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Los Angeles

Culturally Relevant Cyberbullying Prevention

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Gregory John Phillips

2017

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Culturally Relevant Cyberbullying Prevention

by

Gregory John Phillips

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Diane Durkin, Co-Chair

Professor Wellford W. Wilms, Co-Chair

In this action research study, I, along with a student intervention committee of 14 members, developed a cyberbullying intervention for a large urban high school on the west coast. This high school contained a predominantly African American student population. I aimed to discover culturally relevant cyberbullying prevention strategies for African American students. The intervention committee selected video safety messages featuring African American actors as the most culturally relevant cyberbullying prevention strategy for African American students. However, videos were not actually employed due to time constraints. Instead, a paper and pencil treatment was employed. The student body read a cyber-safety brochure, rated their bullying behavior online on a scale ranging from cyberbully to cyber-saint, and reflected in a short paragraph upon whether they would change their online behavior. Of the 522 responders, 244 students promised to change their online behavior towards more safe behaviors. It appears that

the simple act of reflection serves as a catalyst for changing behavior. This action research study may be duplicated at other sites, and it is recommended that public safety messages via video be incorporated into future interventions, using student actors who represent the ethnic make-up of the intended site.

The dissertation of Gregory John Phillips is approved.

Tyrone Howard

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Diane Durkin, Committee Co-Chair

Wellford W. Wilms, Committee Co-Chair

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2017

DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated primarily to my friends in Cohort 21 of the Educational Leadership Program at UCLA. I could not have finished the program without their unflagging support through dark times. Michelle Melendres always sent me positive text messages during the times I felt I could not finish the study. She always supported me when I wanted to give up, and I will be forever grateful. Adaina Brown connected me to my LAUSD mentor and served as a mentor herself. Michael Carter provided the computer genius that enabled me to find all the necessary files during the crunch time of the written exam. Kristen Barnes served as an example of someone who would stop at nothing to achieve a goal, and buoyed all of us up with amazing baked goods. Jamila Salisberry acted as a personal friend and confident when times got tough. Nicholas Heath was my brother in the program and gave me great right-sizing perspective. Ali Murph provided another example of rugged toughness. Lupe Navarro-Garcia was the fierce female who helped keep us all together. Marcela Valadez was the voice of compassion to help me not be hard on myself, and served as a fantastic study partner. Tammy Mahan was another friendly voice on the journey and great example of never quitting, as well as a personal friend. Terri Iler provided me a ride when I got an ankle injury and showed me a positive spirit. Natalie Johnson and Chris Paul were great study partners and motivators in our group work. Teresa Neighbors also showed a never-quit attitude and served as a role model to me. Jason Rock also helped as an example of a man who put his family first. Robin Hamilton showed a strong work ethic. All of the above cohort members came together and for three years became my UCLA family, and I am grateful.

Lastly, I am dedicating this manuscript to myself, to celebrate my own effort, ingenuity, perseverance, hard-work, and ambition. I never quit on myself, despite needing an extra year. I

did something harder than anything I have ever done, and I deserve to recognize this achievement.

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Lastly, I would like to acknowledge God. Without my higher power, I could not have done this. Thank you God.

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CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop a culturally responsive prevention program for the problem of cyberbullying. I convened a committee of African American student leaders, parents, a teacher, and an administrator, to develop culturally responsive cyberbullying prevention strategies. This study was an action research project at a large urban high school, which contained a student body of 75% African American students, on the west coast. The whole-school approach was used as an intervention strategy, as well as researched culturally responsive cyberbullying prevention methods. The action research committee developed or identified strategies, put them into practice, and assessed their impact via dialogue. It was hoped to incorporate technology, such as iPhone apps or video creation, as part of the intervention cycle, but time constraints prevented the use of technology.

Background on Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, as defined by Willard (2007), is acting cruel towards others by using the Internet or other technologies such as cell phones. According to the website of the Office of the Attorney General of the State of California: "Anyone who sends any online communication to deliberately frighten, embarrass, harass or otherwise target another is a cyber bully" (Oag.ca.gov, 2017). Cyberbullying can include harassing others by sending offensive or insulting messages through instant messaging, posting malicious gossip and rumors on social networking sites, sending embarrassing photos via cell phones, or impersonating someone online for the purpose of humiliation.

Cyberbullying of K-12 students causes a variety of problems worldwide from depression to lower academic performance (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011). Different statistical analyses

highlight the pervasiveness of the problem of cyberbullying in the United States; however, the numbers from various sources differ. National statistics on cyberbullying from the National Center for Educational Statistics show a student rate of cyberbullying victimhood of 12.8% (NCES, 2011). A 2008 report by the Center for Disease Control showed the rates of electronic aggression as ranging from 9% to 35%, with electronic aggression defined as "any type of harassment or bullying" (Hertz et al., 2008). In a study of 3,767 students in grades six through eight, Kowalsky and Limber (2007) found that in a span of two months, 18% of students experienced cyberbullying. Whether victimhood is as high as 35% or as low as 9%, these percentages still translate into millions of U.S. cyberbullying victims. Li (2010) contends that up to 80% of cyberbullying goes unreported, implying that the percentage of cyberbullying victims may be even higher than these statistics illustrate.

Cyberbullying has spread to all parts of the world. According to a 2013 British survey of ten thousand U.K. teenagers aged 13 to 18, an estimated 5.43 million young people in the U.K. have self-reported cyberbullying, with 1.26 million subjected to cyberbullying on a daily basis (Ditchthelabel, 2014). Also, studies report cyberbullying in multiple countries, including Germany, Turkey, Greece, Britain, Canada, and China (Arslan et al., 2012; Cappadocia et al., 2013; Flores et al., 2013; Li et al., 2013, Menesini & Nocentini, 2009). Thus, cyberbullying represents a worldwide issue. Despite its global effects, less research has been done on cyberbullying prevention than on traditional bullying prevention. Current cyberbullying prevention programs have a mixed record of success (Smith, 2011; Kowalski et al., 2014). Thus, this study sought to develop a successful prevention program which takes into account African American students' unique culture, as well as incorporates technology.

Concern for Cyberbullying Varies Greatly

While most schools do have some sort of cyberbullying or bullying prevention policy, policy alone does not generate concern. One possible reason that cyberbullying remains at a high level is because teachers often do not see cyberbullying as a problem (Stauffer et al., 2012; Quing, 2008; Edgen et al., 2013). For example, Stauffer et al. (2012) did a study of 66 high schools to find that one fourth of the teachers did not see cyberbullying as a problem and even believed it prepared them for life. A survey of pre-service Canadian school teachers showed similar results (Quing, 2008). Edgen et al. (2013) found that female teachers were much more likely to be concerned about cyberbullying than male teachers. Even when teachers do see cyberbullying as an important issue to be addressed, teachers are overwhelmed with "multiple demands for services in the face of limited resources" (Smith et al., 2005). Therefore, teachers may prioritize other pressing tasks, such as grading and lesson planning. However, these teachers may be ignoring a hidden danger.

Difference Between Traditional Bullying and Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying effects can be just as devastating, if not more so, than traditional bullying. Cyberbullying victims are even more likely to be depressed, harbor suicidal thoughts, or commit suicide than victims of traditional bullying (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000; Klomek et al., 2007; Winsper et al., 2012).

Cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying because cyberbullying can be carried out over great distances. Unlike many instances of traditional bullying, cyberbullying may be perpetrated anonymously, using a variety of media including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, YouTube, blogging, and other social media sites, as well as traditional email. Cyberbullying incidents need not have an imbalance of power, such as when a stronger victim attacks a physically weaker victim; power imbalance is an element associated with traditional

bullying (Olweus, 2001). According to Donegan (2012), persons who engage in cyberbullying feel empowered to say "crueler" things to victims online than they would during a traditional face-to-face encounter--a phenomenon identified as "online disinhibition" (Suler, 2004). One who engages in cyberbullying is shielded from the target's reaction and are deprived of the feedback loop that happens in face to face encounters. Research has shown that cyberbullying can have a stronger impact than traditional bullying (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000; Klomek et al., 2007; Winsper et al., 2012).

As an added danger, according to Heirman and Walrave (2008), specific technical features of cyberbullying enable perpetrators to affect a nearly unlimited audience. Therefore, anyone, anywhere, can be a target. Indeed, according to Frankel (2011), even 15% of teachers are victims of cyberbullying. The ease of cyberbullying by current youth digital natives contributes to its propagation and perpetration (Kowalski et al., 2008). Having looked at the risks of cyberbullying, I next will show an overview of existing traditional bullying prevention programs, and then of existing cyberbullying prevention programs, so that these successful components from these programs can inform this study's efforts.

Elements of Successful Traditional Bullying Prevention Programs

Research trends show that successful bullying intervention focuses on whole-school methods. For example, a meta-study by Vreeman and Caroll (2007) yielded 26 studies that employed whole-school intervention methods. Vreeman and Carroll found that bullying behavior can be significantly reduced by well-planned intervention and that the chance of successfully reducing bullying improves if the whole school participates in the prevention program. Their findings are consistent with research findings by Olweus (1993) and Pearce et al. (2011). Olweus (1993) stressed that all members of the school community (school staff, parents,

and pupils) gain an understanding of how to respond to bullying. The whole-school approach indicators are: creating school-community-family partnerships, building a supportive school culture, creating key understandings of bullying among all stakeholders, developing effective anti-bullying policies and procedures, creating a protective school environment, and increasing the capacity to act against bullying (Pearce et al., 2011).

Despite some success of the whole-school approach, Smith et al. (2004) cautions that, while the whole-school approach has led to reductions in bullying in some cases, the findings are too inconsistent to rule out other prevention methods. Smith found successful reductions of bullying in schools that "systematically monitored" the implementation of the intervention. Smith et al. suggest that researchers should go beyond student self-reports of bullying, and instead include observations from teachers, classmates, administrators, students, and parents. Such studies indicate that a monitored, ongoing whole-school approach, such as the one proposed here, is needed.

Elements of Successful Cyberbullying Prevention

Some specific elements of successful cyberbullying prevention have been identified. Von Marees and Petermann (2012) found from their meta-cyberbullying prevention study that students should be taught digital safety intervention strategies including blocking offenders, reporting abuse, and Internet safety. Law et al. (2012) suggest that because cyberbullying involves much more reciprocal behavior (bully as both perpetrator and victim) than traditional bullying, cyber intervention strategies should target reciprocal behaviors. Von Marees and Petermann (2012) recommend that cyberbullying prevention use the same technology that perpetrates bullying. According to Tokunaga (2010), technology could moderate cyberbullying relationships.

Other studies recommend changing cultural norms in order to reduce bullying and cyberbullying. Ang et al. (2011) suggest that students must be taught that what seems normal to students is neither "legitimate" nor "acceptable." Ang et al. (2011) found that normative beliefs about aggression were a significant partial mediator of cyberbullying behavior. A previous study by Huesman and Guerra (1977) found that patterns of aggressive behavior "become more firmly established through a social learning process as the child develops into an adult". Therefore, the cultural norms of the social environment play a role in cyberbullying behavior. These findings are further bolstered by the large European study of 54 countries and their European cyberbullying prevention guidelines (Cost, 2012). Cost found that student peer groups need to play a role in cyberbullying prevention. The Cost finding reinforces Ang's finding that students are involved in creating norms of behavior; therefore, students must be part of the cyberbullying solution.

Despite these many findings, researchers indicate that more studies are needed due to a lack of rigorous evaluations of existing intervention programs (Bauman, 2013; Li, 2008; Von Marees & Petermann, 2012). According to Bauman (2013), there has not been a rigorous evaluation study of any intervention program to prevent cyberbullying. Li (2008) contends that further research is necessary to determine effective cyberbullying prevention techniques. Von Marees and Petermann (2012) state that, while traditional bullying prevention is well understood, more research is needed on how to effectively prevent and combat cyberbullying. Other researchers have called for the inclusion of a cultural response when designing cyberbullying prevention (Li, 2008).

The Need for Culturally Responsive Cyberbullying Prevention

A culturally responsive intervention study for cyberbullying has been called for but rarely studied. Li (2008) stresses the importance of culture and institutional context in cyberbullying prevention programs in a study that compared cyberbullying in both China and Canada. Li found that culture played a role in the aggressive behavior of adolescents, and that culture must be accounted for when designing prevention programs. Kowalsky et al. (2014) confirm that little research has been conducted in the fields of cross-cultural bullying. They note that "variations suggest that there will not likely be a one-size-fits-all model of prevention and intervention when it comes to bullying, whether traditional or virtual" (Kowalsky et al., 2014, p. 1127). A cyberbullying intervention would have to be tailored to address the particular needs of the culture of the site (Kowalsky et al., 2014). And we know, from general research on instructional methods, that culturally relevant instruction is more effective than generic instruction (Cannon, 2009; Leonard et al., 2005; Robinson & Lewis, 2011; Sachau & Hutchinson, 2012; Santamaria, 2009). Therefore, cyberbullying intervention should take culture and culturally relevant instruction into account, including African American Communication routines if the program is for African Americans.

African American Communication Routines

Many African American students in large urban areas speak African American English (AAE), a linguistically rich dialect of English that is rule-governed (Green, 2002; Rickford, 1999). This dialect reflects part of the cultural identity of the African American community according to Green (2002) and Rickford (1999). Oral tradition is a powerful element of AAE (Rickford, 1999). The dialect of African Americans incorporates unique Speech Events and Expressive Language Use (SEELU) not shared by white, Eurocentric culture. SEELU of the

African American English is comprised of distinctive verbal routines and rituals, including "rappin', preaching, boastin', and signifying."

According to Grey's findings (2011), the culturally responsive teacher will use five techniques in his or her classroom to build upon--not try to white wash--these unique features of SEELU of African American culture. These unique teaching methods that respond to African American English, and can be used in a culturally responsive teaching unit on cyberbullying, include: direct address; conversational style; use of culturally-specific vocabulary, phrasing, and sayings; African American cultural references; and rhythmic and dramatic speech. Ford (2013) found that a "lighter" version of signifying, called "verbal ping pong", can also be used as an affective culturally responsive teaching method. I contend that a successful culturally cyberbullying prevention program will incorporate many of these culturally responsive teaching methods.

The most unique element of the African American SEELU verbal routines that is relevant to this study is signifying. Signifying is a kind of verbal "dueling" in which students exchange insults. However, signifying in real life can be moderated by facial expressions and other nonverbal cues, which are the most important moderator of communication (Mandal, 2014), whereas non-visual digital communication that starts as playful signifying may instead escalate.

Thus, unique elements of African American cultures, such as SEELU verbal routines, can be woven into intervention methods as part of a culturally responsive teaching (Ford, 2013). In summary, the literature suggests that effective cyberbullying prevention techniques have not been fully studied (Li, 2008; Bauman, 2013; Von Marees & Peterman, 2012); that technology should play a role in cyberbullying prevention (Von Marees & Peterson 2012; Tokunda, 2010); that a whole-school approach is critical for traditional bullying intervention (Olweus, 1993;

Pearce et al.,2011); that peer-leadership should play a critical role in the prevention of cyberbullying (Cost, 2012); and, that African American communication routines can be built upon in culturally responsive teaching (Grey, 2011; Ford, 2014). This study sought to develop a prevention program that incorporates all of these research-indicated elements, as well as taking a home-grown design approach.

Bottom up programs are rare in LAUSD. This study addresses another problem, the need for a strong "grass-roots" cyberbullying intervention, rather than the weak top-down intervention that is currently in place. Current LAUSD cyberbullying intervention programs are often dictated by the central office, and consist of little more than a one-time PowerPoint on bullying, and a form on digital citizenship that must be signed one time by parents and students. Instead of a comprehensive whole school approach, as indicated by Olweus (1993) and Pearce et al. (2011), the approach in practice at LAUSD for combating cyberbullying does not incorporate all stakeholders, is truncated in nature, and has not solved the cyberbullying problem. Thus, this study will address the need for a culturally relative intervention program that utilizes grass roots prevention.

The Project

I developed a new whole-school culturally responsive cyberbullying prevention program using action research that targets African American students. As the action research leader, I convened a weekly committee for three months (consisting of two to three African American student leaders, two parents, the dean, the school social worker, and an administrator) to identify and develop culturally responsive cyberbullying prevention methods. Technology, such as the iMovie app, was also discussed as a tool of prevention. The action research committee utilized a plan, do, review, iterative cycle for each intervention method that it executed. An action

research approach was necessary to create, asses, refine, and embed this new program at the school site, in order to gain knowledge about culturally responsive cyberbullying prevention methods.

Research Questions

1) What are best practices for culturally relevant cyberbullying prevention for African American Students, according to a leadership committee of students, parents, teachers, and an administrator?

2) What do students, parents, and teachers, at a large urban predominantly African American high school, say is the effect of the cyberbullying program on their attitudes and behaviors?

Impact of the Study

As an end result of the findings of this study, I will create a step-by-step handbook of how to create a home-grown culturally responsive cyberbullying prevention program. I will make the handbook available to district leaders and will post this handbook online for any school to replicate. Furthermore, I will give presentations as requested to other interested schools about how to develop a bottom up intervention program with stakeholder buy-in. Lastly, I will make a library of intervention strategies developed freely available to all stakeholders online; I will scan any documents, digitize any videos of any instructional techniques, make YouTube clips of student testimonies, and otherwise fully digitally document all teaching strategies, videos, products, or methods developed to combat cyberbullying, and post all products on a website that I plan to create.

While it was difficult to measure a reduction in cyberbullying events in the short three-month time frame, a pre- and post- survey was administered that gathered the attitudes of students towards cyberbullying and their likelihood to perpetrate cyberbullying in the future.

Ideally, the surveys would show that students are less likely to perpetrate cyberbullying after implementing the prevention program, and would show a reduced level of cyberbullying at the research site. It was hoped that this study would raise awareness and would galvanize stakeholders into action to prevent cyberbullying. As discussed in the findings chapter, the study outcomes did not create the intended changes in student attitudes about cyberbullying.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Literature Review

Cyberbullying has been correlated with teenage suicide (Kowalski et al., 2012; Schwickrath, 2012). Cyberbullying can cause depression, anxiety, feelings of isolation, and reduced academic performance (Bauman, 2010; Elledge et al., 2013; Tokunaga, 2010). To address the problem of cyberbullying, this study created a program of culturally responsive strategies to combat cyberbullying for African American teenagers, ages 14-18. This study utilized a grass-roots "bottom-up" action research approach that responded to the culture of African American students, including students' values, student communication routines, and student linkage to technology. Such a study promised to be more effective than pre-packaged intervention programs that are not site-specific nor culturally responsive.

Overview of the Argument

To support this action research intervention, I first detail the nature and extent of the problem, including gender issues, age trends, and special issues concerning sexual identify and cyberbullying. I then review the literature on culturally responsive teaching as it relates to cyberbullying of African-American secondary students, the target participants of my study, including communication themes of African Americans girls. Next, I review the teenage link to the digital world, also explaining the six methods of digital communication. Teenagers who are linked to digital media require intervention strategies that use and are informed by digital technology. After discussing technology, I review findings from the KiVa traditional anti-bullying program, the Olweus traditional anti-bullying program, and then detail findings from current cyberbullying intervention programs that can inform this study. Taking these findings

into account, I end this literature review with an explanation of the need for a grass-roots intervention, as indicated by organizational change theory.

Nature and Extent of the Problem

There is widespread agreement that cyberbullying threatens the health and welfare of our students. Tokunaga (2010) states that cyberbullying victims can have lower self-esteem. Ybarra et al. (2007) state that targets of cyberbullying experience significant life challenges such as depressive symptomology. Kowalski et al. (2014) find in their meta-review that cyber victims have been linked to anxiety, substance abuse, lower academic performance, sleeping disorders dropping out of school, and increased absenteeism. Lastly, Bauman (2013) tells us that even one cyberbullying event can be psychologically devastating to the victim.

While researchers agree that cyberbullying causes widespread psychological damage (Tokunaga, 2010; Ybarra et al., 2008; Kowalski et al. 2014; Bauman, 2013), they disagree on the magnitude of the problem; cyberbullying statistics vary widely. The highest rate of cyber-victimization found was 72%, as reported by Juhoven and Gross (2008), in an online survey of 1454 teens aged 12 to 17 year olds. Lower results include a meta-study by Modecki and Minchin (2013), who found a rate of 21% victimization of cyberbullying. Hinduja and Patchin (2015) found from their 15 years of research, a victimization rate of 25%. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2013) found a victimization rate of 9%. Thus, the number of cyber victims, while high, varies widely, possibly because researchers have not yet agreed upon common metrics for cyberbullying (Law et al., 2012).

Similarly, researchers and legislators do not agree on the definition of cyberbullying (Law et al., 2012). Researchers, however, do agree on common characteristics of cyberbullying, including power-imbalance, intent to harm, and repetition (Dredge et al., 2014, Hinduja &

Patchin, 2015). See Appendix A for a list of cyberbullying definitions. Clearly, millions of teens are suffering from cyberbullying abuse.

Understanding how cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying helps inform intervention strategies. Unlike traditional bullying, an imbalance of physical power (Olweus, 1993) is not necessary for the cyberbully to inflict lasting damage. Instead, the technology savvy individual holds more power in the bully-victim relationship (Law et al., 2012). Moreover, unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying events persist and can seem to have an infinite lifetime on the internet; they do not cease when the student goes home from school (Tokunaga, 2010). Also, cyberbullying can be perpetrated freely and easily over vast distances; thus, harassment events are not mitigated by the response of the victim (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). Additionally, cyberbullying offers increased chances of anonymity for the perpetrator and can be an opportunistic offense (Englander & Muldowney, 2007). However, researchers have found that 40-50% of cyber victims know their offenders (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Wolak et al., 2007). Finally, due to the quasi-anonymous nature of cyberbullying, the phenomenon of "online disinhibition" occurs (Suler, 2004). When this phenomenon occurs, the youth offender becomes disconnected from both the victim and the moral consequences and thus feels empowered to be more cruel than he or she would be in a face-to-face encounter (Donegan, 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2015).

Understanding these differences, educators can develop strategies that target online moral disinhibition and moral disengagement, to show the offender the human face of the damage he or she causes. Also, offenders who offend behind the shield of anonymity must be shown that no one is really anonymous on the internet (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). Offenders may also be educated about the possible loss of career opportunities later in life caused by digital

misbehavior. Lastly, victims may be educated on digital safety, including ways to block harassers, change email addresses, and how to escape the "perpetual" nature of the assault. Thus, knowing the differences between traditional bullying and cyber bullying and understanding technology can inform education and prevention strategies.

How Cyberbullying Varies by Gender and Age

How does cyberbullying vary by gender? The results are mixed. Kowalski and Limber (2007) and Ybarra and Mitchell (2007) found that girls are more often cyberbullying victims than boys. Other researchers have found just the opposite--that boys are more likely to be victims of cyberbullying than girls (Li, 2008; Slonje & Smith, 2007; Sourander at al., 2010). Some researchers find that both genders (male and female) seem to participate in and suffer equally from cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin 2008; Williams & Guerra 2007; Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). It should be noted that even in studies that find differences in the rate of victimhood between genders, the differences are not large, usually less than ten percent. Also, one should note that boys are not the overall majority of perpetrators and girls are not the majority of victims.

As for age trends in cyberbullying, many researchers find that cyberbullying peaks in middle school at eighth grade, and then drops off steadily (Beale & Hall, 2007; Cassidy et al., 2009). Again, there is some variation in studies on age of victimhood (NCES, 2013). For example, Hinduja and Patchin (2015) find that cyberbullying spikes between 6th and 7th grade and then flat-lines, only slightly increasing from 8th to 12th grade. However, as the age of the offender/victim does not show wide variation in secondary schools, and as neither gender is strongly identified as either the victim or the perpetrator, secondary intervention strategies do not need to focus on one specific gender or one age range, but instead should focus on building

school capacity to combat cyberbullying (Datnow, 2005). Having explained gender and age trend, I now turn to one factor that does strongly affect the level of cyberbullying—sexual identity.

Sexual Identity and Its Relationship to Cyberbullying

While researchers agree that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and questioning youth (LGBTQ) are more likely to be traditionally bullied than their heterosexual peers, only a paucity of research documents LGBTQ youth and their experiences with cyberbullying (Berlan et al. 2010; Crothers & Altman, 2007; Swearer et. al. 2008, Wiederhold, 2014; Schwickrath, 2012). Of the research that exists, one study of 20,000 non-heterosexual and heterosexual youth, grades 9-12 in the Boston area, found the cyberbully victimhood rate of LGBTQ youth to be twice as high as the rate for their heterosexual peers (Schneider et al.; 2012). In another study of 5,680 U. S. teens, ages 13-18, LGBTQ teens were 2.8 times more likely to have experienced cyberbullying than their heterosexual peers (GLSEN, 2013).

Thus, research suggests that LGBTQ teens, who are well documented to have been targets of traditional bullying at higher rates than their heterosexual peers (Wiederhold, 2014), are also more likely to be targets of cyberbullying. Intervention strategies therefore need to take into account the potential risks to the LGBTQ community, since these teens have the highest rate of victimization of any group. I next turn to how to effectively teach intervention strategies through the use of CRT (Culturally Responsive Teaching).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

There is almost universal agreement among researchers that culturally responsive teaching is an effective teaching strategy for teaching diverse students (Cannon, 2009; Leonard et al., 2005; Robinson & Lewis, 2011; Sachau & Hutchinson, 2012; Santamaria, 2009). Any cyberbullying intervention, which teaches behavior, should therefore incorporate cultural

elements (Li, 2008). Gray (2011) found that use of home language, tones, communication strategies, and stories were effective in delivering the message. These same methods need to inform an anti-cyberbullying program.

Gray's study details effective culturally responsive communication language and will be detailed below. Gray asked, as one of her three research questions: "What makes the communication styles of teachers of African American students in diverse classrooms culturally responsive?"

To answer this question, Gray conducted a study of eight middle schools in the Pacific North West of the United States. She focused on four groups: parents, students, principals, and teachers. Gray recruited parents of middle and high school groups who attended educational workshops at a local church. Parents who elected to participate completed an anonymous 15-20 minute questionnaire. The questionnaire contained questions such as: "What are the characteristics of a successful teacher of African American children?" and "Which teachers have your child(ren) experienced success with?" The second group of responders to this study were high school students, who were recruited from a community-based youth achievers program. These high school students were asked "What characteristics make good teachers for you and other African American students?" and "What do these 'good teachers' do or say to make you feel they are a good teacher'?" They were also asked to identify by name these outstanding educators. The third group of responders were principals, who were asked questions such as "which teachers in your school have experienced the most successes with African American Students?" and "Explain how their success is conveyed through their communication styles."

Once all three groups of responders had answered and submitted the names of the outstanding educators, 56 teachers were nominated to participate in the rest of the study. Three

of these teachers were studied in depth in the teacher component. These teachers were videotaped for twelve to sixteen hours over the course of two months. Transcripts of the video-tapes were made, focusing on the teachers' verbal and nonverbal instructional interactions. Gray's findings show that direct address, informal commands, the warm demander, and code switching were key elements of effective CRT.

Direct address was a key finding of the study as a successful cultural communication style, which included matter-of-fact tone and making statements with conviction. The successful teacher used direct language including "You better..." and "You need to…" Instructions did not always need direct address though. Another finding was that the use of indirect commands was effective cultural communication, such as "Let's get lined up" and "I don't see anyone standing in line yet". These indirect commands are commonly accepted effective communication in African American English (Charity-Hudley & Mallinson, 2011). Not only did the successful teachers use indirect commands, they also weaved the "warm demander" style into their commands, showing a no-nonsense attitude while at the same time demonstrating affinity for the students. To complete their toolbox of cultural communication techniques, these effective teachers incorporated contemporary colloquial language such as "you're just hangin' out here" and "awesome" as part of the instructional style. Gray points out that at times it is difficult to distinguish between the lexicon of the teachers as African American culturally responsive teachers or as generic teachers using the vernacular of the broader popular culture. However, this may be the brilliance of these teachers--code switching so effortlessly between the two cultures allows for a broad appeal (Gray, 2011).

Culturally effective communication can be incorporated into instruction on anti-cyberbullying by including direct address and indirect commands, being the "warm demander,"

and code switching between popular culture and the culture of the students.

Communication Routines

While the skillful code-switching instructor will be well positioned to communicate most topics, the culturally fluent instructor needs cultural knowledge of the themes discovered by Dorsey. Dorsey (2000) studied communication between small groups of African American women, and discovered that three themes underpin communications in small groups of female African Americans. The first theme is the "legacy of the struggle", as indicated as well by Collins (1986). The second theme is the meaning of "self-valuation". Black females must struggle to self-define against a panoply of denigrated images. The third theme is women's culture, which Collins defines as connection to history over time. Understanding these cultural elements can help the presenter of anti-cyberbullying not step on toes and instead allow women's unique culture and communication routines to shine and be displayed in video clips and choice of vernacular. Dorsey found that groups of African American women generate and regenerate dialogue about the norm of "struggle". Incorporating the theme of struggle into instruction on cyberbullying may also resonate as a way to begin a dialogue with African American females and students in general on cyberbullying.

Gray's elements of CRT and Dorsey's communication themes could be incorporated into a broader framework cultural competency for teachers developed by Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995). Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's framework consists of four elements for culturally competent teaching: establishing inclusion (creating a rich atmosphere of learning that warmly connects students and teachers with respect), developing attitude (creating a favorable attitude toward learning through personal connection with instructional topics), enhancing meaning (creating thoughtful personal experiences of topics), and engendering competence (creating a

feeling of successful mastery of topics). It is vital to develop the cultural connection to the students in order to generate motivation (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Thus, logic indicates utilizing this framework, which could help students and teachers bond, could help teachers gain student motivation for cyberbullying intervention, or other endeavors as well. I next turn to the teen linkage to the digital world, and how technology might be part of cyberbullying prevention.

Teen Linkage to the Cyber World

Here, I will argue that teens are inextricably linked to technology in ways like never before, and thus are unable to disconnect in the face of cyberbullying. According to Hinduja and Patchin (2015), technology is not just part of a teen's life, "[technology] are their lives" (p. 25). For some teens, it would be unthinkable to disconnect. Indeed, many teens suffer from *nomophobia*, which is defined by King et al. (2013) as fear or anxiety caused by non-availability of a virtual communication device. A 2005 survey by the Pew institute found that U.S. teens viewed their phones as the "key" to their social lives. A later survey of 802 teens, ages 12-17, by the Pew Research Center (2013) found that 78% of U.S. teens own their own cell phone, and 25% use their cell phone as the primary way of accessing the internet. A much larger survey of 9000 U.S. schools, by Project Tomorrow (2013), found that 89% of high school students had access to a cell phone—nearly all teens. There is a clear divide between how parents view technology and how teens do. Most parents see technology as an information tool; most teens see technology as the vital link to their social life (Keith & Martin, 2005).

As further evidence of teenage bondage to technology, the Kaiser Family Foundation (2010) conducted a survey to see how many hours teens were spending using digital media. This study, of 2000 American youths, ages 8-18, found that these youths spend an average of 1.29 hours a day using the computer for a variety of nonacademic purposes, an average of 1.13 hours

a day just playing video games (this time was excluded from computer use time), 2.31 hours a day listening to music, and 10.45 hours per day for total media use (including watching TV).

Ways Teens Communicate Through Technology

Because there are so many ways that teens communicate online, and the ease with which they can cloak their electronic activities, it would be difficult for parents to monitor all of these communication methods. Understanding these methods informs the complexity of combating cyberbullying by understanding the web of communications that teens navigate. For example, students not only communicate with traditional email and text from laptops and desktops, they also communicate via smart phone technology anywhere there is a Wi-Fi connection using: online gaming forums, such as World of Warcraft, app based communication, such as Viber, big name social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, and anonymous social media platforms, such as Yik Yak and Secret, as well as various blog sites (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). Because of the sheer number of communication options, it would be difficult for the average parent to monitor all of this communication without some kind of cyber safety software or commitment by the teen to be transparent about all of his or her communication. Now, I shall turn attention to current traditional anti-bullying efforts, and how these traditional programs can inform cyberbullying intervention.

Current Traditional Intervention Programs for Cyberbullying--The KiVa Program

Cyberbullying prevention, as the younger cousin to traditional bullying prevention, is still in its infancy as a field of study. Personal computers were not readily available to consumers at an affordable price, and thus to potential cyberbullies, until the late 1980's. As a new field, little research documents successful cyberbullying prevention programs (Wilford et al. 2013). Further, no meta-studies on cyberbullying prevention programs are available at this time.

However, a few large-scale traditional bullying interventions have been extensively researched—the KiVa program and the Olweus program. Thus, I shall begin by reviewing and drawing conclusion from the Kiva traditional anti-bullying program, which is considered to be a highly effective anti-bullying program (Kärnä et al., 2013), and then turn to the Olweus program, and how these programs can inform cyberbullying prevention.

The KiVa antibullying program (an acronym for Klusaamista Vastaan, "against bullying") is a Finnish program that targets traditional bullying. Researchers have consistently found that the KiVa program significantly reduces bullying incidents, with reductions of up to 50% in both traditional bullying and traditional perpetrator behavior (Salmivalli et al, 2011; Kärnä et al. 2011; Kärnä et al., 2013; Haataja, et al., 2015). Also, the KiVa program has specifically been found to reduce cyberbullying as well (Williford et al., 2013).

The elements of the KiVa program that might inform this study are the whole school approach, classroom level teachings, attempting to change classroom norms, bullying incidents reporting training, and monitoring of program implementation. The KiVa program has three separate curricula, for primary students, middle students, or high school students. After selecting the appropriate age curriculum, KiVa partner schools deliver four waves of classroom instruction given over four months, designed to strengthen empathy. As part of the program, students see video clips and play online games, relating to both traditional bullying. Parents are taught online monitoring tools. Teachers are given manuals, presentation graphics, and training. Administrators participate in training as well. Thus, it is a whole school effort.

Perhaps most importantly, KiVa cannot be rolled out to any school without school personnel first undergoing training through a designated KiVa trainer. If there is no trainer in the region, a school will not be allowed participate in the KiVa program. This training requirement

insures a high quality of implementation (and is also a barrier to using KiVa's program here in Los Angeles. Currently the KiVa program, while used in five countries in Europe, is available only in Delaware in the United States). Dan Olweus has created an American program that is similar to the KiVa program.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) incorporates many of the same elements of the KiVa program, including consistent program monitoring and required staff training, as well as the whole school approach. Validated as a successful program by Pagliocca et al., (2007), Olweus (1993) and Olweus et al. (2007) found that a key element of the success of the Olweus program was that schools should work to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying (Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007), by using their four principles to positively influence school culture, including demonstrating warmth towards students, creating firm limits for misbehavior, enforcing consistent consequences, and encouraging staff to act as role models. Further information about the Olweus program appears in Appendix C.

Current Cyberbullying Intervention Programs

While cyberbullying occurs primarily outside of school hours, (Feinberg & Robey, 2009; Limber, 2009; Smith et al. 2008), some cyberbullying does occur during school or carries into school from outside of school hours. Thus, school programs do have an important role to play reducing cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). Going forward, this paper will examine several already developed school-based programs and their findings, including the program developed by Johanna Mustaachi, the Australian Cyberbullying Affects Real Lives SOSO campaign (Smart Online, Safe Offline), Hinduja and Patchin's three-tiered approach, and commercially available programs such as iSafe.

Johanna Mustaachi developed an internet safety program at Pierre Van Corlandt Middle School in New York. She based her program on the core concept that adolescents, having powerful peer connections, are best able to protect other adolescents. In her program, she first taught "netiquette" (proper internet behavior), to her eighth graders. After she was convinced her eighth graders were well grounded in netiquette, she paired eighth-graders with sixth grade buddies to serve as mentors. The eighth-graders developed and presented skits to the sixth graders on cyberbullying topics in an assembly setting, with a group of adults also present, including counselors, the school psychologist, and law enforcement, to answer questions. The skits raised issues that captured the attention of the student audience, including "body image, stealing boyfriends and girlfriends, and threats of violence" (Mustacchi, 2009). She received a strong positive response from staff and parents and was subsequently requested by the principal to create an entire internet safety curriculum, which is now available posted on her school website. The important finding from her action research is that it is possible to generate a high degree of student buy-in by developing home grown interventions involving students (Mustaachi, 2009).

Taking a slightly different take on student-driven internet safety programs, the 2009 Australian campaign, Cyberbullying Affects Real Lives, funded by NAPCAN (National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect), in collaboration with Google Australia, includes two-minute video clips to educate and young people. As a part of the SOSO campaign (Smart Online, Safe Offline) social initiative, this campaign also includes catchy marketing slogans such as "Share It, Spread It, Join It and You're a Bully Too". The noteworthy findings of this study are that young people can successfully use online social marketing to serve

as an anti-cyberbullying strategy, and that youth can champion the anti-cyberbullying movement, not merely act as passive research subjects (Spears & Zeederberg, 2013).

Technology-based-student-driven intervention as a successful strategy is noteworthy because this strategy can be replicated into other intervention efforts. Technology use as a strategy is corroborated by Brewer (2011), who found in her dissertation "Fight Fire with Fire" that a web-quest format of presenting cyberbullying information was an effective anti-bullying strategy (Brewer, 2011). Couvillon and Ilieva (2011) go so far to as to say that cyberbullying prevention programs should have technology that becomes self-regulating tool. For example, software could comb through communication messages to ferret out harassment and administer warnings to offenders. However, not all researchers agree that a technological response to cyberbullying is absolutely necessary. Hinduja and Patchin advocate using an "old-fashioned" response of having all students write a paper-and-pen report on the effects of cyberbullying, in order for students to understand the consequences of their actions (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015).

Donlin (2012), in *Cyberbullying Prevention and Response Expert Perspectives*, suggests a three-tiered approach to cyberbullying intervention. The first tier, called Universal Tier I, Prevention, is for all students and staff and parents: education about cyberbullying, the consequences of the problem, training on cyber-literacy, how to report cyberbullying incidents, and general cyber-safety. The second tier, called Targeted Tier II, Prevention-Intervention, is for small teams: counseling intervention teams, student peer groups, and multidisciplinary teams, to provide intervention for mid-level offenders and victims. The third tier, called Intensive Tier III, Intervention, is for individuals involved in cyberbullying as perpetrators or victims, as well as for supporting staff and agencies: counseling, discipline, law enforcement, and medical support. The interested reader should see Appendix B for a diagram of this three-tiered approach.

Commercial Programs

There are commercially available programs for sale that do contain many specific steps and curricula. Limber's cyberbullying intervention program, sold on Hazelden Publishing, can be purchased for $116.00 per booklet. This intervention provides teachers with eight modules of instruction, including skits and video lessons. It consists of a single workbook, along with an attached DVD. Another commercially available program is iSafe, which includes a library of video clips that addresses issues such as internet privacy and reporting. Part of the iSafe software package is a digital reporting site in order to allow victims to log cyberbullying incidents into a database, which could provide stakeholders at a site with important data on the extent of the local problem. iSafe requires a paid subscription by a school district. Yet another program, "Lets Fight It Together" is a free internet curriculum that includes a teacher manual as a PDF download, a film introduction, and video clips of different characters in various roll playing scenarios. The advantage of these programs is that they have a low cost or free cost and can be quickly acquired. The disadvantage is the lack of personal training on how to implement them. Having overviewed both traditional anti-bullying programs and commercial cyberbullying prevention programs, I will next summarize all of the recommendations for cyberbullying prevention, drawing from all of these programs.

Summary of Current Cyberbullying Intervention Recommendations

As a summary, based on research by Olweus (1993), Spears and Zeederman (2013), Mustaachi (2009), Katzer et. al (2009), and Couvillon and Ileva (2011), cyberbullying intervention should take a system level, whole school approach. Also, cyberbullying intervention should influence school culture, infusing a spirit of caring into the school culture (Olweus, 1993). It is essential that any cyberbullying prevention program provide extensive training to

staff for consistent program implementation (Ttofi & Farrington, 2009). The intervention program should utilize culturally responsive teaching elements (Li, 2008) such as communication routines and the theme of struggle (Gray, 2011). Lastly, the intervention should use a variety of resources, including technology (Brewer, 2011), and utilize students as champions of the anti-cyberbully message (Spears & Zeederman, 2013; Mustacchi, 2009).

While existing cyberbullying intervention programs, such as the KiVa program and the SOSO contain many of these elements and have the merit of some success, they lack a site specificity, a cultural message focus, and a grass roots beginning. The next section shall detail the need for a grass roots intervention proposed in this study, as indicated by educational change theory (Schmoker, 2006).

Grass Roots Intervention

This study proposes a unique grass roots beginning, emphasizing action research and culturally responsive teaching methods, that has not been studied before. The majority of bullying prevention programs, such as Olweus's whole school approach, are pre-packaged programs that schools implement, rather than stake-holder developed programs. Examples of pre-packaged programs include iSafe Internet Safety Program, Australian SOSO campaign, and the KiVa program. All of these above programs, while containing some well thought out curricula and good video clips, do not emphasize using culturally responsive techniques, which literature calls for (Gray, 2011), nor were they created by onsite students and staff. The advantage of a grass-roots program is the generation of a critical mass of program supporters to support organizational change (Schmoker, 2006).

Organizational Change Theory that Relates to Cyberbullying Prevention

Researchers agree that a common vision is necessary for organizational change to happen

(Schmoker, 2006, Ed. Commission of the States, 1992; Schein, 2009). Indeed, the Educational Commission of the States (1992) posits that vision represents the most important element of change drives. Thus, cyberbullying intervention programs must first generate a common vision of a harassment-free environment. However, as most educators will generally agree that schools should be swept clean of cyberbullying, the challenge for cyberbullying intervention comes not from generating a school safety vision, but instead, of building organizational level capacity for action and developing a sense of common purpose (Senge et al., 1999; Harris, 2011).

The need to build focused capacity is echoed by Fullan (2010a) and Levin (2010), who state that highly performing systems focus on a small number of goals and build capacity to achieve these goals. Without focused and purposeful capacity building, evidence shows that program gains are likely to be "uneven at best" (Fullan, 2010b). Capacity building at the school site should come through training and monitoring of program implementation, as indicated by the focus on training of staff by the KiVa and Olweus Programs (Salmivalli et al., 2011; Olweus & Limber, 2010). Capacity building should include all stakeholders according to Senge et. al. (1996) and for this proposed intervention may include: training staff in how to execute harassment prevention lessons, training parents how to talk to their children about cyber-safety, empowering other stake-holders such as clerical staff on the process of reporting of cyberbullying incidents, and, beginning critical dialogues with students about the consequences of cyberbullying, as well as training students to be aware of what constitutes abusive behavior.

While the principal of the school must make capacity building a priority for this cyberbullying intervention program to work (Levin, 2010), Bond et al. (2001) noted a different key element of success for organization change—working with a "critical friend," an outsider who could help schools reflect upon their change process. This person could come from the

community. In the three-year Gatehouse project promoting student health, Bond also found that schools faced the barrier of under-utilization of outside community resources (Bond et al., 2001).

In the face of turbulent district priorities, sustainability of this proposed cyberbullying intervention program represents a challenge. Unfortunately, most new school programs fade away over time (Anderson & Stiegelbauer, 1994; Cuban, 1992; Kirst & Meister, 1985). To address the problem of sustainability, the cyberbullying prevention must achieve "institutionalization" (Datnow, 2005). Achieving institutionalization happens when a program loses its special status and just becomes part of how things are done at an organization (Datnow, 2005). Studies on institutionalization have found predictable features that are necessary for reform to be weaved into the fabric of an organization: critical mass of involved participants, professional development over time, a plan for implementation and monitoring, and administrative leadership (Anderson & Stiegelbauer; 1994, Moffet, 2000). Just as predictably, a lack of the above elements will lead to the extinguishing of the reform or program (Datnow, 2005).

Conclusion to the Literature Review

Cyberbullying remains a complex challenge for schools; yet, most schools mandate the creation of safe and orderly learning environments for children and thus have created policies to address various forms of cyberbullying (Wiseman, 1999). However, statistics indicate that teenagers still experience a high degree of victimization, despite these policies (NCES, 2011).

This proposed cyberbullying intervention intends to advance the literature on cyberbullying prevention by focusing on the creation of culturally responsive strategies for cyberbullying prevention, as called for by research (Li, 2008), and as endorsed as effective teaching techniques in the literature on culturally responsive teaching (Gray, 2011; Dorsey,

2000). The linkage of teenagers to digital society should inform any strategies developed, as indicated by research (Brewer, 2011). Also, highly researched programs, such as the KiVa anti-bullying program and the Olweus anti-bullying program, should inform this study and provide elements that may be borrowed, such as the whole school approach, consistent training and monitoring, and school rules that are infused into the school culture.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Methodology

Using action research, I, along with a committee of key stakeholders at the research site, developed a brief treatment program to mitigate cyberbullying. Also, the committee sought to find culturally relevant solutions for African American students. The committee was composed of key stakeholders at the school site, including the student body president, the dean, the principal, and many students from the leadership class. The committee met eight times to identify the best solutions that fit the culture of the site, to employ possible solutions with the student population, and to reflect upon the outcomes of each strategy employed.

Research Questions Restated

1) What are best practices for culturally relevant cyberbullying prevention for African American Students?

2) What is the effect of a cyberbullying prevention program on students' attitudes and behaviors?

Research Design—Mixed Methods

This study utilized mixed methods, incorporating qualitative writing prompts and a quantitative pre- and post-survey. The study required a large qualitative component because the study sought to capture the process of developing a cyberbullying intervention; process research is most suited to qualitative design methods (Maxwell, 2013). As this study sought to create a social change as well as develop understanding of how stakeholders prescribe cultural meaning to intervention strategies, qualitative methods were most suited to the "richly descriptive" products of this study (Merriam, 2009). A qualitative approach allowed me to document discussions generated and dialogues and debates about the implementation of anti-cyberbullying

strategies. Qualitative research was the most appropriate for the "emergent design" nature of this study (Creswell, 2014).

Nevertheless, this study also required a quantitative element to investigate the extent of the problem at the research site—a survey to develop baseline data about the extent of the problem at the research site as well as to measure the success of the program. According to Fowler (1995), data that cannot be observed systematically is best gathered by survey methods. Because cyberbullying is difficult to readily observe and often unreported, survey data is the most appropriate choice to capture the extent of the problem at the research site. The same survey was given to students before and after the research treatment.

Why Action Research Is Appropriate

I used a participatory action research approach to the problem of cyberbullying because I intended to enact social change at the research site. I used as my frame the idea that knowledge is socially constructed (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003), and the idea that action research is the necessary vehicle for combating harmful social habits (Glassman et al., 2012; Bargal, 2008). For example, stakeholders at the research site could best learn to understand and prevent cyberbullying in a group setting in which they had the opportunity to ask questions, collaborate on solutions, and reach consensus on solutions, in order to have all stake-holders on the same page as to what to do about the problem. Without a large investment of human capital to combat cyberbullying, it is unlikely that the problem would improve. Bargal (2008) recommends a high level of participation by participants to enact social change.

Distinguishing Feature of This Intervention.

This intervention study attempted to add one element that other programs did not—a culturally responsive intervention. For example, many other programs focus on curriculum-

based strategies instead, but do not focus on culture. As an example, iSafe provides curriculum training to teachers through a DVD, providing training so that teachers can discuss cyberbullying with students around Webcast video materials, but not does include cultural or technological strategies. As another example, Sticks and Stones, involves a film that illustrates a student victim of cyberbullying, and accompanying discussion material, but again does not focus on culture or technology (Wilson, 2009). My study sought to draw upon good practices from other studies but also add the elements of culturally relevant strategies. I also attempted to add a technology piece, video messages made on iMovie, but ran out of time to make a safety video.

Site

This study required two major parameters in site selection: a large percentage of African American students and a high level of technology infrastructure and access. The chosen research site met both parameters. Westside High (a pseudonym for the chosen site), includes a student population of 75% African-American students, meeting the ethnicity parameter. Westside High also meets the technology parameter. Westside High is part of a pilot program in which 100% of the students have been issued iPads. This research site offered the advantage of 100% student access to application-based technology on iPads, meeting the technology parameter. Unfortunately, I was unable to utilize the technology component for this study due to time constraints, but technology could still be a useful for future safety campaigns.

Access

The school and district administration have endorsed this study as having potential benefits to both the school site and the larger district. I went through an extensive permission process with the research board of the school district. Also, I am employed at the research site and have worked there for 15 years. Thus, I have insider access at the research site. I have, over

that time period, developed a strong network of relationships with faculty members that I leveraged to move this study forward. For example, I know all faculty members by name and was able to get faculty to administer the pre- and post-survey by calling in favors that I have earned over the years. I have aligned my conference period with the period that student leadership meets, and thus had easy access to the student leadership class, without needing to request costly coverage of my classes.

Participants

This study required the formation of a diverse prevention committee of approximately fourteen members. Participation varied weekly from a high of ten to a low of six members, and only the camera crew of two students was constantly present. The lack of steady participation degraded the collective knowledge of the group, as not all members were present for all the discussions. Student members on the committee consisted of the elected student-body president, the vice-president, and several members of the leadership class. The teacher members of the committee consisted of the school dean. Two parent volunteers also joined in from time to time. The principal came as well for two of our eight meetings. The school psychologist and the school nurse were also invited, but declined to join the committee.

Recruitment

I recruited members for the intervention committee by requesting that cyberbullying prevention become a class project for the leadership class. The leadership teacher and principal agreed, and thus I gained access to a class of 40 students whose job it was to improve the school. Then, I made a recruitment pitch directly to students in the leadership class, and recruited ten students to agree to serve on my committee. I also announced the opportunity to serve on the intervention committee at two faculty meetings, but no teachers responded. Further, I asked the

lead parent of the school PTA to post the opportunity to join online to parents in the community, but nobody responded. I personally asked the school dean and the principal to join my committee, and they both agreed.

Data Collection Methods--Observations

I recorded all of the discussions of the intervention committee (which met eight times from April 16, 2017 to June 16, 2017) with digital video recording. Then, I hired a transcriber to type out all of the dialogues. But, there were so many transcription errors that in the end I had to re-transcribe most of the videos.

I used two cameras to record each meeting, run by a student film crew of two students. I own a Canon 5 D Mark III camera, and a Canon 7D, which both received excellent reviews for their video capture. Thus, I was able to create high quality documentation of the meetings, even in less than optimal lighting. Data was saved on a 128 Gigabyte card, so that large files were able to fit onto one card and not have to be chopped into two different files.

Data Collection Methods—Interviews

Pre- and post-interviews with committee members were conducted in order to discover what was learned about the process of implementing culturally relevant intervention. For example, committee members were asked to discuss the effectiveness of various culturally relevant strategies, and to see if they have their own ideas on what culturally relevant strategies should be used as part of the package of intervention strategies.

Data Collection Methods—Document Searches

As part of this study, I read all relevant bulletins relating to cyberbullying policy, including documents on school district policy on bullying and cyberbullying. I also read the district's ethics policy. However, these documents did not provide much guidance in my study.

Data Analysis Methods—Observations of Meetings

I looked for trends and patterns in the transcripts of the intervention committee meetings that spoke to culturally relevant strategies that were specific to this research site. I looked at the transcripts to see if the strategies developed for this research site had any specific cultural nuances, such as use of call and response, use of story, use of the theme of struggle, or other cultural themes specific to the African America community. Also, I looked to see if strategies developed for this site duplicate what other programs recommend, such as iSafe's strategy of curriculum, or if the strategies developed were truly new and innovative cultural strategies.

I utilized the coding method called "In Vivo," which is particularly appropriate for beginning action researchers (Saldana, 2013). This literal coding allowed me to have a first look to see what data I have captured. According to Saldana (2013), it is very common to recode data. Unfortunately, the video recorded meetings focused far too much on the logistics of the safety campaign, despite my efforts to weave in a cultural slant to the intervention. At the direction of my chairs, I ended up abandoning most of the video data that I recorded, as it did not contain cultural nuances that I hoped to capture, and instead based most of my data on the student writing prompts.

Data Analysis Methods—Student Writing Prompts

I realized mid-study that my prevention committee was not generating data about changes in student behavior. Thus, in consultation with my chairs, I developed a writing prompt for the entire student body to measure the change in their online behavior. I had a printing company print the students' responses on different colored index cards. Green cards were for students who promised to change their behavior. Yellow cards were for students who said they would not

change. Orange cards were for non-answers. Then, I coded the cards into many different categories based on the reasons they gave for changing or not changing.

Data Analysis Methods—Statistical Methods

Descriptive statistics (mean, mode, and frequency) were calculated for survey question answers using the standard statistical program SPSS. I used the Mann-Whitney U test to see if students experienced a change in attitude about cyberbullying at the end of the intervention program.

Ethical Issues

I avoided "outing" any student as a cyber-bully. This study had the challenge of communicating to the students that their responses at all points throughout the study were completely anonymous, and that nobody would take any disciplinary action in response to student answers about past or present cyber-bullying behavior. Although had I become aware of child abuse, I would have had to report it. In order to protect participants, participants in the intervention committee were given multiple consent forms. These consent forms underwent extensive revisions at the direction of the UCLA IRB board. The IRB board approved a waiver of individual consent forms the campus wide survey, but did require an "opt-out" statement be read for all students completing the pre and post survey.

Reliability and Validity

Validity has to do with the extent that a study or survey measures what it intends to measure (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Perhaps the biggest threat to the validity of this research was the small size of the intervention committee that determined the best culturally relevant intervention strategies. With a small size of less than fifteen people, it is possible that many good ideas were not heard because the committee was too small.

Another threat to validity was researcher bias. I had to be careful to not cherry pick the data presented merely because I wanted this study to show a successful social change at the research site. Instead, I took care to discuss all of the data with my co-chairs during the writing of the dissertation in order to make sure that I am holistically and accurately representing the results of the study.

Reliability has to do with the ability of a study or survey to measure consistently (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The survey instrument that I used was vetted by both of my chairs at UCLA and my district co-chair. Then, I field tested the instrument three times on a class of thirty and refined it each time. Nonetheless, it is not uncommon for a survey instrument to be tested and refined on thousands of subjects in social science research before it is considered a "good" instrument. But, I did my best with the resources I had.

Summary of the Methodology

In summary, this study utilized mixed methods, with a large qualitative design component (interviews and observations and writing prompts) to determine the best practices for culturally relevant prevention as well as how students would change behavior, and a quantitative approach (a survey) to determine the change in attitude of students towards cyberbullying. This study was heavily weighted towards qualitative research, because the data generated lent itself towards qualitative research. I hoped to understand the complex process necessary to mitigate cyberbullying, and therefore utilized an action research approach, which is best suited to understand complex social processes (Maxwell, 2013).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Summary of the Study

In this action research project, I, along with a team of student leaders, examined cyberbullying at a large urban high school on the west coast with a student body of 998 students. At the site, I sought to identify best culturally relevant practices to prevent cyberbullying; I convened a committee of student leaders to discuss the cyberbullying problem and develop local solutions. The committee met eight times. Student videographers filmed each meeting, and Rev.com[1] transcribed the video dialogues. Strategies that the committee developed include an anti-cyberbullying brochure, a safety slogan, a Public Service Announcement poster contest, a banner, and a video message. The video was never finished due to time constraints.

I sought to answer two research questions:

1) What are the most promising culturally relevant strategies to prevent cyberbullying for African American students at this school?

2) What do students at a predominantly African American high school, say is the effect of the cyberbullying program on their attitudes and behaviors online?

I used data from pre- and post-interviews with committee members to answer the first question. I used data from a pre- and post-survey, and a writing prompt from a sample of 522 students to answer the second question.

Findings

To answer my first research question, namely an attempt to identify effective culturally relevant cyber-safety strategies, I interviewed fourteen members of my intervention committee, which consisted of ten student leaders from the leadership class, two members of the student

[1] Rev.com is a company that provides transcription service for audio and video recordings.

videography team, a parent, and the school dean. I asked each committee member two questions in a final interview:

A) What are the most culturally relevant strategies that we should use to prevent cyberbullying at this school for African American students? These strategies can include strategies that we actually tried or strategies that we should have tried.

B) What makes a strategy culturally relevant for African American students?

Finding #1: Video Messages Featuring People of Color Are Selected as Effective

Six of 14 committee members felt that video safety messages were the most relevant way to reduce cyberbullying, though there were other related suggestions. See Table 1 below for the range of strategies that were identified.

Table 1

Results of Committee Members' Opinions About Which Culturally Relevant Strategy Should Be Used to Combat Cyberbullying

Strategy	People
Video students to create safety messages for school wide distribution.	6
Create classroom activities to promote cyber-safety: take a cyber-safety quiz; answer writing prompts on cyber-safety; role-playing scenarios on cyber-safety; and, discuss cyber-safety with student panels.	5
Develop non-classroom activities to promote cyber-safety: create an internet safety campaign; create a poster contest for cyber-safety; and promote cyber-safety at pep rallies.	3
Total	14

Note: N = 14.

The table illustrates that while cyber safety messages in a video format garnered the most support, committee members identified a number of other ideas as well, such as classroom strategies (i.e. student discussions, writing prompts), and non-classroom strategies, (i.e. poster

contests, pep rallies) to combat cyberbullying. During the eight hours of videoed committee meetings, committee members also expressed other strategies. One committee member emphasized that personal testimony about the dangers of bullying would be an excellent strategy. Also during brain storming sessions, three committee members discussed the use of internet blogs as a powerful culturally relevant strategy. Ultimately, blogs were abandoned as an executable strategy due to a lack of human resources.

As a follow-up question, I asked committee members at the final interview what makes a safety strategy culturally relevant to African Americans. Many (five members) said that the message must be delivered by a person of color. The following table summarizes their answers to this question.

Table 2

Results of Committee Members' Opinions About What Makes a Strategy Culturally Relevant for African American Students

Essence of strategy	Number of Members
Message should be delivered by person of color.	5
Message must be correctly crafted: It should grab attention or relate to what kids are doing.	5
Message should relate to historical events/be realistic.	2
Did not answer the question.	2
Total	14

Note: N = 14.

From these results, it is apparent that there are many ideas on how to make a strategy contain cultural relevance. Not only must the message be delivered by a person of the same race, but the message of cyber safety should grab attention, relate to what kids are doing, and relate to

historical events. Unfortunately, I was unable to delve deeper into the nuances of culturally relevant video making due to time constraints. The other strategies developed, such as the banner and Public Service Announcement Poster Contest, while part of the safety campaign, did not yield data that shed light specifically on cultural relevance to African-American students. Next, I will turn my attention to reporting how students responded to the treatment program.

Question two aims to measure the change in students' behaviors online as a result of the treatment they experienced. The entire student body experienced the following treatment: A) Students read a tailor-made cyber safety brochure that included popular slang language and definitions of sexting. B) Students took a quiz to identify their own cyberbullying behavior in order for them to see the damage they might be causing. The quiz asked students questions which resulted in a ranking of behavior from cyberbully to cyber-saint. C) Students completed a writing prompt that asked how students would change their online behavior as a result of reading the brochure and taking the quiz. Before and after this treatment, students responded to a questionnaire that asked a variety of questions, such as how likely they are to cyberbully, how likely they are to sext, and whether they have been bullied online.

Of a student body of 998 students, 677 students (68 percent) answered the pre-questionnaire, and 398 students (40 percent) answered the post-questionnaire, for a difference in response rate of 22 percent. One reason for the difference in response rates to the questionnaire is the low level of senior participation. Only 17 seniors participated in the post-questionnaire, whereas 149 took the pre-questionnaire. The lack of senior participation in the post-questionnaire occurred because of the timing of the post-questionnaire, which was administered a week before graduation; senior teachers were unable to motivate their seniors to participate. The lack of seniors in the post survey accounts for 12 percent of the 22 percent lower response rate.

Finding #2: Students Report an Increase in the Likelihood that They Would Cyberbully, But Attitudes about Sexting and Retaliating Online Remained Virtually the Same.

Surprisingly, there were statistically significant increases in the likelihood to cyberbully between the pre- and post-groups of students. The p value for the Mann-Whitney U test was p=0.000 when comparing the pre-group to the post group of students for likelihood to cyberbully. I chose the Mann-Whitney U test because it is appropriate for non-parametric data, meaning that the data do not create a normal distribution. Also, I chose this test because the variables in my data were ordinal, meaning that the intervals between the variables are uneven. Thus, the Mann-Whitney U test, which assigns ranks to data, accounted for the inconsistent intervals between the variables.

Looking at frequencies, there was an increase from the pre-value of 2.37 percent to 3.07 percent in post for those who said they were extremely likely to engage in cyberbullying. Also, there was an increase from the pre-value of 3.56 percent to 6.65 percent in post for those who said they were very likely to engage in cyberbullying. One can see the range of values in the next figure.

Figure 1. Results for Pre- and Post-Questionnaire for Likelihood to Cyberbully Online

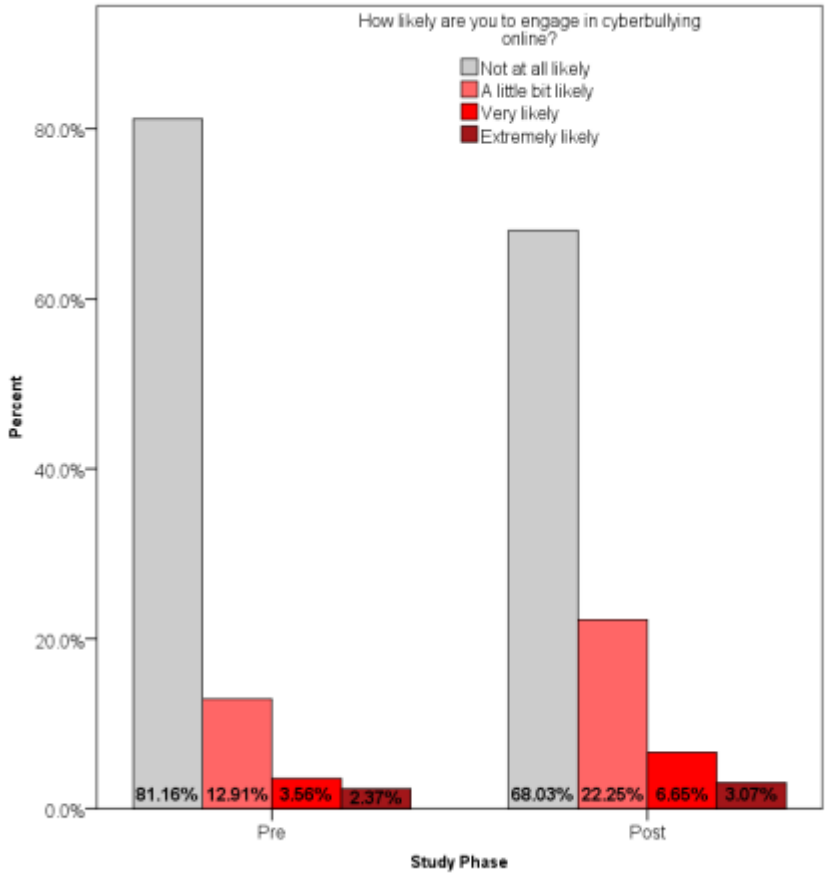


Figure 1. The Likert scale questions are illustrated with different colors; darker colors represent a higher likelihood to cyberbully.

From Figure 1, those who would never cyberbully dropped from 81.16 percent to 68.03 percent, whereas the rose-colored columns increased, meaning that more students will likely cyberbully.

While proclivity to cyberbully increased, attitudes about the appropriateness of sexting remained virtually the same. In the pre-questionnaire, 16.6 percent of students surveyed said it was OK to sext when there was some level of assurance of privacy. 22.9 percent said sexting was OK if sexting is with someone they trust. And, 13.8 percent of students said sexting was always

OK. Thus, more than half the student responders have some level of approval of sexting. These numbers are similar to the values obtained in the post survey, as the next figure shows.

Figure 2. Results for Pre- and Post-Questionnaire for Student Attitudes About Sexting

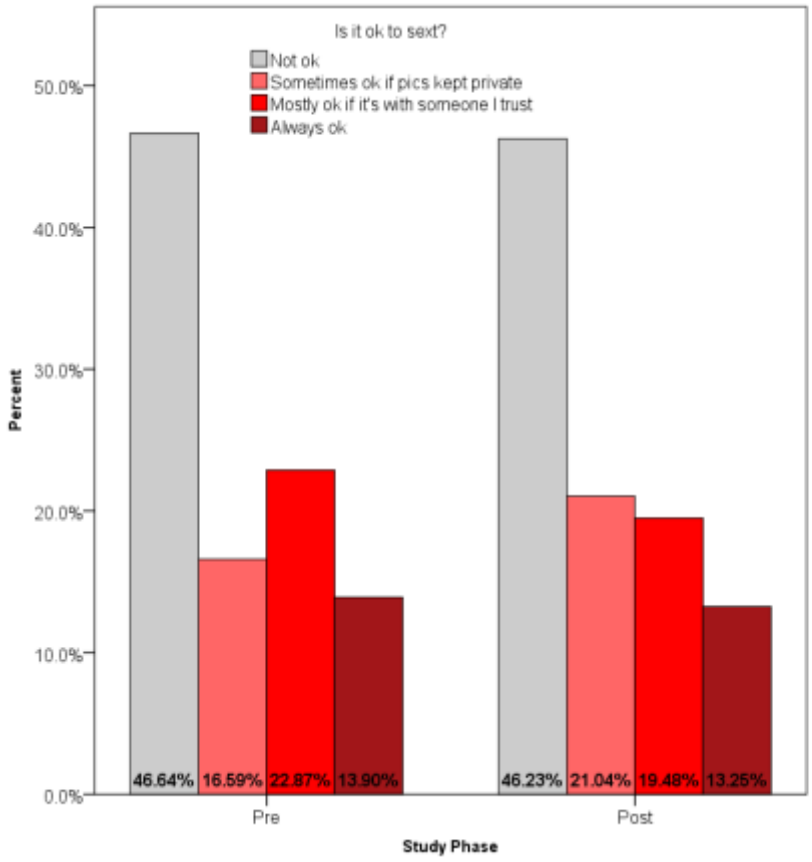


Figure 2. The Likert scale questions are illustrated with different colors; darker colors represent a higher approval of sexting.

Thus, as the figure shows, students did not significantly improve their safety attitudes online in terms of refraining from sexting.

Students also did not change their attitudes about their right to retaliate online. In both the pre- or post-phase of the study, approximately 51 percent of the students surveyed felt that it is

OK to retaliate online when someone is rude to them. The Pearson Chi-Square value for this question was p = 0.991. Thus, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

What did change significantly in a positive sense towards safety was that students increased their knowledge of who the Title IX Bullying/Complain manager is. The following graph illustrates the increase.

Figure 3. Results for Student Knowledge of Who Is the Title IX Bullying/Complaint Manager.

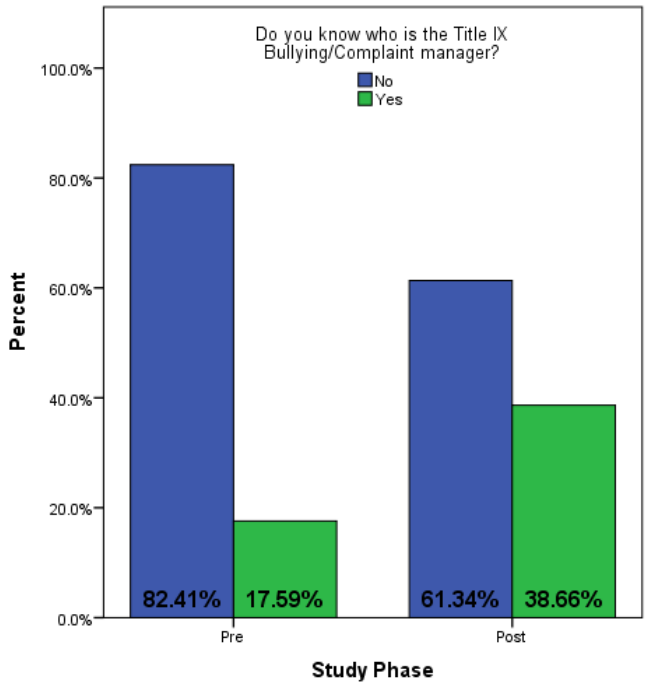


Figure 3. The darker color represents a "no" response. The lighter color represents a "yes" response.

One can see from the graph that knowledge of whom to report bullying to nearly doubled; this is considered the "low-hanging-fruit" in bullying prevention programs.

A correlation test was run to see if any of the bullying behaviors had statistically significant correlation to grade level. Statistically significant correlations were found for sexting

and grade level sexting (p=0.010, positively related for higher grade levels, as well as spreading rumors and grade level (p=0.049, negatively correlated), receive messages that harm and grade level (p=0.039, negatively correlated), likely to cyberbully and grade level (p=0.033, negatively correlated), and telling a friend to refrain from cyberbullying and grade level (p=0.022, positively correlated). In summary, only sexting positively correlated with higher grade levels, while other bullying behaviors negatively correlated with grade level. Next, I will turn my attention away from the survey and towards the qualitative portion of the treatment, the writing prompt.

Results of School-Wide Writing Prompt Showed that About Half the Respondents Promised to Change Behavior.

In addition to responding to a questionnaire, the entire student body was given the opportunity to respond to a writing prompt about how they might change their online behavior, based on new knowledge gained from reading an anti-cyberbullying brochure and from taking a cyberbullying quiz. The quiz required students to rank themselves on a scale of bullying, from cyber-sinner to cyber-saint. Once they had finished the quiz, 522 students out of 998 total responded to the writing prompt. The fact that only 522 students responded can be attributed to the varying levels of extra credit teachers offered as an incentive to complete the writing response, as well as the fact that two teachers had a substitute administer the writing prompt. Also, students were given the right to opt out of participating, and many did. Students answered the following writing prompt:

> After reading the brochure and taking the online behavior quiz, are you motivated to change how you communicate online? If yes, specifically:
>
> 1. How might you change the way you text, send messages, use Facebook posts, tweet, message with Instagram, or use other social media?
> 2. How might you change the way you respond to friends' online communications?

3. Are there any other changes in online behaviors you are contemplating?

The students who said yes they would change, (about half the respondents), generally did not break up their responses into three separate answers. Instead, their responses indicated a variety of different understandings of the writing prompt, interpreting the prompt as asking if they were currently cyberbullying online to whether or not they would change their online behavior in general. Three broad categories of answers emerged from student responses: A) 244 students said they would change their online behavior; B) 273 students said they would not change their online behavior; C) Five students indicated that they did not know how they would change their behavior, or to quote the student, "Pleaded the fifth", or gave an answer that was too ambiguous to categorize. There was some overlap among categories on all student responses. When overlap occurred, the strongest category was coded as the student's response, and each response was counted only one time.

Finding #3: Students Who Promised to Change Their Behavior Focused on Language Choice, from Reducing Profanity, Thinking Before Responding, Saying Nicer Things Online, and Avoiding Offensive Jokes.

The largest group of students who said they *would change* their online behavior recognized a need to improve their language choices. 106 students (about 11 percent of the student body) fell into this category. For example, one student said: "One way I can change the way I text and send message is to be nicer and not use profanity." Another student wrote that he or she "could be more careful with the words I choose…so I can keep my name out of things so I have to respond to everything." The students in this category frequently indicated that foul language online was their only problem. For example, one student wrote: "To be honest, the only problem will be me using bad language. I think that if I stopped using bad language I would

be good." Still another wrote that "I can talk to friends differently by talking with proper English without being sarcastic or rude. I don't think anything else should be changed." All of the students in this category recognized a need to shift from a bad language/profanity laden way of communicating to a more courteous and nicer style of communication. As one student put it:

> Yes, I am going to start being more careful and nicer. I am not going to joke so much because some people might not think I am joking. I am going to try and stop to curse so much. I will try and stop being mean to people and start being nice.

While many students recognize the need for more online courtesy, only 21 students recognized that joking can be taken as cyberbullying. As one student said, "I guess that joking around is also considered cyberbullying because it can be hurtful to others. So, I'll make sure that I think a second time before I actually send a text." Another student recognized the perpetual nature of the internet in his/her response: "Even if I may be joking someone might not take it as a joke and it's online forever." The most enlightened response, though, came from a student who actually connected that his/her catfishing behavior (impersonating others) crossed a line:

> I signed into someone else's screen name to gather information and send rude and scary things to someone, even if I was only joking. I didn't do these things with the intention of bullying. Although I should not have did any of these things without permission of the person. I agree that I need to change my bad habits and will work on it."

Thus, these students have really thought about how joking or catfishing can become harmful. Next, I will report about a very small group of students who will specifically try to be safer online via safety strategies.

Only a Small Group of Students Would Adopt Safety Strategies as a Change of Behavior.

21 students promised to adopt safety strategies. The safety strategies they would adopt include avoiding cyberbullies, spending less time online, keeping passwords private, and reporting cyberbullying. Five students promised to report cyberbullying in the future. As an example of students who would report, one student wrote: "If I ever get threats or rude

comments online I'm reporting to the authorities about them to help cyberbullying come to an end." One student indicated that he or she would avoid cyberbullies as a strategy for the future. This student wrote: "All the person getting cyberbullied has to do is walk away from the screen." 12 students indicated that they would reduce social media or limit time online as a safety strategy in response to the writing prompt. As an example of this strategy, a student wrote: "I will try and change the way by not getting into no more arguments and stay off Instagram and Snapchat." This student appears to have recognized that arguments happen frequently online. Another wrote: "I honestly plan on deleting my Instagram and Snapchat before I go to college." Another recognized the long reach of the internet: "No matter what you do go on there, there is always trouble. People hate on you and comment things on your social media, and that is where most bullying happen. People say mean stuff about each other." Two students promised to tell cyberbullies to stop their bullying. And, one student promised to keep his/her password private. While it was somewhat heartening to find students promising to act safer, the most heartening finding was that a small group of students actually promised to stop cyberbullying.

Finding #4: A Small Group of Students Promised to Stop Perpetrating Cyberbullying.

A small number of students (14 students) promised to stop perpetrating cyberbullying. One student indicates an understand that he or she needs to change, despite the dark pleasure of online harassment: "I will stop doing savage tweets. I feel like I will start thinking. I will stop grilling people even though it is fun." Another recognized the harm he or she has caused: "I will change because I can really ruin someone's life." Still a third recognized the need for self-control: "I haven't been a good person online. I have said mean and rude things to people. I have messaged bad things before. I should start to hold back a little...so I don't reach cyberbully level."

Below is a summary table that breaks down the categories and numbers and percentages of students who said they would change their behavior and how they would change:

Table 3

Results of Writing Prompts for Students Who Will Change Their Online Behavior

Category: Change	Number of Students
Change: Improve Language Choice/Reduce Profanity	106
Change: Think Before Responding	26
Change: Recognize Joking Can Be Cyberbullying	21
Change: Adopt Safety Strategies (Reduce use of social media, avoid cyberbullies, keep password private, report bullying, tell cyberbullies to stop behavior)	21
Change: Be Nicer Online	17
Change: Stop Personal Cyberbullying Behavior	14
Change: Reduce Negativity in Responses	13
Change: More Cautious About Content Posted	12
Change: Hold Back from Responding to Provocation	7
Change: Less Rude Behavior	7
Total	244

Note: N=244.

Thus, one can see from Table 3 that there are a variety of directions for behavior change, with the largest direction pointing toward reducing profanity. Next, I will turn my attention towards the students who *will not* change their online behavior.

Students Who Will Not Change Their Behavior

273 students reported that they *would not* change their behavior. This large group gave a variety of reasons for not changing their behavior. The largest categories of reasons for not

changing included already exhibiting appropriate behavior, communication limited to friends, a lack of empathy, well-understood joking, and already limited use of social media.

Finding #5: Of the Students Who Said They Would Not Change Behavior, the Largest Subgroup of Non-changers (149 Non-Changers Out of 273 Non-Changers), Reported Appropriate Online Behavior, and Thus No Need to Change Behavior.

As one student put it: "I wouldn't change the way I communicate online because I don't do anything to hurt people. I already hate drama as it is and wouldn't do anything to cause any." Another student highlights social responsibility: "I would not [change] the way I communicate online because I am a 'Cyber-Saint.' I do not condone bullying…I would never want to bully someone because it has horrible consequences. No one should ever have to be bullied." Many of these students echoed the sentiments of no need to change as well as a dislike for bullying.

Another group of students maintained their communication within a friend group in which such a rougher style of communication/jokes was well understood. As one student put it: "I don't really want to change how I am online because I don't really hurt someone. I tease or insult someone because I usually just talk to them in a joking way…" To some students, joking is the most common kind of communication he or she experiences with his app, as told by this student: "I am not going to change my ways because I do nothing wrong. Everything is in a joking manner and they know. Insta[gram] is regular. Everyone knows there it's nothing but jokes." These students use joking/razzing as a bonding mechanism. One student wrote: "After reading the brochure I realized I'm not a cyber bully; the only thing I do is make jokes with my friends. I roast them, but in a friendly way…" This group of "joking students" apparently reinforce and nurture their friendships through joking. By contrast, a small but possibly significant group of students show a complete lack of empathy and actually disregard harm

caused to other students.

Finding #6: A Small Group of Students Will Not Change Their Behavior Due to a Lack of Empathy.

A small group of students (38 students) were extremely adamant about not wanting to change their behavior. These students drew a metaphorical line in the sand, and in essence, flaunt a lack of empathy. As one student put it: "I wouldn't change anything…If you get broken hearted because I said something you didn't like, I can care less…I might make you cry. Simple as that." Another student seems to exude a kind cyber alpha male attitude: "My rate says that I am a cyberbully but I would not change my ways because when people come for me, I have to come back 10X stronger and girls like to test me…" Still another caches his or her inappropriate language as the fault of cry-babies:

> If you get broken hearted because I said something you didn't like, I can care less. No one of the internet can break me as a person. People in this world became so weak and they cry about everything. I'm not the person that cries on the internet, and if you fully deserved it, I might make you cry. Simple as that.

Overall, these students are adamant about their right to act as they please on line. One student puts forth a cold but simple solution of unplugging from the internet: "Honestly, I wouldn't change a thing. If someone doesn't like what I say online, then unlike or unfollow me. I will not bite my tongue for anybody." Thus, these students represent the "hard-liners" on the internet.

What follows is a summary table of reasons that students gave for not changing their behavior*:*

Table 4

Results of Writing Prompt for Students Who Will Not Change Their Online Behavior

Category: No change—reasons given are listed	Number of Students
No change: Already act appropriately online	149
No change: Lack of empathy	38
No change: Non-use or limited use of social media	25
No change: Culturally appropriate joking	23
No change: Communication limited to friends	18
No change: Declined to state a reason	6
No change: Necessary self defense	4
No change: Nonbeliever in cyberbullying	4
No change: Already exerting appropriate caution	4
No change: Requested help	1
No change: Does not want to change	1
Total	273

Note: N = 273.

From Table 4 above, one can see that the majority of students who elected not to change their online behavior felt that they already acted appropriately on line as the reason for not changing.

Summary of the Findings

In this action research project, I attempted to mitigate cyberbullying and change the online behavior of students, as well as attempted to discover what culturally relevant strategies should be employed. Video strategies using people of color were selected by the intervention committee as an appropriate culturally relevant safety strategy for African American students. Video strategies were not actually executed because video production took longer than expected. However, the student body read a tailor-made cyber-safety brochure, rated their online behavior according to a quiz, and responded to a writing prompt. As a result of the treatment, 244 students

said they would change their behavior; 273 students said they would not change their behavior. And, five students gave unclear answers. In the next chapter, I will look at deeper meanings for these findings, and make recommendations for practice in the field of cyberbullying prevention for African American students and for all students.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction to the Discussion

In this study, I sought to identify strategies to mitigate the impact of cyberbullying at a large urban high school with a predominantly African American student body. I attempted to find solutions that might be inviting to this population. I collected data on changes in student behavior as a result of a treatment, which consisted of exposing students to a cyber-safety brochure, and completing a self-ranking cyber bullying quiz. I also collected data from a pre- and post-survey from a sample of all students, as well as final interviews with intervention committee members. Before seeking solutions to the problem, I first gathered data on the magnitude of the problem at the research site, in order to quantify the local cyberbullying problem and build momentum for intervention.

Summary of the Findings

14.8 percent of students surveyed at the research site reported that they had experienced cyberbullying within the past two months. As an example, one student reported being harassed online, that he or she was called a racial epitaph, and that it made him or her want to die. Another student reported that he or she perpetrated cyberbullying during online gaming. The large amount of cyberbullying, reported at the research site, is corroborated by a 2012 study by McAfee, which found that 96.6 percent of Facebook teen users had witnessed cyberbullying on its site (Cogen, 2012, August 23). The same study reported that 23.8% of Twitter users had seen cruel behavior on Twitter. According to Fitzgerald (2012, August 2), 15,000 bully-related tweets are sent daily on Twitter. Given the national picture, it is not surprising that so many students at the research site report similar levels of cyber bullying, which is ever present.

In the study, I also attempted to answer how students would change their behavior as a

result of the treatment. The treatment, as previously described, consisted of reading a cyber-safety brochure and taking a self-ranking behavior quiz. Post treatment, the number of students who reported that they were very likely to cyberbully actually almost doubled, from 3.56% to 6.65% (note that here I am reporting percentages as the sample sizes were uneven from pre- to post). Also, the number of students who reported that they were extremely likely to cyberbully also increased, from 2.37% to 3.07%. This disturbing trend is the subject of a long discussion in the following pages, but to summarize, I hypothesize that students began reporting their online behavior more accurately, and did not actually become crueler in the two-month time period of the study.

Equally disturbing, I discovered that a small group of "hardline" students (38 students) appear to want to continue perpetrating cyberbullying online at the research site. These students demonstrated a severe lack of empathy and even seemed to relish the dark pleasure of cyberbullying. It is my opinion that these students are the "serial killers" of the internet at the research site. For example, one student wrote: "Honestly, I wouldn't change a thing. If someone doesn't like what I say online, then unlike or unfollow me. I will not bite my tongue for anybody." Another student wrote:

> People are too sensitive these days. It's not that big of a problem if I call my friend a Jewish Nigger in a text. If I tell a kid I'll fuck his mom on Xbox live, there's no reason to get all mad about it. If I forward a girl's nudes to her grandparents, it isn't bullying, it's just a funny prank.

These callous students most likely cause the most damage online, and should be a target of intervention, which shall be discussed in the implications for practice section. Follow up research could target this group specifically to delve deeper into how their unwillingness to change developed.

While the previous group proclaimed an unwillingness to change as a result of a lack of

empathy, another group reported an unwillingness to change their behavior for a different reason--their online behavior was already highly appropriate. This group of students (273 students) reported that their behavior was already polite and within the bounds of communication norms. For example, one student wrote that he or she never talks bad about anyone and only talks to friends online. As a subset of this "appropriate" group, 23 students reported that while they did a lot of razzing and joking online, their joking was within the context of friend-to-friend ribbing. Scholars refer to this kind of friendly roasting as "signifying" (Green, 2002; Smitherman, 1977).

Contrary to the previous group of both hard-liners and appropriate/joking students, 244 students did promise to modify their online behavior. The majority of these students, 106 students, promised to improve their language choices and reduce their use of profanity. For the other students in this group, there were a wide variety of directions that their promise to change took, from promising to reduce offensive joking (21 students), to thinking before responding (26 students), being nicer online (17 students), reducing social media use (12 students), and most hearteningly, stopping perpetrating cyberbullying (14 students). The latter group of students who promised to change their behavior show that even a brief treatment can make a difference.

I also sought to identify culturally relevant solutions to the problem of cyberbullying. Unfortunately, I was unable to pin down a crystal-clear answer to this research question. However, I discovered that students did favor the creation of video safety messages featuring students of color. According to my final interview with my intervention committee, schools fighting cyberbullying should create a tailor-made public safety video, with a message that grabs attention and relates to the theme of struggle or history of the African American. Having gained this knowledge, I next attempted to actually make the video safety message, so that the nuances

of a culturally relevant video could be discovered. Unfortunately, I ran out of time to make the video, as I discovered that video production requires at least 3 months. Thus, in this sense, my study failed to shed much light on the solution of culturally relevant safety videos. However, further research could tease out the nuances of what makes a safety video more effective for one ethnic group versus another.

Increase in Likelihood to Cyberbully

As stated, I discovered a small but statistically significant increase in the likelihood to cyberbully. This disturbing trend begets the question of whether students actually became crueler or not in the two-month time period of this study. I hypothesize that students did not become meaner in two months' time, but rather, became more educated on the issue of cyberbullying, and thus reported their behavior more accurately. One might argue instead that psychological phenomena could explain the increases in expected cyberbullying behavior.

The first psychological phenomenon that could cause an increase is false memory syndrome. In false memory syndrome, the mere act of talking about an abusive incident can implant a false memory of abuse. This often occurs if there are misleading guiding questions by a therapist. False memory syndrome is strongly advocated for by people who feel they have been improperly accused of sexual abuse (False Memory Syndrome Foundation, 2016). The fact that students were exposed to examples of cyberbullying may have caused students to reframe memories into perceived cyberbullying incidents. In theory, if this happened, the effect would be more pronounced during the post questionnaire as students had exposure to the cyberbullying examples prior to the post questionnaire. However, false memory syndrome is generally not accepted by mental health officials (Dallam, 2008).

Imagination inflation is another possible explanation for increased reportage of proclivity to cyberbully. In imagination inflation, mentally picturing an event to have occurred increases the likelihood that the person actually believes that the event really happened (Sherman, 1996). Imagination inflation is an important area of research for the criminal justice system, which sometimes relies on eye witness accounts and must discern true memory from fantasy. It is possible that students, being exposed to repeated definitions of cyberbullying, began to imagine that they would cyberbully more frequently than they actually do.

The phenomena of brand awareness could also explain the increase. Brand awareness, long studied by marketers, is the idea that consumers can be taught to notice and appreciate a certain brand. Branders use color, sounds, and patterns to imprint brand awareness on consumers' minds (Karam & Saydam, 2015). So, when shopping for a particular car, such as a Toyota, one suddenly sees more Toyota cars on the road. Therefore, because students were made more aware of cyberbullying, they might suddenly start seeing more cyberbullying everywhere.

All of these ideas, false memory syndrome, imagination inflation, and brand awareness, while having empirical evidence to support them, are not as compelling an argument as that students learned how to more accurately classify their behavior. The treatment brochure included many examples of what is and what is not cyberbullying, using the slang of students at the research site, developed by students at the research site, with the aim of educating this student body. Apparently, the brochure worked in the sense that students gained better knowledge about what they really do online. While brand awareness may also contribute to the increase in reporting, the most logical argument for the increase in proclivity to cyberbully is that students began to more accurately report their behavior. However, this is my speculation as a researcher. It may be that all three of the phenomena discussed also contributed to increased reportage of

cyberbullying; the increase was contrary to all my expectations when I began the study, as my aim was to reduce cyberbullying.

Sexting

As another surprise result, the behavior of sexting appeared to be completely unaffected by the treatment of the study, despite the fact that the safety brochure included an entire panel about the dangers of sexting. Yet, sexting attitudes did not show any shifts from pre- to post. As we know, students who sext put themselves in immediate danger of humiliation at the hands of other students, and in future danger as they imperil their ability to get many kinds of careers, such as jobs in politics, teaching, and health care. Many students at the research site appeared not to care about any of the dangers. The question arises as to how to educate this group? It shall be discussed further in implications for practice.

Students Who Will Change Their Online Behavior

Despite the setbacks of either no change in sexting behavior or increased cyberbullying proclivity, as a whole I feel the treatment was a success, because 244 students in the study did promise to change their behavior. These students promised to be safer online, be less rude, think more, tell fewer jokes, use better language, and refrain from getting into online trouble. The important question is why these students will change their behavior. Only one sub group gave a reason for the change. The "jokers" said they would scale back their joking because they realized they might hurt others' feelings. But the others who said they would change generally did not give a reason for the change.

It appears that just the act of thinking and reflecting about their online activity was enough to cause a change of behavior. I believe this is true because the treatment did not provide any "incentive" to change behavior. Participants merely ranked their behavior from cyber-sinner

to cyber-saint. Nor did the treatment contain any stories of the tragedies that occur due to bullying. From this large number of 244 students who promised to change, based on such a bare-bones treatment, I can conclude that merely the act of stopping and thinking about how one acts, the act of reflection, can be a powerful lever to change behavior. However, this supposition about the power of reflection in regards to cyberbullying bears further research.

A small subset of the above group, 14 students out of the 244, actually promised to stop perpetrating cyberbullying entirely, which is the most heartening finding of the study. These are students who recognized that they may be causing harm, and promised to change their ways. One of these students wrote that "I will change because I can really ruin someone's life." Another wrote that "I will stop doing savage tweets…I will stop grilling people even though it is fun." It is wonderful that the treatment of this study actually affected a promised change in behavior for this group. Once again, it appears that just the act of ranking oneself and a reflection (the writing prompt) was powerful enough to cause 14 students to promise to change their behavior. Twelve step programs also try to affect behavior changes with the addicts who join them, and all begin with becoming aware of and admitting there is a problem (Moos & Timko, 2008). Perhaps there needs to be some kind of step program to help those addicted to the cruel pleasure of cyberbullying.

Culturally Relevant Solutions

How students said they would change their behavior leads me to what the study revealed about culturally relevant solutions. Unfortunately, it was difficult to ferret out solutions that were specifically culturally relevant for African American students apart from solutions that would apply to all racial groups. I made many mistakes in this regard. For example, I videoed eight hours of student discussions about solutions. However, much of our time was spent discussing

logistics, for which I under-estimated the need. Also, students seemed more interested in solving the problem of cyberbullying for everyone, rather than focusing on one racial group. Another difficulty was that of the fourteen members on my intervention committee, I had to decide what threshold of consensus constituted a finding.

Originally, I wanted a majority of the members to agree upon a solution before reporting it as a finding (8 or more members). But, the committee never reached a majority consensus on any possible solution strategy. One committee member was passionate that personal testimonials should be used as a culturally relevant strategy; however, one person's opinion does not constitute a finding. Another member thought the ten-foot long banner that we painted and posted was a culturally relevant strategy. Two of the members felt that an internet blog was a good solution. Again, two people do not constitute a majority. Two other members felt that the self-ranking cyber bullying quiz was a culturally relevant strategy. The only clear winner was that six students felt that schools should make tailor-made safety videos featuring African Americans. Students told me that the videos should grab attention and use easily identifiable references. However, this is not particularly useful information for schools, as every video maker wants his or her video to grab attention. Thus, more research is in order as to what kind of videos should be made, and exactly how the message in the video should be crafted. I conclude that I have pointed the compass needle in the direction of video safety messages, but that much more research needs to be done to discover the nuances of crafting the message. Next, I will turn my attention to recommendations for practice, for districts, teachers, and parents.

Implications for Practice—District Recommendations

Current policy for LAUSD is that cell phones should be turned off and out of site (King, 2011). As students already spend large amounts of time on their phones, it may be necessary to

revise policy and integrate cell phone use into the curriculum, as students already surreptitiously use their cell phones. Bringing cell phones "out of the closet," so to speak, might make conversations about cell phone safety easier.

Just as students are taught about safe sex in health education classes, students need to be taught about safe cell phone use. I am advocating for a section of health class dedicated to safely navigating social media apps on cell phones. Unless a strong cyber-safety component becomes "institutionalized" as part of the health science curriculum, district efforts to combat cyberbullying will be uneven throughout the district. For example, there is nothing in the Holt Health Science book about cell phone safety. While I have strongly advocated for a tailor-made solution in this study, I argue that some safety training, even top-down training, would be better than none at all. The reason that my study and treatment were necessary is that there is not an effective cyber-safety training curriculum at my school. If teachers already possessed a cyber-safety curriculum, they could then customize it to fit their site and their students.

Teachers, especially older teachers, may need additional technology training, as they may not even have their own Twitter account or other social media accounts, and might be unaware of how social media can proliferate mean comments (Plant, 2014). Also, teachers might be uncomfortable discussing sexting and might need training on how to bring up these topics with students. A further area of research could be to do a study to measure how comfortable teachers would be having a frank sexting discussion with students, as well as how comfortable they might be doing cyber-safety training.

In addition to incorporating some kind of effort to teach cyber-safety at every school, districts need a paradigm shift, from the reactive model of punish misbehavior (a student acts out and then is sent to the dean's office), to the proactive model of prevention (provide staff and

students with training on positive social climate building before misbehavior occurs). Some schools adopt behavior programs such as Character Counts, which boasts on its website to be "the nation's most popular and effective character education and student development program" (Character Counts, 2016). These programs can have a positive effect on school climate and improve discipline. I believe that implementing some kind of school-wide character program would reduce cyberbullying incidents. It should be noted that that effective anti-bullying programs, such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, contain a large emphasis on character so students can learn to harmonize with each other, to show empathy.

The school district needs to do more work about the topic of joking as well. "It was just a joke" is not an accepted excuse, at least according to LAUSD policy (King, 2014). As a mitigation strategy, a team of district trained student actors could go from school to school, portraying incidents that might seem like just a joke, but could actually cause harm. Students could then hold discussions about whether the role-played joke constituted bullying. According to Pollack (1998), boys tease other boys to reinforce the "boy code" among their peers, which is a narrow code that glorifies aggression, violence, and toughness. To counter the glorification of toughness, the team of actors could uplift the value of kindness, caring, and support. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, which boasts a 50% reduction in bullying, echoes this sentiment, focusing on social climate, and positive peer relations (Hazeldon Foundation, 2007).

Any prevention program used also needs to focus on sexting. Too often, students put themselves into harm's way by engaging in sexting. I advocate a kind of "Scared Straight" approach, in which teens are exposed to personal testimonials about job loss and humiliation from people who have sexted in the past have experienced grief in the future. Also, students could be made aware of the nationally published tragic stories about suicides linked to sexting,

such as the Amanda Todd story. Another way to address sexting is through increased monitoring of student images that are sent, and to provide stronger penalties for those that re-post images. Often sexting victims will not come forward to press charges, leaving little options for law enforcement. Stronger school discipline policies and enforcement of those policies regarding online behavior could help reduce sexting.

Implications for Practice—Teacher Recommendations

Regardless of whether any school district implements a safety curriculum and stronger policies or not, teachers have the ability to assign various projects related to student health, and could assign cyber-safety video projects. Because society increasingly views online videos, teachers should follow the trend and employ videos as one method to combat cyberbullying. Teachers could assign a cyber safety video project to their students, as it seems like a natural extension of student's affiliation for video. Then, these video projects could be shown school wide at an assembly, or emailed, for dissemination. Also, these videos could be re-made yearly, featuring freshmen for freshmen classes, sophomores for sophomore classes, and so on. The videos could always be current, could always reflect the slang of the day, the ethnicity of the students, and could become part of a library of videos for use in the entire school district. I believe students would pay attention to these videos because the videos would feature fellow students who look just like them.

Implications for Practice—Parent Recommendations

Research shows that both nationally and internationally, students knowingly try to hide their online behavior from their parents. According to Siciliano (2012), 33 percent of US teens strongly agree that they know how to hide their cyber-behavior from their parents. This is echoed by 27 percent of UK teens, 28.5 percent of Spanish teens, and 28.5 percent of German teens who

also strongly agree that they can hide their online behavior from their parents. Thus, parents need to consider ways to monitor their child's behavior.

I believe that parents should actually spend the money to invest in subscriptions of safety monitoring software. Consumer parents know that the cell phone bill must be paid, but the idea of paying monthly for safety monitors is not something that is ingrained in the national psyche. Nonetheless, the data show that the cyberbullying problem is so huge that additional monthly expenses for safety software may be necessary. Net Nanny is software that allows parents to monitor their child's use of popular social media, such as Facebook, Tumblr, and Twitter. However, Net Nanny requires input of the children's email address, so it can be circumvented by setting up a different email account. Similar products, such as Circle with Disney and Symantec Norton Family Premier, filter content, monitor smart devices, and limit social media use (Carlsen, 2017). Thus, with the investment of financial resources, parents could do a much better job than they currently do of monitoring online activity. And, with some emphasis on reporting skills, more cyberbullying incidents could be addressed to reduce student suffering. If parents lack the resources to pay for monitoring services, perhaps schools could fund monitoring services, or grant money could be found. Next, I shall turn my attention away from safety recommendations and towards lessons learned, so future researchers could have a smoother experience.

Some Lessons Learned About How to Create a Cyberbullying Intervention

I did not have any grant money to help me with my research. I estimate the price of making a safety video to be at least five hundred dollars. The bulk of this money went to the purchase of microphones. While most students and teachers own electronics that can record sound, fewer people (including myself) own professional grade microphones. Thus, a budget of

at least $500 is necessary, possibly more if cameras are also needed. Therefore, before beginning this endeavor, one needs to launch a small fund-raising campaign.

Furthermore, I vastly underestimated the amount of time needed to make materials from scratch. Creating the tailor-made safety brochure took up three meetings of the intervention committee, which is a huge chunk, considering we just had eight meetings. And, my committee never finished the video safety messages, as it took two meetings of the intervention committee just to brainstorm the plotlines. Thus, I recommend starting any intervention early in the year and allowing at least six months of meetings, possibly 24 sessions, to develop any tailor-made intervention. Also, I recommend getting firm commitments from key people to attend. Having the principal and student body president drop out of the program degraded the decision-making capacity of the intervention group.

Also, I recommend that safety slogans provide an actionable strategy. For example, as our message to our student body, my intervention research team came up with: "Recognize, Refuse, Report." The website Stopbullying.org uses: "Stop, Block, and Tell." The latter slogan is superior to the former slogan because it includes the digital safety strategy "Block". LAUSD has posted a generic anti-bullying brochure with the slogan: "Be safe, be respectful, be responsible." This LAUSD slogan is so generic that it does not seem as if it teaches the students any specific safety strategies. Thus, I can conclude that safety slogans should provide the student with an actionable safety strategy.

I would recommend creating a longer treatment to penetrate school culture more deeply with safety strategies, up to half a year. The actual treatment I did only took three class periods. During one class period, students answered the pre-questionnaire. During another class period, students read the brochure, took the quiz, and answered the writing prompt. During a third class

period, students answered the post questionnaire. Many other anti-bullying programs, such as the Kiva anti-bullying program recommend a multi-year approach (Kivaprogram.net, n.d.). Thus, the results of my brief treatment are unlikely to become institutionalized. Therefore, my treatment needs to be repeated and expanded for increased effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study and to my treatment. First, the intervention committee only had seven stable (long serving members) out of 14. The most important officers, the student body president and vice president, dropped out for unknown reasons. Also, the most influential adult, the principal of the school, only ended up attending two meetings. Thus, the strategies recommended for culturally relevant intervention were given by committee members who were not exposed to all of the discussions. The film crew (two students) became part of the study, as having too few stable members on the intervention committee proved to be a problem. However, these students were not elected officers of the study body, and thus were not "officially" empowered to speak for the student body.

Still another limitation of the study was the lack of senior participation in the post questionnaire. Only 17 seniors answered the post questionnaire, which is below the statistically accepted number of a sample needing to have 30 members. It is possible that the study's treatment had a bigger, but unmeasured, effect on seniors. Those data are now lost. Also, in some cases, the post questionnaire was sometimes administered by substitute teachers. A few teachers at the research site viewed participation in the study as a less-than-desirable duty and therefore pawned off to substitutes the duty of administering the questionnaire. I was unable to provide substitute teachers with training on how to administer the questionnaire, so the administration of the questionnaire was not standardized.

Another potential limitation was the short time frame for the study's questions. In the pre-questionnaire, students were asked "in the last two months, how many times have another student sent you cell phone text messages that were intended to cause you social harm or bully you via cell phone". The reason that two months were chosen as the time frame is that I felt that people can remember best events that occurred recently for more accurate results. However, it is possible that the wording of this question does not capture the whole picture of cyberbullying that occurs at the research site.

Recommendations for Further Research

While this study sought to identify the most promising culturally relevant solution, this study did not test the effectiveness of individual strategies one at a time. Thus, more research on the effectiveness of one strategy versus another would be appropriate. For example, one could have one month in which video strategies were heavily employed, and then convene student focus groups to gauge the reaction of students to the strategy. One could then have a second month in which student testimonials were employed, and repeat the focus groups to gauge the effectiveness of testimonials. On a third month, a different strategy could be applied and its effect measured.

Another recommended area of research would be to see if parents would be willing to employ app monitoring software such as Net Nanny or Circle with Disney, if they were given incentives or free access, or if they would pay for monitoring software. Parents could then be surveyed to see if they felt the safety of their child had improved.

Conclusion to the Study

Cyberbullying constitutes a global problem that continues to affect teenagers. While school officials do not own complete responsibility for what happens online, they do have a

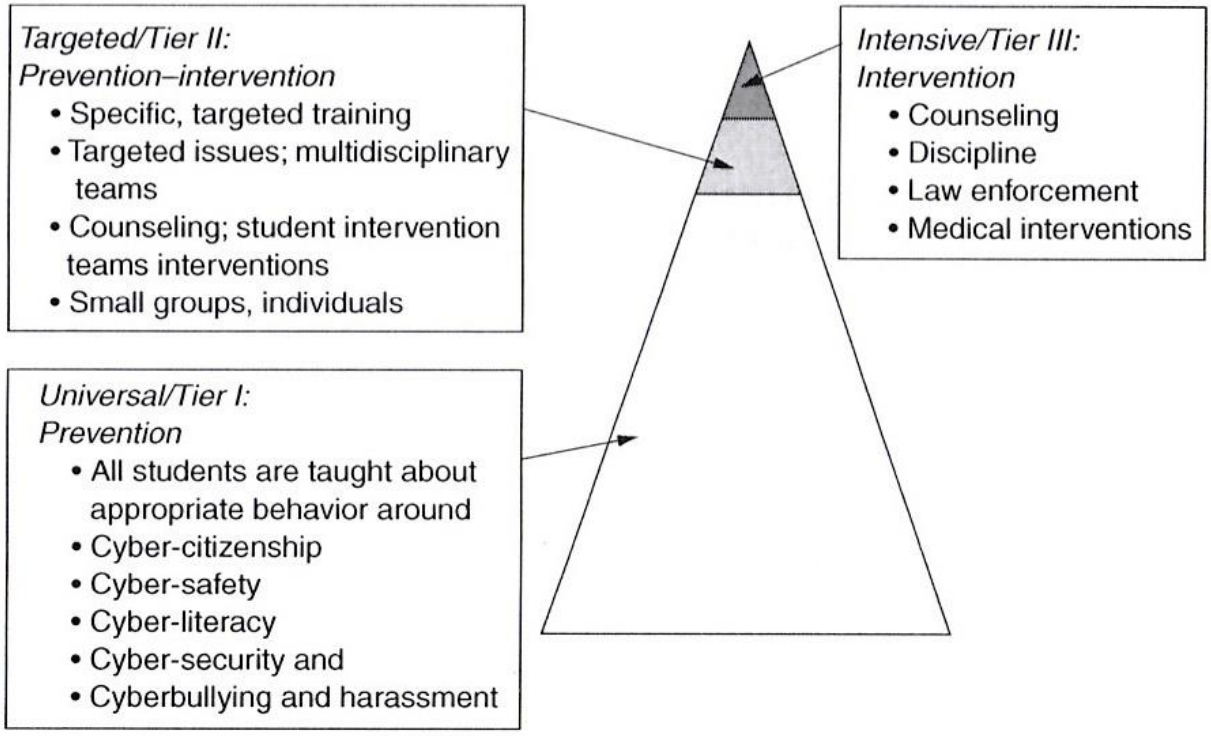
responsibility to create a safe school climate for all. Education colleges also have a duty to continue to research solutions to this cyber problem. This study showed that students would select video safety strategies as one way to attack the problem. This study also demonstrated the need for more education on the dangers of sexting, and the need for empathy development amongst teens. Finally, this study showed that many students promised to change their behavior online, even though the safety treatment only took three classes. It is hoped that this study will spark more research in the ongoing struggle to mitigate cyberbullying.

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND DEFINITIONS

- Bullying, as defined by Olweus (2001), has three components: imbalance of power, repetition over time, and intention to harm.
- Catfishing, as defined by Patchin (2013) is "the practice of setting up a fictitious online profile, most often for the purpose of luring another into a fraudulent romantic relationship."
- Cyberbullying as defined by Smith et al. (2008), is "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself."
- Cyberbullying, as defined by Willard (2007), is being cruel to others by using the internet or other technologies such as cell phones. It can include harassing others by sending offensive or insulting messages through instant messaging, posting cruel gossip and rumors on social networking sites, sending embarrassing photos via cell phones, or impersonating someone online for the purpose of humiliation.
- Flaming, as defined by Hinduja and Patchin (2014), is "sending angry, rude, or obscene messages directed at a person or persons privately or an online group."
- Peer-victimization, as defined by Graham (2011), is a synonym for bullying. Peer victimization is "physical, verbal, or psychological abuse that occurs in and around school, especially where adult supervision is minimal."
- Trolling, as defined by Hinduja and Patchin (2014), is "deliberately and disingenuously posing information to entice genuinely helpful people to respond (often emotionally). Often done to inflame or provoke others."

APPENDIX B: THREE TIERS OF INTERVENTION[2]



[2]The diagram on this page is from "You Mean We Gotta Teach *That*, Too?," by M. Donlin, n.d., in S. Hinduja & J. Patchin (Eds.) (2012), *Cyberbullying prevention and response expert perspectives* (pp. 110-127). New York, NY: Routledge, p. 125.

APPENDIX C: COMPONENTS OF THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM (OBPP)[3]

School-Level Components
Establish a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC).
Conduct committee and staff meetings.
Administer the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire.
Hold staff discussion group meetings.
Introduce the school rules against bullying.
Review and refine the school's supervisory system.
Hold a school-wide kick-off event to launch the program.
Involve parents.

Classroom-Level Components
Post and enforce school-wide rules against bullying.
Hold regular class meetings.
Hold meetings with students' parents.

Individual-Level Components
Supervise students' activities.
Ensure that all staff intervene on-the-spot when bullying is observed.
Hold meetings with students involved in bullying
Hold meetings with parents of involved students.
Develop individual intervention plans for involved students.

Community-Level Components
Involve community members on the BPCC.
Develop partnerships with community members.
Help to spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice in the community.

[3] The information on this page is quoted directly from Core Components of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_scope.page.

APPENDIX D: POPULAR MEDIA STORIES ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

Popular media is filled with stories of tragic deaths, reported as caused by cyberbullying, as evidence of the toll on human lives. For example, the New York Times reported the suicide of death of Rebecca Sedwick (Alvarez, 2013). The D.A. filed subsequent felony charges against the "primary harassers", her 14 year-old and 12 year-old former friends. (Alvarez, 2013). However, these charges were later dropped.

CNN reported that 18-year-old Tyler Clementi killed himself over humiliation caused by videos posted of Tyler kissing another male (Spaulding, 2010). Apparently, the ensuing taunting and shame were too much for him to bear. He also feared being outed to his parents, who were rabidly homophobic.

CBS, in another news report, reported the suicide of Mathew Burdette, after a video posted of Mathew, a San Diego youth, in the bathroom of his high school, was shared on social media. He was allegedly masturbating in the video. He was subsequently taunted by peers and killed himself just two weeks later ("Family: teen who killed himself," 2014). As a point of interest to this study, the CDC reports that suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth ages 10 to 24 ("Youth suicide," 2014). These and other popular media true stories highlight the tragedies that can be caused by cyberbullying.

APPENDIX E: PRE-CYBERBULLYING QUESTIONNAIRE

Pre-Cyberbullying Questionnaire

Thank you ahead of time for filling out this questionnaire! Your participation will help school officials quantify the level of cyberbullying at this school site. Due to the anonymous nature of this questionnaire, you must fill out a separate incident report form if you would like school officials to intervene in a cyberbullying incident. Your teacher has the necessary forms to report an incident. You may decline to answer any question for any reason on this form. There are 19 questions to answer.

* Required

1. **1. What is your grade level?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ 9th
   - ◯ 10th
   - ◯ 11th
   - ◯ 12th

2. **2. What is your gender?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ Male
   - ◯ Female

3. **3. What is your ethnicity?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ Black
   - ◯ Latino
   - ◯ White
   - ◯ Asian
   - ◯ Other

4. **4. How many hours a day are you online?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ 0-2 hours
   - ◯ 2-4 hours
   - ◯ 4-6 hours
   - ◯ 6-8 hours

5. **5. In the past two months, how many times has another student spread rumors about you online (Twitter, Face Book, Snapchat, YikYak, or Secret) that was meant to cause you social harm?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ zero times
   - ◯ one times
   - ◯ two times
   - ◯ three times
   - ◯ four times
   - ◯ five times
   - ◯ six times
   - ◯ seven times
   - ◯ eight times
   - ◯ nine times
   - ◯ ten times

6. **6. In the past two months, how many times has another student sent you cell phone text messages that were intended to cause you social harm or bully you via cell phone?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ zero times
   - ◯ one times
   - ◯ two times
   - ◯ three times
   - ◯ four times
   - ◯ five times
   - ◯ six times
   - ◯ seven times
   - ◯ eight times
   - ◯ nine times
   - ◯ ten times

7. **7. Do you know how to report online harassment at WESM?**
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ No
   - ◯ Yes

8. **8. Do you know who is the Title IX Bullying/Complaint manager at WESM?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes

9. **9. Is it ok to retaliate online when somebody is rude to you online?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes

10. **10. If someone posted something mean or rude about you online this year, what did you do or would you have done if this happened?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Ignore
- ◯ Block
- ◯ Confront online
- ◯ Other

11. **11. To what extent do you think people your age weigh the consequences of cyberbullying?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Not at all
- ◯ Only a little
- ◯ A medium extent
- ◯ A large extent

12. **12. In the past two months, has another student ever gotten angry with you over something that you posted?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Not at all
- ◯ One time
- ◯ Two times
- ◯ Three times

13. **13. If hypothetically someone sent you a picture or image that could cause someone else social harm, what would you do with the picture?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Save it
- ◯ Delete it
- ◯ Share it
- ◯ Notify school officials

14. **14. When somebody posts something online, to what extent is that person responsible for the reaction of other people to what he or she posted?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Not at all
- ◯ Only a little
- ◯ A large extent
- ◯ 100% responsible

15. **15. How widespread a problem do you think cyberbullying is at WESM today?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Barely a problem
- ◯ Small problem
- ◯ Medium problem
- ◯ Large problem

16. **16. To what extent do you feel confident in your ability to report a cyberbullying incident?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Not confident
- ◯ Only a little bit confident
- ◯ Very confident
- ◯ Extremely confident

17. **17. Is it ok to sext?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Not ok
- ◯ Sometimes ok if pics kept private
- ◯ Mostly ok if it's with someone I trust
- ◯ Always ok

APPENDIX F: CYBER-SAFETY BROCHURE

CYBERBULLYING IS NOT OK!

When someone cyberbullies:

Recognize!

Refuse!

Report!

What Students Need to Know

Cyberbullying is the use of electronic communication, such as the internet, cell phones, and IPADS, to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, or intimidate.

Let's break that down:

Is a group chat that puts somebody down cyberbullying? YES

Is sending a "joke" such as "I hate you" cyberbullying? YES

Is dissin', trolling or stabbing someone cyberbullying? YES

Is impersonating someone or creating a fake account in someone else's name cyberbullying? YES and it's illegal too.

Can on-line drama become cyberbullying? YES

Prevention Strategies

Recognize: There is a line between a joking and bullying.. If you know someone has gone too far, let that person know that he or she has crossed the line. If someone tells you that your jokes are hurtful, stop doing it!

Refuse. Never participate in cyberbullying. Never give out personal information. NEVER share your password or sign in information.

Report. Notify Ms. Lesure, the Title IX complaint manager.

We
Embody
Social-media
Maturity

Web Resources

www.cyberbullying.org provides research, stories, fact sheets, and tips.

www.stopcyberbullying.org has a fun quiz to rate your behavior online.

www.wiredsafety.com provides information about what to do if you are cyberbullied.

www.stopbullyingnow.com has information about what you can do to stop bullying.

http://www.netsmartz.org/Teens helps teens stay safe online.

humanrelations.lausd.net provides LAUSD resources on bullying prevention

http://achieve.lausd.net/digcit provides a week of digital citizenship training.

http://achieve.lausd.net/nowmatterslater provides key information about your online presence.

Help Is Available!

If you or someone you know is involved in cyberbullying or any form of harassment, report it to Ms. Shilling, Ms. Lesure, or a trusted staff member. The school will investigate and act to stop the behavior and ensure safety.

What Parents Need to Know

Monitor your child's electronic life.

Set a good example.

Be aware of social media apps (Facebook, YikYak, Secret, Twitter, Instagram). Have your own account.

Sexting and Its Consequences

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually explicit images or messages, regardless of whether the image is of you or someone else. Sexting is risky. Once posted, a student loses all control over what happens next.

Sexting can be considered cyberbullying, sexual harassment, or distribution of pornography.

Remember: Electronic postings are permanent and traceable. Students who sext run the risk of:

- Social embarrassment
- Disciplinary action
- Compromised career and educational opportunities
- Arrest

Contact Us:

APPENDIX G: CYBERBULLYING QUIZ

www.stopcyberbullying.org

Are you a cyberbully?

Often, people who are victims are also bullies. Before you feel too bad for yourself, take the quiz below to find if you, too, are part of the cyberbullying problem! Rate yourself on the following point scale according to if, and how many times, you have done the below activities. Give yourself 0 points if you've never done it, 1 point if you have done it 1 or 2 times, 2 points if you have done it 3-5 times, 3 points if you have done it more than 5 times.

Have you ever...

___Signed on with someone else's screen name to gather info?

___Sent an e-mail or online greeting card from someone's account?

___Impersonated someone over IM or online?

___Teased or frightened someone over IM?

___Not told someone who you really are online, telling them to "guess"?

___Forwarded a private IM conversation or e-mail without the permission of the other person?

___Changed your profile or away message designed to embarrass or frighten someone?

___Posted pictures or information about someone on a Web site without their consent?

___Created an Internet poll, either over IM or on a Web site, about someone without their consent?

___Used information found online to follow, tease, embarrass or harass someone in person?

___Sent rude or scary things to someone, even if you were just joking?

___Used bad language online?

___Signed someone else up for something online without their permission?

___Used an IM or e-mail address that looked like someone else's?

___Used someone else's password for any reason without their permission?

___Hacked into someone else's computer or sent a virus or Trojan horse to them?

___Insulted someone in an interactive game room?

___Posted rude things or lies about someone online?

___Voted at an online bashing poll or posted to a guestbook saying rude or mean things?

Now calculate your total score:

0 – 5 Points: Cyber Saint

Congratulations! You're a cyber saint! Your online behavior is exemplary! Keep up the good work!

6-10 Points: Cyber Risky

Well, you're not perfect, but few people are. Chances are you haven't done anything terrible and were just having fun, but try not to repeat your behaviors, since they are all offenses. Keep in mind the pain that your fun might be causing others!

11-18 Points: Cyber Sinner

You're online behavior needs to be reproached! You have done way too many cyber no-no's! Keep in mind that these practices are dangerous, wrong, and punishable and try to be clean up that cyber record!

More than 18: Cyber Bully

Put on the breaks and turn that PC/MAC/text-messaging device around! You are headed in a very bad direction. You qualify, without doubt, as a cyberbully. You need to sign off and think about where that little mouse of yours has been clicking before serious trouble results for you and/or your victim(s), if it hasn't happened already!

APPENDIX H: WRITING PROMPT

After reading the cyber safety brochure and taking the online behavior quiz, are you motivated to change how you communicate online? If yes, specifically:

1. How might you change the way you text, send messages, use Facebook posts, tweet, message with Instagram, or use other social media?

2. How might you change the way you respond to friends' online communications?

3. Are there any other changes in online behaviors you are contemplating?

Please write a paragraph that gives specific examples of how you might change the way you communicate or why you might change.

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CYBERBULLYING PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Pre-Interview Questions:

1. What does culture mean to you?
2. What elements do you think are unique to African American culture?
3. What kind of prevention strategies do you think we should use to prevent cyberbullying at this school? Can you think of any prevention strategies that are unique to African American culture?
4. Has any prevention strategy kept you safe in the past from cyberbullying? Would you say this strategy is unique to African American culture or just generic?
5. What makes a strategy culturally relevant versus generic?
6. Are there any prevention strategies that are ineffective or useless? What makes these strategies useless?
7. How can we communicate good prevention strategies to all students? How can we generate buy-in to utilize digital safety strategies?
8. What would motivate you personally to utilize strategies that we create.
9. Are there any strategies that should only be used for African American students but not for other students, or are all strategies good for all cultures?
10. How can we teach people to be more kind to each other?

Post-Interview Questions:

1. (After the study is complete). What are the MOST culturally relevant strategies that we should use to prevent cyberbullying at this school for African American students?
2. (After the study is complete). What makes a strategy culturally relevant for African American students?
3. (After the study is complete). What were the LEAST culturally relevant strategies that we used and why?
4. (After the study is complete). What strategies were most successful at preventing cyberbullying in your opinion and why?
5. (After the study is complete). What should we have done differently? Where did we make mistakes in our efforts to prevent cyberbullying?
6. (After the study is complete) What would you tell other schools trying to prevent cyberbullying?
7. (after the study is completed). How has this cyberbullying prevention program changed or impacted your attitude towards cyberbullying?
8. (after the study is completed) How has this cyberbullying prevention program affected the behavior of students at this campus towards cyberbullying (in your opinion)?

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