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An Evaluation of a Teasing and Bullying Intervention Program  
in a Parochial Elementary School

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BARRY UNIVERSITY

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By:

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A Directed Research Project

Submitted to the Faculty of  
Barry University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Specialist in School Psychology

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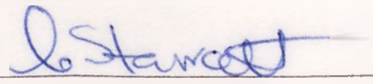
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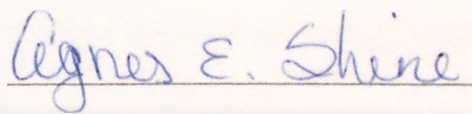
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## Abstract

Literature on bullying suggests that the majority of children will commit, observe, or experience some form of bullying at least once in their lifetime (Eslea & Smith, 1998). The current study is an extension of a prior study conducted in 2003 that identified the extent, frequency and type of teasing and bullying that occurred prior to intervention within a parochial elementary school in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Additional analyses were used to further evaluate the program using archival data collected in 2005, two years following intervention. The data set contains teasing and bullying responses derived from *The Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version* (TABS) for students, teachers and parents and was collected before and after the implementation of the program in 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Data collected in 2005 is comprised of 160 students, 48 parents, and 14 teachers. Parents indicated that they had one or more children enrolled in one or more grades (PreK-3 – 8<sup>th</sup>). Teachers spanned across all grade levels. Overall, results indicate that there was a nonsignificant reduction in teasing and bullying. Results from this study are expected to contribute to the literature that addresses the effectiveness of intervention programs that are designed to decrease school bullying.

## An Evaluation of a Teasing and Bullying Intervention Program in a Parochial Elementary School

According to the literature on teasing and bullying, the majority of children will commit, observe, or experience some form of bullying at least once in their lifetime (Eslea & Smith, 1998). Since the 1980s, researchers have attempted to identify and characterize the different types of bullying behavior as well as possible long-term effects of childhood bullying that may carry into adulthood (Carey, 2003; Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003). Research has focused on the characteristics of bullies, victims and bystanders in an attempt to better understand how these various roles are played out in teasing and bullying situations and to develop intervention programs that will decrease these behaviors school-wide (Carey, 2003; Horowitz, Vessley, Carlson, Bradley, Montoya, McCullough, et al., 2004; Smith, Ananiadou, & Cowie, 2003).

An important consideration to address before examining the empirical literature on bullying is the myths surrounding the topic. It has been assumed that the size of a classroom or school is positively correlated with the frequency of bullying. In addition, it has been suggested that bullies act out as a result of academic failure or frustration. Other presumed predictors of bullying include the physical characteristics of victims. For example, an overweight child is more likely to be bullied than an average-sized child. However, Olweus (1997) suggests that these myths are unsupported by research. Unfortunately, many myths have gained societal acceptance and support and are reflected among popular opinions. The following section reviews the construct of bullying, including definitions and characteristics of bullies, victims and bystanders.

### *Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders*



The intentions of a bully, the type of attack made by a bully, and the environment in which bullying occurs have been identified as crucial variables to consider when selecting an intervention program (Carey, 2003; Horowitz, Vessley, Carlson, Bradley, Montoya, McCullough, et al., 2004). Olweus (1997) suggests that three criteria must be met for a behavior to be considered bullying: 1) the behavior is aggressive or intentionally harmful; 2) the behavior occurs frequently over a period of time; and 3) there is an imbalance of power between the bully and victim in which the bully is perceived to have the dominant power within the relationship.

Bullies have been characterized as being manipulative and domineering (Olweus, 1997). According to Beale (2001), there are four types of bullies: 1) physical bullies; 2) verbal bullies; 3) relational bullies; and 4) reactive bullies. Physical bullies often resort to hitting or kicking. Verbal bullies will verbally tease or spread rumors about other peers. Relational bullies may exclude other students from a group using verbal or nonverbal strategies. Reactive bullies often attack other bullies for the purpose of avoiding being bullied themselves. These bullying approaches can be labeled as either direct or indirect approaches. For example, boys appear to engage in more direct bullying (e.g., hitting) as opposed to girls who engage in more indirect bullying (e.g., spreading rumors) (Merrell, 2004). Bullies have been identified as children with low self-esteem from dysfunctional families and additional risk factors include oppressive parenting (Beale; Rigby, 2004). Also, it has been suggested that bullies tend to have average to high levels of self-esteem and are often popular within their peer groups. However, it is important to note that their popularity appears to decrease with age (Beale).

Victims have also been noted to respond to bullies in fairly characteristic ways. They have been characterized as being anxious, insecure, cautious, sensitive and quiet. Consequently, reactions to bullying include crying, running away, or withdrawing from a group (Olweus, 1997). Victims generally demonstrate poor academic performance and/or experience peer rejection (Beale, 2001). For example, victims typically have a high absentee record because they may avoid school due to the fear of being bullied. As a result, they may miss assignments resulting in lower grades (Olweus).

Finally, bystanders have been divided into two general categories: observer or participant. The observer bystander usually witnesses the bullying, but he or she does not interact or become involved in any way. On the other hand, the participant bystander may encourage the bully or initiate bullying through verbalized encouragement (Merrel, 2004). Frey, Hirschstein, Snell, Edstrom, Mac Kenzie and Broderick (2005) suggest that school guidelines may not provide a clear understanding of what type of appropriate action should be taken as well as when that action should occur. Bystanders are often left to engage their own problem-solving strategies that are often maladaptive. Also, it has been suggested that bystanders are in fact victims themselves because they experience the bullying indirectly that may result in feeling threatened within a school setting and possibly may impact their daily interactions (Merrel). The following section reviews the importance of considering the perceptions of students, teachers and parents before selecting an intervention.

### *Perceptions of Teasing and Bullying*

As suggested by Guerin and Hennessy (2002), schools often differ in their perceptions of teasing and bullying when compared to students. As a result, surveys and

scales designed to measure bullying are often reflective of the developer's own perceptions of teasing and bullying, which may not always reflect the perceptions of a student population. Consequently, there appears to be an inconsistency in how bullying behaviors are defined and measured. For example, some surveys on bullying behavior may identify a competitive behavior as bullying and infer that a school's climate supports this type of behavior. Another definition may include unintentional behavior, which may or may not be labeled as bullying by a victim of bullying. In turn, it may lead one to question the accuracy of school measures of bullying.

In addition, O'Connell, Pepler, and Craig (1999) found that students vary in their description of bullying as well as the description of their involvement. Phrases such as 'often,' 'more than once,' and 'try to help' are commonly used by students and leave researchers with ambiguous responses. As a result, it may be expected that student descriptions of bullying may influence the level of student intervention. For example, younger students appear to be more likely to assist victims than older students. Also, it has been proposed that students may engage in bullying behavior more frequently because they do not label the behavior as bullying (Boulton et al., 2002). Consequently, it could be suggested that estimations of frequency and intensity of bullying may be misleading (O'Connell et al.).

Teacher and parent reports often provide an underestimation of bullying behavior when compared to student reports. One reason may be that teachers and parents are not aware of how often bullying occurs, or more specifically, where it occurs (Smith & Ananiadou, 2003). Additionally, teachers and parents may differ from students in what they identify as bullying behaviors (Guerin & Hennessy, 2002). Supporting this



assumption, Boulton, et al. (2002) identified a discrepancy between what students and teachers classify as bullying behavior. Their results indicated that students did not perceive social exclusion as a form of bullying. The following section reviews the different strategies schools have implored to address teasing and bullying within the school environment.

### School Interventions

Recently, schools have taken a more proactive approach towards addressing teasing and bullying by implementing intervention programs designed to decrease bullying as well as create an intolerance of bullying among student, parent, and school personnel (Carey, 2003). One reason is that research has consistently failed to support the assumption that children grow out of bullying (Beale, 2001). It has been further suggested that the frequency and severity of conflict is increasing among student populations. From a school-wide perspective, fighting and violence appear to be two of the biggest problems that school personnel are battling to ensure school safety (Bell, Coleman, Anderson, Whelan, & Wilder, 2000). Similarly, school shootings have provided support for the assumption that school violence is becoming a national concern in need of attention (Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, & Sprague, 2001). From an individual perspective, many victims often experience chronic absenteeism and increased apprehension as a result of bullying that may impact their potential to succeed academically (Beale). From a developmental perspective, bullying behaviors appear to be the strongest predictor of aggression and delinquency in adolescence and adulthood (Teglasi & Rothman, 2001).

Additional research has demonstrated that treatment in adolescence has produced minimal results for changing an individual's tendency to act violently (Teglasi & Rothman, 2001). Consequently, it has been postulated that early intervention may be the most effective strategy for preventing and reducing violent behavior as well as minimizing the effects of additional risk factors (e.g., sexual behavior, alcohol and drug use) in later life (Metzler et al., 2001; Teglasi & Rothman). Specifically, intervention programs that focus on improving problem-solving skills appear to provide individuals with more adaptive methods for identifying and formulating conflict resolution plans (Teglasi & Rothman).

Bell et al. (2000) suggested that many students who are faced with conflict appear to be engaging in ineffective problem-solving that may include strategies such as threats or withdrawal, while noting that a major component of ineffective strategies appears to be poor communication skills. Additionally, there seems to be an assumption that students are able to maintain and generalize newly learned conflict resolution skills. However, this does not appear to always be the case. According to Teglasi and Rothman (2001), schemas appear to be heavily influenced by experiential learning, assuming that aggression has been continually reinforced by social cognitions, acquiring and utilizing new conflict resolution skills that are at odds with an individual's current problem-solving strategies may be an extremely challenging task.

Given the severity of the consequences and long-term effects of bullying, a more proactive approach may be the best approach for minimizing and preventing the effects of bullying behavior (Carey, 2003; Metzler et al., 2001; Teglasi & Rothman, 2001). More specifically, Bell et al., (2000) suggests that students need to learn skills that assist with

defining problems and identifying the emotional context of the situation, planning, and initiating appropriate problem-solving skills more effectively. However, ensuring that a student is able to learn, maintain and generalize such skills appears to be one of the major challenges of intervention programs. Conversely, Rigby (2004) suggests that schools may be more successful by targeting victims and teaching them how to better protect themselves against bullying because victims may be more open to learning new skills than are bullies. However, little research attention has been given to intervention programs designed to take this approach.

Based on the attention bullying has gained in the literature, it can safely be argued that bullying has become a major issue across the world (Okabayahi, 1996). It has been proposed that school personnel often fail to consider the stressors related to bullying behaviors when selecting an intervention program to best fit their school and, consequently, may inadvertently limit their ability to successfully decrease bullying behavior (Carey, 2003; Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004). MacIntyre, Carr, Lawlor and Flattery (2000) suggested that intervention programs do not account for cultural differences, lack consistent implementation and/or do not provide supplemented parent/teacher training and/or materials needed to yield positive outcomes. Suggestions for improvements include consideration of the child's level of cognitive and linguistic development. Another consideration is the extent to which teachers, parents and students are willing to counteract the effects of bullying. For example, Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) suggest that teachers are able to decrease bullying with minimal school personnel or parent assistance by familiarizing themselves with information on the identification and consequences of bullying. Additional strategies include learning and



applying appropriate intervention strategies in a classroom setting. These findings suggest that teachers may not need a training-based or curriculum-based program to assist them with addressing bullying in their classrooms. Future research may be needed to identify current strategies employed by teachers and assess their overall impact on decreasing bullying.

As a result, it is important to evaluate how teasing and bullying intervention programs vary in their design, approach and purpose (Newman-Carlson, & Horne, 2004; Carey, 2003; Metzler et al., 2001; Price, & Jones, 2001). Further exploration should address how these factors may influence the outcomes of bullying across different school settings (e.g., public vs. private school settings) (Rigby, 2003; Metzler et al., 2001).

Below is a brief discussion that represents selected intervention programs and discusses the design and purpose as well as implementation practices. In addition, special attention is given to the role that school personnel, teachers, parents and students play in the design of the intervention.

#### *Positive Alternative Learning (P.A.L.) with Aggressive Replacement Training (A.R.T.)*

The Positive Alternative Learning (P.A.L.) program with Aggressive Replacement Training (A.R.T.) implemented in a Midwest school system is an intervention program implemented in an alternative school setting for aggressive and violent students. The purpose of the program is to provide students with opportunities to improve their problem-solving skills and providing them with appropriate conflict resolution skills. A student is referred by a school counselor or principle and was accepted into the program based upon the belief that the student would benefit from an early intervention. A criterion for acceptance into the program is contingent upon an



interview and psychological examination. Other students are enrolled if a disciplinary board recommended the program as an alternative to suspension. In either case, both the parent(s) and student have to sign a contract acknowledging their commitment to the program (Okabayashi, 1996).

According to the study, the duration of the program was intended to last one quarter of the academic year, resemble a normal school week, and follow the same general requirements (e.g., attendance rules, school lunch regulations) as public schools. The structure of the program resembled a point system in which students could earn points that could be exchanged for selected privileges in the future. Success was measured by a student's ability to reenter the school setting without the presence of conflict (Okabayashi, 1996).

The P.A.L. curriculum was designed to assist students whose behavior interfered with their ability to achieve and succeed within the school environment. A.R.T. was a crucial component of the P.A.L. curriculum. Student trainings utilized role playing, discussions, and reactive thinking activities that enabled students to develop anger control, empathy, and social skills. In order to ensure that students also received classroom instruction, A.R.T. was implemented simultaneously with academic instruction (Okabayashi, 1996).

A support team (i.e., teachers, teacher aides, psychologist, and special education personnel) was in place to facilitate progress towards achieving goals, such as improving behavior and re-entering the normal school setting, by providing support. In addition, parents attended meetings with trainers in order to help them improve communication skills between the parent and child and inform them of their child's progress. Each parent

received the same training their child received in order to ensure that skills were fostered and reinforced within the home environment (Okabayashi, 1996).

According to Okabayashi (1996), students reported that the program assisted them by providing support and teaching alternative ways for dealing with conflict. Over 75% of the students involved in the program were successfully reintroduced to the normal school setting without conflict. Results from this study may help researchers better understand how to decrease violent behavior among aggressive and violent bullies.

*Bullybusters: A psychoeducational drama*

Bullybusters, a psychoeducational drama, is one component of an anti-bullying program implemented in schools around the United States. The main purpose of the play is to provide the opportunity for students to experience and identify with the different aspects of bullying through observation, reflection and discussions. The play was developed by a middle school counseling and drama staff (Milsom, & Gall, 2006; Beale, 2001).

Based on concepts from the social learning theory, drama is used as a medium to communicate anti-bullying messages to students. Students act as performers as well as audience members. In theory, students are expected to learn through vicarious learning. Skits last approximately 20 minutes and focus primarily on portraying the victims' feelings and reactions. The program was implemented by a counselor, whose purpose was to guide discussion, summarize important concepts and reinforce student participation and learning. Teachers were encouraged to lead reflective discussions regarding the play in their classrooms. Parents were encouraged to participate by viewing

the drama at meetings, utilizing helpful tips in newsletter articles and talking with their children about their reaction to the drama (Beale, 2001).

According to Beale (2001), the highly structured skits did not always provide clear cut solutions to the purposed conflicts. Therefore, students were provided with opportunities to apply their problem-solving skills through discussions with other peers. Consequently, it was suggested that students could indirectly experience bullying through observation.

Across a school population of middle school students, Beale (2001) reported that school administration indicated that 20% of bullying reports decreased within the first year of implementation. Teachers reported that the program increased their awareness of ongoing bullying and that bullying was being more frequently reported by victims and bystander. In addition, it was reported that students were perceived as having a greater awareness of what bullying and demonstrating a lower tolerance for the behavior.

However, Beale (2001) did not indicate how results were obtained and evaluated. It could be assumed that a 20% decrease of bullying reports is based on school administration perceptions rather than data. There was no indication of how student awareness or perceptions of the program was evaluated or the outcomes of the program regarding to what extend it was effective. No additional literature was found to support the effectiveness of the program.

#### *The Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project*

*The Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project* was the product of collaboration among personnel and parents from 23 schools in the design, implementation and evaluation of bullying intervention programs designed for each individual school. The philosophy



behind the project was that if the school community and parents played an integral part in the design of the program and implementation practices, demonstrating ownership of the program, there would be a higher probability for consistent and continued implementation. The focus of the program content was to provide students with the opportunity to develop improved problem-solving skills (Eslea & Smith, 1998).

Initially, all schools developed procedures for identifying and addressing bullying. School personnel collaborated with teachers, parents and students in order to ensure cooperation with and consensus for selected rules and regulations. Optional intervention strategies, such as curriculums, videos (e.g., *Sticks and Stones*), books (e.g., *The Heartstone Odyssey*) and drama, were incorporated into the program. Additional provisions such as environmental improvements (e.g., restructure of seating areas and incorporation of play-time areas) were made. Additional training was offered if a school could supply the needed personnel and resources necessary to offer such options (Eslea & Smith, 1998).

Eslea and Smith (1998) reported findings on program effectiveness approximately two years after initial implementation of *The Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project*. Overall results were derived from a headteacher's feedback during an interview from each school. Results indicated that all schools believed the program had contributed to the improvement of the school climate in one way or another. Additional results were derived from student responses on a questionnaire administered in 1990, approximately 9 months prior to intervention, and again in 1992, approximately 4 terms post intervention. Findings indicated a mean decrease of approximately 17% for student reports of being bullied and 7% decrease of the frequency of bullying. Overall, approximately 80% of



students reported that the intervention had decreased bullying and improved the school climate. However, it is important to note that the researchers indicated that not all schools had finalized policies and procedures regarding the intervention. Only four schools participated in the survey, thus findings may not accurately reflect the overall success of the program.

Overall, findings from the *Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project* were based on intervention outcomes approximately one year after the termination of funding for the project. At the time of the evaluation, only 11 head teachers agreed to an interview and only 4 schools collected self-report measures. Results regarding the frequency and intensity of bullying varied: two schools perceived no problems prior to intervention, one school perceived minimal problems, one school perceived more problems with younger students, and most schools perceived that their problems were similar to that of other schools. In addition, the time to develop policies and procedures ranged from one year to three years, with the clarity of such policies and procedures varying from clearly outlined to vague. It was further indicated that the utilization of resources (i.e., books, drama, and support groups) was depended upon teacher interest of the material (Eslea & Smith, 1998).

Results from the four schools that participated in the survey indicated that only two schools observed a consistent decline in bullying when compared to the first two surveys collected in 1990 and 1992. One school reported a decline between 1990 and 1992, but an increase between 1992 and follow-up. Surprisingly, one school reported a consistent increase of bullying over the duration of the initial evaluation and follow-up.

Overall, the development and utilization of innovative approaches decreased over time (Eslea & Smith, 1998).

It is important to note that only a few schools continued to work individually with bullies and/or victims; therefore suggesting that ownership of a program did not ensure continuous implementation. Also, the majority of findings were based on self-report measures (Eslea & Smith, 1998). Furthermore, it is possible that the program may have been designed for older children since it required an increased usage of cognitive and social skills, which is supported by initial findings that suggested that some children had difficulty understanding items on a self-report measure (Baldry & Farrington, 2004; Elsea & Smith, 1998). No additional literature was found to support program findings.

#### *The Stay Safe Programme*

The Stay Safe Programme, developed and implemented in primary schools in the Republic of Ireland, is a child sexual abuse program that includes a broad curriculum that focuses on topics such as victimization and bullying. The program was implemented school-wide and parent consent was necessary for child participation. Implementers included mental health professional and general education teachers. In addition, parents received training prior to their child's participation in the program and attended ongoing meetings. Multimodal learning was employed through the use of video, discussion, workbook exercises, behavioral rehearsal and role-play for students. As an additional component to the program, a peer support team allowed students to discuss and listen to their peers' experience with abuse (MacIntyre et al., 2000).

Designed from a developmental perspective, The Stay Safe Programme lessons were divided into two age-appropriate categories (i.e., 6-8 years and 9-12 years) to

accommodate variation in language development and teaching methods. The program consisted of 10 – 12 lessons that were taught during 2 sessions per week for approximately 30 minutes. The program focused on five topics: 1) feeling safe and unsafe; 2) bullying; 3) touching; 4) telling; and 5) strangers. In addition, children were provided disclosure, assertiveness, coercion management and abuser identification training (MacIntyre et al., 2000).

Examples of primary goals included: 1) increasing safety and disclosure skills; 2) enhancing self-esteem and communication skills to reduce vulnerability to abuse; 3) assisting children in avoiding other forms of abuse (e.g., bullying); and 4) helping parents and teachers identify precursors to abusive situations. Secondary goals included: 1) promoting early discussion of sexual abuse; 2) teaching skills that guard against the initiation and continuation of abuse; 3) increasing self-esteem; and 4) increasing the availability and awareness of social support (MacIntyre et al., 2000).

Very little attention was given to the evaluation of the program. MacIntyre et al. (2000) reported findings suggesting that knowledge and skills gained by children, parents and teachers were maintained three months after implementation. These findings were based on self-report responses derived from the Safety Knowledge and Skills Questionnaires. There was no indication regarding who completed the questionnaires or when the questionnaires were administered. In addition, teacher referrals and disclosures of possible abuse cases increased drastically after initial implementation. However, there was not data presented to support these claims. Overall, the authors suggested that the program served not only as an intervention, but also as a prevention program to guard



against possible abuse. No additional literature was found to support the effectiveness of this program.

*Bully Busters: A psychoeducational intervention*

*Bully Busters: A Teacher's Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders* is a psychoeducational program that was developed at the request of a school community. The program was designed to train teachers to increase their awareness of bullying and to enhance their skills and strategies for use in a classroom setting to address and combat bullying and victimization. In addition, training focused on increasing teacher confidence in addressing bullying and teaching stress management techniques. It is important to note that parents and school personnel had a limited role in the implementation of this program (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004).

The duration of the training was three weeks, each with two hour sessions. Training continued for a duration of eight weeks, each session lasting one hour. Workshops were used to train teachers on implementation practices that focused on seven modules: 1) increasing awareness of bullying; 2) recognizing the bully; 3) recognizing the victims; 4) taking charge: interventions for bullying behavior; 5) assisting victims: recommendations and interventions; 6) the role of prevention; and 7) relaxation and coping skills. In addition to the manual, teachers received examples of interventions and classroom activities as well as were taught stress-management techniques (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004).

Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) reported that following teacher training, teachers were able to decrease the number of bullying incidents within their classrooms. However, data indicated that training was not successful at significantly improving



teachers' self-efficacy. It was suggested that intervention programs designed for teachers may be more successful than classroom curriculum interventions designed for students.

### *Skills for Success (SFS)*

Skills for Success (SFS) is an alternative education intervention program that was implemented in two schools. The purpose of the program is to identify students at-risk for violence and academic failure and provide them with the needed skills to ensure community and school success. Implementers include a school counselor, full-time teacher and full-time educational assistant. The duration of the program depends upon the individual student's success of increasing social and academic skills (Sprague, Nishioka, & Stieber, 2000).

Incorporated into the program on a school-wide basis are universal strategies (e.g., School Wide Positive Behavior Supports implemented school-wide) and screening procedures that allow the school to maintain a positive learning environment. The alternative education program provides services and supports needed to ensure student success in the community and school. Within the program, mentors monitor student progress and provide solution-focused solutions when conflict occurred. Academic supports include a lower student-teacher ratio and social skills (e.g., communication, problem-solving and interpersonal skills) and life skills (e.g., vocational, self-management and independent living training). Instruction occurred in a general classroom setting as well as individually. Alternative disciplinary procedures were designed to work with an individualized behavior intervention. One aspect of the program was to focus on improving school-family collaboration as well as provide families with school/home intervention strategies. Such intervention strategies focus on

improving familial relationships, ensuring reinforcement and increasing parental monitoring. On occasion, a service plan was designed for a student in order to ensure the family and student were aware of and utilized available community services (e.g., after-school supervision, mental health services). Overall, ongoing assessment procedures allowed a school to identify and address the student's as well as the schools needs (Sprague et al., 2000).

Results were based on program outcomes in two middle schools that implemented universal procedures. Overall, researches found a decrease in referrals for aggression, fighting, intimidation and harassment. Each school reported a decrease of theft, property damage and vandalism. Out of the two schools, only one school implemented an alternative SFS program within the school. A comparison of the two schools indicated a decrease of juvenile arrests for students in the SFS program as opposed to students in the school that did not implement SFS (Sprague et al., 2000).

Findings further indicated that both schools reported an increase in discipline referrals. One explanation was that both schools adopted a data collection system that assisted them with more accurately tracking discipline referrals. Based on the findings, it was concluded that schools that provide school-wide interventions (i.e., universal procedures) as well as individualized interventions (i.e., SFS programs) may be more successful at reducing aggression (Sprague et al., 2000). No additional literature was found to support the success of the program.

### *STORIES*

STORIES (Structure / Themes / Open / Communication / Reflection / Individuality / Experimental Learning / Social-Problem Solving) is a classroom-based

program that uses experimental learning to improve social information processing. The focus of the program is to improve a child's positive group interactions and to provide a setting in which children can evaluate their own strategies for dealing with problems. Program participants include aggressive as well as nonaggressive children (Teglasi & Rothman, 2001).

The program uses stories to assist children in the identification of the issues surrounding the characters (e.g., theme, a character's motives, feelings, and behaviors, consequences of behavior). Children are then encouraged to relate story details to their own experiences. The goal is to change a child's schemas that govern his or her social information processing. The steps of social information processing are: 1) identify the problem by using clues and awareness of ones' own feelings; 2) come up with strategies that can be used to address the problem; 3) evaluate consequences and consider alternatives; 4) set goals and plan; 5) implement the plan; and 6) evaluate the effectiveness of the solution. Throughout the program, children are encouraged to use self-management and self-monitoring skills as well as cause and effect thinking (Teglasi & Rothman, 2001).

The duration of the STORIES program is 15 sessions. The program is facilitated by a leader that guides discussions. Discussions focus on story interpretation that require the child to take the perspective of the bully, victim and bystander and identify the major issues surrounding the internal and external worlds of the characters as well as the evaluation of one's own behavior in relationship to story details (Teglasi & Rothman, 2001).



During an evaluation of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders during an extensive pilot phase, a pretest was conducted to identify two groups of children: aggressive and nonaggressive. Over 20% of the students in this study were identified as aggressive. Based on this finding, the program was then implemented within the entire classroom in hopes of benefiting all students in the classroom. A comparison of program outcomes indicated that within the nonaggressive population externalizing and antisocial behavior decreased. However, among the aggressive population students externalizing and antisocial behavior increased. One reason for these findings may be that the classroom climate may have a determining effect on program outcomes (Teglasi & Rothman, 2001).

Overall, a review of intervention programs suggests that intervention programs are effective at decreasing teasing and bullying among the student population. However, it also suggests that parent and teacher involvement may impact the overall effectiveness of intervention success. Future research may be needed to further address the potential impact of stakeholder involvement in regards to implementation, monitoring program success, and overall effectiveness.

#### *The Social Justice Program (SJP)*

The SJP is a teasing and bullying intervention program implemented in a parochial elementary school. The program's goals are: 1) to promote social justice; 2) to promote inclusion; 3) to encourage a zero-tolerance attitude for disrespect; 4) to foster and encourage personal responsibility; and 5) to address issues with the design of intervention programs. The SJP is comprised of three programs: You Can't Say You Can't Play (YCSYCP); Students United with Parents and Educators to Resolve Bullying (SUPERB); and Student Teacher Assistive Mediation Program (STAMP). Each program

incorporates age-appropriate opportunities that facilitate the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills that can be used to improve the quality of each individual's life. The following section summarizes the findings of a program evaluation that aimed at assessing the overall outcomes of the SJP (Starratt, DeLeon, Delfino-Silva, Jimenez, Lineman, Ramirez, et al., 2005).

*You Can't Say You Can't Play (YCSYCP)*. The *You Can't Say You Can't Play (YCSYCP)* program is implemented in PreK-3 (3-years old) to 2<sup>nd</sup> grades and is guided by Vivian Gussin Paley's (1992) book *You Can't Say You Can't Play*. The overall goal is to promote inclusion by using exclusionary examples within the classroom to promote a zero-tolerance for bullying. Sample activities, stories and incidents are provided; however, teachers have the right to incorporate additional materials into classroom activities. In a program evaluation of the SJP, teachers reported using verbal and visual reminders, positive reinforcement, consequences of bullying behavior, role-play, skits, and puppet shows to promote inclusion (Starratt et al., 2005).

A program evaluation of the YCSYCP program indicated that students' ability to define bullying and provide example of bullying was limited. Approximately 5.8% reported being bullied, while 76.5% reported witnessing bullying on school ground. A playground observation indicated that students engaged in positive play. However, there were observations of students teasing other students in a playful manner. Major findings indicated that students had the most difficulty sharing toys, name-calling and tattling (Starratt et al., 2005).

All teachers reported using a minimum of two intervention strategies within the classroom (e.g., reading stories, positive reinforcement, and verbal reminders). Based on

teacher reports, it was concluded by evaluators that teachers had put great effort into incorporating intervention strategies into their classrooms that address teasing and bullying (i.e., rearranging lunch tables, implementing a 'caring' rule). Overall, teachers reported a great confidence in the program and found it to be flexible and easy to implement (Starratt et al., 2005).

Parent reports produced a mixed response regarding the YCSYCP program. Some parents reported positive perceptions of the program and reported that the program fostered positive qualities and taught socialization skills in their children. However, other parents reported that the program needed to implement more consistent and continuous guidelines for reporting and addressing teasing and bullying. For example, one parent reported that better communication between teachers and parents could help keep parents informed regarding their child's behavior, especially if the child of the parent was bullying other children. Overall, parents reported a need for better communication and intervention strategies regarding the reprimand of bullying behavior within the classroom (Starratt et al., 2005).

*Students United with Parents and Educators to Reduce Bullying (SUPERB).*

Student United with Parents and Educators to Reduce Bullying (SUPERB) is a curriculum-based program that is designed to reduce bullying and teasing among students by changing student attitudes and behaviors as well as facilitating the development of problem-solving skills. Implementation is carried out by a program director and graduate students from a near-by South Florida university and is implemented in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grades. The overall goal is to change and redefine the school's climate with the purpose of redefining acceptable behavior. Special focus is given to identifying the social effects of



bullying with regard to victims, bullies and bystanders. A program evaluation of the SJP identified the following implementation activities: 1) art projects (e.g., posters); 2) reflective writing tasks; 3) music programs; and 4) discussions (Starratt et al., 2005).

An evaluation of the SUPERB program indicated that students in the fourth and fifth grade were able to demonstrate an understanding of what role a bystander should take in the event of a bullying incident, such as how to distract a bully and obtain assistance from an authority figure. However, students experienced difficulty with providing examples of long-term consequences associated with teasing and bullying (Starratt et al., 2005).

Teachers reported positive perceptions of the program. They indicated that students appeared more capable of identifying and stopping bullying when it occurred, which was supported by specific examples of student behavior. However, it is important to note that during the 2003 – 2004 and 2005 – 2006 academic year SUPERB was implemented during the physical education period. Student, parent and teacher feedback all reflected some level of concern regarding the impact of the program substituting for some of the physical education classes on student receptiveness of the program (Starratt et al., 2005).

*STAMP*. The Student and Teacher Assistive Mediation Program (STAMP) is a curriculum-based program that is implemented in 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The program is based on the “Working Together to Resolve Conflict” curriculum (Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Project, 2000) which is designed to address the developmental internal and external conflicts in which adolescents face and provide them with appropriate conflict resolution skills. The curriculum includes five units that incorporate student and teacher

worksheets and overhead projection transparencies. Activities can be carried out individually as well as within a group setting (Starrett et al., 2005).

In addition, STAMP is supplemented with a Peer Mediation Program (PMP) that utilizes the “Working Together to Resolve Conflict” curriculum to teach peer mediators appropriate conflict resolution skills. Peer mediators include 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders and were nominated by teachers based on overall eligibility (e.g., academic performance and character). The program is designed so that teachers, students and administrators can refer students to peer mediation, in which peer mediators assist in conflict resolution in the student-student relationship (Starrett et al., 2005).

An evaluation of the STAMP program suggested that peer mediators reported mixed perceptions of the program. Positive perceptions include the importance of helping others and learning new skills. Negative perceptions include the concern for confidentiality between peer mediators and students referred for peer mediation as well as a lack of student receptiveness of the program from non-peer mediators. Overall, peer mediators expressed concern for victims and the fear related to referring another student for peer mediation. Findings also indicated that eighth grade peer mediators expressed positive perceptions of the program. However, it is important to note that since initial implementation of the program, only eighth grade peer mediators were allowed to conduct peer mediation sessions (Starratt et al., 2005).

In contrast, students reported concern regarding peer mediator competency. Some students felt that peer mediators were not qualified to assist other students with resolving conflict. Positive perceptions included the assumption that the program increased teacher

awareness of bullying; thus, increasing the likelihood of a teacher identifying and reporting when an incident occurred (Starratt et al., 2005).

Teacher feedback suggested that the program may benefit from incorporating more age-appropriate activities in the classroom that reflect more real-life scenarios students may encounter. Additional concerns reported by teachers and parents included the lack of credibility of the program and a sense of skepticism regarding the effectiveness of the program (Starratt et al., 2005)

Over 75% of parents of students in fourth through eight grades correctly identified the intervention program (i.e., SUPERB, STAMP) implemented in their child's grade. Parents indicated that they obtained the most information regarding their child's program via the communications folder, which is a method used to inform parents about school proceedings, events and programs. It was further reported that over 90% of parents believed that their child benefited from the intervention program (Starratt et al., 2005).

School-wide, a comparison of incident report from 2003 – 2004 to 2004 – 2005 academic years suggested that there was an observed decrease in non-relational incidents (e.g., social exclusion) that may have been related to the implementation of the Social Justice interventions. Evaluators also identified a minimal reduction of relational incidents (10% to 8%) (e.g., hitting), which was also thought to reflect intervention implementation. In addition, findings indicated that boys were more likely than girls to be involved in relational and non-relational incidents (Starratt et al., 2005).

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The current project is an extension of Marchewka (2005) using archival data that was collected during a program evaluation of the SJP in 2003 and 2005 to evaluate a teasing



and bullying program (i.e., Social Justice Program) implemented in a parochial elementary school. The independent variables are reports of teasing and bullying by students, teachers and parents and the time of report (before and two years into implementation). The dependent variable is bullying behaviors among fourth to eighth graders. The research hypotheses are as follows:

*Hypothesis 1:* There will be an overall decrease in student TABS total scores for the frequency of committed acts and experienced acts of teasing and bullying when comparing data collected in 2003 and 2005 across all grades.

*Hypothesis 2:* There will be a significant decrease in student TABS total scores for each cohort for the frequency of committed acts and experienced acts of teasing and bullying when comparing data collected in 2003 and 2005. Cohorts are defined as group of participants in 2003 that have matriculated two years later (i.e., fourth grade to sixth grade; fifth grade to seventh grade; sixth grade to eighth grade).

*Hypothesis 3:* There will be a significant decrease in student TABS total scores for grade specific response for committed acts and experienced acts of teasing and bullying when comparing data collected in 2003 and 2005 (i.e., 2003 fourth graders vs. 2005 fourth graders, 2003 fifth graders vs. 2005 fifth graders, 2003 seventh graders vs. 2005 seventh graders, 2003 eighth graders vs. 2005 eighth graders).

## Method

### *Participants*

An archival data set that consisted of teasing and bullying response derived from *The Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version* (TABS; [www.familyandmarriage.com](http://www.familyandmarriage.com)) that was collected in 2003 and 2005 by an elementary parochial school as part of an on-going program evaluation will be used to identify intervention outcomes.

### *Procedure*

Marchewka (2005) collected data in 2003. Data collected after 2 years of intervention were collected by school volunteers. None of the surveys collected in 2003 or 2005 contained identifying information; thus, participants remain anonymous. As part of the original data collection, consent forms were sent home in students' communications folder and parents/guardians returned forms providing consent for the administration of surveys. Student participation was voluntary and students were not provided any type of incentive to participate. School volunteers distributed and collected surveys during normal school hours. The Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version (TABS-S; [www.familyandmarriage.com](http://www.familyandmarriage.com)) was administered to all students in fourth through eighth grades. Parent and teacher versions were also distributed. Cover letters with a brief explanation of the survey were provided and students were provided with opportunities to ask the volunteers questions pertaining to the survey. Reportedly, students placed completed surveys in envelopes and returned them to the school volunteers.

Additionally, all parent and teacher surveys were distributed by the school in envelopes. Again, cover letters were included with a brief description of the instructions

and study. All participants were reminded to omit any identifying information. Parent and teacher surveys were returned to the school office (Marchewka, 2005).

Data collected in 2003 was comprised of approximately 150 students in fourth through eighth grades. Of that sample, a total sample of 147 students completed surveys. Students per grade are as follows: 29 fourth graders; 28 fifth graders; 31 sixth graders; 33 seventh graders; 26 eighth graders (age range = 9 to 15 years). Of the sample, 45.6% were girls and 54.4% were boys. Additionally, the sample included a total of 9 teachers and 63 parents across grades PreK-3 (3-years-old) through eighth grades.

Data collected in 2005 was comprised of a total sample of 160 students across fourth through eighth grades. Students per grade are as follows: 30 fourth graders, 28 fifth graders, 39 sixth graders, 34 seventh graders, 29 eighth graders (age range = 9 to 15 years). Of the sample, 48.1% were girls and 51.9% were boys. Additionally, the sample included a total of 14 teachers and 48 parents across grades PreK-3 (3-years-old) through eighth grades. Table 1 demonstrates the distribution of students across grades.

Table 1.

*Number of Student Responses per Grade in 2003 and 2005*

Phase	Grade	Number of	
		Responses (n)	Frequency (%)
2003	4 <sup>th</sup>	29	19.7
2005	4 <sup>th</sup>	30	18.8
2003	5 <sup>th</sup>	28	19.0
2005	5 <sup>th</sup>	28	17.5
2003	6 <sup>th</sup>	31	21.1
2005	6 <sup>th</sup>	39	24.4



Table 1.

*Number of Student Responses per Grade in 2003 and 2005 (continued)*

Phase	Grade	Number of	
		Responses (n)	Frequency (%)
2003	7 <sup>th</sup>	33	22.4
2005	7 <sup>th</sup>	34	21.3
2003	8 <sup>th</sup>	26	17.7
2005	8 <sup>th</sup>	29	18.1
Total 2003	-	147	100
Total 2005	-	160	100

In addition, students were asked to report their ethnicity using the following options: Caucasian (White, Non-Hispanic), Hispanic (Non-European), Pacific Islander, Black (Non-Hispanic), Asian, and Native American/Alaskan Native. Across data collected in 2003 and 2005 data, approximately two-thirds students reported Caucasian and one-fourth reported Hispanic. An additional black for other was provided. All missing responses were not calculated in frequency reports. Student ethnicity ratings are reported in Table 2.

Table 2.

*Student Ethnicity in 2003 and 2005*

Ethnicity	<u>Phase</u>			
	<u>2003</u>		<u>2005</u>	
	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
	<u>(n)</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>(n)</u>	<u>(%)</u>
Caucasian (White, Non-Hispanic)	74	58.7	59	43.9
Hispanic (Non-European)	29	23.0	25	15.9
Pacific Islander	2	1.6	2	1.3
Black (Non-Hispanic)	2	1.6	1	1.3
Asian	1	.8	2	1.3
Missing	21	-	13	-
Total	126	100.0	147	100.0

\* Students that did not indicate an ethnicity are accounted for in the "Missing" column and were not factored in as part of the frequency measures.

*Materials*

*The Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version (TABS-S;* [www.familyandmarriage.com](http://www.familyandmarriage.com)) has four sections. The first section requests demographic information. The second section is composed of 3-items measuring student satisfaction with his or her school and classes using a 7-point Likert scale (0 = extremely unhappy, 1 = very unhappy, 2 = somewhat unhappy, 3 = equally happy and unhappy, 4 = somewhat happy, 5 = very happy, 6 = extremely happy). The third part is composed of 35-items measuring if a student has bullied or has been bullied, indicated by a yes or no answer, as well as the frequency of being bullied or bullying another during the week before assessment using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = 0 times, 2 = 1 to 2 times, 3 = 3 to 5 times, 4 = 6 to 10 times, 5 = 11 or more times). The last section assesses the frequency of

bullying within specific settings (i.e., classroom, gym, locker room, lunch room/cafeteria, playground/athlete field, school bus, stairs/hallways, washroom/bathrooms, or other) and is measured using a three-point Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = many times). In the fourth section of the survey, the other option provides a space for the student to indicate a specific location that is not listed where he or she has observed bullying.

The teacher version (TABS-T) and parent version (TABS-P) are formatted similarly to the TABS-S and measure teacher and parent perceptions of bullying among the student population. However, the TABS-T and TABS-P do not request demographic information and ask the questions from the respectable perspective in relationship to the student population. ([www.familyandmarriage.com](http://www.familyandmarriage.com)). At the time of the study, information regarding the reliability and validity for the survey was not available (Marchewka, 2005).

#### *Method of Analysis*

The current project uses archival data that was collected in 2003 and 2005 measuring the frequency of teasing and bullying using responses from The Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version (TABS). Because all participant data was anonymous, the existing data set was not coded in any way that would allow the present researcher to specifically compare data collected in 2003 with data collected in 2005.

Descriptive analyses were used to evaluate the frequency and type of teasing and bullying behavior for the 2003 and 2005 student responses. All student responses using the Likert scale were summed using TABS scores to evaluate the frequency of committed and experienced acts of teasing and bullying. A comparison of TABS total scores for data collected in 2003 and 2005 was used to evaluate overall intervention outcomes.



A nonparametric analysis was used to evaluate student TABS total scores for each grade cohort from 2003 to 2005 in order to determine intervention outcomes per grade cohort. Given that participant data is anonymous, participants were not be matched across evaluations points. Further analyses evaluate TABS total scores for grade specific responses from 2003 to 2005. Grade level specific effects were examined by comparing 2003 grade levels with the equivalent 2005 grade levels (i.e., 2003 fourth graders to 2005 fourth graders, 2003 fifth graders to 2005 fifth graders, 2003 seventh graders to 2005 seventh graders, 2003 eighth graders to 2005 eighth graders). Additional descriptive analyses were used to identify the most frequency reported items across grade levels as well as across parent and teacher responses.

### Results

Initially, frequencies were used to identify the frequency of endorsement per TABS item as reported by students as indicated in Table 3. The data in the “Affirmative Response” column indicates the number of students that endorsed each item by marking a ‘yes’ response. The data in the “Frequency” column indicates the percentage of the students that endorsed each item within the sample.

Table 3.

*Number of Affirmative Responses (n) per TABS Items in 2005*

Item	<u>Affirmative</u>	
	<u>Number of Responses (n)</u>	<u>Frequency (%)</u>
1a. Someone ignored you or would not answer you.	64	41.5
1b. You ignored someone or would not answer them.	65	42.5
2a. Someone bossed you around.	64	41.6
2b. You bossed someone around.	40	26.0

Table 3.

*Number of Affirmative Responses (n) per TABS Items in 2005 (continued)*

Item	<u>Affirmative</u>	
	<u>Number of Responses (n)</u>	<u>Frequency (%)</u>
3a. Someone tried to stop you from being someone's friend.	68	43.3
3b. You tried to stop someone from being someone else's friend.	16	10.4
4a. Someone acted as if you were disgusting or gross.	57	37.0
4b. You acted as if someone was disgusting or gross.	53	34.4
5a. Someone bothered or annoyed you.	134	85.4
5b. You bothered or annoyed someone.	59	38.6
6a. Someone picked a fight with you.	35	22.3
6b. You picked a fight with someone.	26	17.0
7a. Someone would not play or talk with you.	55	34.8
7b. You would not play or talk with someone.	36	23.4
8a. Someone was rude to you or disrespected you.	94	59.1
8b. You were rude to someone or disrespected someone.	51	32.9
9a. Someone acted as if you were weird, awkward, or different.	65	41.1
9b. You acted as if someone were weird, awkward, or different.	50	32.5
10a. Someone called you names or put you down.	80	50.6
10b. You called someone names or put them down.	46	29.9
11a. Someone spread rumors or stories about you.	66	41.5
11b. You spread rumors or stories about someone.	25	16.1
12a. Someone from your school used email or the internet to be mean to you.	24	15.3

Table 3.

*Number of Affirmative Responses (n) per Survey Item in 2005 (continued)*

Item	<u>Affirmative</u>	
	<u>Number of Responses (n)</u>	<u>Frequency (%)</u>
12b. You used email or the internet to be mean to someone from your school.	8	5.2
13a. Someone made fun of a person or something you care about.	94	59.5
13b. You made fun of a person or something someone cares about.	26	16.3
14a. Someone laughed at, teased, or made fun of you.	80	51.0
14b. You laughed at, teased, or made fun of someone.	42	27.5
15a. Someone played a mean trick or "joke" on you.	49	31.4
15b. You played a mean trick or "joke" on someone.	27	17.9
16a. Someone swore or cursed at you	81	52.6
16b. You swore or cursed at someone.	46	30.7
17a. Someone was mean about your being a boy or a girl.	19	12.3
17b. You were mean about someone being a boy or girl.	10	6.5
18a. Someone was mean about your not acting like a boy or girl.	11	7.2
18b. You were mean about someone not acting like a boy or girl.	18	11.7
19a. Someone was mean about your race, religion, or nationality.	36	23.2
19b. You were mean about someone's race, religion, or nationality.	13	8.4



Table 3.

*Number of Affirmative Responses (n) per Survey Item in 2005 (continued)*

Item	Affirmative	
	Number of Responses (n)	Frequency (%)
20a. Someone of your own race accused you of acting like a person of another race.	18	11.6
20b. You accused someone of your own race of acting like a person of another race.	14	9.2
21a. Someone would not leave you alone when you asked them to.	96	62.3
21b. You would not leave someone alone when they asked you to.	34	21.9
22a. Someone threatened you by saying things like "I'll get you!" or "You are going to get it!"	39	25.2
22b. You threatened someone by saying things like "I'll get you!" or "You are going to get it!"	17	11.0
23a. Someone threatened to hurt you or beat you up.	39	24.8
23b. You threatened to hurt someone or beat them up.	18	11.8
24a. Someone played "keep away" with your things.	54	34.8
24b. You played "keep away" with someone's things.	31	20.4
25a. Someone purposely tore, broke, or ruined something of yours.	53	34.0
25b. You purposely tore, broke, or ruined something of someone's.	13	8.5
26a. Someone made you give him or her something that is yours.	27	17.2
26b. You made someone give you something that is theirs.	7	4.5

Table 3.

*Number of Affirmative Responses (n) per Survey Item in 2005 (continued)*

Item	Affirmative	
	Number of Responses (n)	Frequency (%)
27a. Someone locked you up or trapped you somewhere.	18	11.5
27b. You locked someone up or trapped them somewhere.	10	6.5
28a. Someone pushed or tripped you.	78	49.1
28b. You pushed or tripped someone.	40	25.6
29a. Someone scratched you or pulled your hair.	49	31.6
29b. You scratched someone or pulled their hair.	17	11.0
30a. Someone slapped, pinched, punched or kicked you.	78	49.1
30b. You slapped, pinched, punched, or kicked someone.	39	25.0
31a. Someone threw you down or held you down.	29	18.7
31b. You threw someone down or held them down.	15	9.6
32a. Someone threw something hard or sharp at you.	33	21.0
32b. You threw something hard or sharp at someone.	15	9.6
33a. Someone choked you.	15	9.6
33b. You choked someone.	6	3.9
34a. Someone threatened you with a gun, knife, or other object.	10	6.3
34b. You threatened someone with a gun, knife, or other object.	2	1.3
35a. Someone hurt you with a gun, knife, or other object.	5	3.2
35b. You hurt someone with a gun, knife, or other object.	1	0.6

*Hypothesis 1*

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be an overall decrease in student TABS total scores from 2003 to 2005 responses combined across all grades. This is expected to allow the researcher to identify any potential overall effects of intervention. Independent samples t-tests were used to compare sum TABS scores across grades. Regarding reports of having committed acts of teasing and bullying, results indicate a non-significant decrease between 2003 ( $M = 119.11$ ) and 2005 ( $M = 117.50$ ) measures,  $t(203) = 1.075$ ,  $p = .284$ . However, findings regarding reports of being teased and bullied indicate a non-significant increase between 2003 ( $M = 87.57$ ) and 2005 ( $M = 98.33$ ) measures,  $t(43) = -1.39$ ,  $p = .172$ . Overall, findings suggest that students reported being teased and bullied more often, but indicated that they were teasing and bullying others less often as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4.

*Comparison of Student Sum TABS Total Scores in 2003 and 2005*

Reported Behaviors	Mean Score per Phase		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	2003	2005			
Committing Teasing and Bullying	119.11	117.50	203	1.075	.284
Experiencing Teasing and Bullying	87.57	98.33	43	1.388	.172

\*  $p < .05$ *Hypothesis 2*

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be a significant decrease in student TABS total scores for each cohort from 2003 to 2005. Analyses will allow the researcher to compare responses taken prior to and after 2-years into intervention (i.e., fourth grade to sixth grade; fifth grade to seventh grade; sixth grade to eighth grade). Independent



samples t-tests were used to compare student TABS total scores for each cohort from 2003 to 2005. Responses for fourth, fifth and sixth graders from 2003 data and responses from sixth, seventh and eighth graders from 2005 were coded into cohorts (fourth grade to sixth grade; fifth grade to seventh grade; sixth grade to eighth grade) and then compared.

Results indicate how frequent a student experienced some type of teasing and bullying. A comparison of TABS total scores for fourth grade students in 2003 ( $M = 121.26$ ) and sixth grade students in 2005 ( $M = 115.04$ ) indicate a non-significant decrease in teasing and bullying experienced by the reporter,  $t(42) = -1.34, p = .209$ . Similarly, a comparison of TABS total scores for fifth grade students in 2003 ( $M = 120.35$ ) to seventh grade students in 2005 ( $M = 119.23$ ) also indicate a non-significant decrease in teasing and bullying experienced by the reporter,  $t(37) = .299, p = .767$ . A comparison of TABS total scores for sixth grade students in 2003 ( $M = 118.25$ ) to eighth grade students in 2005 ( $M = 117.31$ ) also indicate a non-significant decrease teasing and bullying experienced by the reporter,  $t(44) = .315, p = .754$ . Though not significant, results suggest that students across the three cohorts experienced fewer teasing and bullying incidents as reported in 2005 compared to initial 2003 measures. As indicated above, the largest decrease of teasing and bullying behavior was observed in the fourth to sixth grade cohort. See Table 5 for an outline of results.

Table 5.

*Comparison of Student TABS Total Scores per Cohort in 2003 and 2005*

Cohort	Mean Score per Phase				
	<u>2003</u>	<u>2005</u>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Fourth Grader vs. Sixth Grade	121.26	115.04	42	-1.34	.209
Fifth Grade vs. Seventh Grade	120.35	119.23	37	.299	.767
Sixth Grade vs. Eighth Grade	118.25	117.31	44	.315	.754

\*  $p < .05$

Further analyses were used to address the frequency of teasing and bullying committed by the reporter. As expected, students appear to underreport committing acts of teasing and bullying towards other students across all grades. A comparison of TABS total scores for fourth grade students in 2003 ( $n = 2$ ,  $M = 74.00$ ) to sixth grade students in 2005 ( $n = 10$ ,  $M = 108.60$ ) indicate an overall increase of teasing and bullying. However, given the small sample size of the fourth grade group a statistical analysis was not conducted. Additionally, a comparison of TABS total scores for fifth grade students in 2003 ( $n = 4$ ,  $M = 82.75$ ) and seventh grade students in 2005 ( $n = 11$ ,  $M = 86.64$ ) indicate a non-significant increase of teasing and bullying ( $t(13) = -.514$ ,  $p = .066$ ). Moreover, a comparison of TABS total scores for sixth grade students ( $n = 5$ ,  $M = 89.40$ ) to eighth grade students ( $n = 1$ ,  $M = 155.00$ ) also indicate an overall increase of teasing and bullying. However, given the small sample size of both classes a statistical analysis was not conducted. Overall, these findings suggest that students were more likely to report teasing and bullying after implementation of the intervention. However, results should be interpreted with caution given that there were significantly fewer students in the

comparison samples compared to the overall sample size. See Table 6 for an outline of results.

Table 6.

*Comparison of Student TABS Total Scores per Cohort in 2003 and 2005*

Cohort	Mean Score per Phase		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	2003	2005			
Fourth Grader vs. Sixth Grade	74.00	108.60	-	-	-
Fifth Grade vs. Seventh Grade	82.75	86.64	13	-.514	.066
Sixth Grade vs. Eighth Grade	89.40	155.00	-	-	-

\*  $p < .05$

### *Hypothesis 3*

Hypothesis 3 stated that there will be a significant decrease in student TABS total scores for grade specific response from 2003 to 2005. Grade specific effects were examined by comparing 2003 grades with the equivalent 2005 grades (i.e., 2003 fourth graders vs. 2005 fourth graders, 2003 fifth graders vs. 2005 fifth graders, 2003 seventh graders vs. 2005 seventh graders, 2003 eighth graders vs. 2005 eighth graders). To further assess the potential impact the intervention had on decreasing teasing and bullying based on exposure, we examined grade specific effects by comparing 2003 and 2005 grade equivalents. A comparison of TABS total scores for fourth graders indicate that fewer reports of being teased and/or bullied were reported in 2005 ( $M = 117.71$ ) when compared to student reports made in 2003 ( $M = 121.26$ ). However, these results are not significant,  $t(38) = 1.06$ ,  $p = .298$ . Similar results were found when comparing fifth graders in 2003 ( $M = 120.35$ ) to fifth graders in 2005 ( $M = 118.88$ ),  $t(32) = .44$ ,  $p = .661$ ; sixth graders in 2003 ( $M = 118.25$ ) to sixth graders in 2005 ( $M = 115.04$ ),  $t(43) = .96$ ,  $p$



= .330; and eighth graders in 2003 ( $M = 119.26$ ) to eighth graders in 2005 ( $M = 117.31$ ),  $t(43) = .68$ ,  $p = .515$ . Overall, these results indicate that reports of teasing and bullying decreased over the 2-year time period in which the intervention was implemented. In contrast, a comparison of seventh graders in 2003 ( $M = 116.58$ ) to seventh graders in 2005 ( $M = 119.23$ ) indicate an overall increase,  $t(39) = -.67$ ,  $p = .505$ . See Table 7 for an overview of results.

Table 7.

*Comparison of Student TABS Total Scores per Grade in 2003 and 2005*

Cohort	Mean Score per Phase		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	2003	2005			
Fourth Grader	117.71	121.26	38	1.06	.298
Fifth Grade	120.35	118.88	32	.44	.661
Sixth Grade	118.25	115.04	43	.96	.330
Seventh Grade	116.58	119.23	39	-.67	.505
Eighth Grade	119.26	117.31	43	.68	.515

\*  $p < .05$

Comparisons were also computed to identify if the frequency of committing teasing and bullying had decreased as a result of exposure to the intervention. Again, as expected, only a minimal number of students reported committing acts of teasing and bullying toward other students. A comparison of TABS total scores for fourth graders indicate that fewer reports were made in 2005 ( $n = 1$ ,  $M = 79.00$ ) when compared to student reports made in 2003 ( $n = 2$ ,  $M = 79.00$ ). Similar results were found when comparing fifth graders in 2003 ( $n = 4$ ,  $M = 82.75$ ) to fifth graders in 2005 ( $n = 1$ ,  $M =$

87.00) as well as sixth graders in 2003 ( $n = 5$ ,  $M = 89.40$ ) to sixth graders in 2005 ( $n = 10$ ,  $M = 108.60$ ). Additionally, results indicate similar findings when comparing seventh graders in 2003 ( $n = 6$ ,  $M = 102.50$ ) to seventh graders in 2005 ( $n = 11$ ,  $M = 86.64$ ). In contrast, there appeared to be an overall increase when eighth graders in 2003 ( $n = 4$ ,  $M = 74.50$ ) were compared to eighth graders in 2005. These findings indicate that there appears to be an overall increase of teasing and bullying. However, across all comparisons there were too few responses to conduct any meaningful analyses. Results are reported in Table 8.

Table 8.

*Comparison of Student TABS Total Scores per Grade in 2003 and 2005*

Cohort	Mean Score per Phase		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	2003	2005			
Fourth Grader	79.00	79.00	1	-.481	.715
Fifth Grade	82.75	87.00	3	-.68	.543
Sixth Grade	89.40	108.60	13	-1.16	.268
Seventh Grade	102.50	86.64	15	1.37	.192
Eighth Grade	74.50	155.00	3	8.39	.004

\*  $p < .05$

Additional analyses were used to identify the most and least frequent responses indicated by students. The data in Table 9 indicates the five most frequently reported items across all grades in 2005. The "Total Sample of Responses" (N) represents the total number of students across grades that responded to the item. The "Number of Response" (n) column indicates the number of students out of the total sample (N) students across

grades that endorsed an item. The "Frequency" column indicates the total percentage of responses per item. Results indicate that students most frequently reported being bothered and/or annoyed, followed by another student not leaving them alone. Similarly, approximately 59% of students reported that someone was rude and/or disrespectful to them and made fun of them or something they cared about. Lastly, about half of the students indicated that someone laughed, teased, and/or made fun of them. Overall findings suggest that the most frequent endorsed items were direct forms of bullying and teasing.

Table 9.

*Five Most Frequently Reported Items by Students Across Grades in 2005*

Item	<u>Total Sample</u> <u>of Responses</u> <u>(N)</u>	<u>Number</u>	
		<u>of</u> <u>Responses</u> <u>(n)</u>	<u>Frequency</u> <u>(%)</u>
Someone bothered or annoyed you.	157	134	85.4
Someone would not leave you alone when you asked them to.	154	96	62.3
Someone was rude to you or disrespected you.	157	94	59.1
Someone made fun of a person or something you cared about.	158	94	59.5
Someone laughed at, teased, or made fun of you.	157	80	51.0



The data in Table 10 indicates the five least endorsed survey items. The “Total Sample of Responses” (N) represents the total number of students across grades that responded to the item. The “Number of Response” (n) column indicates the number of students out of the total sample (N) students across grades that endorsed an item. The “Frequency” column indicates the total percentage of responses per item. Results indicate that less than 1% of students reported hurting another student with a gun, knife, and/or other object. However, a little more than 1% reported being threatened by another student with a gun, knife, and/or other object; whereas over 3% reported that another student hurt them with a gun, knife, and/or other object. Following, 3.9% reported choking another student. The most frequent responses indicated that a student made someone give up something of his/hers and/or was mean to him/her via email or internet. Overall findings also suggest that the least frequent endorsed items were direct forms of bullying and teasing.

Table 10.

*Five Least Frequently Reported Items by Students Across Grades in 2005*

Item	<u>Total Sample of Responses</u> (N)	<u>Number of Responses</u> (n)	<u>Frequency (%)</u>
You threatened someone with a gun, knife, or other object.	156	2	1.3
Someone hurt you with a gun, knife, or other object.	156	5	3.2
You choked someone.	154	6	3.9

Table 10.

*Five Least Frequently Reported Items by Students Across Grades in 2005 (continued)*

Item	Total Sample of Responses (N)	Number of Responses (n)	Frequency (%)
You made someone give you something that is theirs.	154	7	4.5
Someone from your school used email or the internet to be mean to you.	155	8	5.2

*Parent Reports*

Similar to student responses, independent samples t-tests were used to compare parent sum TABS scores across grades. Reports indicating that another child teased and bullied a parent's child indicate a non-significant increase between 2003 ( $M = 129.93$ ) and 2005 ( $M = 131.44$ ) measures,  $t(75) = -.896, p = .373$ . However, findings regarding reports of a child teasing and bullying another child indicate a non-significant decrease between 2003 ( $M = 75.28$ ) and 2005 ( $M = 74.67$ ) measures,  $t(31) = .139, p = .890$ .

Overall, findings suggest that parents observed that their child was bullied more often when comparing data from 2003 and 2005, whereas their children teased and bullied other children less often. See Table 11 for a list of results.

Table 11.

*Comparison of Parent Sum TABS Total Scores in 2003 and 2005*

Reported Behaviors	Mean Score per Phase		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	2003	2005			
Committing Teasing and Bullying	75.28	74.67	31	.139	.890
Experiencing Teasing and Bullying	129.93	131.44	75	-.896	.373

\*  $p < .05$ 

Secondary analyses were used to evaluate parent reports taken in 2005 after 2-years of intervention implementation. The data in Table 12 indicates the five most frequently reported items across all grades in 2005. The "Total Sample of Responses" (N) represents the total number of parents across grades that responded to the item. The "Number of Response" (n) column indicates the number of parents out of the total sample (N) parents across grades that endorsed an item. The "Frequency" column indicates the total percentage of responses per item. Similar to student reports, parents reported that the most frequent type of teasing and bullying observed was another child bothering and/or annoying their child. Following, parents reported that their child was bossed around and/or another child tried to keep the parents' child from being friends with another student. Lastly, a little more than one-third of parents reported that another student ignored and/or was rude or disrespectful to their child. Overall, findings suggest that parent' observations of teasing and bullying resembled student reports.



Table 12.

*Five Most Frequently Reported Items By Parents Across Grades in 2005*

Item	Total		Frequency (%)
	Sample of Responses (N)	Number of Responses (n)	
Another child bothered or annoyed your child.	47	24	51.1
Another child bossed your child around.	46	20	43.5
Another child tried to stop your child from being another child's friend.	46	19	41.3
Another child ignored or would not answer your child.	47	17	36.2
Another child was rude or disrespectful to your child.	47	16	33.3

Additional frequencies indicate that several items were not endorsed at all by parents. These items included acts of teasing and bullying related to throwing and holding a child down or being thrown and held down by another child, threatening another child or being threatened with a knife, gun, or other object, and hurting another child with a gun, knife, or other object. Surprisingly, parents also report that they have never observed their child pushing and/or tripping as well as throwing something hard or sharp at another child. Findings indicate that parent reports are similar, yet less frequent, compared to student reports. The most common items involve the act of threatening and/or using an object to tease and bullying.

### Teacher Reports

Items on the teacher surveys were similar to student and parent survey items; however, items focus on identifying types of teasing and bullying behaviors that teachers have observed. Independent samples t-tests were used to compare teacher sum TABS scores across grades. Results indicate that a non-significant decrease between 2003 ( $M = 111.00$ ) and 2005 ( $M = 107.80$ ) measures,  $t(6) = .686$ ,  $p = .518$ . However, results should be interpreted with caution given that the sample size of teachers was significantly smaller compared to student and parent reports. See Table 13 for a list of results.

Table 13.

#### *Comparison of Teacher Sum TABS Total Scores in 2003 and 2005*

Observed Behaviors	Mean Score per Phase				
	2003	2005	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Observed Teasing and Bullying	111.00	107.80	6	.686	.518

\*  $p < .05$

The data in Table 14 indicates the five most frequently reported items across all grades at in 2005. The “Total Sample of Responses” (N) represents the total number of teachers across grades that responded to the item. The “Number of Response” (n) column indicates the number of teachers out of the total sample (N) of teachers across grades that endorsed an item. The “Frequency” column indicates the total percentage of responses per item.

Similar to student and parent reports, the most frequently forms of teasing and bullying observed included bothering, annoying, being rude/disrespectful, and bossing around other students. Following, approximately three-fourths of teacher reported that they observed students general forms of teasing (i.e., laughing at or making fun of

another student), refusing to play and/or talk with another student, and attempting to stop two or more students from being friends. Overall, findings further suggest that there appears to be minimal occurrences of teasing and bullying involving an object resulting in extreme threat and/or harm. See Table 14 for frequency of selected survey items.

Table 14.

*Five Most Frequently Reported Items By Teachers Across Grades in 2005*

Item	<u>Total</u> <u>Sample of</u> <u>Responses</u> <u>(N)</u>	<u>Number</u> <u>of</u> <u>Responses</u> <u>(n)</u>	<u>Frequency</u> <u>(%)</u>
A child ignored another child.	14	12	85.7
A child bossed another child around.	14	12	85.7
A child bothered or annoyed another child.	14	12	85.7
A child was rude or disrespectful to another child.	14	12	85.7
A child laughed at, teased, or made fun of another child.	14	11	78.6
A child would not play or talk with another child.	14	11	78.6
A child tried to stop another child from being another child's friend	14	11	78.6

Additional frequencies indicate that five items were not endorsed at all by teachers. These items included locking up, trapping, and choking another child. Two



additional items include threatening or hurting a child with a gun, knife, or other object.

Overall, the frequency of endorsed items is similar to those of student and teacher reports.

### Discussion

Overall, the most frequently endorsed items by students were being followed, bothered and/or annoyed by another student. Additionally, students reported that someone was rude or disrespectful to them or made fun of them or something they cared about. Lastly, about half of the students reported that someone laughed, teased, and/or made fun of them. Based on these results, it appears that students were more likely to report direct forms of bullying compared to indirect forms.

Less than 1% of students reported being threatened or actually hurting another student with a gun, knife, and/or other object. However, a little more than 1% reported being threatened by another student with a gun, knife, and/or other object; whereas over 3% reported that another student hurt them with a gun, knife, and/or other object. Unlike parent and teacher reports, almost 4% reported choking another student. Given the severity of these acts, it is important to note that findings from the program evaluation conducted in 2005 did not report similar findings. It may be concluded that such reports are the result of exaggerated claims made by students. However, additional responses, such as forcing a student to give something up and using email or Internet to be mean, were also frequent responses provided by students.

As expected, more students reported being teased and bullied compared to committing acts of teasing and bullying, whereas fewer students reported committing acts of teasing and bullying. Based upon the definitions of a bully and victim, it may be suggested that these findings support the idea that bullies may not classify their behavior

as teasing and bullying, thus resulting in an underestimation of teasing and bullying occurrences (Boulton et al., 2002). Moreover, victims who are often described as individuals that experience peer rejection, would be more likely to over report occurrences of teasing and bullying (Beale, 2001). However, comparison of cohorts (fourth, fifth, sixth grades in 2003 and sixth, seventh, eighth grades in 2005) indicated that there was an overall decrease of victimization reports. One reason for these findings may be that the implementation of the intervention programs increased awareness of teasing and bullying. In addition, there is the possibility that the programs helped students to improve their conflict resolution and problems-solving skills. However, because results were not significant, further research addressing such areas may be needed. Moreover, as expected, students appear to underreport committing acts of teasing and bullying towards other students across all grades. Cohort comparisons indicated non-significant increases of teasing and bullying.

To further assess the potential impact the intervention had on decreasing teasing and bullying based on exposure, we examined grade specific effects by comparing data in 2003 to data in 2005. Overall, findings indicated that fewer students reported being teased and bullied at in 2005 when compared to 2003. However, there was one exception in which seventh graders in 2005 reported more teasing and bullying compared to seventh graders in 2003 that had little to no exposure to the intervention program. Despite this unexpected finding, overall results would suggest that teasing and bullying may have decreased as a result of exposure to grade-based intervention. Though eighth graders reported that they committed more teasing and bullying acts compared to data collected in 2003, only a few number of students appeared to endorse students' reports of

committing acts of teasing and bullying across all other grades. However, results were not significant and further research addressing such areas may be needed.

In comparison, parents and teachers reported there was an overall nonsignificant reduction in teasing and bullying in 2005 compared to 2003. As expected, parents reported that their child was bullied more often comparing data from 2003 and 2005, whereas their children teased and bullied other children less often. Similar to student responses, parents and teachers indicated that the most frequent forms of teasing and bullying were being bothered and/or annoyed, bossed around, or restricting students from being friends. Both groups reported rude or disrespectful behavior. As expected, teachers reported more general forms of teasing and bullying, such as refusing to talk or play with another student and laughing at or making fun of another student. Additional findings suggest that there appears to be minimal occurrences of aggressive behavior, such as threatening or harming another student with physical force and/or an object (e.g., gun, knife, sharp object).

Based on the results of this study, there is the question of age effects. Beale (2001) suggests that a bully's popularity appears to decrease with age. Consequently, it may be expected that younger students would be less likely to report acts of teasing and bullying when compared to older students. However, an overview of the results from this study would suggest that the frequency of reported teasing and bullying behavior appears to remain consistent despite developmental changes. Additional research has suggested that bystanders are in fact victims themselves because they experience the bullying indirectly (Merrel, 2004). Based on this, it may be suggested that student who received an intervention program that specifically aims to increase bystander awareness and action



(i.e., SUPERB), would be expected to more accurately report acts of teasing and bullying. However, findings suggest that students who received SUPERB as part of the school-wide intervention did not significantly increase the number of reports in which he or she was teased and bullied. Though results decreased, the difference was not significant.

Recalling results from a program evaluation conducted in 2005, overall teachers reported a great confidence in the program and found it to be flexible and easy to implement (Starratt et al., 2005). Based on findings from this study which indicated that parents reported fewer instances of teasing and bullying, it may be suggested that teacher awareness of teasing and bullying increased as a result of implementation. In addition, results indicate that teachers observed fewer incidents of teasing and bullying. However, because results were not significant and there was a small sample size of teachers, this assumption is not empirically supported. Future research is needed to examine the effects of intervention in regards to teacher awareness of teasing and bullying.

#### Limitations

As indicated by the results derived from a program evaluation of the program (A Program Evaluation, 2005), the implementation of the Social Justice Program may have lacked treatment fidelity. For example, the SUPERB program was implemented during the physical education period. Students rotated across weeks, and consequently did not receive continuous intervention, whereas a weekly intervention may have produced more favorable results. Also, there were no outlined monitoring procedures that would ensure students had an equal opportunity to participation in the intervention sessions. Consequently, the duration of exposure may have varied among individual students, and inadvertently impacted the overall level of effectiveness. Also, the STAMP program peer

mediators are recruited based on teacher recommendations. As indicated previously, teachers may not have the most accurate perceptions of student behavior. In addition, there were no set guidelines on monitoring peer mediator performance. Consequently, there is no way of identifying the effectiveness of the peer mediator involvement in the program. Moreover, there was little consistency among the individual programs, in that they were modeled from different curriculum programs and intervention strategies. The lack of intervention consistency across grades may have also contributed to the lack of intervention effectiveness.

Given that the intervention took place in a small parochial school, results may not generalize to the overall public school population. There was no research found that addressed the differences between private and public schools, specifically regarding school culture. Consequently, it may be suggested that a different school climate may have yielded more favorable results. Based on demographic data, approximately two-thirds of the students reported Caucasian as their ethnicity. Consequently, results should be interpreted with caution and future research may be warranted to address similar issues in the future.

In this study, the survey used did not include any items in which students would be able to classify him or herself as a bully, victim, or bystander. Because the surveys were anonymous, there was no way to compare individual student differences and only group comparisons were examined. Consequently, results should be interpreted with caution and future research is needed to address such limitations.

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