Bullying in Schools: Are Pre-Service Teachers Confident to Address This?

Nancy Maynes, Anna-Liisa Mottonen

Nipissing University

Research suggests that, due to a lack of confidence, pre-service teachers feel inadequately prepared to deal with bullying situations. Confidence has been demonstrated to be a function of knowledge related to the concept being considered. To improve pre-service teachers' confidence to deal with bullying incidents, factors influencing their confidence levels must be identified, including those related to their teacher preparation programs. The primary aim of this study was to examine whether pre-service teachers' self-reported confidence in their ability to respond appropriately to bullying situations depended on which teacher preparation program (consecutive vs. concurrent) they completed. Additionally, other factors that may be related to confidence, such as gender, division of instruction, and variables such as type of bullying, were examined. Participants included 183 pre-service teachers with a mean age of 23 years, the majority of whom were female, who had completed or were completing either the concurrent or consecutive teacher preparation program at a Northern Ontario university. Self-reported confidence in ability to respond appropriately to suspected bullying incidents was assessed using an online Likert style questionnaire. Results demonstrated that, with respect to confidence to respond appropriately to suspected bullying, consecutive program participants reported higher confidence than concurrent program participants, with non-significant variations in perceptions across genders of the teachers and/or the divisions for which they were prepared in their teacher accreditation programs, and surprisingly high levels of confidence in this area across both program models were demonstrated. This finding has implications for teacher training, as evidence suggests that teachers may benefit from training to handle bullying that is designed for their experience level and previous research shows that new teachers may identify high levels of confidence even when they may lack the knowledge that should support their self-perceptions.

La recherche porte à croire que les enseignants en formation manquent de confiance et donc se sentent mal préparés pour faire face aux situations d'intimidation. Il a été démontré que la confiance est fonction de connaissances liées au concept en question. Afin de donner aux enseignants en formation la confiance de gérer les incidents d'intimidation, il faut identifier les facteurs qui influencent leur confiance, y compris ceux qui découlent des programmes de préparation des enseignants. L'objectif principal de cette étude était d'examiner dans quelle mesure la confiance de gérer de façon appropriée les situations d'intimidation, telle qu'indiquée par les enseignants en formation dans une auto-évaluation, était liée au programme de préparation (consécutif ou concomitant) qu'ils avaient complété. D'autres facteurs pouvant également jouer un rôle dans leur niveau de confiance, comme le genre, la répartition de l'enseignement et le type d'intimidation, ont également été étudiés. L'étude avait comme participants 183 enseignants en formation dont l'âge moyen était de 23 ans. La majorité était des femmes et elles suivaient le programme consécutif ou concomitant de formation des

enseignants dans une université dans le Nord de l'Ontario. Un questionnaire en ligne reposant sur des échelles de style Likert a fourni les données de l'auto-évaluation de la confiance à gérer de façon appropriée les situations d'intimidation. Les résultats indiquent que les participants au programme consécutif avaient plus confiance à confronter des situations d'intimidation que les participants au programme concomitant. Les variations entre les hommes et les femmes, et parmi les répartitions d'enseignement, n'étaient pas significatives. Le niveau de confiance auto-déclaré par tous les participants était étonnamment élevé. Ces constatations ont des implications pour la formation des enseignants puisque les études indiquent que, d'une part, les enseignants pourraient profiter d'une formation qui vise la gestion de l'intimidation et qui est adaptée à leur niveau d'expérience et que, d'autre part, il se peut que les nouveaux enseignants indiquent un niveau élevé de confiance alors qu'ils n'ont pas les connaissances pour appuyer leur auto-évaluation.

Recurring themes in teacher education research include discussions of ways to ensure a connection between theories that inform educational practice and the actual daily practice of educators as they face issues in their classrooms (OCT, 2015; Deer et al., 2014). Teacher candidates are held accountable for evidence that they can connect theory to practice in their daily teaching and supervision endeavours as they pursue teaching qualifications through various program routes to certification (Nipissing University, *Practice Teaching Handbook*, 2014, pp. 37-40). These accreditation routes may include concurrent education programs, where pre-service teachers study education alongside courses for undergraduate qualifications or may be designed as post graduate degrees and referred to as consecutive education degrees.

Some researchers have framed the connection between theory and practice as a function of developing both content knowledge (CK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK; see for example, Schulman, 1986; Tkachenko, 2015 {M.Ed. Dissertation}; Van Manon, 1982, 1990). Pedagogical knowledge is commonly considered to be knowledge of the content that is to be taught, while pedagogical content knowledge is framed as the professional knowledge a teacher develops that enables him/her to understand what aspects of a topic may cause comprehension challenges for learners and the skill to be able to adjust instructional approaches to ensure successful learning for those students. Researchers have also identified the need to develop both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in specific subject areas, referring, for example, to mathematical content knowledge (MCK) and mathematical pedagogical content knowledge (MPCK; see for example, Blomeke, Suhl & Kaiser, 2011; Hill, Rowan & Ball, 2008; Krauss et al., 2008; Tatto & Senk, 2011, among others). We have framed this study as confidence being a reflection of applicable knowledge, as has been found to be the case in previous related studies (Maynes et al., 2012, 2013, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c).

Regardless of how we frame the relationship between theory and practice in teacher education, few would argue with the need to develop both the ability to teach effectively (the practice) and the ability to know enough about how to achieve this with some consistency (the theory) so that a teacher's instructional efforts actually result in students' learning with predictable regularity. Previous research has also identified the desirability of these characteristics in new teachers, as these are prioritized in principals' hiring decisions (Maynes & Hatt, 2012, 2014). Additionally, a longitudinal study by Beck and Kosnik, (2014) found that 'new teachers' may be a much more extended concept than was acknowledged prior to their study. They found that new teachers self-report considerable professional growth in the areas of

professional practice and understanding how theory can be practically translated into effective practice longer than was previously thought. This may have implications for how researchers investigate program impacts as the move from having knowledge to using that knowledge confidently in daily professional practice, may be a function of time and experience. While some researchers report a steep trajectory of teacher growth in the first three years of practice (Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011), Beck and Kosnik found that this growth period may extend for as much as eight years as new teachers grapple with the complexities of many initiatives, many learner needs, and changing professional contexts. As well, these new professionals may be influenced by contingent labour characteristics, which are brought about by local legislation in the Ontario teaching context, which in turn affects the nature and sequence of employment opportunities for new teachers (Day & Gu, 2010; Pollock, 2015).

Context

In the current study, the relationship between pre-service teachers' self-reported knowledge and confidence to address bullying was investigated. By comparing the opinions of pre-service teachers from the concurrent education program, with those who acquired their accreditation from the consecutive degree program, we hoped to identify some factors that may influence stronger self-perceived knowledge and confidence levels in new teachers in relation to the important professional skill of being able to address school bullying effectively.

In this Ontario context, there has long been the option for prospective teachers to acquire their professional accreditation through either of two program routes. At the time of this study, one route involved students in an intense 8-month consecutive program, which typically included on-campus course work for two terms, interspersed with approximately 13 weeks of classroom placement where teacher candidates could engage in practice related to professional knowledge they had acquired through courses. The second route to accreditation involved acquisition of credentials through a concurrent program route. In this model, teacher candidates studied for 5 years, acquiring an undergraduate degree and a B.Ed. degree concurrently, with a gradual increase in education courses as they progressed through their program. The university involved in this study has three campuses. While the main campus is in a small community in Northern Ontario, where both consecutive and concurrent program routes were available to teacher candidates, two satellite campuses serve focal groups through single program routes. In Brantford, Ontario, the concurrent route is the only option available to prospective teachers, while the concurrent route which allows transfer of early childhood college credits was available on the Muskoka-Bracebridge campus. Teacher candidates from all three campuses were invited to participate in this study.

Cooperating researchers from the Education program and the Psychology department at the university felt that there was some value in examining the relative perceptions of these diverse groups of students about the perceived outcomes of their structurally different education program routes. This was especially interesting as the provincial government has since instituted a new four term (two year) teacher preparation program for this jurisdiction with concomitant increases in the number of weeks of required in-school practicum experience to acquire teacher accreditation. Started in the 2015-2016 academic year, in Ontario, teacher candidates will take a two-year (or four semester) teacher preparation program if they select the consecutive route to accreditation. At the time of writing, the first cohort of this new group of consecutive education teachers was completing their final practicum experience with

accreditation following in June 2017. In the same jurisdiction, this new requirement has had varying impacts on the nature and very existence of concurrent education routes. Historically then, this study provides one of few opportunities to compare the perceived efficacy of two long standing approaches to teacher accreditation before legislated and elective changes to the two programs take full effect.

Literature Review

The gap in empirical investigation into the content and impact of teacher education courses has been highlighted in the teacher preparation research (Bennett & Carre, 1993). This gap is surprising since instilling confidence to teach is a common goal of Faculty of Education programs. Little empirical research has been conducted to determine whether this objective has been achieved. To date, research into pre-service teachers' confidence has largely focused on developing the knowledge to teach specific courses such as science or math (Brady & Bowd, 2005; Li & Kulm, 2008; Swetman, Munday, & Windham, 1993; Tekkaya, Cakiroglu, & Ozkan, 2004), and music (Ebbeck, Yim, & Lee, 2008). This focus on content knowledge is worth further investigation since these studies demonstrate that even with limited knowledge, pre-service teachers report feeling confident in their abilities (Li & Kulm, 2008). Other studies have shown that in-service teachers are significantly more confident than their pre-service teacher colleagues to teach specific subjects such as music (Ebbeck, et al., 2008). Such studies, although limited, would seem to indicate that the role of pre-service courses is a significant contributor to teachers' developing confidence. Ebbeck et al. (2008) also found that neither in-service nor pre-service teachers were overly confident in their self-assessments.

This previous research suggests that having knowledge is not a requirement for feeling confident about teaching subject matter and feeling confident is not a reflection of having sufficient knowledge (Brady & Bowd, 2005; Ebbeck, et al., 2008; Li & Kulm, 2008; Swetman et al., 1993; Tekkaya et al., 2004), which provides further focus for the ongoing consideration of the relationship between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and how each of these may change over time.

While some research has been done to examine confidence levels of pre-service teachers in relation to teaching specific subjects, there is very little empirical research available that reports about general confidence to teach. Efficacy is an indicator of skill, rather than self-perceived knowledge and confidence and some research about pre-service teachers' efficacy levels is available and related to the current study. But, since efficacy, knowledge, and confidence are distinctly different, we decided to focus on connections between knowledge acquisition and growth in confidence, since these measures can be indicated through self-assessments. However, efficacy or skill level might be better measured using the opinions of external evaluators such as faculty advisors or associate teachers, as observing teaching in context would be the best measure of efficacy or skills to teach.

Pre-service teachers' confidence and knowledge in a subject area are not interchangeable. Aside from other aspects of teachers' knowledge and confidence that we have investigated (Maynes et al., 2012, 2013, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c) we know of no empirical investigation into pre-service teachers' knowledge and confidence to address several of their duties, although some earlier studies have examined existing programs to support pre-service curriculum and have addressed many areas of professional growth, such as working with parents (see for example, Flanigan, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002).

As a result, in this study we asked pre-service teachers to respond to several items about their perceptions of both their knowledge and their confidence in relation to a teacher's role in several contexts. Specifically, the current paper addresses the knowledge and confidence this group of teachers brings to the issue of addressing bullying in the contexts of their professional practice and in relation to classroom misbehaviour generally.

Bullying Research Background

In relation to school bullying, Stuart et al. (1998) explain that disruptive behaviour in the classroom may include any student activity that "causes stress for teachers, interrupts the learning process and that leads teachers to make continual comments to students" (Stewart, Bend, McBride-Chang, Fielding, Deeds, & Westrick, 1998, p. 60). In their professional preparation programs, pre-service teachers may be taught that if they can successfully identify the steps involved in the escalation of a classroom disruption, the disruption may be either avoided or lessened and learning may be resumed by using either proactive or increasingly intrusive reactive strategies. For example, Myers (2014) identifies seven somewhat predictable stages in the escalation cycle of students' disruptive classroom behaviours. This cycle explains the steps that a student may go through as he/she misbehaves, suggesting that an effective teacher should be able to intervene at any stage of the escalation to defuse the situation and restore the focus on learning in the class.

Also, many researchers have developed scales for measuring problem behaviours in the classroom. For example, Wheldall and Merrett (1988) identified the types of classroom behaviours that primary teachers consider most disruptive to their teaching, finding that intrusions caused by eating, nonverbal noise, disobedience, talking out of turn, idleness/slowness, lack of punctuality, hindering others, physical aggression, untidiness, and being out of their assigned seats were instructionally disruptive behaviours in the teachers' perspectives. In another study, Houghton, Wheldall, and Merrett (1988) identified classroom behaviours that secondary school teachers identified as disruptive which showed many commonalities with the perceptions of elementary teachers but also highlighted verbal abuse as an additional behavioural concern that characterized older students' misbehaviours.

A decade later, Reed and Kirkpatrick (1998) identified perceptions of 17 of the most common misbehaviours in classrooms. From this work, they concluded that the troubling behaviours may not necessarily involve the student breaking rules but additionally may involve infractions that violated the implicit norms of the social situations in a learning environment. Among the most intolerable of the misbehaviours that were identified in this study were behaviours that disrupted teaching, affected student learning adversely, or that indicated that the offending student lacked the values and attitudes that the teachers considered proper in the context. In the same study, participants reported concerns about verbally aggressive behaviour that could lead to physical aggression, to be particularly problematic.

Several researchers and theorists have proposed models for addressing classroom discipline to produce positive behaviour to prioritize learning and motivation in the classroom and to address disruptive classroom behaviours. This group of researchers includes: Fred Jones (1987) (willing engagement in learning), Marvin Marshall (2001) (fostering responsible behaviour), William Glasser (1986, 1998) (control theory and choice theory; the power of positive choices), Spencer Kagan (2007) (working with students), and Paula Cook (2000, 2004, 2008) (helping students who exhibit neurological-based behaviours), among others.

Many of these researchers and theorists point out that it is critical to recognize the impact of special needs of some students as ways to manage behaviours that are considered by teachers. For example, Paula Cook specialized in teaching students with neurological-based behaviours that may cause classroom disruptions (2000, 2004, 2008a, 2008b). To address behaviours resulting from any of these conditions, Cook developed a model for classroom management that reflects some of the stages of escalation as identified by Myers and as also identified by other researchers (see for example, Greene, 2001). Her model is based on the principles of support to help students feel secure and on providing the conditions necessary for students to access the best possible learning. In this model, supports are specific to individual needs and focus on developing self-control skills. The popular resources related to *More Time to Teach* (Fink & Halpern, 2009), take a similar approach and identify sample responses to many types of classroom misbehaviours.

In this vein, Charles (2014) provides a list of fundamental questions that teachers should address to determine appropriate approaches to individual behavioural support needs. The Charles method and other approaches identified by Cook, Mayers, and Green in the studies that were mentioned previously, all take a similar approach, espousing interventions that promote a quick return to a productive classroom learning environment.

But, the question remains whether all new teachers are well equipped to address misbehaviours as they enter classrooms. Differences have been found between pre-service and in-service teachers in terms of attitudes and approaches to bullying as a specific type of misbehaviour in the classroom. For example, according to existing research, compared to in-service teachers, pre-service teachers report feeling inadequately prepared to deal with bullying situations due to a lack of confidence. However, pre-service teachers also perceive bullying to be a more serious problem than their more experienced counterparts (Curb, 2014). A study by Skinner, Babinski, and Gifford (2014) found that self-efficacy related to dealing with bullying was higher among teachers with graduate degrees. Furthermore, among teachers with limited experience, probability of intervening in bullying incidents was predicted by perceived efficacy more than by perceived threat associated with the situation (Duong & Bradshaw, 2013).

Such differences may simply reflect different degrees of experience in their role, but a lack of experience may mean that pre-service teachers will fail to intervene in bullying incidents, which could allow escalation of disruptive or dangerous behaviours. Importantly, evidence suggests that teachers may benefit from training in how to handle bullying that is designed for their experience level (Curb, 2014). It seems logical that pre-service teachers with different degrees of experience, as a result of different program routes, for example, may feel more or less prepared to deal with a variety of teacher responsibilities, including handling bullying. Due to their different levels of experience, they may require different styles of training or different supports as they move into full time employment in schools.

Research also suggests that all types of bullying (physical, verbal, and indirect) are reported less often by secondary students than by primary students (Rivers & Smith, 1994). For this reason, it is also reasonable to conclude that pre-service teachers enrolled in different divisions (primary/junior, junior/intermediate, or intermediate/senior) may have different levels of experience with bullying, and therefore different degrees of confidence in their ability to deal with bullying. Finally, some research suggests that teacher gender may influence their approach to managing instances of bullying as well (Yoon, Sulkowski, & Bauman, 2016).

The focus of proactive behavioural intervention strategies presented in previous research is consistently focused on the key purpose of ensuring good classroom management, to produce a

classroom climate that promotes learning for all students. With this focus in mind, we sought to examine the self-reported knowledge and confidence of our two groups of teacher candidates who acquired backgrounds about theory and practice in this critically important professional skill related specifically to knowledge and confidence of how to address instances of bullying, in two different formats during their respective teacher preparation programs.

Purpose

The aim of this study was to examine pre-service teachers' self-reported confidence in their ability to respond appropriately to bullying situations involving their students. Specifically, this paper examined whether confidence to respond to bullying differed according to teacher preparation program route (consecutive vs. concurrent), division of education program the pre-service teacher was enrolled in (primary/junior, junior/intermediate, or intermediate/senior), and/or gender of the pre-service teacher.

Method

Pre-service teachers' self-reported knowledge and confidence in several areas of teacher responsibility were assessed via an online questionnaire. Questions were answered using a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from 0 (definitely not) to 4 (definitely). Although several areas of professional practice were assessed, for the purpose of this paper, only questions pertaining to pre-service teachers' confidence in their ability to respond appropriately to suspected bullying incidents are addressed here.

Specifically, participants responded to four questions regarding their confidence to respond appropriately if they suspected bullying. They reported on their confidence related to suspicion that a student was being bullied: (1) at school, (2) off school property, or (3) that a student was bullying another student at school, or (4) off school property. Several questions addressing confidence to respond to other types of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual) were also included.

Limitations

Survey methodology may have some limitations that can influence validity, reliability and transferability of findings. Individual surveys, for example, may not be strong ways of determining trends over time. This limitation is often addressed by repeating surveys at different times to identify trends and changes, but this approach was not chosen for this study because of the uniquely historical characteristics of the 2 populations in this study, with program offerings at this university undergoing changes in design in response to new provincial accreditation policies. Surveys, and especially self-report surveys, may not provide strong cause-effect indications. Since the current study was comparative, rather than causal in nature, researchers felt that this usual limitation of survey methodology was mitigated. Other limitations of survey research methodology (e.g., access to the population of potential participants, lack of time to complete the survey, lack of funding to carry out the survey, and motivation of potential participants to engage with the survey) were addressed by ensuring a participant population size that was sufficiently robust to be representative of the total population.

Data Source

Data analyzed for the purpose of this investigation were collected from 183 participants who had completed or were completing either a concurrent (*N* = 111) or consecutive (*N* = 72) teacher preparation program at a Northern Ontario university. This is the home university of the researchers who were involved as instructors in both of the programs that were investigated. This group, therefore, constituted a convenience sample. In this context, both programs were about to undergo dramatic changes with the introduction of new teacher certification in this jurisdiction so the timing of this study was selected to provide a unique historical perspective of the outcomes of two distinctly different teacher preparation program routes.

Potential participants from concurrent and consecutive programs were invited to participate through an online link to their teacher preparation program and self-selected their involvement. The sample included males (*N* = 20) and females (*N* = 163) with an average age of approximately 23 years. Consecutive participants were, on average, about 2 years older than the concurrent pre-service participants. The relative proportion of participants of either gender was reflective of the overall enrolment in these courses across the university.

Results

Questions in this survey related to confidence to respond where the teacher suspected a student was being bullied and to confidence to address a student who was suspected of bullying others.

When asked about confidence in their ability to respond appropriately if they suspect that bullying is occurring, an independent-measures t-test indicated that consecutive program participants (*M* = 3.08, *SD* = .71) reported higher confidence, on average, than concurrent program participants (*M* = 2.75, *SD* = .79), *t*(181) = 2.812, *p* = .005. This general aspect of bullying, therefore, appeared to be related to the participants' program route. To analyze this finding in more detail, differences between participants from the two programs in terms of their confidence to respond to a student suspected of bullying versus being bullied were analyzed.

With respect to confidence in the ability to respond appropriately if a student is suspected of bullying another student, another independent-measures t-test demonstrated that consecutive program participants (*M* = 3.06, *SD* = .76) reported significantly higher confidence than concurrent program participants (*M* = 2.73, *SD* = .83, *t*(181) = 2.713, *p* = .007).

Similarly, results of another independent-measures t-test demonstrated that, with respect to confidence in the ability to respond appropriately if a student is suspected of being bullied, consecutive program participants (*M* = 3.10, *SD* = .73) reported significantly higher confidence than concurrent program participants (*M* = 2.78, *SD* = .77), *t*(181) = 2.744, *p* = .007.

According to the results of a repeated-measures t-test, regardless of program route, when asked about confidence in their ability to respond appropriately if they suspect that bullying is occurring, participants reported higher confidence, on average, when bullying was taking place at school (*M* = 2.91, *SD* = .78), as compared to when bullying was occurring off school property (*M* = 2.78, *SD* = .83), *t*(182) = 6.082, *p* = .000. Although it seems obvious that teacher candidates would be more confident in their ability to respond to bullying that happens at school, this finding suggests that they may be less confident in their ability to deal with cyber-bullying and that they may be uncertain of school related jurisdiction with issues that happen off school property, despite the potential of such incidents to influence the social interactions on the school's property.

Again, regardless of program route, when asked about confidence in their ability to respond appropriately if they suspect that sexual abuse is occurring, results of a repeated-measures t-test showed that participants reported higher confidence, on average, in their ability to respond to a student who is being abused (M = 2.84, SD = .91), as compared to their ability to respond to a student who is committing sexual abuse (M = 2.64, SD = 1.00), t(182) = 5.020, p = .000. This might imply that teacher candidates are more confident in their ability to deal with victims rather than perpetrators or that current bullying support programs put visible emphasis on showing students ways to seek help if they are being bullied but that insufficient attention may be given to students who, for whatever reason, may be perpetrators of bullying. As well, according to the results of another repeated-measures t-test, teacher candidates reported significantly more confidence in their ability to respond appropriately to victims of abuse of all kinds (emotional, physical, sexual) (M = 2.88, SD = 0.85) than to address perpetrators of sexual abuse (M = 2.64, SD = 1.00), t(182) = 6.096, p = .000. This finding might suggest that teacher candidates are more confident in dealing with victims of any type of abuse than with perpetrators of sexual abuse specifically. However, because no questionnaire items asked specifically about confidence in dealing with perpetrators of other types of abuse (emotional, physical), it is difficult to make definite conclusions about confidence in relation to responding to these types of abusers.

Interestingly, with respect to confidence in their ability to respond appropriately to suspected bullying, regardless of program route, a repeated-measures t-test demonstrated that participants did not report significant differences in their confidence to respond to someone who is being bullied (M = 2.91, SD = .77) compared to someone who is bullying (M = 2.86, SD = .82), t(182) = 1.849, p = .066. In other words, there is no difference in confidence when it comes to responding to bullying, regardless of whether one is responding to the bully or the victim of bullying. However, some relationships were evident when we examined correlations in the data when considering the entire group of participants. There was a weak to moderate positive correlation between teacher candidates' confidence to respond appropriately to suspected bullying and both their confidence to intervene effectively in physical confrontations involving students, r(180) = .340, p = .000, and their confidence to intervene effectively in verbal confrontations involving students, r(180) = .433, p = .000. In other words, pre-service teachers' confidence in dealing with both verbal and physical student confrontations was similar to their confidence in dealing with bullying in general. It is not at all surprising that pre-service teachers feel more confident dealing with verbal bullying than with physical bullying situations, as the potential for injury of students or the teacher is a justifiable concern when physical aggression is involved.

We felt that both confidence to respond appropriately if a student was suspected of being bullied and confidence to respond appropriately if a student was suspected of bullying another student were surprisingly strong in these two groups of pre-service teachers, with average confidence scores only slightly below the highest score of 4 on the scale we used to determine their perceptions. This level of confidence may be indicative of on-the-job experiences that these pre-service teachers have had during practicum placements, and is consistent with the research by Li and Kulm (2008) who found considerable disparity between pre-service teachers' knowledge and confidence, with those groups expressing confidence even when they may lack related knowledge. Other aspects of their preparation programs, such as optional workshops about bullying in schools, or more general discussions of classroom management strategies in various courses may have contributed to this self-perception. It could also be anticipated that

teachers would, over time, become increasingly aware of variations, subtleties, and legislation related to bullying and effective methods to address it and that these new areas of knowledge may influence self-perceptions of confidence.

In this study, confidence in ability to respond to bullying did not differ significantly by the division the pre-service teacher was enrolled in or by gender. This was somewhat surprising as we thought it was possible that divisional differences would be evident based on earlier work by Houghton, Wheldall, and Merrett (1988) and Reed and Kirkpatrick (1998), which showed different levels of the expectation that students comply with implicit norms of behaviours across the age groups of students.

It may also be important to re-investigate the trend found in this study as the new two-year (four semester) approach to teacher certification is implemented across the province and as fewer Faculties of Education offer traditional concurrent program routes. Two-year programs will involve universal increases in classroom practicum time for the consecutive program pre-service teachers, affording greater opportunity for possible exposure to problematic behaviours in classroom and school related contexts. It can be anticipated that more exposure to these behaviours will influence pre-service teacher's knowledge and confidence related to handing such behaviours effectively.

Discussion

The last two decades have produced a great deal of empirical research about many aspects of bullying of and by youth. Previous studies have attempted to define bullying (Farrington & Ttolfi, 2009; Olweus, 1978, 1991, 1993), examine the influence of peer ecology on bullying (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003) and assess school climates where bullying occurs with some frequency (Leff, Power, Costigan & Manz, 2003). Recent studies have also examined the variants of bullying that relate to social media access among youth (David-Ferdont & Hertz, 2007). Studies have measured the extent of the academic impacts of being a bully and of being bullied (Juvonen, 2010) through strategies involving physical, or verbal bullying, or through spreading and building on rumors. In response to increasing awareness of the issue of bullying and its prevalence and impact on youth, many jurisdictions that provide youth related services have studied the impact of the implementation of bullying prevention programs in schools (see for example, Farrington & Ttofi, 2010; Orpinas, Horne & Staniszewski, 2003) and the evidence of impact of laws and policies designed to address instances of bullying (Limber & Small, 2003). These types of information about the topic are bolstered by empirical or conceptual data and are typically studied by pre-service teachers in the context of teacher preparation programs.

However, we know of no other studies specifically designed to assess the confidence of new teachers to address bullying instances they may experience in their classrooms, although several studies have shown the need for intensive teacher training to prevent bullying and to recognize signs of its impact in children and youth (Adi et al., 2007a, 2007b; Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Diekstra, 2008a, 2008b; Scheckner at al., 2002). Similarly, previous studies have shown that training improves teachers' reliability in picking up on symptoms of bullying (Scheckner at al., 2002; Stage & Quiroz, 1997) but this ability is a measure of efficacy, rather than a measure of confidence, which was the focus of the current study.

As we consider sources of the evident confidence in new teachers, who were participants in the current study, to address bullying in schools, it is worth noting that a variety of analytical studies provide some guidance about strategies that have been found to be effective with this

behavioural issue. In a UK report related to mental health issues in school-aged populations, Weare and Nind (2011) examined over 500 reports of research related to bullying and mental health issues in school populations. From this broad data bank, they isolated 52 studies based on their meta-analysis inclusion criteria, identifying studies of intervention programs in the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. A majority of these studies provided statistical analyses of the interventions and these researchers concluded that 28 approaches/programmes for interventions had a significant effect on measures that were investigated. Analysis of these intervention summaries shows some notable commonalities. For example, almost all of the 28 proven strategies/programmes included the following features:

- a whole school approach;

- involvement of parents;

- change over time;

- long term commitment to training for impactful adults charged with intervention implementation;

- ties to classroom ethos and management strategies;

- a focus on interventions in the junior to intermediate aged school populations;

- high standards for social behaviours in the classrooms and schools;

- the identification of risk behaviours (including substance abuse prevention) as a means of creating a universally understood standard of behaviour for the context;

- a focus on self-control;

- opportunities for some level of peer intervention; and

- a basis in social or behavioural theories.

These features of effective interventions may provide a solid basis for further investigation of the specific learning (knowledge) that has led to the self-reported confidence levels of the pre-service teachers who were involved in the current study. This could help us to determine what aspects of the teacher preparation programs might be isolated as contributors to their understanding of effective intervention strategies when they identify the bully or the bullied, and determine appropriate interventions, in their early career teaching.

In the context of this study, comparisons were made between pre-service teachers from two program routes: consecutive and concurrent. The most notable differences between these two programs include time on practicum differences, average age of participants in each program, and the typical number of classrooms that participants experience during their program practicum components. While these variables were not examined in the current study, these factors may have influenced the participants' perceptions of their readiness to address bullying in the pre-service contexts and projections of readiness to address it as they enter the profession. All aspects of confidence in this study demonstrated a higher degree of confidence among consecutive pre-service teachers. These differences may have been due to any or all of several factors. The consecutive participants were, on average, two years older than concurrent students. This difference alone may have allowed them to project more authority in contexts where they needed to address bullying, since some of the concurrent pre-service teachers' early program exposure to students and classrooms would have been when most of them were

between the ages of 17 and 18. Also, while the concurrent students had 6 more weeks of total practicum time during their five-year program, they did not have the benefit of concentrated time over a single year with one group of children or adolescence. Rather, concurrent students had increasing longer periods of time in classrooms (e.g., 2 weeks, 2 weeks, 2 weeks, 3 weeks, 6 weeks) but usually visited different classrooms, in different schools, and, of course, with different students, during each year of their program. In contrast, the consecutive pre-service teachers had, at most, two classrooms to teach in during their practicum placements. This difference leads us to conclude that knowing students better, and therefore having time to observe and understand the dynamics of the class, may be a strong contributor to early career teachers' expressions of confidence to support students who are being bullied or to address students who are bullying others.

Educational Importance of the Study

Consecutive program participants reported significantly higher levels of confidence in their ability to respond appropriately if they suspected that a student was being bullied or was bullying another student. Whether this difference represents a more general difference in confidence levels between participants from the two program routes in a variety of professional practice areas, or a specific difference in confidence related to ability to respond to bullying incidents, it is important for future research to examine what factors are responsible for the higher confidence levels among consecutive program participants. We hypothesize from this study that participants' age and knowledge of the students and classroom dynamics may have been the two differences that accounted for the pre-service teachers' variations in their confidence to address bullying.

Future research should also examine whether confidence to deal with bullying scenarios depends on types of bullying, as past research has demonstrated that relational bullying is perceived by pre-service teachers as less serious than other types of bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). As a result, pre-service teachers often report that teacher intervention is more important in overt than in relational bullying situations (Kahn, Jones, & Wieland, 2012). Additionally, this study did not examine specific types of bullying such as cyber-bullying, which may introduce another dynamic into teacher preparation.

The links between weakened academic achievement and bullying are clear. In an extensive UCLA study (Juvonen, 2010) polled 2300 students in 11 Los Angeles–area public middle schools. Researchers asked the students to rate whether or not they get bullied on a four-point scale and to list which of their fellow students were bullied the most—physically, verbally and as the subject of nasty rumors. A high level of bullying was consistently associated with lower grades across the three years of middle school. Students who were rated the most-bullied by their peers performed substantially worse academically than their peers. In fact in relation to marks, across all three years of middle school, a one-point increase on the four-point bullying scale was associated with a 1.5-point decrease in GPA for academic subjects such as math. This study also found that nearly three in four teenagers were bullied online at least once during a recent 12-month period, but only 10 percent of these students reported such cyber-bullying to parents or other adults. The probability of getting bullied online was also substantially higher for those who had been the victims of other forms of school bullying, which also correlated to weaker school attendance.

It is clear from previous studies and from the current study, that we cannot be vague or

unfocused in our efforts to build confidence in new teachers to address various types of bullying in our schools and to ensure that these new professionals develop the knowledge to support their growing confidence to address various types of bullying that start in school contexts or impact our schools from community contexts. Further research is needed to determine the relative impact on the new teacher's age and knowledge of his/her students to determine if these relate to confidence to address bullying.

References

Adi, Y., Killoran, A., Janmohamed, K., & Stewart-Brown, S. (2007a). *Systematic review of the effectiveness of interventions to promote mental wellbeing in primary schools: Universal approaches which do not focus on violence or bullying*. London: National Institute for Clinical Excellence.

Adi, Y., Schrader McMillan, A., Kiloran, A., & Stewart-Brown, S. (2007b). *Systematic review of the effectiveness of interventions to promote mental wellbeing in primary schools: Universal approaches with focus on prevention of violence and bullying*. London: National Institute for Clinical Excellence.

Bauman, S., & Del Rio, A. (2006). Preservice teachers' responses to bullying scenarios: Comparing physical, verbal, and relational bullying. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98*(1), 219-231. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.98.1.219

Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2014). *Growing as a teacher: Goals and pathways of ongoing teacher learning*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Bennett, N., & Carre, C. (1993). *Learning to teach*. London: Routledge.

Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2007). What works in character education? *Journal of Research in Character Education, 5*(1), 29 -48.

Blömeke, S., Suhl, U., & Kaiser, G. (2011). Teacher education effectiveness: Quality and equity of future primary teachers' mathematics and mathematics pedagogical content knowledge. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(2), 154–171.

Brady, P., & Bowd, A. (2005). Mathematics anxiety, prior experience and confidence to teach mathematics among pre-service education students. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 11*(1), 37-46.

Charles, C. M. (2014). *Building classroom discipline 11e*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

Cook, P. (2004). *Behaviour, learning, and teaching: Applied studies in FAS/FAE* (Distance education curricula). Winnipeg, Canada: Red River College.

Cook, P. (2008a). *Sensory integration dysfunction: A layperson's guide* (2nd ed.; Booklet). Available from author, Paula Cook. Internet contact: pcook59@shaw.ca.

Cook, P. (2008b). *A layperson's guide to what to do when someone begins to rage* (2nd ed.; Booklet). Available from author, Paula Cook. Internet contact: pcook59@shaw.ca.

Cook, P., Kellie, R., Jones, K., & Goossen, L. (2000). *Tough kids and substance abuse*. Winnipeg, MB, Canada: Additions Foundation of Manitoba.

Curb, L.A. (2014). *Perceptions of bullying: A comparison of pre-service and in-service teachers* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest LLC. (UMI No. 3641314)

David-Ferdon C., & Hertz, M. F. (2007). Electronic media, violence, and adolescents: An emerging public health problem. *Adolescent Health, 41*.

Day, C., & Gu. Q. (2010). *The New Lives of Teachers*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Deer, F., Falkenberg, T., McMillan, B., Sims, L. (Eds.). (2014). *Sustainable well-being: Concepts, issues, perspectives, and educational practices*. Winnipeg, MB: ESWB Press.

Diekstra, R. (2008a). Effectiveness of school-based social and emotional education programmes worldwide: Part one, a review of meta-analytic literature. *In Social and Emotional Education: An*

international analysis. Santander: Fundacion Marcelino Botin, pp.255-284.

Diekstra, R. (2008b). Effectiveness of school-based social and emotional education programmes worldwide: Part two, teaching social and emotional skills worldwide: A meta-analytic review of effectiveness. *In Social and Emotional Education: An international analysis*. Santander: Fundacion Marcelino Botin, pp. 285-312.

Duong, J., & Bradshaw, C.P. (2013). Using the extended parallel process model to examine teachers' likelihood of intervening in bullying. *Journal of School Health, 83*(6), 422-429.

Ebbeck, M., Yim, H. Y. B., & Lee, L. W. M (2008). Music in early childhood education:

Teachers' levels of confidence and happiness. *Australian Journal of Music Education, 2*, 22-30.

Falkenberg, T. (2015). Handbook of Canadian research in initial teacher education. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association for Teacher Education.

Farrington, D. P., & Ttolfi, M. M. (2009). School-based programs to reduce bullying and victimization. Campbell Systematic Reviews 2009:6 10.4073/csr.2009.6

Fink, J., & Halpern, J. (2009). More time to teach: Managing conflict with students. DVD. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/MORE-TIME-TEACH-Managing-Conflict/dp/B003IGQ3J0

Flanigan, C. B. (2007). Preparing preservice teachers to partner with parents and communities: An analysis of college of education faculty focus groups. *School Community Journal, 17*(2), 89-109.

Glasser, W. (1986). *Control theory in the classroom*. New York: Perennial Library.

Glasser, W. (1998). *Choice theory in the classroom revised*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Kagan, S., Kyle, P., & Scott, S. (2004/2007). *Win-win discipline*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing.

Henry, G. T., Bastian, K. C., & Fortner, C. K. (2011). Stayers and leavers: Early-career teacher effectiveness and attrition. *Educational Researcher, 40*(6), 271-280.

Hill, H. C., Rowan, B., & Ball, D. (2005). Effects of teachers' Mathematical knowledge for teaching on student achievement, *American Educational Research Journal, 42*(2), 371-406.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Jones, K. P., & Reed, R. P. (2002). Teachers involving parents (TIP): Results of an inservice teacher education program for enhancing parental involvement. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 18*, 843-867.

Houghton, S., Wheldall, K., & Merrett, F. (1998). Classroom behaviors which secondary teachers say they find most troublesome. *Journal of Educational Research, 14*(3), 297-312.

Jones, F. (1987). *Positive classroom discipline*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Juvonen, J. (2010). Victims of bullying suffer academically as well, UCLA psychologists report. Retrieved from http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/victims-of-bullying-suffer-academically-168220

Kahn, J. H., Jones, J. L., & Wieland, A. L. (2012). Preservice teachers' coping styles and their responses to bullying. *Psychology in the Schools, 49*(8), 784-793. doi:10.1002/pits.21632

Krauss, S., Brunner, M., Kunter, M., Baumert, J., Blum, W., Neubrand, M., & Jordan, A. (2008). Pedagogical content knowledge and content knowledge of secondary mathematics teachers. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*(3), 716.

Leff, S. S., Power T. J., Costigan T. E., & Manz P. H. (2003). Assessing the climate of the playground and lunchroom: Implications for bullying prevention programming. *School Psychology Review, 32*, 418-430.

Li, Y., & Kulm, G. (2008). Knowledge and confidence of pre-service mathematics teachers: The case of fraction division. *Mathematics Education, 40*, 833-843.

Limber, S. P., & Small, M. A. (2003). State laws and policies to address bullying in schools. *School Psychology Review, 32*(3), 445-455.

Marshall, M. (2001). *Discipline without stress, punishments, or rewards: How teachers and parents promote responsibility & learning*. Los Alamitos, CA: Piper Press.

Maynes, N., & Hatt, B. E. (2011). Grounding program change in students' learning: A model for the conceptual shift in thinking that will support valuable program change in response to faculty of education reviews. In T. Falkenberg & H. Smits (Eds.), *The question of evidence in research in*

teacher education in the context of teacher education program review in Canada (2 vols.). Winnipeg, MB: Faculty of Education of the University of Manitoba.

Maynes, N., & Hatt, B. E., (2012). Shifting the focus to student learning: Characteristics of effective teaching practice as identified by experienced pre-service faculty advisors, *Brock Journal, 22*(1), 93-110.

Maynes, N., Mottonen, A-L., Sharpe, G. (2015). Dealing with students both verbally and physically: A comparison of perceptions of readiness to address classroom management issues. *Journal of Marketing and HR, 1*(1), 1-9.

Maynes, N., Mottonen, A-L., & Sharpe, G. (2015). A comparative examination of teacher candidates' professional practicum experiences in two program models, *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 11*(1), 36-52.

Maynes, N., Mottonen, A-L., Sharpe, G. (2015). Confidence to differentiate and knowledge to assess: Do these differ between concurrent and consecutive teacher candidates? *Journal of Studies in Education, 5*(1), 74-91.

Maynes, N., Mottonen, A-L, Sharpe, G. & Curwen, T. (2013). Educational software use: A comparative examination of teacher candidates' knowledge and confidence in the use of educational software. *International Journal of Science, Commerce, and Humanities, 1*(8).

Maynes, N., Curwen, T. & Sharp, G. (2012). Examining pre-service teachers' self-reported knowledge and confidence to communicate with parents. *In Education Journal, 18*(2), 217.

Myers, L. (no date). *How to deal with students with behavior issues*. Retrieved from www.wikihow.com/Deal-With-Students-With-Behavior-Issues

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, (2016). *Preventing bullying through science, policy, and practice*. F. Rivera & S. Le Menestret (Eds.).

Nipissing University Practice Teaching Handbook, (2014). Retrieved from http://www.nipissingu.ca/academics/faculties/schulich-school-of-education/bed-programs/bed-consecutive/practicum/Pages/Practice-Teaching-Handbook.aspx

Olweus D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Ontario College of Teachers (2015). Standards of practice. Retrieved from http://www.oct.ca/public/professional-standards/standards-of-practice

Olweus, D. (1978). *Aggression in the schools: Bullies and whipping boys*. Washington, DC: Hemisphere.

Olweus, D. (1991). Bully/victim problems among school children: Basic facts and effects of a school based intervention program. In D. J. Pepler and K. H. Rubin (Eds.), *Development and Treatment of Childhood Aggression*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. pp. 441-448.

Pollock, K. (2015). The new "new teacher". In N. Maynes & B. E. Hatt (Eds.), *The Complexity of Hiring, Supporting, and Retaining New Teachers in Canada* (pp. 91-112). Canadian Association for Teacher Education/Association canadienne pour la formation à l'enseignement.

Reed, D. F., & Kirkpatrick, C. (1998). Disruptive students in the classroom: A review of the literature. *Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium*, Richmond: VA.

Rivers, I., & Smith, P.K. (1994). Types of bullying behaviour and their correlates. *Aggressive Behavior, 20*, 359-368.

Scheckner, S., Rollin, S., Kaiser-Ulrey, C., & Wagner, R. (2002). School violence in children and adolescents: A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of current interventions. *Journal of School Violence, 1*(2), 5–33.

Schulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15*(2), 4-14.

Skinner, A. T., Babinski, L. M., & Gifford. E. J. (2014). Teachers' expectations and self-efficacy for working with bullies and victims. *Psychology in the Schools, 51*(1), 72-84. doi:10.1002/pits.21735

Stage, S. A., & Quiroz, D. R. (1997). A meta-analysis of interventions to decrease disruptive classroom behaviour in public education settings. *School Psychology Review*, (26), 333–368.

Swetman, B., Munday, R., & Windham, R. (1993) Math anxious teachers: Breaking the cycle. *College Student Journal, 22*(4), 421–427.

Stewart, S. M., Bond, M. H., McBride-Chang, C., Fielding, R., Deeds, O., & Westrick, J. (1998). Parent and adolescent contributors to teenage misconduct in western and Asian high school students in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 22*(4), 847-869.

Tatto, M. T., & Senk, S. L. (2011). The mathematics education of future primary and secondary teachers: Methods and findings from the Teacher Education and Development Study in Mathematics. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(2), 121-137.

Tekkaya, C., Cakiroglu, J., & Ozkan, O. (2004). Turkish pre-service science teachers' understanding of science and their confidence in teaching it. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 30*(1), 57-66.

Tkachenko, A. (2015). *An exploratory study of the perceptions of secondary school mathematics teachers on the roles of mathematical content knowledge and mathematical pedagogical content knowledge in instruction*. Unpublished Master of Education thesis, Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario.

Van Manen, M., (1982). Phenomenological pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry, 23*(3).

Van Manen, M., (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Ontario, Canada: Althouse Press.

Weare, K., & Nind, M., (2011). *Promoting mental health of children and adolescents through schools and school based interventions: Evidence outcomes*. Retrieved from http://www.regione.veneto.it/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=274c81c5-3846-49e4-89f5-171e91612933&groupId=10793

Wheldall, K., & Merrett, F., (1988). Which classroom behaviors do primary school teachers say they find most troublesome? *Educational Review, 40*(1), 13-17.

Yoon, J., Sulkowski, M. L., & Bauman, S. A. (2016). Teachers' responses to bullying incidents: Effects of teacher characteristics and contexts. *Journal of School Violence, 15*, 91-113. doi:10.1080/15388220.2014.963592

Nancy Maynes is an Associate Professor at Nipissing University's Schulich School of Education. After a career as a teacher, consultant, coordinator, and school administrator in elementary and secondary panels, she joined the Faculty of Education. Current research interests include teacher preparation, curriculum, and teacher hiring. Her doctoral studies were completed at OISE/U of T, with thesis work related to improving self-direction in students.

Anna-Liisa Mottonen has a Master's degree in Human Development, and an undergraduate degree in Psychology, both from Laurentian University. She is currently completing a Ph.D. in Education at Nipissing University. For her dissertation, she is examining self-directed learning among first year postsecondary students from a personality perspective. Anna-Liisa currently works as an Outreach Officer at the North East Local Health Integration Network, and teaches psychology and statistics courses at Nipissing University. She feels that her background in research methods and statistical analyses has prepared her well for understanding the implications of research findings.