

BULLYING, INSTITUTIONS AND THE THERAPEUTIC CULTURE

BULLYING, INSTITUTIONS AND THE THERAPEUTIC CULTURE:
HOW SCHOOLS RESPOND TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS

By:

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Abstract: Based on empirical interview evidence and data published by the Ontario Ministry of Education, this thesis uses Institutional Theory, and notions of the Therapeutic Culture to examine how and why bullying is addressed within schools. This research analyzes the claims produced and disseminated through the Ministry of Education's written policies and procedures, and the actual responses and views of school administrators. Two data sources are used: documents from the Ontario Ministry of Education, and twenty-two interviews with principals, teachers, and other key players within schools in Hamilton, Ontario. Interviews suggest that the Ministry, as well as the boards and individual schools, actively construct myths regarding anti-violence, and loosely couple their practices with their policies in ways that placate members of their institutional environment and allow them to retain organizational legitimacy. These results support Institutional Theory, suggesting that these anti-violence policies and procedures are ceremonial, serving as "band-aid" solutions, rather than resolving the problems of bullying and violence within schools. Furthermore, they demonstrate the impact of the Therapeutic Culture as the new cultural frame that schools utilize as a means of gaining and retaining legitimacy within their institutional environment.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1a Bullying: What's the Big Deal

Diagram 1: Amazon.com Database Search

Diagram 2: Sociology Index Database Search

1.1b This Study: Research Questions and Hypotheses

Chart 1: Research Questions and Hypotheses

1.1c The Existing Bullying Literature

1.1d Institutional Theory and Organizational Analysis

1.1e The Therapeutic Culture

1.1f The Methodology

1.1g Outline of the Findings

1.1h Brief Conclusions

1.1a Bullying: What's the Big Deal?

Bullying comes in many forms. Children may bully one another. Older children may bully younger children. Parents may bully one another. Parents may bully their children. Adults may bully one another. Bullies often become popular, as they use their bullying to attain status through power, wealth, or strength. Bullies are often feared. They frequently attract negative attention, and often attract followers. History is rife with tales of evil leaders who attained power over those weaker than themselves, and took valuables from them (Renshaw, 2001: 341). Yet, if bullying is as frequent and abundant as it is claimed to be, why has there only recently been a focus on bullying behaviours? Furthermore, where is the line drawn between normal anger or competition, and bullying behaviours? Who decides what 'normal' behaviour is, and what is bullying behaviour? What makes a child decide to bully another child? What makes an adult resort to workplace bullying? How do we teach people to comply with one another, and discuss their problems rationally, without resorting to violent and potentially harmful behaviours?

These are many of the questions that are beginning to be explored by academics and moral entrepreneurs alike, as bullying becomes a more prevalent topic of concern.

Another important question to ask is why has bullying become such a topic of concern for educational institutions? It is common knowledge that schools, as both an institution and an organization, house the majority of all North American children for the first eighteen years of their life. Children are brought together from their communities, assigned to a classroom with thirty peers of the same age, and told to learn for eight hours of their day, five days a week. In such an intense situation, conflict – among many other social phenomena – is bound to occur.

Due to their prevalence and pervasiveness within society, educational practices are required to constantly change and adapt to the social world. Prime examples of this are the new programs that are currently being developed to deal with the challenges of student violence, self-esteem, and bullying (for examples, see: Boulton & Smith, 1994; Brewster & Railsbak, 2001; Camodeca & Goosens, 2005; Champion et al., 2003; Coie et al., 1991; Colvin et al., 1998; Cowie et al., 2000; Hazler, 1996; Meraviglia et al., 2003). While schools have always dealt with social problems, they are increasingly framing such problems as part of their core mandate. This study examines the implications of having schools develop practices that are quite different from their traditional mission of academic instruction.

Currently, the bullying behaviours of children and adolescents have become a significant focus of society, through the media and academe, and concurrently it has become a significant focus of the educational system. While bullying behaviours are

claimed to have ‘always been around’, they are beginning to be seen in a different light: as more prevalent, more pervasive and more harmful. Frequently, occurrences that have ‘always been around’ are redefined and constructed as social problems.

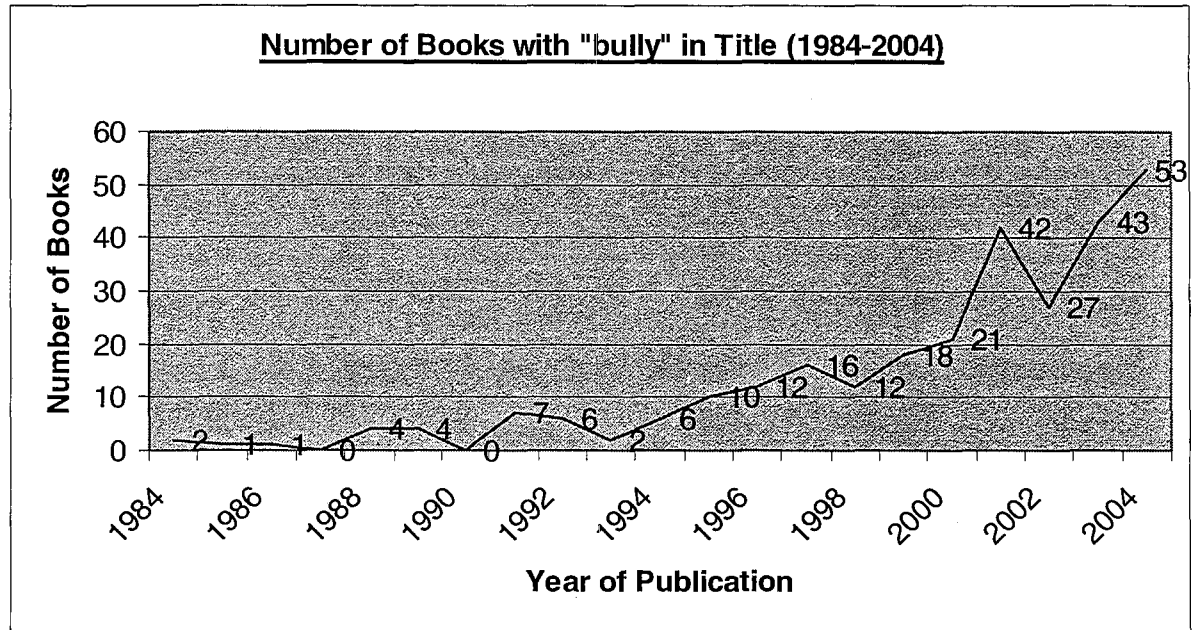
When studying claims-making activities, social constructionists¹ are, in essence, studying how actions and behaviours become regarded as problematic. Claims-makers construct images of social problems by defining their terms in a specific way, and they choose specific examples to prove their definitions. If this endeavour is successful, then the condition will be perceived in the problematic way it has been framed (Loseke & Best, 2003:77). Therefore, claims-makers construct views that they hope audience members will buy into, and eventually accept as their own view of reality. This has occurred in the case of bullying: there are numerous and varied definitions of bullying, which function to falsely inflate the perceived prevalence of bullying. Essentially, bullying has been constructed as a social problem. This thesis takes an agnostic stance toward many of the key assumptions of constructionism, and focuses on a later stage phenomenon – not the ‘construction’ of a social problem, but the formation of programs that deal with it.

Although this thesis could have easily utilized the social constructionist approach, the interest here is to focus on an organizational and institutional approach. Since bullying has already been constructed as a social problem, this thesis takes the next step,

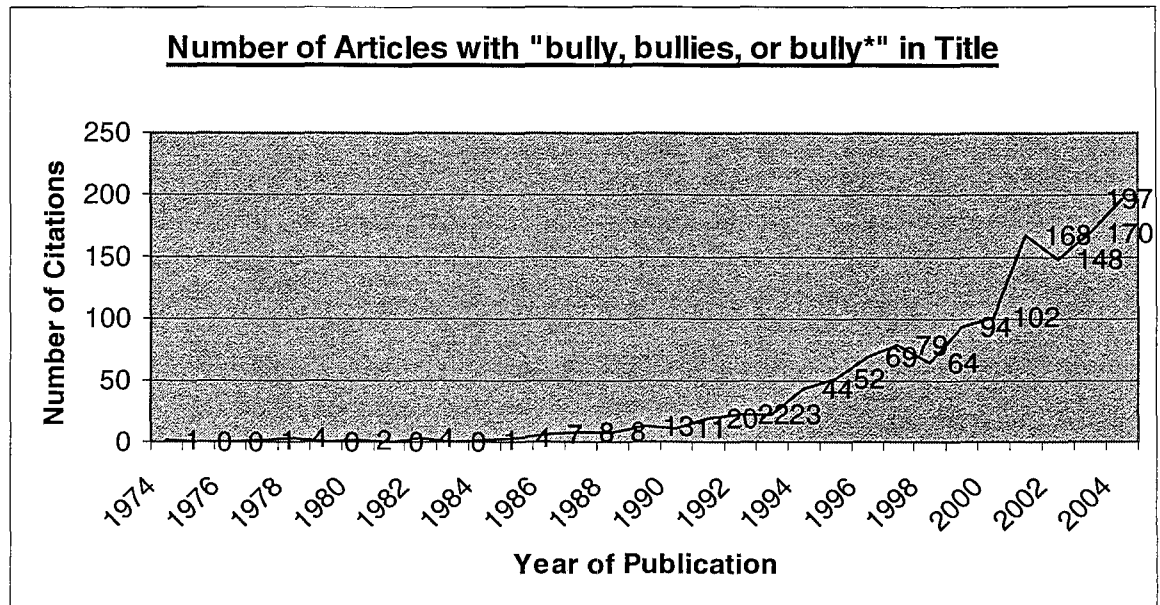
¹ Social constructionism is a unique approach to the study of social problems. Instead of focusing on a putative social problem, constructionists focus on definitions, perceptions and experiences of an alleged social problem. The interests of constructionists lie not in the causes of problematic conditions, but instead in the *views* of conditions, or *changing* views of conditions. Constructionists view social problems as an ongoing process, or as a continual activity.

and explores what happens once social problems have been constructed and are now being institutionalized; this is an approach that has not been addressed by the bullying literature, nor by the construction of social problems literature.

The diagrams below demonstrate how the prevalence with which bullying behaviours are discussed has increased greatly over the past two decades. The first diagram (below) is a line-graph representing the results of a database search (www.amazon.com), which was undertaken to find out how many books had been published with the word “bully” in the title, and when these books were published. The search indicated that between the years 1984 and 2004, 287 books had been published with the word “bully” in the title. Interestingly, over half of these books were published in only the last four years (i.e. between 2000 and 2004). The graph easily shows the drastic increase in the number of bullying books being published yearly, with the most notable jump between the years 2000 and 2001, where the number of books published on bullying actually doubled. Although this is just a representation of how bullying is becoming a more prevalent and pervasive topic within mainstream society, it serves as an indicator of similar trends that are occurring in regards to bullying in other areas: visual media (e.g. talk shows, news reports), school attention (e.g. increased policies and procedures dealing directly with bullying), and attention from the wider market (e.g. community groups, and other entrepreneurs creating and marketing anti-bullying and anti-violence programs for schools and youth organizations).

DIAGRAM 1: AMAZON.COM DATABASE SEARCH

Trends in academic attention to bullying behaviour are similar to the above, non-academic, trends. Using the McMaster University website, and the Sociology Index e-resources, a Boolean search to find “bully or bullies or bully*” within the title of the article produced 1354 articles (once removing duplicates). These articles were then plotted in a line graph (below), to visually demonstrate the increased attention that academics are paying towards bullying behaviours. Similar to the above diagram, almost half of the articles have been published within the last four years (between 2000 and 2004). Thus, the attention that is being paid to bullying is increasing significantly in *all* areas.

DIAGRAM 2: SOCIOLOGY INDEX DATABASE SEARCH

Although the actual prevalence of bullying will be discussed later within this thesis, it is demonstrated that despite the increased discussion of bullying behaviours, bullying is not, in fact, increasing in prevalence, and rates of youth violence and school violence are actually decreasing (Best, 2002; Caldwell, 1997; Paglia & Adlaf, 2003).

Many cities, including Hamilton, Ontario, have undertaken attempts to reduce the perceived prevalence of bullying behaviours and violence that are claimed to exist within the city's schools and communities. For example, Hamilton has undertaken a community-wide approach to stopping bullying, by gathering 30 youth-servicing agencies together to create the Community Roundtable for the Prevention of Bullying. Together, this group attempts to raise awareness about the possible negative effects that bullying can have on children, and involve Hamilton's youth in endeavours geared toward the reduction or elimination of bullying. However, this endeavour is not considered to be

possible without a ‘cultural shift’, where bullying behaviours are challenged both inside and outside of the education system (Vaillancourt, 2004: 15). Yet, the most influential resource for making this cultural shift – the Ontario Government – does not seem to be addressing the same concerns that anti-bullying groups, such as the Community Roundtable for the Prevention of Bullying, wish to see addressed. For example, Ontario’s Premier, Dalton McGuinty, claims that schools can be made safer through the introduction of cameras to entranceways, by undertaking surveys or ‘safety audits’, and by increasing disciplinary measures for bullies². McGuinty’s plans, outlined below, created as a means of ensuring that students are free from violence and the threat of violence at school, do not involve any plans to integrate the community, nor to create a community-wide approach. These plans are outlined to include:

- Assessing the need for increased lighting and new school doors through safety audits of all schools within Ontario
- Implementing cameras in all entranceways for at least 400 schools within Ontario
- Ensuring that all Ontario schools have a bullying-prevention program in place within the year
- Creating an anti-bullying hotline (similar to the well-known Kids Help Phone)
- Implementing a Safe Schools Action Team to undertake safety audits of schools
- Investing a minimum of \$ 9 million, specifically geared towards making schools safer³.

The inconsistencies between what *needs* to be done, what is being *purported* to be done, and what is *actually* being done are vast. As outlined later in this thesis, although there is increased attention paid to bullying behaviours, there is no consistency, continuity, or definitive action applied across schools or communities to actually reduce bullying. The lack of consistency, continuity, and definitive action is partly due to the numerous

² Retrieved on November 12, 2005 at <http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/english/news/Bullies032205.asp>

³ Retrieved on November 12, 2005 at <http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/english/news/Bullies032205.asp>

organizational constraints that schools face, which will be addressed later in this thesis. For example, there is a lack of consistency within the definition of bullying and, as it will be demonstrated later in this thesis, there are numerous definitions of bullying that are vague, ambiguous, and inconsistent with one another. Therefore claims, such as those made by the Ontario Government and community groups, frequently *remain* as claims, and no action is taken. This is but one of many examples that will be outlined further in this thesis, demonstrating the increased attention and focus on bullying behaviours as a social problem.

1.1b This Study: Research Questions and Hypotheses

Many significant research questions are raised as schools deal with bullying as a social problem, particularly when they use therapeutically inclined methods, as opposed to traditional punitive or disciplinary methods. This organizational innovation raises questions such as: How do educational institutions deal with social problems such as bullying? This thesis analyzes these questions from both a structural and cultural angle. ‘Institutional theory’, explained further below, allows these questions to be addressed structurally, and furthermore it poses new questions: In what ways do schools measure the success of the anti-bullying programs they implement? Have they adopted meticulous and accurate measurement techniques, such as ongoing evaluations of students and faculty? Or, are their measurement techniques ‘loosely coupled’ with their practices, meaning that their claim as a legitimate institution, through the use of teacher qualifications and packaged programs, is placed in higher priority than their overall effectiveness? What are the organizational constraints and structural responses to

addressing bullying as a social problem within schools? Culturally, the social issue of bullying has already been constructed, which leads to another research question: what are the cultural underpinnings of this innovation? Various types of therapy and psychological modes of thought have seeped into our larger culture. As such, therapeutic thinking is not only shaping our language, but is slowly being used to re-define social problems, such as bullying. This re-definition of social problems is altering the institutional solutions to such problems; for example, solutions are being instituted that involve programs dealing directly with vulnerable persons, such as students who have experienced the emotional and physical damages of bullying behaviour, as opposed to traditional punitive solutions (this ‘therapeutic culture’ is explained in more detail below). However, schools will most likely face structural and organizational constraints when implementing anti-bullying programs. Faced with these constraints, and the necessity to respond to their institutional environment, it is hypothesized that schools will implement structural responses that are loosely coupled with their practices. Overall, this thesis hypothesizes that the therapeutic culture is the cultural frame for these new practices.

Table 1: Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions and Hypotheses	
<i>Research Questions</i>	
Question 1	How do educational institutions deal with social problems such as bullying?
Question 2	How does dealing with these problems affect the traditional goals of the school?
Question 3	In what ways do schools measure the success of the anti-bullying programs they implement? Have they adopted meticulous and accurate measurement techniques for evaluation? Or, are their measurement techniques loosely coupled with their practices?
Question 4	What are the organizational constraints and structural responses to addressing bullying as a social problem within schools?
Question 5	What are the cultural underpinnings of this innovation?
<i>Hypotheses</i>	
Hypothesis 1	Schools will face both structural and organizational constraints when implementing anti-bullying programs.
Hypothesis 2	Schools respond to the needs of their institutional environment, and implement structural responses that are loosely coupled with their practices.
Hypothesis 3	Schools will implement programs of a therapeutic nature as opposed to using a traditional punitive approach, and anti-bullying programs are made culturally meaningful through the use of the therapeutic culture.

1.1c The Existing Bullying Literature

In the past two decades, school bullying has received increased attention from the media, the academic community, and the public. School violence is a topic that has received much attention, and combined with high profile cases (e.g. the school shootings at Columbine), bullying – which was once defined as a typical childhood behaviour – has been redefined as a social problem deserving, and receiving, much research and attention.

Bullying, and being a victim of bullying, have been claimed to have severe social and emotional repercussions. Schools, school boards, and government branches have

focussed much of their attention on the creation and implementation of policies and programs aimed at the reduction of school violence and bullying behaviours. Numerous studies have attempted to identify the prevalence of bullying in schools, with varying results. For example, Hoover et al. (1992) found that 14 % of Midwestern students in the USA had been moderately to severely bullied at some point while they were enrolled in school. Perry et al. (1988) reported that 10 % of elementary school students were either constantly made fun of, hit, or kicked by their peers. Olweus and Alsaker (1991) found that 9 % of children in Norway were bullied at least once per week, and that 7 % of children in Norway admitted to engaging in bullying behaviours. Smith (1991) reported that prevalence differs across countries, and Hoover and Oliver (1996) demonstrate that although data collection techniques differ, reports from various countries have claimed that bullying is a serious social problem (Berthold & Hoover, 2000: 66). Furthermore, the definition of bullying is constantly growing and changing, creating sub-types of bullying such as physical, relational, and psychological bullying. As the definition of bullying expands, it becomes more vague and amorphous, not only making researching the topic more challenging, but also increasing the amount of research on the topic.

Bullying has only recently been identified as a prevalent social problem, even though it has existed for as long as children have interacted with one another. However, schools have only recently begun to address the problem, often because the public becomes concerned about the bullying behaviours of students, and turns to the schools to provide solutions. Pressures for school systems to adopt changes and commit resources come from myriad sources: parents, special interest groups, governmental bodies,

commercial manufacturers, the media, and many other aspects of the social-political-economic system. These pressures often result in schools making decisions to appease their constituents. As a result, most schools have policies and programs designed to reduce bullying and violence in schools, however teachers and administrators face many constraints that often hinder policies from being upheld consistently, and hinder programs from being implemented effectively. Thus, the problem of bullying remains one that is considered persistent within schools across the world.

1.1d Institutional Theory and Organizational Analysis

Educational institutions are highly organized institutions. The Ontario Ministry of Education – the province’s educational ruling body – creates rules and regulations, and policies and procedures for schools to implement and abide by, however schools often only ceremonially conform to these rules and regulations, and policies and procedures.

Members of the environment surrounding organizations – such as members of society, the media, people who function as claims-makers, and in the case of schools, parents and community groups – express their needs, wants, and desires, which organizations, such as schools, must conform to in order to retain legitimacy as an institution: the key to the organization’s survival. However, organizations often import ‘rationalized myths’ created by their surrounding environments, which become institutionalized and regarded as truths, and members of both the organization and the surrounding environment buy-in to them. These myths are seen to be rationally effective, and therefore retain legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Institutions often design and conform to a formal structure that is congruent with the myths derived from the

institutional environment, which serves as proof that the institution is acting in an appropriate manner, and deserves the support of the public.

In order to achieve public support and therefore retain legitimacy, institutional organizations must appear to be in accordance with the needs and demands of their external environments. If the organization does not retain a façade of competence and legitimacy, or if it markedly differs from what the popular conception perceives that the organization should look like, the organization could be penalized for violation, and it risks organizational death. To achieve survival, organizations must conform ceremonially with their surrounding environments, reflecting the socially constructed reality of their institutional environments and absorbing the myths that are imposed on the organization.

Organizations may find it difficult to maintain legitimacy and to conform to rational myths and normative elements. If the organization must undergo evaluation and scrutiny, they run the risk of losing their legitimacy. In order to avoid evaluation and inspection, organizations employ two strategies: decoupling, and the logic of confidence (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Organizations often ‘buffer’ their technical activities and their formal structures in order to maintain their ceremonial conformity and conform to their rationalized myths. In other words, their formal structure, or the institutional rules they purport to uphold and utilize, are ‘loosely coupled’ or ‘decoupled’ from the actual work and activities they engage in (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Institutional environments frequently seek support and legitimacy through building the trust and cooperation of members of the institutional environment by adhering to their institutional myths. These are, therefore, less formalized relationships,

which allow the organization to avoid assessment, evaluation, or inspection; instead, they rely on the trust and goodwill of their constituents to ‘stand by them’ and continually provide them with support and legitimacy and, in return, the institution will continue to perpetuate its rationalized myths to their public (Dill, 1994).

1.1e The Therapeutic Culture

Millions of people partake in public therapeutic services yearly (Polsky 1991:4). People often seek out human service agencies – such as therapists and counsellors – to help them make sense of their world, and utilize members of the therapeutic culture to help provide meaning to their day-to-day lives. Interactions that were once seen as natural, or even taken-for-granted, are now seen through the frame of the therapeutic culture. As such, individuals feel that in order to manage their lives they must seek professional support. Routine forms of social interaction are no longer seen as routine, but instead represented as complicated and unmanageable.

As the therapeutic ethos has become more pervasive and prevalent in modern society, we speak of ourselves in terms of categories of illness, or labels of disease. The therapeutic culture has grabbed hold of us, and essentially, every slightly challenging event or misfortunate circumstance becomes represented as an emotional threat and challenge to our overall well-being (Furedi 2004: 1). Therapeutic terminology has become part of mainstream language, and terms such as “trauma”, “stress”, “self-esteem”, and “disorder” are used by individuals of all ages.

Although therapeutic diagnoses are ‘fuzzier’ than medical diagnoses, society regards both as legitimate, and – in some instances – provides rewards in place of

sanctions to those who have been diagnosed, or labelled, with an illness or an emotional vulnerability. In fact, therapeutic labels are often sought out, as a label can provide reasoning and justification for otherwise inexplicable behaviours. Traditional illnesses are often elaborated to include greater numbers of people, and actions and interactions that were once seen as commonplace are defined as social pathologies as they are translated into therapeutic terms and emotional illnesses.

Children's behaviours are increasingly portrayed through a therapeutic label, and the therapeutic domain has largely infiltrated children's day-to-day lives: counsellors and social workers are commonplace within schools; behavioural deficiencies and pathological problems (such as Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Oppositional Defiance Disorder) are diagnosed readily; children's vocabulary includes terms such as "depressed", "self-esteem", and "stressed" (terms that children would not have known the meaning of twenty years ago); and, experiences that were once seen as typical for most children to experience are now defined as events that are too stressful for children to cope with (Furedi 2004: 8).

The therapeutic overhauling of day-to-day life has become a fact, but with it comes many repercussions and policy implications. It promotes self-limitation by placing the self within a fragile framework that requires the intervention of experts and professionals. Instead of striving to reach our greatest potential, we search to be labelled as vulnerable and in need of assistance. Individuals perceive themselves to be constantly at risk, and behaviours that were once defined as routine – such as the bullying behaviours of children and adolescents – are redefined and reframed as a threat to our

emotional health and well being. The therapeutic culture provides the cultural frame that schools are using to address bullying, and provides an outlet through which to undertake an institutional analysis.

1.1f The Methodology

For this thesis, two main sources of qualitative data were used. Materials published by the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board, and the Human Rights Commission (including policies, procedures, and disciplinary codes) were collected from online sources. These materials are officially published to be used by administrators and educators within any publicly funded school in Ontario, and are also available via the world wide web. Within Ontario, the Ontario Ministry of Education governs all public schools and Catholic schools, but other religious schools, alternative schools and private schools do not fall under the same policies and procedures. Therefore, this study is only applicable to those schools which are mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Numerous academic journal articles, books, newspaper articles, and other visual and print media were also used in this study, in order to garner a broad understanding of the topic, to understand what type of research had already been completed, and to complement the findings from my own research.

The second source of data was garnered through twenty-two exploratory and semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with current or retired principals, teachers and social workers of schools within the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, one parent of a child who is a victim of bullying, the entrepreneur of an anti-bullying website, a psychologist who has extensively studied bullying behaviours,

and a police officer who works with schools, specializing in school violence initiatives. All of the teachers, social workers and principals worked at different schools across Ontario, some working at numerous schools over their years of employment, and thus providing information about various schools across the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board. The interviewees were acquired through personal contacts, being either friends or acquaintances, or being referred in a 'snowball sample' fashion. The interviews were semi-structured in nature, and lasted between twenty minutes and two hours. Overall, the strategy was to gain an holistic portrait of bullying programs by interviewing a wide range of relevant actors.

1.1g Outline of the Findings

When schools implement anti-bullying programs, they face numerous structural and organizational constraints. Schools must respond to bullying not merely because of need, but because of pressure. Therefore, schools must adopt programs in order to retain legitimacy, however these programs are often of uncertain technology. Often, quick-fix programs are appealing, and they are implemented in order to appear ceremonially compliant. The loosely coupled system of the school also serves as a constraint: each teacher has control of their own classroom, which makes implementing programs difficult. These organizational and structural constraints make it difficult for schools to implement anti-bullying programs, and therefore they must structure them specifically in order to retain legitimacy and appear ceremonially compliant.

For schools to respond to the pressure from the institutional environment and appear ceremonially compliant in order to retain legitimacy, they often utilize a loosely

coupled approach. While loose coupling can pose difficulties for schools, it also can be truly beneficial. In the case of bullying – and for that matter, all social problems education – the use of a loosely coupled system works to appease and placate members of the institutional environment, signal conformity, and retain legitimacy. The quick-fix programs that are often implemented by schools rarely contain goals or outcomes, meaning that rigorous program evaluation cannot occur. This indicates that they are ‘doing something’ about bullying, but are loosely coupling their actions from actual evaluations.

Currently, there is an increasing popularity of more therapeutic approaches, and programs that are more therapeutic – such as focussing on self-esteem – are favoured over more traditional punitive programs, such as zero tolerance. As a result, there is an increase in culturally appealing programs like peer-mediation, even though they are not technologically sound. Traditional punitive programs, such as zero-tolerance, are losing support; they are increasingly criticised for being too harsh, and for not dealing with the child on a personal level. As schools take on outside therapeutic experts, such as social workers and bullying program facilitators, the goals of the school change: new, combined goals emerge, such as attempting to raise the self-esteem of students, and these goals are added to the schools’ traditional goal of instruction.

1.1h Brief Conclusions

This thesis offers the following conclusions: first, that schools face both structural and organizational constraints when implementing anti-bullying programs, including working within a loosely coupled system, only having pre-packaged anti-bullying

programs to implement, needing to appease the institutional environment and retain legitimacy, and having to address social problems on top of an already full curriculum; second, that schools respond to the needs of their institutional environment, and implement structural responses that are loosely coupled with their practices, and; third, that schools will implement programs of a therapeutic nature as opposed to using a traditional punitive approach.

Furthermore, five major implications for addressing any social problem within an educational setting are espoused. First, we must expect definitional expansion. Second, we can expect a certain organizational response; namely, the use of a loosely coupled system. Third, we can expect social problems programs to be ‘tacked-on’ to the existing curriculum, and not fully integrated within it. Fourth, we can expect other types of social problems education, not just bullying, to have priority within the school, including: health and wellness (physical, social, emotional, psychological), sexual education, anti-racism, multi-culturalism, and drug awareness. Fifth, and finally, we can expect the emergence of experts, as the therapeutic frame is likely to be used when dealing with any type of social problem, and the use of professionals and experts signal conformity and legitimacy.

CHAPTER 2 – BULLYING, INSTITUTIONS, AND THE THERAPEUTIC CULTURE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 BULLYING AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

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2.4 CONCLUSION

2.1 BULLYING AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

In the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in interest in the topic of school bullying in countries across the world. This increased interest has come as a result of academic research, extensive media publicity, and public concern. The research has claimed that within Western countries, bullying is a pervasive problem, not only in schools, but also in settings such as prisons and in the workplace (Ananiadou & Smith, 2002: 471-473). However, since schools are responsible for ensuring the safety of their staff and students, containing the problem of bullying is often placed as a high priority, especially for parents and taxpayers.

Bullying was once either not acknowledged, or seen as a common – if not essential – part of the childhood experience. It was seen to contribute to character

formation, and to teach conflict resolution skills (Astor, 1995; Cullingford & Morison, 1995; P.K. Smith & Brain, 2000; Mishna, 2003: 514). The earliest academic report on bullying behaviour in schools was written in 1897, by Burk, on *Teasing and Bullying in the Pedagogical Seminary*. Similarly, in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, a controversial novel written in the 19th century, the harmful effects of bullying in English public schools were written about, leading to intense public debate. *Tom Brown's Schooldays* started the claims that bullying can have serious health consequences to victims. However, no systematic research on bullying was undertaken until the 1970s, when professors such as Dan Olweus began researching bullying behaviours and the nature and effects of bullying. Shortly thereafter, Scandinavian and Norwegian school-based intervention projects were undertaken to combat school bullying. Much of this work was considered successful, and by the late 1980s, others had implemented similar intervention projects (Besag, 1989; Tattum & Lane, 1989; as cited in Smith, 1997: 249). Since then, there have been a number of studies carried out examining both the long-term and short-term consequences of school bullying (Rigby, 2003: 583).

As research initiatives have been implemented to attempt to end bullying, countries are increasingly becoming involved, and deeming bullying as problematic behaviour. Most often, however, it seems to take a major tragedy (such as a school shooting or suicide due to bullying) before the government, academic researchers, or even the public, begin to address bullying as a problem (Duncan, 2005). However, Dake et al. (2004) argue that the problems associated with bullying are just as important as other social problems that schools address within the curriculum. For example, most

elementary schools address substance abuse prevention (89 %), and it could be argued that bullying is an equally important issue. Furthermore, they argue that the problems associated with bullying – such as truancy, absenteeism, fighting, emotional disorders, suicide ideation, and depression – do not seem any less important than substance abuse prevention (Dake et al., 2004: 385).

2.1a Definitional Ambiguity

Bullying has recently been re-defined as a prevalent and persistent social problem. Many of these definitions have been formally defined by agents of social control. Quite recently, the American Medical Association implemented a new policy on anti-bullying which explicated that bullying behaviours are a public health problem with long-term effects for both the bully and victim, as opposed to the perception that bullying is a childhood problem that will be outgrown. The policy also outlined that children who remain within the cycle of bullying are at an increased risk for social, emotional, academic, and even legal problems (Bullying Awareness Network, 2005)⁴.

These studies have led to the shift *away* from seeing school bullying as simply a result of interpersonal differences (e.g. physical size, strength, or personality), and *towards* seeing school bullying as a relational, and social problem (Pepler & Craig, 1995; O'Connell et al., 1999; as cited in Rigby & Johnson, 2004).⁵ This, coupled with recent high-profile acts of school violence, have demonstrated that bullying must be recognized as a detrimental form of behaviour with long-term effects, not merely a normal part of growing up (Seals & Young, 2003: 745). Bullying and victimization has been claimed to

⁴ Retrieved on 28 April 2005 at <http://www.bullyingawarenessnetwork.ca/site/php?page=news>

⁵ Retrieved on 26 January 2005 at <http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/FocusOnBystanders.pdf>

result in severe consequences, such as depression and reduced self-esteem (Hawker & Boulton, 2000), psychosomatic symptoms (Williams et al., 1996), and suicidal thoughts (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999) which may result in actual suicides (Ananiadou & Smith, 2002: 473). Bullying has also been claimed to result in making the victim have nightmares, wet the bed, fake illnesses, and be frequently truant from school (Demko, 1996: 26). It is also claimed that bullying and victimization can result in severe repercussions in adulthood, including difficulty establishing sexual relationships, tendencies towards depression, and aggressive lifestyle patterns (Berthold & Hoover, 2000: 66).

One of the most problematic factors in determining the prevalence of bullying behaviour is that there is an inconsistent definition of what actually characterizes a bully or a victim, as well as an inconsistent definition of what bullying is. However, there is a difficulty with using the term 'bullying', as some researchers claim that the term can underestimate the problem, making it seem as though the violence and harassment is actually natural childhood behaviour. Furthermore, the problem is claimed to be frequently underestimated as perceptions of what constitutes bullying varies between individuals (Ireland, 2002b: 669). The definition of bullying has also changed over time. Once, bullying was termed 'mobbing', and referred to an attack on an individual by a group (Heinemann, 1973). Later research has referred to bullying as both an individual and a group activity (Olweus, 1978). Most recently, the inclusion of psychological, physical, social and emotional characteristics have been added to the definition, along with differences according to gender. As the definition expands, it becomes increasingly

difficult to measure the actual prevalence of bullying behaviours. There is a fine line between separating bullying and victimization from mere child's play, and parents, teachers, and peers often have difficulty judging situations because such a grey area exists. As a result, the situation is frequently ignored, and until a traumatic event occurs (such as a school shooting, or suicide as a result of bullying), people do not recognize the potential consequences that can occur, and potential detriments that bullying can have (Hazler et al., 1997: 6). Thus, the choice of whether or not to intervene, as well as the roles that adults and peers play in stopping the behaviour, are critical components in the resulting encouragement, or discouragement, of bullying and harassment. They are also critical components in determining the prevalence of bullying behaviour. The prevalence will be underestimated if students and school officials believe bullying to be mere child's play; similarly, the prevalence will be overestimated if innocent acts are believed to be acts of bullying and harassment (Hazler, 1996; Hazler & Carney, 2000; Salmivalli, 1999; as cited in Hazler & Denham, 2002: 404).

There are also problems with many of the reported characteristics of bullies and victims. The information comes from varied sources, different research designs, and diverse interpretations of the data. Thus, the conclusions that the researchers have drawn in regards to characteristics of bullies and victims may not be valid or reliable. Also, each description of the characteristics of bullies, and the characteristics of victims, present different characteristics; furthermore, the data can be so varied that some characteristics may appear on one list, and not on another. Often, there are contradictory characteristics presented (e.g. some studies claim that bullies have low self-esteem, while others claim

that bullies have high self-esteem), and a lack of consistency between studies. This makes it difficult to have confidence in the accuracy of the consequences of bullying behaviour, and further, makes it difficult to undertake changes with conviction. The largest problem with the data is that even experts appear to be confused about which characteristics serve as indicators of potential victims or potential bullies (Hazler et al., 1997: 6-7).

2.1b Difficulty of Observation

The overarching assumption is that every student should be able to attend school and feel safe while they are there. Thus, school personnel are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that students are able to learn in a school environment that is safe, and that encourages learning. Schools have the opportunity to play a pivotal role in addressing the issue of youth violence, as educators are able to reach large numbers of children during the most influential years of their development, and teach prosocial behaviours in order to reduce bullying behaviours. Thus, they can implement intervention and prevention easily, and on a large scale (Coie et al., 1991; Nelson, 1996; as cited in Day & Golench, 1997). Teachers are also in a unique position, because they are able to identify children who need special assistance due to any behavioural, emotional, social, or academic problems (Sandford et al., 1992; as cited in Day & Golench, 1997). School systems recognize that in order to reduce aggression and violent behaviour, and to promote prosocial responses to conflict, it is important to develop behavioural policies and codes of conduct that entail achievable goals, clearly outline rules and procedures, and are produced in order to create a positive school climate

(Aleem & Moles, 1993; Landen, 1992). Most importantly, these behavioural policies must be communicated clearly to all students, and the outlined policies must be upheld consistently, fairly, and firmly (Alschuler, 1980; Duke & Canady, 1991; Johnson et al., 1994; Williams, 1993, as cited in Day & Golench, 1997). The idea is to interrupt the cycle of bullying, so that potential bullies do not begin bullying, and existing bullies do not continue, thereby reducing the number of violent behaviours as adolescents move into highschool and adulthood (Colvin et al., 1998: 296-297). However, effective interventions and policies are difficult to achieve, because a lot of bullying occurs in the absence of teachers and administrators (Dess, 2001: 47). In Canada, it has been reported that bullying in schools often takes place in the presence of other students (bystanders), but away from the gaze of teachers. Furthermore, student bystanders most often ignore the behaviour, allowing the bullying behaviour to continue (Hawkins et al., 2001; as cited in Rigby & Johnson, 2004).⁶

Numerous studies have been undertaken to identify the prevalence of bullying behaviour in schools. Varying societal trends, such as the claim that being a victim or a bully is likely to have detrimental effects later in life (Eron et al., 1987), an increased focus on violence against children (Edelman, 1994), and an increased community focus toward safety concerns in schools (Arndt, 1994) has led to the push towards bullying research (Hazler et al., 1997: 6). These studies tend to indicate that bullying is a serious problem, especially for children in industrialized countries. For example, reports from Ireland (O'Moore, 1989), Italy (Basalisco, 1989), Japan (Mihashi, 1997), the Netherlands

⁶ Retrieved on 26 January, 2005 at <http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/FocusOnBystanders.pdf>

(de Kruif, 1989), Sweden (Olweus, 1993), and the United Kingdom (Yates & Smith, 1989) all report bullying to be a serious social problem (Berthold & Hoover, 2000: 66).

A study in 1997 claimed there were approximately 2.1 million bullies and 2.7 million victims of bullying within U.S. schools (Fried and Fried, 1997; as cited in Nelms, 1997: 205). Studies such as this indicate an urge to determine the actual prevalence of bullying behaviours within schools, in order to determine if bullying is common and normal, or if it is problematic. Most studies claim that bullying is not a normal behaviour; conversely, they claim that it is detrimental, and that its increasing prevalence is only making the problem worse.

It is often difficult, however, to determine with certainty the actual prevalence of bullying behaviours within schools. There are many weaknesses inherent in the current strategies for assessing the prevalence of bullying. For example, many studies exclude student reports from their studies if they report very low or moderate levels of bullying behaviour. Similarly, studies often collapse responses into categories of extremes, which eliminate many of the nuances that could be reported, thereby reducing the precision of the study. Another weakness exists when students are asked questions about bullying that elicit responses they feel uncomfortable sharing. The third weakness stems from the focus on physical aggression. Often, bullying is studied as a subset of violence and aggression, which entails a focus on physical bullying, and not on teasing, social exclusion, or emotional bullying. Similarly, the intention of the aggressor, as well as the belief of the aggressor, are other key components which will effect reports of the prevalence of bullying behaviour. Because of their nature as belief and opinion, they

cannot be relied upon accurately to reflect the prevalence of bullying, even though many researchers have explored these avenues in order to determine prevalence (Lane, 1988; Stephenson & Smith, 1988; as cited in Lane, 1989: 212). Furthermore, one of the greatest problems is a lack of consistent and coherent variables to explain bullying behaviours, since numerous definitions are used in studies, and frequently studies examine differing aspects related to psychosocial and demographic factors (Bosworth et al., 1999: 343-344).

Often, studies of bullying behaviour focus on the environmental factors of the school, and attempt to use these factors to explain the problem and prevalence of bullying. The most prominent environmental factors include school size, class size, and competition at school (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1997; Whitney & Smith, 1993). However, other studies have demonstrated that there are no observable significant relationships between these environmental factors and school bullying (Natvig et al., 1999: 563).

Typically, the prevalence of bullying behaviours are determined through anonymous personal surveys, which ask questions about the incidence of bullying, as well as teachers, students, and parents perceptions of bullying behaviours. These surveys have demonstrated that bullying is a multi-faceted problem, and reports of verbal and physical victimization range in frequency between 8% and 46% (Baldry, 1998; Bentley & Li, 1995; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Byrne, 1994; Gasteiger-Klicpera & Klicpera, 1997; Genta et al., 1996; Hanewinkel & Knaack, 1997; Harachi et al., 1996; Hirano, 1992; Kumpulainen et al., 1998; Menesini et al., 1997; Mooij, 1992; Morita et al., 1999; Olweus, 1999; O'Moore & Hillery, 1989; O'More et al., 1997; Perry

et al., 1988; Vettenburg, 1999; Whitney & Smith, 1993; Wolke & Stanford, 1999; Wolke et al., 2000).

One study, conducted in 2001 by the Center for Addiction and Mental Health, surveyed more than 4,000 Canadian students in grades seven through twelve⁷. The results of this study indicated that nearly 25 % of the students surveyed considered themselves to be the victims of bullying. Furthermore, almost one-third of the students surveyed admitted to bullying their peers⁸. However, this 2001 study was the first to estimate the prevalence of bullying within Ontario schools. Thus, there were no previous statistical benchmarks to compare with, leaving the study unable to determine whether or not bullying is on the rise or on the decline. With this study as a benchmark, future studies *may* be able to estimate rises or declines in bullying behaviour; however, since many incidences of bullying go unreported, are underreported, or are ignored by teachers, parents, and peers, it might be impossible to ever accurately assess the prevalence of bullying behaviour⁹. For example, often students do not report bullying behaviours to school personnel because they are either fearful of the repercussions, or they lack the necessary social skills for reporting the bullying behaviour, or they feel that the teachers and other administrators will not do anything to stop the bullying from occurring again

⁷ Although bullying has been consistently shown to increase throughout elementary school, peak in middle school, and decline during high school, there are differences between public schools and private schools. There are often more reports of bullying behaviour in public schools than there are in private schools. Often, the environmental factors of schools come into play when data are analyzed, indicating that larger schools (those with more than 600 students) experience more bullying than smaller schools. As most private schools have less students than public schools, this may indicate why bullying seems more prevalent among those enrolled in public schools (Nolin et al., 1995; as cited in Meraviglia et al., 2003: 1349).

⁸ Retrieved on 3 March 2005 at <http://www.investinginchildren.on.ca/Communications/articles/bully.html>

⁹ Retrieved on 3 March 2005 at <http://www.investinginchildren.on.ca/Communications/articles/bully.html>

(Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Hoover & Oliver, 1993; Slee, 1994; as cited in Bosworth et al., 1999: 341-342).

2.1c Correlates of Bullying

Media interest in bullying is often generated by academic research, as well as tragic events such as students' suicides that result from bullying. In response to concerns about school bullying, academic research, and media attention, many governments and educational authorities worldwide have attempted to address and correct the problem through school-based interventions, prevention programs, and initiatives. These initiatives include publishing materials and resources for schools, and establishing programs to be utilized by school boards, schools, and individual classrooms. For example, in Norway, the first nation-wide anti-bullying campaign was implemented as a result of suicides due to bullying. This program comprised of materials for schools and parents, and was received positively, as the program led to a reduction in both bullying and victimization rates. Most industrialized countries consider bullying to be an important and widespread issue, and are continually addressing the concerns about bullying raised by media and academics alike (Ananiadou & Smith, 2002: 473-474).

Consistently, studies have indicated that bullying tends to increase over the elementary school years (kindergarten to grade eight), peak during the middle school years (grade seven, eight, and nine), and decrease throughout highschool (Hazler et al., 1991; Hoover et al., 1992; as cited in Berthold & Hoover, 2000: 67). These school years are pivotal for the development of youths and adolescents. There are specific qualities of the middle school years (ages ten to fourteen; grades seven to nine) that make studying

bullying and victimization at this age of particular importance. The physical changes that these adolescents are enduring – size, strength, and secondary sexual characteristics – lead to variations among students within the same age cohort or the same grade. These changes provide ammunition for teasing and harassment, and provide those who mature faster than others with significant size and strength advantages. Apart from size differences, maturity also accounts for differences, and the conflicts between adolescents are implicated by these differences in maturity (Cairns et al., 1989; as cited in Champion et al., 2003: 536). The differences in cognitive skills and social skills can lead to increased levels of comparison (both physical and social) between peers, as well as increased self-consciousness, increased concerns about social status, and an increase in negative perceptions of self (Harter, 1990; Zimmerman et al., 1997; as cited in Champion et al., 2003: 536). The transition between schools (moving from elementary school to middle school to high school; or, from elementary school to high school) can also impact bullying and harassment, as students must form new social groups, and have increased interactions with numerous other peers undergoing similar physical and emotional changes (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Harachi et al., 1999; as cited in Champion et al., 2003: 536).

However, one challenge to implementing anti-bullying programs is that the behaviours of adolescents are difficult to change. It is challenging, if not impossible, to convince students to reduce bullying, when bullying behaviours are often used to gain power, status, and privilege over others. If students find bullying behaviours to be useful and effective means of achieving social status, they will be less likely to change their

behaviours. This point is further emphasized by the fact that popularity and dominance are particularly important during adolescence (Gavin & Furman, 1989), and that studies have demonstrated that aggression is a trait that is admired by peers (Bukowski et al., 2000; as cited in Vaillancourt et al., 2003: 171). Thus, programs that utilize negative sanctions against bullying behaviours (e.g. zero-tolerance programs), are often inadequate, as they counter the social status and success that bullies gain from their behaviour.

Research has demonstrated that an increase in the positive social and relational aspects of schooling will increase the overall school quality, as well as the attendance of students, and both the amount and quality of the academic work they produce (Hantler, 1994: 8). Much research has shown that bullying behaviours that are allowed to persist in schools hinders both the personal lives as well as the academic progress of the victims of bullying. The lives of bullies are also affected, as a bully who goes unpunished often continues to act in an antisocial manner as they age (Hantler, 1994: 8). For these reasons, and many others, schools have started to research and address bullying behaviours.

There has also been research regarding adolescence and peer influence undertaken by aggression researchers. Elliott, Huizinga, and Ageton (1982) carried out a longitudinal study of delinquency, and found that there was an association between family and delinquency and social bonds. They found that this association was facilitated by involvement with delinquent peers (Esplage et al., 2000: 327). The few studies that have examined bullying behaviour and peer influences have found that bullying behaviours were strongly associated with perceptions of peer involvement in negative behaviours,

similar to the influences of peer involvement and other risk-taking behaviours (such as alcohol and drug use, and sexual activity) (Hawkins et al., 1992; Jessor & Jessor, 1973; as cited in Espelage et al., 2000: 331). These studies indicate that other negative behaviours, such as fighting, damaging property and engaging in illegal or gang activities are predictors of bullying behaviors (Espelage et al., 2000: 331).

On the other hand, many population surveys can indicate more useful and accurate information of the overall volume and location of deviance in general. The Youth Risk Behaviour Survey, an American study, demonstrates that there was an overall decrease in youth violent behaviours during the 1990s. This study indicates that between 1993 and 1999, self-reports demonstrate a decline of behaviours such as fighting, carrying a gun, or carrying a weapon on school property. These data can be generalized to bullying behaviour, as many definitions of bullying behaviour include fighting and carrying weapons within their definitions. Similar data has been demonstrated in Canada. Canadian studies of youth violence and crime have demonstrated a decline of youth crime during the 1990s. Furthermore, official records of youth crime indicated a decreased number of youths charged with a violent crime (such as assault and robbery – two components often included in definitions of bullying) in the late 1990s (Paglia & Adlaf, 2003: 212-213). However, if these studies are indicating that youth violence is decreasing, why are there so many claims espousing the idea that bullying is increasing?

It is interesting to note that the existing research demonstrates numerous inconsistencies, and offers mixed messages. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that anti-bullying programs are rarely guided by the existing research, which indicates the

loose coupling that exists within the school system. Therefore, given the reality that bullying behaviours are inconsistently reported and analyzed, and that anti-bullying programs are difficult to implement, Institutional Theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding the organizational responses of schools.

2.2 INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

Educational organizations are highly institutionalized organizations. School systems have been a key socializing component of society for decades, and although they constantly undergo changes, they are all essentially similar in structure. Within the province of Ontario, the Ontario Ministry of Education is the governing board that presides over all publicly funded schools and school boards. As the province's educational ruling body, they create and disseminate discourses to their member schools, providing myriad rules and regulations, policies and procedures that the schools must follow. However, many of these rules, regulations, policies and procedures are only put in place ceremonially; for example, the actual practices and activities that the schools engage in do not correspond directly with the stated expectations.

2.2a Rationalized Institutional Myths

According to institutional theory, organizations must conform to the needs and desires of their institutional environments and reflect the values and beliefs of their surrounding societies. However, organizations do not conform to their institutional environments entirely; instead, they adopt rationalized myths which then become institutionalized and regarded as a 'truth' within the organization. An institutional myth is essentially a complex relationship of symbolic associations and representations of

meaning (Colomy, 1998). Members of the organization, as well as members of the surrounding environment, adopt these myths as truths and ‘buy-in’ to them. Because the institutional environment accepts these myths, they provide the organization with their support, faith and trust, thereby providing the institution with legitimacy. Legitimacy is key to the survival of the organization.

There are two key properties surrounding the myths of organizations. First, while they serve to identify the technical purposes of the organization and delineate the proper means of achieving these technical purposes, they do so in a highly rationalized, impersonal, and rule-like manner. Second, due to their institutionalization, these myths function separately of individuals and even separately of the organization itself, thereby removing any discretion and becoming taken-for-granted notions of legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

One process that generates rationalized myths of organizations is the institutional environment that surrounds the organization, which serves to provide relational networks: “The myths generated by particular organizational practices and diffused through relational networks have legitimacy based on the supposition that they are rationally effective” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977: 347). There are two dimensions that serve to shape the environment surrounding the organization. First, organizations influence the aforementioned relational networks to coerce them into adapting to the organization’s structures and relations. Second, the organization itself – specifically powerful organizations, such as a school or school board – attempts to integrate their goals and their procedures into the environment that surrounds them by producing institutional rules

(Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Organizations must prove to their institutional environment that they are acting in an appropriate manner and for a collectively valued purpose in order to retain legitimacy and public support. To prove this, organizations often design and conform to a formal structure that remains congruent with the myths derived from the institutional environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This formal structure demonstrates the institutional rules that the organization is purporting to uphold. In order for the constituents of the institutional environment to 'buy-in' to these myths, they must be able to comprehend and relate to them, and must agree with their importance, their pertinence, and their necessity.

2.2b Legitimacy

Social institutions maintain their authority and legitimacy through institutionalized myths which also legitimate the institutional rules and scripts created by the organization. These institutional myths correspond to the products, the services, the policies and the programs of organizations and institutions, all of which are often only ceremonially adopted by the organization (McMullen, 1994; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Thus, the formal structures of an institution are often only attempts at reflecting the institutional myths and therefore legitimating the formal structures themselves (McMullen, 1994). Frequently, this occurs at the expense of technical efficiency. In order to achieve public support and therefore retain legitimacy, institutional organizations must appear to be in accordance with the needs and demands of their external environments. If the organization does not retain a façade of competence and legitimacy, or if it markedly differs from what the

popular conception perceives that the organization should look like, the organization could be penalized for violation, and risk organizational death.

In order to survive, organizations need to obtain an optimal degree of fit with their environmental surroundings. Organizations must remain connected with their institutional environments, including the surrounding communities, markets, and industries. Thus, organizations face a dual challenge: they must attain and retain technical practicality, as well as upholding normative legitimacy (Dill, 1994).

Organizations such as schools are less technically oriented, and can therefore focus less on retaining technical practicality and instead focus on achieving normative legitimacy. The organization must reflect the socially constructed reality of the environments that surround them, and structure themselves in accordance with the phenomena that surround them, engaging in ceremonial compliance with the needs and wants of their surrounding environment. These organizations are constantly involved with their surrounding environments, and do not function as entities entirely separate and distinct from one another (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

However, Meyer and Rowan (1977) claim that the power and impact of rationalized institutional myths on organizations is unidirectional. Organizations must accept the myths that are imposed on them by their institutional environments. The relationship between the institutional environment and the organization is therefore not a reciprocal relationship. The myths are imposed by the environment and must be absorbed by the organization. Meyer and Rowan (1977) portray myths as externally imposed through sets of codes which are prefabricated and packaged, and then are made available

to the organization. They describe this process as a packaged bundle of myths, delineated by the institutional environment, which are adopted by organizations that both accept and utilize them within their structures and practices. All organizations are both driven and required to adopt these pre-packaged myths as part of their institutional process.

2.2c Loose Coupling

In this institutional environment, the organization must conform to externally defined rules and normative requirements, in order to gain the public support and prestige necessary for legitimacy and survival (Dill, 1994). However, organizations may find it difficult to maintain legitimacy and to conform to rational myths and normative elements. If the organization must undergo evaluation and scrutiny, they run the risk of losing their legitimacy. In order to avoid evaluation and inspection, organizations employ two strategies: decoupling, and the logic of confidence (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Organizations often 'buffer' their technical activities and their formal structures in order to maintain their ceremonial conformity and conform to their rationalized myths. In other words, their formal structure, or the institutional rules they purport to uphold and utilize, are 'loosely coupled' or 'decoupled' from the actual work and activities they engage in (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Many institutional organizations have formal structures which serve as a reflection of the myths of the institutional environment, as opposed to reflecting the real and actual demands of their work environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This ultimately allows the organization to display their conformity to normative regulations yet maintain their autonomy and independence. Furthermore, it allows more

leeway and freedom for the organization to adjust to the environmental demands and specifications without risking loss of support or legitimacy (Dill, 1994).

Rules and beliefs are often ‘rationalized’ by emphasizing the positive relationship between the means and the ends; one must follow the rules, or adhere to the beliefs in order to garner the desired end goals, as outlined by the institution. Further, these rules and beliefs can be considered mythical since they are often taken-for-granted as ‘truth’, even though they lack empirical evidence to demonstrate them as such (Dill, 1994).

Institutional environments frequently seek support and legitimacy through the building of trust and cooperation of members of the institutional environment by adhering to their institutionalized myths. These are, therefore, less formalized relationships, which allow the organization to avoid assessment, evaluation, or inspection; instead, they rely on the trust and goodwill of their constituents to ‘stand by them’ and continually provide them with support and legitimacy and, in return, the institution will continue to perpetuate its rationalized myths to their public (Dill, 1994). Essentially, institutions hold sets of cultural and social rules that provide meaning to cultural and social activity by means of regulating and regimenting them in a structured, formal, and patterned way. Therefore, the process of institutionalization involves the creation of these rules as not actually rules or regulations, per se, but as taken-for-granted processes and procedures of everyday life (McMullen, 1994).

2.2d Language

Language is also important to an organization, in order for them to remain ceremonially compliant with their institutional environments. The organizational

language functions as a ‘vocabulary of motive’, or a ‘vocabulary of structure’. These vocabularies must outline the organizational goals, policies, and procedures in terminology that comply with the institutional rules, in order for the environment to accept the organization as both rational and legitimate. Using the correct terminology and vocabulary can change organizational functions into valuable services, and can adhere the commitments of those involved within the organization, as well as members of the communities surrounding the organization (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Rationalized myths function to both purport and uphold the claims of the institution that the institutional environment will then ‘buy-in’ to. The organization articulates these institutionalized myths through myriad discourses, and stipulates how these myths will represent effective or desired means of achieving the positive and useful end goal. By incorporating the institutionalized myths into the language of the organization, the institutional entrepreneurs are, in essence, utilizing the ‘vocabulary of motives’ which their institutional environment will respond to. This vocabulary of motives serves to legitimate their institution, as well as to garner the resources needed to maintain legitimacy and public support (Colomy, 1998; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Neoinstitutionalists often focus more on structural constraints and cognitive processes, rather than the socialization process or rational choice theories (McMullen, 1994). They tend to concentrate on how individuals learn institutional myths such as “taken-for-granted scripts, habits, routines, rules, and conventional menus and categories of action” (McMullen, 1994:710). Neoinstitutionalists view these rules, scripts, and routines as outside of the individuals themselves, instead subsumed by institutions who

utilize their legitimacy and authority to perpetuate myths of how the institution functions or, on a much more general scale, how the world works (McMullen, 1994).

2.3 THERAPEUTIC CULTURE

2.3a The Growth of the Therapeutic Culture and its Experts

There are many human service agencies, or ‘helping professions’, that function to provide therapeutic services and prosocial adjustment to alienated or distressed individuals, and other marginal groups. These services include – but are not limited to – family therapy, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health counselors and social workers. Individuals engaging in delinquent or criminal behavior, aggression, violence, social or physical stigma, or other inappropriate behaviours are often referred to members of the helping profession (Chriss, 1999: 3). Many private, non-profit organizations provide therapeutic services for the public to take part in. Millions of people are brought under the domain of the human services; millions of people partake in public therapeutic services (Polsky, 1991: 4).

Many different types of persons are able to access the numerous services provided by agents of the therapeutic state, including persons experiencing family distress such as divorce or abuse, individuals experiencing temporary distress such as anger, anxiety, dating or relationship issues, and even marginalized persons, such as the homeless, drug or alcohol addicts, criminals, and the poor (Chriss, 1999: 11-12). This ‘help’ allows people to make sense of their world and their experiences through new meanings and symbols, or new cultural frames. The therapeutic culture functions to provide meaning

within the day-to-day lives of individuals, as it has acquired a powerful and persistent influence over the conduct of individual behaviour (Furedi, 2004: 22).

Interactions that were once seen as natural, or even taken-for-granted, are now seen through the frame of the therapeutic culture. As such, individuals feel that in order to manage their lives, they must seek professional support. Routine forms of social interaction are no longer seen as routine, but instead represented as complicated and unmanageable. For example, child-rearing is no longer something one merely *does*; instead, it is seen as a science involving skills in relationships and communication. Social agencies are continuously utilized to take control of everyday encounters, and as a result, have been deemed ‘experts’.

These experts have colonized the realm of interpersonal relationships (Furedi, 2004: 98). This is a direct result of organizational coupling: existing organizations seek out new professionals, and bring them under their purview. This allows for new and expansive goals to be created, through new concerns that arise as organizational coupling occurs. In this case, the educational organizations have sought out therapeutic professionals and social service agencies, and together they have created new goals regarding the reduction of bullying behaviour and school violence, through concerns such as raising students’ self-esteem and reducing their emotional vulnerability.

As the therapeutic state has become more pervasive and prevalent in modern society, we speak of ourselves in terms of categories of illness, or labels of disease. Furthermore, as the therapeutic ethos becomes embedded in Western culture, compliance with the programs and policies becomes natural, and not achieved through coercion. It

now seems only right that one should seek ‘help’ in some form or another for any type of minor tragedy (Nolan, 1998: 14).

Social agencies are frequently turned to in order to deal with old problems that have not been resolved, as well as new problems that have gained recognition (Polsky, 1991: 6). Many of these new problems are not actually new; as our definition of what happy and healthy means, our view of what is right and what is wrong changes. How we view behaviours is a function of cultural values, and “of the reigning zeitgeist” (Nolan, 1998: 14). As the therapeutic culture grabs hold of our culture, almost every challenge or misfortunate event is seen as a threat to emotional health and well-being (Furedi, 2004:1).

2.3b Medicine and Therapy: The Shift from Medicalisation to the Therapeutic Culture

The helping profession that has had the most impact on our culture has been medicine. The term ‘therapeutic state’, as used by Chriss (1999), is a reference to the dominance of the medical model as the prevailing ideology within Western culture. Medical and therapeutic terminology has come to dominate social, political, and policy discourse, and terms such as “stress”, “wellness”, “addiction”, “disease”, “disorder”, “self-esteem”, “trauma”, and “therapy” have become a significant part of mainstream language. The problems that individuals experience are often presented and discussed in medical or therapeutic vocabulary. Medical experts – or those persons who have obtained medical degrees – maintain a “cloak of competence” (Fox, 1959; as cited in Chriss, 1999), allowing them to retain the stature of ‘expert’, and diagnose and treat individuals without question to their authority and expertise. This expertise has expanded to contain

not only the physical wellness of individuals, but also the wellness of the individual's mind, and the wellness of society as a whole (Chriss, 1999).

Other members of the helping profession – such as therapists, counselors, and social workers – who have not obtained a medical degree hold a similar cloak of competence. Members of society often believe that these individuals are experts within their field, and take their 'diagnoses' or recommendations as truths conferred by experts. The overarching domain of, and infiltration by, the medical community is referred to as medicalisation. As described by Furedi (2004), medicalisation is

a process through which the problems of everyday life are treated as medical ones, usually in terms of illnesses, disorders or syndromes. The process of medicalisation is not confined to diagnosing problems linked to the body. In cultural terms it involves exporting the ideas of illnesses and disease beyond the body to make sense of conditions and experiences that are distinctly cultural and social. (99-100)

Furthermore, medicalisation occurs when health and illness are the primary interpreters of social situations. Instead of deeming an action or interaction as "good or bad", or "moral or immoral", it is deemed as "healthy or ill". However, the therapeutic culture is a post-medicalisation phenomenon. The new dominant cultural frame is one of therapeutics, and therapeutic professionals or experts are gaining a similar cloak of competence to that of medical professionals. As the therapeutic culture becomes the dominant cultural frame, their ideology becomes accepted as legitimate, and their claims regarded as truth. Organizations start to believe that they need emotional assistance, and provide therapeutic professionals with their confidence. As such, this culture becomes justified, and a new 'logic of confidence' is imparted onto the therapeutic community. This 'logic of confidence' means that the therapeutic professionals are not required to provide 'proof' of

their claims; instead, they are taken as truth, or they are taken at face value, with no need for measurement or inspection. This seems reasonable for the medical profession (whom, if required, *may* be able to provide biological proof of a patient's illness or disease), but is harder to rationalize for therapeutics (whom, if required, may *not* have tangible proof of a patient's emotional vulnerability).

Medicalisation, and the labels incurred and applied as a result of medicalisation, are often pathological and biological in nature. They are relatively concrete, and often have tangible treatments, such as prescribed medication. Conversely, the therapeutic culture, and the ensuing labels, are much 'fuzzier' in nature. Therapeutic labels deal with emotions, and are not biologically inclined. While many biological illnesses have clear, well-defined and consensual definitions, emotional vulnerabilities, on the other hand, do not. As such, the therapeutic culture offers a vague and indeterminate cultural frame. Thus, the therapeutic culture has moved beyond medicalisation. Although there are still medical, and medicalised, aspects to bullying and other violent behaviours, the therapeutic culture focuses on emotions, not biology, on vulnerability, not sickness, and addresses the willpower – or lack thereof – of individuals, not their helplessness as a result of biological mishaps.

For example, anger and hatred are frequently represented as symptoms of a disease or pathology that requires therapeutic intervention. These emotions quickly become seen as illnesses (Furedi, 2004: 31). Problems such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Oppositional Defiant

Disorder (ODD) become everyday terms used to describe behaviours, and become labels that professionals – both therapeutic and non-therapeutic – apply readily.

Over the course of the past 25 years, many new forms of illness have been ‘discovered’, many of which are non-physical, and deal instead with emotional problems, as traumas, addictions, disorders and syndromes are applied to numerous members of society (Furedi, 2004:111). More and more psychological problems are being defined and labeled, such as depression, low self-esteem, rage, and trauma, which provide a therapeutic label through which to interpret every facet of human experience.

As the therapeutic culture dominates, definitions of traditional illnesses have also been elaborated in order to encompass greater numbers of people. For example, the definition of depression has changed from being a primarily female-oriented illness, to being an illness that also affects men, and children of both sexes. Similarly, ADHD was once a diagnosis reserved for children, but has recently grown to be an illness that affects adults as well. The reinvention and redefinition of mental illness through therapeutic terms has paralleled the numerous taken-for-granted experiences that are now said to cause psychological damage, and that people are constantly seeking the help of professionals to aid them (Furedi, 2004: 12).

2.3c The Ethos of Vulnerability

Many of the actions and interactions of humans are defined as social pathologies, and have been translated into therapeutic terms or emotional illnesses. Health professionals and social science practitioners have increasingly turned to counseling techniques as part of their approach, and perpetuate the belief that social conditions,

families and schools are creating individuals who desperately need to be cured by doctors, counselors, social workers, therapists, or mental health professionals (Chriss, 1999: 7-8). As therapeutic ideals dominate, people begin to use them as a cultural explanation, or as moral understanding, and refer to these pathological interpretations in their everyday lives. For example, commonly we hear about people experiencing low self-esteem, being a member of a dysfunctional family, or experiencing anxiety, stress, or depression (Nolan, 1998: 14).

The therapeutic overhauling of day-to-day life has become a fact, and proof of this is the frequency with which formal agents of social control readily pathologize human behaviour. As typical behaviours become part of the therapeutic domain, they also require professionals to intervene and 'solve' people's problems. This can work in the reverse as well: as professionals intervene more and more, they create a demand for the therapeutic labeling of everyday behaviours. As counselors and therapists provide advice, they ensure that people are unable to negotiate their lives on their own, thus creating a need for more of these professionals, as well as their services. This fact demonstrates the legitimacy of the therapeutic culture as the dominant interpretive frame.

Therapists and counselors are able to formally label their patients as 'sick', and label their patients' emotions as needing care or expert assistance. Through looking at Talcott Parsons' concept of the 'sick role', therapeutics can be explained as a form of social control. Essentially, the sick role allows for individuals to navigate through their day-to-day lives avoiding judgment or labeling from others, because individuals who are considered to be sick are often not considered at fault, and are therefore able to remove

themselves from certain expectations that society may have for a 'well' person, without consequence. In order to receive these exemptions, individuals must present themselves as having an undesirable condition or illness, and must insinuate that they are doing everything in their power to get well again (Furedi, 2004:95). Thus, labeling theory works to the advantage of the person exhibiting the sick role. Labels such as ADD, ADHD, and ODD allow the person to deflect blame: *they*, personally, are not to blame for their behaviour; instead, their *sickness* is to blame.

2.3d The Therapeutic Culture as a Cultural Frame

Furedi (2004) demonstrates that increasingly, psychological labels are used to portray children's behaviour (1). For instance, many doctors and therapists have been pressured by parents and advocacy groups to both diagnose and treat hyperactivity in children. These groups promote awareness of so-called illnesses, such as ADD, ADHD and ODD, and claim that any harm that could potentially be caused by labeling children is outweighed by the benefits they will experience by having a sick label. For example, children who are labeled as deviant, or as having a behavioural disorder, are able to remove the blame for their behaviours from themselves, and place the blame on their label. Further, many parents are relieved when their children are labeled with a behavioural disorder, as their child is no longer seen as responsible for their behaviour. Children who are labeled as having some type of behavioural or emotional disorder are no longer subject to disapproval, and instead are provided with assistance, whether that is through therapy, counseling, additional school resources (such as time with a school social worker, or the aide of an educational assistant), or moral support (Furedi, 2004:

182). This cultural shift can be attributed to the therapeutic ethos that is growing within society. Many behaviours – not just those of children – are now described in terms of an illness or pathology (Nolan, 1998: 9). For example, what was once called ‘low self-esteem’ – an interesting concept on its own – is now often considered to be depression. Similarly, bullying behaviours that were once seen through the frame of ‘boys will be boys’, or as a right of passage that all children must endure, are now seen as a component of a larger, therapeutic and pathological problem.

Labeling theory would indicate that as labels are applied to individuals, whether informally or formally, stigmatization ensues, and individuals must manage this stigma as well as their identity, through neutralizing techniques (Sykes & Matza, 1957). As a result, individuals often avoid being labeled in order to avoid stigmatization and the potentially harmful consequences that are associated with stigmatization. However, through the therapeutic labeling of children’s behaviour, a cultural shift has been created where it is now positive to label children with some sort of problem, as they will receive treatment and additional resources. Over the past two decades, the number of illnesses and diseases said to affect children have grown immensely. It is for two reasons: first, children’s behaviour and emotions have become pathologised; and, second, parents and schools want their children labeled in order to receive resources. Schools have an easier time gaining funding if the money is being used to assist children with special needs. When children are labeled as sick or ill or as having an emotional deficiency, it demonstrates that their problems are serious, and must be treated as such. Furthermore, when a personal setback is viewed through a therapeutic label, there are often fewer

repercussions or consequences for the labeled individual, and therefore less stigmatization (Furedi, 2004: 183-188).

Demanding labels and diagnoses is an indicator that people expect accountability:

In most circumstances society does not demand a strict absolute standard of accountability. It is generally recognised that there may be extenuating circumstances which could lighten the responsibility of an individual for a particular action...However, the contemporary therapeutic ethos goes way beyond the notion of relative accountability to implicitly question the ethic of responsibility itself. Bad habits, antisocial and destructive behaviour tend to be portrayed as the outcome of dysfunctional parenting, family violence or of people's genes. (Furedi, 2004:189)

Thus, people may strive to be labelled by therapeutic professionals as a means of exemption from the painful stigmatization of society.

2.3e The Therapeutic Frame within the School System: Organizational Coupling

Many public institutions – including schools – have adopted an orientation towards managing the emotions and relationships of their constituents. This is a result of the 'logic of confidence' that is created and justified by the therapeutic frame: as society buys-in to therapeutic ideals, such as emotional education, they provide this cultural frame with legitimacy, thereby eliminating it from any need for inspection, or evaluation. This is clearly espoused through the emerging areas of 'moral education', 'character education', and 'emotional literacy' that schools and school boards are implementing into their programming.

Educating children has always included teaching children appropriate behaviour. Good behaviour was once defined by politeness and honesty, however with the rise of the therapeutic culture, and thus therapeutic education, good behaviour is now based on the

emotional literacy of children. Children must not only conduct themselves appropriately, but they must also exhibit certain (appropriate) feelings and emotions alongside these behaviours (Furedi, 2004:198). When behaviours distress or unnerve us, human service agencies are often sought out to 'normalize' or alter these behaviours. The belief is that the social problem at large must be addressed, and inaction is seen as unacceptable or irresponsible (Polsky, 1991: 6-7). The therapeutic culture displays an aversion to any negative emotions, especially those of anger and hatred. However, what it does not consider is that these emotions may be the appropriate response to a particular situation or problem. People – especially young students – are taught to push these feelings aside, and taught that they are 'bad' or 'wrong'.

As a method of dealing with social problems such as bullying, punishment is decreasing and therapy is increasing. Social control methods are shifting from traditional punitive measures to more therapeutic measures. As external social structures change, such as the decrease in family and school hierarchies and the decline of the traditional authority of the state, many governmental institutions (e.g. schools and prisons) have adopted their own counselling programs (Tucker, as cited in Chriss, 1999: 73-74).

School counselors, psychologists, and social workers exemplify how the therapeutic ethos has entered into the school system. Almost all schools have their own counselors on the premises at all times, and most schools are connected to a social worker, if there is not one present in the school at all times. These therapeutic professionals are not only present to assist students in problems they may be facing at school and at home, but they also assist administrators to develop curriculum, and to

intervene in the classroom (i.e. facilitating student-teacher interactions). The presence of these therapeutic professionals within the school serves to legitimate therapy's role within the school, as well as the taken-for-granted notion that schools and parents serve as therapists for their children, who are to provide mental health solutions to their otherwise fragile children (Chriss, 1999: 22).

The infiltration of the therapeutic culture into the school system has transformed children's school experiences into potentially threatening situations. The school is no longer seen as a safe place to learn; instead, it is seen as a site of intense emotional tension. Similarly, experiences that were once seen as 'typical' for most children to experience are now defined as events which elicit so much stress that children are incapable of coping with the experience. Furthermore, the therapeutic profession seems determined to protect children, and their emotions, from any type of challenge or potentially stressful situation (Furedi, 2004:8).

The abundance of experts within society leads to their intrusion into the family and other social institutions, such as the school. This infiltration is what Jurgen Habermas referred to as the "expertocracy". This expertocracy coincides with the rise of medicalisation and the therapeutic state (Chriss, 1999: 24). Therapeutic professionals, such as counsellors, therapists, and social workers, are the experts who reside within the growing expertocracy. These are the people who come into our lives to tell us that we have an emotional deficit, or label our children with a behavioural illness. At the same time, our social reality is constantly being redefined by these experts. As formal agents of social control encroach on our lives, previously unregulated aspects of our day-to-day

behaviour become formalized and regulated (Chriss, 1999: 195). As the expertocracy gains authority, the therapeutic culture becomes institutionalized, and achieves a dimension of coercion. The therapeutic ethos functions on the premise that only therapeutic ‘experts’ can determine which emotions are positive and which emotions are negative. Furthermore, it assumes that only these experts have the authority to educate, train, and shape people’s feelings (Furedi, 2004:197).

Similarly, criminal behaviours are increasingly being defined as crimes of emotion. Crimes such as domestic violence, child abuse, bullying and school violence are seen as the outcome of emotional deficiencies or destructive personalities (Furedi, 2004:30). There has also been a cultural shift away from public crimes and onto interpersonal crimes, or crimes that occur within the private sphere. Many of these interpersonal crimes have been criminalized as a response to this reorientation (Furedi, 2004: 80). Of course, not all interpersonal crimes result in jail time. Instead, therapeutic interventions are utilized as an instrument of social control. In essence, all of the problems experienced by the contemporary individual are claimed to be cured by emotional education⁹⁴ (Furedi, 2004:161). Often, experts are sought out to aide in the emotional adjustment of those engaging in behaviours such as bullying, school violence, child abuse, or domestic abuse. These deviants are frequently labeled by the therapeutic community as being the victims of emotional vulnerability, or having an emotional deficiency that has led to their behaviour, and their subsequent victimization.

⁹⁴ See A. McCluskey ‘Emotional intelligence’, 7 July 1997, www.e-news.connected.org

As more and more people are labeled with psychological or emotional illnesses, they begin to define themselves as ‘victim’, which determines how they understand themselves and their relationships with others (Nolan, 1998: 14). Through the status of victim, the self is no longer the perpetrator, but is instead the injured party. Actions, behaviours and feelings are no longer the individuals’ fault, but are the fault of the problem afflicting them. Thus, the individual can blame an outside source for their plight, and claim rights to health and happiness.

The therapeutic ethos teaches people how to make sense of their perceived emotional helplessness, by imparting the belief that humans are the powerless victims of social forces outside of their own control. Often, it is claimed that these people “cannot help it”, as they are simply vulnerable persons. This is the model frequently used when discussing bullying, and claims that the victims of bullying are scarred for life by behaviours that were out of their control are abundant. Many studies of bullying behaviours examine how bullying and other forms of childhood delinquency can lead to long-term psychological and emotional problems (Furedi, 2004: 114-118).

Furedi (2004) points out that when children’s lives are represented through therapeutic and psychological vocabulary, ultimately this will lead children to use this language to make sense of their *own* lives. For example, concepts such as ‘stress’ have taught children how to make sense of the challenges they experience. As children’s emotions become problematized, they are trained to see challenges and problems as a potential source of illness which is in need of therapeutic advice and assistance (p. 112).

Furthermore, organizations are required to adopt therapeutically inclined interventions in order to retain legitimacy.

Children frequently rely on the status of victimization to assist them in their young lives. Children labeled with learning disabilities or hyperactive disorders attain more resources and assistance in school, instead of chastisement or punishment for not performing academically. Through the therapeutic culture, society is taught to not judge victims, or emotionally vulnerable persons; instead, they are to be provided with empathy, encouragement, and patience (Furedi, 2004: 183).

The therapeutic notion of individuals being helpless victims of forces beyond their control is frequently utilized by deviants in order to justify or rationalize their actions. Frequently, bullies and school shooters claim the status of victim as part of their defense. This claim is often accepted, and individuals may be excused of their behaviour as a result. This notion of the 'blameless victim' eliminates the objective view of right and wrong, and eliminates the victimizer from the consequences of their behaviour. Victim advocates insist that victims receive sympathy and support in place of blame or punishment. However, this is only legitimate when the victim has rationalized their actions through a therapeutic framework, understanding their actions through mental health terms (Furedi, 2004: 190-191). It must be noted, however, that although the therapeutic culture is arguably an influential interpretive frame, it does not mean that all of its components are un-problematically swallowed.

In order for a therapeutic ethos to prevail, it must be regarded as legitimate. Legitimacy must exist in any type of organization – even an informal one such as the

therapeutic culture – in order to impart social control over those within its domain. Often, the language that is utilized aids in the attaining and retaining of legitimacy. For example, the language of therapeutics is often utilized in non-therapeutic settings, thus ensuring that the legitimacy of the therapeutic ethos is upheld, and that therapeutic views are integrated into these non-therapeutic settings. Language is not neutral, and carries much weight, authority, and definitions of reality with it (Nolan, 1998: 297-298).

The language of the therapeutic ethos has become part of the language of everyday life. The script that is presented by the therapeutic culture allows for definitions of reality to be constructed through the framework of therapeutics. Furthermore, this script also allows individuals to define aspects of themselves, their relationships and interactions, and their relationship with society. More specifically, the therapeutic culture defines people's identities while simultaneously regarding their emotional state as "peculiarly problematic". This distinct view of the nature of human beings regards emotional management as a rationally effective means of guiding collective and individual behaviour (Furedi, 2004:22).

2.3f The Ethos of Self-Esteem

The therapeutic ethos has also directly influenced education policy. While one of the functions of schools is to teach appropriate socialization, many school policies have taken action to ensure that student socialization takes place through some form of emotional training. Teaching self-esteem has become the major influence of these policies. Schools believe that in order for students to adequately learn, they must first have high self-esteem, self-confidence, and emotional intelligence. Often, students are

encouraged to use ‘feeling statements’, and to share their feelings with their peers, through exercises such as completing sentences that begin with “I feel sad when...” or “I feel happy when...” (Furedi, 2004: 62). These types of programs have formalized relationships between people: people are regulated in what they can and cannot say, and when they can and cannot say it. Often, the problems that face society are rewritten in the language of emotion, and our emotions are attributed as the primary cause of these problems. As such, it is becoming increasingly important to feel good about ourselves – through high self-esteem – in order to make sense of our day-to-day lives (Furedi, 2004: 25). Talking is a key component of the therapeutic process, and words are often used as a method of social control. However, this indicates that individuals who seek and/or give advice are essentially engaging in a therapeutic process (Tucker, as cited in Chriss, 1999: 74).

Furedi (2004) demonstrates that the impact of the therapeutic culture on everyday life is clearly evident through the intense concern with self-esteem. The concept of low self-esteem is often presented as a disease or illness that eliminates individuals from having complete control of their lives. Similarly, self-esteem has become a taken-for-granted component of both individual and societal problems (p. 153).

2.3g The Therapeutic Domain

On the whole, the culture of therapeutics does not merely influence individual behaviour. It also provides the cultural idiom through which groups can make sense of their predicament. The recasting of identity through the vocabulary of emotion influences individuals and groups alike (Furedi, 2004:148). As such, the ability to disclose one’s

innermost feelings and emotions will provide accurate insight into the person, allowing their behaviours and actions to be rationalized and justified. The intense concern society has for one's emotional needs has been equated to a "fetishization of the self" (Furedi, 2004: 152-153).

Just as medicalisation and labeling can be used as a form of social control, so can therapy. Therapy assumes that people are experiencing internal, emotional problems, and that by discussing them with others, these problems can be 'cured'. Deviance was once claimed to be a seemingly uncontrollable problem that could only be dealt with once the individuals' internal problems were discovered and discussed (Tucker, as cited in Chriss, 1999: 79). Thus, when people speak of their problems with others (through therapy), the root of these internal problems can be recognized, discussed, and fixed.

With the sharing of feelings, thoughts and emotions comes the blurring of the private sphere and the public sphere. The media has significantly assisted this blurring; for instance, sharing one's grief on public television is seen as 'good entertainment'. For example, many families of 'bullycide' victims have spoken publicly about the deaths of their loved ones who committed suicide as a direct result of bullying behaviour. Print media is involved as well, and can be seen in the numerous amounts of anti-bullying books that are written by 'survivors' of bullying who write about their experiences as a tormented child (Furedi, 2004: 40-44).

2.4 CONCLUSION

Institutional Theory and the Therapeutic Culture are two important lines of inquiry through which to study bullying behaviour – which is a highly topical and

relevant area that needs to be investigated. Institutional Theory allows bullying to be examined where it seems to be most prevalent: within the school system - a highly organized institution which everyone has taken part in at some point in their lives, and therefore can relate to quite easily. The Therapeutic Culture is emerging to become an overarching framework through which we facilitate our everyday lives. Essentially, Institutional Theory provides an outlet for institutional analysis, while the Therapeutic Culture provides the cultural framework for the examination of bullying behaviours.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

- 3.1a Personal Interviews: The First Source of Data
- 3.1b Sampling
- 3.1c The Interview Process
- 3.1d Analysis of the Interview Data
- 3.1e Printed Documentation: The Second Source of Data
- 3.1f Database Searches
- 3.1g Analysis of the Printed Documentation
- 3.1h Concluding Thoughts

Since this project was an exploratory case study, looking for an overview of bullying and the therapeutic culture as social phenomena within school culture, there were no populations to sample from. Furthermore, this project was designed to take an holistic and exploratory approach, given the novelty of the topic and the lack of prior research regarding the links between bullying and the therapeutic culture. However, due to its exploratory nature, there was no clearly defined population, nor was there a well-defined sampling frame to work with. Thus, the research was not driven by statistics, and qualitative methods were most appropriate for this project. Two main sources of qualitative data were utilized for this project.

3.1a Personal Interviews – The First Source of Data

The first, and primary, source of qualitative data were personal interviews, conducted with twenty-two people involved with schools from the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board and surrounding areas. These respondents included key players such as current and retired principals, vice principals, teachers, school social workers, and teachers college students. Other respondents included the mother of a bullied child, a school liaison (police) officer, the entrepreneur of an anti-bullying website, and a prominent psychologist who specializes in the bullying behaviour of youth and

adolescents. The respondents had varying degrees of affiliation with the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, some being extremely involved, or having been involved for decades, while others were only marginally involved, or had only been involved for a short period of time. However, all of the respondents were familiar with bullying, and had dealt with bullying behaviour in some manner through their position.

3.1b Sampling

The goal of this thesis was to undertake an holistic approach to garner an understanding of how schools address bullying behaviours within a therapeutic framework. Thus, there was no population to sample from, nor a well-defined sampling frame. The twenty-two respondents were primarily personal contacts that the researcher had, namely, numerous friends, family, and former teachers. Then in a ‘snowball-sample’ fashion, more contacts were acquired. Snowball-sampling involves asking respondents if they know of others who they believe would be willing to participate in the research. This sampling technique proved to be effective, as the respondents were in a better position than the researcher to identify important – and willing – individuals with whom interviews could be conducted. Upon approval of the study from McMaster University’s Research Ethics Board, the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board’s Research Ethics Board also provided the names of potential respondents, who were eventually interviewed as well¹⁰. All of the potential respondents were sent an initial

¹⁰ Originally, the data for this project was to be acquired through direct classroom observation, with the researcher appropriating a complete observer role. However, the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board’s Research Ethics Board believed that the students’ relationships with peers and adults may be jeopardized by an observer, and that the students’ status as vulnerable persons must be recognized. Therefore, they did not consent to classroom observation. However, they conceded to interviews with a principal and a social worker that they recommended and contacted. While their contacts were outstanding,

letter of information, briefly outlining the purpose of the study, the researcher's contact information, and any potential risks involved with participating. Then, if interested, the potential respondents were encouraged to contact the researcher to set up an interview. The interviews were conducted at various locations that were convenient for both the respondent and the researcher, such as coffee shops, school offices, and a police station. However, some interviews took place over the phone, and while most interviews were tape-recorded, those conducted over the phone were not. At the interviews, respondents were asked to sign a consent form, indicating their knowledge of the risks, how to withdraw from the study, and that any information they provided would remain personal and confidential.

3.1c The Interview Process

The interviews were semi-structured in nature, and consisted entirely of exploratory questions, allowing the respondent to answer as thoroughly as they deemed necessary. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview – as opposed to a fully structured interview where little deviation and probing are permitted – allowed the researcher to ask for clarification and elaboration, and to pursue other lines of inquiry as necessary. Although each interview began with a set list of questions, frequently more questions were required in order to garner complete and accurate information. Furthermore, each respondent was provided the opportunity to share any information they felt was pertinent, but that the interviewer had not asked about. All twenty-two

and the efforts of the ethics board were unparalleled, this concession did lead to downfalls in the research. Primarily, it did not allow for direct comparison between administrators' accounts and actual observation. Instead, the researcher had to rely on the observations of others. Nevertheless, the results are interesting and informative, and many concrete observations and evaluations were compiled.

interviews were conducted by the researcher. Often, the interview led to conversation, once the respondent was comfortable with the topic and with the interviewer. The interviews varied in length; the shortest was approximately twenty minutes, and the longest was over one and a half hours. The majority of the interviews were tape-recorded (upon consent of the respondent), and transcribed verbatim at a later date. The interviews took place between November 2004 and June 2005.

Of the interview questions that were structured, they were designed to holistically explore the links between bullying, schools as institutions, and the therapeutic culture. The questioning began by asking respondents if they believe bullying to be a problem, and if so, how prevalent of a problem. This led to questions regarding the definition of bullying (for example, how a school or school board defines bullying), and whether or not the respondent was involved with, or had any knowledge regarding, anti-bullying programs. Questions regarding anti-bullying training followed (for example, whether teachers and principals had attended any seminars or workshops regarding bullying or anti-bullying initiatives), as well as questions regarding bullying intervention (for example, how the teacher dealt with bullying in the classroom, how the school dealt with bullies and victims, or how social workers dealt with bullies or victims). Ultimately, the questions were designed to be broad and exploratory, with the end goal of addressing the proposed hypotheses: Schools will implement programs of a therapeutic nature as opposed to using a traditional punitive approach, and anti-bullying programs are made culturally meaningful through the use of the therapeutic culture. A complete list of the interview questions can be found in Appendix 3.

3.1d Analysis of the Interview Data

Once an interview was conducted, it was transcribed verbatim. Field notes accented each interview, and were interwoven throughout the transcribed interview, in order to provide a greater and more accurate picture of the interview as a whole. The researcher/interviewer transcribed all of the interviews personally. Once all twenty-two interviews had been transcribed, some common themes, or frames, became apparent. Thus, the interviews were coded into three main sections, with numerous subcategories for each. The three main sections consisted of Institutional Theory, the Therapeutic Culture, and Bullying (as a general frame).

Within the first category – Institutional Theory – six subcategories were created. These categories included Discretion (e.g. the amount of leeway that teachers and principals have when deciding how to discipline a student), Suspension (e.g. whether or not zero-tolerance policies are adhered to directly, and how often bullying behaviour results in a student's removal from the class or school setting), Language (e.g. how the concept of bullying is taught to students, how students are taught to resolve conflicts, and terminology or 'buzz words' that are often utilized but do not always have their meanings explained to students), Experts (e.g. anti-bullying experts, and the use of social workers within the schools), Recess (e.g. when problems occur most, and the reasons for this phenomenon), and Resources (e.g. what is available for the schools to utilize, and what should be available or implemented).

Within the second coding category – Therapeutic Culture – the four subcategories included Talk Therapy (e.g. teaching students how to talk about their problems, and share

their stories), Social Skills Programs (e.g. integrated programs such as “Lions Quest”, or “CHAT”, as well as general social skills education, such as teaching politeness, respect, or consideration), Social Workers (e.g. what are their roles within the school, and what are their roles in terms of bullies and victims), and Alternative Education Programs (e.g. how are students entered into alternative education programs, how do the programs work, and how are students re-integrated into mainstream, or traditional, school settings after completion of the program).

Finally, the third coding category – Bullying – included ten subcategories. These categories included: Anti-Bullying Programs (e.g. “Respect-ED”, and “Second Step”), High Profile and Legal Cases (e.g. bullying incidents that have had legal ramifications, and bullying that has lead to high-profile suicides), Teacher Training (e.g. in-service training, and training in teachers’ college), Types of Bullying Behaviour (e.g. physical, verbal, social, emotional, etc.), Definitions of Bullying (e.g. each school, board and district, as well as each individual define bullying differently), School Shootings (e.g. why are bullying and school shootings often talked about simultaneously, and how have school shootings contributed to the emerging interest in bullying), Media (e.g. how bullying is portrayed in the media – both print and visual), Parental Influence (e.g. how parents affect their children’s behaviour, in both positive and negative ways), Statistics (e.g. interesting numerical representations of the prevalence and frequency of bullying behaviour), and Prevalence (e.g. within schools, and within society, as well as differing views of how prevalent bullying behaviours actually are).

3.1e Printed Documentation – The Second Source of Data

To complement the interview data, and truly allow for a holistic overview of the bullying phenomenon, a second source of qualitative data was acquired through published documentation. These documents were collected over the course of research, and included information from academic journals, newspaper and other print articles, two anti-bullying conferences that the researcher participated in, anti-bullying websites, and documents available from the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, and other boards of education under the Ontario Ministry of Education's umbrella. This data allowed for a much broader overview of anti-bullying programs, and for a direct comparison between the interview data and the printed documentation. The Ministry publishes an abundance of data, including all of their policies and procedures regarding anti-violence initiatives, zero-tolerance policies, and general anti-bullying information. Materials published by the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board, the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, and the Human Rights Commission were collected from online sources. These materials are officially published to be used by administrators and educators within any publicly funded school in Ontario, but are also publicly available via the world wide web. These documents included policy documents, procedural recommendations, and disciplinary codes. They were examined for their definitions of bullying behaviour, and any policies or procedures pertaining to school violence, such as zero-tolerance policies, suspension and expulsion policies. Within Ontario, the Ministry of Education governs all public schools and Catholic schools, but other religious schools, alternative schools and private

schools do not fall under the same policies and procedures. Therefore, this study is only applicable to those schools which are mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

3.1f Database Searches

In order to gather other print resources for this project, many database searches were undertaken. A few of these searches are worth noting. The first was to gather academic articles that had been published on the topic of bullying for the purpose of documenting the rise of the bullying phenomenon. Through the McMaster University Library website, the Sociology Index e-resources provided an avenue of inquiry. Using the search engine, and a Boolean search to find “bully or bullies or bully*” within Title of Article, 1354 articles were found (once removing any duplicates). The titles and abstracts of all 1354 articles were scoured, and many of these articles – all that seemed applicable or unique – were downloaded and read by the researcher to provide a thorough literature review, as well as much other data that is provided throughout this project. Furthermore, as the researcher examined these articles, it became apparent that the majority of them had been published only recently, with almost half of the 1354 being published between the year 2000 and the year 2004 (655 had been published within these five years). The results of this search were then plotted on a line graph (see Introduction), however the year 2005 was omitted from the graph, as the search was undertaken early in the year, and the results would not have been indicative of the number of journals to be published over the course of the full year. A more thorough explanation of the graph itself can be found in the Introduction, and the raw data can be found in Appendix 4.

The results of this search proved intriguing, and another search was undertaken to further document the rise of the bullying phenomenon. Using the search tool found online at the web-page www.amazon.com, a Title search was undertaken to find out how many books had been published with the word “bully” in the title. The search resulted in 456 books, ranging in date from 1920 to 2005. Only one of these books was published in 1920, and the next most recent publication year was 1984. 142 of these books did not have a publication date. These results were also plotted on a line graph (see Introduction), however books published in 1920 and 2005 were excluded, as were the 142 books with no publication date, thus leaving the total plotted at 287 books published between 1984 and 2004. Over half of these books (165) were published between 2001 and 2004. The graph itself, along with a more thorough explanation of it, can be found in the Introduction, and the raw data can be found in Appendix 5.

Also of note were the database searches that did *not* prove useful to the project. The researcher attempted to conduct newspaper article database searches, to see if the number of articles regarding bullying behaviour had increased in a similar fashion to that of the academic journal articles, and published books. However, the search engines for the newspapers were not as thorough as the Sociology Index database, or the Amazon database. Many of the articles that resulted from the newspaper database search were not about bullying at all; some did not even have the word “bully” in the article, but the database had mistaken another word for the word bully. (Often, this was due to the poor quality of the actual printed newspaper that had been scanned into the database. Thus, the electronic database registered words such as “billy” or “ball”, and included those terms in

the search for “bully”). Thus, these newspaper article searches were never completed, as the process was too arduous and time consuming. The researcher could not verify if the newspaper articles followed the same trends as books and academic journal articles (however, she does believe that it would be the case as well, and that similar charts and graphs would have ensued, had the search engines been more accessible and provided more correct data).

3.1g Analysis of the Printed Documentation

During the data gathering stage, it became apparent to the researcher that there is no single, clear-cut, definition of what bullying is. Thus, a catalogue of definitions was compiled, which directly compares over eighty different definitions of bullying (see Appendix 2). These definitions came from all sources of data: journal articles, web sites, policy documents, newspaper articles, and so on. Any source of information providing a definition of bullying was included, whether it was academic or not. This chart (see Appendix 2) clearly demonstrates the ambiguity of existing definitions of bullying, which must be noted when discussing how bullying behaviour is dealt with within the school system. For example, in order to address bullying within a school, the question “what is bullying?” must be answered first. However, since the definitions differ greatly, it hampers solutions from being formed, and does not allow for one program or intervention to deal with or eliminate bullying behaviour. For a more thorough examination of the repercussions of the broad and ambiguous definition of bullying, see Chapter 4, on How Schools Respond to Bullying.

Once compiled, these definitions were then coded into eleven categories: Verbal Bullying (e.g. name calling and teasing), Physical Bullying (e.g. hitting and kicking), Emotional Bullying (e.g. belittling, or “emotional aggression”), Social Bullying (e.g. social exclusion), Psychological Bullying (e.g. bullying that affects one’s psychological status or identity, or lowers one’s self-esteem), Power Imbalance (e.g. size or age differences), Deliberate Behaviour (e.g. intended to harm, or directed at a certain individual), Repeated Behaviour (e.g. more than a one-time incident), Discriminatory Behaviour (e.g. racism, or sexist behaviour), Direct Bullying (e.g. face-to-face), and Indirect Bullying (e.g. gossip, or “behind someone’s back”). Each definition was then examined to determine how many of the eleven categories it contained, and the prevalence of each category were then compiled into a bar graph (see Chapter 4, diagram 3, for graph). Physical Bullying is the category most prevalent among the definitions (at 88 %), and Discrimination is the least prevalent (with only 10% of definitions including Discrimination). In order from most prevalent to least prevalent, the categories are: Physical Bullying, Verbal Bullying, Power Imbalance, Repeated Behaviour, Social Bullying, Deliberate Behaviour, Psychological Bullying, Emotional Bullying, Indirect, Direct, and Discrimination (yielding, respectively: 88 %, 71 %, 58 %, 56 %, 42 %, 37 %, 30 %, 27 %, 17 %, 16 %, and 10 %).

3.1h Concluding Thoughts

The qualitative methods utilized for this project proved to be extremely useful. The statistical information available in published academic articles demonstrated such inconsistencies, and demonstrated the need for a qualitative, holistic, and exploratory

study. The exploratory nature of this study demonstrates the need for future investigation, and demonstrates an emerging therapeutic culture, which would not have been observed by a more statistically inclined, or evaluative study. The interviews situated the minimal amount of existing data, and provided an arena to explore many previously unexplored areas of bullying behaviours, specifically in relation to the emerging therapeutic culture, as well as in relation to the tenets of institutional theory. Combined with the printed documentation, a very thorough and holistic exploratory analysis was completed. The data garnered is probably generalizable to other schools and districts across Canada, since other boards are enduring similar experiences. It is also arguably generalizable to other social problem phenomena, and not limited merely to understanding the links between Institutional Theory, the Therapeutic Culture, and Bullying Behaviours.

CHAPTER 4 – HOW SCHOOLS RESPOND TO BULLYING

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4.5 CONCLUSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

While the concept of bullying has always been around, it has only recently been discussed as a social problem. Even though it is recognized more frequently than it has been in the past, it is unclear whether it is actually more prevalent. This increased recognition stems from the growing amount of media attention, academic focus, and other literature which is focusing more on bullying than ever before. As discussions of bullying become more prevalent, bullying behaviours themselves *appear* to be more prevalent. The result is that organizations such as schools are called upon to address the issue, and they must prove to their constituents that they are doing everything in their power to address the problem in order to retain support and maintain legitimacy.

However, schools face numerous organizational constraints when they attempt to expand their purview to address social problems. Some of these organizational constraints include: the ambiguous definition of bullying, the perceived prevalence of the problem, interpreting the definition of the bullying and implementing it into the existing curriculum, socializing children's behaviours, and working in a loosely coupled system. In response to these organizational constraints, schools have to respond structurally. Some of these structural responses include expanding the existing definition of bullying to fit schools' needs, symbolically conforming to the needs and desires of their institutional environment by dealing with issues they consider pertinent, using a loosely coupled system, and addressing concerns through culturally appealing responses. This appeal stems from the cultural frame that surrounds bullying behaviour; namely, the therapeutic cultural frame. This frame provides the structural responses with meaning and resonance. For example, creating an empathetic culture, using social skills programs, and imbuing students with increased self esteem are indicators of the expanding therapeutic cultural frame, and simultaneously, they serve to justify the schools' structural responses.

This chapter substantiates the following arguments: (1) The therapeutic culture is the frame for these new practices, as opposed to a traditional punitive approach; (2) This culture is slowly changing the approach of the educational system when dealing with social problems education, in that traditional measures of effectiveness are replaced by a therapeutic framework, as opposed to an instructional framework; (3) A cultural – and pedagogical – shift is occurring to focus on more diffuse learning goals such as social

problems education, and an emotional approach to learning, and; (4) Schools respond to their institutional environment, and implement structural responses that are loosely coupled with their practices.

4.2 ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Schools face many organizational constraints when they attempt to expand their purview and address purported social problems. Specifically, as schools attempt to address bullying, they face constraints such as interpreting the definition of the problem, implementing it into their established curriculum, and working within a loosely coupled system.

4.2a Definitional Ambiguity

Bullying and school violence have been common terms heard for years in schools all over the world. Recently, these terms have entered the mainstream, as media, parental groups, and social policy organizations have appropriated them into their day-to-day language. Newscasters report accounts of children being bullied by their peers, horrific school shooting events (where perpetrators often claim to be a victim of bullying), co-workers bullying one another at their place of employment, and even teachers being bullied by their students. While reports of bullying in schools are on the rise, so are the number of definitions of bullying.

While most claims of bullying behaviour are accompanied by a definition of bullying, there is no single prevailing definition. For example, in some definitions, typical daily aggression, such as teasing, is left out, while more violent acts, such as stabbings, shootings, and rapes are added to the definition (Duncan, 2001). Furthermore,

the literature that is available on bullying behaviours often use differing operationalizations, and differing strategies for the measurement and assessment (Bosworth et al., 1999: 43). This ambiguity leads researchers studying the prevalence of bullying to conclusions that are inconsistent with one another.

In order to measure the occurrence of bullying behaviour, not only is a consistent definition required, but also an operational definition. An operational definition provides a set of procedures or actions that are specific indicators, allowing for the instances of bullying to be counted (Best, 2002: 54). However, broad, inclusive, and ambiguous definitions do no such thing. To researchers this is problematic, and can significantly affect the results of one's study. However, to school boards, policy makers, or media pundits, this can be beneficial. If the purpose is to make bullying behaviours seem as widespread as possible, than a broad, inclusive definition is favourable: the more behaviours that fit into the definition, the more problematic bullying becomes. On the other hand, a specific, or limited definition of bullying does not allow flexibility, and does not allow claims-makers to assert bullying behaviours to be as rampant as they currently claim (Best, 2002).

Definitional ambiguity is most likely both a cause and a consequence of loose coupling. Diffuse and expansive definitions create difficulty for clearly assessing and demonstrating the effectiveness of a program. Combined with the vagueness or 'fuzziness' of the therapeutic cultural frame, programs encompassing ambiguous definitions of bullying that include therapeutic or emotional terminology are extremely difficult to assess for effectiveness. Thus, the definitional ambiguity *causes* loose

coupling as it ensures that programs and initiatives cannot be evaluated or scrutinized. On the other hand, definitional ambiguity is caused *by* loose coupling, because as organizations evolve, they create vague, diffuse, and expansive goals. For example, as schools and members of the therapeutic culture (such as social workers) join forces in an attempt to reduce bullying behaviour, the goals of each organization must come together as well. However, as the goals are combined, they become much more ambiguous and much broader. Thus, the goals of the organization are loosely coupled with their outcomes.

For example, in the fall of 2003, the Halton Public School Board published their definition of bullying. The definition, which can be found in Appendix 2, includes verbal bullying (such as name calling), physical bullying (such as hitting or kicking), emotional bullying (such as belittling or ‘emotional aggression’), social bullying (such as excluding or ostracizing), psychological bullying (called ‘psychological aggression’), involves a power imbalance between the perpetrator and victim, is both a deliberate and a repeated action, and includes both discrimination and direct bullying (face-to-face bullying). This expansive definition includes many actions that students engage in frequently. By having a broad definition, students have the ability to claim that they are being bullied frequently, as most actions – even those that are innocent in intent – can be defined as bullying behaviour. Furthermore, the school board can claim that bullying behaviours are rampant, and may be able to institute more policies, gain more funding, or receive more resources because of it.

On the other hand, Hawker and Boulton define bullying as “the experience among children of being a target of the aggressive behaviour of other children, who are not siblings and not necessarily agemates” (2000: 441). This definition does not include the majority of the concepts that the Halton Public School Board’s definition includes. Many behaviours that would be considered bullying by the Halton Public School Board would not be considered bullying by Hawker and Boulton. This demonstrates how crucial the definition of bullying is when determining what bullying behaviours exactly are.

What is included – or excluded – from definitions of bullying behaviour can determine how the results are compiled, and what the ensuing statistics demonstrate. Qualitative questionnaires regarding the prevalence of bullying behaviour are often distributed to school children, and the results from these questionnaires compiled into quantitative measures. However, if a question were to read “how frequently are you bullied” the respondent’s answer will be dependent on both the definition of ‘bullying’, and the definition of ‘frequently’. Furthermore, the respondent’s definitions of bullying and frequency may differ from the researcher’s definition of the two terms. The interpretation of the two terms could greatly affect the results of the study, and the statistical outcomes that follow.

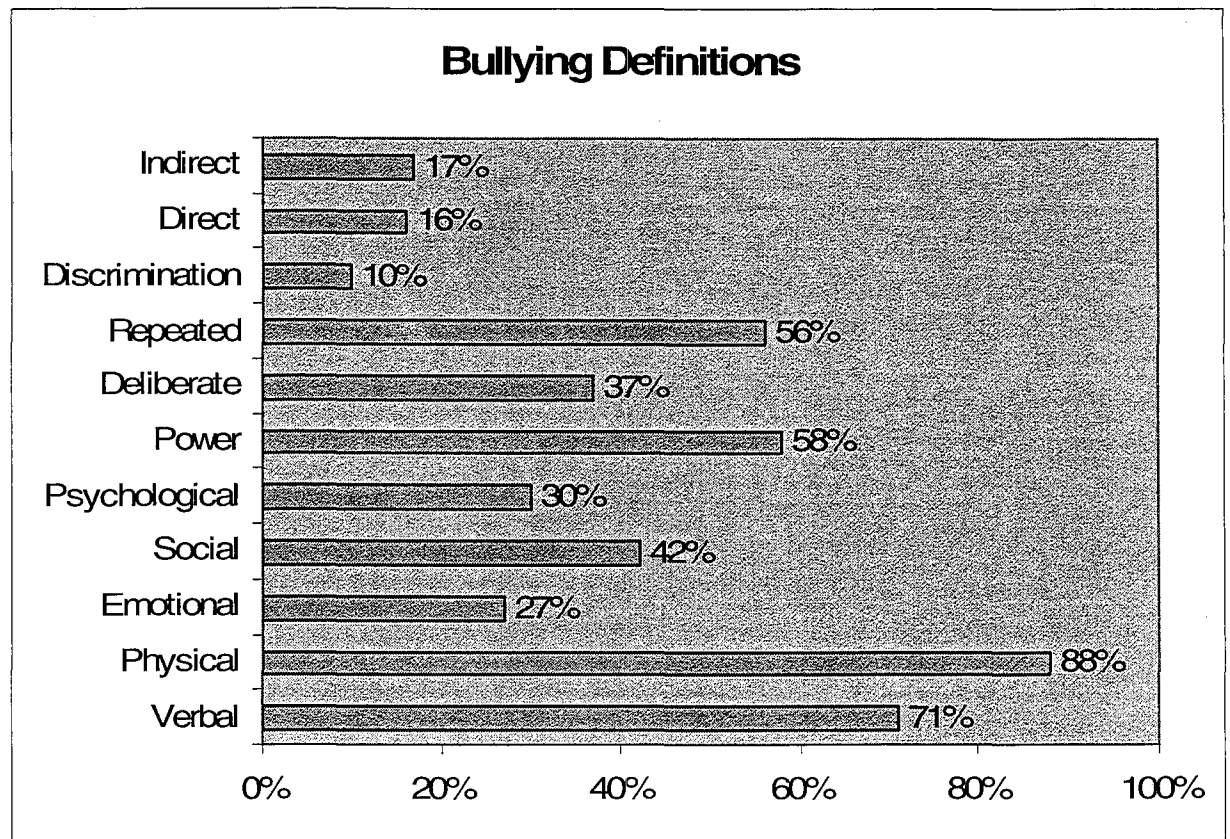
Interestingly, in an analysis of over eighty definitions of bullying, no two definitions were the same (see Appendix 2). Each definition varied greatly from the next, with each incorporating unique combinations of eleven actions that are said to constitute bullying. These eleven actions are outlined in Chart 2 below.

Table 2: Eleven Actions that Constitute Bullying

Eleven Actions that Constitute Bullying	
<i>Action</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
Verbal Harassment	Teasing; Taunting; Name Calling; Threatening
Physical Harassment	Hitting; Kicking; Punching; Spitting; Locking inside a room; Pushing; Shoving
Emotional Harassment	Inducing: Stress; Anxiety; Depression; Fear
Social Harassment	Gossip; Exclusion from group; Being ignored; Spreading rumours; Manipulation of relationships or friendships
Psychological Harassment	Loss of Self-Esteem; Intimidation; Torment; Extortion
Use of Power	Imbalance caused by: Age; Gender; Status; Grade; Ability
Deliberate Action	Intentional; Aimed at specific person; Meant to cause harm or distress
Repeated Action	Occurs over a long time; not a one-time event
Discriminatory Action	Through racism or sexism; or about: Sexuality; Race; Gender; Ethnicity; Class; Social status; Ability; or Disability
Direct	Face-to-face bullying
Indirect	Behind the back; Cyber-bullying

Not every definition includes every action; however, some include more than others.

After each definition was coded according to indicator and action (as discussed previously within Chapter 3), the variations between definitions were obvious. Of the eleven actions, physical harassment was the most frequently mentioned within the definitions (88 %), with verbal harassment as a close second (71 %). Discriminatory actions were the least likely to be mentioned, with only 10 % of the definitions including it. The following chart clearly demonstrates the variations between definitions, which leads to the amorphous nature of the definition of bullying.

DIAGRAM 3

Of note is the expansion of the definition into both non-physical and non-verbal realms.

This expansion makes it more challenging to address bullying behaviours within schools: non-physical and non-verbal forms of bullying are extremely difficult to recognize, they are difficult to teach due to their intangible nature, and they are harder to address through programs, let alone through technology¹¹. This expansion is a result of the overarching therapeutic culture, and demonstrates its emerging dominance.

¹¹ Within organizational theory, the term *technology* does not necessarily imply machinery or equipment; instead, it is about procedures for attaining goals, increasing productivity, and creating formalized systems or methodologies for goal attainment and supervision (Monahan et al, 1994, in Scott et al. 1994).

When bullying is talked about, most often the assumption is that the bullying behaviour is physical. The most prevalent types discussed in the bullying literature – both academic and non-academic – are physical, verbal, social and psychological. The most recent types of bullying to be acknowledged and discussed are those relating to the therapeutic culture; namely social, emotional, and psychological bullying. These types of bullying behaviour have been recognized as a result of the infiltration of a therapeutic ethos. As that ethos gains dominance within the culture typical behaviours are viewed through a therapeutic framework. The different types of bullying were explained well by a high school principal:

You know there's bullying – rumour mongering is a form of bullying, looks, stares are forms of bullying, there's aggressive bullying, non-aggressive bullying, there's internet chat line ... it goes on and on. So, the kids know – the kids should know.

Physical bullying is the most widely discussed – within both the bullying literature and within schools themselves – because it is the easiest type of bullying to relate to, and therefore, it is the easiest type of bullying to teach. One elementary school teacher discussed the recognisability of physical bullying, as opposed to other types:

It's the one that they can relate to most because all of them have had scraped knees and all of them can associate, you know, a kick to the knee as being the same sort of pain. It's something very, very solid in their perceptions. They ... they ... it really goes down to their primal instincts: don't be hurt. So their primal instincts, don't deal with, you know, don't cry. They don't deal with, you know, don't let somebody make fun of you. Because it doesn't actually threaten their physical being.

Frequently, students only recognize bullying as such when it deals with physical violence. This idea is further demonstrated through a statement made by one respondent, an elementary school teacher:

A lot of students haven't learned before what non-verbal bullying, or what non-physical bullying, whether that's verbal, or even just standing in an intimidating way in the hallway. And there's, there are lots of ways to bully. It's a very resourceful community.

Some schools, however, do teach different types of bullying behaviour. Often, as indicated in the interview excerpt below, children are surprised to learn that activities they are engaging in are actually considered to be bullying behaviours:

We talked about the 3 types of bullying ... physical, verbal and relational. We are very clear that things other than physical is bullying. As a matter of fact I've had some conversations with girls particularly on relational bullying, and they are absolutely devastated – not only shocked, but devastated – to think that they are bullies for leaving this person out.

It is truly intriguing to note that until bullying is pointed out to people it is often not recognized as such. This further demonstrates the vague and expanding nature of the definition. Relational, or social, bullying is the second most prevalently discussed type of bullying behaviour. Relational aggression is often associated with females, while physical aggression is associated with males. For example, one social worker that was interviewed stated that:

Male aggression, male bullying, looks quite different from female aggression or female bullying. So the majority of the bullying that either we see or we hear about – because kids will come forward and report about it – you know is, certainly you have the physical aggression, you have the verbal aggression, the teasing, the name-

calling, the disrespect. Boys tend to be much more outward than the girls.

Furthermore, a retired principal that was interviewed demonstrated that there was a difference in the bullying actions between males and females, and the social actions of females were often more challenging to deal with than the physical actions of males:

Particularly the girls, and the exclusionary way that they bully, was a very big issue when I was a middle school principal. A very big issue... The boys are more overt, it was, you know, Billy is stealing my recess money, or something like that. So that's different. What I found very insidious and very difficult to deal with was the girls. The tactics of the girls, the exclusionary tactics of the girls. And it seemed... it was just a much bigger issue for me, than it was for what happened with the boys ... And that's part of the difference between the girls and the boys, is the girls it's very underground, and the girls, it's very difficult to put your finger on it, because it's not like person A went over and slugged person B, or spit on him or stomped him or something like that. It's, you know, I call up 3 of my friends and tell them a story about person C and then those friends tell those friends and then those friends tell those friends, and you know... that is worse.

The newest form of bullying has been dubbed 'cyber-bullying' by researchers. As technology increases, so do the methods of bullying. Cyber-bullying is committed when individuals use electronics such as cell phones or the Internet to threaten and harass their peers. Through the use of text messages, instant messaging, pictures, and web pages, individuals are able to harass their peers quickly, easily, and anonymously. Many victims may never know the identity of their harasser, thus allowing for the bully's behaviour to go un-disciplined¹². As the types of bullying behaviour increase, the definition of bullying becomes more expansive. This also means that schools will have to address all

¹² Retrieved on 28 April 2005 at <http://www.bullyingawarenessnetwork.ca/site/php?page=news>

of the types of bullying behaviour – not just physical bullying – which poses a serious organizational constraint.

Many respondents that were interviewed for this study stated that the lack of a clear-cut definition led to further problems for administrators, students, and parents alike. For example, one respondent who is part of an anti-bullying school program, said that in order to have an effect on bullying, there must be one definition, and that definition must be integrated into the schools, and accessible to the students:

And even some of the definitions, you really need to ... I mean it ... it boggles my mind sometimes how there can be so many versions of a dictionary. I mean, shouldn't they all be the same, like if it's one word? [laughter] Shouldn't you have all the definitions in one spot? Because even, like um, "fair", you know if you're looking at Webster's Dictionary it will say a great definition, but if you look in another dictionary it's different, so it's really important to have sort of up to date definitions, and current, and make, and put it in current language for them as well. Because if it's just a whole bunch of jargon that somebody at Harvard came up with it's not gonna make any sort of effect, any change within the child if they don't integrate it, if they can't understand the word.

Congruent with the above response, a vice-principal stated that:

first of all, bullying really needs to be defined. What is it. Because some people think "well, it's just kids being kids". No, it's not ... I think the whole thing "what is bullying" needs to be defined. Maybe the Ministry [of Education] needs to do that for us, or maybe they need to have a study or a committee that [pause] like we all need to be on the same page so that we all understand what it is, so that filters down and the parents understand what it is. So there's, because a lot of time, well, that's not bullying to the parents. And for other parents it is bullying.

These responses indicate that those working within the schools – regardless of the manner – believe that the existing definitions are broad and ambiguous, and need to be refined and clarified into one concrete, consistent definition before anything can be done to

address the situation. However, if schools and school boards were to create one overarching, concrete and consistent definition, they would not be able to employ loose coupling – as discussed further later in this chapter – and would instead have to employ a more tightly coupled system, which would pose many more challenges.

Another example that demonstrates the need for one clear-cut definition of bullying occurred during an interview with a teacher, whose co-worker entered the office during the interview. The two teachers began discussing whether or not bullying occurred within their school. The first teacher – my respondent – (“T₁”) did not believe that bullying occurred in the school, while the second teacher (“T₂”) believed that it did, though both teachers worked in the same department, and were situated closely within the one school. The following conversation occurred:

T₂: But I see the typical character, like even the boys who sit along the gully, and all the girls walk by and everything like that. And they're like cat-calling and whistling and everything like that. Some girls feel very uncomfortable being down on the first floor.

T₁: Right, but would you define that as bullying?

T₂: If they do it constantly, and the girl says to stop, please don't do it, and they still do it.

T₁: Well, yes...

T₂: It depends on the definition.

T₁: Well, yah. See, my interpretation of bullying is that every lunch period finding that one kid that you just want to pick on relentlessly for no reason.

Interestingly, this difference may have been a result of the anti-bullying training that each teacher had received. Upon further questioning, it was revealed that T₂ had participated in many anti-bullying workshops, and was referred to as the ‘bullying expert’ within that school. Their opinions regarding the prevalence of bullying behaviours may have

differed due to multiple reasons; specifically, inconsistent definitions of bullying, and exposure to anti-bullying initiatives.

4.2b The Prevalence of Bullying Behaviour

The actual prevalence of bullying is difficult to decipher partly due to the vague and expanding definitions of the behaviours. Although the *topics* of school violence and bullying behaviours are prevalent, there is much debate surrounding whether or not bullying behaviours themselves are *actually* more prevalent than in the past. While advocates of anti-bullying programs claim bullying is increasingly prevalent, those working within the schools believe that it is not as prevalent as claimed. Regardless of the actual prevalence, if the institutional environment perceives bullying to be prevalent then the school must comply by addressing the perceived problem, or by claiming to address the perceived problem.

Since those behaviours defined as ‘bullying’ are often covert, include non-physical and non-verbal forms, and predominantly take place in areas with little supervision, it is often difficult to evaluate the prevalence of bullying behaviours through direct observation. Thus, the most reliable means of ascertaining the prevalence of bullying behaviours is through student questionnaires (Olweus 1991; 1992; 1993). However, when these questionnaires are examined, they are often found to have relatively few questions that address the magnitude of bullying behaviours among students (Colvin et al., 1998: 297-298).

Furthermore, student and teacher reports of bullying behaviour are frequently inconsistent with one another. Students often believe that adults will either not help them

or, if they do help, they will be ineffective, or even cause more bullying to occur.

Similarly, in two studies, teachers reported that they responded to bullying behaviour with a greater frequency than students reported their involvement (Meraviglia et al., 2003: 1349). Therefore, the actual prevalence of bullying behaviour is difficult to decipher, which is a significant organizational constraint for schools. A school social worker proclaimed that it is difficult to evaluate whether bullying is more prevalent now than it was in the past:

Yah, it's really hard because I mean, 20 years ago, it wasn't measured a whole lot, and even now I mean the definitions of bullying are changing. So it's really hard to do a comparison – a measure 10 years ago, and a measure now. I think in the field, there's certainly a sense that when kids are bullying that it's more aggressive. It's more harmful. It's more damaging. And so I think that there's that sensitivity, because of that it's a bigger problem. Whether or not ... I don't know if it's more prevalent. We certainly think about it more, we talk about it more, kids talk about it, parents talk about it.

Most of the respondents who were interviewed did not believe that bullying is any more prevalent now than it was in the past. Like the definition of bullying, the prevalence of bullying is ambiguous as well. For example, one teacher responded that:

Respondent: *I don't think it's any bigger of a problem, than, I mean, when we were in school. I think people just make a bigger deal out of it.*

Interviewer: *So, you don't think it's changed?*

Respondent: *I don't think it's changed [hesitatingly], I don't think it's changed. I don't know about you, but I was bullied, I remember being bullied ... I never even actually said anything about it.*

Similarly, a psychologist explained that

in some ways it has and in some ways it hasn't [changed]. I think that bullying has always been there, in fact there's books from the 1800s that depict bullying episodes that are very similar to what we see today. I think that girls probably are more violent – physically violent –

towards each other than they have every been, in recorded history. But, that's the only thing that's changed. I think that boys are doing what they've always done, and girls are doing what they've always done, with the exception of now being more physical. The one sort of, I guess nuance to all of this is that we haven't had the internet, we haven't had computers and text messaging so that's sort of a new phase of bullying.

The above quotes clearly demonstrate that those working within schools do not believe that bullying behaviours are more prevalent than in the past, even if they are framed as such. Similarly, Richard Hazler, a professor at Ohio University who specializes in counsellor education, claims that bullying behaviours are not more prevalent than they have been in the past, but the emphasis on violence, and methods of violence have changed. Furthermore, in an article written by Caldwell (1997) Hazler claims that:

Twenty to 30 years ago, violence was a fistfight in schools. What makes news today is who was caught with a knife, who brought a gun to school, who shot someone. It's an escalation of the degree of violence rather than the number of simple aggressive acts ...

Many respondents made statements similar to Hazler's. Furthermore, many claimed that the perceived prevalence has stemmed from the media, and highly publicized acts of violence. The media has played a major role in the perception of bullying behaviours. Many graphic accounts of the ramifications of bullying behaviours have been portrayed by the media, which has incited us to pay more attention to bullying and its consequences (Boulton & Hawker, 1997: 61). These media accounts have led to perceptions that school violence is a national crisis, and that it is a much greater problem than it actually is. Often, tragic events and the media portrayal of them have disguised the trend that

violence in schools has actually *decreased* in recent years (Best 2002: 52). For example, a school social worker stated that:

these big incidents that have happened; the shootings have had an enormous impact on schools. I think since Columbine, bullying has been much more front and center. It's had to be. And I think also we're just more aware... there are more people doing research on it. I think with the suicides that have happened to those kids has focussed people's attention on it ... none of us are sure that there's any more of it going on now, it's just that we're much more aware of it. And more of it's being reported, so it appears that there's more.

Similarly, another school social worker stated that:

Without a doubt in my mind, it's the deaths of kids who have killed themselves, who have implicated, who have said "oh I can't taking being bullied anymore". I think then it's the adults who have had a whole lot of experience of bullying in their own life, and as a collective they're reflecting and saying "god, that went on and that was terrible". I think there's an increasing sensitivity in society to the damage and the harm of violence ...

Furthermore, inaccurate perceptions and exaggerated portrayals of violence have led to situations where child's play is viewed as violence. For example, one elementary school principal indicated that:

the media has played a huge role in kind of exaggerating the violence that's going on, really kind of cranking the heat in that department for the media. And then I think we've had some really sad situations happen in the [United] States that again the media's got a hold of and they've blown them right up. You know, I've got a huge heart too, they were terrible situations. But, I think because of that words now mean so much. You know, shooting with cops and robbers when we were kids, you never thought twice about it.

As media portrayals of school violence – such as school shootings or gang-related violence – become more prevalent, other types of violence, such as bullying, come into

the limelight: when the media picked up on these high profile cases, then parents, school officials, and concerned citizens started talking about bullying¹³.

Similarly, there have been more lawsuits, and more media accounts of legal action taken by bullies and their victims. Increased litigation against schools as a result of bullying behaviours has stemmed from a combination of factors. Public concern, academic research, media interest, and individual rights are the primary factors (Ananiadou & Smith, 2002: 484). Recently, it has become common practice for adults, especially British adults, to sue their schools for bullying that they endured during their school years¹⁴. However, the expenses incurred from these lawsuits often makes schools reluctant to fight cases, and so they often resort to out-of-court settlements. Yet, this strategy has spurred *more* litigation against schools and other public institutions (Furedi, 2004: 186). Some other high profile examples were explained by a respondent during an interview:

In Anchorage Alaska there was a really big law suit. You know how all the time parents are saying “we’re going to sue”, well it’s starting to happen now. In June of this year, so June 2003, a judge in Anchorage Alaska ordered that a family be paid 4.5 million dollars because their son was so badly harassed ... bullied. Their son tried to commit suicide because he was bullied so much, but he was unsuccessful. Now, he’s being fed through a tube while his mother is changing his diapers. The judge said that the school failed to help the child. The school said something like “well, we went to a

¹³ Many groups and committees have also been formed as a result of inaccurate perceptions of violence that are presented by the media. For example, in the year 2002, two citizens of Hamilton, Ontario, approached the city with their concerns regarding the increase of media reports about bullying behaviours. These two citizens were so concerned with the increased media reports, that they decided to donate a large sum of money for the city to begin research on methods to alleviate bullying with Hamilton (Bullying Prevention and Intervention).

¹⁴ In one case, the complainant claimed that the bullying he had endured as a child made him anxious, depressed and suicidal, greatly affecting his personality. In a settlement, the complainant was awarded £30,000. Similarly, in 1998, a £100,000 out-of-court settlement was reached in the case of a teacher claiming that the headmistress of the school bullied him into a nervous breakdown.

conference!” but the judge said “show me”. He said that what the school was doing was not right; it wasn’t doing anything. So, he made the school board pay \$1 million, and the insurance company for the school paid the other \$3.5 million. I mean, when the US sneezes, Canada catches cold. Cases like this are happening in Canada, just not in such large amounts. The US always pays bigger in law suits. In Vancouver, there was just a case too. A boy was chased by three other boys, and he fell and had a heart attack. He was only like 14 or 15. The family is now suing because of it.

Similar sentiments came from an interview with a Police Liaison Officer:

I don’t think it’s new. There has always been a power imbalance between people of all shapes, sizes, talents and abilities. This doesn’t exist only in school. It exists in schools, in the workplace, at homes, and in society. But, the attention to bullying came partly from our litigious society. People are always worried about being sued. Just a short time ago, the Halton Board was sued as a result of bullying. The victim sued the school. The victim had been bounced around, and not really dealt with. They ended up winning. Things like that situation lead people to be paranoid, and to really take every effort to make sure they don’t get sued, and they don’t have to go through a similar situation. There are also links to suicide. This is a new development as well. More and more kids are committing suicide as a result of bullying, and it’s being talked about a lot in the media ... There is also a greater awareness, through not only the media, but also through researchers such as yourself. Bullying has always been there, it’s always been everywhere.

These legal cases are frequently repeated in the media. Some others can be seen in Appendix 6. The increase in litigation against schools is one component leading bullying to appear more prevalent than it actually is, and may be part of the reason that schools want to be seen as though they are ‘doing something’ to tackle bullying behaviour. If they are able to convey the image that they are taking care of the problem, they may reduce the number of legal suits against them.

The media has also reported numerous tragic cases of handicapped children being harassed, children having to leave school for fear of further victimization, and even

committing murder as a result of bullying (Lane 1989: 211). High profile suicide cases have made bullying a dramatic social problem. Seeing children resort to taking their own lives because of the bullying they have endured has led to calls among academics, parents, and educators that something must be done (Vaillancourt, 2004: 14). Kingman (1994) reported that there are almost a dozen children's suicides per year caused by the stress of being bullied (p. 18). During our interview, one respondent explained that bullying has received such attention because of high profile cases such as teenage suicides, and school shootings:

I'd probably bet one of my last dollars on the fact that bullying is such a hot topic because so many children killed themselves over being bullied. And when the media picked up on these high profile cases, then we started talking about bullying. So I think that Columbine, in 1999, had a huge effect on what we think, and how we think about bullying. So, that was one of the first murder-suicides. And from then there were other high-profile cases in Canada, for example, Reena Virk, Dawn Marie Wesley, you know there were countless across Canada that we can name. And I think that that's what happened: kids started killing – they've always been killing themselves, but now we've paid attention to why they've been killing themselves because it was in the media. And a similar thing happened in Norway, when three boys, 14 year olds, took their lives and the Norwegian government put in a national agenda against bullying, so that's why the ministry of education became involved in their anti-bullying efforts. So, that stems from the suicide of 3 young boys. And, Canada's the same thing I think. We're getting money because, and attention, because kids are killing themselves.

There have been many other suicides resulting from bullying behaviours, bullying attacks with severe repercussions, and victims turning on their aggressors that have been reported widely in the media, and studied extensively by researchers and academics. These cases are outlined in Appendix 7, 8, and 9, respectively.

Frequently, the programs that are instituted lead to more discussion of bullying behaviours and school violence. As awareness is raised, and as children are taught some of the numerous definitions of bullying, they begin to see more interactions that can be considered bullying. Thus, reports of prevalence of bullying expand with the expanding definitions. As a concrete example, the proprietor of a school-based anti-bullying program explained that at the beginning of program implementation, students find an abundance of bullying behaviours that they had not seen before:

***Respondent:** One of the sort of, experiences that we give the kids after we give them their information which usually happens the second day, or at the end of the first day, because we're usually in their school setting, we ask them for five minutes to go out into the hall, and after they've received all this new information, new eyes and ears, ok, to go in the hall in groups of two, and to kind of be, count the bullying or harassment they find in their school.*

***Interviewer:** In five minutes.*

***Respondent:** Yah. In five minutes, dispersed around the school they saw fifty-eight.*

The increased media attention, perceived prevalence, and ambiguous definition of bullying, may have led bullying to become an all-purpose label for a variety of actions. If schools implement or uphold a definition of bullying that is broad, ambiguous, and therefore inclusive, it seems inevitable that they will interpret different interactions as 'bullying', and that some students may use this ambiguity to their advantage. One respondent – a social worker – agreed that children may either misinterpret behaviours, or may embellish:

I mean, you're standing right there, you see it, and they're like "did you see him, he shoved me!" The other kid didn't shove you, or certainly not what I as an adult I would have said shove, but this kid interprets it as a shove.

While it is not typical behaviour, it is feasible to assume that some children may embellish or misinterpret many behaviours as ‘bullying’ since there is a lack of a clear definition. This poses problems: children may not know what is bullying and what is not, and may not respond appropriately to various situations; researchers may have inflated numbers of children claiming to be victims of bullying; and, schools face the prospect of implementing an anti-bullying program without being able to accurately measure the frequency of bullying, due to its amorphous and constantly expanding definition. During an interview, one respondent elaborated on this idea:

I wonder if because there's so much emphasis on it, that it's grown disproportionately to what it should have. I mean, it's definitely an issue, and it's definitely a problem. But, I think sometimes it gets blown out of proportion to the extent that what someone sees as a very big issue really doesn't, shouldn't have been that big an issue. And I sometimes wonder if it's an excuse. You know, I don't do well because I was bullied, I take drugs because I was bullied, I this and that and that because I was bullied, and perhaps that person's perception of what bullying is, if you spoke to someone else, it wouldn't have been that important an issue. So I sometimes think it's gotten blown out of proportion.

The ambiguous definition can have a serious impact: not only does it frame bullying as prevalent, but it also frames other actions as a repercussion of bullying, making bullying seem more prevalent once again. Here, bullying is an attention-seeking behaviour, and a negative repercussion of the increased discussion of bullying behaviours. For example, children will misbehave as a means of garnering attention. This can be achieved by bullying others, or by using bullying as an excuse for their behaviours. For example, one respondent indicated that for

a lot of kids, negative attention is the only attention they're going to get. So, they do things to bring it upon themselves. And this is a

terrible thing to say, but I think sometimes, you have to teach kids – people – how to ignore something. And not make it a big deal. And, if the bully doesn't get the reaction that they want to get, then they're going to find somebody else. And I know it's difficult to do, and I know – depending on the circumstances and what is done, it's impossible, but sometimes by giving them the reaction that they crave, you're actually feeding into this bully's perception of you as a victim, and it kind of feeds upon itself and gets worse and worse and worse I think, the more you make of it. And that sounds very callous, that sounds terrible, but I think you have got to tell kids, for minor things, to just let it roll off.

This statement reflects the sentiments of numerous respondents. When unnecessary attention is given to bullies and victims, it fuels the notion that bullying is increasingly prevalent.

Interestingly, some respondents did believe that bullying behaviour is more recognized – yet not more prevalent – that it had been previously, due to changing societal factors. In summary, the inability to determine the actual prevalence of bullying behaviours is an organizational constraint that schools face: as bullying *seems* to be more prevalent than ever before, schools are pressured by parents and community members to respond, even to the point of litigation.

4.2c Addressing Bullying Within the Curriculum

Within the Ontario School Curriculum, the only area that tenuously addresses bullying exists within the Health and Physical Education section. The curriculum documents themselves claim that “the school environment can profoundly influence students’ attitudes, preferences, and behaviours”¹⁵. The Health and Physical Education curriculum is organized around three core strands of knowledge: Healthy Living,

¹⁵ Retrieved on November 14, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/health/healthe.html>

Fundamental Movement Skills, and Active Participation. Only within one strand, that of Healthy Living, are bullying behaviours implicitly addressed, through therapeutic concepts such as conflict-resolution, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.¹⁶ When the Healthy Living strand is analysed further, it is noted that bullying is explicitly mentioned as an aspect with the Personal Safety and Injury Prevention subsection. Topics within this subsection include harassment, child abuse, bullying, violence in relationships, and peer assault¹⁷. Therefore, bullying is only a small facet within a subsection of a strand of the curriculum.

Since bullying is in fact addressed within the curriculum, as the Ontario Schools Code of Conduct claim it should be, it implies that schools, boards, and the Ministry of Education are complying with their rationalized institutional myths. However, what is hidden is the extent to which bullying is actually addressed within the curriculum. When the Ontario Curriculum Achievement Charts¹⁸ for grades one through eight are analysed, only then does it become clear that bullying is a minute aspect of the overall curriculum. An outline of these achievement charts can be found in Appendix One.

The Ontario Curriculum Achievement Charts outlines each school subject except for Social Studies, History, and Geography, and provides an achievement chart for grades one through eight. It is clear, due to the nature of the topics, that Social Studies, History, and Geography do not include components that address bullying behaviour; therefore, the removal of these three subjects does not affect the results of the current analysis.

¹⁶ Retrieved on November 14, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/health/healthe.html>

¹⁷ Retrieved on November 14, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/health/healthe.html>

¹⁸ Retrieved on November 28, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/achievement/charts1to12.pdf>

There are seven subjects outlined within the document: the Arts, French as a Second Language, Health and Physical Education, Language, Mathematics, Native Languages, and Science and Technology. Each subject has a corresponding achievement chart associated with it. These achievement charts exhibit four areas of knowledge and skills that each student of each grade level are to be evaluated on. For each subject there are eleven categories of evaluation. There are also seven subjects outlined, which entails seventy-seven areas of assessment per year of study. In other words, each student is evaluated in seventy-seven areas, excluding Social Science, History, and Geography. If we assume that these three excluded areas each have at least eleven categories of assessment and evaluation as well, that leaves a total of one-hundred-and-ten categories of evaluation and assessment.

As it has already been established, the only area of the curriculum that addresses bullying behaviour is the Health and Physical Education section. Therefore, out of at least one hundred and ten possible areas of knowledge, only a maximum of eleven may address bullying behaviour. Yet, the major focus of the Health and Physical Education curriculum is divided into three strands, and only one of those strands – Healthy Living – addresses bullying. Thus, only approximately one-third of the time spent in Health and Physical Education would be time dealing within bullying and other violent behaviour. This means that less than one tenth of the entire curriculum deals with bullying. Furthermore, as previously noted, this strand does not deal solely with bullying, but also with “peer assault, child abuse, harassment, and violence in relationships”¹⁹.

¹⁹ Retrieved on November 14, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/health/health.html>

Consequently, one-tenth seems like a high estimate when the myriad other concerns that fit into this strand are also taken into account. Therefore, even though the curriculum documents themselves claim that the school environment is extremely influential towards the behaviours and attitudes of students²⁰, the actual curriculum is barely addressing bullying. Thus, one would assume that these claims are in place to provide legitimacy and retain the faith of constituents. Furthermore, the abundant amount of material that must be covered within the curriculum can be seen as a significant organizational constraint, as teachers may not have time to address everything that is required of them, let alone institute new programs to address social problems such as bullying.

During an interview, one teacher noted that although bullying is claimed to be a part of the Health and Physical Education section of the curriculum, which includes Health, and although he is a Health teacher, he has not taught anything about bullying:

Interviewer: Well, I know that I've been looking at all the curriculum as well, and in the Phys-Ed section, there's a healthy living component which is supposed to encompass bullying. Have you ever taught that, read about it, anything?

Respondent: Yep. I don't know if it... does it actually say bullying? Probably at some point, maybe. I think it says 'healthy relationships' a lot. Yah.

Interviewer: Is it actually taught in that aspect, like as part of the curriculum?

Respondent: It might be. I haven't, I haven't taught it in health.

Thus, even in the small aspect of the curriculum that bullying may be a part of, it is not always taught by the teachers who are directly responsible for it. Due to the importance that schools place on accountability, teachers and administrators do not have the time to address the underlying causes of bullying behaviours. For example, one

²⁰ Retrieved on November 14, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/health/healththe.html>

teacher noted that *“There are small components about it, but it’s not really practiced ... Because we’re busy marking papers, we’re busy providing accountability”*. Another teacher had a similar response: *“In the real world, in a real classroom where you’ve got one teacher and 30 kids, and all the constraints in the classroom setting that you’ve got to deal with, you can’t do it ... tap into all these feelings, bring out all these feelings, and say ok, lets start math now”*. This demonstrates that if a bullying incident is actually dealt with, it is dealt with in a quick and easy manner, limiting the amount of paperwork needed, allowing the teacher to get back to the duty at hand. The primary goals of the school is to provide instruction and accountability, and when other goals interfere, such as dealing with bullying, the primary goals take precedence.

4.2d Socializing Agents: The Family and the School

Emotional determinism is the argument that early childhood experiences will define our behaviours as we age. Therefore, proponents of emotional determinism claim that children who experience trauma and distress will carry it with them into adulthood, predisposing them towards violent, aggressive, and destructive behaviours (Furedi, 2004: 29). Essentially, it is the home environment that teaches and socializes the behaviours that become identified as school bullying. However, school administrators often believe that schools can protect children from bullies that may reside at home. The principal of an elementary school demonstrated the claim that bullies are made in the home:

But my concern is that I’m sending this bully home to a bully. And I wasn’t sure... you know, he said “I will deal with it”, and I think, ok, it needs to be dealt with, but I’m a little concerned about how you’re going to deal with it. And all of the talk about bullying prevention at school ... really, it’s very hard for us to fix society. And they’re coming to us – we don’t create the bullies. Their home environment

creates the bullies. And so, unless there's some magical program, or global program teaching them, the parents, not to be bullies, the kids are going to be bullies.

The facilitator of an anti-bullying program explained that parents often bully children, and it is especially apparent in sports:

***Respondent:** even parents are getting in on bullying kids, like you heard of, about the Scarborough mom at the hockey game?*

***Interviewer:** I've heard a couple of stories about hockey...*

***Respondent:** So, her son was playing hockey, and um, I guess one of the boys hit, checked another boy and she got upset, and started raising a stink, and I think she ended up, I don't know how the conversation happened if one of them got a penalty or whatever, but she ended up throwing her hot coffee on the boy who hit her boy. And then she went, he was brought to the dressing room, to get away from her, and I think sort of it was a friend, sort of a mutual friend who helped him to the dressing room. And the woman came to the dressing room and assaulted that woman for protecting him. It's bizarre.*

Schools may believe that they are powerful organizations, and powerful socializers of students, however they may not be as powerful as people may think. One respondent (a high school principal) demonstrated the lack of socialization power that schools have:

Because sometimes you don't get the help at home. I think bullying is often learned at home, in my opinion...And what's a school system to do, when you have a kid for a few hours a day and then they go home to these asshole parents...I think in most cases, the family, the breakdown of the family unit, the lack of skills many parents have is the biggest contributing factor...We are not, in my opinion, in fact as powerful as we are led to believe. I think parents are.

It seems instead that the family is a more powerful socializing agent than the school. The media and children's rights advocates warn of the potential dangers children face from their siblings and parents. Domestic violence, abuse, and victimization by siblings are all cited as dangers that children are prone to enduring in their private family

lives, no longer considered a “haven from a heartless world” (Furedi, 2004: 81).

Therefore, the school is looked towards to deal with the problem, and to appropriately socialize children, which functions as another organizational constraint.

Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that parents who abuse one another are more likely to have children that develop into a deviant career (Steinberg, 2000).

Similarly, bullying at school has been associated with violence at home, demonstrating that an aggressive, or abusive, family environment socializes children towards violence (Farrington, 1993, as cited in Baldry, 2003: 719). For example, one respondent pointed out that:

Because, again it's the environment they come from. If they live with bullies... then they really don't see a need to change. I mean, if it's working for dad, it's working for mom, it's going to work for me. I don't care what they say.

Similarly, a school social worker explained that:

And if you're a kid who's learned much more aggressive strategies to get your own way, whether it's been modelling at home, whether it's your own temperament, whether it's a combination of both things, and it's worked for you, you're not going to give that up easily.

The existing bullying research upholds the viewpoint that violence at home will ultimately lead to violence at school (Ahmed & Briathwaite, 2004: 37). Aggression has been viewed, over the past few decades at least, as a learned behaviour, not merely an innate characteristic of all humans. Therefore, children learn from their parents and families how to utilize aggression, such as bullying, as a means of achieving their goals (Esplage et al, 2000: 326).

Adolescents spend the majority of their time with their friends, not their families or teachers, and therefore peer cultures are important aspects of socialization. Since adolescents do not have economic or political means of attaining status within these peer groups, they often resort to other means, such as bullying. Status attainment is a concept that is built into their peer groups, and impenetrable by outsiders such as teachers and parents. Status is a rather inalienable and inexpandable resource, and is therefore quite desired by adolescents, who have relatively minimal other resources available to their disposal. Often, the only means of attaining, and retaining, status is to use what Milner (2004) calls *small cruelties*, or in other words, bullying (p. 6). Students use methods of bullying that will aide them to attain and retain their status, such as social exclusion: keeping outsiders away from the group maintains one's status within the group. Furthermore, adolescents recognize that when somebody moves up in status, it means that someone else must move down. Therefore, students resort to these small cruelties to maintain their status, as it is built into their peer groups. The fact that peer groups often reward bullying behaviours makes it all the more difficult for schools to address.

4.2e Loose Coupling

Another organizational constraint that schools face stems from finances. Members of schools believe that they must have resources – both physical and interpersonal – in order to begin to address bullying. However, if financial resources are lacking, then physical and interpersonal resources will be lacking as well. The claim that resources are necessary stems from the belief that children need toys and physical space to occupy their time and help them expend their energy in a positive and productive

manner. It is believed that when these resources are not available, students' time and energy may result in bullying behaviours. One respondent – a teacher at a school with minimal resources – indicated how useful teachers believe that toys could be at recess time:

Sometimes, well, I mean on the playground, they're always, kids are always saying there's nothing to do. Because, you know, they can't make their own fun. That's the problem, right, there's nothing to do. So, you know, there's bins of equipment that every classroom has, that leaves them something to do, or sign out, or borrow and take outside. Of course all that gets lost. You know, we threw it on the roof, or this and that. It's like, well, now it's gone. Right? So, I mean, without the resources to do anything. You know, you don't have the equipment. You don't have the equipment. Or the people to do it.

On the other hand, one vice-principal that was interviewed noted that at a school with numerous physical resources, the bullying behaviours witnessed were minimal:

Really because the nature of the playground – and I think that had a lot to do with it – we backed onto the golf course, so we walked out into this beautiful green space. So there was lots of room for the children to play. You know they were able to get that soccer ball out even in the snow, and get the football out even when there was 3 feet of snow. There was room. And I think that also helped the children too ... Every classroom had balls. We spent thousands on equipment. The whole belief was, and we even had the blacktop painted, the belief was that if you could channel that energy in a really positive manner, we wouldn't see the playground issues, or they wouldn't escalate to the level of a suspension.

However, it is not just physical resources that are believed to curb or eliminate bullying behaviour; interpersonal resources are considered to be of great importance by numerous respondents. One teacher outlined the view that the support of school administration is a resource necessary for teachers to be motivated to solve the problems between children, and not just worry about their accountability. This teacher stated that what is needed is

more resources. Less of an emphasis on ... more in terms of our ability to solve the problem. What do we need to solve those problems? A willingness of staff to learn about these, take the time, and that really just doesn't really exist right now, so that comes down to the motivational level. I mean how is the administrator of the school motivating those people to gain these skills, or gain these abilities. How are they able to nurture and support these, make them grow to be a teacher, to be their teachers.

Research has also claimed that social support needs to go beyond teaching staff to appropriately reprimand unwanted behaviour; it also needs to support both the victim and the bully, providing them with the resources to deal with their behaviours and the resulting feelings and consequences. Thus, schools face another organizational constraint: schools need financial resources in order to provide physical resources (e.g. activities at recess) and interpersonal resources (e.g. teacher training and support services). However, the overall lack of resources stems from the fact that social problems are 'structural add-ons' to schools; they are not a first priority of school systems, and are 'tacked on' as opposed to integrated into the school. Thus, they are not granted sizeable resources to deal with these purported social problems. Yet, if they *were* to receive resources, they would most likely be directed to vague programs, uncertain technologies, and diffuse goals.

Many studies have revealed that the majority of bullying behaviours occur at times when adult supervision is lacking. These places most often include the bathroom, the school bus, and especially recess (Esplage et al., 1998; Kikkawa, 1987; as cited in Bosworth et al., 1999: 356). Recess is a topic that was frequently mentioned by respondents during interviews. Everyone who mentioned recess during their interview agreed that it was the most prevalent time for bullying and other violent behaviours to

occur. Most often, the reasons cited for this occurrence was a general lack of supervision and authority, which is a significant organizational constraint of schools. For example, one teacher noted that the elementary school he works at has only three teachers on duty for approximately three-hundred students: a ratio of one teacher per every hundred students. This teacher stated that they have

tried to dumb it down to three simple rules. Like you know, hands off, feet on the ground, and like, a bit about watch what you say or something. But, then you've got two hundred kids out there pushing and shoving. And there's three people on duty, what can you do? You know, you tell three kids over here keep your hands off, out of two hundred that are pushing and shoving.

A student teacher who was interviewed outlined her recess experiences at the many schools where she had undertaken her teaching placements. One interesting example demonstrated that even with teachers present and available at recess time, they are not always attentive to the needs of students:

what would also end up happening is, a lot of teachers would end up having social hour, like [the supervising teacher that the respondent worked with] never did, and she hated the teachers that did ... she didn't agree with some of the teachers who would cluster in a group and just stay in one area. So what would end up happening is they would stay in primary area, but the whole junior and intermediate area ... like problems did happen.

Therefore, even though the bullying literature claims that increasing supervision in areas where students have unstructured time, such as recess, a smaller teacher to student ratio most likely would not change any of the inappropriate behaviours present on the playground. In order to make a discernable impact, schools would likely need to have highly prioritized and well-funded programs; however, given that the definitions are vague, and that schools have a relatively weak socializing influence over students, it is

possible that no real change would occur. For instance, how could schools reduce girls' exclusionary behaviour, or ensure that all unstructured times were supervised? It would require the creation of a police-state, with dozens of monitors on the playground, in the lunchroom, washroom, hallways, and virtually every aspect of the child's day would require direct supervision.

Victims of bullying have reported that most frequently they seek help from their peers. To a lesser extent, they seek help from their family. Even less, and often only as a last resort, do they seek help from their teachers (del Barrio et al., 2001: 251). This is a reality of the peer culture, which is beyond the schools' immediate influence. Victims surveyed have indicated that teachers often cannot be relied on to intervene with bullying behaviours (Hoover & Oliver, 1996). There have been several reasons postulated as to why teachers do not intervene or actively address bullying: the belief that children should learn to solve their own problems, and not be 'rescued' by adults; staff do not receive support from their co-workers or principals when they do intervene (i.e. a lack of interpersonal resources); teachers interpret bullying behaviours as mere teasing or joking; teachers believe it is typical behaviour, a 'right of passage' for all students; the majority of bullying occurs outside of the view of adults, in areas where supervision is lacking (e.g. recess); teachers believe that students will learn through 'natural consequences' and do not need disciplinary intervention, and; teachers may be afraid of dealing with the bully (Colvin et al., 1998: 294-295).

Interestingly, Batsche and Knoff (1994) cite a study, claiming that one-quarter of teachers surveyed believed the best way to help those individuals involved was to ignore

the situation. Fekkes et al. (2005) found that when teachers did try to intervene, often the bullying either stayed the same, or worsened (p. 89). Interestingly, Crawford (2002) notes that teachers often overestimate their ability to identify and intervene in bullying situations, believing that they are much more effective than they actually are.

4.2f Uncertain Technology²¹

Very few of the numerous anti-bullying programs currently being implemented into schools have been tested empirically. This is problematic, as choosing a program is based on little information about its efficacy (Vaillancourt, 2004: 15). If programs are being implemented without information on their efficacy, then why are they being implemented? A psychologist specializing in bullying behaviours asked similar questions during an interview:

Well we don't know why people use the programs they use. Are they using it because it's evidence based? Are they using it because it's cheap? Are they using it because of word-of-mouth or anecdotal evidence to support its use? Are they using it because there's nothing better out there and it's the sort of program they have in their school? We have no idea why they use what they use.

Interestingly, a school social worker responsible for violence prevention explained how schools choose which programs they will implement, and that their choices are limited due to a lack of program efficacy:

Respondent: *There's lots and lots of anti-bullying programs out there. There aren't very many that work. Or, there aren't very many that we know where there have been any evaluation of the program. So, we base our recommendations on effectiveness. And we look at the*

²¹ As defined earlier, institutional theory uses the term *technology* not to imply machinery or equipment; but in terms of procedures for attaining goals, increasing productivity, and creating formalized systems or methodologies for goal attainment and supervision (Monahan et al, 1994, in Scott et al. 1994).

research that's already been done with various programs and the quality of that evidence and then base that recommendations on that.

Interviewer: *So, what are the programs that you have in place that do work, or are effective?*

Respondent: *There aren't very many of them.*

Of the programs that are being implemented – which are numerous – many do not outline specific goals or expectations. As one respondent indicated:

But, are there any expectations for effectiveness? Who knows. They can't be criticized for implementing something. But, if there are no in-depth measures of effectiveness, how do they know if its working or not? Not too many programs pay attention to measurement. And, a lot of programs are put together without outlining their goals or their desired outcomes. If they don't outline their outcomes, they can't be measured. It's really important to set out goals when planning a program, and more and more committees and schools are starting to see that.

When a program does not outline specific and measurable goals or outcomes, efficacy cannot be determined. If there are no goals, goal achievement cannot occur²². This clearly demonstrates loose coupling: programs without goals cannot be evaluated, and therefore are implemented merely to appease parents, and others who believe that bullying should be addressed. Thus, schools are able to claim that they are 'doing something' to address bullying, which is often all that parents are asking for. If the programs were evaluated, on the other hand, and tight coupling existed, and if the results demonstrated a lack of effectiveness, then the external constituents – such as parents –

²² Colvin et al. (1998) outline three criteria that should be developed to aide evaluation: (1) the program itself should have research accompanying it, outlining its effectiveness; (2) the program should be based on principles of behaviour modification that have been tested; and (3) the program should attempt to replace anti-social, or violent, behaviours with pro-social behaviours, not merely eliminate the anti-social behaviours (p. 309). However, the majority of the anti-bullying programs that are available fall short of these exacting criteria.

would not be satisfied. An example from a respondent explained that there needs to be much more extensive research in order to say definitely which types of programs work²³:

One of the things that we know is that we're expecting that we'll get more reported incidences of bullying for a while and then it will drop off. So, the data on interventions is not great, but it may be because we're just getting so much more reported now. And there haven't been a lot of randomized controlled trials, and I'm sure you understand the difference between qualitative and quantitative methodology. And qualitative methodologies are wonderful. And they show all kinds of exploratory methodology. But, in order to really know whether something is working or not, you have to have some kind of randomized controlled trials. So there are lots of studies that have looked at programs which look at kind of pre and post measures, so they give you some questionnaires before you get the program, and then you give them afterwards. That doesn't tell us a lot. Unless we have a group of kids, not even just a control group, but kids that have been randomly assigned to get it or not get it. I mean, that's really the gold standard, right? And they're, most of these programs, the vast majority, have not been measured against that standard. So, until they are, we really can't say definitively one way or the other.

When programs cannot be measured for efficacy, this brings up questions and issues of technology. Implementing programs of uncertain technology promotes loose coupling: in order to be viewed as accountable and legitimate, schools must implement programs, even if the technology is questionable. This is another organizational constraint that schools face: while they must implement programs to signal their

²³ A current case of implementing programs without testing for efficacy is occurring within Ontario, as the government has committed to putting at least \$9 million into bullying over the course of 2005 and 2006. However, this initiative has its critics: the Bullying Awareness Network claims that while putting programs in place within the year is an achievable goal, putting *effective* programs in place within the year is much more challenging. Also, the claim that putting security devices such as cameras and metal detectors into schools that do not need them is not effective, nor is it financially responsible. Furthermore, critics have claimed that Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty's son was bullied at school, which has clouded his judgement; they believe that his personal experiences are determining how the Premier will spend the taxpayers' money (<http://www.bullyingawarenessnetwork.ca/site/php?page=news>).

commitment to dealing with bullying, they are unable to demonstrate if those programs are effective²⁴.

Many of the agencies and organizations that produce information and programs about bullying recommend the ‘best’ ways to reduce or prevent violence. However, there is little consistency among their recommendations, stemming from the increasingly vague definition of bullying; each program addresses different aspects of bullying, but often does not have a specific definition of bullying, or no criteria for measuring bullying, making it impossible to identify efficacy (US Public Health Service, 2002). Often, these market-based programs are accompanied by their own evaluations, many of which are no more than customer satisfaction surveys, not indicators of efficacy. One respondent indicated that:

all of the consumer satisfaction stuff that's very positive – these are wonderful programs, we think they're working, they're really making a difference with kids, parents like them, um ... they don't work. So, you know we have a responsibility not to do harm. We have to be really careful about what we're recommending, and not just depend on what people are saying they think is working and that they feel good about.

One form of intervention that is often used by schools is peer mediation. Its aim is to teach students means of non-violent conflict resolution by utilizing peers as

²⁴ Interestingly, Dan Olweus – one of the pioneers of bullying research – outlines nine key principles that he believes are necessary for anti-bullying programs to be successful. These are: (1) survey through questionnaire, to raise awareness of the problem; (2) hold a school conference where staff are able to plan and share; (3) increase supervision during unstructured times, such as lunch and recess, when bullying is said to be most frequent; (4) provide classroom rules against bullying behaviours; (5) have class discussions about bullying, and provide opportunity for role-playing; (6) have serious talks, including who is to blame, and punishment for the actions; (7) have serious talks with the parents of both bullies and victims; (8) praise prosocial behaviour, and; (9) have negative consequences for students who bully, such as detention (Olweus, 1993, as cited in Colvin et al., 1998). According to the data gathered from numerous personal interviews, many of these nine proposed key principles are extremely challenging to implement, due to the numerous organizational constraints that schools face. The problems with each are outlined in the table found in Appendix 10.

mediators who assist reconciling minor disagreements and conflicts before they escalate. However, while peer mediation may be useful in cases where the conflict is between students equal in power, bullying is often defined as a situation involving a power imbalance. Therefore, using peer mediation to solve interactions involving bullying are problematic, as “you would no more sit a child who bullies and his/her target down to talk it out than you would sit down a wife and her husband who abuses her” (Blaha, 2001a).

Peer mediation is not an effective technology, however it is most likely utilized because there is an *overall* lack of clear or effective technology. There is also a cultural appeal to peer mediation, and it most likely it used for its symbolic value: the ‘peer’ aspect of the program has appealing connotations of grass-roots empowerment²⁵.

4.3 STRUCTURAL RESPONSE

School responses to bullying are shaped by their structural constraints. For example, the schools’ structural response includes expanding the already ambiguous definition of bullying, ceremonially conforming to their institutional environment and using the loosely coupled structure of the school to their benefit.

4.3a Expanding the Definition Further

As bullying becomes a more prevalent topic, more and more people attempt to garner a ‘piece of the bullying pie’. Although there is ongoing lobbying from moral

²⁵ Nevertheless, the peer mediation program has been hailed a success by some members of the school system, such as school social workers. Having peer mediators present at recess may be a way to compensate for the lack of supervision, and this is part of the structural appeal of peer mediation. A school social worker explained that: “*mediation I think is so successful, because you’ve got 8 other pairs of eyes, which catch very low-level conflict before they build into something that’s more out of control. Because 2 teachers can’t see everything. And often conflicts that are going on between children are not recognized as conflict by adults. So, other kids see it as conflict, but we don’t. So, again, that’s a good reason for having young mediators on the playground.*”

entrepreneurs, they have a difficult time infiltrating educational institutions. The entrance route for moral entrepreneurs is a very difficult one, heavily bureaucratized, monitored and regulated through a vast hierarchy. The structural reality is that the many claims perpetrated by moral entrepreneurs are not absorbed by the school system. In fact, schools buffer most external influences (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; as cited in Ballantine & Spade, 2001). This is an organizational reality that needs to be addressed. However, some of the anti-bullying programs that are rapidly becoming available are making their way into the schools. Entrepreneurs use bullying to gain access to the school: social skills programs that may not otherwise receive a second glance by schools add the words 'bullying prevention' into their outline, and they are rapidly scooped up by schools and boards. As more programs are developed, they often create broader, and more amorphous definitions that allow more behaviours to be 'fixed' by their program. Furthermore, these programs are quite expensive to implement. However, if schools need to address the problem of bullying to appease members of the institutional environment, they will pay large sums of money to retain their legitimacy. Thus, these programs are able to charge what the market will bear.

As schools advertise that they are 'doing something' about bullying, the school gains a reputation of being safe and caring about its students²⁶. Woods et al. (2003) claim that the glossy policies that are produced for schools are often completely unrelated to the actual behaviours found in the school (p. 397). Schools often implement programs and policies to placate parents and other members of the institutional environment, and they

²⁶ Accessed at www.bullybeware.com/moreinfo.html

are implemented in order to retain legitimacy, and avoid inspection, not necessarily as a solution to the purported problem. Therefore, schools often implement programs as a structural response to the organizational constraints they face.

Many of the intervention programs that are implemented are only for short-term use, and serve as band-aid solutions to demonstrate that ‘something is being done’, as opposed to actually attempting to solve the problem. These programs are quick and easy to implement, requiring little time, effort, or resources. Furthermore, these programs serve to signal compliance and ceremonial conformity. Often within the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, short term solutions are implemented as opposed to long-term or whole-school interventions. One elementary school teacher explained that there are a many short term programs used, but nothing is long-term or ongoing:

last year we uh, the Hamilton Police did a poster contest for bullying, so we did a lot of talking about it: what would be a good slogan, what should go on the poster, and how do bullies, why do people bully, how to handle bullies, and so on, and this year they did a, YMCA did a t-shirt contest of the same thing. So I mean, it's not an ongoing program...

There are many short-term silver-bullet programs available for schools. For example, one high school principal explained that

there's about a hundred and one videos on bullying ... I've seen 2 or 3 but you can call any, call the ed-center and get any, get numerous videos on bullying. Some at the grade 8 level, some at the high school level, some deal with teachers – you know, how can teachers detect it – some are geared for principals, in terms of how can schools manage it, depending who your target audience is there could be a number of videos.

Similarly, the bullying interventions that the Ontario government are claiming to implement are also ‘band-aid solutions’, used to placate parents and taxpayers, and

demonstrate that schools are dealing with bullying. A social worker who was interviewed demonstrated criticisms of the Ontario government's plans:

***Interviewer:** The McGuinty government just put out that... that hotline, the anti-bullying hotline.*

***Respondent:** Which is great, but I'm not sure how it's going to impact directly on kids. Because, what are they going to do with the information? ... But if you phone a hotline, you can get some help if you're a kid who needs some help maybe, some strategies or some advice about how you might deal with it, but the school kids ... they can't get that information to the school.*

Short term programs are frequently utilized by schools as a means of dealing with current issues, such as bullying. Similarly, schools need to prove to their constituents that they are doing something to overcome bullying within their school. Often, undertaking a school wide survey, or having the board's social worker come into the school is enough to appease parents, taxpayers, community members, and other members of the institutional environment, demonstrating that schools are adhering to their needs and wants. Essentially, these programs are cheaper and faster to implement than whole-school or long-term programs, and therefore are utilized readily, as the primary goal is to signal conformity.

Within the educational community, understanding and overcoming the issue of school violence has had a tremendous focus. Day and Golench (1997) found that most school boards have some policy to address violence within schools, and that the majority of these policies include suspension and expulsion. However, Day and Golench (1997) believe that these drastic approaches only function as a quick-fix because their only purpose is to remove the problem student from the school environment, as opposed to

addressing the long-term problem. Similar sentiments regarding zero-tolerance policies were expressed during an interview:

***Respondent:** You have heard of the zero-tolerance program in schools, right?*

***Interviewer:** Yes*

***Respondent:** Well, I think it was Mayor Miller [the Mayor of Toronto] who said that the zero-tolerance program is not looking good. Why? Because what they thought was a solution is not a solution. To expel a child for bullying does not deal with the problem. There have to be other things in place to deal with the problem, you can't just send them out of school...When kids are expelled, it's often a holiday, not a punishment. Or, the kid who is expelled is really angry, and they will come back to find who squealed. They'll think that the kid they were bullying was a tattletale, and they'll hunt down the victim. Often, they come down on them harder than they did in the first place. The zero-tolerance program is not discipline, and it's not teaching them that what they did was wrong. It's a cookie-cutter approach, as opposed to regarding each situation as individual and unique.*

Zero tolerance policies and their use, repercussions, and non-therapeutic nature are examined further, below.

4.3b Symbolic Conformity

Over the course of the past decade, abundant discussions of bullying within the media – such as newspaper articles, television show themes, news reports, books, and magazine articles – suggest an increasing importance placed on reducing the instances and occurrences of bullying. Schools, districts and boards are demonstrating that they buy-in to this movement by creating their own literature about bullying. This literature – including policy documents and the Ontario School's Code of Conduct – claims that bullying is plaguing schools, and that schools are attempting to reduce this negative behaviour. Schools are therefore absorbing the myths from their institutional environment.

The Ontario Ministry of Education outlines norms and expectations for all of its boards, districts, and schools. These are presented as uniform and pre-packaged regulations that institutions must categorically adopt. Although they outline that these institutions should create their own standards and expectations to meet the needs of their surrounding communities, they also require schools to uphold these predetermined rational myths. In this aspect, while the organizational field is attempting to be heterogeneous by allowing individual schools to create their own standards, norms and expectations, it is creating expectations that conform ceremonially with other institutions within the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Ceremonial conformity is a key factor in building and retaining legitimacy. Individual schools have little choice but to remain similar to one another, as they fall under the jurisdiction of not only their district and their school board, but also the Ontario Ministry of Education. Thus, all publicly funded schools within Ontario are governed by the same educational body, and as a result, they all hold many characteristics in common. This allows them to retain their legitimacy and public support with little effort. Furthermore, it allows the educational system to perpetuate its rationalized institutional myths on a broader scale, and to a much wider and more captive audience than any other institutional organization.

According to Policy/Program Memorandum No. 128²⁷, all Ontario school boards are required to develop their requirements in conjunction with the needs of the schools' surrounding communities, yet remain consistent with the requirements of the

²⁷ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/128.html>

Memorandum. However, if each school board creates their own requirements, they may not be congruent with other publicly funded schools within Ontario. A lack of homogeneity may lead to a lack of trust, support, and therefore legitimacy. By stating that the individual requirements must also be consistent with the requirements of the Policy/Program Memorandum, this ensures that all schools will have similar and congruent rules and regulations. Thus, the schools will be able to conform ceremonially, and will all uphold the same institutionalized rational myths. The decentralized nature, as well as the loose coupling that exists within and between schools, allows them to create myths that fit the requirements of their own locales, while simultaneously meeting the requirements of the greater school system.

The Ontario Ministry of Education's *Violence Free Schools Policy*²⁸ outlines some of the reasons that school boards are implementing, violence prevention policies. It proclaims that all stakeholders must be involved in order to address and eliminate violent behaviours, since violence is perceived as becoming a more pervasive social problem²⁹. Organizations and institutions, including schools, accept and adopt these claims, or myths, as 'truth'. They are then rationalized and institutionalized by the organization.

The Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board, which is a member of the Ontario Ministry of Education, perpetuates the myth that they will both communicate and adhere to an appropriate code of conduct. This myth is rationalized through numerous statements in their policies. For example, within their Policy Against Bullying

²⁸ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/vfreeng.html>

²⁹ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/vfreeng.html>

Behaviour³⁰, they vow to “provide and maintain an environment that is safe and secure for all members of the school community” by clearly communicating that inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. They rationalize this myth further by asking not only for support, trust, and good faith, but also by claiming that this code of conduct will become a primary component of the schools’ daily functions³¹. These statements aim to signal that both the school and board are producing a safe environment for their students, aiming to have parents feel confident.

Through loose coupling, schools are able to claim they are taking proactive measures, yet due to a lack of inspection and evaluation, they do not have to actually uphold these measures. According to one teacher during an interview,

Now, because we do live in a world of litigation and all these areas where we’re affected by legal limits or these social restrictions, we do have a demand from the general public to become more accountable, and say “we’re doing something about this, we’re doing something about this”, even though the problems have always existed. Um... and so the educational community and the ministry of education are forcing themselves to take care of this, but aren’t necessarily looking at possible solutions. They’re looking at being accountable. And protecting their own ass.

While the school board wants to appear legitimate and accountable, this process is not a *proactive* disciplinary code, as the Policy Against Bullying Behaviour³² claims. In fact, as another teacher pointed out, accountability reduces proactivity and, in fact, deters teachers:

It stopped being proactive when she went to another grade. Because, now the problems are popping up again and again and there has been

³⁰ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at http://www.hwdsb.edu.on.ca/board_policies/fs_bp9.html

³¹ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at http://www.hwdsb.edu.on.ca/board_policies/fs_bp9.html

³² Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at http://www.hwdsb.edu.on.ca/board_policies/fs_bp9.html

some teacher communication, but not enough. And, that's where I wish I could be a person who said "yes I took care of that, and I talked to the teacher right away" but it wasn't the number one concern on my mind. We have all these concerns on our mind, and you know there's no person who's multitasking enough to address all of them equally with the same passion, the same vigour, strength; because, we are solely focussed on being accountable and documenting these things. They become deterrents even for actually taking action.

Similarly, the Hamilton Wentworth Board of Education's Policy against Bullying Behaviour explicitly prohibits bullying, and states that behaviours constituting bullying will not be tolerated by staff members while on school property, or during any school-related activity³³. However, numerous respondents were unanimous that bullying behaviour *is* tolerated within school settings. As teachers either ignore the behaviour or cannot attend to it due to their myriad other responsibilities, or are unable to recognise bullying due to its ambiguous nature, much of the behaviour is either tolerated or left unattended.

This inattentiveness to bullying behaviour was pointed out through numerous responses during interviews with teachers. One teacher noted that a parent believed that bullying behaviour previously reported to the school had been dealt with (as the policies state it will be), yet no action had actually taken place:

I had one kid, whose mother came in very angry one day. She said "my son is being bullied". And she wants, she wants it dealt with ... She phoned in earlier in the year and said her son's being bullied, and thought it was dealt with.

Furthermore, accountability also comes into play which limits how often teachers actually deal with the behaviour. As another teacher pointed out, *"that's not really happening*

³³ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at http://www.hwdsb.edu.on.ca/board_policies/fs_bp9.html

because, the entire system as it sits is overwhelmed with paper work, and covering up for accountability and procedure instead of focusing on these kids and just documenting afterwards". In order to avoid documentation, teachers often let aggressive behaviours proceed unattended to. Another example came from a teacher who noted that the amount of teachers within a school limit the action that takes place; if each teacher deals with the situation minimally, but over the course of time multiple teachers all deal with the same student in this minimal manner, then the behaviour is essentially tolerated. This teacher stated that *"because then, you find yourself you got ten other teachers in the school who have given the same speech to the same student over and over and over again, but the behaviour still continues"*. Inattention to bullying is a structural response to the accountability that teachers and administrators must provide. However, due to loose coupling, the inattentiveness often goes unnoticed. As long as it is *believed* that schools are responding to, and dealing with, bullying, the pressure is removed from the organization.

The language that is utilized within many of the documents produced by the school board, such as the Ontario Schools Code of Conduct, emphasize that schools and school boards are ceremonially conforming with their institutional environment. This 'vocabulary of motives' or 'vocabulary of structure' ensures that the purported goals, policies, and procedures are presented in a language that is understood and utilized by members of the institutional environment, thus allowing constituents to accept the organization's goals as both rational and legitimate. However, this language is often vague, ambiguous, unclear, or lacking, as is the definition of bullying behaviours. It

merely serves as a method of rationalizing institutional myths, as opposed to clarifying or exemplifying the goals and purposes. Thus, the language assists the organization to conform to its environment, thereby retaining their trust, support, and consequently, legitimacy.

For example, the Ontario Schools Code of Conduct³⁴ utilizes language which functions as a ‘vocabulary of structure’. Under the section titled Standards of Behaviour, there are ten rules outlined that all school members – students, parents, teachers, and staff – must follow with regard to responsibility, citizenship, civility and respect (p. 8). While these are presented in order to outline standards of behaviour that are clear across the province, these standards are written in vague and ambiguous terminology. ‘Buzzwords’ such as ‘respect’, ‘fair’, ‘appropriate’, and ‘proper’ are all utilized within the Standards of Behaviour, however none of these terms are defined. As such, while it is demanded of school members to comply with these behavioural standards, they do not have any clearly delineated or defined standards to adhere to.

Throughout the personal interviews, multiple teachers noted the ambiguity and vagueness of the language utilized within these governmental documents. Interestingly, one teacher said that *“I think zero-tolerance is another buzz word”*. Teachers noted that they were both ‘euphemisms’ and ‘buzzwords’, and that students could memorize them, but not internalize them. For example, one teacher pointed out that he has learned

how to break down the language of other people. And say “ok you’re using that word. But what do you mean?” And to really hit them hard. And they know to use respect. They ... don’t know what it means. They

³⁴ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/conduct/conduct01.pdf>

don't actually have it ingrained in them what respect means. They're taught I t... and it's not their fault. But, you know, in this world of accountability they've said, you know, cover these issues, use these words, use this language. And they haven't actually specifically said it, but that's the message that so many people have been getting. So why don't they actually say, create another document and get rid of these words. They are buzzwords. They're euphemisms. They're words that the meaning has been drained away from them. But, yep, they don't know what respect is.

These students can memorize the 'euphemisms' or 'buzzwords' that are repeated to them, and use them on their own, essentially perpetuating the myths outlined in the policies and procedures. However, these students are rationalizing the vague language that the myths have been institutionalized with. An interview with a teacher pointed out that he has

had students who go through a taxonomy of solutions and getting through emotional bullying or just name calling. And can justify it and rationalize it and, you know, quote the lines to the teacher in saying, you know, "I am solving this problem because they have disrespected me by saying this, it made me feel sad. I thought I should go to a teacher and try to solve this problem. How can you help me solve this problem? So here I am talking to you". And that's almost verbatim for some students in the school system.

Students use vague and ambiguous language to discuss bullying because the definitions of bullying are vague and ambiguous in themselves. For example, the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board defines bullying as consisting of

negative actions which may be physical or verbal in nature, have hostile intent, are repeated over time and involve a power differential between bully and victim. Bullying may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, punching), verbal (e.g. name-calling, teasing, threatening), social (e.g. excluding an individual from a group on purpose, initiation or hazing rituals, subtle social manipulation such as malicious gossip or rumours) or computer-based (e.g. using the internet or e-mail to ridicule, spread rumours, threaten)³⁵

³⁵ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/conduct/conduct01.pdf>

However, this definition has problems in and of itself. First of all, the language used within this definition – like the definitions of bullying – is vague and ambiguous. For example, it states that there must be a ‘power differential’ between the victim and the bully. Yet, no definition exists as to what this power differential entails. One could assume that there would be a difference in power between a grade five student and a grade three student, or similarly, between a male student and a female student. However, it does not make clear where the power differential exists if it is the grade three student who is bullying the grade five student, or if it is the female student who is bullying the male student. Neither of the terms ‘power’ nor ‘differential’ are explicated, thus leaving the definition vague, ambiguous, and unclear. This serves as a structural response, because the schools’ definition must be vague and ambiguous to correspond with the existing definitions of bullying.

TABLE 3:

Table of Ambiguous and Undefined Terms		
Power Differential	Appropriate	Responsibility
Respect	Zero-tolerance	Citizenship
Fair	Proper	Civility

Another requirement within the Policy/Program Memorandum states that “a board may direct the principal of a school to establish a local code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in the school”³⁶. In this case, the board may *not* direct a principal to establish a local code of conduct. By using the phrase “a board *may* direct the principal”, they are leaving it open that no such direction may ever occur. This ambiguity

³⁶ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/128.html>

provides the school with discretion as to whether or not they do, in fact, create a local code of conduct. Furthermore, it allows both the school and school board to rationalize why they have, or have not, created a code of conduct.

The Policy/Program Memorandum outlines requirements that are applicable to both individual schools and the school boards as a whole. One of the requirements states that periodically, the board should review the guidelines and policies that it has created³⁷. A periodic reviewing of policies and guidelines should allow the board to evaluate the success and the efficacy of said policies and guidelines. However, 'periodic' may entail a review once a week, once a month, or once every ten years. Without specifying how often schools should review their policies and guidelines, school boards hold the discretion to evaluate, or to *not* evaluate, as often as they should choose. This allows them to avoid inspection and evaluation, thereby retaining their legitimacy and not subjecting themselves to the risks associated with inspection and evaluation. This Memorandum functions as a legal document which may be referred to as a means of legitimating the policies and requirements of schools and school boards. Furthermore, the broad, vague, and ambiguous language functions to loosely couple their actual practices from their operational policies and procedures.

4.3c Loose Coupling

There is an organizational concept called *structural secrecy*, whereby the organization ignores information that does not fit with their overall operating paradigm. Instead, they focus on the goals that external constituents are pushing them to accomplish,

³⁷ Retrieved on November 7, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/128.html>

obscuring any problems that may be residing under the surface (Newman, 2004: 81). For example, as schools push forward, implementing anti-bullying programs that are called for by parents and community members, they may not recognize any of the detrimental effects that the program – such as zero-tolerance, and suspensions and expulsions – is having on the students' relationships, academics, or bullying behaviours.

Schools are privy to a lot of information about their students, and their students' lives. For example, not only do schools have information about the students' academic records, disciplinary histories, and peer relationships, but they would also have information about the students' home lives and health records. However, as loosely coupled organizations, this information is held by many different people. Since each teacher has control and responsibility of their own classroom, they may never share this pertinent information with any other teachers or administrators within the school. Furthermore, there are minimal formal means of communicating such information to other teachers, without it being viewed as 'gossip'. This is the heart of structural secrecy: it is the manner that the organizational hierarchy, specialization, and division of labour keep information about tasks and goals separated. Structural secrecy also means that any information that is conveyed will be minimal or partial; that the segregated knowledge minimizes the ability to recognize and act on activities that are different from the norms and standards of the organization; and that there is an increased potential for things to go wrong when tasks or information cross boundaries, since the information is often partial or incomplete (Newman, 2004: 81-82). Each member of the schools' faculty will have different information about each student, yet this information will never be put together to

formulate ‘the whole package’, and therefore the teachers and the administrators within a school will not thoroughly know the student as a person, and will not know their needs.

Even though schools have the expertise and the technology to be able to collect and share this information, it is not disseminated for two reasons. First, the loosely coupled nature of the school acts as a structural barrier, eliminating the perceived need (and often, the opportunity) to share such information. Second, schools attempt to respect their students’ privacy, and worry that if personal and private information is disseminated, it could prejudice future teachers, and essentially label students, thereby eliminating the ‘clean slate’ that students receive as they move to a new classroom, with a new teacher (Newman, 2004: 82). Teachers attempt to eliminate biasing one another against their future students, and preserve the clean slate mentality; essentially, there is no institutional memory of any problems or concerns about students (Newman, 2004: 86-87). Furthermore, information that is not positive is filtered out through *systemic distortion*. This is the idea that people do not seek out unfavourable information, and therefore, any information that does not directly pertain to the organizations’ goals or survival is weeded out (Newman, 2004: 88).

Although loose coupling does have its benefits, when information is not disseminated – often in an attempt to protect the child – it means that seriously troubled children, and serious social problems can, and do, go unnoticed. Although loose coupling is often a protective factor, it may not be protective at all; instead, it may serve to cover up problems that become evident once it is too late (Newman 2004: 104). On the other hand, cut-and-dried zero-tolerance policies, harsh punishments, as well as other methods

of surveillance and policing (such as the instillation of metal detectors, security guards, and security cameras) serves to create a ‘police state’ as opposed to a school; these more tightly-coupled initiatives may serve to drive violence and bullying ‘underground’, or out of view of adults, where it has the potential to become more harmful and insidious.

Zero-tolerance policies are often criticized, and contested as being too harsh and ineffective³⁸. One major component that has led to the criticism of zero-tolerance policies is the non-uniform and discretionary manner in which it is applied. For example,

We have um...the ministry of education has developed a zero tolerance for violence, and the ministry document has some clear-cut policies about how aggressive behaviour should be dealt with, and bullying would be one of the specific types of behaviours that fall under the umbrella, and that ministry document in turn is implemented at the board levels. But, how each school chooses to implement that program has much more flexibility. So, it's happening, but how exactly is up to the schools. But, you know, it's up to common sense judgement, and expertise within the school itself.

Zero tolerance policies are not a component of the therapeutic culture, and they are highly contested. Often, more ambiguous responses are considered to be more appealing, which likely bolsters the therapeutic frame and the use of more therapeutic responses, as opposed to cut-and-dried, non-therapeutic responses such as zero-tolerance policies or silver-bullet programs. The consequences of inappropriate student behaviour are outlined by each school in their policy documents (for an example, see Appendix 11). Most schools use zero-tolerance policies, and inappropriate behaviours result in suspensions, or even expulsions. However, in practice, the discretion that teachers and principals hold means that suspensions are not utilized as punishment as uniformly as purported. An

³⁸ Retrieved on March 3, 2005 at <http://www.investinginchildren.on.ca/Communications/articles/bully.html>

example of the discretionary manner in which suspensions are distributed is demonstrated in this statement from an interview with an elementary school principal:

... threatening bodily harm is a mandatory suspension, and certain things are mandatory and other things are discretionary suspensions. But, suspension only goes so far. And then, again it's the lack of support [from parents], because we don't have a lot of recourse about what we're gonna do. And so suspension was kind of like what we did, all the time ...

Loose coupling, combined with the ambiguous nature of bullying, means that suspensions are not applied uniformly or consistently within or between schools. Regardless, suspensions and expulsions are often used as measurements of the success of anti-violence policies. If numbers of suspensions decrease, this is taken as effective policy or program implementation, and vice versa. For example, one elementary school principal stated that their “*biggest measurement is our suspensions. And I'm really proud of that. You know when I look at the way our numbers dropped. That to me is our huge measurement*”. Furthermore, a high school principal elaborated that:

The big thing now is base-line data, and benchmarks ... and we should have goals. For example, if we had 200 suspensions dealing with bullying, maybe we should get it down to 100, make the education ... there's always that data available to us, to kind of, to have a benchmark with. Whether we do it or not, whether we have the time to do it or not – probably not.

Since suspensions and expulsions are not applied uniformly across the board, they are not accurate indicators of success or failure. The following excerpt from a school social worker outlines some of the many problems associated with using suspension rates as indicators of effectiveness:

Respondent: *We absolutely do keep track of all suspensions and expulsions that happen in the school, by grade level.*

Interviewer: *I was thinking it might be interesting to compare with youth violence rates with stats Canada ... I'm sure the board does that kind of thing.*

Respondent: *Well we don't often ... we don't. Because we don't have the time. There may be somebody here who has done that – I certainly haven't done that. But one of the things that we'll probably be doing is looking at suspension rates and some of the safe schools data we get from the survey, by school.*

Interviewer: *That would be an interesting comparison.*

Respondent: *The other issue though with bullying, is if you just look at suspension rates and discipline records that people keep of discipline in school, if you only consider those things then you're missing huge components of what bullying is about.*

Interviewer: *Oh definitely.*

Respondent: *Especially the relational stuff that goes on among kids and especially among girls, because it's hidden. It's very difficult to detect, and it can be just as destructive. So the physical stuff often isn't serious enough, it's right in your face, you can see it, you can put a stop to it, but the relational aggression that goes on is very difficult to identify. And so when we just look at suspensions and all those kinds of things, it really doesn't give us that true picture of what's going on.*

Even though suspension and expulsion rates are not appropriate indicators of the rate and prevalence of bullying, they are frequently used as such. Zero tolerance policies serve as a non-therapeutic structural response: schools are able to claim that they do not tolerate bullying behaviours or violence, and that they have a policy in place to ensure their commitment. However, once the ambiguous definition of bullying, the discretion of administrators, and loose coupling are introduced into the equation, the policy is not applied as uniformly or consistently as it is claimed. While suspension is used as a solution, it can actually cause *more* problems, instead of reducing behaviours. Increased suspension and expulsion rates are attributed as the cause of many negative factors which impact not only the students, but also the student's family, and community. Most commonly, the negative factors of suspension and expulsion include increased drop-out

rates, increased criminalization rates, increased anti-social behaviour, a general loss of education, and negative psychological impact. Similarly, many believe that zero-tolerance policies lead to anti-social behaviour, and the increased criminalization of students (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2004)³⁹. In general, zero tolerance policies are a highly contentious response to school violence. It is laden with ambiguities in implementation, and it is a highly contested response. ‘Softer’ responses, or those of a more therapeutic nature such as social skills programs, are sought after and are seen as being more attractive responses. This is described further, below.

Board policies, school policies, and codes of conduct are quite explicit in their rules and regulations. However, they do not, and cannot, outline every possible incidence of violence, or every extenuating circumstance of an altercation between students. Thus, it is left up to the discretion of school administrators to handle disruptive situations, such as bullying. At the outset, this seems to be a prudent decision: leave major decisions, such as suspension and expulsion, up to the authorities who know the students personally, instead of following cut-and-dried rules that may not be applicable to the situation at hand. However, upon further examination, it is revealed that administrative discretion is problematic, as it leads to inconsistencies between and within schools.

During the personal interviews, it was demonstrated that administrators feel the need to teach children about bullying, not merely suspend them for engaging in bullying

³⁹ Interestingly, during the House debates on the Safe Schools Act, the Minister of Education acknowledged that sending children out of school through suspension or expulsion creates additional problems for the student and the community, because the problem is being moved from the classroom to the street. Acknowledging this sentiment, the Minister of Education claimed that the government would provide support for those students who were suspended or expelled. Interestingly, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2004), claims that the government has not upheld its promise, and is not providing support for students who are suspended or expelled.

behaviours. However, if teachers cannot recognize or understand bullying because of its definitional ambiguity, then it is difficult to teach students how to recognize bullying. Furthermore, parents, taxpayers, and community members want reassurance that schools are responding seriously to bullying, and claiming that zero-tolerance policies are in use serves just that purpose. The discretion of administrators, and the negotiation between administrators and students, was further explicated by a police liaison officer during an interview:

Well, first of all, everything is negotiable. The Safe Schools Act calls it "extenuating circumstances", and there is a clause leaving some discretion to the principal or vice principal of the school. I mean, there are so many factors that have to be taken into consideration with every situation. Especially things like mental and emotional status. They can be major factors in any situation. No situation is black and white. There are too many variables. There is a realization, or an unspoken understanding, that each situation will be dealt with seriously but individually. However, the concept of zero-tolerance is another thing. It's a concept that teachers don't and didn't buy into.

Interestingly, while members of the institutional environment, such as parents, buy-in to, and even desire, zero-tolerance policies, the teachers who must uphold the policy do not buy-in to it. One principal of a high school explained that having a lot of discretion leads to inconsistencies, which is largely problematic:

***Interviewer:** Do you think, though, having that much discretion... does that give a lack of consistency?*

***Respondent:** Yep. That's a big problem. Big, big problem. And they're trying to address that problem. I mean, you could even do something lower level. Um, a kid tells a teacher to f-off, at one school, one school may give him 10 days, and one school may give him an afternoon...there are what are called mandatory suspensions, and discretionary suspensions. And that was an attempt to make it more consistent. But even within that framework, it still can be inconsistent... But what is persistent truancy to me could be different from you. What is opposition to authority could be different from one principal to the other.*

The inconsistent manner in which zero-tolerance is applied means that it is likely to not have as strong of an effect as desired. Inconsistencies can also occur between teachers within the same school due to the loose coupling that exists between classrooms: each teacher has control over their own classroom, and can deal with situations as they see fit.

Of the respondents interviewed, many of the teachers indicated that the training they receive in regards to bullying is minimal. Unanimously, the principals and teachers that were interviewed agreed that they had not been trained in – and not even *discussed* – bullying while they were in teachers college⁴⁰. Of the few times that training programs are offered to teachers and school administrators, many of the respondents indicated that they did not accept the training offered, and had never had *any* kind of formal training in regards to bullying. However, even if teachers were to receive training, it may have no effect: how are teachers to be adequately trained in a topic that is not clearly defined? The inherently ambiguous nature of bullying poses a serious challenge for creating and implementing training programs. One elementary school teacher discussed the few training programs that are available:

Respondent: *There are training programs and there are workshops, and you can find out about them usually through a memo or by going onto the internet, going to the board website and finding what they've got going on. And it's easy to get into them. But there's [pause] no real drive for it. I haven't ever been inspired to go to one of them. I've been more inspired to take my time and work with kids.*

Interviewer: *So they're not mandatory*

Respondent: *No, no it's usually... there's sometimes a program that's mandatory for one person from each school to be the lead expert on it or the person who has had the formal training, like, and that's the*

⁴⁰ It must be noted that many of the teachers who were interviewed had graduated teachers college within the past five years (during the increasing bullying movement), and one of the respondents was still enrolled in teachers college.

same as saying, you know, there's just one person in each school who has to have first- be a certified first-aider, and there isn't too much about it. Now, there are more mandatory programs like that for principals, because they are, you know, ultimately in the school the be-all and end-all and that's where it stops. And if, you know, the shit's really gonna hit the fan, they're the one that has to deal with it. Because, you know, our teachers are typically resources, but it's the principal's job.

As discussed elsewhere, principals have a large amount of discretion, and are also the primary decision makers within the school. Therefore, if the principal believes that bullying is a prevalent social problem, they may be more apt to implement teacher training. However, as the respondents indicated, people within the schools do not actually believe that bullying is as prevalent as it is claimed to be. Therefore, principals are unlikely to make training mandatory, and teachers are unlikely to participate in the training that does become available.

An elementary school vice principal stated during an interview that there is no mandated formal training in regards to bullying:

I don't think that there's formal training for it, like through the board. I don't think it's been a board initiative, like maybe... there's none that I know of, to be honest. It may be, now that they're doing this Second Steps thing, it may be something that's gonna come to light. But they've never made... like we're doing tons of in-servicing, and I think until it comes down from the Ministry, "thou shalt do this" it won't be done, unless... Unfortunately something major might have to happen before the Ministry says "we have to do something about this".

However, a school social worker did elaborate on the minimal training that is offered by the board. The respondent stated it is available to teachers and administrators, but it is not necessarily about bullying; instead, it is about the specific programs that are available:

there's a huge push-on within the board, and within the Hamilton community right now to end bullying. So certainly, I mean there's a

social worker dedicated to look at violence prevention initiatives. The training tends to be on the specific programs, looking at rectifying or intervening around bullying. So, yes. At various times of the year, if you're interested in running this program, here's the in-service dates. And then, a couple months later, here's the training on this particular thing. But, it wouldn't be like, you know, come and we're going to tell you about bullying. It would be, we'll tell you about bullying, put it in the context, and then here's what you can do about it, in terms of a specific program.

A high school teacher that was interviewed explained that although there are some in-service training programs available, often the only teachers who will attend the training are those teachers who have another goal in mind; a goal that is not the reduction of bullying behaviours:

the teachers who are interested are the teachers who want to build up their resume because they want to take VPs courses and they want to become a principal. So, then they take those courses to pad their resume and that kind of stuff. You know, whether its health and safety, whether its first aid – you know, these are the types of courses that are offered...they're offered once a semester kind of thing, and so the same people that take them all the time. It's not because they're interested in stopping bullying here, but they're more interested in getting their resume padded if they took a course on bullying.

Therefore, of the limited training that is available, it is not utilized to the extent that it is intended to be. Although resume padding is a common organizational phenomenon, in this instance it further emphasizes the notion that teachers do not believe that bullying is as prevalent, or important, as it is claimed to be.

Within the school, teachers have the most interaction with their students, have the most influence over students, and have the most knowledge of the individual student, their families and their needs. However, as demonstrated previously, they also have the most time constraints, attempting to cover everything in the curriculum, as well as other

board mandated programs. Thus, taking the time to get at the heart of a situation, or the cause of a conflict, may not always be the teacher's first priority. Often, it is the influence of the principal, and the discretionary decisions that the principal makes, that influence how teachers respond to violent situations. For example:

It depends on the principal. I have a principal who really places a lot of value in being out on the playground, and seeing the kids, and being there and being involved and walking around talking to them. So, I would say that my principal is more proactive in that sense and is more apt to be on the same field as the teachers, but there are other principals who can't afford that, the luxury for themselves, or aren't interested, or you know there's a myriad of reasons.

Principals also have the authority to decide whether or not anti-bullying and anti-violence programs are implemented in their school. Discretion comes into play in this situation as well:

Interviewer: And how do you decide – or whoever does – how is it decided what you're going to use at your school?

Respondent: Principal, principal, principal. It's filtered through committees and chairs of committees, so schools are completely autonomous in terms of – and maybe too much autonomy, because you mentioned about being consistent – it's up to schools and principals if they think there's an issue at their school with bullying, to educate children. Some do a great job. Some don't do the job at all. They may not be a huge issue at their school. Their school may be dealing with more of a racism thing as opposed to bullying. So I mean it's really up to the different school, the principal, the team of teachers, the community within the school, the parent council.

Discretion and loose coupling prove beneficial to schools, as administrators can decide which program their school needs, if they need one at all. Further, they demonstrate that schools are attempting to solve the problem, but they allow the school to do so in their own manner. However, since there is not a board-mandated program, principals may choose *not* to implement a program unless it is in response to institutional pressures.

Furthermore, if they are merely responding to pressure, they may implement a program, regardless of its efficacy. Interestingly:

... the Public board gives its discretion to principals. However, if they aren't being told by the government what to do, it's really an individual thing and depends on the school and the principal, and on the initiative to implement a brand new program. It also depends on how much money the school has to implement a program, and how much that program costs.

Thus, there are many discretionary decisions regarding the implementation of anti-bullying programs. Furthermore,

how each school chooses to implement that program has much more flexibility. So, it's happening, but how exactly is up to the schools. But, you know, it's up to common sense judgement, and expertise within the school itself.

Although discretion is frequently used, and decisions vary within and between schools, the schools and administrators are not reprimanded for their inconsistencies by members of the institutional environment such as policy makers, board members and tax payers; since schools are required to set individual requirements that are consistent with board documents, discretionary variations are still similar and congruent within the over-arching rules and regulations. Therefore, schools essentially are conforming to one another, and upholding rationalized institutional myths. Discretion allows the schools to create myths that meet their own local needs, conform ceremonially to the wider school system, and thereby retain legitimacy.

Frequently, the 'tighter' responses that schools implement – such as zero tolerance – are highly contested. This encourages schools to re-frame the issue in a more appealing

manner. Currently, the therapeutic culture is the frame that is utilized by schools when implementing programs and initiatives to address bullying behaviours.

4.4 CULTURAL FRAMING

4.4a The Old Frame

Social problems like bullying were once dealt with by telling children that their experiences would make them stronger or teach them lessons about the ‘real world’, and that they had to stand up for themselves and solve their own problems, not be ‘rescued’ by adults. Bullying was often seen as a typical behaviour, or a right of passage that students must go through, and the methods of dealing with bullies – such as ‘fighting back’, or ‘standing up for yourself’ – were taken for granted as the so-called ‘natural consequences’ were seen as the best solution (Colvin et al. 1998). Schools dealt with violent behaviours in a different manner than they do now: explicit policies existed that delineated specific consequences for specific actions. Removing problematic behaviour was a higher priority than attending to the feelings and emotions of victims and perpetrators. Programs like zero-tolerance were hailed as the solution to school violence. However, harsh policies such as zero-tolerance are a highly contentious response to school violence, as they are laden with ambiguities in implementation, and therefore are becoming a highly contested response (Nolan, 1998). This counter frame was of a more tightly-coupled nature, creating challenges for consistent implementation. Alternatively, ‘softer’ responses, or those of a more loosely-coupled and therapeutic nature, such as social skills programs, are sought after, and are seen as being more attractive responses than those of the older counter-frame.

4.4b The Therapeutic Frame

Therapeutic culture gives meaning to the expanding definitions of bullying, as they move into the non-physical realm. The emerging therapeutic cultural frame is not clear or explicit; as it deals with emotional deficits and problems, and not biological problems, there are not tangible solutions or cures. Thus, by expanding the definition of bullying to encompass emotional deficiencies and problems, it brings bullying into the therapeutic frame and imbues it with a greater urgency through creating a notion of emotional vulnerability. The ambiguity of the definition, the lack of clear-cut solutions, and its affinity for diffuse goals allows the therapeutic culture to evolve and expand, further promoting the cultural framework, and requiring minimal justification.

As individuals attempt to make sense of their lives, they are strongly influenced by the cultural norms that surround them. Although people, by nature, do not wish themselves to be sick or ill, if the cultural norms surrounding them provide signals that their troubles can be explained by a therapeutic label, they are apt to accept that label. The availability of an explanatory label – such as a therapeutic diagnosis – can make feelings and emotion seem tangible, and even treatable. In this sense, diagnosis can create a peace of mind, allow individuals the opportunity to gain moral sympathy, and help them make sense of their identity, because “at a time of existential insecurity, a medical diagnosis at least has the virtue of definition” (Furedi, 2004: 182). As the therapeutic cultural frame gains ascendancy, society accepts and utilizes this new frame, which provides meaning and resonance to the structural responses that the organization institutes. The schools’ use of empathy, social skills programs, and the self-esteem

movement serve to both legitimate the therapeutic cultural frame, as well as to indicate its prevalence within the educational system.

Blaming has become a major component of the therapeutic culture, and as such it has become a common practice. Frequently, bullying is blamed for physical and emotional issues that students experience while in school, and adults are blaming childhood bullying for the problems they face later in life. Toxic parents and childhood trauma are external influences that are frequently blamed by victims for their emotional injuries. Victims feel entitled to place blame, and reject responsibility. However, placing blame does not achieve anything for the victim, other than to fuel the cultural validation for placing blame. Schools and bullying are but two of the many factors that are blamed for the emotional traumas that many people believe they are experiencing. As the therapeutic cultural frame gains ascendancy, people begin to place blame more frequently than they take responsibility. Furthermore, the ambiguous definition, and the perceived prevalence of bullying, allows blame to be placed easily and readily.

4.4c The Social Skills, Empathy, and Self Esteem Movement

The programs that are instituted within schools often have a social skills approach to them, which makes them more widely accepted than programs that take a punitive, or disciplinary approach. When anti-bullying programs cannot, or do not, work, social skills programs are relied upon to do the job instead. Social skills, as a core part of the therapeutic culture, gives the program meaning and resonance, and therefore reduces the need to demonstrate efficacy. Frequently, school-based anti-bullying programs provide social skills training to student, focussing on conflict resolution, interpersonal skills,

anger management, and character education (Colvin et al., 1998: 309). As an example, one elementary school vice principal explained a social-skill-based anti-bullying program:

It's from the US. It's the same thing; building self-confidence, making good choices, the whole manners piece, how to deal with anger ... and it's right K[indergarten] through [grade] eight. And its mandatory that the teachers cover it every Thursday morning for 20 minutes, school-wide. And I think that's a really important piece, given the children I'm dealing with now. You and I were raised in homes where there are manners, and there are expectations, and doors are held open for one another, and my children in this school aren't being raised in those types of homes, not all of them. And so we have to teach them those values, and we have to instil in them the protocol we're expecting from them in school, and hopefully at home eventually. And then with that program in place, we're building the confidence. We're giving them the tools to deal with their friends.

The therapeutic culture has seeped into the classroom environment, and it can be seen with the numerous social skill programs that schools, and even individual teachers, are implementing. Schools are stepping out of their traditional role as an institution of instruction, and becoming an institution of feeling. Children are frequently taught how to properly feel, how to recognize their emotions, and how to be emotionally responsible. A prime example is exclusionary bullying, where children are taught that they must include one another in their games and activities or they are considered to be engaging in bullying.

Advocates of the therapeutic model argue that mental health services provided to schools must be increased, because emotional and mental health problems have been attributed as some of the greatest obstacles to learning. Furthermore, it has been argued that in order to prevent problems and reduce violence, the emotional, social, and

developmental need of students must be attended to. It is claimed that unless the community and schools acquire and utilize resources to learn to help students experiencing mental health problems, the students may never get the help they need. Interestingly, the prevailing belief is that movement from a traditional disciplinarian approach – or a law-enforcement model – to a mental health model (including the development of social skills, counselling, and social workers) is the most effective change (Newman, 2004: 294-297).

The principal of an elementary school demonstrated the view that teaching children social skills, and focussing on social-emotional education, is analogous to feeding children – something that everyone recognizes as a basic need:

you know, we spend millions of dollars feeding kids because a hungry kid can't learn, and we spend very little on feeding the social-emotional side of kids, and we feel strongly that that's just as big a component as feeding kids, in a traditional sense... my philosophy is that we have to, we feed kids so that they learn better. We have to feed their minds to get them emotionally prepared. So, a major component of where we're moving to is feeding their minds so they're emotionally stable and ready to learn.

Portraying social-emotional education as a basic need, such as eating, implies its perceived importance, and creates the impression that social skills training is as an important educational requirement. This demonstrates that the infiltration of the therapeutic culture serves to justify a wider goal: the production of empathy. However, teaching children social skills or empathy will not ensure the elimination of bullying behaviours; instead, it draws attention from the obvious counter understandings and places the importance on the new cultural frame. Similarly, although some researchers have reported that bullies lack social skills (e.g. Dodge & Frame, 1982; Dodge et al.,

1986), others have found this not to be the case. In fact, Smith et al., (1993) found that bullies have a wealth of social skills, and are able to select from numerous social strategies to find the best means of achieving dominance within their social relationships (Bosworth et al., 1999: 345). However, proponents of social skills programs believe that it may be able to reduce bullying behaviours because “*what you’re trying to do is teach the children to be empathetic. Because if you’re empathetic, you won’t bully, because you know what it feels like*” (retired elementary school principal, during an interview).

For example, the vice principal of an elementary school stated that

we’re addressing a social skill. Which is really the essence to, I think, changing bullying, is educating children how to treat one another. And hopefully somewhere along the line you’re going to reduce it... it’s never going to eliminate it. All you can do is hope to reduce it... And I’m a real believer that if you put the social skills in place, maybe I’m too optimistic, but I really feel that if we’re raising these children to be ladies and gentlemen – and those are the words I use with them – then somewhere the bullying is going to be reduced with that, because we’re giving the skills of kindness and respect and warmth and empathy. That’s what surrounds what we’re giving the children, and if they are able to digest those skills, then you know what, there should be no room for bullying left in that heart.

Although socialization has always been a purpose of schooling, it is often part of the ‘hidden curriculum’, a term that describes the routine classroom practices that are enmeshed within the school and classroom practices, but are not outlined in the curriculum; instead, they are ‘hidden’ and embedded within the day-to-day occurrences of school life (Brint et al., 2001: 165). The public is often quite insistent that schools address social problems, such as teenage pregnancy and drug use. However, recently the public has been concerned with schools addressing social skill sets, and insisting that schools explicitly teach social skills. As the socialization messages become explicit –

such as teaching appropriate emotional responses, and focussing on interpersonal relationships and social skills – the socialization messages that were once part of the hidden curriculum become overt. Instead of teaching children social skills through invisible means, the therapeutic culture has ensured that they are taught through overt, explicitly stated instruction, and this new goal is justified through therapeutics (Brint et al., 2001: 165).

The language that is used also plays a role in how effective the social skill, or anti-bullying, program will be. To some extent, calling bullying intervention programs ‘social skill programs’ takes away from the negative connotations associated with the term ‘bullying’, and replaces them with the positive connotations associated with the therapeutic culture; connotations that constituents of the institutional environment and the therapeutic culture are more likely to buy-in to. For example, the vice principal of an elementary school stated that:

there seems to be a little bit of a move away from calling it “anti-bullying”, looking more at a social skills program, because as soon as you say “bullying” it kind of sets off all kinds of things, and it kind of opens doors for people, “well you’re doing bullying there” and you know “what’s going on there because my child’s being bullied” and stuff like that. And we had a talk at a principal’s meeting ... one of the guys that’s a principal ... he had done a huge thing, and he said that if he were to do it again he would never mention “bullying”. He said “I would look at it more like a social skills program” and I think that may be the way we go more is, try to do... teach, reinforce what’s good instead of punishing what’s bad sort of thing.

Both peer mediation programs and whole school social skills programs are laden with cultural appeal. Given the therapeutic cultural frame, programs involving group dynamics that are described as increasing positive relationships – as both peer mediation

and social skills programs proclaim – are used because of their cultural appeal, not because they are effective technology.

Due to the therapeutic cultural frame, focus on children's mental and emotional health has lead to the increased domain of social workers within the school. Within the Hamilton Board of Education, as well as other boards of Education, there are social workers involved at the board level, the school level, and the individual, or student, level. These social workers are often turned to for advice, program implementation, and training. Social workers are claimed to be uniquely suited to help not only the children involved in the bullying, but also their families⁴¹. They are also claimed to be able to address peer victimization at all levels of intervention. Social workers are accepted and welcomed into the school because they are assumed to be an aid to fulfilling the goal of teaching children social skills, and the goal of the therapeutic culture which is to produce empathy. Meyer et al. (1981) argue that schools often use signals such as appropriate facilities, adhering to 'proper' topics of instruction, and credentials to signal conformity. Therefore, the use of social workers within the school is a method of using a professional credential to signal conformity. Social workers are seen as a therapeutic agent of social control who can facilitate the development of empathy and social skills.

As the therapeutic culture has influenced and changed the cultural frame, self-esteem has become a core goal of the education system. Students have taken the idea of self-esteem to heart, most likely due to the increased attention and emphasis by schools

⁴¹ Interestingly, even though social workers are claimed to be able to influence and positively change the bullying behaviours of children, bullying has received relatively little attention within the social work literature (Mishna, 2003: 513).

(Nolan, 1998). Furthermore, the therapeutic culture alters our view of bullying by making its presumed impact on self-esteem central, which allows for the expansive definition of bullying to persist and grow. Chriss (1999) claims that self-esteem is a core focus on because of the decline in the traditional areas of life that were supposed to provide children with increased levels of self-esteem. Children are often viewed as living their lives as victims, where self-esteem is severely lacking, due to the perceived breakdown of the family unit, the infiltration of the expertocracy (deemed necessary due to the increased rates of children with behavioural and emotional disorders, and teachers who are too 'stressed' to cope with them), and the false perception that violence is increasing, thereby leaving children to grow up in unsafe, crime-ridden neighbourhoods (Chriss, 1999: 192).

The concept of self-esteem has become a taken-for-granted concept, typically indicating feeling good about oneself, feeling happy and confident. These are all desirable states, making the notion of self-esteem unlikely to be challenged because of the predominant therapeutic cultural frame, which incites us to focus on concepts such as self-esteem and empathy. Since the therapeutic culture has its basis in emotional vulnerability, raising people's self-esteem in an effort to make people feel good about themselves is a core concept. The vague and ambiguous nature of therapeutic diagnoses calls for an equally vague and ambiguous solution; an all-purpose cure-all such as raising self-esteem serves just that purpose. Similarly, the vague and ambiguous nature of bullying calls for a vague and ambiguous solution, such as raising students' self-esteem.

As the therapeutic culture achieves ascendancy, feelings and overall well-being become a cultural focus. Claims have been made that in order to cure society, decisive action must be taken to raise the self-esteem of vulnerable groups, such as single parents, school children, youth and adolescents, and many more. Furthermore, claims-makers, attempting to raise awareness about social problems such as bullying and youth violence, often emphasize the damage that the purported problem can have on self-esteem levels. However, low self-esteem has become a catch-all explanation for everyday problems. The idea that one factor can be the cause of so many social and emotional problems is a tribute to the cultural forces that have led to the therapeutic culture and the universality of self-esteem. It is able to attach itself to any problem and any issue. The myth of self-esteem is that it can work as a magic-bullet solution, fixing numerous individual and societal problems. This has led to the “self-esteem movement”, promoting the inflation of self-esteem as a magic potion situated to cure all of society’s, and all individuals’, ailments, including those claimed to be caused by bullying⁴² (Furedi, 2004: 155-157).

Even though self-esteem has been demonstrated to cause problems, it is nevertheless seen as a cure-all to social and emotional problems like bullying. The reason it is still seen in a positive light is because it has been culturally framed as such. The dominance and infiltration of the therapeutic culture means that concepts associated with

⁴² On the other hand, Furedi (2004) describes a major study undertaken by Professor Nicholas Emler (London School of Economics), which demonstrates raising self-esteem can actually *cause* problems. In fact, it was shown that students with high levels of self-esteem were more likely to engage in bullying behaviours, and other violent or dangerous activities (p. 158). Interestingly, bullies are often found to have high levels of self-esteem, although the common belief is that their self-esteem levels would be lower than others (Duncan, 1999: 872).

the therapeutic culture will gain dominance as well. Therefore, the decision to raise self-esteem has gained ascendancy in many areas of life, especially within the school system.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Schools face numerous organizational constraints when they attempt to address a perceived social problem. Some of the constraints that were examined include: definitional ambiguity, the perceived prevalence of bullying, environmental demands, limited resources, the use of unclearly effective technology, and working within a loosely coupled system. Given these organizational constraints, combined with the pressure to respond, schools respond in unique ways.

Some of the structural responses to these organizational constraints include ceremonial conformity, inconsistent implementation of programs and policies, the use of discretion and loose coupling, and using programs and policies that are culturally appealing. In the case of bullying, the therapeutic culture provides the frame whereby structural responses are imbued with meaning and resonance because of this pervasive cultural frame. The therapeutic culture stems from the creation of empathy, the self-esteem ideology, and the use of social skills programs. Together, the organizational constraints, the structural responses, and the cultural frame provide some insight into how schools are responding to the pressures to address the social problem of bullying.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

5.1a Introduction

5.1b Organizational and Structural Constraints

5.1c The Structure of Anti-Bullying Programs

5.1d Cultural Meaning

5.1e Implications for Social Problems in Education

5.1a Introduction

This thesis has addressed the following research questions: What constraints do schools face when implementing anti-bullying programs?; How do schools structure anti-bullying programs?, and; How are anti-bullying programs made culturally meaningful? Correspondingly, it has addressed the following conclusions: first, that schools will face both structural and organizational constraints when implementing anti-bullying programs, including working within a loosely coupled system, only having pre-packaged anti-bullying programs to implement, needing to appease the institutional environment and retain legitimacy, and having to address social problems on top of an already full curriculum; second, that schools implement structural responses that are loosely coupled with their practices, and; third, that schools are implementing programs of a therapeutic nature as opposed to using a traditional punitive approach. These research questions and conclusions were addressed using an institutional analysis, as well as examining the infiltration of the therapeutic culture into the school system. This chapter will succinctly summarize the key findings, and provide some conclusions to the aforementioned questions, as well as the implications for addressing social problems in education. A summary of this chapter can be found in Appendix 12.

5.1b Organizational and Structural Constraints

When schools are implementing anti-bullying programs, they face numerous structural and organizational constraints. Schools must respond to bullying not because of need, but because of pressure. This was indicated by the numerous teachers who did not believe that bullying was more prevalent than it had been in the past. Therefore, schools must adopt programs in order to retain legitimacy, however these programs are often of uncertain technology (such as peer mediation). Since a vague definition of bullying exists that schools must work with, there are a lack of programs that are technologically sound or that have proven efficacy. As a result, quick-fix programs are appealing, and they are often implemented in order to appear ceremonially compliant. For example, there are numerous ongoing school programs that deal with social problems. Currently within Ontario, there are programs addressing poverty and homelessness⁴³, cross-cultural communication⁴⁴, gendered issues⁴⁵, race, diversity and equality⁴⁶, and

⁴³ *The HWDSB Anti-Poverty Task Force* addresses the claimed manifestations of poverty, including low and unreliable income, poor health, low levels of education and literacy, disempowerment and isolation from mainstream society. Accessed online 23 May 2006 at

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/directors_place/action/index.aspx

⁴⁴ *Adopt a Village Campaign* addresses the exchange of opportunities between students in different countries with the goal of participating in unprecedented cross-cultural communication, and increasing leadership and character education. Accessed online 23 May 2006 at

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/directors_place/action/index.aspx

⁴⁵ *Project G.O. – Girls Only* uses role-modelling and single-gender programming to support young women and develop leadership skills and character. *Boys to Men* is a mentoring and counselling program designed to attend to the “growing problem with our boys”, and supposed increases in violence, anger, alienation and underachievement that boys today are claimed to face. Accessed online 23 May 2006 at

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/directors_place/action/index.aspx

⁴⁶ *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity* is an attempt to extend current multicultural education, and focus on teaching respect for members of all cultures and ethnicities while simultaneously creating safe and respectful learning environments. Accessed online 23 May 2006 at

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/antiraci/antire.html>

promoting healthy lifestyles⁴⁷. Furthermore, policies and curriculum are being developed to address the purported social problems of homelessness and poverty, mental illness, drug and alcohol use, gambling, obesity and weight related problems, and family abuse⁴⁸. These are just a few examples demonstrating the dominance social problems have within the education system.

The loosely coupled system of the school also serves as a constraint: each teacher has control of their own classroom giving them discretion entailing that anti-bullying programs will be dealt with inconsistently. The current curriculum that exists covers numerous areas of instruction (see Appendix 1), and the introduction of new programs or elements is often frowned upon by teachers, who do not have time to deal with additional problems or programs. These organizational and structural constraints make it difficult for schools to implement anti-bullying programs, and therefore they must structure them specifically in order to retain legitimacy and appear ceremonially compliant.

5.1c The Structure of Anti-Bullying Programs

In order for schools to legitimately respond to the pressures from the institutional environment, schools often utilize a loosely coupled approach. While loose coupling can pose difficulties for schools, it also can be beneficial. In the case of bullying – and for that matter, all social problems education – the use of a loosely coupled system works to

⁴⁷ *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* provides breakfast for underprivileged youth in an attempt “a) to prevent emotional, behavioural, social, physical, and cognitive problems in young children living in socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods; b) to promote healthy child development in these children; and c) to enhance the abilities of families and communities to provide for their children”. Accessed online 23 May 2006 at <http://www.fedcan.ca/english/fromold/breakfast-peters1299.cfm>

⁴⁸ Accessed online 23 May 2006 at: http://www.camh.net/Research/Research_publications/Research_AR_2003/socfac_previnterven_rar2003.html

appease and placate members of the institutional environment, signal conformity, and retain legitimacy. The quick-fix programs that are often implemented by schools rarely contain goals or outcomes, meaning that rigorous program evaluation cannot occur. Schools will use satisfaction surveys, or student, parent, and teacher questionnaires in place of rigorous program evaluation. This indicates that they are ‘doing something’ about bullying, but are loosely coupling their actions from actual evaluations. Similarly, schools often evaluate program ‘success’ through suspension rates, which do not actually indicate success (i.e. the reduction of bullying), but again, serve to signal that they are ‘doing something’ about the problem. With the increasing popularity of more therapeutic approaches, programs that focus on self-esteem are favoured over more traditional punitive programs, such as zero tolerance. As a result, there is an increase in culturally appealing programs like peer-mediation, even though they are not technologically sound.

5.1d Cultural Meaning

Traditional punitive programs, such as zero-tolerance, are losing support; they are increasingly criticised for being too harsh, and for not dealing with the child on a personal level. These programs are being replaced by more therapeutic approaches which attempt to teach appropriate behaviours as opposed to merely punishing inappropriate behaviours. Schools take on outside therapeutic experts, such as social workers and bullying program facilitators. By doing so, new and combined goals emerge, such as attempting to raise the self-esteem of students. Thus, children are praised for exhibiting ‘appropriate’ emotions, not praised merely for academic achievement. Similarly, there is a change in focus from being called ‘anti-bullying’ programs, to being called ‘social skills’ programs.

5.1e Implications for Social Problems in Education

This thesis espouses five major implications for addressing any social problem within an educational setting. First, we must expect definitional expansion. As a social problem gains perceived prevalence, the definition will expand, allowing for the creation of programs and experts, as people attempt to ‘latch on’ to the problem. Second, we can expect a certain organizational response; namely, the use of a loosely coupled system. Loose coupling allows for the use of ineffective technology and minimal evaluation and inspection; instead, the program is used to signal legitimacy and conformity, rather than effective social change. Third, we can expect social problems programs to be ‘tacked-on’ to the existing curriculum, and not fully integrated within it. This is because programs will ebb and flow as the priorities of the institutional environment shift, meaning that schools will adopt programs and policies in response to the current pressures. Fourth, we can expect other types of social problems education, not just bullying, to have priority within the school, including: health and wellness (physical, social, emotional, psychological), sexual education, anti-racism, multi-culturalism, and drug awareness. Fifth, and finally, we can expect the emergence of experts, as the therapeutic frame is likely to be used when dealing with any type of social problem, and the use of professionals and experts signal conformity and legitimacy. However, the emergence of experts who will combine forces with the school will entail the creation of new definitions of the purported problem, and therefore further expansion of the definition.

APPENDIX 1: SKELETAL OUTLINE OF THE ONTARIO CURRICULUM ACHIEVEMENT CHARTS

Achievement Chart – Grades 1-8⁴⁹

Categories	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Knowledge and Understanding – <i>Subject-specific content acquired in each grade (knowledge), and the comprehension of its meaning and significance (understanding)</i>				
The student:				
Knowledge of content	- demonstrates limited knowledge of content	- demonstrates some knowledge of content	- demonstrates considerable knowledge of content	- demonstrates thorough knowledge of content
Understanding of content	- demonstrates limited understanding of content	- demonstrates some understanding of content	- demonstrates considerable understanding of content	- demonstrates thorough understanding of content
Thinking – <i>The use of critical and creative thinking skills and/or processes</i>				
The student:				
Use of planning skills	- uses planning skills with limited effectiveness	- uses planning skills with some effectiveness	- uses planning skills with considerable effectiveness	- uses planning skills with a high degree of effectiveness
Use of processing skills	- uses processing skills with limited effectiveness	- uses processing skills with some effectiveness	- uses processing skills with considerable effectiveness	- uses processing skills with a high degree of effectiveness
Use of critical/creative thinking processes	- uses critical/creative thinking processes with limited effectiveness	- uses critical/creative thinking processes with some effectiveness	- uses critical/creative thinking processes with considerable effectiveness	- uses critical/creative thinking processes with a high degree of effectiveness
Communication – <i>The conveying of meaning through various forms</i>				
The student:				
Expression and organization of ideas and information in oral, visual and written forms	- expresses and organizes ideas and information with limited effectiveness	- expresses and organizes ideas and information with some effectiveness	- expresses and organizes ideas and information with considerable effectiveness	- expresses and organizes ideas and information with a high degree of effectiveness
Communication for different audiences and purposes in oral, visual and written forms	- communicates for different audiences and purposes with limited effectiveness	- communicates for different audiences and purposes with some effectiveness	- communicates for different audiences and purposes with considerable effectiveness	- communicates for different audiences and purposes with a high degree of effectiveness
Use of conventions, vocabulary, and terminology of the	- uses conventions, vocabulary, and terminology of the discipline with	- uses conventions, vocabulary, and terminology of the discipline with	- uses conventions, vocabulary, and terminology of the discipline with	- uses conventions, vocabulary, and terminology of the discipline with a

⁴⁹ Retrieved on November 28, 2004 at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/achievement/charts1to12.pdf>

discipline in oral, visual and written forms	limited effectiveness	some effectiveness	considerable effectiveness	high degree of effectiveness
Application – The use of knowledge and skills to make connections within and between various contexts				
The student:				
Application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts	- applies knowledge and skills in familiar contexts with limited effectiveness	- applies knowledge and skills in familiar contexts with some effectiveness	- applies knowledge and skills in familiar contexts with considerable effectiveness	- applies knowledge and skills in familiar contexts with a high degree of effectiveness
Transfer of knowledge and skills to new contexts	- transfers knowledge and skills to new contexts with limited effectiveness	- transfers knowledge and skills to new contexts with some effectiveness	- transfers knowledge and skills to new contexts with considerable effectiveness	- transfers knowledge and skills to new contexts with a high degree of effectiveness
Making connections within and between various contexts	- makes connections within and between various contexts with limited effectiveness	- makes connections within and between various contexts with some effectiveness	- makes connections within and between various contexts with considerable effectiveness	- makes connections within and between various contexts with a high degree of effectiveness

APPENDIX 2: CATALOGUE OF BULLYING DEFINITIONS⁵⁰

Date	Author	Definition
1991	Olweus	Bullying has been operationalized in various ways and includes a variety of hurtful actions such as name-calling, social exclusion, and having money taken or belongings damaged, as well as the more obvious forms of hitting and kicking (Crick, 1997; Crick et al., 1997; Menesini et al., 1997; Rigby et al., 1997; Thompson & Sharp, 1998). Those behaviours have been classified as direct and indirect bullying (Olweus, 1991). Direct bullying involves open attacks on a victim and indirect bullying is distinguished by social isolation, exclusion from a group, or nonselection for activities.
1991, as cited in 2002 (p. 15)	Olweus, as cited in Canadian Red Cross	Offensive, cruel, intimidating, insulting or humiliating behaviour, combined with the misuse of power or position. Attacks on a person (the victim) are often sudden, irrational, unpredictable and unfair. Bullying can be physical or verbal. It can be direct (face-to-face) or indirect, such as gossip or exclusion. Bullying is an assertion of power through aggression.
1992, as cited in 2002 (p. 15)	Tattum & Tattum, as cited in Canadian Red Cross	The wilful, conscious desire to hurt another and put him/her under stress.
1992 (p. 5)	Hoover et al.	According to Pikas (1989), the term ‘mobbing’ should be reserved for group attack on a single, low-status individual. Using this convention, bullying refers to attempts by stronger students to harm a weaker victim, presumably in the absence of provocation. The attempted harm can be of either a physical or psychological nature and is longitudinal in nature. The term ‘mobbing’ refers to situations where victims are chronically abused by several peers.
1993, as cited in 2002a (p. 155)	Farrington, as cited in Ireland, J.	a specific form of aggression that includes physical, psychological or verbal attack, involves an imbalance of power, is repeated and intended to cause harm or fear to the victim.
1993	Olweus	A behaviour of physical or psychological persecution of one student against another, the one s/he chooses as a

⁵⁰ All definitions are quoted directly from the source they were found in, however the quotation marks have been omitted for aesthetic appeal.

		victim of repeated attacks. This negative and intentional action places the victims in a position of which it is difficult to get out by their own means. The continuity of these relationships clearly has negative effects on the victims, causing loss of self-esteem and states of anxiety or even depression, which make difficult their integration in the school environment and their normal learning environment.
1993 (p. 7)	Whitney & Smith	We say a young person is being bullied, or picked on, when another child or young person, or a group of young people, say nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a young person is hit, kicked or threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no-one ever talks to them and things like that. These things can happen frequently and it is difficult for the young person being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a young person is teased repeatedly in a nasty way. But it is not bullying when two young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel.
1996	King et al.	We say a pupil is being bullied when another pupil, or a group of pupils, says or does nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a pupil is teased repeatedly in a way he or she doesn't like. But it is not bullying when two pupils of about the same strength quarrel or fight.
1996, as cited in 2002 (p. 15)	Rigby, as cited in Canadian Red Cross	Repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person or group. It is not the same thing as conflict, violence or disagreement – although it may involve all these. With bullying there is always a power imbalance, which makes the ill treatment of the victim possible.
1996 (p. 26)	Demko	Persistent bullying may be verbal, physical or psychological, or a combination of these. It can include kicking, shoving, name-calling, intimidation or torment, as well as the fear of being bullied.
1996 (p. 7)	Garrity et al.	When one person uses power in a wilful manner with the aim of hurting another individual repeatedly.
1997 (p. 249)	Smith	Bullying can be described most succinctly as the systematic abuse of power – persistent and repeated actions which are intended to intimidate or hurt another person. Bullying embraces many different types of direct and indirect aggressive behaviour, such as name-calling, rumour-mongering, social exclusion, extortion

		and physical violence; and also some types of discrimination and harassment – aggressive behaviours directed at a person or group of people because of their identity. But a conflict or disagreement between two individuals or groups who have equal status or power would not be classed as bullying behaviour.
1997 (p. 205)	Nelms	Bullying is much more than teasing. According to Fried and Fried (1997) six factors are characteristic of significant bullying. These factors help us distinguish normal teasing from true bullying behaviour. These factors are: (a) the intent to harm; indeed, the bully will continue even when the victim's distress is obvious; (b) intensity and duration; the teasing and taunting occurs over a long period of time; (c) power of the abuser; often the perpetrator maintains power as a result of age, size, strength, or sex; (d) vulnerability of the victim; victims frequently have certain physical or psychological characteristics that make them more vulnerable to bullying; (e) lack of support; victims are often isolated and fail to report because of fear of retaliation; (f) consequences; the damage to the victim is long lasting, often resulting in withdrawal or aggression. Indeed, some victims may attempt suicide, whereas others may turn to very aggressive acts such as classroom shootings as a last result.
1997	Rigby	Bullying can be usefully defined along lines suggested by Farrington (1993) as repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group. It is not the same thing as conflict, violence or disagreement – although it may involve all these. With bullying there is always a power imbalance which makes the ill-treatment of the victim possible.
1997 (p. 62)	Boulton & Hawker	What is bullying? Studies by ourselves and others have shown that while everyone is likely to agree that it is a “bad” thing, and to regard physical assaults as bullying, there is disagreement about what other acts count as bullying.
1997 (p. 62)	Boulton & Hawker	While it is difficult to provide a definitive answer to this question – after all, each episode is likely to be unique – there are reasons why we think it is necessary at least to consider the possibility that these sorts of activities may be bullying. A recent study in the USA found that 9-12 year old children often viewed these

		behaviours as associated with anger and as involving harm to others, two characteristics that psychologists take as defining features of aggression [Crick et al., 1996]. For these sorts of reasons, researchers working in the anti-bullying field have moved away from the stereotypical view of bullying as “just” physical assaults. There is not a consensus that children can and do rely on many non-physical acts in the service of their hostile interpersonal aims [Bjorkqvist et al., 1992].
1997 (p. 62)	Boulton & Hawker	But do adults who work directly with young people, and indeed young people themselves, regard some non-physical acts as bullying? ...[the results]... clearly indicate that there was much more agreement for the physical item than for all of the non-physical items. This was most pronounced for deliberate social exclusion – fewer than half of the teachers and the Junior school pupils, and only about one in five of the secondary school pupils, regarded this as bullying.
1998 (p. 294)	Colvin et al.	Bullying may take the form of any number of aggressive and antisocial behaviours, such as, insulting, teasing, abusing verbally and physically, threatening, humiliating, harassing, and mobbing. The following features are critical indicators of bullying: (a) malicious intent, (b) intense and continued mistreatment, (c) powerful abuser, (d) vulnerable and isolated victim, and (e) damaging consequences.
1999 (p. 216)	Pelligrini et al.	Bullies are defined as youngsters who repeatedly use negative actions, such as physical or verbal aggression, against victims (Olweus, 1991, 1993). Bullies are also more aggressive, physically stronger, and bigger than their peers.
1999	National Resource Center for Safe Schools	Bullying can be direct or indirect and varies between boys and girls. Direct bullying is the kind of action that the word generally brings to mind, including physical violence, taunting and teasing, threats of violence, and extortion or theft.
1999	National Resource Center for Safe Schools	In recent years, the academic definition of bullying has been expanded to include indirect bullying, such as name calling, spreading rumours, and exclusion from a peer group. Indirect bullying socially isolates children. Both forms of bullying occur repeatedly over a prolonged time. Boys typically engage in direct bullying while girls end to use indirect methods, though girls are less frequently either bullies or victims.

1999 (p. 342)	Bosworth et al.	The international nature of the research on bullying is complicated by the use of a variety of definitions. Olweus (1978) originally defined <i>bullying</i> as “the systematic use of physical and/or mental violence by one boy or several boys against another boy.” More recently, Olweus has refined this definition and concluded that a “bully chronically harasses somebody else either physically or psychologically” (Olweus, 1991). Arora (1987), in studying British children, reported that bullying is “achieving or maintaining social dominance through overtly aggressive means which occur because the victims have no sufficient skills or capacity to integrate with their peer group” (p. 116). Another British researcher reported that bullying occurs “when one person or group deliberately causes distress to another person or group” (Galloway, 1994, p. 76). In the major study of United States adolescents, Hoover and colleagues (1993) defined bullying as “physical or psychological abuse of an individual by one or a group of students.” Although there are many definitions, most converge on the notion that bullying behaviour can be either physical or psychological.
1999 (p. 343)	Bosworth et al.	Bullying was defined as a subset of aggressive behaviour that has potential to cause physical or psychological harm to the recipient.
1999 (p. 330)	Chesson	Over time perceptions have changed of what constitutes bullying, but it may include a range of activities including hitting, pushing, spreading slander, provoking, making threats, extortion, and robbery. The commonest types of bullying reported by victims are name calling, followed by being hit, threatened, or having rumours spread about one.
1999 (p. 386)	Vernberg et al.	Peer victimization is defined as actions taken by one or more youths with the intention of inflicting physical or psychological injury or pain on another youth.
1999 (p. 176)	Schuster	Bullying is said to take place when an individual, unable to defend him- or herself, is exposed repeatedly (e.g. at least once a week) and over a long period of time (e.g. at least half a year) to intentional harm by one or several others, either directly (e.g. through physical assaults) or indirectly (e.g. through spreading rumors).
2000 (p. 57)	Rigby	Bullying is generally conceived as repeated unprovoked aggressive behaviour in which the perpetrator or perpetrators are more powerful than the person or

		persons being attacked. It may be physical in form or non-physical; direct or indirect. The victim of such aggression is typically unable to resist effectively because of the power imbalance.
2000 (p. 83)	Cowie & Olafsson	We say a child or young person is being bullied, or picked on when another child or young person, or a group of children or young people, say nasty and unpleasant things about him or her. It is also bullying when a child or young person is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no one ever talks to them and things like that. These things happen frequently and it is difficult for the child or the young person being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a child or young person is teased repeatedly in a nasty way but it is not bullying when two children or young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel.
2000 (p. 326)	Esplage et al.	Bullying has been defined as a set of behaviors that is “intentional and causes physical and psychological harm to the recipient” (Smith & Thompson, 1991, p. 1). Bullying includes actions such as name-calling or teasing, social exclusion, and hitting.
2000 (p. 873)	Sourander et al.	Bullying is intentional and unprovoked and can be considered as a form of abuse (Dawkins & Hill, 1995). Bullying is either physical or psychological, and verbal bullying is the most common form (Whitney & Smith, 1993).
2000 (p. 664)	Kaltaiala-Heino et al.	A pupil is being bullied when another pupil, or a group of pupils, says or does nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a pupil is teased repeatedly in a way he or she doesn't like. But it is not bullying when two pupils of about the same strength quarrel or fight.
2000 (p. 202)	Hanish & Guerra	Peer victimization is defined as when children are teased, attacked, or bullied by one or more peers, occurs quite frequently, often while children are at school.
2000 (p.65-66)	Berthold & Hoover	Bullying is invoked when mild aggression is directed purposely in a situation where one student (the bully) enjoys more physical or psychological power than the victim, though it may be true that the victim's lack of power is a matter of perception (Hoover & Oliver, 1996). If an individual is bullied collectively by several others, the term 'mobbing' is often applied (Pikas, 1989). Bullying includes behaviours which are overtly

		illegal such as extortion (strong-arm robberies of lunch money) and assault. However, students perceive bullying as largely consisting of verbal behaviour (Hazler et al., 1991; Hoover et al., 1992, 1993; Shakeshaft et al., 1995).
2000 (p. 441)	Hawker, & Boulton	Peer victimization is the experience among children of being a target of the aggressive behaviour of other children, who are not siblings and not necessarily agemates.
2000 (p. 73)	West & Salmon	Bullying in schools refers to the intentional, unprovoked abuse of power by one or more children to inflict pain on, or cause distress to, another child on repeated occasions. The commonest type of bullying is general name-calling, following by physical hitting, threatening and spreading rumours about the victim.
2000 (p. 989)	Wolke et al.	As defined by Olweus (1991, 1999, p. 10) “a student is being bullied or victimised when he/she is exposed <i>repeatedly and over time</i> to <i>negative action</i> on the part of one or more students” with the intention to hurt. It usually involves an imbalance in strength, either real or perceived (Craig, 1998; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Bullying behaviour constitutes a spectrum of actions including physical (hitting, kicking, pinching, taking money or belongings, etc.) and verbal (name calling, cruel teasing, taunting, threatening, etc.) aggression (Boulton & Underwood, 1992). Recently another domain of bullying behaviour has been described, namely relational bullying/aggression. Crick and Grotpeter (1995) define relational aggression as the hurtful manipulation of peer relationships/friendships that inflicts harm on others through behaviours such as “social exclusion” and “malicious rumour spreading”.
2001 (p. 30)	Haynie et al.	Bullying is a form of peer abuse that includes acts of aggression in which one or more students, physically and/or psychologically harass a weaker victim (Batsche & Knoff et al., 1994; Hoover et al., 1992; Olweus, 1994).
2001	Duncan	Most countries generally follow Olweus’s definition of bullying: repeated physical or psychological mistreatment by a peer who is physically or psychologically stronger than the victim.
2001 (p. 341)	Renshaw	A bully can be any age, either sex, of any race or religion. A bully needs another weaker or smaller person or animal to deliberately threaten, insult,

		ridicule, tease, put down, and hurt by critical words or acts of harm such as blows or kicks. Bullying is usually repeated.
2001	Brewster & Railsback	Bullying, unlike isolated conflicts between individuals, occur when a student or group of students targets an individual repeatedly over time, using physical or psychological aggression to dominate the victim (Hoover & Oliver, 1996; Rigby 1995; UDOE, 1998).
2001	Brewster & Railsback, in Schoolwide Prevention of Bullying	Among middle and high school students, bullying behaviour most frequently involves teasing and social exclusion, but may also include physical violence, threats, theft, sexual and racial harassment, public humiliation, and destruction of the targeted student's property. Bullying behaviour in elementary grades is more likely than in older grades to involve physical aggression, but is characterized by teasing, intimidation, and social exclusion as well (Banks 2000).
2001 (p. 562)	Natvig et al.	Bullying is characterised by an aggressive behaviour that is carried out repeatedly over time.
2001 (p. 242)	del Barrio et al.	Repeated, psychological or physical oppression of a less powerful person by a more powerful one.
2001 (p. 1249)	Weir	Bullying occurs when one or more children repeatedly and intentionally intimidate, harass or physically harm another child who is perceived to be unable to defend himself or herself. It takes the form of threats, physical harm, rejection, name calling, teasing, rumours and the taking of personal belongings.
2001	Hazler et al.	Bullying by definition, requires a situation in which one person or a group maintains a power advantage over another, usually in the form of social, emotional, verbal, or physical ability.
2001	Blaha	Bullying...is when one child or a group intentionally hurts another child over and over again, and over a prolonged period. It's beyond good-natured occasional joking or teasing. Hurt is inflicted through assaults that can range from words, such as name calling or taunting, to physical aggression – kicking, shoving, fighting. And a subtler, but just as damaging form...is shunning or socially isolating a child.
2002 (p. 15)	Canadian Red Cross	Bullying = + a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + repetition (typical)

		+ an unjust use of power + evident of enjoyment by the aggressor + a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.
2002 (p. 18)	Canadian Red Cross	There are four types of bullies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical Bullies: will hit or kick victims or take/damage property 2. Verbal Bullies: will use name-calling, insults, discriminating comments and constant teasing 3. Relational Bullies: will try to cut off victims from social connection by convincing peers to exclude or reject a certain person; most common among girls 4. Reactive Bullies: will engage in bullying, as well as provoke bullies into attacking them by taunting.
2002 (p. 24)	Canadian Red Cross	There are three types of harassment: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal 2. Sexual 3. Abuse of power and authority.
2002 (p. 326)	Hunter & Boyle	<i>When we talk about bullying, we mean anything which one or more people do to another person to hurt or upset them. Also, bullying is something which does not happen once – it happens again and again.</i> Some alternative definitions make the explicit requirement that bullying should involve an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, to distinguish it from aggressive behaviour in general (Whitney & Smith, 1993; Sutton et al., 1999).
2002 (p. 669)	Ireland	School-based definitions view bullying as a repetitive behaviour occurring on a regular basis.
2002 (p. 669)	Ireland	An individual is being bullied when they are the victim of direct and/or indirect aggression happening on a weekly basis, by the same or different perpetrator(s). Single incidences of aggression can be viewed as bullying, particularly when they are severe and when the individual either believes or fears that they are at risk of future victimisation by the same perpetrator or others.
2002 (p. 670)	Ireland	Direct aggression refers to an overt and easily recognized form of aggression that includes physical, verbal, theft-related and sexual aggression. Indirect aggression is a more subtle form of aggression that include behaviours such as gossiping, ostracizing and spreading rumours.

2002 (p. 670)	Ireland	Swift (1995) reported four main types of bullying, psychological/verbal, threats, specific acts of violence and damage to property.
2002 (p. 673)	Ireland	Researchers have utilized a number of different terms to describe subtle forms of aggression such as “covert” or “relational” aggression (Bjorkqvist et al., Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). The term “indirect” aggression will be used here to cover all forms of subtle aggression.
2002 (p. 469-470)	Palmer & Farmer	One view of bullying is that it is aggressive behaviours repeated over time in a relationship where there is a power imbalance (Olweus, 1996). Further to this, Tattum (1989) has also stated that such behaviour is premeditated and planned with the aim of hurting, threatening or frightening the victim. In line with these, Farrington (1994) suggested that for actions to constitute bullying behaviour there are five key elements: a physical, verbal or psychological <i>assault</i> ; an <i>imbalance</i> in power; <i>no provocation</i> from the victim; <i>repetition</i> of the behaviour by the perpetrator; and an <i>intention</i> to cause harm or fear on behalf of the perpetrator. Randall (1997) notes that <i>fear</i> of repetition alone, or even witnessing a “bullying” event, can be sufficient for a victim to feel intimidated.
2002 (p. 470)	Palmer & Farmer	not all bullying takes the form of overt aggression towards the victim (Ireland and Ireland, 2000). Overtly aggressive behaviours are known as direct bullying, and occur when there is a direct interaction between the bully and their victim, for example verbal abuse, threats, and physical aggression. Indirect bullying is used to describe more covert means of bullying, with Ireland and Archer (1996) including such behaviours as rumour spreading, gossiping, and ostracizing people within this category.
28 June 2002 (p. 3)	Hamilton Community Foundation	Bullying, unlike isolated conflicts between individuals, occurs when one individual or a group targets another individual repeatedly over time, using physical, verbal, or psychological aggression to dominate the victim. The repeated incidents function to create and enforce an imbalance of power between bully and victim.
May/June 2002	Centre for Addiction and Mental Health	Bullying is when one or more people tease, hurt or upset a weaker person on purpose.
2003 (p. 421)	Stevens et al.	A person is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative

		actions on the part of one or more other persons.
2003 (p. 537)	Wong	In general, bullying is defined as repeated oppression, physical or mental, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons. It occurs where there is an imbalance in power between people, and it is a persistent or continued unwelcome behaviour (Olweus, 1993, 1994; Rigby, 1996; Smith & Sharp, 1994). It ranges from simple teasing to violent physical acts. The literature on bullying and delinquent behaviour suggests that bullying and delinquency are not the same. Delinquency, different from bullying, includes a number of types of antisocial behavior that are prohibited by criminal law, including stealing, violence, vandalism, fraud and drug use (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). Bullying behaviour with violence is definitely a subtype of delinquency, however bullying among students, such as insulting, threatening, or kicking, may not be seen as delinquency.
2003 (p. 714)	Baldry	Bullying has been extensively defined as any form of physical or psychological behavior repeatedly inflicted by a more powerful and stronger student (or group of students) towards another one perceived as weaker.
2003 (p. 301)	Coleman & Byrd	Physical peer victimization involves overt forms of aggression including slapping, punching, pinching, scratching, and hitting, whereas social victimization entails wilful attempts to damage another youth's self-esteem, social status, or close relationships through social exclusion, negative gossip, or friendship manipulation.
May 16, 2003 (p. 4)	Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA)	Bullying is a multi-dimensional construct and occurs when one experiences repeated attacks, over time, by one or more individuals who systematically abuse their power. It often takes place in the presence of others and for the most part is motivated by the need for social status or the need to dominate. Physical and verbal forms of bullying most often come to the attention of school authorities. However, the social manipulation and social exclusion of victims, although not as easily detected, is equally harmful and likely more prevalent.
May 16, 2003 (p. 7)	Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA)	Bullying occurs when a student experiences repeated attacks, over time, by one or more other students who systematically abuse their power. Bullying is a social activity (it almost always takes place in the presence of others) and for the most part is motivated by the need

		<p>for social status or the need to dominate. The harmful intentions of boys and girls are expressed differently in bullying behaviours. Girls are more likely to mask their harmful intentions. Bullying behaviour is a multi-dimensional construct and is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aggressive behaviour or intentional 'harmdoing'; • repetitive, coercive acts over time without provocation; and • interpersonal relationships where the victim is powerless to resist and the bully derives status and gratification. <p><i>Direct</i> bullying is an open attack on a victim. These attacks can be physical, verbal, sexual or racial in nature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical attack: hostile gesturing, hitting, kicking, pushing, holding, choking; • verbal attacks or harassment: name calling, threatening, taunting, degrading, malicious teasing, sexual harassment, racial slurs, homophobic put-downs. <p><i>Indirect</i> bullying is more subtle and more difficult to detect. It includes non-physical forms of aggression aimed at controlling social situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social isolation, intentional exclusion, ostracizing, manipulating friendship relationships; • rumour spreading, slandering, obscene gestures, silent treatment.
May 16, 2003 (p. 13)	Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA)	When one or more people tease, hurt or upset a weaker person on purpose.
2003 (p. 1348)	Meraviglia et al.	Bullying behaviours include threatening words or gestures, physical aggression, hurtful teasing, social isolation, and rumours.
2003 (p. 514)	Mishna	Bullying is a form of aggression in which there is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim (Besag, 1989; Olweus, 1991), and it occurs largely within the context of the peer group (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Twemlow et al., 1996). Bullying, which may be

		direct (e.g., name-calling) or indirect (e.g. gossip), covers a wide range of behaviours from social exclusion to physical assaults (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Pepler et al., 1994), as well as emotional intimidation that may stir up intense and overwhelming feelings in the victim.
2003 (p. 634)	Flouri & Buchanan	Bullying can be succinctly defined as the “systematic abuse of power” (Smith, 2000). As defined by Olweus (1999), a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative action on the part of one or more other students’ with the intention to hurt (Wolke et al., 2000).
2003 (p. 189)	Smith & Ananiadou	Bullying is usually defined as a subset of aggressive behaviour (Olweus, 1999). It is characterized by repetition – a victim is targeted a number of times – and by an imbalance of power – the victim cannot defend him/herself easily, for one or more reasons (he or she may be outnumbered, be smaller or less physically strong, or be less psychologically resilient, than the person(s) doing the bullying). The definition “a systematic abuse of power” (Smith & Sharp, 1994, p.2) also captures these two features.
2003 (p. 190)	Smith & Ananiadou	While a number of typologies of aggression and of bullying exist, the main types include: <i>Physical</i> : hitting, kicking, punching, taking belongings <i>Verbal</i> : teasing, taunting [plus new forms such as email bullying, telephone bullying] <i>Social Exclusion</i> : systematically excluding someone from joining in normal social groups <i>Indirect</i> : spreading nasty rumors, telling others not to play with someone. Typically boys use more physical forms of bullying, girls more indirect forms and social exclusion.
2003 (p. 176)	Smith et al.	Bullying is a subset of aggressive behaviour, involving repetition and imbalance of power.
2003 (p. 129)	Unnever & Cornell	Bullying is usually defined to include repeated behaviours by a student or group of students to demean, threaten, or physically injure a weaker student.
16 May 2003 (p. 9)	CPHA	A bully <i>wants to hurt the other person</i> (it’s not an accident). A bully does or says the same things <i>over and over again</i> . Bullying is about using power over another person. There are four main kinds of bullying. <i>Physical</i> : - hitting, shoving, kicking, spitting on, beating up on

		<p>others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - damaging or stealing another person's property <p>Verbal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - name-calling, mocking, hurtful teasing - humiliating or threatening someone - making people do things they don't want to do <p>Social:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - excluding others from the group - spreading gossip or rumours about others - making others look foolish - making sure others do not spend time with a certain person <p>Electronic: using computer, e-mail, phone or cellular phone text messages to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - threaten or hurt someone's feelings - single out, embarrass or make someone look bad - spread rumours or reveal secrets about someone.
Fall 2003 (p. 2)	Halton Public School Board	Bullying is a pattern of repeated, aggressive behaviours with negative intent, directed from one person to another where there is a power imbalance. Bullying, in the form of emotional or psychological aggression, is insidious because it is less visible but very painful to the victim(s) over time. It is anti-social behaviour requiring a social solution.
Fall 2003 (p. 2)	Halton Public School Board	Bullying is not normal childhood conflict, like sibling rivalry, or one to one disputes among family or friends. These conflicts are random acts and there is no intended victim. This is conflict and teaching children to resolve conflicts peacefully is an important strategy within the family, the community and the school. Teasing behaviour is an example of creating potential conflict but it is not characteristic of bullying because it is not intended to do harm. Teasing behaviour maintains the dignity of the other and pokes fun in a light-hearted manner. The teaser and teased can swap roles easily and always stops when the person objects or becomes upset by the teasing.
Fall 2003 (p. 6)	Halton Public School Board	Bullying is aggression; physical, verbal, relational or psychological. Bullying is aggression, but it is more complex behaviourally than fighting or using foul language. Bullying in the form of emotional or psychological aggression is insidious because it is less visible but very painful to the victims over a long time. In short, bullying is one or more of the following

		<p>characteristics...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An imbalance of power; • Arrogance in action; • Contempt for a person or persons; • A learned behaviour; • A conscious, willful, deliberate act of hostility intended to do harm and induce fear through threat of further aggression; • A planned action directed towards a specific target(s), not an impulsive action; and • An anti-social behaviour requiring a social solution. <p>Bullying behaviour may involve taunting behaviours that are intended to harm, humiliate, have a sinister intent and continues regardless of objections. Frequently, bullies use the phrase “just joking” or “just teasing” to mask the hurtful intent. Taunting is not teasing!</p>
Fall 2003 (p. 9-10)	Halton Public School Board	<p>Three types of bullying behaviours have been identified in the literature: verbal, physical and relational (Coloroso, 2002; Olweus, 2003).</p> <p>Verbal bullying... involves false or malicious rumours, gossip etc. This type of bully behaviour can be face-to-face, over the phone or with increasing frequency these days, via the internet using chat room conversations or using/creating malicious websites. Verbal bullying may involve name-calling, taunting, belittling, racial slurs, sexually suggestive or abusive remarks, to name a few. The issue is using the power of language to cause hurt of a prolonged, destructive nature.</p> <p>Physical bullying... involves slapping, hitting, choking, kicking, poking, punching, etc. The older and stronger the bully, the greater the likelihood of serious physical harm. The most troubled of all bullies are more likely to move to more serious criminal offences over time (Olweus, 2003).</p> <p>Relational bullying... involves ignoring, shunning, excluding or isolating the victim. The combination of shunning and spreading rumours is the most powerful example of relational bullying behaviours. Relational bullying is most frequently seen in the middle school years. It is used to alienate peers and ruin friendships. It</p>

		is also the most frequent type of bullying ignored and/or unseen by adults.
2003	Bully B'ware Productions	Bullying in its truest form is comprised of a series of repeated intentionally cruel incidents, involving the same children, in the same bully and victim roles. This, however, does not mean that in order for bullying to occur there must be repeat offenses. Bullying can consist of a single interaction. Bullying behaviour may also be defined as a criminal act if the bully is twelve years of age or older.
2003	Bully B'ware Productions	<p>So, what makes a bullying incident? Certain conditions must exist for a bullying incident to occur. Lots of kids joke around with each other, call each other names, or engage in some fairly physical horse-play and yet these incidents are not deemed as bullying when they occur between certain children. The difference lies in the relationship of the bully and victim, and in the intent of the interaction.</p> <p>Bullying usually, although not always, occurs between individuals who are not friends. In a bullying situation, there is a power difference between the bully and the victim. For instance, the bully may be bigger, tougher, physically stronger or able to intimidate others or have the power to exclude others from their social group. The intention of bullying is to put the victim in distress in some way. Bullies seek power.</p>
2003	Bully B'ware Productions	<p>Physical bullies are action-oriented. This type of bullying includes hitting or kicking the victim, or, taking or damaging the victim's property. This is the least sophisticated type of bullying because it is so easy to identify. Physical bullies are soon known to the entire population in the school. As they get older, their attacks usually become more aggressive. These aggressive characteristics manifest themselves as bullies become adults.</p> <p>Verbal bullies use words to hurt or humiliate another person. Verbal bullying includes name-calling, insulting, making racist comments and constant teasing. This type of bullying is the easiest to inflict on other children. It is quick and to the point. It can occur in the least amount of time available, and its effects can be more devastating in some ways than physical bullying because there are no visible scars.</p> <p>Relational or relationship bullies try to convince their</p>

		<p>peers to exclude or reject a certain person or people and cut the victims off from their social connections. This type of bullying is linked to verbal bullying and usually occurs when children (most often girls) spread nasty rumors about others or exclude an ex-friend from the peer group. The most devastating effect with this type of bullying is the rejection by the peer group at a time when children most need their social connections.</p> <p>Reactive victims straddle a fence of being a bully and or victim. They are often the most difficult to identify because at first glance they seem to be targets for other bullies. However, reactive victims often taunt bullies, and bully other people themselves. Most of the incidents are physical in nature. These victims are impulsive and react quickly to intentional and unintentional physical encounters. In some cases, reactive victims begin as victims and become bullies as they try to retaliate. A reactive victim will approach a person who has been bullying him/her and say something like, "You better not bug me today, otherwise I'll tell the teacher and boy, will you be in trouble, so you just better watch out."</p> <p>Statements such as this are akin to waving a red flag in front of a raging bull, and may provoke a bully into action. Reactive victims then fight back and claim self defense. Reactive victims need to learn how to avoid bullies.</p>
2003	Bully B'ware Productions	<p>Children who systematically bully others usually have a group of children they bully regularly while other bullies randomly target a variety of students. Bullies have particular behavior and personality traits. Dr. Sam Samenow describes these as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - greater than average aggressive behavior patterns - the desire to dominate peers - the need to feel in control, to win - no sense of remorse for hurting another child - a refusal to accept responsibility for his/her behaviour. <p>Parent(s) of bullies usually support their child's aggressive behavior toward other children and often bully their child.</p>
2003	Bully B'ware Productions	<p>Good natured teasing and rough-housing are only fun if both parties involved agree that it is fun. The power difference between bullies and victims determines the nature of the interaction.</p>

		Children who are victimized tend to display "vulnerable behaviors". People who are identified as being highly vulnerable are often singled out as victims.
2003 (p. 536)	Champion et al.	Victimization in the context of bully-victim problems involves aggression perpetuated repeatedly over time by a dominant aggressor against a weaker victim.
2003 (p. 536-537)	Champion et al.	Aggressive behaviour comes in many forms, and the distinction between reactive and proactive aggression is particularly germane (Coie & Dodge, 1998). Proactive aggression includes behaviour intended to hurt or harm for the purpose of obtaining privilege, reward, or dominance for the aggressor. The motivation is instrumental and involves little fear-based emotional arousal, appearing instead to be carried out in a cold, callous, and unemotional manner. Bullying is a form of proactive aggression intended to achieve, demonstrate, or maintain social dominance (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Pellegrini, 1998). Reactive aggression, in contrast, involves aggression in response to a preceding insult, frustration, or some other provocation. High emotional arousal and lessened self-control are important aspects of reactive or "hot" aggression (Coie & Dodge, 1998). Nonbullying victims experience provocation frequently and may show reactive aggression occasionally (Pellegrini et al., 199; Poulin & Boivin, 2000).
2003 (p. 1312)	van der Wal et al.	Bullying is generally viewed as a specific form of aggression. Most authors describe bullying as repeated and lasting negative actions of 1 or more children (the offender[s]) directed to a specific child (the victim). The victims are typically not able to defend themselves. Some authors make a distinction between direct (overt) bullying and indirect (covert, relational) bullying. Direct bullying includes all sorts of physical and verbal aggression, such as kicking, hitting, threatening, name-calling, and insulting. Indirect bullying includes aspects of social isolation such as ignoring, excluding, and backbiting.
2004 (p. 368)	Hoel et al.	A situation where one or several individuals persistently over a period of time perceive themselves to be on the receiving end of negative actions from one of several persons, in a situation where the target of bullying has difficulty in defending him or herself against these actions (based on Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996).

2004	Canada Safety Council	Bullying is a social relationship where an individual repeatedly picks on another individual. It can be physical, verbal or psychological. Perpetrators are equally likely to be boys or girls. Boys are more likely to be physically aggressive – for instance hitting and kicking – whereas girls are more likely to be verbally aggressive when they bully. Extortion, intimidation and destruction of property are all part of the behavior pattern.
2004	Magee	Verbal violence takes multiple forms, including attacking one's looks or speech, attacking religion or race, spreading false rumors, or making sexual comments or gestures – the latter somewhat more common among females.
2004 (p. 373)	Dake et al.	Bullying can take various forms including direct physical aggression (hitting, kicking), direct verbal aggression (name calling, teasing), and indirect aggression (psychological, relational).
2004	Parents for Children's Mental Health	Bullying can be defined as repeated and systematic harassment and attacks on others. Bullying can be perpetrated by individuals or groups. Bullying takes many forms, and can include many different behaviours, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical violence and attacks • Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs • Threats and intimidation • Extortion or stealing of money and possessions • Exclusions from the peer group.
2004	Toronto District School Board	Bullying is a combination of power and aggression. It occurs when a student maliciously and repeatedly oppresses, harasses or intimidates another student verbally, physically or psychologically.
2004	Bindman et al.	Bullying is defined as the assertion of power through aggression.
2004	Bindman et al.	Psychologists define bullying as a power relationship carried on by one individual or a group of individuals towards another person. Bullying does not necessarily need to be brutal or physical violence. Rumours, threats, hurtful words also lead to feelings of rejection.
2004 (p. 212)	Paglia & Adlaf	Violence has been defined as "...a social act involving the abuse of power in order to control and/or oppress others." Indeed, for the public health community, "...violence takes on many more forms than physical

		blows or wounds. It includes sexual assault, neglect, verbal attacks, insults, threats, harassment and other psychological abuses” (Canadian Public Health Association, 1994).
2004	Bullying Prevention and Intervention: A Hamilton Community Initiative	Bullying, unlike isolated conflicts between individuals, occurs when one individual or a group targets another individual repeatedly over time, using physical, verbal, or psychological aggression to dominate the victim.
1 June 2004	Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board	Bullying behaviour consists of negative actions which may be physical or verbal in nature, have hostile intent, are repeated over time and involve a power differential between bully and victim. Bullying may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, punching), verbal (e.g. name-calling, teasing, or threatening), social (e.g. excluding an individual from a group on purpose, initiation or hazing rituals, subtle social manipulation such as malicious gossip or rumours) or computer-based (e.g. using the internet or e-mail to ridicule, spread rumours, threaten).
2004 (p. 14)	Vaillancourt	Bullying is defined as repeated, intentional abuse on the part of one or more person more powerful than the victim.
2004	Investing in Children	Boys who exclude another from soccer because of his skin colour; girls who spread rumours about another girl they don't like; a group of kids repeatedly calling another “fag” or “homo”; these aren't just “kids being kids,” these are bullies. Bullying can manifest itself as physical violence, intimidation, name-calling and other verbal abuses, peer-pressure, taunting, ostracizing and excluding, spreading rumours, theft or destruction of personal property, racial discrimination and any other way one child can denigrate another.
2005	Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada	Bullying is the assertion of power through aggression. Bullies acquire power over their victims physically, emotionally and socially. This can be done in many ways: by physical size and strength, by status within the peer group, by knowing the victim's weaknesses or by recruiting support from other children, as in group bullying. Emotional and social bullying may perhaps be the most frequent and harmful forms. Bullying can be physical or verbal. It can be direct (face-to-face) or indirect (gossip or exclusion) (Olweus 1991).

2005	Media Awareness Network	There are several ways that young people bully others online. They send e-mails or instant messages containing insults or threats directly to a person. They may also spread hateful comments about a person through e-mail, instant messaging or postings on Web sites and online diaries. Young people steal passwords and send out threatening e-mails or instant messages using an assumed identity. Technically savvy kids may build whole Web sites, often with password protection, to target specific students or teachers.
2005 (p. 81)	Fekkes et al.	Bullying is a specific form of aggressive behaviour and can be described as a situation when a student: 'is exposed repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students' (Olweus, 1993). These negative actions take place when an imbalance of power exists between the victim and the aggressor. The bullying behaviour can be 'physical' (e.g. hitting, pushing, kicking), 'verbal' (e.g. calling names, provoking, making threats, spreading slander), or can include other behaviour such as making faces or social exclusion.
2005 (p. 186)	Camodeca & Goossens	Bullying is a phenomenon characterized by negative actions towards a peer with the intention to hurt (Olweus, 1991, 1993). The actions of the bully are repeated over time and may include physical or verbal aggression (Olweus, 1993; Boulton & Underwood, 1992), and relational harassment (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Crick, & Grotpeter, 1995; Wolke et al., 2000), which harms others by means of social manipulation, social exclusion, and malicious rumors. There is usually an imbalance of power between the bullies and their victims. Bullying takes place within relatively small and stable settings (like classes), which are characterized by the presence of the same people (e.g., children). Generally, children other than the bullies and their victims are also involved in the bullying process and may actually maintain the bullying by supporting the bully or failing to defend the victim. Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvst, Osterman, and Kaukiainen (1996) suggested that all the children in a particular class play a role in bullying out that only few of them may be considered to be uninvolved.
2005	Due et al.	Bullying is defined as a deliberate, repeated or long-term exposure to negative acts performed by a person

		or group of persons regarded of higher status or greater strength than the victim. Bullying might be verbal acts such as threats, insults or nicknames or physical acts such as assault or theft. Also social acts such as exclusion from the peer group are considered bullying.
2005	Bullying Awareness Network	Bullying generally involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with the more hurtful child or group attacking those who are less powerful. It includes an assortment of negative acts carried out repeatedly over a period of time generally away from the presence of adults or, in the presence of adults who fail to intercede. Bullying occurs when one person derives pleasure from another's [sic] pain. Both of these children are victims and losers in the situation.
2005	Bullying Awareness Network	A broad definition of bullying is when a student is repeatedly exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. These negative actions can take the form of physical contact, verbal abuse, or making faces and rude gestures. Spreading rumours and excluding the victim from a group are also common forms. Bullying also entails an imbalance in strength between the bullies and the victim, what experts call an asymmetric power relationship.
2005	Bullying Awareness Network	Bullying is a relationship problem in which an individual or group uses power aggressively to cause distress to another.
2005	Bullying Awareness Network	Bullying is a relationship problem that requires relationship solutions. Bullying is a dynamic interaction that unfolds and consolidates over time.
2005	Bullying Awareness Network	Repeated oppression, psychological, or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons (Rigby, K. 1996).
2005	Bullying Awareness Network	(Bullying is) a repetitive attack which causes distress not only at the time of attack but also by the threat of future attack. It may be verbal, physical, social or psychological (Griffiths, D. 1997).
2005	Bullying Awareness Network	A person is bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons (Olweus, D. 1991).
2005	Bullying Awareness Network	Repeated attack, physical and psychological, social or verbal by those in a position of power, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing

		distress for their own gain or gratification (Besag G. 1990).
2005	Bullying Awareness Network	Bullying is a relationship problem. People who bully are in a position of power relative to their victims. Their power may come from many aspects of the relationship. They may be larger, stronger, older, more popular, or they may know something sensitive or vulnerable about the victim (e.g., a learning, family, or personal problem). Bullying can take many forms. It can be physical hits, kicks, and damage to property. Bullying can be verbal: insults, putdowns, sexist or racist comments. Bullying can also be indirect and hurt another's social relationships when it involves exclusion or spreading rumours. Bullying causes distress to the victims even though bullies may say they are "just having fun". As bullying continues over time, the power differential and dynamics in the relationship become increasingly consolidated (Pepler et al. 2004).
2005 (p. 147-148)	Rigby	Bullies are students who are thought to engage in bullying their peers on a large number of occasions, e.g. on a weekly or daily basis. However, there are many more students who engage in bullying less frequently.
2005 (p. 148)	Rigby	Aggressive behaviour occurs when someone seeks to hurt another person and bullying behaviour...is generally regarded as a sub-set of aggressive behaviour in which aggressive acts repeatedly occur in situations in which there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the intended target of the hurtful behaviour (Olweus, 1993). These actions may be direct, as in hitting or verbally abusing another person or indirect as in seeking to hurt another person by spreading lies about him or her or by deliberate and unjustified exclusion.
2005	Safe School Questions and Answers (Toronto District School Board)	A bully is an individual who uses power and aggression with the aim of hurting another individual repeatedly. This aggression can be physical, verbal and/or psychological.

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**Questions Regarding Institutional Theory**

Exploring the institutional environment:

1. Why do you think bullying is such a prevalent topic of discussion lately?
2. What factors have led bullying to be such a major school issue?
3. How does the school, or school board, define bullying behaviour?
4. Are there specific protocol in place to deal with children who exhibit bullying behaviour?
5. What are the goals of your school program?
6. Are there ways of measuring the effectiveness of this program?

Exploring isomorphism and socialization:

1. Are there any training programs held for teachers/staff with regard to bullying?
2. Did you ever have any training with regard to bullying, either with a school or in teacher's college?

Questions Regarding Therapy Culture

1. Do your school programs involve more reactionary approaches, or more proactive approaches to stopping bullying behaviour?
2. Do you deal more with the bully or the victim?
3. Do you ever refer students or parents to outside sources or agencies?
 - a. Are the referrals for the victims or for the bullies?
 - b. Where do you refer them to?
 - c. Why those agencies/sources in particular?
4. What are the benefits of treatment-based programs/ alter-ed programs?

5. What are the drawbacks of treatment-based programs/ alter-ed programs?
6. How do treatment-based programs differ from typical school programs?

APPENDIX 4: NUMERICAL DATA FOR AMAZON DATABASE SEARCH

www.amazon.com	
title search: bully	
458 results	
Number of Books	Year of Publication
1	1920
2	1984
1	1985
1	1986
0	1987
4	1988
4	1989
0	1990
7	1991
6	1992
2	1993
6	1994
10	1995
12	1996
16	1997
12	1998
18	1999
21	2000
42	2001
27	2002
43	2003
53	2004
26	2005
142	No publication date

**APPENDIX 5: NUMERICAL DATA FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE INDEX
DATABASE SEARCH**

Sociology Index Database	
1356 Results	
Number of Citations	Year of Publication
1	1974
0	1975
0	1976
1	1977
4	1978
0	1979
2	1980
0	1981
4	1982
0	1983
1	1984
4	1985
7	1986
8	1987
8	1988
13	1989
11	1990
20	1991
22	1992
23	1993
44	1994
52	1995
69	1996
79	1997
64	1998
94	1999
102	2000
168	2001
148	2002
170	2003
197	2004
38	2005
1939	1
1932	1

APPENDIX 6: LEGAL CASES INVOLVING BULLYING⁵¹

Legal Cases Involving Bullying		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Incident</i>
	Calgary, AB	A student filed suit against a teacher after claiming that 3 years of verbal and physical abuse led to a suicide attempt.
	Burlington, ON	A brother and sister claimed that even though they had complained to school administrators about the bullying they were enduring, it continued, and progressed to the extent that the sister dropped out of school in grade 11. The siblings filed a \$550,000 law suit against their bullies, their former principals and vice-principals, and the Halton District School Board.
	Mission, BC	2 girls from Dawn-Marie Wesley's school were charged with uttering threats, and 1 of the girls was accused of criminal harassment. *see Appendix 7 for details associated with Dawn-Marie's death*
May 1998	Victoria, BC	In 1998, two of the girls who lured Reena Virk to where she was killed were sentenced to a year in custody and another year of probation. *see Appendix 8 for details associated with Reena's death*
1999	US	<i>Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education</i> : parents of a 5 th grade student sued the school board and school officials for failing to address the sexual harassment of a student in the class by a classmate. The Supreme Court ruled that "private damages may lie against a school board for student/on/student harassment when the recipient of federal funding (which includes virtually all public schools) acts with the deliberate indifference to known acts of harassment in its programs or activities. The Court also noted that the harassment has to be so severe as to interfere with the victim's access to education" ⁵² .
March 2002	BC	A girl found guilty of repeatedly verbally bullying a classmate was convicted of criminal harassment and uttering threats.
November 2002	Pennsylvania	A federal lawsuit was filed against a rural school

⁵¹ These cases were derived from numerous sources over the course of the research.

⁵² Accessed 9 May 2005 at www.healthinschools.org/focus/2004/no2.htm.

		district for allegedly ignoring a bullying problem that was occurring in the school. A student and his parents had reported severe bullying behaviours to the school, but they went unattended to.
July 2004	Anchorage, Alaska	Tom (last name unknown), attempted to hang himself, but was unsuccessful. Now, he requires 24-hour care due to severe brain damage as a result of the failed suicide attempt. The Anchorage School District paid out \$1 million dollars as part of a \$4.5 million dollar settlement, but they denied liability. *see Appendix 7 for details associated with Tom's suicide attempt*

APPENDIX 7: SUICIDES RESULTING FROM BULLYING BEHAVIOUR⁵³

Suicides as a Result of Bullying			
<i>Date</i>	<i>Victim's Age</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Incident</i>
March 1993	13	Iowa	Curtis Taylor shot himself after 3 years of verbal and physical bullying.
January 1995		Belfast, Ireland	Maria McGovern was bullied and overdosed to escape it. She left behind a diary detailing the bullying she endured daily.
February 1996	16	Isle of Lewis	Katherine Jane Morrison fatally overdoses after horrendous bullying.
August 1997	15	Invercargill, New Zealand	Matt Ruddenklau committed suicide, with the coroner reporting that "bullying and victimization were a significant factor in the boy's life in the months leading up to his suicide" ⁵⁴ .
September 1997	13	Salvation Army	Kelly Yeomans fatally overdoses after months of bullying and torment.
September 1998	13		Jared B. High took his life after a long period of school bullying.
March 2000	14	New Westminster/ Surrey, BC	Hamed Nastoh jumped off a bridge, leaving a detailed 7-page suicide note, outlining the bullying he endured.
April 2000	14	Belfast	Denise Baillie fatally overdoses after extensive bullying.
November 2000	14	Mission, BC	Dawn-Marie Wesley hanged herself in her bedroom with a dog leash, leaving a suicide note stating: "If I try to get help it will get worse. They are always looking for a new person to beat up and they are the toughest girls. If I ratted they would get suspended and there would be no stopping them. I love you all so much" ⁵⁵ . *2 girls from Dawn-Marie's school were charged with uttering threats, and 1 of the girls was accused of criminal

⁵³ These examples were derived from numerous sources over the course of research.

⁵⁴ Accessed online at www.bullybeware.com/story.html

⁵⁵ O'Malley & Ali, 2005.

			harassment.* *see Appendix 6 for legal details*
October 2000	15	Tranmere, Mereyside	Gail Jones fatally overdoses after long-term bullying, including threats and harassment on her cell phone.
December 2000	13	Hampshire	Kayleigh Davies hangs herself after long term bullying.
June 2001	16	Edmonton, AB	Gilles Moreau was found dead, face-down in a ditch.
June 2001	15	Dunbartonshire, Scotland	Nicola Raphael fatally overdoses after horrendous bullying.
November 2001	15	Hartlepool	Elaine Swift fatally overdoses on painkillers after enduring an extensive bullying campaign.
March 2002	15	Bristol, England	Hannah Taylerson hanged herself with her school tie after extensive bullying.
April 2002	13	Lisvane, Wales	Laura Kilibarda hanged herself of – what her parents believe to be – extensive bullying.
April 2002	14	Leeds	Adam Grigg hanged himself with a lanyard from his sea cadets uniform after three years of bullying.
April 2002	14	Halifax, Nova Scotia	Emmet Fralick shot himself in his bedroom due to bullying by his classmates.
August 2002	13	Whitby, Yorkshire	Jack Glasby hanged himself with a lanyard from his sea cadets uniform after enduring long-term bullying.
September 2002	12	Edinburgh	Emma Morrison hanged herself after extensive verbal and physical bullying.
October 2002	15	Toronto, ON	Greg Doucette hanged himself in his basement, no longer able to take the bullying about his acne.
April 2003	15	Nottinghamshire, England	Sarah Harrison hanged herself after enduring months of bullying.
June 2003	16	Lynemouth, Northumberland	Karl Peart planned his own funeral, and then fatally overdosed on painkillers and alcohol after repeated bullying.
June 2003	15	Lynemouth, Northumberland	Gemma Dimmick fatally overdosed, leaving several suicide notes, after enduring bullying behaviours. Gemma attended the same school as Karl Peart

			(above).
July 2003	15	Leeds	Christopher O'Reilly hanged himself after bullies threatened to kill either him or his parents.
September 2003	15	Perthshire, Scotland	Marianne Shanks hanged herself after extensive bullying.
May 2004	12	Broughshane, County Antrim	Aaron Armstrong hanged himself at the family farm after extensive school bullying was left unattended to.
July 2004		Anchorage, Alaska	Tom (last name unknown), attempted to hang himself, but was unsuccessful. Now, Tom requires 24-hour care due to severe brain damage as a result of the failed suicide attempt. *The Anchorage School District paid out \$1 million as part of a \$4.5 million settlement, but denied liability.* *see Appendix 6 for legal details*
September 2004	14	Kidderminster, Worcestershire	Amy Rose Tipton fatally overdoses on antidepressants after experiencing bullying.
October 2004	17	Cardiff, Wales	Jamie Sell hanged himself after taunting by bullies.
April 2005	12	Essex	Nathan Jones hanged himself after being tormented by bullies.
April 2005	14	Ellesmere Port, Cheshire	Shaun Noonan hanged himself after long-term bullying.
May 2005	15	Bartley Green, Birmingham	Anna Marie Averill kills herself after enduring months of bullying.

APPENDIX 8: BULLYING ATTACKS WITH SEVERE REPERCUSSIONS⁵⁶

Bullying Attacks with Severe Repercussions			
<i>Date</i>	<i>Victim's Age</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Incident</i>
November 1997	14	Victoria, BC	Reena Virk was attacked, tormented, and beaten by 6 teenage girls and 1 boys, and left to drown. *In May of 1998, two of the girls who lured Reena to where she was killed were sentenced to a year in custody and another year of probation.* *see Appendix 6 for legal details*
May 1999	13	Cherokee County, Georgia	Josh Belluardo was killed as a 15 year old punched him in the back of the head as they exited the school bus. The punch erupted an artery, and Josh bled to death within 60 seconds.
November 2000	10	London, England	Damilola Taylor is attacked on his way home from school and bleeds to death in a stairwell.
March 2003	12	Newcastle	Natalie Ruddick is murdered by an intruder in her bedroom after skipping school because of bullying.
May 2005	16	Blackley, Manchester	Becky Smith is left unconscious after being attacked by her schoolmates. They recorded the attack on their cell phones and distributed it around the school.

⁵⁶ These examples were derived from numerous sources over the course of research.

APPENDIX 9: WHEN VICTIMS TURN ON THEIR BULLIES⁵⁷

When Victims Turn		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Incident</i>
April 1997	Nanaimo, BC	A grade 4 student pulled a knife on another student who had been taunting him and his peers for over a year.
April 1999	Tabor, AB	A 14 year old boy, who had to do his school work at home because he feared school due to relentless bullying, shot and killed another student, and wounded another.
March 2001	Santee, California	After enduring long-term bullying, 15 year old Charles Andrew Williams brought a gun to school, shooting and killing two schoolmates, and wounding 13 more, as well as several adults.
March 2001	Williamsport, Pennsylvania	Elizabeth Bush, 14, brought her father's gun to school and wounded a friend who had turned on her. The friend began bullying Elizabeth along with the other students at school.
November 2001	Tokyo, Japan	A primary school boy attempted to end the physical and verbal bullying he was enduring by stabbing his tormenter.
April 2005	Fresno, California	11 year old Maribel Cuevas threw rocks to defend herself as neighbourhood boys taunted and bullied her and her 6 year old brother. The rock made one boy bleed enough to need stitches. *Felony assault charges were laid against Maribel, but were dropped in August of 2005.*

⁵⁷ These examples were derived from numerous sources over the course of research.

APPENDIX 10: BULLYING PROGRAMS AND THEIR PROBLEMS

Nine Proposed Principles for a Successful Anti-Bullying Program and Potential Problems	
<i>Proposed Principle</i>	<i>Potential Problem</i>
Survey through questionnaire, to raise awareness of the problem.	Surveys are often used as quick fix solutions, in order to demonstrate that schools are 'doing something', yet frequently no further action is taken than the survey itself.
Hold a school conference where staff are able to plan and share.	Time constraints and minimal funding hinder the possibility of holding a school-wide conference.
Increase supervision during unstructured times, such as lunch and recess, when bullying is said to be most frequent.	Time constraints (i.e. lack of prep time; lack of instructional time) that teachers face reduce the likelihood that they will participate in extra supervision duties.
Provide classroom rules against bullying behaviours.	Since classrooms are loosely coupled from one another, and function according to rules that are set by the individual teachers, consistency among and between classrooms is difficult to accomplish.
Have class discussions about bullying, and provide opportunity for role-playing.	Discussion and role-play are typically used only as reactionary measures, not proactive precautions.
Have serious talks, including who is to blame, and including punishment for the actions.	Many schools have adopted a 'no-blame' approach, rationalizing that punitive methods must not be effective, or else bullying would not be such an enormous topic of concern (Demko, 1996: 26).
Have serious talks with the parents of both bullies and victims.	Parental involvement is challenging for teachers and administrators to instigate. Further, parental aggression reduces the likelihood of schools instigating meetings.
Praise prosocial behaviour.	Teachers are often unable to recognize bullying, or antisocial behaviour, indicating that they may not be able to, or may not have time to, recognize prosocial behaviours.
Have negative consequences for students who bully, such as detention.	Administrative discretion indicates that consequences are not applied uniformly to students. Also, as many bullying behaviours occur away from the presence

	of adults, negative consequences cannot be implemented.
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APPENDIX 11: THE CONSEQUENCES OF INNAPROPRIATE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

Figure 1: Consequences of Inappropriate Student Behaviour: Mandatory Suspensions⁵⁸

MANDATORY SUSPENSIONS (<i>Education Act, Part XIII, section 306</i>)	Principal Shall Issue Suspension	Notify Police		Discretionary Expulsion
		May	Shall	
Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person	10 Days (Minimum)		X	X
Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs	5 Days (Minimum)	X		
Being under the influence of alcohol	1 Day (Minimum)	X		
Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority	1 Day (Minimum)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school	5 Days (Minimum)		X	X

Figure 2: Consequences of Inappropriate Student Behaviour: Mandatory Expulsions⁵⁹

MANDATORY EXPULSIONS (<i>Education Act, Part XIII, section 309</i>) Principal shall conduct an inquiry and impose a limited expulsion or refer to Board for Hearing	Principal Shall Issue Suspension	Notify Police	
		May	Shall
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	20 days		X
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	20 days		X
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	20 days		X
Committing sexual assault	20 days		X
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs	20 days		X
Committing robbery	20 days		X
Giving alcohol to a minor	20 days		X
Possession of explosive substance	20 days		X

⁵⁸ Toronto District School Board, 2004b

⁵⁹ Toronto District School Board, 2004b

APPENDIX 12: SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Research Questions, Hypotheses and Answers	
Q: What constraints do schools face when implementing anti-bullying programs?	
H: Schools will face both structural and organizational constraints, including working within a loosely coupled system, only having pre-packaged anti-bullying programs to implement, needing to appease the institutional environment and retain legitimacy, and having to address social problems on top of an already full curriculum.	
A:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools must implement pre-packaged programs, often which are of uncertain technology - Schools must adopt programs in order to retain legitimacy - Schools must work with vague definitions of bullying, making quick-fix programs appealing, as they are implemented in order to appear ceremonially compliant - Teachers don't have time to deal with more problems – they have enough on their plate due to the full curriculum - Each teacher has control of their own class (loosely coupled system), which makes implementing programs difficult - Lack of programs that have proven efficacy - Discretion entails that programs will be dealt with inconsistently - Schools respond to bullying not because of need, but because of pressure (as indicated by teachers not believing that bullying is more prevalent than ever before)
Q: How do schools structure anti-bullying programs?	
H: Schools respond to the needs and desires of their institutional environment, and implement structural responses that are loosely coupled with their practices.	
A:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of satisfaction surveys (not rigorous evaluation) - Student / Teacher / Parent Questionnaires - Evaluating 'success' through suspension rates - Programs not evaluated: cannot be measured accurately between or within schools - Lack of goals and outcomes - Loosely coupled system: works to appease and placate members of institutional environment; signal conformity; retain legitimacy - More therapeutic programs favoured over traditional punitive programs - Use of culturally appealing – yet not technologically sound – programs like peer mediation
Q: How are anti-bullying programs made culturally meaningful?	
H: Schools will implement programs of a therapeutic nature as opposed to a traditional punitive approach.	

<p>A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zero-tolerance and other punitive programs losing support / highly criticized, and being replaced by more therapeutic approaches - Schools become infiltrated by outside ‘experts’ – social workers, bullying program facilitators - The goals of the school changes as the school merges with therapeutic experts: new, combined goals emerge (such as attempting to raise the self-esteem of students) - Use of ‘social skills’ programs as opposed to ‘anti-bullying’ programs - Children are praised for exhibiting ‘appropriate’ emotions, not praised merely for academic achievement
<p>Implications for Social Problems in Education</p>
<p>Expect definitional expansion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As problem gains perceived prevalence, the definition will expand
<p>Expect a certain organizational response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of ineffective technology - Use of loose coupling - Programs are ‘tacked-on’ not integrated - No, or minimal, evaluation: used to signal conformity and legitimacy - Programs will come and go, depending on pressure from institutional environment (i.e. priorities shift from sex-ed to drug-abuse to anti-bullying to anti-racism, etc)
<p>Expect emergence of experts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Therapeutic frame is likely for dealing with any social problem - Use of professionals/experts to signal conformity and legitimacy - This will further expand the definition of the purported problem
<p>Expect other types of “social problems education”, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - health and wellness (physical, social, emotional, psychological) - sexual education - anti-racism and multi-culturalism - drug awareness

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