

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

BULLYING AND THE
DEAF/HARD OF HEARING STUDENT

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts in Special Education,
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

By

Arby Jean Alba Tacub

May 2013

The graduate project of Arby Jean Alba Tacub is approved:

Tamarah Ashton, Ph.D.

Date

Michele Haney, Ph.D.

Date

Rachel Friedman Narr, Ph.D., Chair

Date

Table of Contents

Signature Page	ii
Abstract	iv
Literature Review	1
Methods	8
Participants	9
Procedures	10
Results	14
Discussion	23
References	25
Appendix A	27

ABSTRACT

BULLYING AND THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENT

By

Arby Jean Alba Tacub

Master of Arts in Special Education

Bullying is becoming a prevalent issue in today's schools and communities. There have been studies conducted to gain insight to possibly reduce the amount of bullying occurring in our schools. Though there have been studies conducted for specific populations within Special Education; one group of students who have been overlooked are the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students in mainstream school settings. Hearing students who grew up in a different culture might not understand the struggles and experiences of their DHH counterparts. This project outlined a unit of study that was implemented in American Sign Languages classes to reduce miscommunication and misunderstandings between DHH students and hearing students. There were 100 participants who were taking American Sign Language Level 1 as their language requirement to graduate high school. It focused on exposure to Deaf culture, the Deaf community, and the Deaf experience in hopes of fostering camaraderie and friendships between DHH students and hearing students.

Literature Review

Bullying is a prevalent issue for educators and students in today's school-aged population. Many students have fallen victim to bullying at school from their peers simply because they are "different." The focus of this research is Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students who are often bullied because they are different and not considered by their peers to be the "norm." Bullying has become a serious topic because it can lead to doing poorly in school, negative effects on social and family life, and has resulted in more serious effects, such as self-mutilation and suicide.

Perhaps surprisingly, there has been almost no research about the experience of deaf and hard of hearing students related to bullying. There has been a great amount of research about bullying and the average student (Bowllan, 2011; Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2012; Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007), teacher practices that respond to bullying at school (Allen, 2010; Dake, Price, Telljohann, Funk, 2003; Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, Sink, & Birchmeier, 2009), and bullying and students with other disabilities (Carter, 2009; Flynt, & Morton, 2004; Frederickson, 2010; Heinrichs, 2003; Mishna, 2003; Raskauskas, & Modell, 2011).

Many students are experiencing bullying in their schools, and many schools are now implementing bullying prevention programs to ensure that their students feel safe when they come to school. Bowllan (2011) designed a study to implement and evaluate a school-wide bullying prevention program in an urban/suburban middle school. The goal was to see the impact of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). One hundred and twelve students received instruction in the OBPP. One hundred and fifty-eight students were considered the comparison group, because they did not receive instruction

in the OBPP. The students were compared to see how effective the OBPP was with these students. The findings suggest that there were many positive outcomes for the students and for the teachers who participated in the program. The positive outcomes included, significant improvements in the students' and teacher's capacity to identify bullying, and teacher gain in both confidence to talk to students who bully and handle the situations more professionally, confidence to talk to students who have been bullied and help to recover from the situation.

Bullying often occurs when there are bystanders present, according to Polanin, Espelage and Pigott (2012). Although a lot of discussions about bullying focus on the victim or the bully, the bystander also plays an important role in the bullying cycle. Many students are bystanders, and they are unaware that they are taking part in bullying a student by letting it happen. Polanin et al. (2012) looked into the role of the bystander and why it is important to educate students on the role of the bystander. Understanding the role of the bystander allows students to become more aware of their actions, be they passive or aggressive.

Quality of life is an important aspect in any discussion about bullying. Some students feel depressed or have contemplated suicide because the ridicule is too much to handle. Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, Sink, and Birchmeier (2009), found that peer and teacher support could impact the quality of life for those victimized by bullying. Students who often feel ostracized feel they cannot turn to anyone else, but it is important to show them that there are other peers who are there to support and who care. When students feel they can trust their peers who can help them through tough times, sense a

valuable source of social support. Peers and teachers can contribute to students' academic and social success (Flaspohler et al., 2009).

An important element of this research is to have background information about students with other disabilities and their experiences with bullying. Carter (2009), studied students with Asperger Syndrome and their experiences with bullying. Students who have Asperger Syndrome often have problems with social skills. They are often unable to interpret social cues. This inability to interpret social cues is often coupled with social deficits. This leads to teasing, isolation and exclusion by peers. The purpose of this study was to see how often these students were bullied and victimized within a year. The study included 34 parents who had children between the ages of 5 to 21 years old. The Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ), and another researcher-made instrument with three questions about shunning were used to investigate the research questions. The results showed how often the students were being bullied and what kind of bullying was being endured. The study revealed that many instances of bullying occurred within the year the surveys were taken.

The parents of these students with Asperger Syndrome reported that their children were being hit, scared by peers, and one had been attacked and hurt in their private areas by peers. Some of the students were not invited to a birthday party, always picked last for teams, or ate alone at lunch at school every day. Parents even reported that their children had experienced depression and had suicidal thoughts because the bullying was too much to handle.

Although the characteristics of being DHH or having Asperger Syndrome are quite dissimilar, both kinds of students are considered “special needs.” This designation may make them more vulnerable to bullies because of a perceived “handicap.”

Mishna (2003) identified that students with learning disabilities are at an increased risk of victimization. She reviewed studies of students with disabilities and concluded that although most of the students with special needs were often victimized, those who have special needs can also be the bully. Difficulties with social interactions and problems in academics, could lead to impulsive behaviors, frustration, and defiance. Though there has not been specific research correlating bullying and learning disabilities, the author has used other research with the Special Needs population to support her research about bullying and learning disabilities.

Flynt and Morton (2004), also suggested that students with disabilities are more likely to be bullied than their non-disabled counterparts. Students who have special needs are often looked down on and considered weaker than the general school population. For example, students who are cognitively delayed are targeted because they tend to have low self-esteem and often depend on others. The authors also discuss that the most effective way to stop bullying is to establish a school intervention program or policy.

Heinricks (2003) and Raskauskas and Modell (2011), addressed the needs of all children in starting an anti-bullying prevention program. Heinricks (2003), identified components for the success of an anti-bullying program including, increasing awareness and understanding for all members of the school community, gathering information from students and teachers about experiences with bullies, implementing class rules that prohibit bullying, involving the teacher in discussions with students, increasing

supervision in areas of the school that bullying often occurs, implementing appropriate consequences for bullies, training for victims and bullies on social skills, and incorporating parent participation in groups and training. It is important that every anti-bullying program include training on respecting others, accepting everyone's differences, and understanding the meaning of empathy (Raskauskas and Modell, 2011).

Dispelling myths and defining bullying are two ways to bring awareness to students about bullying (Heinricks, 2003; Raskauskas and Modell, 2011). Providing students with information about what to look for in a bully, a victim, or even a bystander is also important for awareness. Finally, Heinrichs (2003) and Raskauskas & Modell (2011) provided strategies for establishing class rules, how to educate targets and bullies in social skills, and how to involve the parents of both targets and the bullies.

Students who have Special Needs are often ostracized from their peers at school, but sometimes the fact that they have a label can help them and help other students understand them better. Frederickson (2010) argued that labels can sometimes be beneficial to the student. If non-disabled students were aware of their classmates and their disabilities, it may foster more awareness and acceptance. Students who are victimized can be helped by effective peer education. General education students who are educated from the start about disabilities are more willing to interact with their counterparts with special needs and may become more open-minded to learning about other disabilities.

Teacher practices. It is important that the teacher prepares the class in the appropriate way, so bullying does not occur among the students. Allen (2010) found a correlation between bullying and lower-quality classroom instruction, disorganization, and student social structures. The better the classroom management the teacher had, the

better grasp the teacher had with handling behavior and bullying. Allen's (2010) discussion was unique. Allen discussed not only peer bullying but also student-to-teacher bullying and teacher-to-student bullying. There is not a lot of literature that discusses these issues, but it does exist in our schools. According to Allen (2010) about half of teachers get bullied by students at least once, about 35% get bullied sometimes or more, and 10% get bullied by students several times a week. In response, the teacher who feels attacked and bullied may bully the student back and the cycle does not end. Clearly, a teacher can have a powerful effect on the prevention of bullying and the ongoing struggle to bring awareness to victims of bullying, or the perpetuation of it.

Dake, Price, Telljohann and Funk (2003), conducted a study with a random sample of teachers about bullying and school prevention activities. There were a total of 359 out of 700 teachers who responded to the survey. Most of the teachers responded that they had serious talks with those involved in bullying. They did not just talk to the bullies, but also to the victim. Some teachers would set aside classroom time to talk about bullying or some teachers would even create classroom rules about bullying. Dake, et al. (2003), found that teachers were unaware of effective techniques of how to prevent bullying at school or in their classroom. The findings suggested that there should be time allotted for professional development regarding bullying. Professional and continuing education are needed to improve teacher knowledge of effective classroom-based bullying prevention activities.

Even though bullying has been in our schools, the research about bullying is somewhat new. It has only been recently considered to be an important issue because it IS affecting our youth, in particular those with special needs. In order to better serve our

Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, it is imperative that bullying prevention programs are implemented for the betterment of the student in school. The research that came before is important to analyze. Because of previous research, we are able to better understand the struggles of students with disabilities. We can understand why they are being victimized and we can examine what we can do to alleviate the bullying. Aside from being able to understand the victim, past research gives us a better insight on what it is to be the bully. By understanding the bully, we can dissect the meaning of the bullying and hopefully prevent it from happening again. In addition, it is important to understand what bullying is in general and how we can implement an effective bullying prevention program in our schools to serve all of the students and make sure they feel safe.

The purpose of this action research project was to design and implement an anti-bullying campaign for hearing students and DHH students integrated into a large mainstream high school. Research and guidelines for developing an anti-bullying/bully prevention unit were considered in implementation of this campaign.

Methods

Action Research

The researcher was a classroom teacher who had DHH students in class, along with students who are hearing, and had personally witnessed instances of bullying in and out of the classroom. Informal observations of bullying between DHH students and hearing students influenced the teacher-researcher's idea of bringing awareness of bullying to the classroom. The goal was to increase awareness in the classroom, and subsequently influence a school-wide anti-bullying campaign. Three specific examples of bullying within the classroom were observed. First, students made comments about DHH students under their breath. Second, derogatory comments were made and then justified based on biased information. For example, students would witness DHH students struggling with a certain assignment or project, and make comments, such as: "God! They're so slow," or "He's not going to understand anyway." When scolded for saying such statements, students made statements such as, "Well, he's Deaf anyway, so what's the difference if I say it or not 'cause he's not going to hear me." Third, there were instances of miscommunication and frustration where students did not want to work with their classmates. When students needed to find partners for an assignment, the DHH students wanted to work with other classmates, but students avoided working with them because they did not want to "do more work and carry the other partner."

Context of the class. For the anti-bullying message to be spread school-wide, the awareness started in the classroom where most of the bullying occurred, a class where students were interested in American Sign Language (ASL) and the Deaf community to learn about Deaf people and Audism. Most of the students who started at ASL Level 1,

had never heard of the word: *Audism*. Audism is oppression or discrimination of someone based on his or her hearing loss (Zak, 1996). Students were given the opportunity to experience what it is to struggle being Deaf, and to reflect about the bullying that occurred in their school. This unit of study was designed and implemented to provide ASL Level 1 students with an opportunity to learn about Deaf culture and address inappropriate behaviors that happened in the classroom.

Participants

The researcher was a classroom teacher at a school in Los Angeles. The school had hearing students and DHH students together in a large classroom setting. Hearing students took ASL as part of their World Language requirement to graduate from high school, and DHH students took it for language development. Three Level 1 classes (n=100) participated in the unit of study. Seven out of 100 student-participants were Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Six out of the seven students had been classmates since elementary school. One student was recently identified as hard of hearing and was transferred to the DHH program his junior year of high school. Out of the 100 participants, 45 were males, and 55 were females. Eighteen were in the 9th grade (freshman), 57 were in the 10th grade (sophomore), 24 were in the 11th grade (junior), and one was in the 12th grade (senior). All the students were involved in different activities or clubs in school. About 50% were involved in a school sport, such as football, volleyball, track and field, and/or basketball. Twenty-eight students were involved in show choir or an instrumental music.

Procedures

The unit of study was designed in three parts: 1) Exposure to the Deaf Experience, 2) What is Bullying?, and 3) Promoting Anti-bullying,. The unit of study was designed to provide participants exposure to Deaf culture and encouragement to participate in the Deaf community. The unit was originally planned as a five-day lesson plan. The unit was designed with hands-on experiences to engage students, encourage social learning, and include students with different needs (Cleaver, 2013).

Exposure to the Deaf experience

For the first part of the unit, students participated in projects that exposed them to everyday situations that Deaf people go through to help them understand struggles/obstacles that Deaf people experience on a daily basis. Three projects were created to expose students to the Deaf experience.

The caption project. In the Caption Project, students watched a movie or a TV show with the Closed Captions on and without sound. This showed them the obstacles DHH students often face doing a common activity. The students applied this to the experiences at home or even at school. For example, at home, it can be hard for DHH students to enjoy something as simple as watching their favorite TV show after school because many are not Closed Captioned. Also, it can be a struggle if DHH students do not have strong English or reading skills. Participants wrote a reflective essay about their experiences with the Caption Project. In their paper, they addressed the following questions: Was the experience positive or negative? Why?

Cross-cultural communication strategies. The second part of the Exposure to the Deaf experience was a class discussion about Cross-Cultural Communication methods.

As students learned about Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the community, they were also exposed to different ways DHH people communicate, in addition to the use of ASL. Many who grew up with oral backgrounds often do not use ASL. There are also Deaf people who use other signed forms of communication. The students learned that ASL is not universal. They learned to be flexible and use different strategies to communicate with Deaf people they encounter. Students discussed communication methods, such as using pen and paper, using gestures, lip-reading, and using technology. This part prepared students for the second project.

Deaf for an hour. Students went to a store or a food establishment and asked for something while wearing earplugs to simulate being deaf. Students were instructed to go to a restaurant and order a drink or meal, or they could go to a store and ask where something was, or directions to another part of the store. Before the students went out into the community, the DHH students in the classroom shared their experiences on how it is to interact with people who did not know sign language. By being “deaf” out in the community, hearing students were able to see how DHH people interact with people who do not know ASL. They were able to experience first-hand how difficult it is to do everyday errands or leisure activities while communicating with others who do not understand them. They applied their knowledge of different cross-cultural communication strategies when out in the community to determine which method was effective. They wrote a reflective essay on their experience answering the following questions: Was it a positive or negative experience, and why?

What is bullying?

Students participated in Part 2 of the unit after being exposed to the Deaf experience and given time to reflect on their experiences. Part 2 defined bullying and provided examples of bullying. Students were assigned into groups of three or four to discuss the different types of bullying that were apparent in schools. Each group was responsible for defining one type of bullying and providing 10 examples they had witnessed at school or in the community. The four types of bullying discussed included verbal bullying, physical bullying, psychological bullying, and cyber bullying.

After the discussion, students were given a survey about the bullying they had seen at school (Appendix A, Figure 1). Questions included in the survey included: What are different types of bullying? What are some examples of bullying you see at school? Which type of bullying do you think students experience most? Which type of bullying do you think DHH students experience most? What is the school's policy on bullying? What do you think the school can do to help stop bullying? This survey served as a baseline of information and was later compared to the post-unit survey completed after the remaining parts of the project.

Following the survey, students rejoined their groups and discussed responses to the question: What type of bullying do you think DHH students experience most? Students also created a poster about their answer, and gave examples of different situations that they had seen or had heard about.

Promoting Anti-Bullying

The third part of the unit required students to work together as a class to spread awareness to the whole school about DHH and Hearing student bullying. They worked in

pairs or small groups to create an Anti-Bullying poster promoting being friends or interacting with the DHH students at school more often. Posters promoted a positive relationship and fostering new lifelong friendships. The unit concluded with a post survey (Appendix A, Figure 2) identical to the pre-unit survey. The surveys were compared to determine the unit's effectiveness.

Results

One goal of this action research project was to provide a safe environment for students to reflect and share their experiences with bullying. The teacher-researcher was candid about her experience with bullying and this honesty probably made for profound discussion and reflections. During the implementation of the unit, the teacher-researcher collected student data and evidence to assess the effectiveness of the unit. The data collected yielded well thought out reflective responses that supported the need for this kind of action research, and lesson content.

Responses

For each project that was assigned, the participants wrote reflective essays on their experiences. The common question was: “Was your experience positive or negative for you, and why?” Participants answered with both positive and negative comments. The responses ranged from, “I had a positive experience, I can’t wait to try this project (Deaf for an Hour) again,” to “I hated it! I never want to do it again!” The majority of the responses, however, were positive and insightful. For example, one participant shared her experience with the Caption Project that the researcher shared with the other students.

“I thought this was a good project to do for ASL class. At first I thought it was a stupid project, but I actually learned a lot. When [a deaf classmate] told us that he hated watching movies, I didn’t understand! But then I realized that it’s not fun watching movies without sound. I got bored and ended up falling asleep. I realized that I take my hearing for granted and I appreciate my deaf classmates more. They go through a lot.”

This type of response showed that the student gained valuable insight by participating in the project. Examining this participant's response, and her participation in the entire unit, it was clear she benefitted from the unit. She was identified at the onset as one of the students who did not interact with DHH students much. The student's response to the Caption Project showed her insight about the topic and her DHH classmates' experiences. The teacher-researcher emphasized that she wanted students to understand the obstacles DHH students face and experience everyday.

Participants also reflected after the "Deaf for an Hour" project. The students were hesitant to participate in this project because going out into the community was required. Many students felt embarrassed about this project. The students had both positive and negative experiences that helped shape their idea of what DHH students might have to experience everyday. One response that stood out was written by a participant who was known to be a bully and made inappropriate comments in class directed towards the DHH students. His response to the question was:

"I didn't want to do this project. I thought it was stupid, but I did it with [another student]. We went to Taco Bell after practice because we were both hungry. We put our earplugs in our ears and we tried to order our burritos. At first, we tried to sign but the cashier didn't understand what we were saying. We didn't have any pen or paper, so we used our phones to type out our order. We could tell that the cashier was frustrated with us. He started to yell at us. We didn't understand what he was saying because of the earplugs, but we knew he was yelling. I got angry! I wanted to yell at him and demand respect! Just because someone is deaf doesn't mean that

people can treat them bad. If I see this happening to a deaf student from [school] I would try and help them! They don't deserve to experience what me and [another student] had to!"

A participant who shared that she had been bullied in the past wrote a reflective essay on her positive experience with the "Deaf for an Hour" project.

"For my project, I went to Starbucks. I was scared because I'm only in ASL 1. I thought people would make fun of me and that made me even more nervous. When I walked up to order, I tried signing my order, but the barista didn't understand. When she didn't understand, she ripped off some receipt paper and gave me a pen. It seems that she has served Deaf people before. I thought that was cool. It was hard to communicate with people who didn't know ASL. I felt like people were getting mad at me for taking too long. That made me feel weird. I felt pressured. It would suck if [my Deaf classmates] felt like this whenever they went out. That wouldn't be fair."

Both responses to the "Deaf for an Hour" project indicated that these participants gained a new perspective and understanding about what it might be like to be DHH as a result of the unit of study.

What is Bullying?

To introduce the topic, the question: "Who has ever been bullied?" was posed to the students. The majority of the class raised their hands and were given an opportunity to share their experiences. Students were then grouped to discuss bullying and share relevant ideas, comments and questions to the discussion. Students shared stories about

being bullied because of weight, appearance, and sexual preferences. The participants all had background knowledge that assisted them in contributing opinions and anecdotes.

Following the discussion, the participants were put into random groups of five or six members. Each group was assigned a type of bullying. The participants discussed his or her past experiences, defined the different types of bullying, and provided examples. The types of bullying that were the most difficult for students to define were psychological bullying and cyber bullying. Students discussed the best definition of psychological bullying and agreed upon: “Psychological bullying is when a bully talks bad to a person or about a person and it affects their emotions and everyday life.” Most of the participants were unfamiliar with the term “psychological bullying” prior to this unit. Some examples of psychological bullying that the participants provided were: telling someone they are fat and it makes them throw up their food, telling someone they are dumb and they believe it, feeling sorry for a person because they have a disability, making fun of someone because they have a disability.

The type of bullying that seemed to be most prevalent to this age group was cyber bullying. All of the participants were able to define this type of bullying. The participants defined it as: “Using technology or social media to bully, hurt someone’s feeling, or to torment.” All the participants experienced or knew someone who had experienced cyber bullying. The examples the participants provided included: posting on someone’s Facebook wall that they’re stupid or dumb, texting someone anonymously and insulting them, and posting an embarrassing video of a person on YouTube so people can make fun of them.

After the students defined different types of bullying, the question was asked, “Which type of bullying do you think DHH students experience more?” The teacher-researcher asked the hearing students to answer before the DHH students answered. The hearing students felt that DHH students suffer more from cyber bullying because that is how most of them communicate with hearing peers. Most of the DHH students have a Facebook account, so the hearing students assumed that is how they are bullied. The DHH students disagreed. They felt that they were more victims of psychological bullying. One DHH student said that his siblings bullied him because he was Deaf. He explained that his siblings always told him that because he was Deaf he would not be able to do anything when he got older. He said that he grew up with very little confidence in himself and it was not until high school when he met other Deaf friends that he realized he had potential to be anything he wanted. Another DHH student agreed and shared his experiences when he felt bullied by his teachers. He came from another country where Deaf people were considered to be severely handicapped. His teacher in his home country did not challenge him in the classroom. He did not get the same work as other classmates. His teacher told him that he would not be able to advance in school or go to college because Deaf people could not be educated. This particular student said, “Well look at me now! I’m going to Gallaudet in the fall!”

Following these candid statements by DHH students, hearing students in the class had many questions for the DHH students. The teacher-researcher encouraged the discussion and DHH students shared their experiences and answered questions. It was noted that the hearing students who did not normally interact with the DHH students were

the ones who asked the questions and participated the most in the discussion. DHH students in each ASL 1 class shared their experiences with their classmates.

Promoting Anti-Bullying

To spread awareness to the school community about how DHH students feel bullied, students were paired up and asked to create an anti-bullying poster that was hung in the school, especially in the halls where there are students who have special needs. At this particular school, the classes that service students with special needs are in another building away from the majority of the student population. The students created posters that promoted friendship with DHH students, and taking ASL classes at school. Students felt that taking ASL would be the first step in being friends with the DHH students at school. One of the informal observations that the teacher-researcher noticed before starting to create this unit was the constant miscommunication the DHH students were experiencing everyday. One hearing participant made a poster that targeted the teachers at school and how the DHH students should be treated. The poster read, “Students are students! Everyone can learn!” The poster pictured a Deaf student in the classroom with an interpreter.

Although two of the three ASL Level 1 classes created anti-bullying posters, one class wanted to promote anti-bullying in another way. One participant felt like the administration did not address issues of bullying in a timely or professional manner. This particular class discussed their experiences with bullying and what the administration did to help. One participant suggested that everyone write a letter to administration with suggestions on how they can improve issues of bullying, not only with the general student population, but with DHH students as well. During the discussion, DHH students

shared that they did not feel comfortable going to administration with issues of bullying because they felt the administration did not care. They felt that they do not get the appropriate support from the individuals who run the school. The participants in this class voted to all write letters to the administration to provide suggestions for how the school can improve handling issues pertaining to bullying.

Participants were allowed to modify the culminating experience for the unit of study and make this unit their own. The students urged the teacher-researcher to share the letters with the administration in hopes they could impact how bullying was handled in the future. The students sat in silence as they wrote their letters to administration. Comments in letters and passages ranged from, "...give bullies an automatic maximum suspension," to "Students should be involved in a buddy program that has them hang out with people they might not hang out with, like The Breakfast Club!" Many letters mentioned how unfair the students with special needs were treated at school and the administration needed to be more "special needs friendly."

Pre-post Surveys

After parts 2 and 3 of the project had been completed, survey was re-administered to the students. The surveys analyzed to determine effectiveness of the unit. The following questions guided the analysis: Did the students give different answers to the post unit survey? Did the students learn anything new from the unit? Did the students' opinions about DHH students change after the unit?

Similarities and differences in responses on pre and post-unit surveys. In the pre unit survey, the answers from the students were short. There was not much reflection. One question on the survey was: What are some examples of why Deaf or Hard of

Hearing students get bullied? In the pre unit survey, answers ranged from, “I don’t know” to “They get called dummy.” In the post unit survey, students had more in depth answers. Some examples included, “Deaf students get bullied because they can’t hear. Some people think that because they can’t hear, that they’re dumb and can’t do anything when they grow up;” “Deaf students are sometimes ostracized from hearing students at school because they’re different. Not many people can communicate with them. Bullies target those who are different. Deaf people don’t see themselves as having a disability;” Deaf people are not only bullied by their classmates, but also by their teachers. Some teachers don’t have any expectations for DHH students because they think Deaf children cannot be educated.”

There was more reflection in the responses from the post unit survey. The participants were able to recall and reflect on anecdotes about how it is to be Deaf firsthand from their DHH peers. The insights from the DHH classmates helped shape hearing students’ understanding of how DHH students are bullied. The students became more aware of their behavior and behaviors of others. The post unit survey showed that they were moving in the right direction to be allies to the Deaf community.

The most valuable new piece of information that the students acquired was the policy regarding bullying. The participants learned that their school has a zero tolerance policy for bullying. They are able to become advocates for themselves and their schoolmates. The students presented new ideas for how students, teachers, and administrators can promote anti-bullying.

This action research project implemented a teacher designed unit pertaining to bullying. Results showed a positive change in students’ behaviors and perceptions about

students who are DHH and bullying. Student-participants identified different reasons DHH students get bullied, and many were able to support their answer with details. Most participants also quoted some of their classmates when referencing examples for how DHH students get bullied. This was considered evidence that the participants listened to each other and did try to work together and understand each other.

Discussion

Addressing bullying for those students who are DHH is a significant instructional challenge. Including discussions of bullying in the classroom can be unfamiliar and awkward for some students, but addressing bullying is essential for students to understand what it means to be a bully and to be bullied. This unit brought awareness to bullying in the classroom, and it created a sense of empowerment with and by the students. Student-participants promoted anti-bullying throughout the campus and even sent personal letters to the administration of the school in hopes for change.

Not only did this unit bring awareness of bullying of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, but also it made students more aware of the bullying happening at their school. Within days after the unit, informal observations in the classroom showed more interactions between the students in the classroom. Hearing students who did not normally work with DHH students were more open to communicating with them before and after class. DHH students were also not afraid to ask help from their hearing classmates. There seemed to be more camaraderie in the classroom. Students interacted during lunchtime and although still congregated in certain areas, hearing students were signing with DHH students.

As a result of this unit, there was a noticeably more positive attitude towards Deaf people in the classroom, as well as a positive response to the anti-bullying posters that were posted around the school. Many teachers complimented the students on their artwork and some teachers wanted a poster for their classroom. The awareness spread from the classroom to the school community.

This is a unit that can be implemented in any ASL class. Exposing hearing students to what it is like to be Deaf can help enrich their experience in ASL and help bring hearing and DHH students together, thereby diminishing occurrences of bullying.

References

- Allen, K.P., (2010). Classroom management, bullying and teacher practices. *Professional Educator, 34*(1), 1-15.
- Bowllan, N.M., (2011). Implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive, school-wide bullying prevention program in an urban/suburban middle school. *Journal of School Health, 81*(4), 167-173.
- Carter, S., (2009). Bullying of students with Asperger syndrome. *Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing, 32*, 145-154. doi: 10.1080/01460860903062782
- Cleaver, S. (2013). Hands-on is minds-on. Retrieved February 1, 2013, from <http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3751901>
- Dake, J.A., Price, J.H., Telljohann, S.K., & Funk, J.B., (2003). Teacher perceptions and practices regarding school bullying prevention. *Journal of School Health, 73*(9), 547-355.
- Flaspohler, P.D., Elfstrom, J.L., Vanderzee, K.L., Sink, H.E., Birchmeier, Z., (2009). Stand by me. The effects of peer and teacher support in mitigating the impact of bullying on quality of life. *Psychology in the Schools, 46*(7), 636-649.
- Flynt, S.W., & Morton, R.C., (2004). Bullying and children with disabilities. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 31*(4), 330-333.
- Frederickson, N., (2010). Bullying or befriending? Children's responses to classmates with special needs. *British Journal of Special Education, 37*(1), 4-12.
- Heinrichs, R.R., (2003). A whole-school approach to bullying: Special considerations for children with exceptionalities. *Intervention in School & Clinic, 38*(4), 195-205.

- Mishna, F., (2003). Learning disabilities and bullying: Double jeopardy. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 36*(4), 336-347.
- Polanin, J.R., Espelage, D.L., & Pigott, T.D., (2012). A meta-analysis of school-based bullying prevention programs' effects on bystander intervention behavior. *School of Psychology Review, 41*(1), 47-65.
- Raskauskas, J., & Modell, S., (2011). Modifying anti-bullying programs to include students with disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 44*(1), 60-67.
- Solberg, M.E., Olweus, D., & Endresen, I.M., (2007). Bullies and victims at school: Are they the same pupils? *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 77*(2), 441-464.

Appendix A

Figure 1

Hearing Students/DHH Students Bullying Survey

Bullying is a big issue that each school is talking about. Please be mature adults as we discuss this topic, and please answer this survey HONESTLY. This survey is anonymous, you don't have to put your name on it, but your ideas and opinions are important to me. ██████████

1. What are different types of bullying?
2. What are some examples of why students (in general, hearing students) get bullied?
3. What are some examples of why Deaf or Hard of Hearing students get bullied?
4. What is (if you don't know, what do you think is) Burbank High School's policy on bullying?
5. What can you, or BHS do to help with the bullying problem?

Figure 2

Hearing Students/DHH Students Bullying Survey: Wrap-up

After discussing different types of bullying, and how DHH students are being bullied, how can you be an ally? Would you answer these questions differently than how you answered them two days ago? Look over these questions. Did your answers change?

1. What are different types of bullying?
2. What are some examples of why students (in general, hearing students) get bullied?
3. What are some examples of why Deaf or Hard of Hearing students get bullied?
4. What is (if you don't know, what do you think is) Burbank High School's policy on bullying?
5. What can you, or BHS do to help with the bullying problem?