THE EFFECTS OF BIBLIOTHERAPY ON THE BULLYING BEHAVIORS OF ADOLESCENTS

by

Angela Van Batavia

An Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Educational Specialist in Human Services, Learning Resources in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development University of Central Missouri

May, 2012
ABSTRACT

by

Angela Van Batavia

Bullying has no racial, ethnic, gender, or socioeconomic boundaries. Many students are victims to bullying while in school and often experience detrimental effects. Other students take an active part in bullying; these students often face difficulties with authority when they are older. This thesis examined the effects that bibliotherapy has on adolescent bullying behaviors. Participants read and discussed literature focused on the negative aspects of bullying. This is a between-group study focusing on the three different fifth-grade classes in an elementary school. The lesson plan format and technology resources for both groups were identical. The differences in the study include the literature used and student assignments. After completion of the bibliotherapy lessons, students in both groups completed a 12-question bullying survey. Findings suggest that students who participated in bibliotherapy that focused on the detriments of bullying exhibited less bullying behaviors than students who took part in regular library lessons.
THE EFFECTS OF BIBLIOTHERAPY ON THE
BULLYING BEHAVIORS
OF ADOLESCENTS

by

Angela Van Batavia

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Educational Specialist
in Human Services, Learning Resources
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development
University of Central Missouri

May, 2012
THE EFFECTS OF BIBLIOTHERAPY ON THE BULLYING BEHAVIORS OF ADOLESCENTS

by

Angela Van Batavia

March, 2012

APPROVED:

Thesis Chair: Dr. Patricia Antrim
Thesis Committee Member: Dr. Jenny Robins
Thesis Committee Member: Floyd Pentlin

ACCEPTED:

Chair, Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development: Dr. Patricia Antrim

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL MISSOURI
WARRENSBURG, MISSOURI
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Jenny Robins and Dr. Patricia Antrim for guidance and assistance through all portions of this thesis, and Mr. Pentlin for assisting with additional reading. I would also like to thank my family for their patience and understanding during the research and writing of this thesis.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis of the Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Overview</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying Defined and History</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices to Reduce Bullying</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliotherapy and Bullying</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration Between the Teacher and Librarian</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH STUDY</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and Design</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection and Analysis</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1: Percentage of Students Responding to Bullying Behaviors</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2: Percentage of Students Taking Positive Action</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3: Percentage of Students Bullied at School</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibliotherapy Literature</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliotherapy Integration ........................................................................................................ 36
Bibliotherapy Participation .................................................................................................... 37
Bibliotherapy and Student Empathy ...................................................................................... 38
Recommendations................................................................................................................ 39

WORKS CITED ..................................................................................................................... 41

APPENDICES

A. Stop-Walk-Talk Bullying Teacher Handout ................................................................. 50
B. Bullying Survey .............................................................................................................. 51
C. Literature used for Test Group ....................................................................................... 54
D. Literature used for Control Group .................................................................................. 55
E. Signed Approval Memo ................................................................................................. 56
F. Signed Consent Form ...................................................................................................... 57
CHAPTER 1:
NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Although change is often slow to come to education, few things have remained constant. Teaching styles and theories have come and gone. Some areas of focus and instruction have emerged, while others have been discarded. Forms of discipline and classroom management have evolved. While many things have changed, one constant has remained prevalent since the beginning of education: bullying. Fifty years ago bullying was as prevalent and extreme as it was in 2010 (Bennett); however, Olweus finds that reactions to bullying and expectations regarding the school’s role have changed (qtd. in Bennett). This research will attempt to prove that students who receive bullying bibliotherapy lessons are less likely to bully others and more likely to intervene when others are being bullied.

For most children bullying is a given part of the school environment. Almost half of children in school will experience at least one incident of bullying during their upper elementary and middle school years; in high school the percentage of reported bullying decreases, but the rate and duration of those who report being bullied increases (Olweus, What is Bullying). Students play a part in the bullying process whether they are involved as victims, perpetrators, or bystanders. Dr. Richard Gross confirmed this in his address to the American Medical Association Forum on Bullying in 2002: “We all are either bullies, bullied, or bystanders” (“Introduction” sec.). For almost one in five children, bullying has become a way of life, as 17% of American children are regularly bullied in school (Synder).
Although bullying is a problem in schools, major research on its causes and effects did not emerge until forty years ago; and even then, much of that research was conducted in Northern Europe (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse” 196). Because of this scarcity of long-term research many districts and schools have begun examining their own bullying incidents and implementing some of the research-based methods that have been studied to measure the social climate of the classrooms and help reduce the instances of bullying (Leff et al.,165). Implementation of these methods has caused many school personnel to re-examine ideas about bullies and victims, as some age-old bullying ideas have now been labeled as myths (Graham 67).

To confront and reduce instances of bullying, education and prevention programs have become commonplace in schools. Massachusetts state law requires bullying education programs in all schools (Bennett 38). In Missouri, all superintendents in the Western Missouri Conference believe their schools should have more anti-bullying programs (Copeland, ii). With the assertion that educational bibliotherapy supports a balanced personality (Janaviciene 119), this research combines anti-bullying education with a bibliotherapy application, and focuses on one way that bullying prevention education was addressed at an elementary school.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this thesis is to review the literature associated with adolescent bullying and to report the results of bullying bibliotherapy lessons implemented as a part of a fifth grade media center curriculum. The literature regarding bullying incidents, bibliotherapy, and empathy were reviewed. The literature regarding national, state,
local anti-bullying programs and practices were also reviewed. In this thesis one group of students, the test group, received bibliotherapy instruction using literature focused solely on the detrimental effects of bullying. Another group which served as the control group received instruction with literature focused on historical fiction, with topics ranging from the framers of the United States Constitution to Jim Crow Laws. Although the assignments for the test and control group were different, both groups utilized online resources in their respective lessons. The results of this study show that students who participate in bullying bibliotherapy are less likely to bully others but are only slightly more likely to stand up for others who are being bullied.

Questions Guiding the Study

This thesis and its research were guided by the following questions:

1. What types of literature and lessons are common in bibliotherapy units?
2. How is bibliotherapy integrated into district and school-determined curricula and goals?
3. How do students actively participate in bibliotherapy lessons?
4. How does bibliotherapy foster student empathy towards others?

Limitations

The research available on bullying is fairly recent, as national research on bullying did not begin until the late 1980’s. Although there is a wide base of bullying research from the 1980’s to the 2012, this field lacks a rich collection of previous research. As a result, this study uses somewhat recent research as a basis for its support. Many of the developed,
long-term bullying studies are completed by a small number of individuals, such as Olweus, and he is referred to frequently in this research.

A limitation of the research is the small number of participants (82 total students), and the small test and control groups (27 and 28, respectively). The demographics of this suburban elementary school in the Midwest United States where the research was conducted may also prove to be a limitation, as schools with students of different races, ethnicities, or socioeconomic backgrounds may experience different results. According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the student population of this elementary school is 512 students; 34.5% of these students are considered low socioeconomic status, as they qualify for free and reduced lunch. The student racial make-up of the school is also a limitation, as 73.4% of the population is White, 11.3% is Black, 9.3% is Hispanic, and 6% Asian. Another limitation of this study deals with the relationships and gender distribution among students in the classroom. Kawabata and Crick find that student classroom relationships that have already been formed may affect bullying behaviors (1763), and Santalahti et al. found that bullying may be affected by the number of boys versus girls in a classroom (463). Naylor et al. found that even with controlled bullying language, students may have varying perceptions of bullying (553) which can be an additional limitation in this study.

The overall results cannot be generalized to the larger field of elementary library instruction. The results serve as an analysis of bibliotherapy instruction in an elementary library with a fixed schedule where the librarian conducts specific bullying bibliotherapy
lessons. This study is also limited to behaviors related specifically to bullying and does not address other forms of negative student behavior.

**Definition of terms**

Bibliotherapy—Reading of documents that helps readers understand themselves and cope with problems relevant to their personal situations and developmental needs (Janaviciene 119).

Bullying—Repeated confrontations that are physical or relational between or among students with a direct intent to cause harm (Olweus, *What is Bullying*; Graham 66); to qualify as bullying there also needs to be an imbalance of power between the victim and perpetrator (Lodge and Frydenberg 330).

Bullying bystanders—In a bullying situation, the student(s) who watch the bullying incident occur (Lodge and Frydenberg 330; Karna and Voeten 263).

Bullying perpetrator—In a bullying situation, the student who is committing the act of bullying; can be referred to as the “aggressor” or “bully” (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse” 197).

Bullying victim—In a bullying situation, the student who is being targeted, or picked on (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse” 197).

Direct bullying—Repeated confrontations between students that involve physical actions (Jolliffe and Farrington 540).

Empathy—A person’s emotional response to someone else’s perceived emotions; empathy facilitates prosocial behavior and inhibits antisocial behavior (Jolliffe and Farrington 540); an emotional response that stems from another’s perceived emotional state
(Eisenberg and Fabes 702). In other words, empathy is the ability to put oneself in someone else’s shoes.

Indirect bullying—Confrontations between students that involve purposely ignoring, giving mean looks, or using hurtful words (Jolliffe and Farrington 540).

**Design of the Study**

For this thesis the researcher reviewed literature and conducted original research. The guiding questions were answered using existing literature and research on the topic. Articles were searched for and retrieved from the following databases: *Academic Search Complete, Education Journals*, and *Education: A SAGE Full Text Collection*. Search terms included “bibliotherapy,” “peer harassment,” and “bullying.” Olweus, the well-known bullying researcher, was also used as an author search term.

The thesis is a between-group study focusing on three different fifth-grade classes in an elementary school building. All of the fifth-grade classes worked toward completing three main objectives, which are a mandated part of the district’s library curriculum:

1. Students will understand character motivation.
2. Students will understand cause and effect in writing.
3. Students will be familiar with technology resources.

With these goals serving as a foundation for the lessons, the fifth-grade students read and discussed various literary works and shared their ideas about the literature on Web 2.0 venues. The differences between the testing group and the control group were the type of literature read during the instruction and lessons assigned to the students. One class of fifth-graders served as the testing group and read and discussed fiction and
nonfiction texts focused solely on the negative effects of bullying. The other two classes of fifth graders, who served as a control group, read and discussed historical fiction literature. After the bibliotherapy treatment, all students completed a 12-question survey. All students who participated in the study provided signed parental consent forms; students were also able to individually opt out of the final bullying survey.

This thesis includes five chapters related to how bibliotherapy affects adolescents’ bullying behaviors. The next chapter is a review of literature. Chapter three focuses on the methodology of the research, providing a description of the participants, materials, design, and procedure. Chapter four presents the results of the study, and chapter five presents conclusions, a discussion, and practical applications of the results of this research.
CHAPTER 2:
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The days of parents, teachers, and administrators thinking that bullying is a rite of passage are gone (National Crime Prevention Council). Schools have become one of the most prevalent places for bullying behaviors because of the differences of students who attend (Merrell, et al. 28). To address and help alleviate bullying, many states have mandated bullying education in schools (Davis). Some of these programs include a mixture of educational and character-education programs in an attempt to prevent and reduce bullying incidents (Crothers and Kolbert 133).

This literature review presents research findings on bibliotherapy and bullying. The literature reviewed here provides explanations of how, through bibliotherapy, students develop a greater sense of personal empathy toward other students, which can lead to fewer bullying behaviors. Critical literature surrounding bibliotherapy and its implementation will also be reviewed and discussed. This research will attempt to show that students who participate in a bibliotherapy unit focusing on bullying literature will be less likely to bully others and more likely to intervene when other students are being bullied.

Section one of this review will focus on bullying. It presents the definition of bullying and related bullying terms, such as peer harassment, a brief history of bullying in schools, common views of targets and perpetrators, and myths associated with bullying. It presents bullying statistics, the effects of bullying, practices commonly used to intervene
and reduce bullying in schools, the concept of empathy, and the connection between empathy and bullying.

Section three of this review will define bibliotherapy, and implementations for adolescent development, and its use in character education. Specific examples of effective uses of bibliotherapy will be shared, as well as possible detriments. Literature presenting the connection between bibliotherapy and improving empathy will be reviewed. The final section of the chapter will focus on the positive results that collaboration between teachers and librarians has on overall student behavior, as this collaboration among school staff is an impetus in bullying prevention programs (Olweus and Limber, 134). This section will also summarize the literature presenting suggestions for implementing an anti-bullying bibliotherapy program in a middle school.

**Bullying Defined and History of Research on Bullying**

The definition of bullying has evolved throughout the years and it still varies according to region or even school level. This paper uses the definition developed by Olweus in “Bullying or Peer Abuse”: bullying, also referred to as peer harassment, is repeated abuse, whether physical (using physical actions) or relational (purposely ignoring, giving mean looks, or using hurtful words) between or among students with a direct intent to cause harm (197; see also Graham 66). It includes an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. If these aspects are not in place, according to Olweus, the behaviors are classified as peer conflict.

Survey data indicate that 30-80% of school-age youth (ages 12-18) report that they have personally experienced some sort of bullying and 10-15% may be chronic victims
The Effects of Bibliotherapy

Typically, boys are more likely to bully and are more likely to be the victims of bullying; girls use more indirect bullying and boys use more physical bullying (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse” 197). Overall, verbal bullying is the most prevalent type of bullying that students experience (Olweus, Bullying at School 16), and bullying rates generally decrease as students get older (23).

Bullying takes many different forms. Examples of bullying range from repeated hitting and shoving to name calling and spreading rumors (Jolliffe and Farrington 540). Bullying has a trio of participant types: perpetrators instigate or bully others, perpetrators bully targets, and bystanders observe the bullying behaviors. Bullying does not have to be face to face. Bullying may take the form of repeated harassing or threatening online text messages, social media posts, or e-mails (Graham 66). When it takes place in online social media or e-mail settings, Olweus (“Bullying or Peer Abuse”, 197) calls it cyber bullying. Although cyber bullying is a fairly new concept, bullying in school has been a problem since the advent of school (196).

The first scientific study regarding bullying occurred in the late 19th Century, and the modern era of bullying studies began with Olweus in the 1970s (Card and Hodges 451), although these studies were limited to Northern European countries. In the 1980s and 1990s, research focused on bullying in other countries, including the United States (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse” 196). Many studies in the 1980s focused on school-related bullying. Since these initial studies, hundreds of studies regarding bullying have been published. Because so many variables are present when bullying occurs, finding an effective intervention and prevention program is difficult.
The Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reported that the Safe and Drug Free School Act, signed into law in 1994, took a strict anti-bullying and anti-violence stance, an attempt to ensure that bullying would not be a “quiet” or “taboo” topic. This act mandates student climate surveys that include questions regarding safety and bullying. As a result, according to the Missouri Department of Mental Health “Executive Summary,” all students in 6th thru 12th grade are asked to take part in the Missouri Student Survey (3) which asks questions regarding school bullying experiences.

The American Medical Association officially recognized bullying as a public health problem at their Educational Forum on Adolescent Health in 2002. In the ten years since the forum, Card and Hodges found that 30% to 60% of school-aged children (ages 5 to 18) report that they have been bullied and 6% to 15% may be chronic targets (451). These statistics are the ones students actually report; many cases of bullying are not reported. Newman and Murray found that in middle school only about 30% of students who were bullied actually reported the incidents (349). Some parents have begun suing school districts because of the lack of intervention their children received when bullied at school. In the summer of 2011, the largest school district in Minnesota was under investigation by two civil rights groups after parents alleged that their children, two of whom committed suicide, were continually bullied at school with minimal school intervention (Harlow and Propst).

Most school children have anti-bullying attitudes (Rigby and Slee 617); that is, they do not like when others are bullying and they do not think bullying is right. Creating a paradox, however, only 20% of children who witness or know about bullying actively
intervene to stop it (Salmivalli and Voeten 275). The bullying targets are often disliked and rejected by peers (Card and Hodges 452; Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse” 197), which could explain why those who come to aid the victim are rare (Graham 68).

Students with disabilities are not immune to bullying; in fact, these students are often sought out as victims. Marshall et al. found that students with disabilities are more at-risk of becoming bullying victims, as reports indicate these students are two to three times more likely to be bullied than students without disabilities (178). Students with disabilities are at a greater risk of being victimized, but they may also bully others because of lack of social skills or impulse control (Cummings et al. 197). Because there are few longitudinal studies regarding the effects of bullying on students with disabilities, researchers are unsure if the childhood bullying experiences of these special needs students result in different outcomes than students without disabilities who were bullied.

**Myths Associated with Bullying**

Myths associated with bullying have interfered with educators’ abilities to understand, intervene, and prevent bullying in schools. Previous to the research conducted since the 1970s, educators made varying assumptions or went with “gut feelings” on the causes and effects of bullying. These beliefs and assumptions about bullying and bullies affect the way interventions are approached. The first myth is that bullies have low self-esteem and are not liked by their classmates. Graham found that many bullies actually have “inflated self-views” and enjoy a high social status in their schools (66). Another myth is that boys are the physical bullying victims and perpetrators, and girls are the relational victims and perpetrators. Because physical violence becomes less socially acceptable as
students get older, this bullying gender stereotype is usually ended by early adolescence (Archer and Coyne 226), and both genders become more likely to be relational bullies and targets. Differences in student appearances, large class or school size, and competition in school are also outdated explanations of the causes of bullying (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse” 197). Although differences in student appearance or competition lead to conflicts between students, in general these differences are coupled with other factors, such as lack of teacher supervision or group encouragement of negative behaviors that lead to bullying.

**Effects of Bullying**

Bullying and its effects on targets as well as perpetrators have become more of a focal point of research in recent years because of the scope of violence in schools. Bullying is a school problem that escalates into a societal problem, as bullying victimization is connected to low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Crothers and Kolbert 133). Perpetrators of bullying are at a high risk of maladjustment, and bullying other students is a risk factor for antisocial and criminal behavior (133). All of those involved in the bullying events, including witnesses to bullying, are measurably affected by what they experience or see. Bullies and targets have both shown poorer psychological adjustment than those not involved in bullying (Smith et al. 547).

In 2010 Graham reported that bullying perpetrators are more aggressive and victims are more vulnerable than in the past (Graham 66). The American Medical Association that bullies are more likely to drink and smoke, more likely to grow up to abuse their spouses, and more likely to engage in criminal behavior (Stagg Elliott). Bullies are more likely to drop out of school and engage in delinquent behaviors (Gottfredson,
Gottfredson, and Hybl 201). Often, bullying behaviors are not isolated to student targets. Many bullies are also aggressive toward authority figures in their lives, including teachers and parents (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse” 197). It is likely that, unless modified, this anti-social behavior will continue. In a longitudinal study conducted in Sweden, over half of the males who were identified as “bullies” as adolescents were convicted of criminal offenses by the age of 24 (Olweus, Bullying at School 113).

Bullying poses significant risks to targets. These victims often experience depression, loneliness, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Hawker and Boulton 441). Juvonen, Yeuyan, and Espinoza support this with their findings that targets suffer both psychologically and academically (169). Bullying victims are also likely to possess a lower social status than others; this low social status is difficult to overcome (Card and Hodges 454) and may spill over to the activities and practices after school graduation. Card and Hodges also found that targets have higher rates of absenteeism and try to avoid school, including after-school and extra-curricular activities (455). Targets have been shown to be more socially isolated, lack social skills, have more anxiety, and have a higher risk for depression and suicide (Smith et al. 547). After continual and repeated incidents of bullying, some targets of school bullying have turned to deadly, violent acts of peer hostility. The Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education found of the “37 school shootings that took place in North America between 1974 and 2000 that 71% of the attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked, or injured by others prior to the incident, and one attacker referred to himself as ‘the one all the kids always teased’” (3).
Students who observe bullying, known as bystanders, are also affected by bullying acts. Female bystanders more often reacted with “disgust and anger” when other students were verbally bullied; male and female bystanders also felt confusion, guilt, and fear, and had a lack of knowledge about the next step they should take (Lodge and Frydenberg 332). Bystanders affect the results of bullying by their action or inaction. “Changing classroom norms via influencing bystander behavior can significantly reduce the risk of vulnerable children for victimization” (Karna and Voeten 279). This is why many bullying intervention programs are now focused on teaching bystander groups the skills to help counteract bullying incidents.

**Practices to Reduce Bullying**

For many years educators have tried implementation programs aimed at ending bullying and helping students respect the differing interests of others (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse” 199). The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) states that school districts in Missouri are required to have an anti-bullying policy and some districts across the state currently combat the bullying problem with resources from the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) at Clemson University, the Missouri Department of Social Services, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). Some school districts focus on intervention, while others spend their time on bullying prevention. Anti-bullying programs range from school-wide character education programs to positive behavior modification, such as Positive Behavior Support (PBS) and Behavior Intervention Support Techniques (BIST). These common practices, implemented to reduce bullying, have turned into a high priority for staff
development, teacher training, and even parent education events (Lodge and Frydenberg 334).

Zero-tolerance policies and anti-bullying programs are the most common policies, but they have had varied success rates. The American Psychological Association (APA) Zero Tolerance Task Force found that some zero tolerance policies have a counter-effect and often increase student bullying and lead to anti-social behavior. The effects of school-based anti-bullying programs overall are modest, at best (Merrell et al. 29; Smith et al. 548). Even research-based bullying programs, such as the Olweus Program, have shown results that are not uniformly consistent in the United States (Olweus and Limber, 124).

Because bullying involves more than just the target, the most effective bullying programs are comprehensive and focus on the bully, the target, the bystanders, as well as parents and teachers (Olweus, “What is Bullying”). Lessons giving students the opportunity to see examples of empathy being practiced, then demonstrating empathy themselves, are important steps in increasing empathy, and hopefully, reduce bullying, especially for adolescents (Jolliffe and Farrington 541). Ultimately, the absence or continuation of bullying depends on the students; therefore, students are vital participants in the successful implementation of effective anti-bullying programs.

**Empathy and its Role to Bullying**

Some educators, psychologists, and researchers are now focusing on the implementation of empathy education in school-bullying programs because the presence of empathy facilitates pro-social behavior and inhibits anti-social behavior (Jolliffe and Farrington 540). Many researchers and educators have realized that the only way for
students to truly respect differences and seek others’ varying viewpoints is for them to
develop a greater sense of empathy. According to Eisenberg and Fabes, empathy is an
emotional response that stems from another’s perceived emotional state (702). In other
words, empathy is the ability to put oneself in someone else’s shoes. There is a belief that
the more empathy students have toward others, the less likely they are to exhibit bullying
behaviors; and research has supported this as Jolliffe and Farrington found males who
bully others frequently have significantly lower empathy than male non-bullies (547), and
Feshbach (267) found that empathy plays a role in the control of aggression. Olweus
(“Bullying or Peer Abuse” 197) and Fox et al. (186) support this claim with their findings
that high-frequency bullies have little empathy toward their targets and lower empathy
levels in general. Conversely, children with high levels of empathy are more likely to
recognize and understand a target’s feelings, and this may motivate them to help targets
and report or discourage bullies instead of blaming the target for their situation, which
could lead to apathy, or worse, joining in on the bullying (Fox et al. 186).

**Bibliotherapy and Bullying**

Bibliotherapy, which Herbert and Kent define as a “method of using literature to
help (readers) understand themselves and cope with problems relevant to their personal
situations and developmental needs” (qtd. in Gavigan and Kurtts 11), has been in existence
almost as long as there have been books. Duffy points out that often people of the late
Middle Ages who suffered from mental or physical disabilities were prescribed books to
help cope with their illnesses (3). In the past ten years bibliotherapy has been used
successfully in treating patients with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (Leininger et al. 22),
depression among at-risk teens (Stice et al. 2), and panic disorders (Nordin et al. 271). If
bibliotherapy has been successful in treating these disorders, bibliotherapy could be used in a school setting to teach empathy (Jolliffe and Farrington 548).

**Bibliotherapy Used to Increase Empathy and Decrease Bullying Behaviors**

For years bibliotherapy has been used by teachers, librarians, and parents to make text-to-world and text-to-self connections (Kurtts and Gavigan 23). However, with the success of bibliotherapy as an aid to treat psychological disorders, many librarians and teachers have strategically implemented bibliotherapy to help their students learn and become more tolerant and accepting of others with differences (Gavigan and Kurtts 11).

Many educators, including teachers, librarians, and counselors, are implementing various forms of bibliotherapy (Gavigan and Kurtts 11; Stringer, Reynolds and Simpson 69). Bibliotherapy is a promising tool to help students build their levels of empathy, as this literature helps facilitate students’ understanding and acceptance of individual differences (Gavigan and Kurtts, 11). Most types of bibliotherapy, whether conducted by someone at school or a parent at home, are recommended starting as early as the elementary grades (Janaviciene 131). Gavigan and Kurtts have integrated bibliotherapy programs into their teacher and librarian college-level programs with success. They have found that literature helps the reader develop empathy, and it allows students to understand some of the differences of other students around them (11). School counselors have implemented bibliotherapy to motivate students academically (Ilogho 437) and increase self-esteem (Stringer, Reynolds and Simpson 69).

Bibliotherapy, when implemented in a therapy setting, has had significant results in improving negative behaviors among adolescents. In a study of reducing negative
behaviors and increasing empathy among aggressive males, those who received therapy, counseling, and bibliotherapy “had higher stages of change, and had higher frequencies of insight and therapeutic change” (Shechtman 645). These positive changes are ideal among adolescents, especially those involved in bullying behaviors.

**Bibliotherapy: Benefit, Burden, or a Waste of Time?**

Implementing bibliotherapy in a whole-class setting involves lengthy preparation, which first includes an understanding of the interpersonal issues among students who are causing tension or problems (Janaviciene 119). Bibliotherapeutic literature includes a character who faces physical or emotional challenges and who then come to terms with those challenges (Kurtts and Gavigan 32). This literature must be analyzed and reviewed to ensure a suitable fit for the audience. For example, if an upper elementary or middle school student with a severe physical disability was being bullied because of that disability, an effective book would need to portray a student in a similar circumstance, such as *Picking Up the Pieces*, by Patricia Calvert (Gavigan and Kurtts 15). When the appropriate literature is selected and applied in bibliotherapy, Oliver and Young found that children can become more creative in their problem solving (137).

According to Gavigan and Kurtts, those administering effective bibliotherapy familiarize themselves with the books’ characters and their choices, as books that depict student differences do not always advocate empathetic, peaceful ways to solve problems and understand those differences. In a study of 22 young adult novels, Oliver and Young found that the main characters reacted to bullying with violence almost one-third of the time. Inversely, coping skills for bullying were presented in only three books (137).
addition to advocating violence, some books present misinformation. In a study of bibliotherapy books for students who stutter, Logan, Mullins, and Jones found some of the books that were actively used for stuttering bibliotherapy presented those who stuttered in a negative light, and some books contained outdated, false information regarding stuttering (609).

There is criticism surrounding the use of bibliotherapy, as well. Arkowitz and Lilienfeld found that the research surrounding bibliotherapy has many limitations, including small sample sizes, uneven results, and combined treatments (78). Shechtman found that many students for whom bibliotherapy is used are often resistive to the treatment (645). Some educators are resistant to bibliotherapy, especially regarding bullying, because they feel that bullying prevention should be a responsibility of parents (Cunningham et al. 929).

Effective bibliotherapy requires time, research, and collaboration among all stakeholders involved, including teachers, students, parents, administrators, counselors, and librarians. A suggested bibliotherapy implementation includes pre-reading, guided reading, post-reading discussion, and follow-up activities (Gavigan and Kurtts 12). An in-depth study and discussion of the main characters, including their choices, alternatives, and motives, helps students to empathize and connect with the characters. An effective bibliotherapy book includes characters who reflect at least one trait of the students reading it, as this literature resonates because it taps into the readers’ emotions (Duffy 3).
Collaboration Between the Teacher and Librarian

Facing today's bullying problem is not a single-event task. Some therapists have used a one-on-one form of bibliotherapy with their patients; however, in the school setting teachers, counselors, and librarians in the building have worked together to use bibliotherapy effectively (Jack and Ronan 162; Stringer, Reynolds and Simpson 69). Teachers and librarians work together to help students respect the differing interests of others, receive information about solving problems, talk with others going through similar experiences, and learn strategies to manage and reduce anxiety (Prater et al., 6). Reducing bullying behaviors through bibliotherapy is a logical and feasible project for librarians and teachers. A strong foundation has been laid that supports working together to create a change in student behaviors (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse”). Janaviciene’s bibliotherapy research found that literature has helped targets of bullying learn how to overcome stressful or frightening situations (122). This same research has shown that specific literature has been able to distract readers from a closed or narrow thought processes and open up new avenues of thinking, acting, and reacting. With this information, bibliotherapy is not only beneficial for bullies, but for victims and bystanders as well.

Although bibliotherapy helps students develop empathy, and therefore, may reduce bullying behaviors, it is not a “quick fix” or “magic pill.” Bibliotherapy can be supported at home and school with available resources such as those mentioned below (Kochenderfer-Ladd and Troop-Gordon 222; Cunningham et al. 932). Teachers, librarians, and parents work together to ensure that other factors, such as engaging students in extra-curricular activities and clubs, are also supported. Working together with parents, the librarians and
teachers can become more involved in student’s lives and become advocates for the student (Olweus, “Bullying or Peer Abuse”).

Strategies for implementing bibliotherapy in the library and classroom involve reading the literature and participating in a facilitated discussion. Guided reading activities, discussion, and other activities relating the text’s characters to the real world are necessary in effective bibliotherapy (Gavigan and Kurtts 13). To ensure accurate discussion facilitation in bullying literature, those implementing bibliotherapy should be familiar with the school’s social work and counseling policies (if applicable), bullying policies and terminologies, and the roles of the participants in bullying (Fullerton). A social marketing campaign, supported by parents and surrounding community members, repeats the message that school faculty and staff will be supportive and act on bullying complaints (Kochenderfer-Ladd and Troop-Gordon 223).

Bullying will never be completely eradicated in schools, but working together, teachers, librarians, and counselors may be a missing component in the quest to find the best bullying intervention program. Research has shown the success of bibliotherapy in treating social disorders. Therefore, there is hope that when teachers, librarians, and counselors work together using bibliotherapy, they will decrease the pain of bullying victims, help bullying bystanders understand what to do, and help bullying perpetrators develop a greater sense of empathy.

Taking into consideration the statistics of bullying (Olweus, “Bullying in Schools”; Card and Hodges), most students will encounter a bullying incident as a victim, bystander,
or bully. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in this research, which was a study of bibliotherapy used with fifth graders as part of an anti-bullying program.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH STUDY

This study will show the impact of implementing bibliotherapy lesson plans with anti-bullying themed literature presented in tandem with traditional library literature lessons. This was a between-group study focusing on the fifth-grade classes in an elementary school building in a suburban school district in Midwestern United States.

Setting

This study took place at a suburban, elementary school with 512 Kindergarten through fifth-grade students and 35 certified staff members, which include teachers, one counselor, and a Recovery Room Intervention Specialist. The building has other non-certified staff, which include aides, a part-time social worker, and recess supervisors. In regards to student demographics, the school is in a period of transition. Library staff include a full-time librarian on a fixed schedule and a part-time library aide.

According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Scorecard, 34.5% of the students receive free or reduced lunch. The student minority population is 26.6%. These percentages have been increasing since the school was founded 17 years ago. The school district’s mobility, or number of first through fifth-grade students new to the building in the 2010-2011 school year, is 13.1%. Students in this school attend specials classes—physical education, music, art, and library—on a four-day rotation. Conversations with the counselor, classroom teachers, and the school principal indicate initial, isolated concerns about bullying.

Before the bibliotherapy lessons began in January, the school counselor presented two 45-minute bullying lessons to all fifth-grade classes. The school has also adopted an
anti-bullying program, known as the Stop-Walk-Talk Bullying Program, which aims at and reducing bullying with collaboration from all school personnel and redefining the bullying construct (Ross, Horner and Stiller). This program is part of the school-wide Positive Behavior Support Program. All teachers in the building received background information and training on this program and a handout (see Appendix A) to display in the classroom. The school counselor conducted two bullying presentations to each fifth-grade class approximately one month before the bibliotherapy lessons began. Although this project was presented independently of the school counselor's bullying lessons, the same bullying language and terminologies were used.

**Participants**

The fifth-grade students participating in the survey are ten or eleven years old. They spent 55 minutes a day in specials classes, and receive grades in physical education, music, and art, but not in the library. Fifth-grade teachers sent consent forms home with all of the fifth-grade students. The parents of the fifth-grade students completed a consent form to have their child's results included in this research. Students also completed an assent form to participate in the survey and have their survey results used as data for this study. The surveys collected no identifiable information; therefore, student results are anonymous.

To participate in the bullying survey, students had to return to the librarian consent forms signed by their parent or guardian. On the day of the survey, students whose parents did not consent stayed in the regular classroom during regular library time, and these students did not participate in the survey. Of the 82 fifth grade students, 25 did not return
parental consent forms and, therefore, did not participate in the bullying survey. Of the 57 total students who returned the parental consent forms, all signed the student assent forms. Students experienced no negative impact as a result of not participating in the survey.

The students were divided into a test group and a control group. The control group and test group were similar in size, with 27 students in the test group and 30 students in the control group. Male to female ratio was different, with 46% of males and 54% of females in the control group and 55% of males and 45% of females in the test group. These numbers reflect school administrators and staff attempts in the year prior to create a balanced classroom; boy-to-girl ratio is just one of the many factors considered in classroom assignment.

**Study Methodology**

This research focuses on the implementation of bibliotherapy lessons in an elementary library in a Midwestern suburban school. Although this project was presented independently and after the school counselor’s bullying lessons, the same bullying language and terminology were used with students in this study.

All fifth graders in the school took part in library lesson plans; however, the topics of the library lesson plans were different for the control group and the test group. The students were taught eight 30-minute library lessons over an eight week period beginning in January following winter break. The lessons were aligned with the district’s elementary library media curriculum. The following lesson objectives were addressed:

1. Students will understand character motivation.
2. Students will understand cause and effect in writing.

3. Students will be familiar with technology resources.

For all of the lessons the librarian implemented three types of reading: the librarian read aloud to the students, students read individually and silently, and students read in small groups. Students answered character-related questions during and after the readings with posts on blogs and wiki pages. The technology incorporated into the lessons, the pacing of the lessons, and the reading approaches were consistent for both groups. The researcher taught lessons with the same objectives for the two groups and they met the same number of times and received the same amount of instruction.

Through discussions with elementary and middle school librarians in the district, as well as reviews from the Comprehensive Children's Literature Database, the research identified appropriate texts for the students in the test group. The test group read fiction and non-fiction texts that focused on the detriments of bullying or included an anti-bullying theme and discussed how other characters expressed empathy for the main character. The literature for the test group included fiction and nonfiction texts that focused on the negative impact of bullying and focused on the concept of empathy. Students read portions of Anything But Typical, by Nora Raleigh Baskin; A Shelter in Our Car, by Monica Gunning; and Terrible Things, by Eve Bunting. Non-fiction texts for the test group include My Bullied Son's Last Day on Earth, by Mallory Simon, and bullying articles and informational texts (see Appendix C for complete list). Students also viewed short, nonfiction bullying clips from NBC Learn and participated in a video with an administrator who had experienced bullying. Students in this test group analyzed the characters in these books, articles, and
clips and discussed the causes and effects of bullying on all of the characters. Students also discussed ways bystanders in the texts or videos could have helped the victim. Students discussed empathy at great detail, and shared ways they could “put themselves in the shoes of bullying victims.” For their final project, students in the test group created an online poster using Glogster, which illustrated the feelings and experiences of someone being bullied, or students created an online comic strip using the web site MakeBeliefsComix which showed how a bystander could help intervene when someone was being bullied.

The control group read literature that varied by theme and author but focused on the historical fiction genre, specifically, the political development of the concept of equality in the United States. Fiction and nonfiction literature for the control group focused on the historical fiction genre on topics from the framework of the U.S. Constitution to the Civil Rights era (see Appendix D for a complete list). Students in this group read fiction books and non-fiction articles dealing with these periods in United States history. Students in the control group also watched short clips on NBC Learn regarding Civil War Reconstruction and the 15th Amendment. Students in this group participated in a video call with someone who participated in a Civil Rights march in the 1960s. This group shared their thoughts on character motivation and cause and effect through blogs and wiki pages; however, the control group did not address bullying or empathy, as the testing group did. They completed their final project using the same technology resources as participants in the test group.
**Data Collection**

Following all lessons, all fifth grade students who had returned consent forms and provided assent took an anti-bullying survey. This survey is a shortened, modified form of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire published by the Hazelden Foundation (used with permission by the school district, which has a contract with Olweus). The survey included twelve multiple choice or yes/no questions that assess bullying experiences and behaviors (see appendix A). Students answered each of these questions by choosing one of two or one of four answers given. The survey included one qualitative question where students could add any additional information regarding bullying. Questions on the survey focused on bullying behaviors and experiences from a perpetrator, victim, and bystander point of view. The questions also examine the frequency which students’ victim and perpetrator bullying experiences have occurred.

The librarian passed out the bullying survey. The librarian read the bullying survey to the students and gave students as much time as needed to complete it. The results of the test and control groups were kept separate, and then analyzed and compared.

A total of 57 surveys were completed for this research.

**Data Analysis**

After collecting the student surveys, responses were analyzed between the test and the control group using the mean response, positive versus negative. These responses were converted to percentages and are reported in Tables 1, 2, and 3 in the results section.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

According to student survey results, it was determined that the treatment resulted in a decrease in bullying perpetrator behaviors among fifth graders in the test group. The bystander positive action for those students who witnessed a bullying incident remained fairly similar between the test and control groups, as 95% of the students in the control group who witnessed a bullying incident took positive action and 100% of the students in the test group who witnessed a bullying incident took positive action. Positive action is defined as telling an adult that bullying is taking place, telling the bully to stop, or standing up for the person being bullied (Fullerton).

Students in the test group (n = 27) reported a smaller percentage of incidents of bullying where they were the victims (22% claim to have been bullied in the test group compared with 53% in the control group) and reported participating in fewer bullying incidents where they were the bully (3% claim to have bullied another student in the test group compared with 16% in the control group) than those in the control group (n = 30).

Students in the test group also reported witnessing fewer bullying behaviors and reported less fear of being bullied while at school. Table 1 highlights the differences in the reported bullying behaviors between the test and control group. Students reported bullying behaviors that they had been a part of or that they had witnessed in the past 2 to 3 months.
Although a higher percentage of students in the control group reported witnessing more bullying than the percentage of those in the test group, this survey showed similarities between the control group and test group in regards to actions of the bystander during an occurrence of bullying at school. The results suggest that most students taking this survey, whether or not they received bullying bibliotherapy with focus on empathy and speaking up when they witness bullying behaviors, claim they take positive action to help other students who are being bullied. Twelve students in the testing group (44%) and 22 students in the control group (73%) said they had seen someone being bullied in the last couple of months. Of these students, 100% of those in the test group and 95% of those in the control group claimed to have taken one or more positive actions to help the victim. Table 2 shows the specific actions the bystanders claimed to have taken when they saw a bullying incident.
TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Test group</th>
<th>Control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students who have seen a bullying</td>
<td>12 students</td>
<td>22 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I told a teacher or another adult</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I told the bully to stop</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stood up for the person being bullied</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reveals that students in both groups used more than one positive action to help stop the bullying, as students were allowed to choose more than one answer. Of the 27 students in the test group, 12 of them responded that they saw a bullying incident and responded in a positive manner. Of the 30 students in the control group, 22 of them responded that they saw a bullying incident and responded in a positive manner.

Although students in the control group reported more incidents of being bullied than those in the test group, the rates of being a victim of physical bullying were higher in the test group, with 33% of students in the test group reporting they had been a victim of physical bullying and 12% in the control group reporting they had been a victim of physical bullying. The most reported forms of bullying experiences also varied between the two groups, with students in the test group reporting more students “telling lies about me and trying to make others dislike me,” and students in the control group reporting being called more “mean names.” Table 3 highlights other reported forms of experienced bullying.
TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience Description</th>
<th>Test Group (n = 27)</th>
<th>Control Group (n = 30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was bullied by being called mean names</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was bullied by being hit, kicked, punched, or shoved</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was bullied by being called mean names about where I live, my disabilities, or my race or color</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was bullied by others telling lies about me and then trying to make others dislike me</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The test and control groups had similar experiences with communication about bullying at home. In the test group 41% of students reported an adult at home had talked with them about bullying at least once in the last couple of months. In the control group 43% of students reported an adult at home talked with them about bullying in the last couple of months. This suggests that, without school lessons on bullying, over half of the students in this research would not be exposed to bullying information in the last couple of months from parents or the school. These students may have other avenues of receiving bullying information, however, such as their church, the media, extended family, or friends.
The survey also included an open-ended question where students had the option to write down anything further in regards to bullying. Of all of the students completing the survey, none in the test group wrote additional information and four students in the control group included responses. The written responses were as follows:

Respondent 1: Some people are trying to create conversation but they try to start it with comments about other kids they don’t mean them but it might be embarassing [sic] to the other kids.

Respondent 11: Bullying happens alot [sic] at this school.

Respondent 16: Someone is making comment [sic] about my family.

Respondent 21: Rumors!

The responses here support assertions by Olweus that verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying (*Bullying at School* 16).

Chapter 4 has presented the findings of this research. Chapter 5 provides answers to the questions presented in chapter 1, drawing on the literature review and the findings from chapter 4. It also reflects on the connections between bullying and empathy and discusses applications, as well as drawbacks from the study.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study presents two major results. First, students who take part in bullying bibliotherapy library lessons with literature that focuses on empathy are less likely to participate in bullying perpetrator behaviors (see Table 1). Second, students who take part in bullying bibliotherapy library lessons with literature that focuses on empathy are only slightly more likely to take positive action when they witness a bullying incident (see Table 2). This research indicates that the treatment had a greater effect to encourage students not to bully than an influence to motivate students to respond to others that bully.

In addition to the bibliotherapy lessons, other variables factor into student bullying. Bullying behaviors could have been affected because of the depth of friendships among students in the classroom (Kawabata and Crick 1763), number of boys versus girls in the classroom (Santalahti et al. 463), or because of varying student perceptions of bullying (Naylor et al. 553). Although the level of friendships among students in the classroom cannot be controlled, school administrators and staff attempt to create as equal boy-to-girl ratio as possible when assigning students to classes. To address varying student perceptions of bullying, the school counselor conducted bullying presentations to each fifth grade class. To answer the research questions presented in chapter 1, the researcher has relied on the literature reviewed and the findings of this study, presented in chapters 2 and 4. This chapter will focus on bibliotherapy literature, bibliotherapy integration, bibliotherapy participation, and bibliotherapy and student empathy.
The Effects of Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy Literature

This section addresses question one: What types of literature and lessons are common in bibliotherapy units? Research literature suggests that children’s literature is valid in presenting different student attitudes and beliefs related to bullying and that children’s literature represents a rich resource for imaginative coping and problem resolution strategies (Oliver and Young 137). For this unit the researcher spoke with other elementary librarians and read recommendations on the Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database. Through these discussions and searches I found that there is not a “standard” type of literature used for bibliotherapy, although Nordin et al. found that unassisted and pure (assisted) bibliotherapy have been successfully used to treat psychological disorders (267). Janaviciene recommends that bibliotherapy, regardless of the topic being covered, should be informational, cultural, and socio-educational (119). Gavigan and Kurtts suggest that once implemented, bibliotherapy should include assigned readings, interactive games, role-playing and writing (13).

Bibliotherapy Integration

This section addresses question two: How is bibliotherapy integrated into district and school-determined curricula and goals? For this study, the literature and activities that were included in the bullying-themed bibliotherapy lesson plans had to be integrated into the district’s elementary library media curriculum. With this curriculum in mind, a variety of texts were used for the bullying bibliotherapy lessons, including a fiction novel, award-nominated fiction and nonfiction books, nonfiction news articles, and news clips. With these texts, students were able to meet three library objectives: understanding character
motivation, understanding cause and effect in writing, and being familiar with technology resources.

**Bibliotherapy Participation**

This section addresses question three: How do students actively participate in bibliotherapy lessons? Approximately one month prior to the study, the counselor presented Stop-Walk-Talk, a bullying prevention/intervention program in their regular classroom. The researcher used the same terminology that the counselor presented.

In this study, students worked alone or paired up to respond to bullying questions and scenarios and comment on the readings on a group blog. Students completed the in-class readings in various ways: the researcher read aloud, students partnered and read, or students read independently. After the readings of fiction novels or shorter fiction texts, most students requested to use the class blog to express their reactions. Classroom discussion after all of these readings took place in under five minutes, although students spent anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes sharing their ideas and reflections from the story on the blog. After the nonfiction reading and video clips, students were much more verbal and often took 10 to 15 minutes to verbally reflect on the reading and share their own similar experiences. In these discussions the researcher served as a facilitator, and posed open-ended questions which focused on empathy to the students.

During the bibliotherapy students were required to take notes, but requested that they could add “text to self” connections to real-life bullying experiences on an online note taking device. Many technology resources were used for this lesson, as students also took part in a class video conference with a district administrator whose special needs brother
experienced bullying on an almost daily basis during school. This administrator shared his memories and also shared how bullying is handled at the nearby middle school where he works. Students also completed their final project using online comic strip sites or online poster sites. Students shared their comic strips and posters with each other after completion.

**Bibliotherapy and Student Empathy**

This section addresses question four: How does bibliotherapy foster student empathy towards others? Research surrounding empathy suggest that students with high empathy will, for various reasons, respond in attempts to diminish negative emotions in others and those with low empathy will be less likely to respond (or not respond at all) to the negative emotions of others (Jolliffe and Farrington 540). Feshbach finds that when set in a bullying context, students who have higher empathy rates are less likely to bully others since they are better able to share or understand the victim’s reaction (qtd. in Jolliffe and Farrington 541).

By exposing students, through bibliotherapy, to the negative reactions and experiences that characters face because of bullying, this research found that bullying behaviors were less in the test group than in the control group. Survey results indicate that 22% of the students in the test group (n = 27) reported an incident of bullying where they were the victim and 53% of the students in the control group (n = 30) reported an incident of bullying where they were the victim. In regards to bullying other students, 3% of students in the test group reported bullying others and 16% in the control group reported bullying others. Students in the test group witnessed a smaller percentage of bullying, as
well, with 44% reporting that they saw someone being bullied and 73% of the students in the control group reporting that they saw someone being bullied. Of these students, 100% of those in the test group and 95% of those in the control group claimed to have taken one or more positive actions to help the victim (Question 8). These results of this question were disappointing, as I expected students in the testing group to take a bigger part as a bystander and advocating for victims when they witnessed a bullying incident.

Whether or not the bibliotherapy directly impacted student empathy levels was not determined. Although the results of the bystander portion of the survey were not as I had hoped, I believe this research was still a success, as students in the test group reported taking part in less bullying and witnessing less bullying. Other factors that could have affected the results of this study include the individual classroom environment before and during the testing, and the test group exposure to drastic examples of bullying through the bibliotherapy itself. This exposure may have led to altered perceptions of bullying.

**Recommendations**

To implement a similar bibliotherapy program many elements must be considered. First, it is necessary for classroom teachers, the counselor, and the librarian to collaborate and share language so that terminology is consistent throughout. This study took place in a school that includes the use of anti-bullying language embedded in the school-wide positive behavior support system, so the entire school was familiar with the anti-bullying program and its language as it was being explained to the students.

For this study the librarian presented different sets of media—fiction texts, nonfiction news clips and articles, and multimedia clips for each group. The test and
control group read, reviewed, and discussed the resources and created online products that documented their discussions and understanding of the information that was presented. Each group took an Olweus-based bullying survey after their lessons. The survey results showed that incorporating a library-curriculum based on activities related to bullying was effective for both groups; however, the group which focused on the negative effects of bullying and increased empathy reported less overall bullying behaviors.

In a further study, having questions that focus on the place where the bullying occurred (i.e. the restroom, recess, the lunchroom, or the classroom) would be beneficial and provide insight into results of the study.
WORKS CITED


Appendix A:
Stop-Walk-Talk Teacher Information Sheet

**Stop Walk Talk Adult Interaction**

1. Thank the child for coming to you
2. Ask the who, what, when, where
(Ensure the student’s safety. Is the bullying still happening?)
3. Ask if the child said "stop"
4. Ask if the child "walked away" calmly

If no

*Practice the stop sign with the student:
Confident, eye contact, firm voice

*Discuss where the student can walk away

If yes

Initiate the following interaction with the perpetrator:
“Did _____ tell you to stop?”
If yes: “How did you respond?”
If no: Practice the 3 step response (Listen, Take a deep breath, Go on with your day)

“Did _____ walk away?”
If yes: How did you respond?”
If no: Practice the 3 step response

Did the perpetrator meet the characteristics of bullying?

1. Repeated
2. Imbalance of Power
3. Intent to Harm

If no

*Peer mediation
*Appropriate consequence
*Reinforce other strategies (Heart Talk, Agree, Stay Away, etc)

If yes

**Fourth Referral**
- Office Referral
- Team meeting with parents

**Third Referral**
- Conference with student
- Think sheet filled out w/Counselor
- Classroom Teacher calls home
- *Create Behavior Plan for student

**Second Referral**
- Conference with student; Think sheet filled out in classroom
- Give copy to Mrs. Fullerton
- *Classroom Teacher calls home
- *Loss of Privileges (based on setting)

**First Referral**
- Conference with student
- Think sheet filled out in classroom
- Give copy to Mrs. Fullerton
Appendix B: Bullying Survey

(Adapted with permission from the Park Hill School District who has a contract with Olweus).

Directions: This is a short survey regarding your life in school. There are answers below each question. Answer each question by filling in the circle next to the answer that best describes how you think or feel. If you fill in the wrong circle, put an “X” through the circle or erase the circle completely.

Do not put your name on this survey. No one will know how you answered these questions. But it is important that you answer carefully and tell how you really feel. Sometimes it is hard to decide what to answer, but just try to give your best answer. If you have questions, raise your hand.

Most of the questions are about your life in school in the past couple of months. So when you answer, you should think of how it has been during the past 2-3 months and not only how it is just now.

1. Are you a boy or a girl?
   
   ○ Boy
   ○ Girl

2. In the past couple of months, have you been bullied at school?
   
   ○ No, I have not been bullied at school in the past couple of months.
   ○ Yes, I have been bullied once or twice.
   ○ Yes, I have been bullied 2 to 3 times.
   ○ Yes, I have been bullied more than 3 times.

   *If you answered yes, please complete questions 3-7. If you answered no, skip to question 8.

3. I was bullied by being called mean names.
   
   ○ No.
   ○ Yes.
4. I was bullied by being hit, kicked, punched or shoved.
   - No.
   - Yes.

5. I was bullied by being called mean names about where I lived, my disabilities, or my race or color.
   - No.
   - Yes.

6. I was bullied by others telling lies about me and then trying to make others dislike me.
   - No.
   - Yes.

7. Have you been bullied by boys or girls?
   - Mainly by 1 girl
   - By several girls
   - Mainly by 1 boy
   - By several boys
   - By both boys and girls

8. How often have you taken part in bullying another student or students at school in the past couple of months?
   - I have not bullied another students or students at school in the past couple of months.
   - It has only happened once or twice.
   - 2 or 3 times a month
   - About once a week
   - Several times a week
9. Have you seen someone being bullied at school in the past couple months?
   ○ No.
   ○ Yes.

   *If you answered yes, please complete question #10. If you answered no, please skip to question #11.

10. When you saw someone being bullied at school, what did you do? (You may fill in as many circles as you need)
   ○ I did nothing.
   ○ I told a teacher or another adult.
   ○ I told the bully to stop.
   ○ I stood up for the person being bullied.

11. How often are you afraid of being bullied by other students in your school?
   ○ Never
   ○ Sometimes
   ○ Often
   ○ Very often

12. Has any adult at home talked with you about bullying in the past couple of months?
   ○ No, no one has talked to me about it.
   ○ Yes, someone has talked to me about it once.
   ○ Yes, someone has talked to me about it two or three times.
   ○ Yes, someone has talked to me about it several times.

13. Is there any other additional information about bullying that you would like to add?
Appendix C
Resources Used for the Test Group

Books:

*Anything But Typical* by Nora Raleigh Baskin (Chapters 1 and 2)

*A Shelter in Our Car* by Monica Gunning

*Terrible Things* by Eve Bunting

Nonfiction Article:

“Parents: Cyberbullying Led to Teen’s Suicide” from *Good Morning America*

Media

“Cyberbullying” from *Netzsmart.org*

“Standing Up to Bullying in School” from *NBCLearn.com*

Skype call with district administrator
Appendix D
Resources Used for the Control Group

Books:

*John, Paul, George and Ben* by Lane Smith
*Dave the Potter* by Laban Hill
*Thank You, Sarah: The Woman Who Saved Thanksgiving* by Laurie Halse Anderson
*Ruth and the Green Book* by Calvin Ramsey

Clips and Articles:

“The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow” Interactive Maps on PBS.org and “Edwilda Isaac” on PBS.org

Media:

“History of Jim Crow Laws: Jim Crow Laws in the South” on NBC.Learn

Skype call with former Civil Rights marcher
Appendix E
Signed Approval Memo

12/20/2011

Angela Van Batavia
7306 NW 77th Terrace
Kansas City, MO 64152

Dear Ms. Angela Van Batavia,

Your research project amendment, 'The Effects of Bibliotherapy on Adolescent Bullying Behaviors', was approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee on 12/14/2011. This approval is valid through 11/16/2012. Your informed consent is also approved until 11/16/2012.

Please note that you are required to notify the committee in writing of any changes in your research project and that you may not implement changes without prior approval of the committee. You must also notify the committee in writing of any change in the nature or the status of the risks of participating in this research project.

Should any adverse events occur in the course of your research (such as harm to a research participant), you must notify the committee in writing immediately. In the case of any adverse event, you are required to stop the research immediately unless stopping the research would cause more harm to the participants than continuing with it.

At the conclusion of your project, you will need to submit a completed Project Status Form to this office. You must also submit the Project Status Form if you wish to continue your research project beyond its initial expiration date.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the number above.

Sincerely,

Janice Putnam Ph.D., RN
Associate Dean of The Graduate School
putnam@ucmo.edu

cc: Dr. Patricia Antrim
Appendix F
Signed Consent Form

Identification of Researchers: This research is being done by Angela Van Batavia, a graduate student with the Library Science & Information Services. I am with the Educational Leadership and Human Development Department at the University of Central Missouri.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to find out if bibliotherapy decreases bullying behaviors or causes an increase in positive action taken by bystanders during a bullying incident.

Request for Participation: We are inviting your child to participate in a study on the effects of bibliotherapy on bullying behaviors. It is up to you whether your child would like to participate in the survey. If you decide your child will not participate, he or she will not be penalized in any way.

Exclusions: Those students who are not in 5th grade and you must give your child permission to take the bullying survey.

Inclusion Criteria: Fifth grade students at English Landing Elementary are included in this research.

Description of Research Method: This study involves completing a short, 13-question survey in the library. The survey will ask about your child's gender and experiences with bullying as a perpetrator, victim, and bystander. This survey will take about 15 minutes to finish. The questions will be read and explained to your child and your child will also have a chance to ask questions. Please note that we cannot give you or your child individual results because the data are anonymous.

Privacy: All of the information we collect will be confidential. We will not record your child's name or any information that could be used to identify your child. The information will be properly stored in accordance to UCM procedures.

Explanation of Risks: Students who participate in this study can possibly be exposed to feelings of sadness. Students will be directed or referred to the counselor or social worker.

Explanation of Benefits: Your child will benefit from participating in this study by getting firsthand experience in psychological research and finding ways that schools and teachers can help alleviate bullying.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, please contact me. I can be reached at vanbatavia@parkhill.k12.mo.us or at (816) 359-5548. If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a research participant, please contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at (660) 543-4621.

If you allow your child to participate, please sign a copy of this letter and return it to his or her classroom teacher or Mrs. Van Batavia. The other copy is for you to keep.

I have read this letter and agree for my child to participate.

Child’s Name ____________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

Reviewed 10/20/10 JP