be victimized than girls; as were the findings with the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* and the Hinduja and Patchin study (2008); it was stated that those who were more likely to experience bullying in chatrooms suffered lower self-esteem, negative emotional parent relationships, and school related behavior problems.

Researchers (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, & Tippett, 2008) from Goldsmiths, University of London, UK conducted two studies; the first with 92 students which represented 6% more girls than boys in grades 7 – 10. They utilized a questionnaire based partly on the *Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire* and they also conducted focus groups with 47 students from the original 92. Results from this study indicated that 6.6% of students were cyberbullied often, while 15.6% were victims once or twice. Eighty-two students provided responses concerning who they were being bullied by; 28% were from a different class, 22% were not from their school, 20.7% were in the same class, and 20.7%

were unknown. The focus groups revealed that students thought the cyberbullying experiences would have been at a much higher rate and when informed of the discrepancy, they replied “not many people would admit to it, because they get threatened if they told” (p. 378). The groups also revealed that students thought text messages would be the predominate form, not phone calls; yet when they learned it was the opposite, they rationalized that there would be less evidence from a phone call than a text message. The second study included 553 students which represented each gender nearly equal. When students were asked how long ago they were bullied online, 5.3% replied in the last week or month; 5.1% this term, 3.7% the last school year, and 3.1% over a year ago. Just over 9% stated they had bullied others in the last week or month, 4.4% this term, 3.7% last school year, and 7.4% over a year ago. The study indicated that the most common tools used to bully others were phone calls followed by text messages.

Research, focusing on gender effects, with 264 junior high school students in Canada conducted by Li (2006) found that 22.3% of males and 11.6% of females were cyberbullies and 25% of males and 25.6% of females were cyberbully victims. Additionally, over half of the males and females stated they were aware of cyberbullying. The results also showed that close to 62% of those cyberbullied were victimized one to three times, and just over 37% were victimized more than three times. Moreover, nearly 55% of cyberbullies reported bullying others between one and three times, and over 45% did it more than three times. Lastly, over one-third of the participants responded that they “did not think adults in schools tried to stop cyberbullying when informed” (p. 10).

Cyberbullying research (Slonje & Smith, 2008) conducted in Sweden with 210 lower secondary students found that 17.6% of participants had been electronically victimized, while 11.9% admitted to cyberbullying others. The victims reported email as being the tool mostly used, followed by a picture or video clip. Bullies reported they used email the most, with text messages and picture or video clip being used the equal amount of times. Two other researchers, one in Canada (Shariff, 2005), and one from Australia (Campbell, 2005) reported statistics from various research endeavors on cyberbullying. Chu’s research (as cited in Shariff, 2005) conducted in the United States revealed that of 3,700 middle school students participating in the study, 18% had experienced cyber-bullying. Research conducted in Brisbane, Australia by Campbell and Gardener (as cited in Campbell, 2005) disclosed that 11% of the student participants reported being cyberbullies, and 14% were victims.

According to Media Awareness Network (n.d.), youth who would not have been bullies on the school yard are now becoming bullies by electronic means. They wrote, “A quarter of youth who perpetrate cyberbullying are teenagers who have also bullied others offline. However the remaining three quarters do not bully others in person” (¶ 9); they attributed it to the empowerment of

the Internet. In studies conducted by Dibbel and Evard (as cited in Shariff, 2005), findings indicated that teenage girls were more often the victims of cyberbullying.

Sexting

According to Willard (n.d.), Director of the Center of Safe and Responsible Internet Use, the term “sexting” is a combination of the terms “text” and “sex.” She explained that the term “is being applied to situations to sending self-created nude or semi-nude sexually provocative images or sexually explicit text” (p. 1, ¶ 1). The STOP cyberbullying website reported cases of teens sending degrading pictures of other teens in mass e-mails; they wrote, “once an e-mail like this is sent, it is passed around to hundreds of other people within hours; there is no way of controlling where it goes” (p. 2, ¶ 4). According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project (as cited in Media Awareness Network, n.d.), 4% of 12 – 17 year olds have sent sexting messages, and 15% have received them. They described three contexts in which sexting typically occurs: “in lieu of sexual activity for younger adolescents who are not yet physically sexually active; to show interest in someone a teen would like to date; and, for sexually active youth, as proof of trust and intimacy” (¶ 4). Many of the teens participating in a focus group study (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2009) referred to sexting as, ‘no big deal’ and ‘everybody does it.’ One older high school girl commented, “If a guy wants to hookup with you, he’ll send a picture of his private parts or a naked picture of him[self]. It happens about 10 times a month” (p. 2). It is not uncommon for girls to send nude pictures of themselves to their boyfriends, and when they break-up, the boyfriend sends them to his network of friends. A 2008 study by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl.com (as cited in Willard, n.d.) found that “36% of teen girls and 39% of teen boys say it is common for nude or semi-nude photos to get shared with people other than the intended recipient” (p. 2).

Legal Aspects

Various journal articles and online networks have raised the issue of the legalities of cyberbullying; generally, can one be prosecuted for being a cyber bully? The web site STOP cyberbullying stated, “Cyberbullying may arise to the level of a misdemeanor cyberharassment charge, or if the child is young enough it may result in the charge of juvenile delinquency (¶ 6). Cyberbullying has become such a newly debated issue that United States Supreme Court cases have been cited in regards to their implications on the cyberbully and the school personnel. Both Willard (2010) and Mason (2008) discussed *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, *Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser*, and *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*; all of these cases address students’ rights to free speech. Willard also raised the issue of school officials’ responsibility to respond to off-campus behavior. She wrote, “...school officials should have the authority to impose

discipline for on- or –off-campus sexting acts that are directed at harming a student’s reputation or causing a hostile environment at school for that student” (p. 8). She interpreted that school officials have the authority to respond to cyberbullying that takes place off campus if it makes the victim feel unsafe, interferes with the victim’s education, or creates a significant disruption at school.

In 1999, U. S. Attorney General, Janet Reno, sent to Vice President Al Gore her report titled *Cyberstalking: A New Challenge for Law Enforcement and Industry* which began to explore ways to address this issue. The report stated, “Unfortunately, many of the attributes of this technology – low cost, ease of use, and anonymous nature, among others – make it an attractive medium for fraudulent scams, child exploitation, and increasingly, a new concern known as “cyberstalking” (§ 1). The report acknowledges that there is no universally accepted definition of cyberstalking, however it does include ‘leaving written messages or objects’ within the defines of stalking; hence, would leaving harassing text messages be considered stalking which could then be a criminal act?

Interventions, Programs, Policies

One of the better known intervention programs being implemented in schools across the country is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The program website, which is maintained by Clemson University, describes the program as “a comprehensive, school-wide program designed and evaluated for use in elementary, middle, or junior high schools” (§ 2). In addition to the goals of reducing and preventing bullying among students, it aims to improve peer relations, the social climate of classrooms, and reduce antisocial behaviors. The program’s questionnaire, which is given to the students in participating schools has just two questions relating to cyberbullying; one relating to being bullied and the other to being the bully. However, Limber, Kowalski, and Agatston (2008) published a curriculum guide for grades 6-12 and a curriculum guide (2009) for grade 3-5 which are dedicated to specifically addressing the prevention of cyberbullying and they are used as part of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

According to Hinduja and Patchin (2012) 49 states have bullying laws with 15 states including cyberbullying into the law, while another 5 states have proposed adding cyberbullying into the law. The Cyberbullying Research Center (2011), which maintains a Blog, included information from Sameer (2009) about a project the Seattle Public Schools District was initiating to create curriculum materials to specifically address cyberbullying. It stated, “Washington has been very progressive in creating and promoting anti-cyberbullying legislation...and surveys and studies tell us that cyberbullying is more pervasive and seriously impacts more young people than other better known cyber-safety issues” (§ 1). Globe correspondent, Jennette Barnes (2011) reported that high-school educators in Massachusetts received new curriculum on reducing cyberbullying. She stated, “Englander’s

curriculum offers lessons for each grade designed to stand alone so schools can include them in health, social studies, or other classes without taking all the time from a single course” (§ 3).

A Google® search on September 27, 2012, produced 14,100,000 hits when ‘cyberbullying’ was entered; and 634,000 hits when ‘cyberbullying prevention websites’ was entered. Many of the sites offer tips to parents and educators on reducing and preventing cyberbullying; some sites offer a variety of lessons and lesson plan ideas, and some sites are for student use. Other sites include curriculum materials, such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program that have been developed for school districts to adopt for individual schools or for district-wide implementation. Media Awareness Network (n.d.) described cyberbullies as “no longer only the ‘tough kids’ who may act aggressively – it can just as easily be the shy, quiet types, hidden behind their computers” (§ 3). Their web site lists many tips for parents on how to address cyberbullying and the types of actions they could take. In addition to the resources online, books for teachers and teacher educators are now including the topic of cyberbullying. In the 2012 edition of *Teaching in the Middle School* by Manning and Bucher (2012), cyberbullying is defined in the glossary and mentioned twice more in short paragraphs. The book, *Middle Childhood Development: A Contextual Approach* (2009) included 43 words on cyberbullying:

Definitions of bullying also have recently been expanded to include “cyberbullying,” or using the Internet to stalk or humiliate a peer by sending e-mail or posting online journals (also called weblogs, or ‘blogs’ for short) to circulate rumors, photographs, or other slanderous material (Simmons {as cited in Zembar and Blume p. 328})

Another text used by teacher educators, *Introduction to Middle School* (Powell, 2011) includes a very short definition of cyberbullying in the glossary as “bullying accomplished through technology” (p. 363), in addition, it devotes 4 paragraphs to the topic. In her book, *The Teacher’s Guide to Success*, Kronowitz (2012) addressed cyberbullying in one paragraph.

Although much of the cyberbullying is taking place off school campus, school administrators are feeling the push to form policies to address this emerging issue. Beale and Hall (2007) stated, “School administrators must implement a comprehensive prevention plan that has the support and cooperation of parents, the school, and community members if students are to be free from cyberbullying” (p. 10). They advocate the collection of data to first determine the prevalence and attitudes of cyberbullying and then begin with student education. This priority of education is also shared by the STOP cyberbullying web site as they stated, “Education can help considerably in preventing and dealing with the consequences of cyberbullying. The first place to begin an education campaign is with the kids and teens themselves (§ 1). When researching board policies for the Bellingham Public Schools in Washington, McKenzie (1995) spoke of the risks involved with board policies by noting issues of censorship

and regulation with Internet use. He cautioned, "The vaguer the rules in a particular district, the greater the risk that individuals will be caught up in storms of protest or moral dilemmas..." (p. 2).

Discussion

The literature reveals that cyberbullying, bullying by electronic means, is a reality affecting our youth in negative, serious, and disturbing ways. Although most of the cyberbullying takes place off school grounds, school districts are distressed as they are compelled to create policy addressing this form of 21st Century bullying. Keeping our youth safe at school when involved in off-campus electronic bullying and aggressive behaviors is central to the policies school districts must develop. As noted in the Legal Aspects section, a cyberbully could possibly be charged with a misdemeanor or juvenile delinquency; hence school districts must consider carefully what actions schools can take without putting our youth into the criminal court system. School districts will also need to review various cyberbullying curricula and programs to determine which fits best with their schools. Additionally, consideration must be given to when and where the anti-bullying information will be taught. It could be a standalone curriculum that could be implemented in various disciplines, or perhaps it could be part of the advisor advisee programs in middle schools.

School districts will also need to plan and implement professional development for its educators, administrators, and staff; as well as, prepare parent and community education programs on the dangers of cyberbullying. Adults need to know the affects cyberbullying may have on their students and youth. Showing signs of being angry, sad, or scared may be an indication the student is a victim of cyberbullying. Higher rates of absenteeism, loss of concentration, and a drop in academic achievement are also associated with being bullied. Additionally, students who are not bullies are often drawn into the drama as sexting photos are often spread to everyone, or several persons, on the bullies' contact list. Research should be conducted to determine what affects, if any, cyberbullying has on this population.

The studies reported in this paper included various methodologies and outcomes. One study investigated communication in chatrooms only, whereas another looked at cell phone and Internet use only. Some studies looked at gender and grade differences, where others look at just the number of incidences of cyberbullying. One study focused on the number of incidences of cyberbullying by someone the participants knew, versus by ones they knew only online. Participants completed online surveys, and surveys based on another survey. Participants were recruited in social media sites, while others were from school settings. Studies showed more girls were victims, studies showed more males as being victims, and studies showed no significant differences or main effects between genders. A most important concern is that one study did not even use the term "cyberbullying" or even "bullying,"

rather the term "mean things" was used in the research. Also of concern is the way online bullying was defined; one study said it could include "bothering." What constitutes bothering? Is saying mean things to another student considered bullying? Included in bullying definitions is the word "repeatedly;" thus, how many incidences of electronic aggression is considered cyberbullying? What are the differences, if any, among bullying, stalking, and harassment? It is apparent that much more research needs to be conducted on cyberbullying, however a precise definition of cyberbullying needs to be accepted and it must be completely understood by researchers and participants.

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