

Actions Speak Louder Than Words?:

Investigate the Relationship Between Bullying and Cyberbullying and

Deal with School Bullying Through SEL Programs

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Abstract

With the popularization of the internet and other electronic devices among adolescents, cyberbullying has become a severe threat to teenagers' well-being. Scholars debate the relationships between cyberbullying and bullying. The project aims to define the essence of cyberbullying and clarify its relationship with face-to-face bullying through reviewing previous studies.

The findings are inclined to the statement that cyberbullying is an extension of traditional bullying, which results from negative personal emotions and interpersonal interactions. With this hypothesis, the focus of this current project is to improve teenagers' real-life relationships with their peers. By examining the characteristics of students involved in bullying, their lack of social and emotional competencies is recognized. As a result, the primary objective of the project is to improve students' social and emotional competencies. To achieve the target, one anti-bullying Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program is designed to develop students' social and emotional skills through pet-owner relationships.

Keywords: bullying, cyberbullying, SEL, pet-owner relationships, adolescents

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background and Significance

With the rapid progress in the field of information and technology (IT), the internet has been a crucial and essential tool we use every day for our social life. While providing convenience and speed for communication worldwide, the internet also causes a wide variety of problematic human behaviors and social phenomena, such as internet fraud, network addiction, and cyberbullying.

Adolescents, who were born in the era of computer technology, are the primary victims of bullying online. According to a 2005 report published by the Media Awareness Network, youth spend an average of 2 to 4 hours online each day (Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010), and most of them regard the internet as an indispensable platform for their social communication. They can engage in various social activities, such as online games, online forums, and live chats to have fun and make friends. At the same time, the connection among individuals through this online network also allows for bullying to “follow them from school to home” (Tokunaga, 2010, p.277), which may considerably affect their life and study. Considering the vulnerability and sensitivity during this period, adolescents, compared to adults, are more prone to be exposed to and hurt by abuse and victimization in cyberspace. Overall, most studies, conducted with different age groups, with varying definitions of cyberbullying, estimate that 20% to 40% of adolescents have been cyberbullied at least once during their school lives (Tokunaga, 2010).

Unlike bullying, cyberbullying is a more recent topic, with relatively a few

studies being conducted prior to 2004 (Bauman, Toomey, & Walker, 2013; Tokunaga, 2010). The issue of cyberbullying entered the public view in different countries with the media's coverage of a number of adolescent suicide incidents associated with cyberbullying. The impacts, prevalence, and frequency of the tragedies started to alarm the society and draw the attention of researchers who began to recognize the scope of the damages.

Studies found that involvement in cyberbullying, both as victims and bullies, are often associated with risky or aggressive behaviors, and can result in harmful physical and mental problems (e.g., Bauman et al., 2013; Hase, Goldberg, Smith, Stuck, & Campaign, 2015; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015; Mishna et al., 2010; Smalley, Warren, & Barefoot, 2017). In consideration of the characteristics of the internet, such as a large audience, anonymity, less supervision, and longer continuity (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Sticca & Perren, 2013; Tokunaga, 2010), some researchers suggest that cyberbullying, as a distinct, new form of bullying, has more harmful effects than traditional bullying (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Campbell, Spears, Slee, Butler, & Kift, 2012; Dempsey, Sulkowski, Nichols, & Storch, 2009). On the other hand, opponents argue that in most cases, bullying online represents an extension of traditional face-to-face bullying in school, and its impacts have been overestimated by the media coverage (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Li, 2007; Olweus, 2012). Thus, there exists a debate centered on the relationship between bullying and cyberbullying, which I will discuss further.

As a significant and severe social issue, there are a lot of studies focusing on the

physical and mental outcomes of cyberbullying as they relate to bullies and victims.

However, very few articles deal with the debate of the relationship between cyberbullying and traditional bullying in school from the perspective of education systematically, which leads to the ambiguity and overlapping of definitions.

To define the concept and essence of cyberbullying can help the public to thoroughly understand the phenomenon and come up with practical prevention and intervention methods and plans. The literature review that follows in Chapter 2 aims to examine the research about cyberbullying in terms of definitions, reasons, and outcomes, while comparing cyberbullying and bullying from the perspectives of gender, prevalence, age, and impacts. The purpose of the examination and comparison is to reach a comprehensive understanding of the essence of cyberbullying. Some possible solutions are provided accordingly to educators, parents, and students to cooperate together to prevent, intervene, and reduce the harm of cyberbullying.

Rationale

I first ‘witnessed’ bullying through some terrible videos shot by the bullies in some rural areas of China a couple of years ago. In these videos, a group of students, usually aged at about 14 or 15, took turns to strike, slap, and kick the victims. What is more astounding is that while physically inflicting damage on the victims, they laughed, satirized, and videotaped the whole process of bullying without shame or fear, but instead with pride and fun. In some instances, girls had their clothes torn, photos taken of their naked bodies, and pictures sent to others. Most of the videos were uploaded to the internet by the perpetrators to show off as if they were the

heroes, or to humiliate the victims as revenge for their “disobedience” in school.

With a few cases appearing in social media continuously, the users of these platforms became outraged. They appealed to protect the victims and charged the bullies with intentional assault and reputation infringement. Sadly, some school boards argued that the online videos or pictures were taken outside the school, so it was not the school’s responsibility to deal with this kind of situation. With the pressure from the social network users from different cities, most perpetrators were arrested by the local police. However, without severe physical injuries, as juveniles, most of the bullies just got a verbal warning and some slight criticism. Meanwhile, some victims gave up their rights to charge the bullies, because they, or their families, regarded the incident as disgraceful and humiliating. As a result, among all incidents, just a few high school students who were over 18 were sentenced for a couple of months. Even though the phenomenon of bullying was censured severely by the public, no valid methods were applied to solve the problem, and worse yet, the school system largely ignored the issue, claiming it was not their responsibility to settle this issue.

Through the reports of social organizations, such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and studies of scholars in the fields of education, psychology, and health, I found that cases of bullying are prevalent worldwide and the outcomes are dreadful to the well-being of adolescents. Moreover, in consideration to the data in different studies indicated that the humiliating words, pictures, and videos exposed to the public were just the tip of the iceberg, it is hard to imagine how many boys and

girls are threatened without the public's knowledge.

At first, I believed that most people, including me, would pay attention to the physical harm implemented to the victims, such as the footprints on their uniforms, the slap on their face, and the wounds on their arms. Nevertheless, my perspective changed when I was in my practicum in a high school in Beijing. After getting along with these Grade 10 students and recalling the memory of my middle school and high school life, I started to realize how fragile and sensitive those adolescents are despite their carefree appearance. I noticed that students of this age, no matter boys or girls, have a pretty strong sense of self-pride, care enormously about their image in front of others, and feel ups and downs according to the reactions from others around them. Even a glance, a whisper, or a thoughtless comment from others can lead them to make a blind connection to their own appearances, words, and actions. They attached great importance to interpersonal relationships, treasured friendship, and wanted to gain popularity in class. Some of them consulted me when they were in trouble, and I found that most of their questions were related to 'relationships' with their peers, for example, how to fix the relationships with their 'enemies' in class, how to apologize to a friend, and how to get along with acquaintances. In consideration of the characteristics of the students of this age group, I realized that some victims compromise to the bullies because they want to stop the nightmare from school, which otherwise might be spread on the internet. However, more and more incidents indicated that bullying would not simply end with their obedience, as it follows them everywhere through the internet. Therefore, I started to think, in terms of bullying,

what is the relationship between bullying and cyberbullying? Which one hurts more?

Does action indeed speak louder than words?

To understand the stance of those who were bullied, I searched for their real experiences on the Internet. On the website “Cyberbullying Research Center,” many victims posted the experiences and feelings of being cyberbullied, and some parents posted the incidents of their children and asked for help. Among all of them, a 13-year-old girl just wrote one sentence as “It feels like you could die inside,” (Cyberbullying Research Center, n.d.) which can sadly summarize the feeling of many of these teenagers. Through their descriptions, I can feel their fear, helplessness, and despair. Very few victims who went through the soreness encouraged others to hold a positive attitude and stand for themselves, but most of them just showed their agony desperately and mentioned the attempt to commit suicide as they cannot see the hope to survive from the endless harassment. Unlike scars on their bodies, their suffering inside, which may not be distinguished merely through their behaviors or appearances, can be more troubling and heart-breaking.

As a pre-service teacher, personally, I think schools and educators should take responsibility to solve the problem as the objectives of education are not just academic success, but optimistic characters, healthy habits, and sound in body and mind. To reach the objectives, the issue about cyberbullying should be examined and studied more explicitly along with traditional bullying, with consideration of the characteristics of the bullies, the victims, the victim-bullies, and the witnesses.

Afterward, specific in-school methods and plans should be designed and adapted to

deal with the problem.

Project Overview

In the following literature review, 36 studies addressing the definitions, reasons, and outcomes of school bullying (include traditional bullying and cyberbullying) will be reviewed, and the essence of cyberbullying and its relationships with traditional bullying will be examined through comparing it with traditional bullying from aspects of gender, prevalence, age, and impacts. To be specific, three research questions are proposed:

1. What is the definition of traditional bullying? What is the definition of cyberbullying?
2. What is the reason or motivation of bullying?
3. What are the differences between bullying and cyberbullying regarding prevalence, gender, age, or impacts?

In Chapter 2, some basic theories of social and emotional learning also will be reviewed, and the critical role of it can play in maintaining students' mental health is recognized.

Along with the findings of Chapter 2, in Chapter 3, one SEL program is designed. Some concrete and practical methods and plans combined with different subjects in the curriculum will be provided to prevent, intervene and reduce the harm of cyberbullying.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Method

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to explore the essence of cyberbullying by examining its definition and its relationships with traditional bullying.

To get a broad idea and a variety of opinions on this issue, I started my project from researching. The fact that some concepts or ideas are expressed by different terms makes the process of identifying terms difficult and complex. For example, to refer to adolescents, different terms, such as teenagers, middle school students, high school students, youth, and youngsters can be used interchangeably. To make it lucid and logical, I searched on the Internet for the definitions of the key terms to find some synonyms or related expressions. To get access to more available information, I searched on the UVic library advanced engine with the search terms: cyberbullying/bullying online/bully on cyberspace/electronic bullying, adolescents/teenagers/middle school/high school/youth/youngsters with the limiters of the full text. To find the most current studies, I limited the time of the published papers from 2007.

For the search outcomes containing the terms, I first examined them from the titles and abstracts and eliminated some irrelevant ones, such as the ones which included only one key term in the titles but the articles ended up being about other topics. After examining the titles, I selected 56 articles and started to read the abstracts to see their relevance to my topic, in the meantime, the reference lists of these papers were also examined to find some older but fundamental and influential articles. I

selected the articles for extensive reading based on the following criteria:

1. Whether the research was conducted in school settings or could be applied in school settings instead of hospital or family settings.
2. Whether the subjects of the research, both the perpetrators and victims, were middle school or high school students.
3. Whether the researchers clarify the definition of traditional bullying and cyberbullying.

After that, I chose 36 research articles which were the most related to my research questions. At the same time, I searched online for some overall statistics, recent news, and possible solutions through the websites of some organizations, such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Cyberbullying Research Center.

Findings

The definition of bullying. Research about bullying is prevalent worldwide, and the definition of bullying is well-accepted by scholars.

Olweus (1993) defined bullying as aggressive behaviors intended to harm another person which is repeated over time and involves a power imbalance. Through bullying, the influential individuals or groups (bullies) “use a variety of methods to gain superiority over their physically, emotionally or socially weak victims” (Olweus, 1991, 1992, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015, p.2). As a major public concern for adolescents in the USA, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014) defined bullying among youth as “unsolicited antagonistic behavior (i.e.,

physical, verbal, or relational/social aggression) by another youth or group of youth that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated and typically results in the targeted youth experiencing physical, psychological, social, and/or educational harm.” Here, we can summarize some basic elements of bullying. First, bullying is a kind of aggressive behavior inflicted to harm others. Second, it involves a power imbalance between the bullies and the victims. Last, the behavior is repeated or likely to repeat over time.

There are mainly two kinds of bullying, namely, direct bullying, such as physical and verbal bullying, and indirect bullying, such as social or relational isolation (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). According to Bonanno and Hymel (2013), compared to direct bullying, negative feelings are associated more closely with indirect bullying and victimization.

Being involved in bullying, as victims, perpetrators, or victim-bullies, can lead to many destructive effects. The harmful impacts can be classified into two main categories, increasing the rate of risky behaviors, and causing physical and mental problems. For risky behaviors, one study conducted by Smalley, Warren, and Barefoot (2017) suggested that bullying is associated with a wide variety of risky behaviors, such as substance abuse, self-harm, suicide ideation, and weapon use. These findings are echoed by Ybarra, Diener-West, and Leaf (2007). At the same time, truancy and suspension rate among students who are bullied is much higher than the non-bullied students as they feel not as safe to go to school (Smalley et al., 2017). As a result, bullying incidents in school can also lead to poor academic performances (Nakamoto

& Schwartz, 2010) and difficulties in school administration (Smalley et al., 2017). As for physical and mental problems, it is showed that victims of bullying endorse higher levels of psychological distress, depression, and social anxiety (Bauman et al., 2013; Kaltiala-Heino, Fröjd, & Marttunen, 2010; Smalley et al., 2017), and higher possibility of physical symptoms, such as headache, backache, abdominal pain, skin problems, sleeping problems, bedwetting, or dizziness (Gini & Pozzoli, 2013) when compared to their non-bullied counterparts. From the above study results, we can conclude that these impacts greatly endangered the physical, psychological, and social well-being of the bullied youth and their families.

What is more, studies also revealed that the damages of bullying are not just limited to victims, as bullies themselves are at high risk of suicidal ideation or attempts (Bauman et al., 2013; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). This finding is related to the characteristics and motivation of the perpetrators, which will be examined in the following section.

It is noteworthy that to a group of students with some special characteristics, when they are bullied, it is likely for them to react with violence and turn into bullies themselves. And these youth are categorized as victim-bullies (Ma, 2001; Olweus, 1993). In the following section, some studies about their characteristics, along with the characteristics of bullies and victims will be examined. The characteristics of the three groups of students can help teachers or parents to identify potential involvement in bullying, and prevent and intervene in advance.

The characteristics of the bully. Studies indicated that bullies are usually

identified as “being emotionally aroused and with an argumentative predisposition” and “displaying a need for dominance, assertiveness, and control” (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015, p.3).

Physically, bullies, especially boys, tend to be stronger or taller, and excel in sports (Olweus, 1993). They are usually supported by social popularity and advantages (Olweus, 1993). Studies noted that in most cases, bullies hold a positive attitude towards violent and aggressive content (Roland & Galloway, 2004), and show no empathy to or take no responsibility for their offensive and harmful actions to others (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). As for academic performance, most of them are underachievers, so they regard violence as a way for them to enjoy a high status (Ma, 2001, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). Usually, they not only display aggressive behaviors to their peers, but also towards their teachers and families (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015).

It is commonly believed that bullies are not content with themselves, so they regard violence as a way to defend themselves. However, this argument was only supported by a few studies (e.g., Batsche, & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993). Most researchers noted that contrary to assumption, they have high self-confidence (e.g., Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015; Roland & Galloway, 2004). Their motivation to assert violence and harm others will be examined further and deeper in the following section.

The characteristics of the victim. In contrast to bullies, who are stout and athletic in appearance, studies conducted in 1993 by Olweus concluded that victims of

bullying usually suffer from “body anxiety” as fat, short, or weak physically, and less competent in sports and games. Meanwhile, unlike bullies, who feel good about themselves, most vulnerable victims of bullying have relatively low self-esteem (Roland, 1989, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015), and they view themselves as deserving the ill-treatment. In terms of personalities, they are usually regarded as cautious, sensitive, and quiet, and are predisposed to passive behavior, feelings of failure, anxiety, and lack of confidence (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). Usually, they feel socially isolated, with having few close friends (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015).

Another complicated characteristic of the victim is related to social discrimination and marginalized minority status. Social status, ethnicity, and intelligence are all assumed to be the target of harassment (Stephenson & Smith, 1989, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015; Roland, 1989, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen). In these studies, it is revealed that students who come from advantaged families, who achieve lower scores in intelligence tests, or who are marginalized minorities are more likely to be the targets of bullying. In my opinion, this issue could be one of the reasons for the perpetration of bullying. However, both the number and scope of studies regarding this topic are limited, and from my review, I found that few studies linked the perpetration of bullying with social discrimination or investigate the relationship between social status and victimization. This is an area worth more attention and exploration.

The characteristics of the victim-bully. The third group of students is hard to be

distinguished. At first, for they are victims at the beginning, and turn to be the bullies afterward. They are regarded as having a hot temper, being hyperactive, restless, emotionally immature, and clumsy (Rigby, 2007, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). After being attacked, especially physical harassment, they will respond and react immediately with violence, which may lead to more aggressive behaviors (Besag, 1989, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). As a result, Olweus (1993) described them as ‘provocative victims’, who are easily aroused. He also pointed out one specific characteristic of this group as having difficulties in concentration coupled with hyperactivity, and this characteristic may contribute to their provocativeness.

Stephenson and Smith (1989, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015) noted that the change of their roles indicates their attempt to revenge. They also found that those victims who are also bullies are the students with the lowest self-confidence, who are liked the least, and who are academic underachievers compared to other victims. Similar to bullies, they show no empathy or sympathy for others (Ybarra, Diener-West, and Leaf, 2007). In terms of adult-child relationship, research (Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1994) found that victim-bullies are more likely to lack caring and warmth from caregivers in their childhood. According to Ybarra, Diener-West, and Leaf (2007), some ‘external behaviors’, such as alcohol use and drug abuse, could also be the signs of the trend to be a victim-bully.

Here, we can see some overlaps between the characteristics of the victim-bully and bully, and also of the victim-bully and victim. However, the characteristics of the

victim-bully are not simply the summation of the two parties.

As a group of youth with complex personalities, victim-bullies are also at high risks. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) found that victim-bullies are six times more likely to suffer from distress compared to victims. Studies also found that victim-bullies are at greater risk for other psycho-social problems (Olweus, 1993; Haynie, Nansel, Eitel, Crump, Saylor, Yu, & Simons-Morton, 2001), such as internalizing problems (Menesini, 2012), and interpersonal difficulties (Haynie et al., 2001). However, not much attention was paid to the research to this group of students, and their specific characteristics were often neglected or underestimated. To investigate their characteristics and stances can be the core to understanding the phenomenon and solving the problem, so the unique characters of victim-bullies can be the direction for future studies.

In my opinion, this complicated group is hard to recognize, but it can cause the most chaotic and dangerous situation. Ideally, if we can prevent and intervene in advance, we can avoid the “role shift” of this group and stop the incidents getting worse.

According to the study conducted by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004), the characteristics of adolescents involved in cyberbullying showed few distinct differences compared to conventional bullying, though weak associations with social status are demonstrated. Thus, the characteristics of the three groups of students can also apply to cyberbullying.

The definition of cyberbullying. With the acceptance of the definition of

bullying by Olweus (1993) and others, cyberbullying is defined as bullying which uses electronic applications or other technological platforms that enable interpersonal communication to harm others by socially excluding, embarrassing, or threatening on purpose (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Williams & Guerra, 2007). Compared to the definition of traditional bullying, most scholars believed that one discrepancy worth noticing is that the imbalance of power may not exist or becomes weak in cyberbullying (e.g., Huang & Chou, 2010; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).

It seemed that the concept of cyberbullying commonly was recognized. However, looking at the details of the definitions provided by different scholars, there are still some subtle differences and varied emphases. For example, the definitions of some researchers emphasize the willfulness of the bullies (e.g., Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004), while some consider repeated actions over time as a necessary element (e.g., Dehue, Bolman, and Vollink, 2008, as cited in Tokunaga, 2010). Different definitions among researchers may cause some unexpected problems. For instance, participants may respond differently under different definitions, and the results achieved by various researchers cannot be concluded together under different concepts of the core element of the topic. Accordingly, it is urgent to explore the essence of cyberbullying, and define and term with common acceptance and consistency.

Cyberbullying victimization is also associated with a wide range of adverse issues similar to those of traditional bullying. Victims of cyberbullying have lower

self-esteem, and higher levels of negative feelings, such as depression, sadness, fear, and social anxiety (Bauman et al., 2013; Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). The experience of being bullied online can also relate to ‘affective disorder’ (Tokunaga, 2010), as well as some social problems, such as detachment, external hostility, and delinquency (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Tokunaga, 2010). In schools, similarly, students who are suffering from cyberbullying have a lower academic achievement (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Ybarra et al., 2007) and more behavior problems (Ybarra et al., 2007). The psychological, social, and physical outcomes that are associated with cyberbullying can lead to higher suicide rates (Bauman et al., 2013), which appeals to more detailed and systematic studies and effective solutions urgently.

The reasons for school bullying among adolescents. In many ways, traditional bullying and cyberbullying share a considerable degree of similarities in their core motivations (Tokunaga, 2010), as the perpetrators wish to inflict harm on the targets to cause them distress. According to the study conducted by Cassidy, Jackson, and Brown (2009), bullies reported that their primary motivation is that they simply dislike the target, or they had a negative interaction with the victim during previous interactions. Some researchers (e.g., Sijtsema, Veenstra, Lindenberg, & Salmivalli, 2009) found that the aggressive behaviors of the perpetrators could be a way for them to gain and maintain social status in the group for a sense of belonging.

Through “the interpersonal theory of suicide” presented by Van Orden and his peers (2010, as cited in Bauman et al., 2013, p.342), the desire to commit suicide is

caused by the existence of both “thwarted belongingness” and “perceived burdensomeness” (p.342). Some research illustrated that the demand and desire for belonging indicated the lack of belongingness of bullies, which could also prove the findings that perpetrators are also at high risk of suicide ideation and attempt (Bauman et al., 2013; Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010).

Furthermore, owing to the characteristics of the internet, individuals choose cyberbullying for some unique reasons, for instance, the bullies cannot see the victims being hurt in person, and it is common to post some inappropriate content about others on cyberspace, so it is to some extent acceptable (Willard, 2004, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). These unique features of the internet are also referred as “the phenomenon of online disinhibition” (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015, p.5) as Internet users lose their normal sense of inhibition and release their thoughts and emotions freely with little or no fear of “being judged or rejected by others” (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2015, p.5). Some studies indicate that the lack of restriction makes the impacts of cyberbullying more intense and harmful (e.g., Bonanno & Hymel, 2013). The impacts of “the phenomenon of online disinhibition” will be examined thoroughly in the parts as follows.

The comparison between traditional bullying and cyberbullying. To recognize the essence of cyberbullying and define the term scientifically, one essential question to answer is the debate mentioned above, cyberbullying among adolescents is a new means of bullying paralleled with traditional bullying, or an extension of bullying in school. In terms of answering this question, the following section will

focus on the comparison between traditional bullying and cyberbullying from aspects of prevalence, gender, age, and impact.

Difference and overlap in prevalence. Consistent with the public assumption, cyberbullying is a prevalent phenomenon among adolescents, as Tokunaga (2010) conservatively estimated the rate of adolescents being bullying at between 20% to 40%. Some studies suggest more astonishing results. For instance, Juvonen and Gross (2008) found that 72% of the 12 to 17-year-old youth being surveyed reported being bullied at least once during the past year. However, the discrepancies among definitions discussed above in the questionnaires of different studies led to the great gaps among different results. Due to the discrepancies, it is difficult to summarize and compare the results without examining the details of the questionnaires. As the rapidly increasing use of the internet and other electronic means, the prevalence rates of cyberbullying are likely to grow accordingly (Bauman, 2010).

Although the rate of cyberbullying is high in most studies, a current study conducted by Lapidot-Lefler and Dolev-Cohen (2015) in Israel suggested that bullying online among adolescents is less prevalent than bullying at school, which proved the findings of some previous researchers (e.g., Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Juvonen & Gross, 2008). This finding is not consistent with the public's assumption and parents' awareness that cyberbullying is more harmful due to the easy access to the internet. Thus, Lapidot-Lefler and Dolev-Cohen (2015) concluded that cyberbullying aroused public attention along with heightening parents' concerns due to the potency of the internet, rather than the frequency of the incidents themselves.

To explore further, if the number of victims of cyberbullying is not as much as traditional bullying, whether those who are bullies on the internet are also the targets of face to face bullying in school? According to the examined studies, the rate of the overlap is high, ranging from 84% (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004) to 93% (Hase et al., 2015; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, & Tippett, 2008). The high overlapping rate indicated that students who are bullied online are also the targets of bullying in school, and their experience of online victimization can be an extension of face to face harassment in school. In other words, bullying which happens in school can follow them through the internet everywhere.

Difference and overlap in gender. Unlike traditional bullying involvement, in which most studies found that boys tend to be involved in bullying as bullies or victims more than girls do (e.g., Bauman et al., 2013; Olweus, 2003), in terms of gender differences in bullying in cyberspace, study outcomes varied widely.

Some researchers illustrated that similar to face to face bullying, boys are more likely to be the bullies (Bauman et al., 2013; Huang & Chou, 2010), while others found no significant differences between gender and cyberbullying involvement (e.g., Mishna et al., 2010).

As for victimization, while some studies found no correlation between gender and victimization (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015; Juvonen & Gross, 2008), some studies indicated that girls are more inclined to be victims online than boys, and they are more likely to be hurt (Ybarra et al., 2007; Bauman et al., 2013). However, opposite results were also reached (Hase et al., 2015) that when controlling the

traditional bullying, under the pressure of cyberbullying, boys are more likely to be negatively impacted, having more psychological symptoms.

According to the study about the correlation between bullying and suicide conducted by Bauman, Toomey, and Walkers (2013), cyberbullying perpetration is a strong predictor of suicide attempts for only males due to feeling guilty, while cyberbullying victimization is strongly related to suicide for females as girls are more prone to internalize feelings and experiences. However, no further studies covered in this paper with cross-section methods or larger subjects were conducted to prove the statement. I believe that this finding could be a specific character of online bullying, and it is worth researching further.

Many researchers mentioned gender differences regarding the means of bullying (e.g., Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015; Mishna et al., 2010), as boys are more engaged in physical aggression, while girls are more involved in indirect forms. This might be the reason of the severe outcomes associated with online victimization for girls reported by Bauman and his peers (2013), because cyberspace can provide the virtual platform for indirect harassment, such as rumor spreading, picture posting, or threatening text.

Difference and overlap in age. Bullying in school is not restricted by age and can influence students from a very young age (Tokunaga, 2010).

To provide suggestions to schools and parents, many studies focus on the relationship between the frequency of bullying and different age groups. However, the results are mixed. Most studies failed to find a distinct link between age and face to

face bullying (e.g., Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Only a few studies concluded the associations between age and cyberbullying, while a wide range of targeted age groups adopted in different research led to diverse findings (Tokunaga, 2010). For instance, the study of Ybarra and his peers (2007), through examining the survey targeting students from 10 to 15 years old, concluded that elder students suffered more from cyberbullying. However, Tokunaga (2010), considering the curvilinear relationship and other nonsignificant findings in previous studies, obtained different results, as the highest frequency of online victimization pointed to seventh and eighth grades. The target population of the research of Bauman and his peers (2013) was high school students, and they highlighted the high school transition years, illustrating that students of 9th grade and 12th grade experience greater stress and have a larger chance to be involved in cyberbullying.

From the above discussion, it may be inappropriate to compare bullying and cyberbullying from the frequency of the different age groups, because no agreements can be reached from both sides. However, it does not mean that the research regarding the correlation between age and victimization is insignificant. To the contrary, I believe the results are more alarming, because the mixed findings indicate that bullying is prevalent in different age groups and impacts students of all ages, which appeals to a need for more detailed and scientific research to protect adolescents.

Difference and overlap in impacts. Given the high overlap in students who are suffering from in-person bullying and students who are bullied online, some scholars have begun to challenge the ‘additive harm of cyberbullying’ (e.g., Hase et al., 2015).

To illustrate the idea further, Olweus (2012) claimed two points in his work. One is that instead of being a 'qualitatively distinct phenomenon', cyberbullying is nothing more than the extension of face to face bullying. The second is that compared to face to face bullying, the unique negative outcomes of cyberbullying is not significant.

To argue against Olweus's claims (2012), many studies found that cyberbullying can predict adverse outcomes above and beyond traditional bullying (e.g., Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Perren, Dooley, Shaw, & Cross, 2010). They found that involvement in cyberbullying uniquely predicts negative outcomes, such as depression symptomatology, internalized problems, and suicide ideation, exceeding the contribution of traditional bullying. These results can support the common assumption and concern that cyberbullying is more harmful than traditional bullying.

However, contrary to the above results, more and more studies reported that when controlling for bullying, cyberbullying no longer predicts the negative effects, or the association between cyberbullying and negative psychological symptoms becomes very weak (Bauman et al., 2013; Dempsey et al., 2009; Hase et al., 2015; Juvonen & Gross, 2008). These findings corroborate the claims of Olweus (2012) that cyberbullying attributes to the negative outcomes, but the impacts become insignificant when controlling for face to face bullying, which can be an indicator that cyberbullying is not paralleled with traditional bullying as a new form of bullying. According to the present evidence, as the extension of traditional bullying, the phenomenon of cyberbullying may be exaggerated and overestimated, which channeled the studies and resources to the wrong directions (Olweus, 2012). Indeed,

we can always see the news about cyberbullying, blaming the lack of supervision of the internet. However, from the perspective that cyberbullying is the extension of face-to-face bullying, to protect adolescents from bullying, simply to reduce or prevent their use of the internet is unrealistic and ineffective. To help solve the problem, more efforts should be made to investigate the methods to deal with face to face bullying in school, and school administration should take the responsibility to help students figure out the correct way to get along with others and resolve the contradictions, to avoid the unpleasant interactions turning into bullying incidents.

If cyberbullying is just the extension of traditional bullying, why do many scholars take it separately as a new means of bullying? I think the reason lies on the unique characteristics of the internet, which makes the impacts of cyberbullying severe and special from face to face bullying. Lapidot-Lefler and Dolev-Cohen (2015, p.10) noted that the “intensity” of online bullying and “severity” of its outcomes are decided by the Online Disinhibition Effect (ODE). The ODE describes the phenomenon that human behaviors may break the traditional boundary on the internet, which “increases the depth, intensity, and prevalence of many human behaviors” (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015, p.10). Some aggressive behaviors, such as bullying, may not be seen in face-to-face interaction, but are released and demonstrated on the internet (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). According to the studies, the phenomenon of the ODE is led by the following reasons. Firstly, the bullies cannot see the victims being hurt, so they will not see the outcomes of their action (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). Secondly,

the privacy protection policies of the internet, such as anonymity (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015; Tokunaga, 2010; Bonanno & Hymel, 2013), may allow bullies to feel safe to say or do what they will not do in real life. Lastly, it is prevalent to post some impolite, harmful content on the internet, so the action seems to be acceptable to some people (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). In terms of anonymity, although the content on the internet can be anonymous, a large proportion of victims know the perpetrators in real life in the surveys (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015; Tokunaga, 2010; Ybarra et al., 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004), which means to a large extent, cyberbullying is rooted from real-life interaction. In consideration of the relationship between perpetrators and victims, it is reasonable to consider cyberbullying as an extension of face to face aggressive behavior.

Other characteristics of the internet also facilitate the perpetration of cyberbullying, which makes it more of a concern of parents than traditional bullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). For instance, social networks allow the widespread and extensive diffusion of harmful contents (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015; Tokunaga, 2010), which may aggravate the suffering of the victims. According to Mishna and her peers (2010), cyberbullying by its nature is as continuous as the content on the internet can be accessed easily far and wide, at present or in the future, which makes its influence hard for the victims to eliminate. All the evidence indicates that compared to traditional bullying, cyberbullying can be more efficient.

Discussion

From the above literature review, personally, I am more convinced by the statement that cyberbullying is an extension of traditional bullying for mainly two reasons.

Firstly, by examining the definitions of bullying and cyberbullying separately, I found that cyberbullying is different from bullying mainly in their perpetration methods. Specifically, one is through electronic devices, while the other is by means of face to face interaction. It seemed that there are two kinds of aggressive behaviors. However, despite the nonconformity among the definitions of cyberbullying, by comparing the two concepts roughly, it is distinct that the key elements of cyberbullying, by its nature, is similar to bullying, as they shared the same motivation and purpose. Admittedly, the impacts of bullying will become more evident and severe through electronic devices owing to the distinctive characteristics of the internet, but fundamentally, both bullying and cyberbullying result from previous personal interaction, and different means of bullying contribute to the same objective, to humiliate or annoy the victims.

Secondly, the overlaps between bullying in school and cyberbullying are also of significance, especially the high rate of overlaps of the victims and bullies, which illustrates that students involved in bullying in school and online are relatively the same group of students. This finding illustrates that cyberbullying, instead of harming a new group of targets, aims at the same group of students suffering from traditional bullying. As for the relationship between the bullies and victims, we can conclude that

although there are a considerable amount of cyberbullying incidents targeting strangers, for adolescents, according to the outcomes of the present studies, most of the incidents are conducted by their peers they know in school. The overlaps in both the perpetrators and recipients indicate that the perpetration of cyberbullying is to a large extent rooted from unpleasant relationships in real life. Besides, most studies pointed out that the harmful effects of cyberbullying are to a large extent based on bullying in person, as when traditional bullying is controlled, the impacts of cyberbullying become weak. This finding can also contribute to the statement that cyberbullying is the extension of face-to-face bullying.

Although there are some disagreements among studies, from the majority results obtained by the studies, we can conclude that cyberbullying is an extension of traditional bullying in consideration with their concepts and overlaps. However, the objective of investigating the essence of cyberbullying is not just to define the term accurately, but also to solve the problem more efficiently. Since cyberbullying is regarded as rooted in face-to-face interaction from previous studies, to prevent bullying incidents, we should grasp the core of the problem. For bullying, fundamentally, the core contradiction lies on the unhealthy interaction, so we should pay more attention to promote and maintain positive interaction in school, such as to create a harmonious atmosphere and caring relationships among students. Students should learn some interpersonal communication skills, such as how to get along with others, how to negotiate with others when there is disagreement, and how to express their own opinions politely. In other words, to prevent bullying or cyberbullying,

adolescents should be equipped with proper communication skills and attitudes to make others and themselves feel free and safe while building interpersonal relationships between each other.

To achieve this goal in school, I think one productive method is to develop a complete system of social and emotional learning. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; 2013) defines social and emotional learning (SEL) as “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” In my opinion, the phenomenon of bullying in school is closely related to the lack of social and emotional development. In the following chapter, the theory of social and emotional learning will be examined, and some possible solution and guidance will be given to deal with the issue of bullying and cyberbullying in school.

Theory Framework

Social and Emotional Learning. From the definition of social and emotional learning mentioned above, we should realize that SEL is a “coordinating framework” (CASEL, 2013) for educators, families, and communities to work together to improve students’ social, emotional and academic capacity to efficiently deal with challenges and tasks in their daily life. Daniel Goleman (1995, p.xxii) noted in his book *Emotional Intelligence* that “emotional intelligence includes self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself.”

According to *the Framework for Systemic Social and Emotional Learning* (CASEL, 2017), five core competencies are identified to improve students' intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive ability. The five core competencies are illustrated in the Wheel (Figure 1), and we can draw some connections between these five core competencies and the characteristics of the bullies, victims, and victim-bullies reviewed in Chapter 2.



Figure 1. Social and Emotional Learning Competencies (CASEL, 2017). Retrieved from <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>.

Self-awareness. According to CASEL, self-awareness is “the ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior”. With proper self-awareness, students should be able to recognize

their own strengths and limitations, and exhibit a sense of confidence.

Reexamining the characteristics of bullies and victims of school bullying, we can infer that they may lack self-awareness. For bullies, most of them hold an inaccurate perception of themselves. They may overestimate their strengths and advantages, become conceited and arrogant owing to their high self-images, and disregard and disvalue others' competencies and abilities (e.g., Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015).

As for those who are bullied, on the contrary, they are self-humiliated (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). In most cases, they cannot see the value in themselves, appreciate their advantages, or feel comfortable to express their opinions. As a result, they usually hold a negative view towards their life and the world. With these emotions and attitudes kept in mind, it is not hard to understand the reason why some of them regard themselves as deserving the harmful, unfriendly, and aggressive treatment from others (Roland, 1989, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015).

Self-management. Self-management is described as “the ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations” (CASEL, 2017). Self-management skills can help students set personal life or academic goals, and get organized and motivated towards their goals (CASEL, 2017). Students with high self-management ability can handle stress, control impulse, and get self-motivated.

These sub-skills of self-management remind me of the characteristics of students

involved in bullying, especially those victim-bullies. Their provocativeness can be explained from the perspective of self-management, as they have difficulties in managing stress and controlling emotion, which lead them to react bullying with physical violence (Besag, 1989, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015). Besides, according to the reviewed studies (Stephenson & Smith, 1989, as cited in Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015), these students are the least popular students with lowest academic performance, which indicates their lack of organization and motivation for their personal or academic goals.

Beside victim-bullies, considering the psychological troubles and social problems students may encounter being involved in bullying, both bullies and victims should learn how to deal with stress correctly, set meaningful and advantageous life goals, and motivate themselves in positive ways.

Social-awareness. Social-awareness addresses the ability to “take the perspective of and empathize with others” (CASEL, 2017), with which students can respect and appreciate diversity.

I found that bullies and victim-bullies, who often resort to violence to resolve interpersonal problems, have a lower level of social-awareness. They show little empathy towards others and show little regret to the harms they have done (e.g., Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015), because they lack the ability or habit to think in others’ shoes. At the same time, since they seldom sense and understand the feelings or emotions of the victims, they may not know the severe impacts of their action. As a result, bullying incidents won’t cease, but worsen.

From my perspective, the characteristics of the internet, for instance, the invisibility and universality (e.g., Bonanno & Hymel, 2013) I reviewed in the previous Chapter also eliminate bullies' social awareness. They cannot see the reaction of the victims which makes them unaware of others' feelings, and the prevalence of cyberbullying justifies their perpetration.

Relationship skills. This competency is defined as “the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups” (CASEL, 2017), and the abilities contained are related to interpersonal communication, such as to express ideas clearly, to cooperate with others in teamwork, and to negotiate conflicts politely.

It is obvious that relationship skills are directly associated with involvement in bullying. For bullies and victim-bullies, the lack of communication skills and poor relationships with others directly lead them to violent and aggressive behaviors, as it is the way for them to solve problems. Without proper communication skills, it is hard for them to build healthy relationships with others, and poor relationships with others make them difficult and reluctant to resolve contradiction through negotiation, which worsens their relationships with others. The vicious circle resulted from insufficient relationship skills makes them appreciate violence and the sense of conquering and belonging they get from hurting others.

Relationship skills also consist of the ability to seek help from the external surroundings. However, for victims, being quiet and unconfident, most of them have few or even no close friends to ask for advice or help (Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen,

2015). Besides, most of the victims who are not satisfied with their self-image also believe they should bear the pressure by themselves as they feel disgraceful and embarrassed to ask for help from adults. Not to mention the situation we discussed above, some of them even consider themselves as deserving bullying.

Responsible decision-making. Responsible decision-making means “to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms” (CASEL, 2017). To make responsible decisions, students should be able to analyze the current situation, evaluate the outcomes of their action, and consider the well-being of themselves and others. The process of making responsible decisions can help students identify the problems, and then respond appropriately and efficiently with taking the benefits of others into account.

Here, we can infer that students involved in bullying, as bullies and victims, need to improve their responsible decision-making skills. If bullies can consider the harmful outcomes their actions may bring to the victims, and value others’ feelings while they are making decisions, many conflicts can be avoided. In the meantime, if the victims are equipped with proper decision-making capacity, they can try to protect themselves in effective ways, instead of submitting to the unjust treatment. In my opinion, to help students find ways to protect themselves from bullying is of the same significance as to prevent students from being bullied.

After examining the connections between the five core competencies and the characteristics of students involved in bullying, we can see the direct and indirect

relationships between SEL and bullying and cyberbullying, which indicates that to improve students' social and emotional competencies can be a way to prevent and deal with bullying in school and online among adolescents. Since SEL is not a single, separate, or independent program, these five core competencies can be achieved through different ways in different settings (CASEL, 2017). To improve the five core competencies, teachers of diverse disciplines, parents, school districts, and communities should cooperate with each other and work together. The first step is to design a comprehensive series of programs embodied in various courses and activities, addressing the five core competencies, which is suitable for the condition of the school districts and flexible for the instructors to apply to different situations and individuals.

The impacts of SEL programs in improving students' social and emotional well-being and promoting students' social and emotional competence are highly recognized in recent studies (e.g., Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Weissberg & Schellinger, 2011; Burroughs, & Barkauskas, 2017). According to Yeager (2017), SEL is especially helpful to adolescents. He pointed out that during this period, students are learning about handling new social demands and intense emotions, and their increasing sense of dependence urge them to feel that they should accomplish the transformation from a kid to an adult without adult guidance.

From these studies about SEL, we can see that besides "proximal outcomes" (Rimm-Kaufman & Hulleman, 2015, p.152) which can be recognized immediately, "distal outcomes" (Rimm-Kaufman & Hulleman, 2015, p.152), as long-term changes,

are also significant. On the website of CASEL, it is showed that the impacts of SEL are also related to long-term equity and poverty from the macroscopic view.

Chapter Three: Project

Considering the current situation that the internet has become an essential part of adolescents' daily life and social communication, cyberbullying influences adolescents' physical and mental well-being inevitably. Through reviewing previous studies, from my perspective, I agree with Olweus (1993) that cyberbullying stems from face to face bullying, which addresses the problem of negative or inappropriate interpersonal interactions and relationships. As teenagers, to cultivate and maintain healthy interpersonal interactions and relationships, they should be equipped with proper social and emotional skills. Therefore, in Chapter 3, one SEL program will be designed to improve students' related skills to deal with the situation.

Criteria for Successful SEL Programs

Recognizing the significance of SEL, many SEL intervention programs are implemented in school settings, and some evidence of effectiveness are concluded to design and assess SEL programs. To come up with an efficient and scientific program, in the following session, the standards of successful SEL intervention and some possible outcomes will be discussed. The factors are mainly derived from *the 2015 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs—Middle and High School Edition*, and some recent research studies and reports.

SAFE. SAFE (Durlak et al., 2011) describes one series of criteria that can be used for designing and assessing SEL programs. The acronym of the criteria is SAFE, representing the four practices:

- (a) Sequenced: "Does the program use a connected and coordinated set of

activities to achieve their objectives relative to skill development?”

(b) Active: “Does the program use active forms of learning to help youth learn new skills?”

(c) Focused: “Does the program have at least one component devoted to developing personal or social skills?”

(d) Explicit: “Does the program target specific SEL skills rather than targeting skills or positive development in general terms?” (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 410).

From the above criteria, we can conclude that an adequate SEL program should focus on engaging students actively to develop some specific SEL skills through a series of connected activities.

Positive Outcomes of Effective SEL Program

According to the criteria of SAFE, to design an effective SEL program, specific targets and objectives the program aims to achieve should be considered in advance to guarantee that the program is “explicit” (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 410). Keeping some concrete and specific targets in mind can make the program more focused and realistic to achieve.

Besides designing, taking the specific targets into consideration can also help amend, improve, and self-assess the effectiveness of the SEL program while and after implement. During the process of practice, teachers can adapt and personalize the program for different individuals in varied situations, and make formative evaluation according to the pre-set goals. As for post-practice evaluation, to consider the expected positive outcomes of the program can assess the effectiveness, whether the

program reaches its objectives, what aspects are improved unexpectedly, and how to improve the program in the future.

Through examining some successful examples of SEL intervention (e.g., Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Weissberg, & Schellinger, 2011) and the guidance provided by CASEL (2015), I summarized a list of specific positive outcomes of effective SEL programs. All the possible positive outcomes are categorized into four main classifications, and to make it explicit, some examples in real classroom practice are also presented in Table 1.

From the specific positive outcomes listed, we can also see the direct connections between SEL and bullying among adolescents. For instance, many studies (e.g., Wilson & Lipsey, 2007; Wilson, Lipsey, & Derzon, 2003) found that students' aggressive and disruptive behaviors could be decreased after participating in SEL programs. Aggressive or violent behaviors are directly and closely related to the perpetration of bullying. Therefore, we can infer from the results that students are less likely to perpetrate bullying in school with the influence of SEL programs. Improved positive social behavior can also contribute to the prevention of bullying at school. From the review of characteristics of these three groups of students in Chapter 2, it is evident that students who are involved in bullying or cyberbullying, as bully, victim, or victim-bully, lack proper social skills and attitudes, such as the effective ways to communicate with others, solve problems, and express their feelings. As a result, improved positive social behavior and reduced negative behavior are two targets of the designed program.

Table 1

The positive outcomes of effective SEL programs on students

Positive Outcomes	Examples
Improved Academic Performance	Achievement test and grades are improved (e.g., Durlak et al., 2011; Denham & Brown, 2010). School adjustment and engagement are improved (e.g., Durlak et al., 2011).
Improved Positive Social Behaviour	Prosocial skills are increased and improved (e.g., Durlak et al., 2011; Bierman et al., 2010). Social relations and adjustment are improved (e.g., Wilson & Lipsey, 2007).
Reduced Negative Behaviors	Conduct and internalizing problems are reduced (e.g., Wilson & Lipsey, 2007) Emotional distress is decreased (e.g., Durlak et al., 2011). Aggressive and disruptive behaviours are reduced (e.g., Wilson, Lipsey, & Derzon, 2003; Valente, Ritt-Olson, Stacy, Unger, Okamoto, & Sussman, 2007).
Improved SEL Skills & Attitude	Social-cognitive and affective competencies are developed (e.g., Durlak et al., 2011). Social, emotional, and ethical competences are developed generally and uniformly (e.g., Burroughs & Barkauskas, 2017).

Program

The basic information of the program. This program is designed to deal with bullying and cyberbullying among adolescents through the development of a pet-owner relationship. From Chapter 2, I am more convinced by the opinion that

cyberbullying, as an extension of bullying, is rooted from interpersonal communication and relationships. Thus, this program aims to deal with bullying in school from the perspective of SEL, whose fundamental goal is to improve students' social and emotional competency to build a healthy relationship with others and deal with intrapersonal and interpersonal problems properly.

Since SEL should be embodied and permeated in the curriculum with other subjects and activities, this program is designed as in-class and extra-curriculum activities in the fields of language, art, science, and athletics through fostering a pet-owner relationship. A pet-owner relationship is applied as a means to improve target students' social and emotional skills, whose function lies on the special role pets can play in a human's life, and the positive influence of the interaction between pets and their human counterpart.

The study of animal-human relationship has a long history. The first report on the beneficial effects of the relationship between dogs and children can be dated back to the 1960s with the experience of Boris Levinson (Berry, Borgi, Francia, Alleva, & Cirulli, 2013; Harris & Sholtis, 2016), and its benefits are recognized by many studies along with the history of the studies in this area (e.g., Muldoon, Williams, & Lawrence, 2015). Some studies proposed that the relationship is an intrinsic need for human beings since our childhood (Harris & Sholtis, 2016; Solomon, 2010), and the time spent with a pet can form and influence children's attitudes towards animals, others, and the broader environment, which can last for a long time (Solomon, 2010; Muldoon, Williams, & Lawrence, 2015).

It is obvious that a positive pet-owner relationship can have benefits in multiple areas, such as social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and academic development (Daly & Suggs, 2010; Jegatheesan & Meadan, 2006), as pets can provide them with opportunities for companionship, affection, acceptance, non-judgmental love, and confidential listening. Being accompanied with a pet can cultivate students' sense of caring and responsibility (Fifield, & Forsyth, 1999; Muldoon, Williams, & Lawrence, 2015). Most studies emphasize the fact that pets can increase their pro-social behaviors, such as desire to talk, sharing, and increased social participation (Anderson & Olson, 2006; Harris & Sholtis, 2016) and positive feelings, such as confidence, relaxation, compassion, and empathy (Daly & Suggs, 2010; Meadan & Jegatheesan, 2010), and reduce their stress, depression, and anxiety (Anderson & Olson, 2006; Muldoon, Williams, & Lawrence, 2015). Similar studies about human-animal relationships gave credit to the effects of animal-assistant therapies or activities towards students with social, emotional, or developmental disorders, as they can decrease aggressive, problematic, and negative behaviors (Anderson & Olson, 2006; Silva, Correia, Lima, Magalhães, & de Sousa, 2011).

Considering the special characteristics of students involved in bullying, we can see that the growth of a pet-owner relationship also contains the element of power imbalance. Bullies or potential bullies can learn how to treat pets, who are at a weaker position to them, and can help them cultivate empathy, deal with diversity and discrepancies, and while realizing that violence cannot solve problems. As for victims, pets can be their perfect company as a non-judgmental listener, encourager, and

supporter to make them feel comfortable and confident to distinguish, accept, and deal with their emotions and life challenges positively. For victim-bullies, with the accompaniment of pets, they can concentrate better and be calmer while learning to control their emotions and impulse.

Table 2

Three Considerations for the Specific Goals of the Program

Considerations	Would-be Goals
5 Core Competencies	Relationship Skills Social Awareness Self Awareness Self Management Responsible Decision Making
Possible Outcomes	Improved Academic Performance Improved Positive Social Behaviors Reduced Negative Behaviors Improved SEL Skills& Attitudes
The Roles of Pet-owner Relationship	Cultivate ethics of caring Improve sense of responsibility Develop social skills Decrease negative behaviors Increase positive feelings (affection, love, accompany, support...) Release stress and depression

Specific goals of the program. In my proposed SEL program, the goals of the program are mainly based on the two categories discussed above, to improve positive social skills and to reduce negative behaviors. To get some more concrete goals, I looked back to the relationship between the five core competencies and the characteristics of adolescents involved in bullying in Chapter 2, possible outcomes of

SEL programs, and the roles of developing a pet-owner relationship (Table 2).

In consideration of the difficulty to address the objectives in practice, the acceptability of adolescents, and the importance of their roles in preventing and dealing with bullying in school, I came up with four particular goals. The program aims to help students to cultivate ethics of caring, develop essential communication skills, control negative emotions, and reduce aggressive or violent behaviors. Achieving the four targets, students can empathize with and care for the ones who are in a weaker position, take others' feelings and emotions into consideration while making decisions, manage their emotions and impulses when they encounter depression, frustration or anger, and solve their conflicts with negotiation.

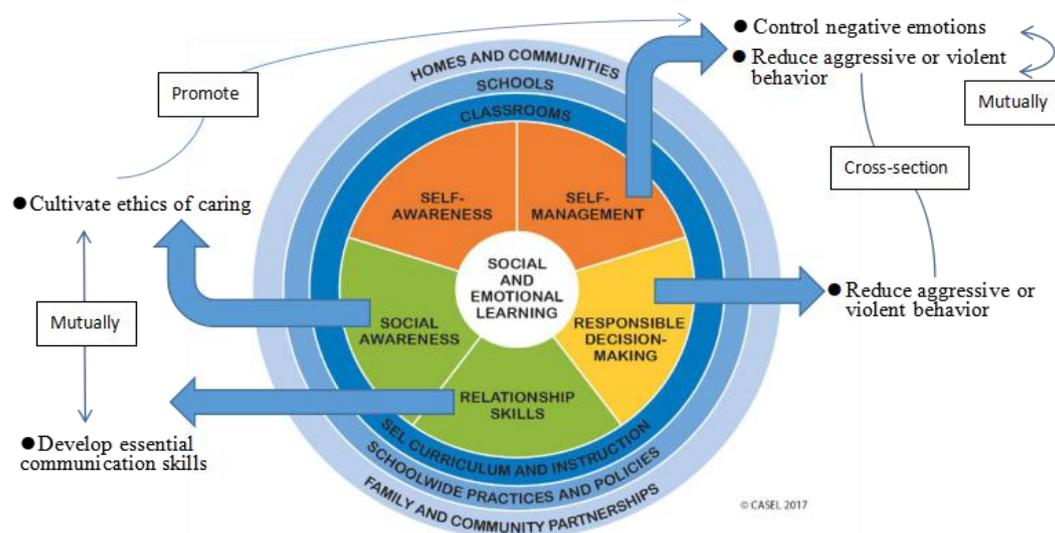


Figure 2. Four Goals and SEL Competencies (CASEL, 2017). Retrieved from <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>.

From the perspective of students' SEL competencies (Figure 2), we can find that these four goals are not mutually exclusive. They can work together with each other

and mutually with the five core competencies to improve students' overall and cross-section SEL skills and attitudes. For example, if a student exhibits an ethic of caring, they will become more aware of the other person's emotions and feelings, and they will take it into consideration when relating with others thus leading to a more effective communication style. As a result, they can build healthy relationships with others, and in turn receive love, respect and care from others, which will further encourage them to care for and support others in return. At the same time, if they care for others and make the habit of taking others' feelings into consideration, they will automatically control their negative emotions and behaviors, as they know the emotion or action may cause harm to others.

The whole cycle and reciprocal process I proposed above can boost four SEL core competencies (Figure 2), which also indicates the integrity and internal consistency of SEL. From the cross connections among these four goals and the five core competencies, we can infer that some unexpected positive outcomes will emerge during and after the implementation of the program.

The activities of the program. As mentioned above, SEL programs should not be excluded or separated from daily courses and activities, so the interaction and integration with different subjects are shown in Figure 3. All the activities are centered on the topic of pet-owner relationships.

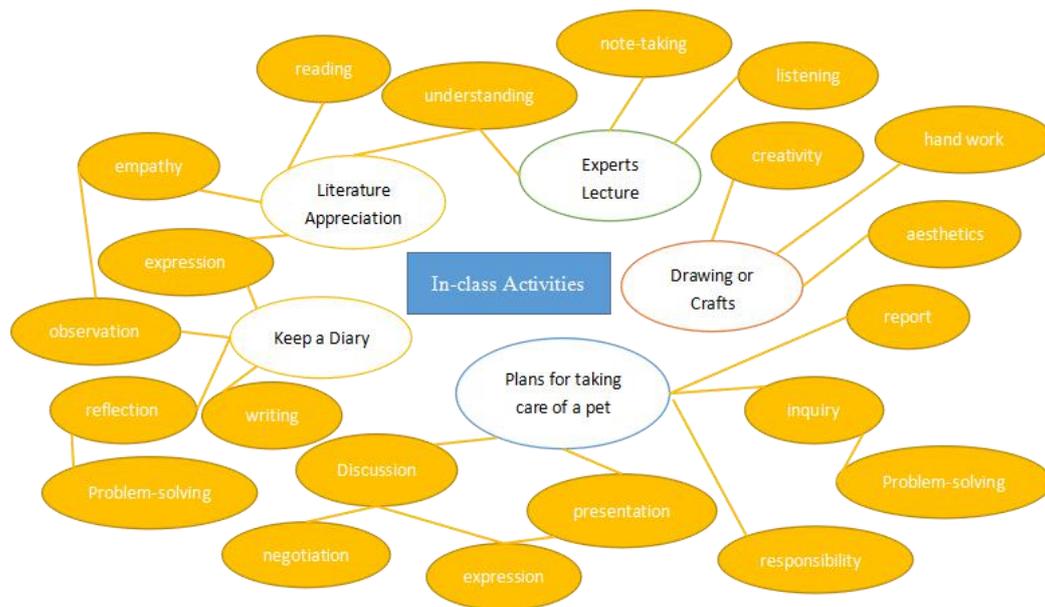


Figure 3. In-class Activities

Some relevant academic skills, such as reading, presentation skills, and creativity, are expected to be developed from this initiative, but more importantly, some necessary social and emotional skills regarding the issue of bullying can also be improved. Considering the special relationship between humans and animals, for most middle school students, these activities can help them develop basic communication skills, improve problem-solving competency, and cultivate ethics of caring. For instance, some significant communication skills, such as the ability to negotiate with others, to express themselves, and understand others' perspectives, will be developed while cooperating with group members in teamwork. They are also the key element to prevent bullying and cyberbullying, as these skills are crucial to build and maintain positive relationships with peers, understand an issue from different angles, and respect diversity and disagreement. Students can also learn some problem-solving skills, from distinguishing the problem to dealing with it properly with the assistance from reliable resources. Although it is often adopted in scientific research, the technique can also be

applied to life challenges. When they encounter interpersonal problems or unfair treatment, they can follow certain steps to solve the problem, or seek help from others. From the appreciation of artworks and literature, students can also promote their ability to sense and understand others' feelings and emotions.

As for those students who exhibit the characteristics of bullies, victims, or bully-victims, or who are considered to be involved in or influenced by bullying incidents or potential incidents, some particular attention should be paid to them. To enhance the effects of the program for these students, some activities outside the classroom can be applied. Cooperating with the families and community, after-class activities can be helpful for students to reduce their negative behaviors, release stress, keep calm, and improve their concentration span (e.g., Jalongo, 2005; Muldoon, Williams, & Lawrence, 2015). Some activities are presented in Figure 4.

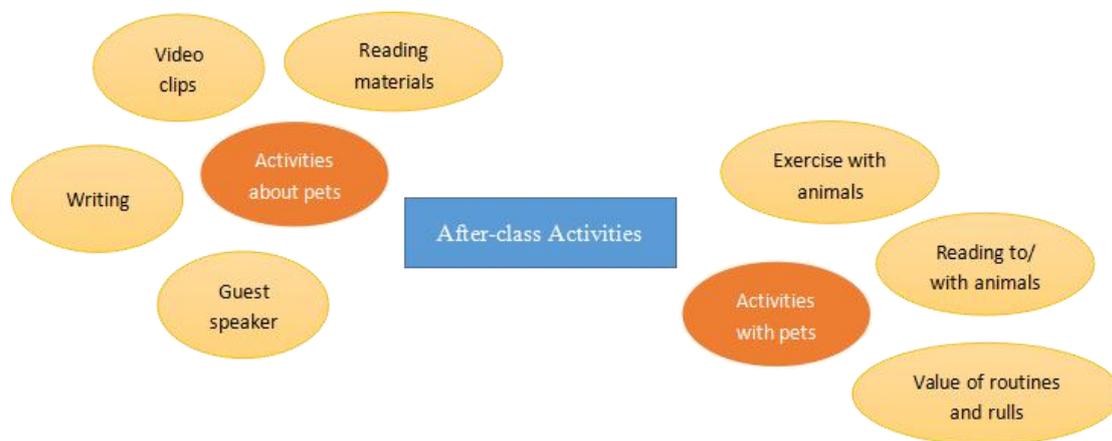


Figure 4. After-class Activities

There are two groups of after-class activities. One of them is activities about pets. These activities are especially suitable for those families who do not have pets at

home or for those students who are allergic to pets. The recommended tasks and recreations can be arranged in their spare time. For instance, schools or communities can invite some guest speakers, such as working dog trainers, or dolphin therapists to give some public speeches, which can allow students a chance to get access to more knowledge about human-animal relationships. Students can also watch a movie, read a book, or write a poem about animals with their families at home. It is a simple but rewarding way for family communication and recreation, and it is also an excellent opportunity for the parents or guardians to deepen their connections with their children, to know, understand, and express their love and support to the students.

The other classification is activities with pets. As for those families with pets, students can take care of the pets with their parents, which will cultivate their sense of caring and responsibility. Learn how to take care of a pet, such as training a dog or setting the meal plan for a cat, is also a sensational opportunity for them to deepen their understandings about the value of rules and regulations, resistance, and patience.

Given certain conditions, teachers can have a conversation with students and their parents about keeping a classroom pet. With a classroom pet, all students can have a chance to take care of the pet. They can take part in activities, talk about with each other, and entertain together with the unique member of the class, which will strengthen mutual understanding, build cooperative relationships, and create loving atmosphere among students. According to many studies (e.g., Anderson & Olson, 2006; Friesen, 2010), animal-assistant activities have distinctive benefits to children or youths with social, emotional, or developmental disorders in school and therapeutic

contexts.

Table 3

Recommended After-class Activities

Settings	Recommended Activities
School	<p><u>Keep a Classroom Pet</u> Students set a caring plan together after researching and take care of the pet in groups. Students keep a diary of the pet to share.</p> <p><u>Invite Guest Speakers</u> Invite expert in animal behavior or pet training to give speeches on how to get along with animals or how to treat pets. Invite working animals, such as guiding dogs, and their owners to share their stories. Invite therapist of animal therapy to introduce the role animals can play on human beings' health and mental welfare.</p> <p><u>Invite Volunteer Animals</u> Students can play with them after class to have fun or release pressure before exams. They can accompany students during their self-study, reading, or exercise time.</p>
Home	<p>Students set a caring plan with their parents and take their own responsibility to take care of the pet.</p>
Community (Cooperation)	<p>Public Library can invite volunteer dogs or cats in reading rooms for readers to calm down. Communities can hold some events or games for pet owners to participate in and communicate with others, such as doing sports competition with pets. Communities can hold some experience changing meetings for students to communicate and make friend with each other.</p>

Students can also participate in many activities with their pets in the neighborhood. Community and individual families should take their responsibilities

and cooperate with the school board. For example, those who have body anxiety can get exercise with their pets without the feeling of being judged. Schools or public libraries can invite volunteer pets into classrooms or reading rooms, and students can read to or study with the pets, which will keep them concentrated and calm. Some possible activities are listed in Table 3.

These after-class activities can allow students to apply what they have learned in class into practice, such as setting a scientific diet plan according to the nutrition need for a dog.

It is suggested that activities with pets can help students with their social and emotional skills (e.g., Daly & Suggs, 2010; Meadan & Jegatheesan, 2010; Muldoon, Williams, & Lawrence, 2015), such as reducing negative behaviors. To emphasize its role of preventing and solving the problem of bullying, teachers and parents should point out some keynotes or raise some prompt questions for students to think about before, during, and after the activities. These keynotes or questions should help students broaden their views from pet-owner relationships to interpersonal relationships step by step, such as from what is an ideal relationship between two pets and owners, to how to build positive relationships with others, and how to treat different appearances and characters. Similar questions can help students generalize their experience with pets to a broader environment, and arouse their deep thinking about issues of equality, diversity, respect, and love.

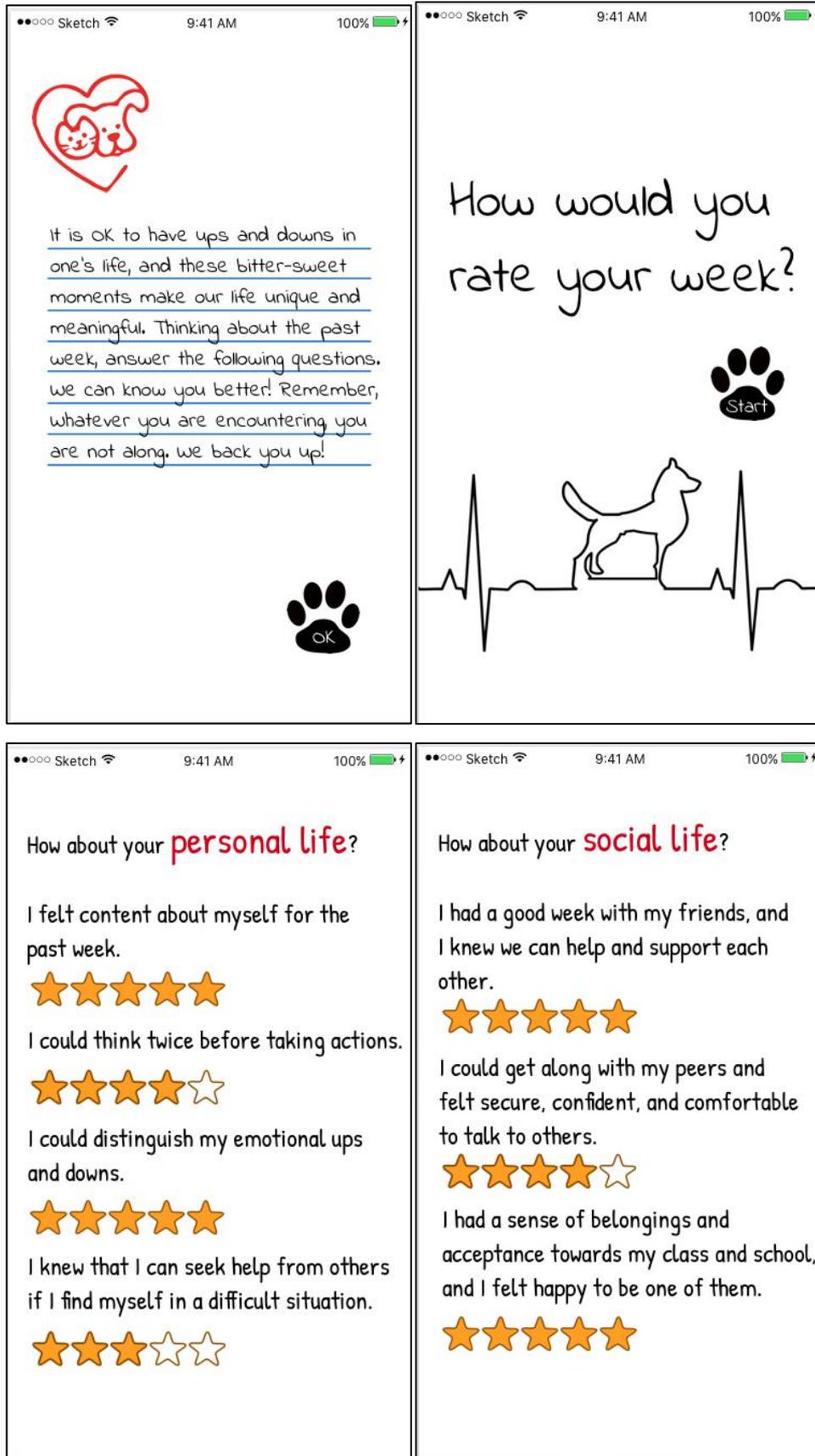


Figure 5. Interfaces of the Supplementary Mobile Application

The supplementary mobile application of the program. Since the program is designed to reply to the phenomenon of bullying, especially the arising cyberbullying, among adolescents, to assess students progress in social and emotional learning, monitor students' emotion changes, and understand students' challenges, one mobile application is designed as a platform to record students' interpersonal relationship with others, emotional ups and downs, and to distinguish bullying incidents or to prevent potential bullying. It is an uncompleted mobile application I made up as a part of my proposal. The presented examples of the mobile phone interfaces (Figure 5) are designed by myself through Sketch, with all pictures downloaded from a free pictures website, Pixabay.

There are two main functions of the application. One is for students to keep a record of their life in school, at home, and with connections to others. Middle school students using the platform from diverse backgrounds will form a network where all students can keep a record of their happy moments and bothering troubles every week and share them with others if they like. Different from other social media where information is mainly shared publicly, their posting will only be assigned to five other students from different schools randomly and anonymously. The recipients are not allowed to give comments, as unsupervised comments may worsen the situation if the feedback is hurtful or unprofessional. Besides, each student also needs to assess their social life and emotional standard every week along with the recording their life events. They need to rate their life from different dimensions of social and emotional learning. Some questions are presented in Figure five, but they can be updated every

week by the teachers according to the content they discussed about for the previous week. The scores of each student will be supervised by their school teacher. Notably, emotional ups and downs are universal and normal for every individual, but if the score of one dimension drops dramatically suddenly, it is not a waste of time for the teacher to pay more attention to and know more about the individual.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, compared to talking to adults, adolescents are more comfortable to share the bullied experience with friends, as they think they that seeking assistance from adults means they are not mature enough to figure things out by themselves. So to keep them comfortable to share the problems they encountered during social contact with their peers, the App allows those who are bullied or socially isolated in school or on cyberspace to talk to their peers without negative feedback or judgment.

Admittedly, if a student is bullied, simply talking to others about the issue cannot solve the problem. As a result, there is another function of the App, that is to report to the teacher about the suspect bullying incidence and other severe social or emotional problems. The recipient of the information needs to make their own judgment about the situation of the sender, whether it is an issue that should be notified to the teachers or school counselor of the sender. Since there will be 5 recipients of one record, even only one of them believe that the condition of the student is worth noticing, the teacher of the sender will get a notice from the system and further actions can be taken by professionals. The process is shown in Graph 1.

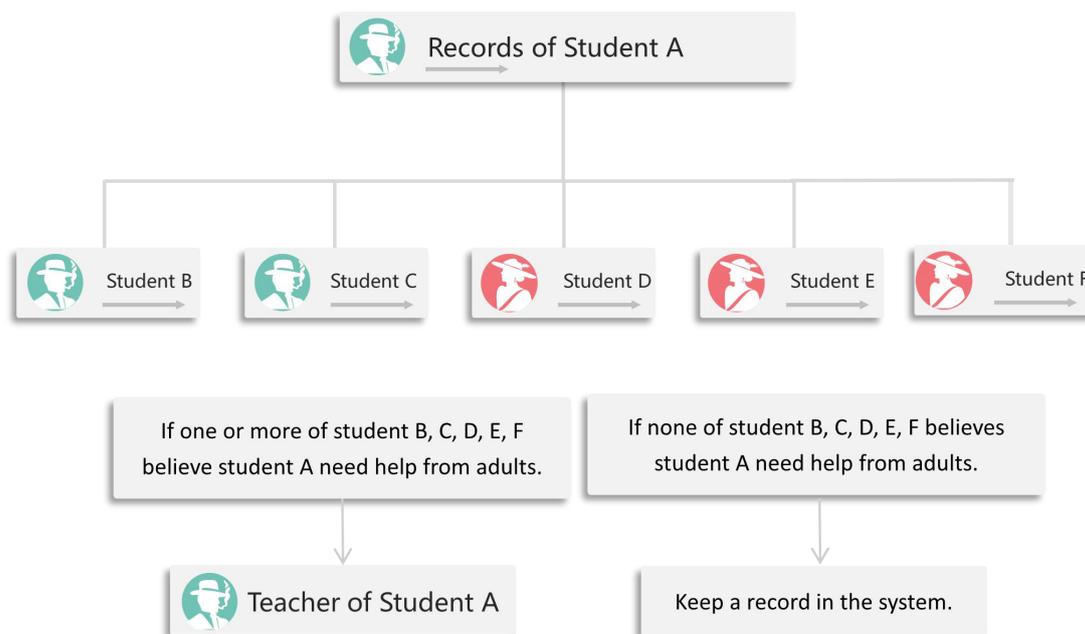


Figure 6. The Process of Reporting

The assessment of the program. The assessment of the program lies in two main categories. One is before implement assessment, which is to evaluate whether the designing of the program can fit the SAFE criteria. The other is after implement assessment, which is to evaluate whether the outcomes of the program reach its four goals.

SAFE criteria. In this section, the SAFE criteria will be reviewed and my program will be evaluated through the four questions of the criteria.

(a) Sequenced: “Does the program use a connected and coordinated set of activities to achieve their objectives relative to skill development?” (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 410). The program contains a series of activities connecting different disciplines and various settings. These activities focused on one theme, which is pet-owner relationships, so they are related to one another and need to be implemented coordinately and cooperatively with each other in class and outside

school to achieve the goals. As for the supplement mobile application, the interfaces of the App are also designed with the patterns of animals, which means to attract users' attention and make them relaxed and relaxed.

(b) Active: "Does the program use active forms of learning to help youth learn new skills?" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 410). At first, the topic of the pet-owner relationships is engaging, interesting, and purposive, as it is related to students' lives. Secondly, the activities promote cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, leadership, and critical thinking, which are all significant skills of learner-centered learning. Lastly, some activities with pets can arouse students' interests of learning, engage them in some demanding tasks, and create a harmonious atmosphere in the classroom.

(c) Focused: "Does the program have at least one component devoted to developing personal or social skills?" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 410). The program focuses on more than one social skills. It mainly addresses communication skills, such as discussion, negotiation, and expression skills.

(d) Explicit: "Does the program target specific SEL skills rather than targeting skills or positive development in general terms?" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 410). From the four goals, we can see that the program targets specific skills and attitudes, instead of general SEL development.

BC's new curriculum. Since SEL program should be integrated into the curriculum with other subjects and school activities, another dimension of the assessment is to check whether the program is in accordance with the curriculum. To

assess the program from this dimension, I chose BC's new curriculum as the standard. The core competencies of BC's new curriculum (2016) were examined, and the outcomes are presented in the following section.

As for communication skills, it is also the emphasis and goal of the program. Through discussing with other students and families for the well-being of the pets, students can develop their ability to "impart and exchange information, experiences, and ideas" (BC's new curriculum, 2016). To get information about the pets through research and inquiry, they can learn to "understand and effectively engage in the use of digital media" (BC's new curriculum, 2016).

The second competency is creative thinking. To figure out a good way to take care of the pets, students can "generate new ideas and concepts that have value to the individual or others, and the development of these ideas and concepts from thought to reality" (BC's new curriculum, 2016). And their ideas will be applied in real life, which creates the sense of fulfillment and confidence. They can also make revisions during the process if they find the plan is problematic or come up with new ideas.

Critical thinking is one essential element of education. By researching and discussing with others for the tips to care for pets, students should select the information, "consider the provided options, analyze these using specific criteria, draw conclusions and make judgments" (BC's new curriculum, 2016) to get the most suitable, realistic one. At the same time, they can develop reasoning and problem-solving skills during the process of the inquiry.

BC's new curriculum also addresses personal awareness and responsibility. With

the company of a pet, students can “feel less stressful, stay healthy and active” (BC’s new curriculum, 2016). Take care of a pet or take part in activities with pets can help students “set goals, monitor progress, regulate emotions, respect their own rights and the rights of others, manage stress, and persevere in difficult situations” (BC’s new curriculum, 2016). Through the process, they can develop awareness of the needs of others and care for others.

The last competency is social responsibility. Through taking care of pets and negotiating with others, students can consider the relationship between themselves and other, including pets, other people, and the environment. By take or share the responsibility of caring the pets, they can “contribute positively to their family, resolve problems peacefully, empathize with others, and appreciate other perspectives” (BC’s new curriculum, 2016).

From the above analysis, we can find that there is a huge overlap between the requirement of BC’s new curriculum and core competencies of SEL, and the program can fit the standard of the curriculum.

The conclusion and discussion of the program. This program aims to deal with the phenomenon of bullying and cyberbullying among adolescents I illustrated in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 through SEL, with four presented specific goals regarding different social and emotional skills. The program intends to achieve these four goals through the means of introducing positive pet-owner relationships. The activities in various disciplines with pets or about pets are flexible and can be adapted according to individual differences.

To achieve these four goals, students can build healthy relationships with others through effective communication, and feel more confident, content, and considerate about themselves, others, and relationships with the surrounding environment and other people, which will successfully prevent bullying in school. At the same time, as we discussed in Chapter 2, to distinguish their own feelings, reply to unfair treatment and seek help properly are of the same importance as bullying prevention. The app tends to build the platform for adolescents to pour out their troubles, and ask for help if their situation is severe. As the listener, students can also develop and improve their ability to care for others' feelings, sense the emotional swings of themselves, and lend a hand to someone in need. By sharing their feelings, teenagers can also realize that it is normal to have ups and downs in life and in hearts, so they can better accept their own emotions and at the same time better understand others' situation.

This program should be implemented as a long-term program in the curriculum. Considering the fact that social and emotional skills are relative, connected, and unified, other improvements expect for the four goals are expected.

Chapter Four: Reflections

Reflections and Implications

Bullying and cyberbullying is a common phenomenon and a hot topic. However, from current media coverage and expert discussions, I found that most people focus on anti-bullying from a social dimension, instead of an educational perspective. They appealed to reinforce laws, define responsibilities, or improve supervision to punish the bullies and protect victims. Admittedly, their proposal to improve relevant laws and regulations can raise public awareness, demand justice, and reduce the occurrence of bullying incidents. However, in my opinion, oppressing the impulse of would-be bullies cannot make a difference to their personalities, attitudes, or social skills. They might rely on other bad habits, such as alcohol, to release their tension and upset. Regarding the topic of bullying among adolescents, people sometimes neglect one real purpose of education, that is to cultivate students to care for others from hearts, instead of keeping them from making mistakes with punishment.

People always paid attention to the violent behaviors, loud curses, and tragic outcomes, and it is common for them to show their anger to the bullies and sympathy to the victims. However, the reasons behind the actions were seldom discussed. My intention to conduct this project is to figure out the reasons for bullying and the method to solve the problem.

Through reviewing previous literature, I found that students involved in bullying might have some special characteristics, and these characteristics were based on their lack of proper social and emotional skills and competencies. As a result, I decided to

design an SEL program to deal with the issue of bullying in school. To make the program more intriguing and concrete, I chose pet-owner relationships as the bridge to lead students to SEL.

The program has three main parts, with the in-class activities combined with specific subjects in the curriculum, the cooperation between schools and communities, and a supplementary mobile application. The activities are specific and flexible for teachers, parents, and others in the communities to adept and apply to different situations.

During the process of doing my project, I applied what I have learned from my MEd. program into practice, make connections between my knowledge and the targets of my project, and search for new resources to fill in the blanks between my wisdom and my goals.

Limitations

After reviewing previous studies, personally, I am more convinced by the statement that cyberbullying is an extension of traditional bullying. As a result, the preceding project was based on this premise. The project focuses on improving face-to-face interactions and relationships, and to some extent neglect the communications through electronic devices. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the relationship between bullying and cyberbullying is still a hot debate, and both sides have their reasons. I think this is an area where future studies can explore more in depth.

Regarding SEL program, through researching, I found most of the programs were

conducted systematically in elementary schools, despite some studies (e.g., Valente, et al., 2007; Yeager, 2017) that distinguished the significant benefits of SEL to adolescents. To implement SEL programs in middle schools or even high schools efficiently, studies should be conducted to recognize the different focuses of SEL for children and SEL for teenagers. However, in my proposed program, this consideration was not thought deeply or thoroughly due to limited resources.

As discussed above, to improve the project, I think some activities can be added to address more issues about cyberspace, and help students to apply the social skills they acquired in the real world to the virtual world to build friendship, seek help, and share life. Even though cyberbullying is not a separate version of bullying, to hold an objective attitude towards the internet is essential nowadays.

As for the program, I know that it is difficult to find a lot of learning materials about pet-owner relationships from existed resources, which are relevant to the curriculum, suitable for the level of students, and fascinating to catch students' eyes. To solve this problem, I think it is feasible that we can design a set of learning materials, such as picture books, videos, or even online games, according to the needs of the curriculum.

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Appendix 1



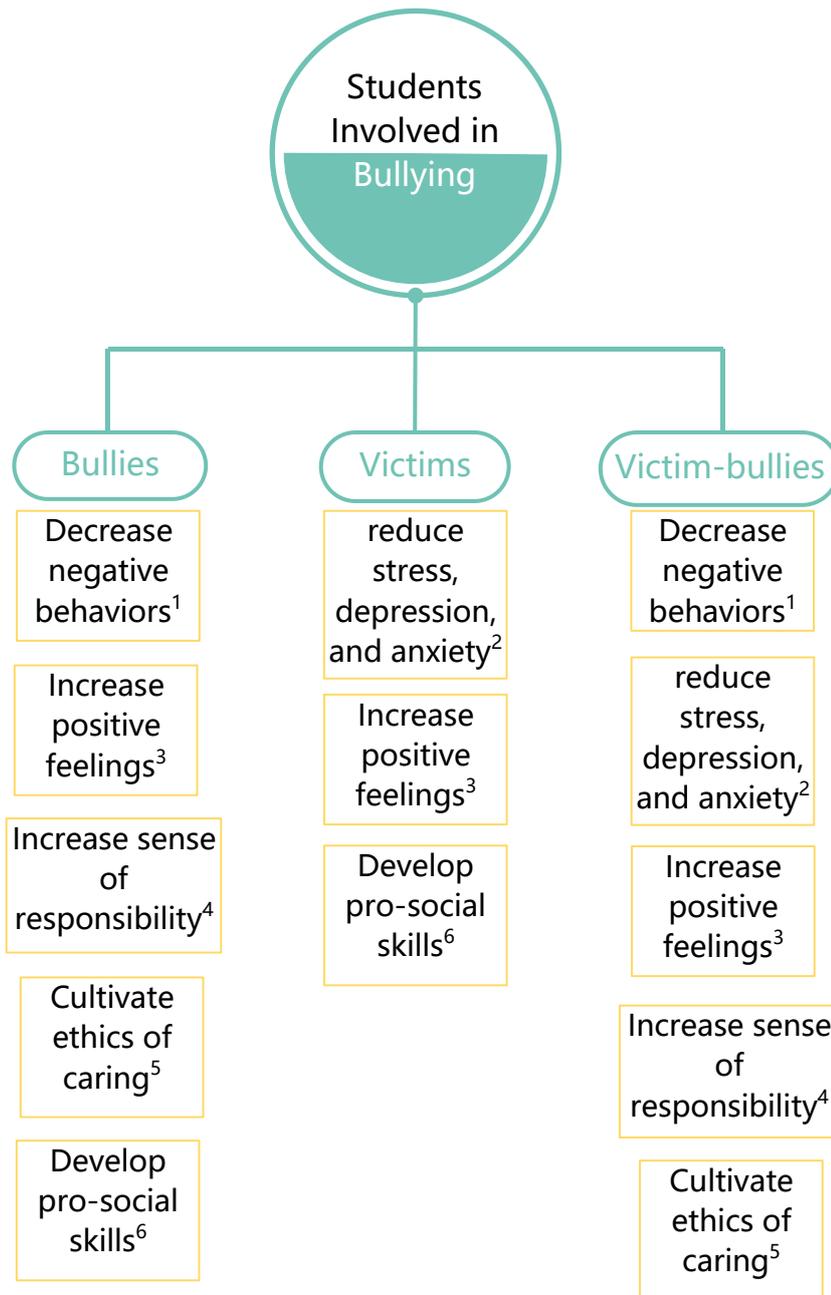
Background Information and Theory Basis

The Effects of Pet-owner relationships

Anti-bullying Program through Pet-owner Relationships

Targeting Students

- Middle school students



1:Silva, Correia, Lima, Magalhães, & de Sousa, 2011; Anderson & Olson, 2006
 2:Muldoon, Williams, & Lawrence, 2015; Anderson & Olson, 2006
 3:Daly & Suggs, 2010; Meadan & Jegatheesan, 2010
 4:Muldoon, Williams, & Lawrence, 2015; Fifield, & Forsyth, 1999
 5:Solomon, 2010; Muldoon, Williams, & Lawrence, 2015
 6:Harris & Sholtis, 2016; Anderson & Olson, 2006

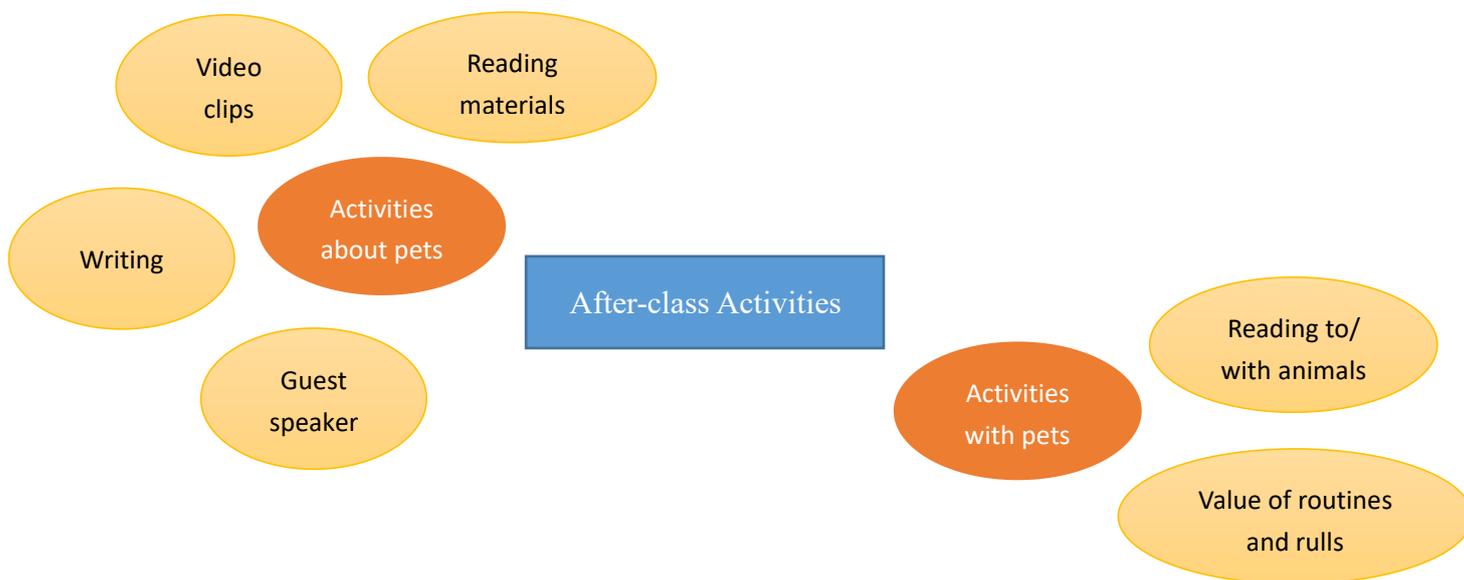


Activities for Classroom Practice





Ideas for After Class Practice



Recommendations for After Class Activities

Recommended Activities	
School	<p><u>Keep a Classroom Pet</u> Students set a caring plan together after researching and take care of the pet in groups. Students keep a dairy of the pet to share.</p> <p><u>Invite Guest Speakers</u> Invite expert in animal behavior or pet training to give speeches on how to get along with animals or how to treat pets. Invite working animals, such as guiding dogs, and their owners to share their stories. Invite therapist of animal therapy to introduce the role animals can play on human beings’ health and mental welfare.</p> <p><u>Invite Volunteer Animals</u> Students can play with them after class to have fun or release pressure before exams. They can accompany students during their self-study, reading, or exercise time.</p>
Home	<p>Students set a caring plan with their parents and take their own responsibility to take care of the pet.</p>
Community (Cooperation)	<p>Public Library can invite volunteer dogs or cats in reading rooms for readers. Communities can hold some events or games for pet owners to participate in and communicate with others, such as doing sports competition with pets.</p>

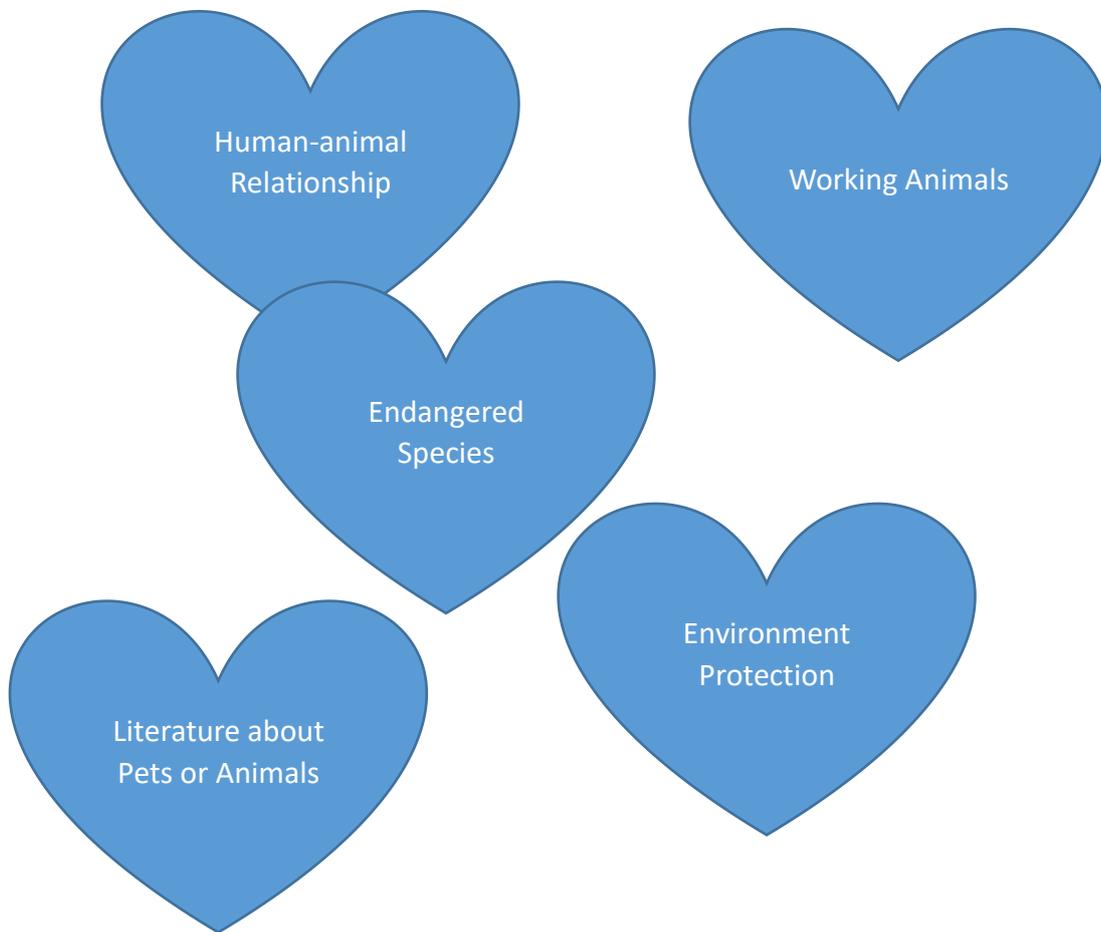


Related Core Competencies in BC's New Curriculum

- **Communication:** Through discussing with other students and families for the well-being of the pets, students can develop their ability to **impart and exchange information, experiences and ideas**. To get information about the pets through research and inquiry, they can learn to **understand and effectively engage in the use of digital media**.
- **Creative Thinking:** To figure out a good way to take care of the pets, students can **generate new ideas and concepts that have value to the individual or others, and the development of these ideas and concepts from thought to reality**. And their ideas will be applied in real life, which creates the sense of fulfillment and confidence. They can also make revisions during the process if they find the plan is problematic or come up with new ideas.
- **Critical Thinking:** By researching and discussing with others for the tips to care for pets, students should select the information, **consider the provided options, analyze these using specific criteria, draw conclusions and make judgments** to get the most suitable, realistic one. At the same time, they can develop reasoning and problem-solving skills during the process of the inquiry.
- **Personal Awareness and Responsibility:** With the company of a pet, students **feel less stressful, stay healthy and active**. Take care of a pet or take part in activities with pets can help students **set goals, monitor progress, regulate emotions, respect their own rights and the rights of others, manage stress, and persevere in difficult situations**. Through the process, they can develop awareness of the needs of others and care for others.
- **Social Responsibility:** Through taking care of pets and negotiating with others, students can consider the relationship between themselves and other, including pets, other people, and the environment. By take or share the responsibility of caring the pets, they can **contribute positively to their family, resolve problems peacefully, empathize with others, and appreciate other perspectives**.

(BC's New Curriculum, 2016, Retrieved from:
<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/>)

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These topics can be introduced in different courses explicitly or implicitly by reading, writing, or inquiry-based learning. To combined with science, classroom pets can also be used as teaching tools or objects to illustrate concepts and ideas in Math, Physical and health education areas, such as weight, safety, and life cycles.