

Developing a Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework for Educators

In today's technologically enhanced and changing world, incidents of cyberbullying are increasing and it is a reality that impacts children and adults. Educators need to be able to identify cyberbullying, implement effective management strategies that align with school policies, as well as engage in pro-active programming for prevention. This article proposes a cyberbullying conceptual framework that can be used as a tool to investigate cyberbullying. The framework is grounded in the literature that was analysed using a constant comparison method for purpose of identifying current and emerging themes and indicators for each of the key elements. The paper finishes with a discussion about the application of the Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework for Educators. This conceptual framework is important to educators given it helps to deconstruct the complex concept of cyberbullying and to construct praxis approaches for identification, management and prevention of cyberbullying.

Keywords: cyberbullying, cyberbullying framework, educators, teachers, bullying,

1.1 Introduction

Incidents of cyberbullying are increasing in today's technologically enhanced world. It is a reality that exists both in schools, as well as in the larger community. Educators need to develop the knowledge and skills to be able to apply theory to practice in addressing and reducing incidents of cyberbullying. They need to be able to identify cyberbullying, implement effective management strategies, as well as engage in pro-active programming for prevention. Educators that actively bridge the gap between theory and practice will foster capacity development in addressing the ever growing issue of cyberbullying.

This article is structured using four sections. First, it begins with a short review of the literature examining the cyberbullying. Second, a description of how the conceptual framework was developed. Third, a summary of the framework is presented with the three categories where each is then described in detail with the elements and indicators. Fourth, recommendations for how the framework can be implemented to inform schools, teachers and teacher education programs to aid in addressing cyberbullying. This description of the framework is important to deconstruct the complexity of cyberbullying and to construct praxis approaches for identification, management and prevention of cyberbullying in today's schools.

1.2 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, as noted by Albert (2011), is a "fast growing problem in society, and especially among our student population" (p.1). Cyberbullying involves the use of "email, text, chat rooms, mobile phones, mobile phone cameras and web sites" (Campbell, 2005, p. 68). It is not a matter of something that occurs beyond school hours. Rather, it occurs 24/7 both in and outside of school "frequently impacts students' social interaction at school and creates situations that require the intervention of teachers, counselors, and administration" (Howlett-Brandon, 2014, p. 2).

Albert (2011) acknowledged that there is no clear definition of cyberbullying and that there are varied perceptions of it. Vandebosh and Van Cleemput (2008) reported that "most students seemed to equate it with 'bullying via the Internet' or they mentioned Internet practices they regarded as examples of cyberbullying" (p. 500). They argued that this is "part of a repetitive pattern of negative offline or online actions; and be performed in a relationships characterized by a power imbalance" (Vandebosh & Van Cleemput, 2008, p. 499). Similarly Willard (2007) defined it as "being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other form of social aggression using the Internet or other digital technologies" (p. 1). Adding to these definitions, Mason (2008) argued it is "an individual or a group willfully using information and communication involving electronic technologies to facilitate deliberate and repeated harassment or threat to another individual or group by sending or posting cruel text and/or graphic technologies means" (p. 323). Further, Smith and associates (2008) defined cyberbullying as "an

aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (p. 376). In general, cyberbullying occurs over time as a patterned behaviour which engages “a covert form of verbal and written bullying” (Mason, 2008, p. 323) through the use of the Internet.

2.1 Problem in Practice

Today’s youth are increasingly having access to and using digital technologies. Lenhart (2015) reported in the USA, “88% of teens have or have access to cell phones or smartphones and 90% of those teens with phones exchange texts”. Teenagers (ages 13 to 17) are frequently online for example, “92% of teens report going online daily — with 24% using the internet ‘almost constantly,’ 56% going online several times a day, and 12% reporting once-a-day use. Just 6% of teens report going online weekly, and 2% go online less often” (Lenhart, 2015). Similarly in Australia in 2014-2015, people of the ages of 15 to 17 were the “highest proportion of internet users (99%)” (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Of this 15 to 17 age group, they spend 18 hours per week on the Internet adding they were “online for social networking (91%), followed by entertainment and formal education activities (73% for both)” (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Youth are actively using their digital devices, which then makes them more susceptible to cyberbullying.

Educators need to be aware of and able to identify cyberbullying and the effect it has on the day-to-day and long-term mental and physical health of students. Fostering wellness in the classroom and school requires educators being able to identify, manage and prevent acts of cyberbullying, as well as educating students of the effect such harmful actions have on individuals which may go beyond the incidents lead by the bully.

2.2 Rationale for the Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework

Cyberbullying has received much attention but there has been limited research investigating the awareness and abilities of educators to address this complex issue. As educators grapple with cyberbullying and the effects of it in schools, they are in need of a structure or guidelines to help them to identify it, manage it and to prevent it. The purpose of the framework is to identify elements along with a series of indicators for the three categories (identification, management and prevention) that will help to develop the knowledge and skills of educators in addressing cyberbullying. The elements and indicators provide key information to be used for discussion, as well as action. This is critical given that educators will need to work within current policies, procedures and practices when identifying and managing incidents of cyberbullying as well as educating students for the prevention of cyberbullying.

2.3 Process for Developing a Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework

Conceptual frameworks assist researchers and practitioners to operationalise theoretical concepts by representing the complex ideas in diagrams or tables (Adom, Hussein, & Agyem, 2018). The Framework Method Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid and Redwood (2013) modified to create the Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework. The framework was founded from Mallon’s (2013) social constructionist method and using a deductive analysis of relevant and available literature which enables the authors to previous new incites yet build on the literature in the field (Bradley, Curry & Devers, 2007).

There is extensive literature on cyberbullying from the perspectives of different stakeholders however, few frameworks exist to support teachers and pre-service teachers in identifying, managing and preventing cyberbullying. A social-ecological framework for understanding cyberbullying has been presented by Cross, Barnes, Papageorgiou, Hadwen, Hearn and Lester (2015) which unpacks different influences on cyberbullying. Whereas, Kansara, and Shekogar (2015) present a framework to detect cyberbullying. A taxonomy of cyberbullying mitigation and prevention is discussed by Ashktorab (2018).

The process of establishing the key concepts and indicators for the framework occurred using a priori approach. The researchers explored the current literature on bullying and cyberbullying for commonly used concepts or ideas. Themes are commonly identified because of repetition, unfamiliar terms, metaphors and analogies, transitions, similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, missing data, or theory-related

material (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The literature was analysed using a constant comparison method to search for and identify current and emerging themes. Ryan and Bernard (2003) submitted that social scientists use a number of terms to describe themes within their data, for example, categories, codes, labels, thematic units, and concepts. They suggested, a theme “themes are abstract constructs that link ... expressions found in texts” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 87) and are used in analysing text to: discover themes and subthemes; refining themes; building hierarchies of themes; and linking themes to a theoretical model. Although Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) suggested there are multiple ways to analyse qualitative data, we predominantly used the constant comparative approach to generate themes to build the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework was developed in a number of stages:

- Stage 1: Process undertaken was to search for literature on cyberbullying in schools to identify common terms, this continued until the identification of the terms became repetitious or a point of information redundancy. The terms were discussed where themes emerged and were agreed by the researchers. From this process the first draft of the framework was compiled.
- Stage 2: Themes were refined in continued discussions. Themes were grouped according to similarities and appropriate headings assigned. The first version of the framework was proposed with a number of categories and elements.
- Stage 3: The framework was then refined by revisiting the literature to check the researchers’ understandings of each category and element, as well as, identifying indicators to describe each category.

3.1 The Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework

The Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework (see Figure 1 below) has been developed to provide a new structure to assist educators and researchers to act on and understand this complex issue. Huang and Chou (2013) reported that “[i]t would be helpful if school teachers have more knowledge about the medium and mechanism of the new form of bullying among students” (p. 235) and this framework aims to assist educators in developing deeper knowledge and understanding of the concept.



Figure 1: Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework

The Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework has three categories: identification, management and prevention. The framework builds on previous relevant research and synthesises key elements and indicators for each category. Each of the three categories of the framework are discussed in detail below in Tables 1, 2 and 3. A summary of the categories and the elements for each category are provided in Table 4.

3.2 Identification of cyberbullying

The first category of the framework is identification. Four elements were identified from the literature related to identifying cyberbullying: understanding the attributes of cyberbullying, knowledge of the types of cyberbullying, identifying student awareness of cyberbullying and educators perspectives of cyberbullying. Table 1 identifies the key elements and their indicative examples or indicators for each element.

Category 1: Identification of Cyberbullying	
Key Elements	Indicators
<p>Attributes</p> <p>(Bauman, Toomey & Walker, 2013; Beringer, 2011; Belsey, 2004; Campbell, 2005; Dooley, Pyzalski & Cross, 2009; Huang & Chou, 2013; Li, 2008; Mason, 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Shariff, 2005; Sharples, Graber, Harrison, & Logan, 2009; Suler, 2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power imbalance • Constant access • Permanent record • Online disinhibition
<p>Types</p> <p>(Akbulut & Cuhadar, 2011; Huang & Chou, 2013; Shariff, 2005; Willard, 2005, 2007)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyberstalking • Denigration • Excluding • Flaming • Harassing • Impersonating • Outing • Trickery
<p>Student awareness</p> <p>(Beale & Hall, 2007; Beringer, 2011; Bhat, 2008; Huang & Chou, 2010, 2013; Mason, 2008; Pergolizzi, et al., 2009; Shariff, 2005; Willard, 2005)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying role players (victim, perpetrator and bystander) • Concealing identity that is deliberate • Perceiving they are invisible online • Reporting incidents • Seeking help
<p>Educator perspectives</p> <p>(Albert, 2011; Bauman, et al., 2013; Beringer, 2011; Craig, Bell & Leschied, 2011; Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2013; Huang & Chou, 2013; Kokko & Porhola, 2009; Li, 2008; Mason, 2008; Murphy, 2014; Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012; Shariff, 2005; Siu, 2004; Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012; Yilmaz, 2010; Willard, 2007)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying impact on social and emotional well-being • Recognising impact on learning • Acknowledging educator personal experiences • Raising concerns in relation to the breadth of the issue

Table 1: Elements and Indicators for Identifying Cyberbullying

Attributes

Bullying and cyberbullying have attributes which are similar, for example, all forms of bullying are more likely to occur when there is an imbalance of power (Beringer, 2011). However, the power imbalance can be altered within a digital space, for instance, the perpetrator may have little power in real world but has superior technological skills which enhance their power online. A critical element of cyberbullying is that of the “systematic abuse of power and control over individual that is perceived to be vulnerable and weak” (Mason, 2008, p. 323). What is evident when defining cyberbullying is the “imbalance in power between perpetrator and victim has been described as a fundamental aspect of bullying that permits the distinction between acts of aggression and bullying” (Dooley, et al., 2009, p. 183).

There are also a range of differences between the forms of bullying. One of the key differences is the mode of bullying i.e. the use of digital devices to enable cyberbullying to occur. Hinduja and Patchin (2010) argued it is “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices” (p. 615). These types of digital tools used to conduct cyberbullying include: Instant messaging, chat rooms, eMail, social networking (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), blogs, public websites, and mobile phones through verbal and text messaging (Huang & Chou, 2013).

As defined by Belsey (2004), cyberbullying is “the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others”. These digital technologies provide the perpetrators with constant access to their targets or victims (Shariff, 2005). Further, given the 24/7 access to technology, as well as the fact that the vast majority of students have access to digital technology, this created a massive audience for the cyberbullying. The *cyber* element of the bullying provides an avenue for the act to occur 24/7 without the limitations of space and time (Bauman, 2010).

The digital nature of the cyberbullying enables a permanent record of it to be kept and facilitates easy replication and sharing of text, images, audio or video which further exacerbates the issue (Li, 2008). The research of Sharples, et al., (2009) highlighted the “difficulty of removing material from [social networking] sites, particularly if it has been copied and stored on children’s computers and media players” (p. 78). Interestingly, because the victim and perpetrator do not need to be co-located, the perpetrator does not see the targets immediate reaction. This emphasises that the bully does not require instant gratification from the cyberbullying incident. The lack of co-location of the bully and the victim also means that the victim is missing the nonverbal clues to the meaning of message which may lead to unintentional cyberbullying (Huang & Chou, 2013).

Cyberbullying often involves online disinhibition, which is the tendency for an individual to say and behave in a way in the virtual space that he/she would not do in a face-to-face context (Suler, 2004). Mason (2008) considered that “anonymity fosters disinhibition <and is> characterised by an apparent reduction in concerns for self-preservation and judgment of others” (p. 328). This results in adolescents, in particular, acting in a different way online, disassociating themselves from their real self, and as a consequence increased negative behaviours such as rudeness, harsh criticism and hatred can be seen online.

Types of cyberbullying

Normally, the goal of the cyberbullying is to humiliate, embarrass or intimidate the victim. These different forms of social aggression can occur using text, images, audio and/or video. These different types of material forms the ammunition for the perpetrator. Irrespective of the type of cyberbullying, although it may start online, “impacts learning and the physical school environment” (Shariff, 2005, p. 460). Highlighting that there are many different types of cyberbullying, Willard’s (2005, 2007) early work addressing cyber safety, including cyberbullying, identified these types:.

- Cyberstalking: harassment that threatens or intimidates;
- Denigrating: sending or posting humiliating, harmful, untrue, or cruel material about a person;
- Excluding: specifically and intentionally excluding a person;
- Flaming: sending angry, rude, or vulgar messages;
- Harassing: repeatedly sending a person offensive messages;
- Impersonating: Masquerading as someone else and sending or posting material that makes that person look bad;

- Outing: spreading material about a person that contains sensitive, private, or embarrassing information; and
- Trickery: engaging in tricks to solicit embarrassing information that is then made public.

Student awareness of cyberbullying

Student awareness of, involvement in, and responses to, cyberbullying vary. There are three roles that occur within cyberbullying. These roles may include individuals or groups of people. The bullying triad includes the victim, who is the target or recipient of the harmful or cruel material; the perpetrator is the offender or bully initiating the social aggression; and finally the bystander who is not an aggressor however is aware that the cyberbullying is occurring. Willard (2005) identified two different types of bystanders.

- Bystanders-who-are-part-of-the-problem are those who encourage and support the bully, or who stand by watching the cyberbullying occur, but do nothing to intervene or to assist the victim.
- Bystanders-who-are-part-of-the-solution are those who seek to stop the bullying, protest the bullying, or provide support or assistance to the victim. (p. 3)

Anonymity is one of the factors which increases the fear of the victim, as, they often do not know the identity of the perpetrator (Beale & Hall, 2007). Within the digital world bullies can deliberately conceal their identity (Beringer, 2011). This is one of the differences between bullying and cyberbullying and anonymity can be one of the reasons students engage in cyberbullying (Beringer, 2011). In contrast, some digital users perceive they are invisible online (Beringer, 2011) and this augments their online disinhibition mentioned previously. The anonymous nature of cyberbullying compromises adolescence impulsivity (Bhat, 2008) which fosters behaviours lacking in empathy, responsibility and a fear of getting caught (Mason, 2008).

There are a number of positive actions and responses that students might have to reduce or resolve cyberbullying. Students should report all incidents of cyberbullying, either experienced or observed. However, adolescents are reluctant to report cyberbullying. In their study of cyberbullying in Taiwan, Hung and Chou (2013) found that teachers overestimate students' willingness to report cyberbullying. Often victims need encouragement to report incidents of cyberbullying to a responsible adult or peer (Beale & Hall, 2007). Sadly, in those cases where reporting does occur teens are unlikely to report to a teacher (Huang & Chou, 2010). Schools have a role to create safe environments where students feel able to speak freely about cyberbullying incidents.

Students should also seek help if they are engaging in cyberbullying. Adolescents are likely to hide their participation in cyberbullying either as a victim, bully or bystander (Huang & Chou, 2013). However, all roleplayers in cyberbullying should seek help and support (Beringer, 2011). Pergolizzi, et al. (2009) stated that "[b]ullying can have negative physical, emotional, and social consequences for both victims and perpetrators" (p. 266). It is important for teachers, schools and parents to respond to the social and emotional impacts of cyberbullying supporting all those involved.

Educator perspectives

Many researchers (Li, 2008; Shariff, 2005; Willard, 2007) have found that although cyberbullying often occurs outside of school hours and outside the schools grounds, it regularly has an impact on the learning and learning environments in schools. This impact includes the cognitive engagement in the learning process and social and emotional well-being of students which in turn negatively influences individual student's learning outcomes and results in lower academic performance (Beringer, 2011; Mason, 2008).

One of the consequences of cyberbullying is a negative impact on learning (Mason, 2008). Educators need to not only recognise when student learning is at risk, they also need to have confidence that they can find out why learning is being impacted. The degree to which academic achievement is affected by cyberbullying is unknown, however, it is regularly reported as a negative outcome. As Albert (2011) commented "students who are worried about being bullied, or those who deal with it already do not perform or focus on academia" (p. 14-15). They "divert their attention from academic tasks and create an atmosphere that reduces learning opportunities" (Eden, et al., 2013, p. 1039).

“Cyberbullying can lead to significant emotional harm of students” (Mason, 2008, p. 342). Educators have a role in identifying the impact that cyberbullying has on students social and emotional well-being. “The digital nature of cyberbullying creates a permanent record of negative information that can affect students’ current and future psychological and emotional state, which in turn can significantly impact many different aspects of students’ behavior” (Eden, et al., 2013, p. 1039). The emotional distress of those involved in or concerned about cyberbullying may be enacted through changes in behaviour that can be observed and responded to by educators. Bauman et al. (2013) found in their study that both bullies and victims, in some cases bullies more than victims, are at risk for depression and suicidal behaviors. The profound effect of cyberbullying goes beyond the personal and social feelings to have major impact on mental and physical health and well-being. Cyberbullying is an insidious phenomenon which is widespread across a range of sociodemographic factors. It occurs globally and to people of any gender, age and any socio economic income bracket (Huang & Chou, 2013; Schneider, et al., 2012). Educators should be aware that irrespective of which type of school they teach at all of their students could be at risk of being involved in cyberbullying.

In Eden et al.’s (2013) study of teacher perceptions of cyberbullying, they found that teachers within their study had been victims of cyberbullying. Teachers gain a different perspective on the seriousness bullying dependant of their personal experience (Hung & Chou, 2013). Teacher’s childhood and adult personal experiences may include their own experience as a victim, perpetrator or bystander; the experiences of their siblings, children or other relatives; and also the experiences of their friends or peers. These experiences impact on how teachers respond to bullying in school. Teachers’ likelihood of identifying, responding to and reporting cyberbullying is dependent on their frame of reference. Kokko and Porhola (2009) found “that teachers’ own experiences of victimization may enhance their ability to” respond to incidents of bullying (p. 1000). A teacher's previous experience or role in any type of bullying impacts how they react to what they see or gets reported to them. This provides a lens that colours how teachers see the act of cyberbullying and impacts on their perceptions of the act.

Educators at both the pre-service (Li, 2008) and in-service (Eden, et al., 2013) levels have identified that cyberbullying is concern for them. Teachers are anxious about cyberbullying because of the negative impacts it has on their students, however, they also have low confidence in their ability to effectively respond to incidences of cyberbullying (Beringer, 2011; Hung & Chou, 2013).

3.3 Management of cyberbullying

The second category of the cyberbullying framework is that of management. It is related to how educators and schools manage or resolve incidents of cyberbullying. This category has two elements, the role and responsibility of the school and that of the educator. Table 2 summarises the elements and indicators included in the management category.

Category 2 - Management of Cyberbullying	
Key Elements	Indicators (Examples)
Role and responsibility of the school (Beale & Hall, 2007; Beringer, 2011; Eden, et al., 2013; Huang & Chou, 2013; Mason, 2008; Murphy, 2014; Eden, et al., 2013; Li, 2008; Shariff & Hoff, 2007; Ryan & Kariuki, 2011; Siu, 2004; Willard, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and review policies • Providing a range of appropriate school responses • Fostering a culture of reporting • Ongoing communication with parents/caregivers • Utilizing relevant school and community resources and supports
Role and responsibility of the educator (Belsey, 2004; Eden, et al., 2013; Li, 2008; Huang & Chou, 2013; Mason, 2008; Shaheen, 2005; Siu, 2004; Yilmaz, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working knowledge of school policies and practices • Reporting incidents • Implementing strategies to manage incident

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing strategies to support role players
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Table 2: Elements and Indicators for Managing Cyberbullying

Role and responsibility of the school

Berringer (2011) found that teachers believe that it is very important for schools as a whole to commit to identifying, manage and prevent cyberbullying. Part of a school's management of cyberbullying is to develop and/or review their cyberbullying policies. Shariff and Hoff (2007) suggested “a policy approach that will move the dialogue toward educational and protective measures that might better enable children to learn in physical and virtual school environments without fear of cyberbullying, as unprecedented problems related to new technologies surface.” (p. 79). In many schools a cyberbullying policy is included in the overall behaviour management policy. It is important that the policy is enforceable on the school grounds (Mason, 2008) and is created using feedback from relevant stakeholders.

Mason (2008) indicated that “[s]chools are key to providing the community leadership necessary to bring educators, parents, students, and other community members together” (p. 342) to help in resolving and reducing cyberbullying. As part of the stakeholder engagement for the policy development and review process, schools could survey their students (Li, 2008) to gain information about their experiences and to acquire anonymous data about the frequency that their students experience cyberbullying. This is necessary because of the very low reporting rates that have been previously mentioned. Parents and community organisations including local law enforcement could also be part of the feedback process.

Specific strategies and practices of schools to handle or resolve cyberbullying will be determined on the school, stakeholders and degree to which the issue is perceived to be problem. Irrespective of what the action looks like in practice there are a number of factors which must be considered to ensure that the school does not “tacitly condone cyberbullying and perpetuate the problem” (Shariff & Hoff, 2007, p. 79). Appropriate school responses need to be timely and involve all roleplayers. This might include immediate responses such as increasing playground supervision, supporting the victim, formal discipline for the perpetrator, informing parents, and contacting the police.

Longer term responses might include organizing school-wide activities and information sessions for stakeholders (Li, 2008). Schools could be involved in “educating bystanders about the importance of speaking out, providing assistance to victims and reporting concerns” (Mason, 2008, p. 336). Schools could also work with the perpetrator and their parents to find out why they are behaving in this manner; for them to understand the impact of the cyberbullying; be accountable for their actions; and plan for positive action in the future (Mason, 2008).

Schools are unable to address issues of cyberbullying if they have no knowledge of it occurring. Shariff and Hoff (2007) exposed that the majority of students do not report incidences of cyberbullying whereas Huang and Chou (2013) found that teachers overestimated their students' willingness to report cyberbullying when it occurs. Fostering a culture of reporting cyberbullying whether observed or experienced is a key element to reducing cyberbullying. Schools need to educate students, teachers and parents that no matter what role they play (victim, perpetrator or bystander) that all incidences should be reported.

Cyberbullying can occur while young people are at home and parents are often unaware of what their children are doing online (Shariff & Hoff, 2007), and so, ongoing communication with all parents and caregivers is essential.

Because the problem occurs in the hidden online world of students and it reaches beyond the school and into the home, it is imperative that school administrators, parents, and community representatives work together to eradicate this twenty-first century form of bullying. (Beale & Hall, 2007, p. 12)

Cyberbullying is a social and community problem rather than one located in schools. Utilizing relevant school and community resources and supports goes somewhat to resolving and reducing the effects of cyberbullying. There are a number of resources that schools can access. These can include health

professionals who can provide physical and emotional care and support and law enforcement who can provide legal advice and support. “Cyberbullying should be addressed in schools through a collaborative effort between schools, families, and the community” (Beringer, 2011, p. 19).

Role and responsibility of the educator

Teachers have “a crucial role in tackling the problem—in classroom and individual interventions, in working with student victims and bullies” (Eden, et al., 2013, p. 1039). However, they also found that there was a gap between their desire to act and their confidence in their ability to successfully respond to incidents of cyberbullying. Teachers need a working knowledge of the school policies and practices to help counter cyberbullying. Involving teachers in the policy development will assist further develop their knowledge of how to manage cyberbullying.

Belsey (2004) recommended “teaching students to report incidents and building awareness of the problem” are effective techniques to combat cyberbullying. This is true also of educators who need to be familiar with how to recognise incidences of cyberbullying and to identify the participants. Because cyberbullying often occurs outside of school, teachers will often not be aware of incidences unless it is reported to them. Once cyberbullying has been identified, teachers then need to be able to follow the schools policy in managing the observed or reported cyberbullying. It is important that teachers and other adult staff member in schools intervene when cyberbullying has been identified and to implement strategies to resolve the issue (Beringer, 2011).

“Even though teachers can neither continuously nor comprehensively monitor cyberspace, they surely can create within the school environment a sense of community and belonging that helps reduce the incidence of bullying behaviors” (Huang & Chau, 2013, p. 237). Creating an environment where students are willing to report cyberbullying will assist teaching in implementing specific strategies to manage incidents of cyberbullying. “Teachers may feel helpless and powerless if they consider themselves as lacking the skills to do so, feelings that might create considerable stress to them” (Siu, 2004, p. 44). To build confidence in teachers, anti-cyberbullying strategies should be developed in conjunction with teachers where Eden et al. (2013) suggests “teachers to design and to plan appropriate actions to prevent cyberbullying, and to implement useful strategies to help pupils in need” (p. 1050).

It is important that all roleplayers in cyberbullying are supported during the management of cyberbullying. “Bullying has long been confirmed as having negative effects on not only victims’ mental health but also the bullies’ mental health during these individuals’ school years and later in life” (Huang & Chou, 2013, p. 227). Support for the target “should address the harm and seek to empower the victim with effective skills to prevent and respond to bullying” (Mason, 2008, p. 341). For example, the victim may be encouraged to leave the online environment or turn off their device, they should also be urged to keep evidence, and seek peer support. To reduce the risk of it happening again it is important to help “bullies learn both to think before they act and to change their behaviors” (Mason, 2008, p 335). Bystanders should be persuaded to be part of the solution, and to report cyberbullying, rather than part of the problem by supporting the perpetrator or not assisting the victim.

3.4 Prevention of cyberbullying

The final category of the cyberbullying framework is prevention. This category has three elements including the role and responsibility of the school, teacher and teacher education program. Table 3 provides a brief outline of the category and the elements will be described in the next section.

Category 3 - Prevention of Cyberbullying	
Key Elements	Indicators (Examples)
Role and responsibility of the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing policies, practices, and responses

(Beale & Hall, 2007; Beringer, 2011; Eden, et al., 2013; Huang & Chou, 2013; Mason, 2008; Murphy, 2014; Li, 2008; Ryan & Kariuki, 2011; Siu, 2004; Sharples, et al., 2009; Yilmaz, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing ongoing professional development and resources • Fostering a culture of reporting • Ongoing information/communication with stakeholders
<p>Role and responsibility of the educator</p> <p>(Albert, 2011; Beale & Hall, 2007; Belsey, 2004; Beringer, 2011; Eden, et al., 2013; Huang & Chou, 2013; Hsu, 2010; Li, 2008; Mason, 2008; Pergolizzi, et al., 2009; Ryan & Kariuki, 2011; Sharples, et al., 2009; Siu, 2004; Walker, 2012)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing and implementing curriculum and explicit classroom activities • Implementing policy • Ongoing professional learning
<p>Role and responsibility of Teacher Education programs</p> <p>(Albert, 2011; Huang & Chou, 2013; Li, 2008; Murphy, 2014; Ryan & Kariuki, 2011; Sui, 2004; Yilmaz, 2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness • Preparing pre-service teachers to identify and manage • Promoting ongoing professional learning

Table 3: Elements and Indicators for Preventing Cyberbullying

Role and responsibility of the school

Eden, et al. (2013) recommends urgent attention be paid to school policy development to stem the rates of cyberbullying. Stakeholders can be involved in the development and review of policies, practices and recommended responses to incidences of cyberbullying (Beale & Hall, 2007) while Hung and Chou (2013) believe that the “complicated and problematic nature, would require school-wide collaboration and parental support” (p. 236). As part of the policy review and development, schools need to identify how prevalent cyberbullying is within their student population. Enhancing the awareness of the school administration and teaching staff will assist in their ability to contribute to the development and review of school wide policies, practices and responses to cyberbullying.

Schools must be able to identify and respond to the gaps in perceptions and knowledge of cyberbullying of their teachers (Beale & Hall, 2007). One way to approach this would be to survey their teachers, questions could be included that have the teacher identify any personal experience with cyberbullying, their knowledge of policies and processes, and their awareness of curriculum materials. Eden et al., (2013) recommend “supporting teachers with specific training programs on how to cope with the issue” (p. 1050). This could involve schools sourcing and implementing professional development workshops or seminars, encouraging teachers to attend conferences, or participate in professional discussions with peers.

“Parents will need to be continually reassured that the web can be a valuable place for learning and that schools have effective policies and practices for safe use” (Sharples, et al., 2009, p. 83). Schools need the assistance of parents, and the broader community, in the planning and implementation of anti-cyberbullying programmes. It is important for stakeholders including students, teachers and other school staff, parents, community groups to understand the school and consequences of cyberbullying within the school context (Beale & Hall, 2007). Frequent and ongoing information and communication with stakeholders can assist in addressing cyberbullying. This communication could be through the organisation of school-wide activities and information sessions for stakeholders, sharing of tips to parents through school newsletters, making links to community resources such as the police and counsellors, and providing information about training courses and information to parents (Eden, et al., 2013).

Role and responsibility of the teacher

Teachers are critical to the prevention of cyberbullying of school students (Hung & Chou, 2013). However, “[t]eachers will need support in developing new teaching practices that embrace creative and social learning on the Web and in promoting responsible Internet use” (Sharples, et al.,, 2009, p. 83). Albert (2011) noted the importance of “professional development so that educators can gain confidence in their understanding on the topic and successfully integrate it into their curricula” (p. 27.)

Teachers need to design classroom activities that explicitly align with strategies for identifying, managing and reporting cyberbullying. It is important to engage in explicit teaching and learning of cyberbullying, rather than making implicit links and hope that the students can interpret the relationship to cyberbullying. Many examples of resources and activities on websites such as Office of the Children's e-safety Commissioner (<https://www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues/cyberbullying/cyberbullying-information-for-teachers>), and NetSmartz (<http://www.netsmartz.org/Educators>). These sites often also provide support materials for parents, schools and law enforcement.

Pergolizzi, et al. (2009) reported

Some success at reducing bullying (measured scientifically, with control groups, blind assessments, and repeated measures) has been attained with a structured curriculum, delivered by well-trained teachers to heterogeneous groups of school students via discussions, stories, role-plays, and other active learning methods." (p. 276)

It is common for schools to teach digital citizenship which is appropriate and responsible behaviour with digital technologies. Responsible digital citizenship includes elements such as internet etiquette, internet safety which are based around respect for and protection of self and others. Sample curriculums are available online, for example, CyberSmart (<http://www.cybersmartcurriculum.org/home>), and i-SAFE Inc. (www.i-safe.org). Albert's (2011) research found that "teachers perceive cyberbullying awareness education as not only important but significant in curriculum" (p. 9). Walker (2012) remarks that "[c]hoosing a curriculum which is grounded in research and addresses cyberbullying as part of a long-term systemic change can be a good start toward creating new social norms in a school" (p. 139). The teacher has a key role and responsibility in identifying and managing cyberbullying. Hung and Chou, (2013) have suggested "that school teachers can positively affect students' bullying behavior, and teacher perspectives can help to produce an all-round view of school bullying" (p. 228). Teachers should be involved with both the development and implementation of school wide cyberbullying policies.

Teachers "have a responsibility to intervene on issues dealing with cyberbullying in order to create a safe, peaceful school climate" (Mason, 2008, p. 333). However, Hsu's (2010) research reported that 75% of teachers "do not feel comfortable discussing issues such as Internet predators or cyberbullying with students" (p. 178). Teachers must engage in ongoing professional learning to enhance their knowledge and skills in the identification, management and prevention of cyberbullying. It is likely they will need to seek the professional development external the school. The school may not provide or have the expertise to support the professional learning of educators with varying experience with and knowledge of cyberbullying. The teachers in Albert's (2011) study reported that there were benefits in raising awareness of and confidence in dealing with cyberbullying after engaging in professional learning.

Role and responsibility of the teacher education program

Teacher education programs should increase pre-service teacher awareness of cyberbullying including its effects. Li's (2008) study of pre-service teacher perceptions found that they understood "the significant effects of cyberbullying on children ... they do not think it is a problem in our schools." It is essential that pre-service teachers have high levels of awareness of cyberbullying including the impacts on their students. It seems that "pre-service educators viewed cyberbullying as a serious concern and a compelling problem for students, schools, and the wider community" (Ryan & Kariuki, 2011, p. 108). Further, they commented that pre-service teachers see the topic of cyberbullying as important as other topics within their teacher education program.

Li (2007) reported that most pre-service teachers do not feel confident in addressing cyberbullying, although they showed high levels of concern about the issue. The study also found that the participant's university education did not prepare them well to manage cyberbullying. While that study was completed a decade ago there seemed little research evidence that current teacher education programs have been more successful in explicitly preparing pre-service teachers to identify, manage and prevent cyberbullying. Ryan and Kariuki's (2011) more recent study of pre-service teachers had similar findings to Li (2007). They suggest that pre-service teachers need more than awareness of cyberbullying as an issue they need skills and strategies to assist in the identification, management and prevention of cyberbullying.

In acknowledging that professional learning continues beyond an initial teacher education qualification it is essential that pre-service teachers have an awareness of and a commitment to ongoing professional learning, particularly in the area of cyberbully where the types and tools used change as technology changes. Li's (2008) study indicated that pre-service teachers want to learn more and it is hoped that this continues beyond their formal study in teacher education. While Albert's (2011) investigation of cyberbullying indicated that although there are some professional learning resources available on the internet that educators would benefit from discussions to inform practice in the classroom. Teacher educators could provide ongoing professional learning for in-service teachers in addition to pre-service teachers within their teacher education programs. Huang and Chau (2013) claimed that the "keys to successful cyberbullying intervention and prevention lie in the teacher education provided to pre-service and in-service teachers" (p. 237).

Table 4 provides a summary of the three categories and the elements related to each. The previous section described the elements and provided indicators that are indicative examples and are not meant to be an exhaustive list.

Categories	Key Elements
Identification	Attributes Types Student awareness Educator perspectives
Management	Role and responsibility of the School Role and responsibility of the Educator
Prevention	Role and responsibility of the School Role and responsibility of the Educator Role and responsibility of Teacher Education programs

Table 4: Categories and Elements of the Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework

4.1 Application of the Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework

The framework can be used in various ways in the school and larger community. First, it provides a meta-language to dialogue with stakeholders in unpacking this complex and emotionally charged issue. By drawing on a category, the elements and indicators provide stems to launch or direct dialogue, as well as action. For example, when examining the role and responsibility of the educator, the framework identifies specific indicators that need to be addressed (e.g., designing and implementing curriculum and explicit classroom activities). This begins the conversation which can lead to next steps within the particular context. Through this framework, direction can be given to what needs to be done and by who. It provides prompts in terms of identifying levels of responsibility, process, and action.

Second, the implementation of the framework should help inform processes, procedures and policies in support of safe schools. As noted in the National Safe Schools Framework,

In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or well being. (Education Services Australia, 2010, p. 2)

The framework helps to inform different roles and assigns responsibility in terms of identification, management and prevention of cyberbullying. The framework is a helpful guide when working through the process of establishing processes, procedures and policies in relation to cyberbullying.

Third, the framework is not bounded to only be used in a particular context by a particular group of people (e.g., pre-service teachers). Rather, it can be used by various stakeholders in the educational community

(e.g., teachers, schools, researchers, professional associations and teacher educators), as well as with the broader community (e.g., police, health, social service agencies) who are working together to identify, prevent, and resolve cyberbullying issues. The framework can be used in whole or in part by various stakeholders in addressing cyberbullying. Given the structure, it can be used as a checklist when attending to identification, management and/or prevention. Further, given it is grounded in the literature, it provides a wealth of literature that can be used to inform users of the framework both in terms of theory and practice.

Next steps in the work with the Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework is threefold. First, research needs to be conducted to statistically validate the framework. Trialling the elements of the framework will be critical for determining validity and reliability. As part of the research design, the research team needs to work with pre-service teachers, teachers, principals, and students in capturing their perceptions and reflections of how might the framework help, be useful, or applicable to them. This data will be used to inform and refine the framework. Second, the research team will need to implement the framework as a lens to unpack the perspectives of pre-service teachers and to help them to develop their knowledge and skills to be able identify, manage and prevent cyberbullying. This requires the application of the theory (e.g., framework) to practice (using it with pre-service teachers). The framework can play a key role within teacher education program in dialoguing about the issue, as well as helping pre-service teachers to be well prepared to address the issue in their future schools. Third, exploration of the framework should occur with other academics at the same and other universities. A component of this will be to invite other educators and researchers to use the framework across various locations, populations and contexts to assist in the validation of the framework and to comment on the robustness of the framework. Although the framework offers a contemporary framework for cyberbullying it may also be useful in traditional bullying situations.

4.2 Conclusion

With the incidents of cyberbullying on the increase and the increasing media attention it receives, school and educators need to be able to identify, manage and prevent cyberbullying from occurring within their student communities. This article has begun with a review of the cyberbullying literature to understand cyberbullying. The literature review forms the basis to propose the Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework that can be used in education, as well as in conducting research into cyberbullying in schools. The conceptual framework is described in detail where cyberbullying is defined in terms of three main categories, each with elements that explain the categories and indicators along with examples are provided to help in understanding what the element means in practice.

What is evident from the framework is there are many stakeholders who can or need to be involved in identifying, managing and preventing cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can occur anywhere and anytime. An important message is that stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, etc.) cannot work in isolation. Rather, they need coordinated approaches to share the responsibility as cyberbullying is not restricted to the classroom or school grounds. This complex problem requires school communities, families and the border community to work together. The conceptual framework can be used to form the basis of a common understanding and approach to be used in identification, management and prevention strategies that schools and educators can implement to support parents and students to minimise cyberbullying. Further, the framework can assist educators and researchers to address, explore and resolve this complex issue. It is unlikely to eliminate cyberbullying, however, schools and educators need to work in proactive ways to reduce the incidences of it. By publishing this conceptual framework, we aim to raise awareness and the importance for all educators, at all levels including teachers, pre-service teachers and teacher educators, to be informed about the importance of reducing cyberbullying.

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