

12-2019

"Just Kidding" What Bullies Say

Christina Marie Gumbin

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all



Part of the [Early Childhood Education Commons](#), [Elementary Education and Teaching Commons](#), [Junior High, Intermediate, Middle School Education and Teaching Commons](#), [Liberal Studies Commons](#), [Pre-Elementary, Early Childhood, Kindergarten Teacher Education Commons](#), and the [Secondary Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gumbin, Christina Marie, ""Just Kidding" What Bullies Say" (2019). *Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 675.

https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all/675

This Capstone Project (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Capstone Projects and Master's Theses at Digital Commons @ CSUMB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Projects and Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ CSUMB. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csumb.edu.

“Just Kidding”: What Bullies Say

Christina Gumbin

California State University Monterey Bay

Author Note

Thank you to the past and present faculty of Martin Murphy Middle School for taking time to meet and complete the interviews about bullying.

Abstract

The focus of this Capstone Project is on how present and past staff members of MM Middle School have addressed bullying in their classrooms and what they think could be done to prevent further bullying. This is an important issue for teachers of any grade because bullying affects children at any age. An argument is made that during middle school, bullies tend to say that they are just kidding without knowing why they are bullying. Consideration of the issue, required obtaining the perspectives of the principal and both current and former teachers. Three themes emerged from an analysis of the data which explored ways to address bullying in the classroom. Calling the bully out is argued to be the most effective way to achieve the goals on how to prevent bullying in the classroom.

“Just Kidding”: What Bullies Say

I have vivid memories of being bullied both inside and outside the classroom. Whether they were in the same grade or higher, there was at least one person who would bully me. The bullying that I received was verbal bullying, and as I got older, I found out I was cyberbullied as well. Although bullying happened throughout my education, there were times that I knew there were some people who would stand up for me and tell others that it was not appropriate to tease me. However, over time, I had also learned to find my voice to face the bullies and tell them to stop. In summary, bullying is something that I wish never happened to me, but it made me a stronger person in advocating for others when I see it happen to them.

During school, it is a requirement for students to work in groups, whether it is for in-class assignments or group projects. However, with a child who not only has a learning disability; but also is a frequent victim of bullying teachers had mixed opinions on certain situations. In class, when the teacher assigned either a group project or group assignment, certain students would immediately pair up. If the teacher would ask me why was I not in a pair or group, my response would typically be that nobody wanted to be in a group or partnership with me and that I preferred to work by myself. Teachers would respond to this in one of two ways. Some teachers would respect my decision to work by myself and let me continue forward. Other teachers would make an announcement to the class that I was in need of a group and would force me to join their previously assembled group. The team members would feel not only uncomfortable, but unhappy that I had joined their group. Although being forced into groups was something that I really did not enjoy when I was in school, my classmates had done more things to show me that they did not want me in the classroom. Another example of how my own classmates would bully me is by putting staples in my hair. There were school supplies that we were required to purchase such as the usual binder paper, mini stapler, and, of course, the mini staples that went with the stapler. Due to the immaturity of these students, instead of using the staples for what they were intended for, they would take them apart one by one and flick or put them in my hair without my knowledge. I did not know why the students would do this cruel prank, besides the fact they were obviously bored and did not want to pay attention. Despite my politely asking them to please stop doing what they were doing, it never worked in my favor or stopped the bullying.

Though most of the bullying I experienced was verbal, there are times that the bullying was physical.

With bullying, there are a range of ways that it can go, whether it is verbally calling names or doing physical harm to that person. There were many times when I was younger that I would be verbally bullied by name calling; but there were times that I was physically bullied in and out of the classroom. This particular example occurred when I was only a freshman in high school, and I honestly cannot remember what I was doing prior to the incident. I think I wanted to clean up my backpack or I was trying to organize my backpack since it was sixth period Spanish class, and I was getting ready to go home. I had placed my cell phone on my table and, due to my naivety and lack of awareness of my surroundings, someone from my class stole my cell phone and placed it under a bus only for it to be run over. Although this bullying experience was something that made a drastic impact on my educational experience, this was not the only time I was physically bullied in the classroom.

Another example of when I was physically bullied was either when I was in seventh grade. I remember going to my PE locker at the end of the day, and I found that my locker was sprayed with yellow spray paint. Once I managed to open my locker, I found that the inside of my locker was sprayed as well with the yellow paint. My clothes were also drenched as if someone took my clothes as well as my gym bag and sprayed them with the same paint. This made me so furious and sad because we never caught the person who did this, and out of every girl in the school, I was the one who had this happen. Through this instance of my being bullied during middle school, as I got older, I never truly trusted anyone with my belongings or even kept my things in my locker. As a result, I have had trust issues with everyone because I do not know if people respect me or my belongings. In summary, though there were more instances of bullying that has occurred to me, it has made me a stronger person whether that is standing up for myself or even others that are receiving the same bullying that I have experienced.

These are just some of the things that I have experienced. Although I have overcome these challenges, it does not mean that I forgave and forgot what they did to me. I have been advocating for people to take a stand and know that bullying is something that should not be ignored. In my three years at CSUMB, I have still experienced bullying though not to the extent I

have in the past. I have also gone back to where some of the bullying had happened when I was given the opportunity for service learning. This is why I want to ask teachers how they are trying to prevent bullying in their classrooms. I want to see if there has been a change since I was a younger student unable to stand up for myself. In summary, bullying is something that may not seem like a big deal to some people, but to others it is a recurring issue that they try to put behind themselves when faced with dangerous situations.



Source: PowerofPublish, & PowerofPublish, A. (2019, March 20). 101 Anti Bullying Slogans That Have An Impact. Retrieved from <https://powerofpublish.com/anti-bullying-slogans/>.

Literature Synthesis & Integration: Bullying from home, school and worldwide

What is the problem?

Dake (2003) states that in the past three decades, school bullying has gained increased attention in the United States, because of the rise of media based off homicide and suicide cases where bullying was a factor. When defining the term bullying, it is divided into different factors that have a range of situations. Kowalski and Limber (2007) state that bullying is commonly defined as repeated aggressive behavior where there is an imbalance of power between the parties. In comparison, the traditional form of bullying is physical acts, including hitting or shoving. Based off observation, bullying is something that you see no matter what the age of the

children, there can be at least one bully in the classroom since children can form groups together. Although bullying is a huge factor in schools, most teachers have the resources to prevent bullying in the classroom by confronting the student who can either be the victim or bully; but those children who are doing the bullying might have other problems going on which is the cause to them bullying others. In comparison, Dewey Cornell (2019) states that children should be concerned about bullying of any kind, because there is so much more bullying in schools which can result to fights over things such as racial background; thus making the child feeling powerless and insecure. When a child feels powerless, it is crucial that once you are aware of that to figure out what is the cause and how to properly fix the problem. McClellan (2018) states that bullying can often impact children's health and well-being which can lead to an increased risk of not only substance abuse but academic problems as well. Which consequently can lead to violence later on in their adulthood and adolescence stage of life. In summary, the issues that surround why middle school teachers should be trying to prevent bullying in the classroom cannot only prevent issues in the classroom; but also the children's life as an overall whole.

Why is it an issue?

Gordon (2019) states according among 15 to 24 year olds, that suicide is one of the leading cause of death. Which is a huge deal when thinking about bullying because a lot of times the victims are not expressing concern about being bullied in a classroom. Bullying can be reoccurred whether it is when in school, it can impact the child's learning to the point that they may feel they should not go back to school; because it is not a place to be. Through a child getting bullied, they might not want to retaliate and take extreme measures to stop the bullying themselves whether that is hurting themselves or others that are in the school such as the bully. With the bullying having an increase, it would lead to the student having a negative impact on their environments around them, because the bystanders won't do anything to stop the child who is causing the bullying to reoccur daily. However, the bully might have an edge on who the victim might go to for help and the bully might take advantage of that situation and use it to their advantage. Although with the term bullying, there is a difference when describing what the person is doing such as kicking or other things; but still bullying is something that should be brought up no matter what grade of the children. Bullying can even occur where it is least

expected and should not be ignored. Whether you are a bystander or a victim it is important to know the signs before they are too late and can change someone or a family's life forever because someone they care about is gone. To conclude, bullying is an issue that needs to be brought up in any situation whether it is at home, in the classroom or even the office.

In comparison, Cornell & Limber (2016) states that children should be concerned about bullying of any kind, because there is so much more bullying in schools which can result to fights over things such as racial background; thus making the child feeling powerless and insecure. When a child feels powerless, it is crucial that once you are aware of that to figure out what is the cause and how to properly fix the problem. Rivera (2016) states that bullying can often impact children's health and well-being which can lead to an increased risk of not only substance abuse but academic problems as well. Which consequently can lead to violence later on in their adulthood and adolescence stage of life.

From bullying playing a huge role in the school, it is important to figure out what has been done to prevent bullying in and out of the classroom. Based on Seth's law, which is located in Education Code, Section 234.1(b)(1), it is used to strengthen the existing state anti-bullying laws which requires schools to update their anti-bullying policies and programs. Therefore, based off this law it says that the policy must adopt a process for receiving and investigating complaints whether it is discrimination, harrassment, intimidation or bullying. In summary, bullying has a range of definitions and how this can bullying be prevented to others.

As previously mentioned, with the many types of bullying and not a lot of ways to prevent from recurring whether it is outside or inside the classroom. With each type of bullying, there are different types and different definitions that correspond to them. Fullchange & Furlong (2016) state bullying has been associated with negative impacts of victimization. There has been a cross-sectional and longitudinal research which has shown a cross-sectional and longitudinal research that proves poor mental health, academic and life outcomes when comparing with the youth who have not been involved with bullying. In comparison, the victims face the social-emotional functioning and adjustment as well. In conclusion, with bullying being an issue in the schools, what can be done to resolve bullying inside the classroom is worth figuring out. What should be done?

State legislators have been trying to provide leadership and guidance to schools on anti-bullying laws that can prevent it from recurring. In comparison, bullying is often seen as just something that kids do for fun and will eventually grow out of. Menesini & Salmivalli (2017) state that based off certain studies, bullying not only comes in different forms but also in different age groups as well. During middle school there is a peak and that boys are reported to be more involved with bullying than girls. Although that is surprising and with schools trying to prevent bullying in the classroom, there are different components such as asking the students to stop bullying that particular child. Therefore, each component has the best effectiveness to stop bullying in the classroom, through an investigation. While investigating the study Wolke and Lereya (2015) state that it has been observed that bullying has resulted in health consequences for the victims, bully, or the bystander. In comparison, with peers in the classroom, it is likely that the students will distribute the power to who they will be bullying. Menesini & Salmivalli (2017) state the teacher's response to the bullying might impact the student's learning and the student's anxiety along with their peer's rejection that they may face when in the classroom. However, if we knew what measures schools were doing to prevent bullying in their classroom, then teachers can understand what to do in the classroom when they see their own students are getting bullied. When a child gets bullied, there are health consequences that can get involved. For example, they have a significantly higher risk that might include psychosomatic problems than non-involved age-mates and even victimisation is a major childhood factors whether that is depression or even major childhood risks. In conclusion, what can be done against bullying, there are ways to examine how the effectiveness of school bullying that will be based on bullying intervention programs globally.

When looking at the global perspective of school bullying, there are negative outcomes for the bully, victim and bystanders. Gaffney, Farrington, and Ttofi (2019) found through longitudinal studies that those individuals that do bully others in childhood are more likely to be violent in adulthood. There is a limited understanding of different countries for both the victims and bullies; however this is not only a concern for parents and educators in terms of public health concerns. However, bullying was also related to a decrease in school graduation and a lower

academic overall though later on not statistically significant. In summary, bullying needs to be prevented in the classroom and stopped so no more lives are not taken from something so drastic.

Conclusion

When examining bullying in a classroom or even in a workplace, there are always going to have the same three people which are the bully, victim and bystander. However, with bullying, there needs to be different alternatives on how to prevent bullying no matter what the situation is. From the data that has been presented, it has shown that there are negative results such as suicide or even self harm that are the result of bullying. Sadly, lives are still at stake and there are people still trying to prevent bullying in the classroom. In conclusion, bullying is something that has been going on for a long time and with teachers trying to prevent it in the classroom, it cannot just not be to tell the children to stop and do it repeatedly.

Method

Context

The site location that will based off this research will be at ¹MM Middle School, located in San Jose, California near Santa Teresa. The overall environment is a low income area with the student population being diverse with the majority of them Hispanic and White are the majority who attend. In comparison, there are a total of the student population of 38.9% who receive free/discounted lunches. The student to teacher ratio is 1:24 students.

Participants and Participant Selection

I had invited a minimum of 4 participants to participate in this study, two teachers who had recently retired, one current teacher who is teaching there and one who worked there in 2006.

²Participants.

DL was a teacher at MM Middle School in 2006 to 2007 who had taught seventh grade English/History.

HW was a seventh grade middle school resource and special education teacher at MM Middle

¹ Martin Murphy Middle School

² Pseudonyms have been used for the names of people

School. Then decided to retire at the end of 2017 school year after working there since 1992. MC was an eighth grade middle school resource and special education teacher at MM Middle School. Then decided to retire at the end of 2017 school year after working there since 1997. DM is a current staff member of MM Middle School teaching sixth grade and in the past has worked at another school within the district.

Researcher. Bullying is meaningful to me because I was once a victim of bullying and teachers had no way of stopping the bullies in the classroom. Another example of background knowledge is, I did a Girl Scout Gold Award based on how children can stop bullying in the classroom. What makes me different from the “informants” and “influentials” is having a learning disability and not having that much confidence to stand up to the bullies. With this problem occurring in the classroom, I will see how my perspective has changed with how teachers are preventing bullying in the classroom.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

1. What do you see as the challenges of addressing bullying in the classroom?
2. What is currently being done to respond to bullying - by whom - and do you think this is good, bad, or indifferent? Why?
3. What do you think should be done about bullying?
4. What do you think are the obstacles to stopping bullying in the classroom?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to say about bullying and/or stopping bullying in classrooms?

Procedure

All participants were interviewed and done individually. When it was not possible to interview participants in person, they were invited to complete a phone interview or via email. All interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Results

For this Capstone Project, two retired teachers, one past teacher, and five current teachers that have either worked or currently work at MM Middle School teachers were interviewed to see what they think could be done to improve the prevention of bullying in the classroom. This is

important because bullying increases during those years. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature three themes emerged (see Table 1). Evidence-based decision making required evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria:

Effectiveness; Timeliness; and Impact. With these criteria, it is crucial that each option has valuable opportunities in any situation. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option an action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1

Evaluation of Action Options

	Effectiveness	Timeliness	Impact
Private Conversation with Bully	High	High	Low
Reintroducing “Olweus” Program every year	High	Moderate	High
Creating more harsh consequences	High	Low	High

Effectiveness/Timeliness/Impact: Calling the Bullies Out - When teachers are calling the bullies out for bullying, it would show that bullying should not be tolerated in the classroom. However, it might not stop unless the teacher discusses why the particular action should not be done both inside and outside the classroom.

Effectiveness/Timeliness/Impact: Reintroducing “Olweus” Program every year - Through re-introducing the program every year, it drills home both to the new students but the students who have been there for the other two years that bullying is not tolerated in any environment.

Effectiveness/Timeliness/Impact: Creating more harsh consequences - With creating more harsh consequences for bullies, there will have to be seen as trial and errors to make sure they work and follow through. However, when using harsh consequences, it is important to know the effect of what could possibly happen to the bullies and the victims as well.

Conclusion: With these three options, it is important to understand that there are other options that middle schools can do to prevent bullying in the classroom. However, with these different options it is important to know to keep the topic simple for children to understand.

Dear Ms. Dimas,

My name is Christina Gumbin and I am currently attending Cal State University Monterey Bay University. Currently, I am doing my Senior Capstone on the impact of bullying in the classroom and how to prevent it. I was inspired to address this topic because, when I attended Martin Murphy as a seventh and eighth grader (2006 to 2008), I was a victim of bullying. Some of my classmates would put staples in my hair, steal my PE clothes from my locker and get them completely filthy, and even name calling me such as a teachers pet. None of the staff really was able to stop the bullying and this resulted in having low self confidence in the classrooms as well as not feeling safe while in the classroom. Consequently, through doing my capstone, my ideal recommendation to address bullying is to reintroduce Olweus every year to new and current students. Interestingly, when I did my service learning at Martin Murphy from Fall 2016 to Fall 2018, I was never aware that Olweus was being implemented as stated in the SARC report and as reported by one of the teachers I interviewed. It is also important to enforce the reason to be a better bystander. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Christina Gumbin

Action Research Project Documentation and Reflection

Through the options and research given, the action which I chose to do was to email the current principal through email. Once I had sent the email, it was surprising that requesting them to keep implementing Olweus every year to be more effective. From this, the changes were to see a student use the program and how it would impact them attending at the school. However, the best response so far is knowing that it has declined a bit with the Olweus being implemented in

the school. However, based on what I know now, I wish I knew about the Olweus program at the program and could see how the school was prior to implementation. Consequently, the next steps are to keep advocating for students that are victims. In summary, through project I learned that bullying which is still a recurring issue and has no true answer for why it is happening so young; therefore, how I plan to make a change is by standing up for those students and encourage everyone to be a positive bystander and speak up.

Synthesis and Integration

Through doing this Action Research Project, there were two Liberal Studies MLOs that impacted my professional development. The first MLO was through Developing an educator. This was done by speaking about the general knowledge about bullying and how four different teachers have seen bullying in their classrooms, and what has been done to prevent from happening. Therefore, this has impacted my learning with knowing there are options that I can use to prevent it in the room. In comparison, the second MLO was based on a Social Justice Collaborator which had shown through community experience that most teachers do have an idea on how to stop bullying but not entirely on their own since most students do not come forward with the information given. Therefore, within these two MLOs, my necessary steps are to keep advocating teachers to keep trying to prevent bullying in their classrooms by saying something to the bullies.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed. text rev.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Cornell, D. G., & Limber, S. P. (2016, February). Do U.S. laws go far enough to prevent bullying at school? Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/02/ce-corner>.
- Degelman, D. (2009). *APA style essentials*. Degelman, D. (2009). *APA style essentials*. Retrieved from http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc_id=796
- Fullchange, A., & Furlong, M. J. (2016). An Exploration of Effects of Bullying Victimization From a Complete Mental Health Perspective. *SAGE Open*, 6(1), 215824401562359. doi: 10.1177/2158244015623593
- Kohn, A. (2019, February 20). Why Punishment Won't Stop a Bully. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/09/07/why-punishment-wont-stop-a-bully.html>.
- Gaffney, H., Farrington, D. P., & Ttofi, M. M. (2019, February 21). Examining the Effectiveness of School-Bullying Intervention Programs Globally: a Meta-analysis. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42380-019-0007-4>.
- Menesini, E., & Salmivalli, C. (2017). Bullying in schools: the state of knowledge and effective interventions. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22(sup1), 240–253. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13548506.2017.1279740>
- Mulvahill, E. (2019, September 18). Meanness or Bullying? How to Make Sure Every School Staff Member Understands the Difference. Retrieved from <https://schoolleadersnow.weareteachers.com/difference-between-meanness-and-bullying/>.
- PowerofPublish, & PowerofPublish, A. (2019, March 20). 101 Anti Bullying Slogans That Have An Impact. Retrieved from <https://powerofpublish.com/anti-bullying-slogans/>.
- OBrien, A. (2011, October 5). Bullying Prevention: 5 Tips for Teachers, Principals, and Parents. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/bullying-prevention-tips-teachers-parents-anne-obrien>.
- Rivara, F., & Menestrel, S. L. (2016). *Preventing bullying: through science, policy, and practice*.
- Seth's Law (AB9) - Your Right To Not Be Bullied At School. (2019, August 5). Retrieved from <https://www.aclusocal.org/en/seths-law>.
- Shetgiri R. (2013). Bullying and victimization among children. *Advances in pediatrics*, 60(1), 33–51. doi:10.1016/j.yapd.2013.04.004 /
- Wolke, D., & Lereya, S. T. (2015, September). Long-term effects of bullying. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4552909/>.