MINIMIZING BULLYING IN SIXTH GRADE CLASSROOMS THROUGH LITERATURE:
AN ANTI-BULLYING CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

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B.A., University of California, Davis, 2006

PROJECT

Submitted in partial satisfaction of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

EDUCATION
(Curriculum and Instruction)

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

SPRING
2010
MINIMIZING BULLYING IN SIXTH GRADE CLASSROOMS THROUGH LITERATURE: AN ANTI-BULLYING CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

A Project

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Abstract

MINIMIZING BULLYING IN SIXTH GRADE CLASSROOMS THROUGH LITERATURE: AN ANTI-BULLYING CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

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This project addressed the problem of minimizing bullying in sixth grade classrooms through literature. Although many schools have an anti-bullying program in place, rarely do they ever transfer effectively in classrooms or address content standards when implemented. Through literature, teachers can brave minimizing bullying in classrooms consistently throughout the school year still able to instruct within content standards.

The research revealed an array of established practices and successful interventions on minimizing bullying intended for use in classrooms. Tested theories and relevant teacher practices surfaced from research, informed the corpus of this project, and piloted the creation of an anti-bullying curriculum guide for teachers. The anti-bullying curriculum guide exposes research-based classroom methodologies that promote healthier classroom environment, grade-level appropriate literature and shared inquiry discussion linking to content standards, and sample lessons for teachers.
The project adds to the literature on developing effective anti-bullying interventions intended for sixth grade classrooms. Teacher resources and easy-read curriculum matrix included in this project allow for implementation of anti-bullying intervention in the classroom without teacher endeavor. In particular, the anti-bullying curriculum guide provides extension activities for differentiation, additional grade-level recommended book and story list, and assessment guidelines that help teachers minimize bullying and elevate learning in sixth grade classrooms.

_____________________, Committee Chair
Porfirio Loeza, Ph.D.

____________________________________
Date
DEDICATIONS

To papa and mama- a little tribute to your hard work and sacrifices. I often wonder if I can be as strong as you papa, and I wish to become the woman you are mama.

To my husband, Derek- Thank you for having the patience throughout the countless nights where my attention was taken away from us. You allow me to grow as my own because you encompass the love to take care of us both. My first draft of everything I write in this project was a start of a little conversation, a venting session with you. Thank you for having the listening power and the sincere engagement to hear me out at any given time. I love you.

To my friends and brothers- Thank you for the encouragement and limitless love.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Porfirio Loeza for being the one to encourage me to start on my masters’ degree. Thank you Dr. Loeza for all your help, guidance, and support throughout this journey.

I would also like to thank Cameron Holden, Rose Penrose, and Elizabeth Toney for being wonderful colleagues. Cameron, thank you for our many talks and always asking, “how is your day going?” Rose, thank you for keeping me sane and understanding this process. Elizabeth, thank you for all the handouts and the “you can do it” attitude.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedications ................................................................................................................. vii
Acknowledgments .................................................................................................... viii

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 1
   Purpose of the Study ............................................................................................. 1
   Statement of Problem .......................................................................................... 2
   Significance of Project ......................................................................................... 3
   Methods ................................................................................................................ 5
   Limitation of the Project ....................................................................................... 6
   Definition of Terms .............................................................................................. 7
   Organization of Project ......................................................................................... 8
   Summary ............................................................................................................... 9

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .................................................................................. 10
   Introduction ........................................................................................................ 10
   Understanding Adolescents and Existence of Bullying
     (Who are the characters?) Adolescent Identity .................................................. 14
   Brain, Behavior, and Peer Pressure in Middle School
     (What is the setting?) ......................................................................................... 15
   Gender and Bullying ............................................................................................ 17
Active Participants and Bystanders (How do participants and bystanders set up the rising action?)………………………………………………………… 18

Effects of Bullying on Students and School
(What is the main conflict?)…………………………………………………... 21

School Climate and Rules/Punishments
(Climax)………………………………………………………………………. 22

Successful Anti-bullying Programs
(What is the resolution?)…………………………………………………… 24

The Power of Reflection
(What is the final outcome?)……………………………………………….. 27

The Teacher’s Role and Literature in Anti-bullying Intervention in the Classroom (What are the common themes and universal truths?) . ..............29

Summary…………………………………………………………………… 30

3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT……………………………………….. 31

Relationship between Literature Review and Methodology .................... 32

Project Design………………………………………………………………. 36

Plan for Implementation and Dispersion ………………………………………. 42

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS...43

Discussion……………………………………………………………………... 43

Summary……………………………………………………………………... 45

Recommendations ……………………………………………………………. 46

Limitation……………………………………………………………………. 47

Conclusions…………………………………………………………………. 49

Appendix. Minimizing Bullying in Sixth Grade Classrooms through Literature:
An Anti-bullying Curriculum Guide for Teachers……………………………..51
References

xi
LIST OF FIGURES

1. Figure 1 Plot Diagram of Literature Review ........................................ 12
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION
Purpose of the Study

As I greet my students at the door to welcome them in my classroom, I notice Aliah crying as she came in. She is entirely unfocused to start class as she tries to deal with her current state of mind. Aliah tells me that Veronica, a student from her previous class, had called her a bad name in front of her peers. To a 6th grader, such bullying incident can alter the entire day in which academic focus is lost. Bullying not only causes considerable suffering to individual students like Aliah, but it can also have damaging effect on school climate and academic performance (Elton, 1991). Yet, with the increasing students that reveal the widespread problem of bullying, teachers still tend to ignore bullying as a whole (Elton, 1991). Teachers are not the only people who ignore bullying; macroscopically, the mindset of society views bullying as a common experience that every child endures as a part of growing up.

Although there are proven connections between bullying and potential for low academic performance (Milsom & Gallo, 2006), in these challenging years with No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), teachers often neglect teaching character education in the classroom in place of ensuring their students performing well on state-standard testing (NCLB Subpart: Civic Education Section 2342.Purpose). Bullying in middle school is prevalent but is often ignored due to societal demands on academic achievement. Even
before NCLB, there was an upsurge of public interest in the topic of bullying and victimization in schools to teachers neglecting character education in place of improving academic performance (Whitney & Smith, 1990). Therefore many educators ask: how can anti-bully intervention be implemented in classrooms without using instructional time? One solution is to infuse anti-bullying programs with literature.

Literature is the central focus of my curriculum guide project. Reading literature enables students to experience bullying situations without actually being in one: victims can recognize similar events in the stories they read and bullies learn empathy through the same readings (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006). My project aims to extend anti-bullying intervention into sixth grade classrooms. I will be offering lessons that are research-based, successful, and current methods and activities that will minimize bullying. With literature in the heart of each lesson, teachers will get quality lesson plans that cover content standards while addressing anti-bully intervention.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of my project is to develop an anti-bullying intervention curriculum guide using sixth grade level appropriate literature. The curriculum guide will embed sixth grade Language Arts content standards and it can be used as a supplemental material to any teacher’s already existing curriculum. The curriculum guide will include literature that focuses on bullying issues, discussions and activities that expand bully
awareness, and exercises that develop helpful communication skills in bully confrontations. Through the literature and activities, students will gain confidence and communication skills to avert from bully situations and/or deal with bullies with insight and good judgment. The ultimate goal of the anti-bullying intervention curriculum guide is to help teachers incorporate bully awareness into their classrooms without having to stress about instructional time and preparation of each lesson. Although the curriculum guide only deals with sixth grade, a potential growth of the project can outreach to every grade level.

Significance of Project

According to a study released by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, “more than two million school children are involved in bullying” (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006). Although bullying can happen at every grade level, bullying behaviors are truly magnified during the middle school years when adolescents start to spend more time with their peers. Espelage, Bosworth, and Simon (2001) assert that many researchers believe that the pressure to gain peer acceptance may be related to an increase in bullying. Perhaps, it is when middle school students spend more time with their peers that the likelihood of bullying will also increase.

In response to bullying, many schools have implemented school-wide anti-bullying programs. Orphinas, Horne & Staniszewki (2003) found that many schools are
trying to prevent bullying by using packaged programs. However, many prepackaged anti-bullying programs often fail because of the two primary reasons. School-wide programs are ineffective because they do not get enough teacher support and schools neglect that securing cooperation from key personnel is an important first step (Orphinas, Horne & Staniszewki, 2003). Another key reason why anti-bullying programs fail is that they do not promote healthier behaviors in bullies and victims because they require students to act appropriately rather than teaching students to reflect upon their actions. In classrooms, students are naturally eager to think and reflect; therefore fusing anti-bullying intervention with curriculum corresponds well in a classroom setting. Furthermore, a program that fights bullying though the use of excellent stories offers an effective means to undercut the power and presence of bullies at school (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006).

This project provides literature and activities that encourage reflection from students that provide opportunities of self-regulated changes. The literature student’s read is the driving force behind this anti-bullying program because they can “live vicariously through characters” (Milsom and Gallo, 2007). Victims, bullies, and bystanders are exposed to bullying situations by simulation from the readings. While literature sets the setting, the lessons provided in the curriculum guide will help teachers to use shared inquiry questioning and discussion that should generate reflection from students. It is the
intent of this project to encourage reflection from students in order to improve their behavior, which in turn, will create a better classroom-learning environment, enrich a school’s climate, and minimize bullying.

Methods

This project was developed based upon findings in educational research. These practices and philosophies prompt the outline of the curriculum guide. The guiding research question that probed my research is, “How can anti-bullying intervention practices carry over into the classroom and work with the current classroom curriculum?”

The three primary areas of research that I focused on were: (a) awareness of what constitutes bully, victim, and bystander, (b) intervention for bully behavior, and (c) successful anti-bullying programs. I examined the following five sub-questions, as they were intended to frame my thinking as I create the curriculum guide:

1. What current practices are effective in minimizing bullying that can be applied in the classroom?

2. How can teachers minimize bullying in their classrooms by promoting student awareness about bullying?

3. How can building students’ ability to read and communicate minimize bullying?

4. How can promoting diversity and compassion in the classroom minimize bullying?
5. How can minimizing bullying affect and create a better classroom-learning environment?

When all the resource and studies concluded, I consulted with colleagues and retired teachers about the findings, and afterward I prepared materials relevant to developing the anti-bullying curriculum guide. Throughout the developmental process and long after, I continuously updated and revamped the curriculum guide as necessary.

Limitation of the Project

The intent of this project is to provide teachers with an anti-bullying curriculum guide as an alternative, or as an addition to their school wide anti-bullying intervention program, for minimizing bullying within their respected classrooms. The curriculum only addresses sixth grade Language Arts content standards and is not intended for any other grade level. Also, this project should not be used as a single factor in minimizing bullying. This project should be an addition to, and not at all, be the only effort in dealing with bullying. Bullying is a multifaceted issue; therefore, minimizing its effect and progression will in-turn require multiple approaches. The expected outcome of this project is to offer teachers a gateway using literature to make students aware of bullying, help students build communications skills and build a better learning community in their classroom to which, holistically leads to minimizing bullying.
Definition of Terms

Bullying: The act of intentionally causing harm to others, through verbal harassment, physical assault, or other more subtle methods of coercion. Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior and has been described as “the systemic abuse of power” (Marsh, Parada, Craven, & Finger, 2004, p.1)

Bully: An overbearing person/student who habitually badgers and intimidates smaller or weaker individual or groups. A main characteristic of a bully is his or her need to gain control (Milsom & Gallo, 2007)

Victim: The person/student who is harmed by or made to suffer by a bully (Olweus, 1991).

Anti-bullying Intervention: Methods of use for the promotion against bully-behavior and furthermore teaches healthier ways to deal with peer aggression within the school environment. A well-designed anti-bully program that tackles school bullying establishes desirable educational environments and positive pathways to self-reliance for children (Marsh, Parada, Craven, & Finger, 2004, p.1)

Content standards: California sixth grade Language Arts standards available when referring to the sixth grade: http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/ (2009).

Cooperative Learning: Cooperative learning is when students socialize, communicate, discuss, and engage with each other in a constructive manner. Cooperative
learning creates inclusion in the classroom and an excellent tool to use to increase community building and increase academic performance (Willis, 2007).

Curriculum Planning Guide/ Curriculum: The course of study offered in an educational institution. The curriculum-planning guide is the layout of the course of study by periods, standards, or genres (California Department of Education, 2009)

Organization of Project

Chapter 1 is the Introduction, which includes the following: Statement of the Problem, Background, Methodology, Definition of Terms, and Organization of the Project.

Chapter 2 is the Review of Literature. The literature review will focus on current teaching methods that build classroom community, effective anti-bullying programs, and sixth grade level appropriate literature.

Chapter 3 is the Development of the Project. This chapter explains the relationship between the literature review and the methodology. This chapter also includes the project design, which outlines the four thematic units in the curriculum guide.

Chapter 4 is the Summary of the Project, which includes the following: Discussion, Summary, Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusion.

Appendix includes the anti-bully intervention curriculum guide.
Anti-bully Intervention Curriculum Guide Organization and Contents

1. Curriculum Map (thematic overview in an easy read format);
2. Thematic Overview (includes: objectives, content standards, literature, essential questions, and classroom activities);
3. Sample Lessons (including but not limited to: content standards, objectives, materials and handouts, activities related to anti-bullying intervention, debriefing questions, and journal topics).

Summary

This chapter introduces the purpose this project: minimizing bullying in the 6th grade through literature. Overall, chapter one provided the background that coach teachers how to implement anti-bullying intervention in their classroom using literature as to effectively teach students both content standards and bully awareness. Chapter two outlines relevant literature that best explains the following: adolescents (the target population), successful anti-bullying practices, theories behind anti-bullying programs, and practical applications in the classroom.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this section was to explore the many facets of bullying, review current practices and programs available to minimizing bully behaviors and examine practical strategies teachers can use to guide students to become more aware and educated in bully situations (see figure 1). Too often, our society labels adolescents as a homogeneous group with ‘problems’ and who are ‘at-risk’, thus becoming ‘deviant’ largely as a result of being labeled as such (Stevens & Hunter, 2007). It seems that there are more adolescent bullies because we make bullies of adolescents.

Progressively, researchers, parents, and school personnel are recognizing that there is a need to minimize bullies in school. Bullying can affect students not only in minute instances but its effect can harm them for a lifetime. In a larger scope, bullying can impact school climate negatively thus students in that setting become more hostile and unruly causing greater behavior problems at school. Frequently, classrooms all throughout the nation lose valuable instructional time as teachers mediate between students. To minimize bullying means great benefits not only to students’ well being, but also to teachers’ heighten success in facilitating the curriculum for mastery. Although
there is not a solitary solution to eradicate bullying, there are many successful interventions to reduce its presence and its effect.
2. Rising Action
Active Participants: permeable roles of bully, victim, and bystanders
- The permeability to change roles in bully situation adds onto the multifaceted problem of bullying
Bystanders: Bystander Effect
- Peer presence influences bully’s actions

Conflict
Bullying’s Impact: Short and Long Term Effects

1. Exposition
Characters: Understanding Adolescents—adolescent identity
- Adolescents’ “storm and stress” phase
Setting: Middle School and Gender Relations
- Increased bully behaviors in middle school setting
- Gender traits affecting bully interactions

3. Climax
School Rules: Established Climate and Punishment Perpetuate Bully Actions

4. Resolution
Successful Anti-bullying Programs: literature and discussion
- Activities that promote discussion and reflection
- Literature as a central piece of anti-bullying intervention
- Consistency

5. Final Outcome
Reflection: reflecting the meaning of the literature experience
- Dealing with bullies vicariously through the reading
- Self-awareness

6. Theme
Teacher’s Role: creating opportunities to learn and reflect
- Guiding students toward self-change
- Providing models of appropriate behavior
This chapter investigates the research linked to effective strategies that encourage students to become aware of bullying and reflective of their actions. The first area of literature reviewed tries to answer why bullying exists, and attempts to uncover the players involved in bully situations. The second area presents the literature on bullying effects on students and school, and discusses how successful anti-bullying programs tackle the causes and effects of bullying. Thirdly, and the final part of the chapter, focuses on literature as an anti-bullying program. The chapter mirrors a plot summary as to help readers understanding of the concept. The summation of this chapter notes the introductions to the curriculum guide to minimizing bullying in the classroom.

The goals of schools are not only to provide students with the ability to master content standards, but they are also to encourage students to become productive and well-informed citizens. Through literature, teachers can attain both goals of teaching content standards and nurturing healthier students. If one defines literacy, in the broadest sense, as the ability to use written and spoken language to help understand the human condition, then literature can be studied to both improve reading comprehension and peer relationships (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006).
Understanding Adolescents and Existence of Bullying (Who are the characters?)

Adolescent Identity

In order to understand anti-bullying programs, we first need to understand adolescents and their behaviors. Stevens & Hunter (2007) explores societal perception of adolescents:

Predominantly referred to as ‘adolescents,’ this group experiences two difficult sides of a discursive moniker. They are subject to a term that defines itself primarily through what it is not: neither child nor adult. No longer in need of the special program developed for early childhood but not yet ready for the ‘serious’ work of upper secondary schools, the adolescent is defined as being in between, effectively illegitimate in either valid end of a developmental binary. While differing historical and epistemological moments have framed these discourses in different ways, the adolescent has consistently been offered as an essentialised, flawed, and incomplete being within a metadiscourse of age. The obvious response from educators has inexorably been to categorize, remediate, or ‘fix’ young people to discipline and train them towards the idealized adult figure (p.108).

Stevens & Hunter (2007) adds that although a century stands between current research and Hall’s (1904) definition of adolescence as a period marked by “storm and stress”, this developmentalist discourse has proven to have both longevity and widespread tacit concurrence (p. 112). As adolescents exist in this binary stage of development, they undergo what Erikson (1956) would call the “identity crisis.” In that crisis, when a child hits puberty, they enter the “competence” phase, a comparison of self worth to others (p.8). In this phase, adolescents recognize differences in abilities and places themselves amongst the rank. As adolescents try to find their identity, they create an imaginary rank
ranging from inferior to superior. Adolescents continuously align themselves in that rank by trying to “exclude” anyone and anything that do not belong in their clique (Erikson, 1964).

Espelage (2002) supplements Erikson’s idea by stating that adolescents “struggle to establish who they are by rejecting characteristics and stereotypes of their dislike” (p. 2). Therefore, many researchers believe “that the pressure to find peer acceptance and status may be related to an increase in teasing and bullying; this behavior may be intended to demonstrate superiority over other students for boys and girls, either through name-calling or ridiculing” (p. 3). Bully behaviors become a display of an adolescent’s self-assurance that involves cruelty to others. Adolescents show a spectrum of bullying from words to fists to let others know that they are, in fact, superior over the victim.

Brain, Behavior, and Peer Pressure in Middle School (What is the setting?)

There are many reasons as to why there is an increase of bully behavior in middle school. Stressors such as fueled hormones and increased peer interaction in middle school result to heighten student anxiety (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2001). Naturally, the increase of time adolescents spends with their friends correlate with the increase pressure to attain social status and peer acceptance (Corsaro & Eder, 1990). Peer influence is critical, and it can in fact increase bullying behavior “when teens are with their peers”
Peer influence fuels bullying because the bullies’ intentions are validated when they are around affiliates and bystanders. Besides middle school environment, in which we can affiliate with nurture, biological factors in a pubescent child’s brain also fuels the increase in bully behaviors. All in all, when adolescents feel pressure and anxiety, the limbic lobe that triggers emotions takes precedence over the logical part of the brain.

Adolescents think more emotionally rather than logically at their age group. Schkloven’s (2007) brain research proposes that the human brain matures at different rates; the brain matures from back to front. The prefrontal cortex, which involves logic and organization, will not fully develop until adulthood, approximately mid-twenties. Dr. Jay Geid, a neuroscientist and chief of brain imaging in the child psychiatry branch at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), concluded, “That’s why even with teens who seem to have relatively good judgmental skills, the quality of the decision making ability declines dramatically in moments of high emotional arousal. Emotions such as happiness, anger and jealousy override logic” (Schkloven, 2007). Therefore, in terms of bullying behavior, adolescents are more prone to bully because they do not weigh the consequences of their actions. Adolescents constantly seeking peer acceptance paired with the limited mental ability to think logically become a disorderly combination for unpredictable actions.
Gender and Bullying

Bullies and victims transcend across the gender lines; there are no exceptions to who are bullies and victims. However, there are differences in bullying behaviors between boys and girls. According to Nansel, “boys engage in bullying more frequently than girls. Also, boys are more likely to engage in physical or verbal bullying, while girls often revert to relational bullying” (2001). A decade later, Nansel (2001) still confirms Olweus’ (1991) research in which he found that “males have been found to be more involved in physical bullying, while females use more covert forms” (p.3).

Furthermore, research specific to urban students also suggests the same finding in suburban demographics, “Males were involved in bullying significantly more than females” (Seals and Young, 2003). Seals and Young’s research reveal that the disparities are in gender and not so much class or ethnicity issue. The research also emphasizes that society upholds significant factors leading to aggressiveness in the male gender. In society, the standards of punishment are harsher to male crimes than female. Miller (2001) gives an explanation to Seals & Young’s conclusion:

Males are also reported to more exposure to physical force outside of school than females. Either through video games, movies, and sports, boys do encounter more violence in their everyday interactions, which can manifest into bullying behavior (p. 7).

While boys tend to take part in active bullying, girls exhibit passive bullying behavior. Nansel (2001) describe girls’ passivity typically by forming cliques and isolating other
adolescents, especially their own kind: girls. Again, the form of bullying from girls reflects societal standards of female propriety. Instead of physical bullying, girls tend to gossip, name-call, and neglect other students. The society influences, in fact, forces adolescents to fit the masculine and feminine roles. Therefore, adolescents are again trying to be accepted by being “normal” and fit into the mold, which causes the anxiety and reasons to bully one another.

Active Participants and Bystanders
(How do participants and bystanders set up the rising action?)

Active Participants

When considering active participants in bully situations, varying media usually depict a bully, a victim, and bystanders who are involved. However, the separation between the three active roles is permeable. Simply labeling students permanently as bullies and victims is not only hard to do but fallacious. Milsom and Gallo (2006) explain that even victims can respond to victimization with bully behavior. In this recent decade, newer research is presenting different ideology in defining bullies; new research departs from previous research designs:

Bully behavior in recent studies treated bully behavior as a continuous variable and no students were categorized as “bullies”…because there was no clear indication of what cutoff score would be appropriate to classify students as “bullies” or “non-bullies” (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2001).
At any given situation, students have the fluidity to act as the bully, victim, or bystander in one instance and act completely the latter in the next. For example, a student bullies another student, yet when the alleged victim is with his or her peers, the victim in turn bullies back and continues this repeated action when peers are around. Again, the distinction of bully is a problematical matter because a) students display fluctuating actions between the roles and b) bully behavior is not definitive. Furthermore, we must acknowledge that sometimes, bullies are not defined as one being, but rather a group force. Koo (2007) presents the mob mentality:

There is also an issue of distinguishing the nature of bullying and mobbing. Mobbing describes the collective behavior of harassing a victim. Mobs share a large degree of similarity in feelings, thoughts, and behavior. As the definitions emphasize, a mob usually is composed of a relatively large group of people joining in some kind of common performance (p. 109).

We cannot assume that bullying among young and adolescents is a simple interaction between bully and victim. Instead, recent studies and media reports suggest that there are groups of students who support their peers and sometimes participate in teasing and harassing other students (Espelage, 2002, p. 4). Therefore, when mentioning successful anti-bulling programs in the later part of this chapter, effective methods not only deal with individual students but the collective student body.
Bystanders

Bystanders, by definition, are people that are not involved in the mob mentality and they are neither bully nor victim. Yet, their presence in bully situations can fuel and intensify bullies’ intention to act upon a victim. A famous example of bystander effect is in the case of Kitty Genovese:

The story of the 38 witnesses who watched from their apartments (and then failed to intervene) while Kitty Genovese was murdered on the street below, has an iconic place in social psychology. The events of that night in New York in 1964 paved the way for the development of one of the most robust phenomena in social psychology – Latané and Darley’s (1970) ‘bystander effect’ (the finding that individuals are more likely to help when alone than when in the company of others). It also led to the development of the most influential and persistent account of that effect, the idea that bystanders do not intervene because of a diffusion of responsibility, and that their perceptions of and reactions to potential intervention situations can be negatively affected by the presence (imagined or real) of others (Manning, 2007).

How does bystander effect-phenomenon affect bullies? Bosworth, Espelage, and Simon (1999) propose, “The typical bully is motivated by positive and negative attention from teachers and peers.” Many studies and surveys also concluded that bullying is perpetuated from peer encouragement and that bullies are more likely to continue engaging in bully behavior when they feel no one will intervene and there will be no consequences (Cornell, 2003, p. 18). The bystander effect endorses the bully’s actions telling the bully that he/she will not be punished. As noted in the Kitty Genovese case,
the murder made it clear that crowds and groups more generally, could be dangerous because they promoted inactivity (Manning, 2007, p. 7).

Effects of Bullying on Student and School (What is the main conflict?)
Short Term and Long Terms Effects on an Individual

Bullies and victims are both at risk for negative future outcomes (Milsom & Gallo, 2006, p. 13). For example, both bullies and victims are more likely drop out of school, engage in substance abuse, and are diagnosed with depression (Lemonick, 2005, p. 145). These effects have been found to continue into adulthood for both the perpetrators of bullying and those who are victimized by them (Olweus, 1993).

Although, some victims experience short-term effects of bullying such as low self-esteem, depression and truancy from school, there are many victims who undergo a lifetime bearing the impact of bullying. Seals and Young (2003) explain that depression associated with bullying can lean to academic problems, self-defeating behaviors, and interpersonal problems. Additionally, victims are particularly at risk if there is no emotional support provided, and depression can lead to suicidal ideation and ultimately, suicide (p. 738).

On the other spectrum, bullies have added risks and consequences because they deal with aggression. William Coleman, professor of pediatrics at the University Of
North Carolina School Of Medicine, notes that, “bullies are four times more likely to engage in criminal behavior by age 24 (Milsom & Gallo, 2006, p. 24). Cottle (1998) adds that among the children who eventually are brought to juvenile court, fifty percent of them employ bullying as a technique that bespeaks both their inner sadness and anger (p. 43). According to Cottle, these children need to feel inclusion rather than feeling alone because in their minds, independence is synonymous with defiance (p. 48). Therefore, anti-bullying interventions need to address the inclusion of bullies rather than extricating them out and making them feel even more of an outsider. When victims are perceived as subspecies (as bullies see themselves separate), sadistic behavior is readily justified, even likened by some to a mere stunt or game (Cottle, 2004, p. 53).

School Climate and Rules/Punishments (Climax)

As mentioned in the last segment, inclusion of bullies is a vital part of anti-bullying programs, yet most traditional school systems do not lend themselves to this concept. Let’s first look at Freire’s “banking concept of education.” In the banking concept of education, “knowledge is bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those who consider knowing nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others” (Freire, 1994). The definition of the banking concept is similar to bullying, “a need to gain control over others and impart their ways to victims (Milsom &
Gallo, 2006, p. 12). Bullies tell the victim that they are superior by physical and/or verbal commands, which is similar to the banking concept where teachers and administrators tell students what they need to know and students need to regurgitate answers without ever questioning the authority of why. Moreover, Yoneyama and Naito (2003) states that many schools are created as socializing and educating institutions which are based on hierarchical and authoritarian relations much like prisons and the defense forces (Marsh, Parada, Craven & Finger, 2004).

In terms of punishments, many school policies reflect “bully-like” procedures. For example, in Natomas School District, the school wide and district wide policy for behavioral punishment are: a) warning, (b) conference (usually where the teacher makes suggestions to improve student behavior and student agree), (c) parent phone call, and (d) referral/suspension (Natomas Middle School Agenda, 2008). Students who are not fitting into the school behavior “norm” is isolated, physically taken out of school, talked down to, and rarely is the child given room to talk and reflect on their action. The child is suspended; again, exclusion is a result. The way school punishes students reflect bully behavior. Furthermore, when schools do identify a child acting like a bully, they are often reprimanded with a command and detention (Natomas Middle School, Progressive Behavior Chart, 2009). The child’s bully behavior is not fixed, and what the authority just did is to confirm bully-ness as a form to correct what is wrong.
Successful Anti-bullying Programs (What is the resolution?)

Instead of lecturing students about acceptable behavior as a way of minimizing bullying, much research suggest for teachers to guide students in understanding why they should act respectfully. “Yoneyama and Naito (2003) point out that the use of power-dominating relations, alienating modes of learning, high levels of rejection, and dehumanizing methods of discipline all contribute to creating and maintaining bullying in school environment” (Marsh, Parada, Craven & Finger, 2004). With a traditional system in place, what can teachers do in their classrooms that counteract what already exist? Marsh, Parada, Craven, and Finger (2004) argues that teachers spend considerable amounts of direct contact with their students and that they are responsible for the social structure of the class and possess a vital role in appropriately managing school bullying (p.7). Additionally, Milsom and Gallo (2006) propose that anti-bullying programs should include instructional methods and activities to help increase student’s understanding of bullying. They suggested an example of a successful program:

A drama teacher wrote a play, Bullybusters, to educate students about how to deal with bullies. The authors believed psycho educational drama allowed students to learn vicariously through the actors and allowed for modeling positive attitudes and behaviors. Teachers were encouraged to explore student reactions to the drama though class discussions (p. 150).

Similarly, Mosley (1991) did a Dramatherapy study with peer group support in a school; the teachers and students developed a play and acted out plays about anti-bullying
as a part of a teaching curriculum (p.1). As a part of their curriculum, the students engaged in a playwriting process, in which the results in the arts-based inquiry examined the cognitive and affective learning that emerged during the process. Within the artistic activity, or upon reflection and sharing with each other, the students and teachers learned the skills of communication, empathy, listening and decision-making required to navigate their worlds (Mosley, 1991, p.3, Belliveau, 2006, p. 11). Likewise, the teachers and the students who discussed Bullybusters each learned communication skills, empathy, and positive attitudes through reflection. Teachers and students alike were able to process their own feelings and discuss alternative ways of handling bully situations (Milsom & Gallo, 2006, p. 14). Furthermore, the process of reflection also improves decision-making skills.

Yet, many teachers would find plays and role-playing consuming valuable instructional time. Therefore, Hillsberg and Spak (2007) introduce literature as a focus for anti-bullying program in the classroom because literature aligns with content standards. Much like the Bullybusters and Dramatherapy program, literature and class discussions show students how to avert and deal with bullies. However, instead of showing a play, they want to showcase the use of “written and spoken language to help [students] understand the human condition” (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006, p.25). Based on that premise, they created meaningful learning experiences in literature for three grades
in middle school. The stories they chose must contain “memorable protagonists, engaging plots, and thematic material that empowered victims of bullying” (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006, p.26). They also included helpers to encourage active reading:

We included graphic organizers that helped students analyze the elements of cause and effect in the stories. As there were two stories per grade level, there were also organizers for comparing and contrasting the two stories (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006, p.26.)

Hillsberg and Spak cite the Bible as an example of literature’s power to teach values (p. 28). They continue to argue a good story has more power than any rules and punishment can demonstrate to a child. They believe that middle school students are capable of taking a good story to a higher level and turning it into something personal and meaningful (p. 28).

Hillsberg and Spak introduce the concept of literature as a means of anti-bullying program, and although this initial concept is a breakthrough, they lack one key ingredient in tackling bullies: consistency. They offer “six selected stories, two for each grade level, each written by a renowned author of young adult literature (Hillsberg & Spak, 2007, p. 25). With that as their framework, students in every grade level will only encounter two stories with discussions throughout the year. Marsh, Parada, Craven, and Finger (2004) researched the most popular anti-bully interventions contemporary in schools and compare all of them in a two-year study. They note that truly successful intervention programs are the ones that understand the need for continual intervention:
Time is crucial and has been lacking with previous anti-bullying interventions that have endured marginal success. Bullying is an ongoing problem…so a “one-off” effort over a term or a year without continuation will have no lasting impact. Continual commitment from the school to recurrently implement the program after initial completion gives schools the chance to maintain long-term improvements (Marsh, Parada, Craven, & Finger, 2007, p.12).

Thus, the research above suggests that Bullybusters, Dramatherapy, and Hillsberg and Spak’s two-literature attempts per grade level fall short of creating a lasting impact in minimizing bullying since they only engage students once or twice per year. Other findings prove that, a single effort to reduce bullying, in theory and practice, is an unrealistic expectation to tackle long-term school bullying and vicious cycle it creates (p. 6). Marsh, Parada, Craven, and Finger’s, 2007, research highlights the importance of follow-up posttest measures and clearly illustrates the need for ongoing intervention (p.6). Perhaps, engaging students to reflect upon their actions continually, applies radically to any anti-bully intervention’s chance for successes.

The Power of Reflection (What is the Final Outcome?)

Aristotle believed that dramatic tragedy had a cathartic effect; tragedy was said to arouse the “emotions of pity and fear in order to discharge these feelings and leave the viewer feeling purified and purged” (Petrillo and Winner 2005, p. 205). In most research findings, reflection from students is the central focus of any anti-bullying program.
Likewise, reflection is the driving force behind Hillsberg and Spak’s “Young Adult Literature as the Centerpiece of an Anti-bullying Program in Middle School”:

In reflections written after reading and discussing stories, many students expressed positive outcomes from the experience. For example, a sixth grade girl felt that the story helped her realize how bullies can be anywhere and can be stopped by speaking out. In addition, many boys felt that the story helped them stand up to bullies. Therefore, it seems that literature did provide comfort and coping strategies for some students (p. 26).

Whether it be a play, reading or games that students participated in, the majority of such discussions allowed students time in the end to reflect on the significance of their activities. Mosley, 1991, states, “the ‘having of experience’ is not enough itself. The final task must be for teachers to help pupils collectively reflect on the meanings of underlying experience. Teachers should probe the symbolic meaning of the dramatic/ [reading] encounter through marrying the subjective experience and objective analysis…to distort experience to significance” (p. 7). Furthermore, and the most essential, Mosley infers that teachers are to help students toward the reorganization of perception that will enable them to achieve the self-changes they are seeking (p. 7).

In reflection, students motivate themselves to improve their behavior. Hoffman, Hutchinson and Reiss (2009) identify this self-motivating behavior as conscious discipline (p. 15). Conscious discipline works with mental set to help adults and children become more aware of their thoughts, feelings and actions and the consequences of each
on themselves and others. The scientifically based research on conscious discipline concludes the finding, “healthy social-emotional development is the foundation for cognitive development. And, without saying, cognitive development is essential for academic progress” (Hoffman, Hutchinson & Reiss, 2009, p. 15). In relation with bullying, reflection and conscious discipline’s mindset pushes students and teachers to focus on a cognitive, interpretive approach to motivation that emphasizes long-term development of pro-social behavior.

The Teacher’s Role and Literature in Anti-bullying Intervention in the Classroom (What are the common themes and universal truths?)

As teachers of reading and writing, we have the ability to encourage our students to read literature and write in journals to ease their pain (Hillsberg & Spak, 2006, p.26). Therefore, they add that teachers possess a vital role in appropriately managing school bullying (p.26). Through implementing literature that deals with bullying, teachers are in a position to seek ‘teachable moments’ where they can address social justice as it relates to their students’ lives (Ganley, Quintanar, & Loop, 2007, p.6).

Presenting literature that promotes pro-social behavior can be useful for building positive character traits. Rowan (2007) suggests that classroom libraries be filled with books that foster traits such as friendship, tolerance, and service to others…that main characters of these and other stories are ones to which students easily relate, thus
providing models of appropriate behavior (p. 184). With appropriate literature that deals with bully situation, teachers can create opportunities for students to make decisions, to listen to the different perspective of others, to respond to situations in a variety of concrete and imaginary worlds, and provide them with skills of communication (Belliveau, 2006, p. 11).

Summary

The purpose of this section was to explore the many facets of bullying, review current practices and programs available to minimizing bully behaviors and examine practical strategies teachers can use to guide students to become more aware and educated in bully situations. The literature review provided a context in understanding the “story” of bullying, as it exists in middle school. Along with that understanding, the literature review also presents the importance of literature and the teacher’s role in anti-bullying efforts. The next chapter presents the framework and explains the sections of the curriculum guide that was created and informed by this research and the available literature on the topic.
Chapter 3

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

This project was developed and constructed based upon findings in educational research, which deals with minimizing bullying in sixth grade classrooms through literature. The literature review has revealed numerous practices and philosophies that have proven to work in minimizing bullying in classrooms. These practices and philosophies prompted the outline of the curriculum guide and threaded the foundation of each thematic unit. In this chapter, the rationale behind the curriculum guide is presented and clarified. Furthermore, the purposes of each thematic unit in the curriculum guide are associated with appropriate and relevant research. Lastly, this chapter reveals the development of the curriculum guide and its planned implementation to the teachers and the field.

Ever since the incident with Aliah when the she came into my classroom crying three years ago, I’ve become dedicated to minimizing bullying in the classroom, and outwardly, the school as a whole. For the last three years, I have involved myself in equity, G.A.T.E. social-emotional, and anti-bullying trainings. Additionally, I have been using research-based strategies and reading literature that promotes anti-bullying intervention. Thus far, I have had great success in changing my classroom climate. In
search of maintaining and further improving my classroom successes, I have consulted colleagues, school counselors and psychologists, and administrators about this topic. Collectively and after much thought, the following question was used to frame my thinking: How can anti-bullying interventions practices carry over into the classroom and work with the current classroom curriculum? After much research, the following key findings generate a probable answer to the framework question and support the construction of the curriculum guide: literature is a helpful source to minimizing bullying, student reflection can create awareness of bully-issues and can lead to intrinsic student motivation to self-regulate appropriate behavior, and consistency in advocating anti-bully environment in the classroom establish better learning environment. The literature summary explains the three main findings in detail.

Relationship between Literature Review and Methodology

The research literature presented many ways in which we, as teachers, can address anti-bullying intervention in our classrooms without much training and without wasting valuable instruction time. The research lead me to breakdown the main research topics into three parts. Literature, reflection and consistency are three main ideas from research that serve as the foundation of the anti-bullying curriculum in sixth grade classrooms.

The literature presented clear evidence that the most effective ways teachers can manage the problem of bullying is by increasing student knowledge and awareness of the
problem, ensuring that there are minimal opportunities for acts of bullying to materialize, and offering student support, training, and education aimed at attacking the root causes of bullying (Newman-Carlson, Horne, Bartolomucci, 2000). However, Stephenson and Smith (1989) found that many teachers feel helpless to address the problem of bullying due to the lack of adequate skills and training to intervene. In addition to the lack of teacher training problem, in these times of increasingly more pressure for results on standardized tests, many teachers have stopped addressing character education that encompass anti-bully education in their classrooms (Newman-Carlson, Horne, Bartolomucci, 2000). These problems are kept in mind as the curriculum guide is developed with continual target of literature, reflection, and consistency as a guide.

Literature as a Main Focus of Minimizing Bullying

In every Language Arts classroom, teachers utilize literature as the key component in teaching content standard skills. Addressing bullying also takes students to learn skills for averting or dealing with bullies, and just as language arts, literature can be used as a key component to teach students those skills. Hillsberg and Spak (2007) align literature as a focus for anti-bullying program in the classroom because it not only addresses content standards but it showcases the use of the written and spoken language to understand the human condition. Students can live vicariously through characters and
learn from them without ever having to be in such situations. Hillsberg and Spak (2007) continue to argue that a good story has more power than any rules and punishment can demonstrate to a child. Therefore, the curriculum guide has a memorable story integrated with each activity. Through literature, teachers can teach the content standards while also teaching anti-bullying practices to students.

Reflection of Literature and Activities Lead to Self-Motivating Changes in Behavior

Stephenson and Smith (1989) stated that due to the lack of training teachers do not have adequate skills to intervene in bully situations. One way to tackle this issue is to take a proactive approach. In most research findings, reflection from students is the central focus of any anti-bullying program (Sherrill & Ley (1994), Marsh, Parada, Craven, & Finger (2004), Bellevue 2006). Through reflection students learn to self-regulate their behaviors thus minimizing bully-behaviors. Although literature serves as a means of understanding the human condition, Mosley (1991) states, the “having-experience” is not enough itself and that the final task must be for teachers to help pupils collectively reflect on the meaning of the underlying experience. The curriculum guide serves this purpose. For every piece of literature in the curriculum guide, there are inquiry questions that lead to class discussion. In addition, the activities that link with each story promote communication skills and reflective instances that allow students to change their
perception. This, Moseley (1991) infers will enable students to achieve the self-changes they are seeking.

Consistency Boost Anti-bullying Intervention Success

Marsh, Parada, Craven and Finger (2007) conducted a study that looked at successful anti-bullying intervention programs noting what they have in common. Their study shows that truly successful intervention programs understand the need for continual intervention “so a ‘one-off’ effort over a term of a year without continuation will have no lasting impact” (Marsh, Parada, Craven, & Finger, 2007, p.12). The curriculum guide provides teachers to confront bullying in their classrooms with continual commitment. Teachers can use the curriculum guide in many ways. They can use the literature to supplement the genre they are teaching, they can pick out content standards they are addressing and use a specific story and activities, and they can look at individual literature and activities as stand-alone lessons. Regardless of how teachers will use the curriculum guide, they are given more opportunities to teach bully awareness.
Project Design

When my research and literature review concluded, I shared the following information with my colleagues and the Natomas District Curriculum Planning Committee. I wanted their feedback about how to make the curriculum guide easy to read, accessible to use in more than one way, and teacher friendly. Gathering teacher and committee feedback, I started to develop my project keeping literature, reflection, and consistency in mind. The curriculum guide provides teachers with research-based background knowledge and practical instructional lessons ready to use to minimize bullying in the classroom.

The curriculum guide, in its broadest form, is a map with the intention that teachers can read and compare stories, activities, and lessons with ease. Peeling back the map, the curriculum guide presents four thematic units, each devoted to different aspects of bullying. Each thematic unit includes the following: overview of the theme, objectives of the unit, synopsis of literature used, inquiry questions, classroom activities explained, and three sample lessons. In each theme, sample lessons that have been proven to work are included. Each lesson includes: time frame, content standard addressed, objectives, materials, text opener, reading with purpose exercise, activities, discussion questions, and journal wrap-up.
The final result of my research and exchanges with colleagues is a multi-layered curriculum guide with literature at the heart of minimizing bullying in sixth grade classrooms. The remainder of this chapter, I aim to explain the four thematic units in the curriculum guide.

**Themes**

The curriculum guide contains four separate series with each theme dealing with an aspect of bullying. Each theme begins with an overview for teachers of the specific topic in bullying and objectives that are designed to give teachers goals for the reading and activities. In every theme, there are two-three classroom activities and they are intended to increase student participation in efforts to minimize bullying in the classroom. I encourage teachers to incorporate these activities into their already existing curriculum.

**Theme 1: Understanding Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders**

The first theme in the four series deals with bully awareness. It is essential that teachers explain to students that being a bully is not a permanent label and that people make choices that make them a bully at any given time. Milsom and Gallo (2006) explain that even victims can respond to victimization with bully behavior. The stories and
activities in this series help students become aware of bullying that is occurring in the school.

In creating awareness to the situation, students are able to take an active role identifying such problems. Awareness is an essential step in creating reflection and Hoffman, Hutchinson and Reiss (2009) call this self-motivating behavior as conscious discipline. Conscious discipline helps students become aware of their environment, thoughts, and the consequences of their actions. Theme one helps create a definition of bullying in order to assist students in openly discussing the problem of bullying. Furthermore, Newman-Carlson, Horne, and Bartolomucci (2000) states that this awareness can help students identify their role in bully prevention (p. 40).

**Theme 2: Speaking up by Building Communication against Bullies**

Theme one focuses on identifying the bully and creating a holistic awareness on bully situations. In this series, theme two will focus on helping students build communication skills to avert and deal with bullies. However bullying may start, it is encouragement from children’s peers that continue to propel bully behavior (Espelage, 2002). If it takes a group of peers to encourage a child to become a bully, it will also require that same peer pressure to get the bully to rethink their actions. Again, many studies and surveys concluded that bullying is perpetuated by peer encouragement and
that bullies are more likely to continue engaging in bullying behavior when they feel no one will intervene and that there are no consequences (Cornell, 2003). Thus in theme two, each activity encourages students to speak up and against bullies by teaching them helpful words and phrases they can use in bully situations.

**Theme 3: Awareness of Inner Strength and People’s Differing Background**

With attention commonly focused on bullies and bully behaviors, the needs of victims are often neglected. Theme three focus on raising awareness that victims are not alone. Furthermore, theme three will focus on students’ differences and how to value diversity in the classroom. Espelage (2002) states “adolescents struggle to establish who they are by rejecting characteristics and stereotypes of their dislike.” In theme three, the goal is to get students to understand that although they may be different, there are always interests in common with others. When students realize that their values and interests can be similar with students who differ from them, the likelihood of seeing each other as separate individuals will lessen.

Focusing on the victims, theme three helps students find helpful words and resources on how to get help. In creating this awareness in the classroom, students that are victimized will come to see that teachers, counselors, and administrators are supportive in the development of the solution to reduce or eliminate victimization.
Theme 4: Creating a Better Learning Environment in the Classroom

The themes preceding theme four focus on individualistic attention of the bully and victim. Rather than focusing on the individual, theme four focuses on the classroom environment. Although it is essential that we understand and intervene with bullies and victims, it is perhaps even more important to take a proactive approach by creating a healthy classroom environment. Koo (2007) presents the mob mentality in bullying where students join in some kind of performance. The mob mentality can be used to either fuel bullying or stop bullies. In classroom where students feel connected and have together successfully worked with one another, the mob mentality will play a factor in positive outcomes.

According to Cottle (2004) students also need to feel inclusion rather feeling alone because in their minds, independence is synonymous with defiance. Therefore, focusing on classroom activities that are inclusive of all students will minimize bullying in the classroom. In theme four, students will work together as a team in non-competitive activities to promote positive social interaction.
Choosing Literature

According to Hillsberg and Spak (2006) the stories must contain, “memorable protagonists, engaging plots, and thematic material that [empower] victims of bullying.” With that in mind, sixth grade teachers from Leeroy F. Greene, Heron, and I, a representative from Natomas Middle School, handpicked stories from Prentice Hall and Holt that had those requirements. Prentice Hall and Holt publishing companies cover the majority of Natomas School District and the nation as a whole. It was important to me that teachers have these same stories accessible to them.

Addressing Content Standards

Teachers can teach the content standards by using the stories they already have. The stories chosen already have elements that qualify them as useful stories that can help minimize bullying in the classrooms when paired with appropriate activities. Under each lesson plan in the purpose for reading, the students identify places in the text that integrate the content standards and anti-bullying intervention.

Shared Inquiry Questions

The discussion questions that are included in each theme are called shared inquiry questions. They are questions that do not have one correct answer; rather the questions require multitudes of answer. This movement is moving away from the “banking concept of education” (Freire, 1994). Students and teachers alike are encouraged to accept
multiple answers, which alleviate student anxiety and displace the banking concept mentality of “projecting an absolute ignorance onto others.”

Plan for Implementation and Dispersion

The purpose of this paper was to review the research behind bullying, successful anti-bullying programs, and practical teacher strategies that minimize bullying occurrences. The resultant project is the anti-bullying curriculum guide that will be made available to sixth grade Language Arts teachers at my school and district. The goal is to turn this anti-bullying curriculum guide into a staff development presentation and to give in-service trainings at staff meetings at my site and district. Beyond that sequence, the next goal of the project is to expand past sixth grade into other grade level in middle school. With thorough feedback from my presentation, I can make the necessary changes before sharing it with neighboring districts.
In many ways, the process of developing this curriculum guide was challenging because bullying is such a multifaceted subject. It is difficult to defeat bullying because it resurfaces and succumbs in moments—one can only minimize its occurrences. Through the development of this curriculum guide, it has expanded the author’s views on minimizing bullying through literature. The goal of the curriculum guide was to give teachers the flexibility to incorporate anti-bullying intervention techniques with the classroom curriculum. In this chapter, there is a discussion on the significance of this project, a summary of the findings, the limitations, recommendations (including suggested stories), and conclusions.

Discussion

Two decades ago, Whitney and Smith (1990) released a report on the topic of bullying and victimization in schools. Their study shows that there are proven connections between bullying and potential for low academic performance. Recently, Cornell’s finding in 2003 looked at multiple studies and surveys concluding that bullies are more likely to continue engaging in bully behavior when they feel no one will intervene. Even with such studies, Milsom and Gallo (2006) argue in their research that
schools and teachers are still neglecting character education and anti-bullying intervention in place of improving test scores in spite of their relationship. If these two factors correlate and affect the outcome of the other, why do many schools and teachers ignore bullying?

Marsh, Parada, Craven, and Finger (2004) point out those schools often ignore bullying because their anti-bullying intervention program is not successful. In such cases, the schools have an intervention in place but they are not exercised continuously throughout the school year that their effect does not minimize bullying: “time is crucial and has been lacking with previous anti-bullying interventions…so a ‘one-off’ effort over a term or a year without continuation will have no lasting impact.” Marsh, Parada, Craven, and Finger’s research reveals that successful anti-bullying interventions have a need for continual intervention. The curriculum guide is designed to address continuity in practice. Teachers can take a proactive approach to bullying by incorporating content standard linked lessons in their existing curriculum throughout the year. When teachers will teach a certain standard or a form of literature, they can easily pick out a lesson from the anti-bullying intervention curriculum guide to supplement the unit they are teaching. When the curriculum guide lessons are in practice, students will learn communication skills helpful to them in bully situations. The students will learn their roles in bully situations so that they do not become bully bystanders. For example, in the lesson called,
“Stop, Rewind, Say that Again,” students are able to suggest a better way of talking to bullies. Students are actively engaged as the class tries to come up with suggestions.

Teaching a separate lesson about bullying and straying away from their existing curriculum can be a hassle. Obstacles such as the time in making separate lessons to teach bullying can inhibit teachers from teaching bully awareness in the classroom thus a contributing factor why anti-bully intervention is not in practice. The anti-bullying curriculum guide should help encourage teachers to include bully awareness in classrooms despite the increased pressure to improve test scores. As teachers, our profession should not be limited to teaching students mastery of content; we must encourage students to also be humane.

Summary

This project gives teachers the tools to incorporate anti-bullying intervention in their classrooms using sixth grade level appropriate literature. Teachers who will use this curriculum guide can help minimize bullying in their classrooms while still embedding sixth grade Language Arts standards in their instructional time. Educators are able to utilize ready-made lessons to raise students’ awareness on bullying issues, build communication skills, help students identify their role in bully prevention, and provide support to both bullies and victims.
Furthermore, this curriculum guide is usable in various ways. The curriculum guide provides teachers the autonomy and flexibility to choose the literature, content standard, or the lesson they please to use in their classrooms. The curriculum map makes it easy for teachers to compare the thematic units side by side and each unit is thoroughly explained in an overview. Lastly, the practical lessons in each thematic unit are a compilation of research-based activities and high interest literature established to minimize bullying.

Recommendations

Additional research needs to be completed on anti-bullying intervention. When looking at different modifications to the school’s anti-bullying policies, questions about how the intervention can transfer into the classroom need to be asked. Students spend the majority of their time in classrooms and the curriculum consists of other subjects—these subjects can also be utilized to help minimize bullying. For instance, science is a great way to introduce to students how their brain functions and how that contributes to bullying. Nonfiction, fact-based literature can help students understand their misconceptions about each other and guide students to promote the acceptance of diversity.

Although the anti-bullying curriculum guide targets sixth grade, the activities can link to seventh and eighth grade appropriate literature. Anti-bullying curriculum guide
should be made for all grades in middle school to continue its message of zero bullying policy. Furthermore, literature that promote anti-bullying ideas need to be accessible for students to take home. Students need to be able to take anti-bullying practices from the classroom to their homes. Teachers should also promote readings and activities that parents can do with their children outside the school because the home is where students first learn how to bully or become meek from discipline.

*Suggested Research*

The areas of future research under the broad topic of minimizing bullying are plentiful. The topic of bullying is such a long and extensive spectrum that minimizing bullies through literature is only one vital approach. There are other ways to include anti-bullying intervention in the classrooms and that topic needs further exploration. Teachers need to tackle bullying from different angles besides literature. Another important area of research would be the correlation between classroom behavior expectations to children’s practices at home. What impact do parents and home environment have in creating student’s attitude towards bullying is another worthy of consideration.

*Limitation*

The limitations of this project include how to get educators to use the curriculum guide, how to change the way teachers and students view bullying and awareness, how to embed the curriculum guide into teacher’s already packed classroom curriculum, how to
link the curriculum guide with the school’s anti-bullying policy, and how to disseminate the curriculum guide to colleagues. Additionally, a limitation of the curriculum guide would be that classrooms use different text book publishers and the recommended literature may not be in the text used in the classroom. Furthermore, the curriculum guide is intended for classroom use and there is no discussion in guide for parent involvement—how to extend the learning beyond the classroom to the home.

As bullying has many situational causes and origins, there are no proven ways to completely eliminate bullying—we can only hope to suppress and minimize its occurrences. Bullying is also multifaceted and has many layers amongst the facets therefore, trying to minimize bullying in one way will not be effective. Educators should approach bullying in various ways and the curriculum guide is a stepping-stone in linking the school’s anti-bullying intervention into the classroom. The curriculum guide should not and is not intended to be the only way to tackle bullying. Teachers can use the curriculum guide as one of many interventions that have to be mobilized to minimize bullying.

The curriculum guide deals only with sixth grade appropriate literature. Thus, the thematic units and lessons are more in depth rather than trying to cover all the grades in middle school. A list of books, stories, and other genres of literature appropriate for seventh and eighth grade are listed under recommendations. As these lessons and
recommendations are based on research, the researcher was keenly aware of the potential role of bias and has taken caution to limit the influence of bias when designing this curriculum guide. The goal to the curriculum guide was to present variety of lessons and high interest literature appropriate for sixth grade, and strategies that have garnered support from academic and research communities as well as from classroom practitioners.

Conclusions

Developing and implementing the ideas presented in the curriculum guide have had an enormous impact on the author. Researching the topic and developing the curriculum guide have profoundly changed how the author views anti-bullying intervention and ways to minimize bullying. The author has found herself advocating for classroom anti-bullying intervention through literature with colleagues, administrators, and parents. Raising bully awareness by finding avenues to present anti-bulling literature and intervention activities from the curriculum guide will be the author’s next goals.

Changing the classroom culture and student perspective on bullying issues is vital in minimizing the occurrence of bully incidences. Literature is such a powerful tool for students to vicariously experience bully situations and learn fundamental devices to avert bullying and intrinsically better their behaviors. As educators, we can no longer afford to turn a blind eye from bullying in our schools, let alone our classrooms. Bullies will
continue to torture students and degrade classroom environment unless we all stand up against their violence. In minimizing bullying, we can provide students safe and healthy learning environments for growth in both education and compassion.
APPENDIX

Minimizing Bullying in Sixth Grade Classrooms through Literature: An Anti-bullying Curriculum Guide for Teachers
Minimizing Bullying in Sixth Grade Classrooms through Literature:
An Anti-bullying Curriculum Guide for Teachers

By Arcy De Vera
California State University, Sacramento
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>LETTER TO TEACHERS</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>CURRICULUM MAP</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>THEME 1</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>THEME 2</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>THEME 3</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Fellow Teachers,

Our profession demands so much of us already that adding one more thing in our classroom can seem like a daunting task. However, we have to realize that a large portion of our students’ lives is spent in our classrooms therefore placing us in a profound position to address bullying. Unfortunately, many of us feel helpless to address the problem of bullying due to the lack of training to intervene. I felt this way and furthermore, I worried that I might make bullying worse in my classroom if I draw attention to it.

Over the years and the more I read about bullying, there is one thing that we do as teachers to perpetuate the bully-mentality in our classrooms: ignore it. Bullies are relentless unless we stop them. I made a choice that there is zero- bullying in my classroom and I took it farther, I related some of our stories we read with bullying and I made activities with the stories that made them aware of bullying. Today, my students are willing to help each other and above all, they are sensitive in understanding their behaviors and actions. This alleviated many of my classroom behaviors and I had more time to reward courteousness.

The anti-bullying curriculum guide serves as a gateway in creating bully awareness and improved classroom environment by using the resources we use
everyday—literature. Through literature, students can live vicariously through the characters without having to have undergone bully-situations. Students are able to read and learn key concepts about dealing with bullies from the readings’ characters and resolution. The curriculum guide integrates literature with activities that promote the awareness and changes in their behavior whether they are the bully, victim or bystander.

As I mentioned before, adding one more thing in our classrooms can be a daunting task, therefore while developing the anti-bully curriculum guide, I kept in mind that teachers would want to use it in various ways. Primarily, the anti-bullying guide can be used in three different ways.

1. Each reading and its activity is linked to the California Content Standards with the intention that teachers who teach by skill can use a stand-alone lesson as an addition to their curriculum.

2. The curriculum guide uses multiple genres of literature so that teachers can use the stories, poems, auto/biography, letters or nonfiction piece of their choice to supplement the form of literature they are teaching.

3. The anti-bullying curriculum guide is arranged by themes, each addressing different elements of bullying. Teachers can use the thematic activities in sequence throughout the whole year. There are four thematic units in which teachers can easily incorporate a unit per quarter or more per semester.
The anti-bullying curriculum guide is easier to see in the curriculum map where each theme, literature, content standards, and overview of the activities are charted. Each thematic unit consists of an overview that details the objectives, literature, activities, and lessons in the unit. There are three pieces of literature and lesson plans that are already ready for use in your classrooms. Lastly, the activities in the anti-curriculum guide can also be used to pair up with a piece of literature of your choice.

The goal of the anti-bullying curriculum guide is to help other teachers, as it has helped me, incorporate bully awareness in our classrooms without having to stress about instructional time and preparation of each lesson. With this curriculum guide, the literature and activities that follow can help students gain confidence and communication skills to avert from bully situations and deal with bullies with insight and good judgment. As I have seen in my own classroom, we are able to help students toward the reorganization of perception that will enable them to deal with bullies and achieve self-changes that they are seeking.

Respectfully,

Arcy De Vera
## Curriculum Map

### Minimizing Bullying in Sixth Grade Classrooms through Literature: An Anti-bullying Curriculum Guide for Teachers (Theme 1-2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1</th>
<th>Theme 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1</strong>-Understanding the plot and its characters: Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders</td>
<td><strong>Theme 2</strong>- Speaking up: Intervention for Bully-behavior and Building Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Overview
- **Theme 1** promotes student awareness of bully situations.
- **Theme 2** focuses on helping students build communication skills necessary in dealing with bullies.

### Objectives
- **Theme 1**
  - To increase students’ awareness, understanding, and identification of bullying behaviors
  - To assist students in identifying their role in bully prevention
- **Theme 2**
  - To guide students build communication in dealing with bullies
  - To help students build coping mechanisms when they are angry and distressed

### Content Standards
- **Reading: Vocabulary Development**
  - a. Identify and interpret figurative language and words with multiple meanings.
  - b. Recognize origins and meanings of frequently used foreign words.
- **Reading: Vocabulary Development**
  - 1.3 Recognize origins and meanings of frequently used foreign words.
- **Reading: Comprehension**
  - 2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.
c. Monitor unknown words by using context clues.

Reading: Literary Response and Analysis

3.2 Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.

3.4 Define how tone and meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.

| Text and Genres | 1. Aarons Gift by Myron Levoy (short story) | 1. from The Pigman and Me by Paul Zindel (autobiography) |
| 2. Eleven by Sandra Cisneros (short story) | 2. The Southpaw by Judith Viorst (letters) |
| 3. All Summer in a Day by Ray Bradbury (short story) | 3. Life Doesn’t Frighten Me by Maya Angelou (poem) |

| Essential Questions | How can I conduct the following classroom activities to help my students become more aware of bullying? | How can I encourage my students to support one another in their efforts to deal with bullying? |
| | | How can I encourage my students to take an active role in preventing bullying? |

| Classroom Activities | 1. Picturing the Bully | 1. I Can See You through the Other Side |
| 2. Stop, Rewind, Say that Again | 2. Cage your Tiger |
| 3. I’m Sorry, I Wish | 3. Fishbowl |
# Curriculum Map

## Minimizing Bullying in Sixth Grade Classrooms through Literature: An Anti-bullying Curriculum Guide for Teachers (Theme 3-4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme 3</th>
<th>Theme 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theme 3</strong>-Recognizing the Positives: Awareness of Inner Strength and People’s Positive Intentions</td>
<td><strong>Theme 4</strong>-Proactive Approach: Creating a Better Learning Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview</strong></td>
<td>Theme three promotes student’s inner strength and teaches students to embrace diversity.</td>
<td>Theme four focuses on building community in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td>• To increase awareness for victims support</td>
<td>• To encourage students to work together to achieve goals in a non-competitive way</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• To assist students find people and places to seek help when victimized</td>
<td>• To give students suggestions about keeping an open mind when working with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To help students embrace diversity and differences in people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Standards</strong></td>
<td>Reading: Literary Response and Analysis</td>
<td>Reading: Literary Response and Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.</td>
<td>3.5 Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Analyze the influence of setting on the problem and resolution.</td>
<td>3.6 Analyze and Identify features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.

3.6 Analyze and identify features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text and Genres</th>
<th>1. All American Slurp by Lensey Namioka (short story)</th>
<th>1. Breaker’s Bridge (short story)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The Sneetches by Dr. Suess (poem)</td>
<td>2. Rowing the Bus by Paul Logan (short story)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli (novel)</td>
<td>3. The Just Us Club by Richard Cohen (poem)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Questions</th>
<th>How can I promote positive self-image for all students?</th>
<th>How can I encourage my students to welcome one another in groups in order to build a positive learning environment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do I create an inclusive classroom where students embrace diversity and creativeness?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Activities</th>
<th>1. Warm and Fuzzy Bags</th>
<th>1. Crossing the Bridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Proud to be Me, Proud to be Different, Proud to be Similar</td>
<td>2. Lego your Thoughts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 1 - Understanding the plot and its characters: Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders

Overview:
The first step of tackling bullying in the classroom is to understand what constitutes as bullying (Horne, 2000). The stories that follow will heighten student’s awareness of bullying situations. The activities provide an opportunity for students to express what they believe a bully is and does. Furthermore, students will also explore what they believe a victim is and does through the readings.

The discussion questions will guide students to view the situations as a bystander, bully and victim. Students will suggest how to avert from bully situations from different viewpoints.

Objectives:
- To increase students’ awareness, understanding, and identification of bullying behaviors
- To assist students in identifying their role in bully prevention
- To give students suggestion in communicating their emotions and to help students learn appropriate ways to interact

Synopsis of Texts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Title and Author</th>
<th>Content Standards</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Story</td>
<td>Aaron’s Gift by Myron Levoy</td>
<td>Reading 1.2 Identify and interpret figurative language and words with multiple meaning.</td>
<td>While skating in a park, Aaron finds an injured pigeon and nurses it back to health. When a gang of boys invites Aaron to join them and to bring his bird to a meeting, Aaron goes, not suspecting that they will harm the bird. Aaron tries to protect the bird from the boys, and the bird flies away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Story</td>
<td>Eleven by Sandra</td>
<td>Reading 1.3 Recognize the</td>
<td>Rachel, the narrator, wakens on her eleventh birthday but doesn’t feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cisneros</td>
<td>origins and meaning of frequently used foreign words in English and use these words accurately in speaking and writing.</td>
<td>eleven at all. When she goes to school, her teacher, Mrs. Price, makes Rachel wear an old red sweater that isn’t hers. Rachel wishes she were far, far away instead of celebrating her birthday with people whom she knows.</td>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Story</td>
<td>All Summer in a Day by Ray Bradbury</td>
<td>On this imaginary version of Venus, the sun shines for two hours every seven years. The rest of the time on their planet, it is raining. Nine-year-old Margo anxiously waits with her class to witness the sun’s brief appearance. She and her family moved from Earth five years ago and the Venus-born children resent Margo for that, so they lock her in the closet. The sun appears and the children run and play in its warmth. The children come back from playing when the rain returned and they let Margo out, but it’s too late—the sun will not return for another seven years.</td>
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</table>

**Inquiry Questions:**

- Are the bullies, in these cases, the antagonists, aware that they are bullying someone? Why or why not?
- How do you think the bully comes to have these characteristics?
- Was it possible for the victim to avoid the bully-situation? What could the victim do differently?
- If you were to say anything to the bully or the victim about the way they acted, what would it be? Explain.
Classroom Activities:

1. Picturing the Bully and the Victim - After reading a selected text, students are to draw how they perceive the bully and the victim in the story. They may use symbols and words to describe each one. On the back of the frames, students will write suggestions for the bully and the victim to become a stronger person. (Sample Lesson 1)

2. Stop, Rewind, Say That Again- Students will find quotes from the story where the bully says hurtful words and do hurtful actions. They will also find quotes from the story where the victim is lacking rebuttal. The students will suggest a positive alternative for each negative comment and/or action. Extension activity is available on the back page where students scout people from the school say hurtful things, write them down, and suggests better ways of saying them. (Sample Lesson 2)

3. I’m Sorry, I Wish- After reading selected text students will write two informal letters—one to the victim and the other to the bully of the story. Students will write an apology “I’m Sorry” letter to the victim while they write an “I Wish” letter to the bully. (Sample Lesson 3)

Theme 1, Sample Lessons:

*Theme 1, Lesson 1:* Picturing the Bully and Victim using Aaron’s Gift by Myron Levoy (Suggested time: 30-40 minute activities over 2 days)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Standards:</th>
<th>Reading 1.2 Identify and interpret figurative language and words with multiple meaning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Objectives        | 1. Students will be able to identify the bully and the victim.  
                  | 2. Students will be able to give suggestions about                                             |
dealing with bullies.

| Materials/Handouts | • Aaron’s Gift by Myron Levoy  
|                   | • Markers/Colored pencils  
|                   | • Frame Handout of bully (appendix A)  
|                   | • Frame Handout of victim (appendix A)  
|                   | • Suggestion page (appendix A)  
|                   | • Journal page (appendix F)  
|                   | • White board and dry-erase markers  

| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Ask students if they have ever wanted to join a group?  
|                               | What was the outcome of it?  

| Activity 2: Read Aaron’s Gift (20-25 minutes) | Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
|                                               | B= bully-like behaviors (students will identify parts of the text where a character is imposing their will on another character)  
|                                               | V= victimized (students will identify parts of the text where a character feels helpless)  
|                                               | Q= question about the text or words with multiple meaning (students will mark parts of the text where they are confused about the plot and character and/or words with multiple meaning. Teacher will scaffold and identify words with multiple meanings with the class)  
|                                               | Teacher will check regularly for understanding.  

| Activity 3: Framework (30 minutes) | 1. Students will reread their notes.  
|                                   | 2. Students will draw who they think is a bully in the story. Students can also use words and symbols to further explain their bully pictures. They may also combine what they know from movies, readings, and experience with the reading to come up with their bully example.  
|                                   | 3. Students will draw who they think is a victim in the story. Like the bully, students can also explain their victim
4. On the back of the frame, guide students to suggest how Aaron could have handled the situation with Carl on the victim side. Have students write down their suggestion to Aaron.

5. On the other bully side, have students address Carl giving him insight on his behavior. What can Carl do to see that what he does hurts people?

Teacher will write the suggestions for the bully and victim up of the white board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 4: Debrief (10 minutes)</th>
<th>Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are the bullies, in these cases, the antagonists, aware that they are bullying someone? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do you think the bully comes to have these characteristics?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Was it possible for the victim to avoid the bully-situation? What could the victim do differently?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If you were to say anything to the bully or the victim about the way they acted, what would it be? Explain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Activity 5: Wrap up (10 minutes) | Remind students of what they have learned about bullies and victims. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page. |
**Theme 1, Lesson 2:** Stop, Rewind, Say that Again using Eleven by Sandra Cisneros  
(Suggested time: 50 minutes, 1 day)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Standard:</th>
<th>Reading 1.3 Recognize the origins and meaning of frequently used foreign words in English and use these words accurately in speaking and writing.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives:</td>
<td>1. Students will be able to learn communication skills and learn appropriate ways to interact.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Materials/handouts| • Eleven by Sandra Cisneros  
• Stop, Rewind, Say that Again Handout (appendix B)  
• Journal page (appendix F)  
• Space to Role Play  
• Chair |

**Activity 1: Opener**  
(5 minutes)  
Ask students one/two of the following questions:  
• Explain a situation where they wanted to say something, but they just stayed quiet?  
• Are adults always right? Are people that are powerful always right (i.e. doctors, principal)?

**Activity 2: Read Eleven**  
(15-20 minutes)  
Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
B= bully-like behaviors (students will identify parts of the text where a character is imposing their will on another character)  
V= victimized (students will identify parts of the text where a character feels helpless)  
Q= Students will pick out three words that are from other dialects. Teacher will scaffold and identify words with foreign origin  

Teacher will check regularly for understanding.
| Activity 3: Stop, Rewind, Say that Again hand out (5-7 minutes) | Ask students to find a passage where Rachel is frustrated. Have students suggest what she should have done or what she should have said. Students will use SRS handout to write their answers. |
| Activity 4: Stop, Rewind, Say that Again Role Play (15 minutes) | Assign the following parts:  
1. Rachel  
2. Teacher  
The actors will use their SRS handout to as their dialogue for the play. In front of the class, have Rachel sit on a chair with her SRS handout. Have the teacher start standing next to her.  
* Have students act out what happened in the story for the first take.  
* Have students use the SRS handout to suggest a different solution to Rachel’s frustration.  
* Repeat activity with different student portraying Rachel. Teacher will ask the class which solution they liked best. |
| Activity 5: Debrief | Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow).  
  - Are the bullies, in these cases, the antagonists, aware that they are bullying someone? Why or why not?  
  - How do you think the bully comes to have these characteristics?  
  - Was it possible for the victim to avoid the bully-situation? What could the victim do differently?  
  - If you were to say anything to the bully or the victim about the way they acted, what would it be? Explain. |
### Activity 6: Wrap up (10 minutes)
Remind students of what they have learned about bullies and victims. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page.

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**Theme 1, Lesson 3: I’m Sorry, I Wish using All Summer in a Day by Ray Bradbury**
(Suggested time: 50 minutes, 1 day)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Standard:</th>
<th>Reading 1.4 Monitor texts for unknown words by using context clues to determine meaning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Objectives:       | 1. Students will be able to discuss motivations and actions of fictional character.  
                    2. Students will be able to empathize with the victim.  
                    3. Students will be able to give suggestions to change bully-behaviors. |
| Materials/handouts| • All Summer in a Day by Ray Bradbury  
                    • Two pages of binder paper  
                    • Two envelopes and stamps  
                    • Journal page (appendix F)  
                    • Timer  
                    • Overhead and pens |
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Ask students one/two of the following questions:  
                                 • Why do people write letters?  
                                 • Would you rather play in the rain or in the sun? |
| Activity 2: All Summer in a Day (30 minutes) | Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
                                           B= bully-like behaviors (students will identify parts of the text where a character is imposing their will on another character)  
                                           V= victimized (students will identify parts of the text where a character feels helpless)  
                                           Q= Students will write down three sentences and underline |
an unfamiliar word.

Teacher will check regularly for understanding. Students will turn in their three sentences. Teacher will pick out two or three examples and write them down on overhead. As a class, students will use the sentence and/or the paragraph to figure out the underlined word.

| Activity 3: I’m Sorry, I Wish (25 minutes) | Ask students to first write an apology letter to Margo. Students can write about the sunshine, empathy, and what they can do to help her.  
Next, ask students to write an “I Wish” letter to William asking him that they wish he would change his attitude. Students can write about how it cost Margo to see the sun, his actions, and what William could do about his jealousy.  
When students are finished writing, have them share their letters to a friend, then with the class.  
Students will put these letters in an envelope with their address. Teacher will mail them out during summer. |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activity 5: Debrief | Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow).  
• Are the bullies, in these cases, the antagonists, aware that they are bullying someone? Why or why not?  
• How do you think the bully comes to have these characteristics?  
• Was it possible for the victim to avoid the bully-situation? What could the victim do differently?  
• If you were to say anything to the bully or the victim about the way they acted, what would it be? Explain. |
Activity 6: Wrap up (10 minutes)
Remind students of what they have learned about bullies and victims. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page.

Theme 2- Speaking up: Intervention for Bully-behavior and Building Communication

Overview:
Theme one focuses on identifying the bully. Theme two will focus on helping students build communication skills necessary in dealing with bullies. This section will also explore bullying in terms of gender.

Studies conclude that bullying is perpetuated from peer encouragement and that bullies are more likely to continue engaging in bullying behavior when they feel no one will intervene (Cornell, 2003). Therefore, it is important that students know what to say in bully-situations. The stories that follow all have strong protagonist that deal with bullies. The activities provide an opportunity for students to practice communication skills and learn helpful words when dealing with bullies.

The discussion questions will guide students to help generate appropriate language used in bully situations. Students will ultimately have a list of phrases and words to help avert and deal with bullies.

Objectives:

- To guide students in understanding how reputation plays a part in maintaining bullying behavior
- To help students build communication against bullying
- To increase student’s awareness of the different types of bullying

Synopsis of Text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Title and Author</th>
<th>Content Standards</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>from The Pigman and Me by Paul Zindel</td>
<td>Reading 1.3 Recognize the origins and meanings of</td>
<td>Paul attends a new school. Unaware of a time limit on using gym equipment, Paul refuses to give the paddle to John. Without thinking,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Short Story/ Letters | The Southpaw by Judith Viorst | Reading 2.4 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.  
Reading 3.2 Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and the resolution of the conflict. | The friendship between Janet and Richard is in trouble. As captain of the baseball team, Richard won’t allow Janet to play because she is a girl. Janet responds with an angry letter and Richard insults back. The two characters volley letters to each other. Richard’s resolve finally cracks as members of his team are injured. He accepts Janet and her teammates on the team. By the last letter, the friendship is on the mend. |
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poem</td>
<td>Life Doesn’t Frighten Me by Maya Angelou</td>
<td>Reading 3.4 Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line-length, punctuation, rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.</td>
<td>The narrator is dealing with dealing with frightening aspects of her life. She exudes simple self-confidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inquiry Questions:

- What are some solutions you will use to stop bullying? What are some phrases you would use to carry out the solution?
- What do you think of the idea that you can choose how you respond if you are feeling angry?
- The next time a character is feeling angry, what do you think she/he might try instead of losing control?
- What are some ways to conquer fear and bullies that could involve people beside you?

Classroom Activities:

1. I Can See You through the Other Side- Placing an empty chair in the front of the class or in a circle of students, the teacher will ask the students to imagine the story’s bully/bullies sitting on the empty chair. Taking turns, volunteer students will describe what they don’t like about the bully. For everything that is negative, they will have to say how they assist the bully in changing his or her behavior. Teacher can repeat the exercise with an imaginary/story’s victim in the chair with students suggesting how the victim could cope with the bullying. (Sample Lesson 1)

2. Cage Your Tiger- This activity will allow students to explore positive alternatives to handling their anger. After identifying the conflict in the story, brainstorm what happened in the story that had one or more characters angry. Using the Cage Your Lion worksheet, students will reflect on how the character can cage their anger before lashing out on someone else. Students will also brainstorm what makes them angry and learn alternative ways of caging their lion before they lash out on someone. (Sample Lesson 2)

3. Fishbowl- After reading a selected text, students are to divide into two groups (one girls’ group, one boys’ group). The girls will sit in a circle and the boys will form a bigger circle around them. The outside circle does not talk they only listen. The teacher will read specific passages in the story to the girls and they will
discuss. The teacher will then give a “she said, he said” scenario for them to answer. Repeat process with the boys. This will help students become aware of differences between male and female bullies. (Sample Lesson 3)

**Theme 2, Sample Lessons:**

*Theme 2, Lesson 1: I Can See you through the Other Side using Life Doesn’t Frighten Me by Maya Angelou (Suggested Time: 40-minute activities over two days)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Standards:</th>
<th>Reading 3.4 Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line-length, punctuation, rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Objectives:       | 1. Students will be able to build communication skills that will be helpful in bully situations.  
                    2. Students will be able to generate ideas on how to intervene in a bully/victim interaction. |
| Materials/handouts: | • Life Doesn’t Frighten Me by Maya Angelou  
                          • Chair  
                          • Binder paper  
                          • White board and dry erase markers  
                          • Journal page (appendix F) |
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Ask students what is something that frightened them as a child? |
| Activity 2: Read Life Doesn’t Frighten Me (15-20 minutes) | Before reading, teacher will explain that most of the descriptors are metaphors of life.  
                                                                                  Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
                                                                                  D= Students will mark the text where they find something dangerous  
                                                                                  C= Students will mark the text where they find the speaker/narrator confident in her actions  
                                                                                  M= Students will pick out three metaphors in the story. |
| Activity 3: Understanding the metaphors (15-20 minutes) | 1. The teacher will show students how to fold and label the binder paper. The binder paper will be folded in half (hot-dog, lengthy way). On the left column, students will write “metaphor” and the right side, students will write “meaning and dealing”.

2. Students will pick two of the three metaphors in the story and explain their meaning and how they would deal with them if they met them in real life situations. What would they do? Would they feel as confident as the speaker?

3. Teacher will write on the board, Bullies shouting sound Crowd laughing loud Life doesn’t frighten me at all.

   On the back of the binder paper, students will copy the metaphor and explain how they can stand up to bullies.

4. As a class, students will generate phrases to start communication with bullies. Teacher should encourage appropriate language such as “stop, you should think about what you are saying right now” and “I am not afraid of you” |

| Activity 4: Look In (15 minutes) | 1. Teacher will model imagining “mean old Mother Goose” on the empty chair. The teacher will give out examples why she doesn’t like the bully sitting on the chair. Next, the teacher will tell Mother Goose how she should change to become nicer.

2. Students will have the opportunity to go next. Two
students will take turns telling the imaginary “metaphor” how they feel about it. Students should articulate how to change one’s behavior. Teacher will write down important phrases on the board. Other students should write the phrases to add onto their list.

3. Repeat process with imaginary bullies on the chair.

4. Repeat process with imaginary victims on the chair. Student suggestions should help the victim cope with bullies and their feelings.

| Activity 5: Debrief (10 minutes) | Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow).

- What are some solutions you will use to stop bullying? What are some phrases you would use to carry out the solution?
- What do you think of the idea that you can choose how you respond if you are feeling angry?
- The next time a character is feeling angry, what do you think she/he might try instead of losing control?
- What are some ways to conquer fear and bullies that could involve people beside you? |

| Activity 6: Wrap up (10 minutes) | Remind students of what they have learned about bullies and victims. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page. |
**Theme 2, Lesson 2: Cage Your Tiger using The Pigman and Me by Paul Zindel**  
(Suggested Time: 50 minutes, 1 day)

| Content Standards: | Reading 1.3  
| Recognize the origins and meanings of frequently used foreign words in English and use these words. |
| Objectives: | 1. Students will be able to explore positive alternatives to handling their anger. |
| Materials/handouts: | • The Pigman and Me by Paul Zindel  
| | • Cage Your Tiger worksheet (appendix C)  
| | • White board and dry erase markers  
| | • Journal page (appendix F) |
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Ask students why are rules important? Are there rules that aren’t written that people should follow? |
| Activity 2: Read from The Pigman and Me excerpt (15-20 minutes) | Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
B= Students will mark the text where they find someone giving Paul bad advice  
G= Students will mark the text where they find someone giving Paul good advice  
Q= Students will pick out three words that are from other dialects. Teacher will scaffold and identify words with foreign origin.  
Teacher will check regularly for understanding. |
<p>| Activity 3: Cage Your Lion | 1. On the left side of the Cage Your Tiger worksheet, |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(15-20 minutes)</th>
<th>students will brainstorm a character that lost their temper. They should analyze the character’s actions and suggest what the character should have done instead.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>On the right side, students should brainstorm what makes them angry. Let them make suggestions in changing their behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Think-pair-share what students wrote. As a class, write down some instances when students get angry and have the class suggest how to improve their behavior. Together, the class should evaluate why some of their suggestions will create a positive outcome.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 5: Debrief (10 minutes)</th>
<th>Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow).</th>
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<tr>
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<td>- What are some solutions you will use to stop bullying? What are some phrases you would use to carry out the solution?</td>
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<td>- What do you think of the idea that you can choose how you respond if you are feeling angry?</td>
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<td>- The next time a character is feeling angry, what do you think she/he might try instead of losing control?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What are some ways to conquer fear and bullies that could involve people beside you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Activity 6: Wrap up (10 minutes) | Remind students of what they have learned about bullies and victims. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page.  |
**Theme 2, Lesson 3: Fishbowl using The Southpaw by Judith Viorst**  
(Suggested Time: 50-minute activity, one day)

| Content Standards: | Reading 2.4 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.  
Reading 3.2 Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and resolution of the conflict. |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Objectives:       | 1. Students will be able to increase their awareness of differences between boys and girls in terms of bullying behavior.  
2. Students will be able to have an opportunity to discuss issues related to male and female bullying and give feedback to one another. |
| Materials/handouts: | The Southpaw by Judith Viorst  
Journal page (appendix F)  
Empty room (gym, outside blacktop)  
Bowl (fishbowl, box)  
Index Cards  
He said, she said scenarios (appendix D) |
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Ask students who they think bully more, girls or boys? What do you notice that boys do more of? What do you notice that girls do more of? |
| Activity 2: Read The Southpaw (10-1 minutes) | Explain to students that while reading, they should set a purpose.  
Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
D= Students will mark the text where they find Janet and Richard disagreeing. |
| Activity 4: He Said, She Said  
(25 minutes, 10 minutes per group) | 1. Teacher will give students an index card. Have the boys write a quick letter to Richard. Have the girls write a quick letter response to Janet.  
2. Teacher will collect the letters from the boys first and set it aside. Teacher will collect the girls’ letters next and put that in the fishbowl.  
3. Divide the class into two groups: one boys’ group and the one girls’ group.  
4. Have the girls’ group form a circle then have the boys’ group form another circle surrounding the girls. The group inside is the only ones that can talk and the outside group is listening.  
5. Teacher will select a “She Said” scenario and read it aloud. Girls will discuss their thoughts and feelings about the scenario, whether they consider it bullying and what they can do to prevent it. Next, teacher will use one of the index cards in the fishbowl and repeat process.  
6. Have the boys and girls switch positions. Teacher will select a “He Said” scenario and pick from the fishbowl a boy’s index card. |
| Activity 5: Debrief  
(10 minutes) | * For debriefing, students can opt to discuss the fishbowl question.  
Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow).  
- What are some solutions you will use to stop bullying? What are some phrases you would use to... |
| carry out the solution? | • What do you think of the idea that you can choose how you respond if you are feeling angry?
• The next time a character is feeling angry, what do you think she/he might try instead of losing control?
• What are some ways to conquer fear and bullies that could involve people beside you? |
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</table>
Theme 3- Recognizing the Positives Intentions: Awareness of Inner Strength and People’s Differing Background

Overview:
With attention commonly focused on bullies and bully behaviors, the needs of victims are often neglected. Theme three focus on raising awareness that victims are not alone. By looking at students’ strengths, we can focus on identifying the positives in each student in the classroom. Above all, theme three will focus on students’ differences and how to value diversity in the classroom.

Focusing on the victims, theme three helps students find helpful words and resources on how to get help. In creating this awareness in the classroom, students that are victimized will come to see that teachers, counselors, and administrators are supportive in the development of the solution to reduce or eliminate victimization.

The discussion questions will guide students to realize that victimization is something that many endure and that there are places and people to help alleviate and eliminate bullying.

Objectives:
- To increase awareness for victims support
- To assist students find people and places to seek help when victimized
- To help students embrace diversity and differences in people
- To guide students and the classroom turn into an inclusive learning environment

Synopsis of Text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Title and Author</th>
<th>Content Standards</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Story</td>
<td>All American Slurp by Lensey Namioka</td>
<td>Reading 3.6- Identify and analyze features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.</td>
<td>The narrator and her family encounter table manners that are much different from their Chinese customs. Various events during their first months in America illustrate how the family members learn the customs of their new country. The narrator befriends Meg, and Meg’s family become guests over the Lin family. The narrator finds out at the end of the story that Meg’s family is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
just as confused with the Chinese customs just as they were with American manners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss</th>
<th>Reading 3.4- Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Sneetches is about the star belly Sneetches and the plain belly Sneetches. The star belly Sneetches were proud and walked right by the plain belly Sneetches without acknowledgement. Then one day the scam artist, Sylvester McMonkey McBean came to the beach and placed stars on the plain belly Sneetches. The original star belly Sneetches decides to take their star off. McBean makes lots of money while the Sneetches can’t tell the differences between themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Novel | Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli | Reading 3.2- Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.  
Reading 3.3 Analyze the influence of setting on the problem and resolution. |
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<td>Stargirl left homeschooling and enrolled in the tenth grade of a public school in Arizona. She was a free spirit and other students have difficulty understanding her when she arrived. At first students welcomed her, then later shuns her. Meeting Leo, Stargirl falls in love, and their adventure begins. Stargirl teaches students the importance of being yourself and the interconnectedness of everyone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inquiry Questions:**

- What thoughts and feelings would you or a character experience when one would attempt to join a group? What are the pros and cons about how people might react to the person entering the group?
If someone or a character in the story were being victimized, whom might they talk to if they needed help? Why is it important to get help from an outside source?

Why do you suppose that characters as well as people need to accept others?

What would happen if characters and people could not see the goodness in others?

**Classroom Activities:**

1. **Warm and Fuzzy Bags** - Students will decorate a plain brown bag with their name in bold and big letters. The teacher will decorate a brown bag with the main character’s name. After reading a selected text, students will write things about the main character that they admire about him/her. Next, the teacher will tell students to pick out ten people they really know in the class and ten people they would like to get to know. Students will write positive comments for the twenty students and place it in their warm and fuzzy bags. As the students write, teacher will write to students who they think will not get as many comments to boost their confidence. (Sample Lesson 1)

2. **Proud to be Me, Proud to be Different, Proud to be Similar** - After reading a selected text, students are to compare and contrast two characters. After comparing and contrasting characters, students will fill out “Proud to be Me” handout and find someone who they think is least like them. Together as a team, they will fill out the “Proud to be Different, Proud to be Similar” handout to see what they have in common and to embrace their individual differences. (Sample Lesson 2)

3. **Who Can Help?** – After reading the selection, students will cite places in the text where a character asked for help from a friend or needed help from an adult. After making a list of helpers, students in groups will brainstorm people in the school and outside of school that can help them if they are victimized and explain why these people can help. As individuals, each student will suggest how to set up a meeting with one of the following people they brainstormed as a group. (Sample Lesson 3)
### Sample Lessons, Theme Three:

*Theme 3, Lesson 1:* Warm and Fuzzy Bags using *The All American Slurp* by Lensey Namioka  
(Suggested time: 30-40 minute activities over 2 days)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Standards:</th>
<th>Reading 3.6- Identify and analyze features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Objectives        | 1. Students will increase their awareness on cultural diversity.  
|                   | 2. Students will be able to discuss what makes an inclusive classroom community. |
| Materials/Handouts | - The All American Slurp by Lensey Namioka  
|                   | - Markers/Colored pencils  
|                   | - Index Cards  
|                   | - Brown paper bags  
|                   | - Journal page (appendix F)  
|                   | - Stapler |
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Ask students if their parents have ever embarrassed them?  
|                   | Ask students what do their families do that is embarrassing? |
| Activity 2: Read The All American Slurp (25-30 minutes) | Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
|                   | E= Embarrassing moments (students will identify places where characters are embarrassed because of an action)  
|                   | U= Understanding the character (students will identify parts of the text where they can understand how the character is feeling)  
|                   | A= Admiration of character (Students will mark places in the text where they feel an admiration to the main character)  
|                   | Teacher will check regularly for understanding. |
### Activity 3: Warm and Fuzzies (30 minutes)

1. The teacher will model what to do. In front of the class, the teacher will write down “narrator” big enough to see from afar. On an index card, the teacher will write down something that is admirable about the character and drop it in the brown paper bag.

2. Students will receive a brown paper bag and they will write down their names on the paper bag copying the teacher. Once the brown paper bag is finished, they will turn it in to the teacher. While students are coloring their bags, the teacher will pass out the 21 index cards to each student.

3. As a class, students will use an index card to write about one thing that they admire about the character. Students should emphasize on the character’s ability to learn English, make friends, adapt, and care for her family. Students will put that index card aside. Students will now pick ten students that are their friends and ten other students they want to get to know better. They will write down their admiration on the index cards while the teacher staples the brown bags on the wall.

4. Excusing the students by groups, have students place index cards in the proper paper bags. Teacher can either check the index card before students place in the bag or teacher will check the bags after students leave.

   (Some students will not get as many index cards, teacher should write some notes to those who did not receive many notes)

5. The following day, students will receive their warm and fuzzy bags.

### Activity 4: Debrief (10 minutes)

Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity 5: Wrap up (10 minutes)</th>
<th>Remind students of what they have learned diversity and the theme of the story. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What thoughts and feelings would you or a character experience when one would attempt to join a group? What are the pros and cons about how people might react to the person entering the group?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If someone or a character in the story were being victimized, whom might they talk to if they needed help? Why is it important to get help from an outside source?</td>
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<td>Why do you suppose that characters as well as people need to accept others?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What would happen if characters and people could not see the goodness in others?</td>
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</table>
**Theme 3, Lesson 2:** Proud to be Me, Proud to be Different, Proud to be Similar using The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss  
(Suggested time: 50-minute activity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Standards:</th>
<th>Reading 3.4 - Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Objectives        | 1. Students will be able to discuss what makes an inclusive classroom community.  
2. Students will learn to embrace their individual differences and find interests in common with each other. |
| Materials/Handouts | • The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss  
• Proud to me handout (2 pages) (Appendix E)  
• Journal page (appendix F) |
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Ask students if they would consider being called an individual a good or a bad label. |
| Activity 2: Read The Sneetches (15-20 minutes) | Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
C= Conforming (students will identify parts of the text where characters try to conform to the other group)  
E= Exclusion (Students will mark places in the text where group excludes other characters)  
R= Repetition (Students will mark ten places in the poem where they find phrases or words repeated)  
Teacher will check regularly for understanding. |
| Activity 3: Proud to be Me, Proud to be Different, Proud to be | 1. Students will fill out the “Proud to be Me” handout.  
After students are finished, the teacher will number students and call random number pairs. Tell the students |
Similar (30 minutes)

that they have just read The Sneetches and that the next exercise will require them to work with someone that they might not want to work with. The goal of the activities is not to exclude others.

2. In pairs, students will fill out the “Proud to be Different, Proud to be Similar” handout. After students are done working in pairs, have them pick one thing they will share about the other person.

3. Students will take turns in pairs telling the class one thing they have in common and one difference they have.

Activity 4: Debrief (10 minutes)

Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow)

- What thoughts and feelings would you or a character experience when one would attempt to join a group? What are the pros and cons about how people might react to the person entering the group?
- If someone or a character in the story were being victimized, whom might they talk to if they needed help? Why is it important to get help from an outside source?
- Why do you suppose that characters as well as people need to accept others?
- What would happen if characters and people could not see the goodness in others?

Activity 5: Wrap up (10 minutes)

Remind students of what they have learned diversity and the theme of the story. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page.
**Theme 3, Lesson 3: Who to Ask? using Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli**  
(Suggested time: novel, 3 weeks with other activities)

| Content Standards: | Reading 3.2 - Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.  
Reading 3.3 Analyze the influence of setting on the problem and resolution. |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Objectives         | 1. Students will be able to learn helpful words when asking for help from adults, school staff, and counselors.  
2. Students will have the opportunity to create a list of people who can help when they are victimized. |
| Materials/Handouts | • Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli  
• Teacher help guide for Stargirl daily activity lessons  
• Character List handout  
• Multiple journal pages (appendix F) |
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Every day, students can write in a journal page about what happened in the last reading or they can write about other characters that remind them of Stargirl. |
| Activity 2: Read Stargirl (Everyday activity, preferably 2 chapters per day as the chapters are short) | Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
S= Stargirl (students will identify parts of the text where Stargirl’s actions are surprising)  
R= Relationships (Students will mark and explain Stargirl’s relationship with other characters)  
H= Helpers (Students will use the “Character List” handout every time they see a character helping Stargirl out)  
Teacher will check regularly for understanding. |
| Activity 3: Character List (30 minutes) | 1. Students will take the “Character List” handout and evaluate from 1 being the most helpful to 10 being the least helpful characters. Students should explain their reasoning.  

2. In pairs or small group, students will come up with as many people that can help them in their time of need.  

3. Students will evaluate their list from 1 being the most helpful to 10 being the least helpful people. Students should explain their reasoning. |
| --- | --- |
| Activity 4: Debrief (10 minutes) | Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow)  

- What thoughts and feelings would you or a character experience when one would attempt to join a group? What are the pros and cons about how people might react to the person entering the group?  
- If someone or a character in the story were being victimized, whom might they talk to if they needed help? Why is it important to get help from an outside source?  
- Why do you suppose that characters as well as people need to accept others?  
- What would happen if characters and people could not see the goodness in others? (Since this is a novel, teacher should use journals at their discretion) |
| Activity 5: Wrap up (10 minutes) | Remind students of what they have learned about helpful people, disparities that people endure and the theme of the novel, which is, never be afraid to be yourself. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page. |
Theme 4 - Proactive Approach: Creating a Better Learning Environment

Overview:
The themes preceding this one have focused on individualistic attention of the bully and victim. Theme four moves away from individual student focus towards focusing on the classroom as a holistic cluster. Although it is essential that we understand and intervene with bullies and victims, it is perhaps even more important to take a proactive approach to prevent bullying from occurring in the first place.

The lessons that follow will help build community in the classroom by integrating cooperative learning activities. Such activities require students to collaborate with one another to solve problems. The more engaged and involved students are in their lessons, the less opportunity they have to participate in undesirable behaviors. Such activities will also provide the opportunity for students to work with people they do not necessarily socialize with.

The discussion questions help students understand that cooperating on academic tasks relates to other situations in life.

Objectives:
- To encourage group work where students achieve a goal in a non-competitive way
- To increase students’ awareness in recognizing and appreciative differences in people’s work patterns
- To give students suggestions about keeping an open mind when working with others

Synopsis of Text:

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<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
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<th>Content Standards</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Breaker’s Bridge by</td>
<td>Reading 3.6-Analyze and identify</td>
<td>The emperor has given breaker the task of building a bridge. Failure will cost Breaker his life. Although Breaker does not know how he will accomplish the task, he accepts the challenge. When he encounters an old man who needs help, Breaker puts aside his own problems to assist the stranger. In return for Breaker’s help, the man</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story</td>
<td>Lawrence Yep</td>
<td>features of themes conveyed</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>through characters, actions, and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>images.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short Story</strong></td>
<td>Rowing the Bus by Paul Logan</td>
<td>Reading 3.6 - Analyze and identify features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.</td>
<td>gives him two mysterious pellets to create the bridge. Breaker follows the old man’s instruction, but breaks one of the pellets. Nonetheless, the bridge is build and Breaker’s life is saved, thanks to his kindness to a stranger.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Poem</strong></td>
<td>The Just Us Club by Richard Cohen</td>
<td>Reading 3.4 - Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.</td>
<td>Four friends decide to make a club that excludes anyone who are not like them. The poem notes all the fun things they can do in the club because it only includes people that have the same interest as them. The friends tell everyone at the school about their exclusive club. However, once they announce that they are accepting people to join, no one signs up and they find themselves alone and excluded from the rest of the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inquiry Questions:

- Why is it hard for a group of friends to recognize when someone is attempting to become a part of the group?
- Name an instance in the story that a character helped out someone even though it was inconvenient for him or her to do so? Have you ever had to help someone out even if you had to go out of your way?
- Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you wanted to do something that goes against the majority but felt that it had too high a price?

Classroom Activities:

1. Crossing the Bridge- After reading the selected text, students will list six people that helped a character achieve their goal. Next, have students pick out a name from the list and meet with people in the class that picked the same character to form another group. Once students are in their groups, they form a semi-circle and stand on a piece of construction paper. The teacher will place another place of paper in front of the semi-circle. Students will have to make it “across the bridge” and work as a team to get everyone across to the opposite end. (Sample Lesson 1)

2. Lego Your Thoughts- Students will get into groups of four and start reading the selected text. The teacher will tell them to stop and hand a student a Lego that they will have to pass around in a circle and talk about what they have read so far. When all the students in the group are done talking, they will start reading again until the teacher tells them to stop. Repeat process until the reading selection is finished. (Sample Lesson 2)

3. Zoom- After reading the selected text, students will be timed to reiterate parts of the story by standing onto any four corners of the room. Each student can only go two times to contribute to the class list. This activity will teach students to work together and take turns listening to one another. (Sample Lesson 3)
**Theme 4, Sample Lessons:**

*Theme 4, Lesson 1: Crossing the Bridge using Breaker’s Bridge by Lawrence Yep*  
(Suggested time: 40-minute activities over 2 days)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Standards:</th>
<th>Reading 3.6- Analyze and identify features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Objectives         | 1. Students will be able to work together to achieve a goal in a non-competitive way  
                     2. Students will have an opportunity to increase their awareness in recognizing and appreciating differences in people’s work patterns |
| Materials/Handouts | • Breaker’s Bridge by Lawrence Yep  
                     • Eight sheets of 8x11 construction paper per group  
                     • Journal page (appendix F)  
                     • Space to maneuver around (suggested place: outside or empty hallway  
                     • White board and markers |
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Together with the class, make a list on the board on what students believe makes a good group member or how a successful group looks like. |
| Activity 2: Read Breaker’s Bridge (25-30 minutes) | Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
D= determination (students will identify parts of the text where they see Breaker determined to finish the task at hand)  
H= Helpfulness (students will mark on the text where they see characters helping each other out)  
T= theme (looking over their notes on determination and helpfulness, students will write down what they believe is the theme of the story.  
Teacher will check regularly for understanding. |
| **Activity 3: Crossing the Bridge (20 minutes)** | 1. Teacher will divide students into groups of seven. They will make a semi-circle.  
2. Teacher will pass out a construction paper to students and tell him or her to place it where they are standing and stand on it. While students and doing that, teacher will place another piece of paper on the diameter of the semi-circle. This will be an empty space.  
3. Students will have to “cross the bridge” to the opposite side without two people being on the same construction paper or falling off the paper.  
4. Students will reflect on the activity. |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity 4: Debrief (10 minutes)** | Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow).  
- What was the hardest part about being in a group?  
- How did you feel when your team finally “crossed the bridge”?  
- Name an instance in the story that a character helped out someone even though it was inconvenient for him or her to do so? Have you ever had to help someone out even if you had to go out of your way?  
- Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you wanted to do something that goes against the majority but felt that it had too high a price? |
| **Activity 5: Wrap up (10 minutes)** | Remind students of what they have learned about helpful people, disparities that people endure and the theme of the novel, which is, never be afraid to be yourself. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page. |
Theme 4, Lesson 2: Lego Your Thoughts using Rowing the Bus by Paul Logan
(Suggested time: 40-50 minute activity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Standards:</th>
<th>Reading 3.6- Analyze and identify features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Objectives          | 1. Students will build communication skills by actively participating and listening.  
                     | 2. Students will learn how to self-facilitate a group  
| Materials/Handouts  | • Rowing the Bus by Paul Logan  
                     | • Journal page (appendix F)  
                     | • Legos (one per group)  
                     | • Preset questions about the reading selection (preferably one inquiry question per page)  
                     | • Groups of four to five  
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Teacher will ask students to volunteer to be a part of an experiment. Tell students that this exercise is something that adults have a hard time doing and that they are to see if they can do a better job. Teacher will call on three volunteers to show the class what to do.  
Question to ask: What are characteristics of bullies? Pass the Lego around the circle until it comes back to teacher. Teacher will ask the next question: Where can victims get help? Pass the Lego in the opposite direction to start. |
| Activity 2: Read Rowing the Bus and Lego your Thoughts (Students will be reading the text and doing the class activity) | 1. Students will read a page of the text at a time. When students finish reading a page, they will answer the preset question only for that page. When they see that everyone has answered the question, the person with the Lego will speak and answer the question.  
2. The student that finished talking will pass the Lego to the person next to them until they have all gotten... |
simultaneously—
Approximately 40-minutes) | a chance to speak.
3. Students will read the next page and repeat answering the preset question. Student with the Lego from the last rotation will ask who want to go first and when that person is finished talking, they can pass it to the person next to them until everyone has had a turn.
4. Students will continue to read in this process until they are done with the text.
5. When the groups are finished, they will start on their journal topic quietly until all the groups are finished.

| Activity 4: Debrief (10 minutes) | Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow).

- How did you feel doing the activity? How did you feel about the reading selection?
- Why is it hard for a group of friends to recognize when someone is attempting to become a part of the group?
- Name an instance in the story that a character helped out someone even though it was inconvenient for him or her to do so? Have you ever had to help someone out even if you had to go out of your way?
- Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you wanted to do something that goes against the majority but felt that it had too high a price?

| Activity 5: Wrap up (10 minutes) | Remind students of what they have learned about helpful people, disparities that people endure and the theme of the novel, which is, never be afraid to be yourself. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page.
**Theme 4, Lesson 3: Zoom using The Just Us Club by Richard Cohen**  
(Suggested time: 40 minute activity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Standards:</th>
<th>Reading 3.4- Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Objectives         | 1. Students will work cohesively as a group to achieve a goal.  
2. Students will be able to discuss what makes an inclusive classroom community. |
| Materials/Handouts  | • The Just Us Club by Richard Cohen  
• A room with four corners  
• Timer/Stop watch  
• Journal page (appendix F) |
| Activity 1: Opener (5 minutes) | Ask students if they have ever been excluded from a group and how did they cope with it. Teachers can also ask if students ever excluded people from their group and why. |
| Activity 2: Read The Just Us Club (25-30 minutes) | Tell students that they will mark the text as follows:  
G= Group Activities (students will identify places where characters in the poem are planning to do activities in groups)  
E= Exclusion (students will identify parts of the text where characters try to exclude others from their club)  
T= Tone (Students will mark and circle words that create the tone of the poem)  
Teacher will check regularly for understanding. |
| Activity 3: Zoom (30 minutes) | 1. After reading the selection, teacher will tell the students that they are to work as a class to break |
1. The record of 50 ideas in a game called Zoom.

2. Zoom is a game with one student at each corner of the room. They must work together and pass the zoom (a clap and point to a corner) and say an idea from the reading to pass the zoom around.

3. Each student can only stand up in a corner of the room and say three ideas from the poem and then sit down for everyone to take a turn at a corner.

4. Teacher will put ten minutes on the clock and count how many ideas or thoughts students remember about the poem.

5. Students cannot repeat the same ideas. The point of the activity is for students to listen and everyone be involved to reach 50 ideas.

| Activity 4: Debrief (10 minutes) | Tell students that they will use some of these as topic questions for their journal. Use inquiry questions to have a class discussion (the journal will soon follow).

- How did you feel doing the activity? How did you feel about the reading selection?
- Why is it hard for a group of friends to recognize when someone is attempting to become a part of the group?
- Name an instance in the story that a character helped out someone even though it was inconvenient for him or her to do so? Have you ever had to help someone out even if you had to go out of your way?
- Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you wanted to do something that goes against the majority but felt that it had too high a price?

| Activity 5: Wrap up (10 minutes) | Remind students of what they have learned about helpful people, disparities that people endure and the theme of the novel, which is, never be afraid to be yourself. Have students write a journal entry about what they have read on the journal page. |
APPENDIX A

Picture the Bully

Words to describe bullies...
Picture the Victim

Words to describe victims...
### Suggestions for Aaron

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did the bullies do to Aaron?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggest another way in which Aaron could have handled the bullies?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-violent approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Rachel was really frustrated with her teacher and she just couldn’t find the words to explain her views. Help Rachel find the words to explain her frustrations.

On the left side, write out what Rachel said in the story. On the right side, give suggestions to what Rachel should have said to her teacher.

What Rachel said…    What Rachel should have said…

[Diagram with speech bubbles]
APPENDIX C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Name:</th>
<th>Your Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why did the character lose their temper?</td>
<td>Why do you lose your temper? Write an example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did the character react? Focus on their actions.</td>
<td>How do you react when you are angry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did the character say and to whom?</td>
<td>What words hurt you the most when people make you angry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the outcome of their action and words?</td>
<td>What is the usual outcome when you get angry? Is that a healthy resolution?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What changes would you make in their behavior? Explain.</td>
<td>What can you do different next time you are angry and about to lose control?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
She Said: In Jefferson Middle School there is a secret club for girls. The three girls who are in charge of the club are bossy and downright mean. These girls have been spreading vicious rumors and making ethnic slurs. They have targeted two students, Lakisha, who is African American, and Holly, who is of Asian descent. Lakisha and Holly frequently visit the nurse’s office during their lunch hour with complaints of headaches, nausea, and dizziness. Teachers have never directly witnessed the verbal assaults, but they have received grievances from other students. Lakisha and Holly have been reluctant to report episodes. Within the last two weeks, Lakisha has missed five days of school days. Holly has attended class but often appears distracted.

He said: Ms. Meyers, a seventh-grade teacher, overhears John, Allan, and Sam discussing a situation in which a classmate is being bullied. They express their dismay in seeing this person bullied but are unsure about what they should do. John thinks that if they intervene they will make it worse and cause the bully to turn on them. Allan thinks that they should stand up for the victim the next time it happens. Sam just doesn’t know which idea is best.
APPENDIX E

Proud to Be Me

Instructions: Fill in each blank with information about yourself.

1. I was born in ________________________________.
2. I have ___________________________ brothers and sisters.
3. My favorite movie is ____________________________.
4. My cultural heritage is ________________________________.
5. I want to be ________________________ when I am older.
6. My favorite subject is ____________________________.
7. I like to ________________________________ after school.
8. I am happiest when ____________________________.
9. My best characteristic is my ________________________.
10. I get really angry when ____________________________.
11. My favorite color is ________________________________.
12. If I were an animal I would be a ________________________.
13. It makes me laugh when ____________________________.
14. It hurts my feelings when ____________________________.
15. A funny fact about me is ________________________________.
**______________________ is Proud to Be…..**

Instructions: Fill in each blank with information about yourself.

1. * was born in _________________________________.
2. * has ________________________________ brothers and sisters.
3. *’s favorite movie is ________________________________.
4. *’s cultural heritage is ________________________________.
5. * wants to be ________________________________ when I am older.
6. *’s favorite subject is ________________________________.
7. * likes to ________________________________ after school.
8. * is happiest when ________________________________.
9. * best characteristic is my ________________________________.
10. * gets really angry when ________________________________.
11. * favorite color is ________________________________.
12. If * were an animal * would be a ________________________________.
13. It makes * laugh when ________________________________.
14. It hurts * feelings when ________________________________.
15. Funny fact about * is ________________________________.
APPENDIX F

Journal Topic/Question: ________________________
_____________________________________________
_____________________________________________
_____________________________________________
_____________________________________________

My Thoughts:
_____________________________________________
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REFERENCES


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http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101040510/


