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Links between School Climate and Bullying: *A Study*
of Two Two Tribes Schools

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Links between School Climate and Bullying: A Study of Two Tribes Schools

Wendy Ryan

Faculty of Education

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A thesis submitted to the
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my best friend and soul mate, Pierre. You were my rock throughout this journey. Besides being my unpaid research assistant, you were always willing to listen to my ideas, read drafts, and offer suggestions. Your love, encouragement, and support throughout this process kept me going. I couldn't have done this without you.

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Abstract

Bullying is a problem for schools around the world, and is an important topic for research because it has been associated with negative outcomes on several social, psychological, and academic measures. Antibullying programs have varied greatly in their outcomes, with some studies reporting positive results while others have reported little or no positive impacts. This could be due, in part, to insufficient attention paid to school climate as a possible mediating variable. My dissertation aims to explore the links between school climate and bullying/victimization. Because Tribes (Gibbs, 2001) is a well-developed program intended to improve school climate and is becoming increasingly popular in schools, it was used to explore the links between school climate and bullying/victimization. Tribes is a program that uses a learning-community, whole-school model and aims to create a positive school climate through improved teaching and classroom management, positive interpersonal relations, and opportunities for student participation. A case study methodology was used and data was collected from 2 Tribes elementary schools. One school was in its first year of implementation, and the other school was in its fourth year of implementation. Data sources included: surveys of grade 4-6 students, teacher surveys, student focus groups, teacher semi-structured interviews, classroom and general school observations, teacher focus groups, and interviews with non-teaching staff members. Data from this study indicate which aspects of the school climate may be most important for creating a bully-free environment, and a model is proposed describing possible mechanisms through which school climate can be changed to produce an environment less conducive to bullying. The results of this study also provide local knowledge to the two schools involved regarding the perceived impacts of the Tribes program on school climate and bullying in their schools, and what can be done to further improve school climate and reduce bullying in their schools.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to: 1) briefly outline the research problem, 2) describe how the ideas for this study originated, 3) reveal some relevant information about myself as a researcher and a former teacher, 4) describe the unique contributions of this study, and 5) provide an overview of the structure of the dissertation.

Statement of Problem

Bullying is a problem for schools around the world and is an important topic for research primarily because it has been associated with negative outcomes on numerous social, psychological, and academic indicators (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Rigby, 2001; Swearer, Grills, Haye, & Cary, 2004). Antibullying program outcomes have varied greatly from one study to another, with some initiatives producing encouraging results (P. K. Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004), while others have shown little or no positive impacts (J.D. Smith, Schneider, P.K. Smith, & Ananaiadou, 2004). These mixed results underscore the importance of pursuing further research into the problem of how to effectively prevent or reduce bullying.

One possible reason for the limited success of some antibullying programs could be the failure to account for the impact of school climate on rates of bullying/victimization (J. D. Smith, 2006). Smith (2006) argues that schools with restorative (i.e., responsive, collaborative, re-integrative) climates are conducive to encouraging respectful behaviours, whereas punitive (authoritarian/stigmatizing) climates are not. Smith's discussion of these two types of school climates provides insights into the role that school disciplinary policies and staff behaviours may play in promoting a caring school social climate where bullying may be less likely to occur. However, a broader, multi-faceted conceptualization of school climate remains to be explored in

conjunction with student bullying. That is, instead of dichotomizing climates into restorative and punitive, it may be useful to explore a wider range of climate characteristics such as individual characteristics of members of the school community (i.e., students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members) and the interpersonal relationships among them as well as organizational characteristics such as school policies, openness to change, opportunities for participation, academic orientation, and the physical environment.

Another reason that some antibullying programs have not produced the desired outcomes could be that some teachers may be unable to invest the sustained time and effort necessary to implement a program that focuses only on bullying, when they have so many other daily preoccupations such as discipline, classroom management, and student motivation (Galloway & Roland, 2004). These authors suggest that a general program aimed at school improvement may have a wider impact on a variety of undesirable student behaviours, including bullying, as this approach is easier for teachers to adopt and maintain compared to a program focused solely on bullying. Roland (2000) argues that general classroom management approaches, such as teachers caring for students, effective teaching practices, monitoring of student behaviour, and appropriate teacher intervention for student misbehaviour in general may work to prevent bullying as well as a wide range of other behaviour problems.

The Tribes program (Gibbs, 2001) fits the description of the type of general program that Galloway and Roland (2004) propose might be effective in reducing undesirable student behaviours such as bullying. Tribes uses a whole-school, learning community model and aims to create a positive school climate through improved teaching and classroom management, positive interpersonal relations, and opportunities for student participation (Benard, 2005). The Tribes process consists of four key principles: attentive listening, appreciation/no put-downs, mutual

respect, and participation/right to pass which serve as a stable foundation for building positive interpersonal relations in classrooms and throughout a school. Teachers in Tribes classrooms model respectful behaviour and encourage respectful interactions among students. Tribes teachers aim to use the most effective teaching methods and meet the learning needs of students with a variety of different learning styles (Gibbs, 2001). Instead of focusing solely on verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical forms of intelligence, Tribes schools provide students with opportunities to develop a variety of other forms of intelligence such as kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, visual/special, naturalist, existential, and intrapersonal. Students participate in daily “community circles” where there is an opportunity for learning, sharing, and practicing collaborative skills. Fun activities (energizers), which can be integrated into curricular areas, are interspersed throughout the school day in Tribes classrooms in order to promote feelings of inclusion and a sense of community. Having the opportunity to work in long-term, small heterogeneous groups (tribes) fosters the development of social skills, such as active listening, problem solving, and conflict resolution, while promoting positive interdependence and individual accountability.

Studies of the Tribes program are limited and none could be found in peer-reviewed journals. The following studies are described on the Tribes website (CenterSource Systems, 2008) and referred to on the website of the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (2005) in their Model Programs Guide: 1) A study conducted by Judith Holt in 1993 found that students from Tribes classrooms were less likely than students from non-Tribes classrooms to be referred to the principal or school counsellor for disciplinary problems. This study involved the random assignment of 280 grade 6 students from one school in Oklahoma. 2) A study conducted in the Beloit, Wisconsin school district between 1996 and 1999 found that the Tribes program was implemented inconsistently throughout the school district. However, grade 4 students from Tribes

classrooms where the program was well implemented scored higher on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills than those from less well-implemented Tribes classrooms. As well, 60% of teachers reported spending less time managing student behaviour because of the Tribes program. This study involved over 3,000 elementary and middle school students and used a mixed methodology. 3) A two-year evaluation of the Tribes program in more than 40 schools in the United States was undertaken by the WestEd Regional Educational Laboratory. Results reported include greater improvements in Tribes schools compared to non-Tribes schools in the areas of student inclusion, respect for multicultural populations, student engagement, collaboration, and reading and math test scores. Reports from year one and year two of the WestEd evaluation can be downloaded from the Tribes website (CenterSource Systems, 2008).

From what I had read and from my experience as a teacher, I came to believe that the Tribes program (Gibbs, 2001) could have a positive impact on student interactions through the creation of a more positive school climate. I wanted to gain a better understanding of how such a general program could impact student inter-personal behaviours such as bullying and victimization.

In this dissertation, I explore the links between school climate and bullying/victimization. I use the Tribes program as an example of a program that claims to have an impact on school climate. Data are collected from two elementary schools that have implemented Tribes, one in their first year of implementation and the other in their fourth year. Surveys, interviews, and observations were conducted with multiple informants in an attempt to gain as many perspectives as possible. The main objectives of the study are to: 1) describe the perceptions of stakeholders such as students, teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff, and parents regarding impacts of the Tribes program on school climate and bullying/victimization in their school, 2) explore which components of school climate stakeholders perceive as being important to promoting a bully-free environment, and 3)

develop a new model based on data collected in this study that describes possible mechanisms through which school climate may be changed to produce an environment that is less conducive to bullying.

Positioning Myself

Many qualitative researchers advocate beginning a report by telling readers who you are and how the study came about (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont (2003) talk about the “confessional tone, and the celebration of the personal, found in much qualitative writing published over the past decade” (p. xiii). I also believe that by making my worldview and background clear from the start, the reader may have an easier time understanding where I am coming from and where I am going in my text. Below is some information about my background and epistemological positioning that aims to help the reader contextualize my study.

My interest in conducting this study began as I participated in the Instructional Intelligence Initiative while employed as a teacher in the Western Quebec School Board. Participating in this initiative, I was exposed to the ideas of Barrie Bennett from OISE who co-authored *Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional integration* (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2001). I also had the privilege of participating in the Tribes (Gibbs, 2001) Basic Course taught by John Mazurek, a colleague of Barrie’s. These two men both spoke glowingly of the Tribes “way of learning and being together” and told stories of Tribes schools in the Toronto area which had positive school climates with little or no bullying. As a teacher, I had been troubled by the reality of bullying in my school, and wondered what to do about it. There seemed to be no room in the school day for teachers to implement an antibullying program such as the one our principal had purchased. In completing an Interim Report looking at students’ reactions to a video from a popular antibullying program, I started to question the effectiveness of such antibullying interventions. I began to feel that there was

a bigger piece that was missing. The Tribes training that I undertook made me realize the importance of creating a caring, collaborative school community. Although Tribes is not marketed as an antibullying program, I began to wonder whether a general program such as this, that aims to improve school climate, could also have the outcome of reducing rates of bullying and victimization. As I began to immerse myself in the bullying literature, I found that there were some researchers that had some similar ideas (e.g., Galloway & Roland, 2004; Ortega, Del Rey, & Mora-Merchan, 2004).

My original thesis proposal that was approved by my thesis committee involved an ambitious mixed methods design where I would use quantitative measures of school climate and bullying to compare 20 Tribes schools with 20 non-Tribes schools, and conduct interviews, focus groups, and observations in a sample of these schools to provide deeper and richer insights. Under that proposed design I was hoping to have enough quantitative data to be able to test hypotheses about the effects of a program intended to improve school climate (Tribes) on rates of bullying, and use qualitative data to gain a deeper understanding of the issues. However, problems with access made it impossible to continue with this plan. After six months of recruitment attempts within eight different school boards, I only had two principals that were willing to have me conduct my study in their school. Time was quickly passing and I needed to start collecting data, so I had to modify my research design and reformulate my objectives and research questions.

Because my unit of analysis is the school, I could no longer use a quasi-experimental design to try to determine whether the Tribes program has an impact on school climate and rates of bullying. However, I could still gain a deeper understanding of the topics of interest to me (i.e., bullying, school climate, Tribes program). Working under the constraints that I had, but with the goodwill of my thesis committee, I was able to “beef-up” the qualitative components of my

proposed study and remove my “hypotheses”, thereby changing my design to a multiple case study. My current research questions focus on gaining a better understanding of the problems outlined, instead of trying to measure the effects of one variable on another.

Like others (e.g., Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), I believe that all research methods have inherent limitations and biases; therefore, if only one method is used to examine a given problem, biased and limited results are inevitable. However, when two or more methods with differing limitations are used to study a question, and the results of these methods support one another, then the validity of the conclusions is improved (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Following a pragmatist paradigm, in which the research questions drive the methodology, a mixed methodology is used in this study in order to capitalize on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

In designing this study, I have embraced aspects of post-positivist and constructivist paradigms resulting in a truly hybrid design. I value the post-positivist tenets of trying to be as objective as possible and using instruments that have established validity and reliability. I also like the idea of having a research plan based on the current empirical literature (as is evident in my literature review). Along with constructivists, I also believe that knowledge can be socially constructed and that there can be multiple, sometimes conflicting realities. As argued by Greene and Caracelli (1997), “...each paradigm offers a meaningful and legitimate way of knowing and understanding” (p. 7) that is of value in a mixed methods inquiry. According to the pragmatic position, different paradigms can be used together in order to meet “the inquiry problems’ practical demands” (Greene & Caracelli, 1997, p. 7). Therefore, I was able to maintain my epistemological beliefs and continue using mixed methods to gather different types of data in order to explore my topic of interest while working within the practical constraints I was facing.

I came to accept that my work might consist of “messy, uncertain, multivoiced texts” (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994), and that the story that I would be telling would never be complete (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). As I continued to read and think, I began to realize that it would be acceptable that I make myself visible in my dissertation text (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). Therefore, at times, in the dissertation I will speak in the first person as I try to tell a story about my research.

Contributions

Most of the research conducted in the areas of bullying and school climate are quantitative in nature, relying exclusively on survey data. For example, in the most recent compilation of antibullying program evaluations (P. K. Smith et al., 2004), all of the 14 studies, from eleven different countries, reported in the book, were conducted using a quantitative methodology, usually a quasi-experimental design. Similarly, much of the school climate literature (e.g., Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2003; Samdal, Nutbeam, Wold, & Kannas, 1998), and research combining the areas of school climate and bullying or school safety (e.g., DeRosier & Newcity, 2005; Furlong, Greif, Bates, Whipple, & Jimenez, 2005; Kallestad, Olweus, & Alsaker, 1998; Wilson, 2004) has also been quantitative in nature. I believe that the field would benefit from the addition of studies with more qualitative methods to help provide more depth to the existing knowledge.

Another problem with the existing literature on school climate is that the conceptualization of school climate is often very limited. Many researchers that claim to be studying school climate are actually only studying a few select dimensions of school climate (Van Houtte, 2005). DeRosier and Newcity (2005), for example, write about school climate, but they exclusively use measures of student perceptions of interpersonal and intrapersonal character traits of their peers to operationalize the concept. When Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991) study school climate they focus solely on teacher and principal behaviour. There are a few researchers that take a broader view of school

climate and include dimensions such as fairness of discipline policies and student-teacher relationships (Furlong et al., 2005; Wilson, 2004); however, these measures are still limited in that they do not cover all aspects of school climate and tend to rely on a single group of informants such as students.

My unique contribution is an exploration of the links between school climate and bullying/victimization by using multiple methods, multiple informants, and a broad definition of school climate. I provide an in-depth and open-minded look at two schools at different levels of implementation of a program that aims to improve school climate, and present multiple views of the perceived impacts of the Tribes program on school climate and bullying. Besides creating new descriptive knowledge at the local level, I use data from my study to examine which components of school climate are perceived as being important to promoting a bully-free environment, and I develop a new model describing possible mechanisms through which school climate may be changed to produce an environment which is less conducive to bullying. The contextual information provided from this study may provide important practical clues for educators and administrators that seek ways to improve their school's climate and reduce bullying in their schools.

Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 provides a conceptual context for the study by outlining the relevant academic literature in the areas of bullying and school climate, and by describing some theoretical literature that may help in understanding these two areas. The chapter ends with a summary of the research objectives and specific research questions.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study. The chapter begins with a justification of the research design, and then details the methods used to recruit participants, the characteristics of the participants and the community they were drawn from, the measures used, and the procedures

followed for each component of the study. Finally, the data analysis plan is described and methods for ensuring trustworthiness of the data are outlined.

Chapter 4 presents the findings to the research questions. Contextual information is provided to help situate the findings. Results are organized into four sections: 1) barriers and challenges to implementing the Tribes program, 2) stakeholder perceptions of the impact of the Tribes program on school climate and rates of bullying, 3) aspects of school life identified as being in need of change, and 4) components of school climate important to promoting a bully-free environment.

Chapter 5 presents a model outlining possible mechanisms through which school climate may be changed to produce an environment that is less conducive to bullying, and provides a discussion of the findings in relation to existing theories and empirical research. Concluding remarks and a summary of the contributions and the limitations of the study are offered. Finally, implications for research and practice are discussed, and recommendations for future directions are outlined.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the academic literature that forms the conceptual context for this thesis. The academic literature and conceptual models that I outline in this chapter have informed my beliefs about human development, what bullying is, why it occurs, and what can be done about it. After providing the conceptual context for the study, I will conclude the chapter with a summary of the research objectives and specific research questions.

Bullying

Defining Bullying

According to Rigby, Smith, and Pepler (2004) “there is no universally agreed definition of bullying” (p. 5). However, most researchers define bullying as a subtype of aggressive behaviour characterized by the intent to harm, repetition of attacks, and abuse of power over a weaker victim (e.g., Olweus, 1991; Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2003). Power imbalances in bullying relationships can come in the form of superior physical strength, verbal skills, or social position, for example. Bullying can include direct physical or verbal aggression, as well as indirect forms such as threats, intimidation, group exclusion or gossip (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Charach, Pepler, & Ziegler, 1995).

It is generally agreed that researchers need to have a clear, consistent definition of bullying in order to measure prevalence rates reliably and be able to compare rates in different settings (Sveinsson & Morris, 2007). The most commonly used measure amongst researchers, the *Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire*, provides the following definition of bullying to students at the beginning of the questionnaire:

A student is being bullied when another student, or several other students: say mean and

hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names; completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose; hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room; tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her; and other hurtful things like that. When we talk about bullying, these things happen repeatedly, and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend himself or herself. We also call it bullying, when a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way. But we don't call it bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about equal strength or power argue or fight (Olweus, 2001).

The assumption that survey respondents can reliably understand and apply this definition to the questions asked, however, may not be valid (Sveinsson & Morris, 2007). It is possible that this definition is too complex for younger children to understand, and it is also possible that respondents might revert to their own personal definition of bullying as they complete a questionnaire (Arora, 1996).

There is evidence that younger children tend to view "bullying" and "aggression" as synonymous (P. K. Smith & Levan, 1995; Swain, 1998). In Swain's small scale study on the subject, he found that 100 per cent of grade 3 students identified "fighting with someone" as bullying compared to the 16 per cent of grade 6 students who did. Younger students' definitions of the term "bullying" often include "anything that someone does that is nasty and hurts me", without the qualifications of repetition of behaviour or inequality of power (P. K. Smith & Levan, 1995; Swain, 1998). In the 14 countries that P. K. Smith, Cowie, Olafsson and Liefhoghe (2002) sampled, it was concluded that 8-year-olds had a less differentiated understanding of bullying terms than did

14-year-olds. Another issue is that the term bullying, as used by Olweus, is not easily translated into other languages (Arora, 1996; P. K. Smith et al., 2002).

High levels of differing interpretations of the term “bullying” are found among teachers, as well (Boulton, 1997; Siann & Callaghan, 1993). For example, in Boulton’s study, teachers recognized physical and verbal forms of bullying, but less than half regarded social exclusion as bullying. Siann and Callaghan (1993) found that although teachers did recognize multiple forms of bullying, including social exclusion, and understood the role of power imbalances, they did not mention repetition as an important feature.

In this study, I did not aim to collect prevalence rates to be compared with rates collected from other studies. Instead I strived to gather information about student and staff perceptions of the nature and occurrence of bullying-type behaviours. When I asked informants about bullying at their school, I did not provide a definition of bullying, nor did anyone ask for one. Instead, I assumed that definitions would be broad and varied; and the wide variety of examples of behaviours that informants shared as they spoke about bullying gave credence to my assumption. In this dissertation, bullying includes the wide range of conceptualizations of bullying that students, parents, and school staff hold. This is consistent with the constructivist/interpretivist notion of multiple realities.

Seriousness of the Problem

Research evidence clearly indicates that involvement in bullying is detrimental to children’s wellbeing (Rigby, 2001). In addition to being correlated with poorer academic performance (Chen, 1997), bullying has been associated with social anxiety, poor self-esteem, loneliness, depression, and unhappiness at school (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Craig, 1998). Children involved in bullying, especially those who both bully and are bullied, tend to have poorer psychological adjustment than

those not involved in bullying (Kumpulainen, Rasanen, Henttonen, Almqvist, & Kresanov, 1998; Nansel et al., 2001). Even more disturbing is the apparent link between bullying and extreme acts of violence, such as murder (Leary, Kowalski, Smith, & Phillips, 2003) and suicide (Roland, 2002).

It appears that early peer difficulties, including involvement in bullying, are associated with future adjustment problems (Ladd, 2005). Childhood aggression and peer rejection, both of which are operative in bullying, have been identified as the most powerful predictors of future behavioural and socio-emotional problems, including adult aggression and delinquency (Coie, 2004). Research by Connolly, Pepler, Craig, and Taradash (2000) found that adolescents identified as bullies were more likely than a matched sample of non-involved youth to report physical and social aggression with their girlfriends or boyfriends. Similarly, Loeber and colleagues (1993) describe an “overt pathway” to violence as the occurrence of minor aggression which may then lead to physical fighting and may be followed by more severe violence. Clearly, if we want less violence in our society, we must do something about it as early as possible along this pathway. Antibullying programs implemented at elementary schools can be one way to reduce the number of individuals heading down this overt pathway to violence.

In order to identify appropriate means of preventing bullying, it is important to have some theoretical understanding of human behaviour. This next section will describe some theories of human behaviour (ecological systems theory and socio-ecological theory) and make links to research on bullying.

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1977) argues that in order to understand an individual’s behaviour, one must examine multiple systems beyond the immediate situation containing the individual. He uses Brim’s (1975) terms microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem to describe the nested

arrangement of these systems. For Bronfenbrenner (1977) the microsystem consists of immediate environments that contain the individual (e.g., family, school, peer group); the mesosystem is comprised of connections between microsystems (e.g., a child's home and school); the exosystem consists of external environmental settings which may have indirect impacts on the individual (e.g., a parent's workplace, characteristics of a neighbourhood); and the macrosystem includes the broad institutional patterns of a culture or subculture (e.g., economic, social, and political systems). According to Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological theory, influences in the microsystem are reciprocal; that is, children may be influenced by and have an impact on their immediate surroundings. As well, the experiences of an individual in one setting (e.g., school) have an impact on their behaviour in other settings (e.g., day care, home). External contexts such as health and social services, parent's work conditions, and neighbourhood crime rates, for example, can also have an impact on a child's development and behaviour, as can broad institutional and ideological patterns of the culture or subculture (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979).

More recently, Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) have extended the model to help explain how hereditary and environmental factors interact in the development of behavioural differences. Their new proposition, called a bioecological model, focuses on the individual-environment interactions (proximal processes) that operate in transforming genotypes into phenotypes (i.e., how nature and nurture interact to produce patterns of behaviour).

Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological theory as well as Bronfenbrenner and Ceci's (1994) bioecological model underscore the importance of examining individual factors as well as the multiple contexts surrounding the individual when studying bullying. Breaking away from the traditional view that bullying occurs due to the moral and behavioural failings of the individual, several bullying prevention researchers (e.g., Benbenishty & Astor, 2005; Orpinas & Horne, 2006;

Swearer & Espelage, 2004) have adopted Bronfenbrenner's models in order to help conceptualize why bullying occurs and what types of interventions are needed to address the problem. This application of Bronfenbrenner's model to bullying is often referred to as a "social-ecological" model (Swearer & Espelage, 2004) and will be described below.

Social-Ecological Theory of Bullying

Using a social-ecological framework, bullying is examined through a wider lens, including contextual variables. Benbenishty and Astor (2005) use the "matryoshka doll" metaphor to help visualize how different factors might interconnect. They describe the theory this way: "...victimization in school is the product of many factors that are associated with multiple levels organized hierarchically (nested like a matryoshka doll): individual students within classes, classes within schools, schools within neighborhoods, and neighborhoods within societies and cultures." (p. 113). These authors as well as others (e.g., Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Swearer & Espelage, 2004) also talk about individuals being nested within family contexts and peer groups as being part of the school context. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of this model adapted from Orpinas, Horne and the Multisite Violence Prevention Project (2004), and Swearer and Espelage (2004). Below I will briefly outline some of the research evidence linked to each of these levels.

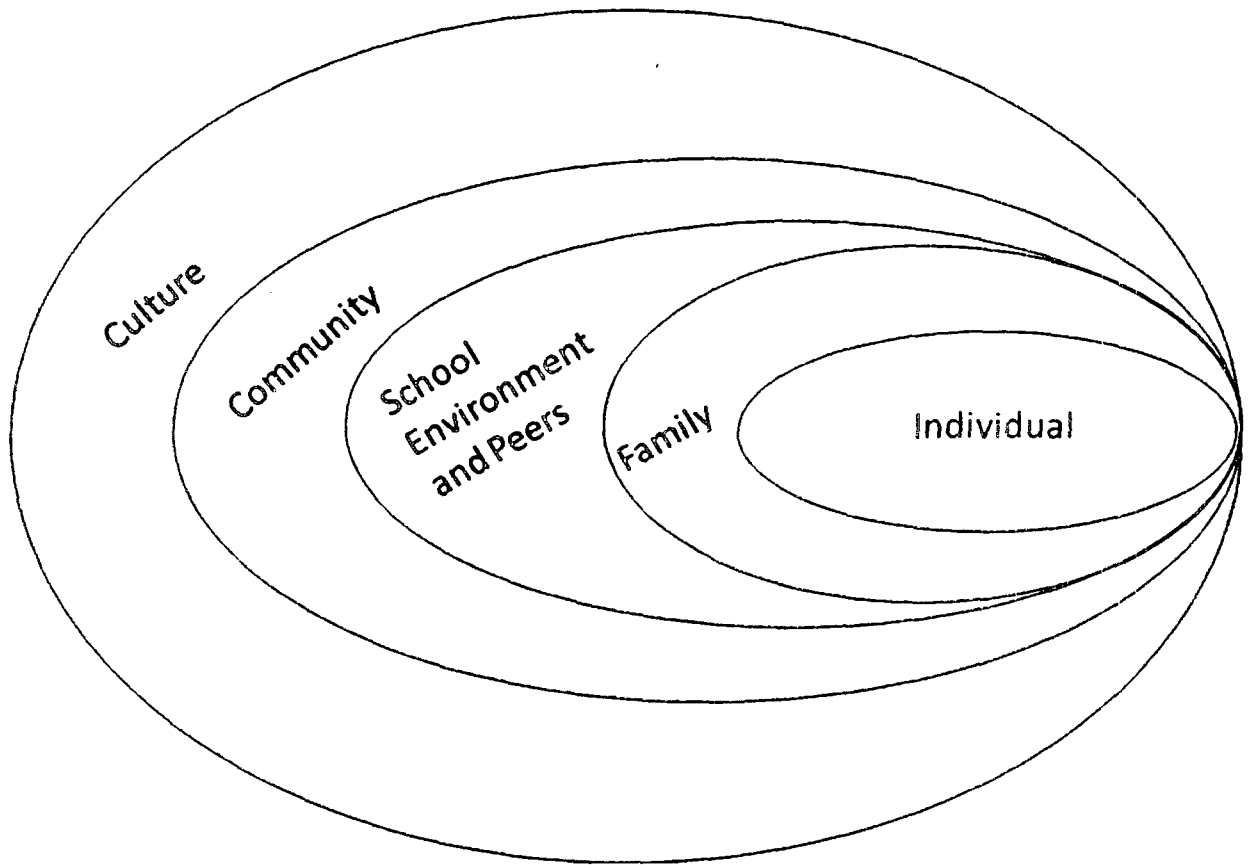


Figure 1. Socio-Ecological Model. Adapted from Benbenishty & Astor (2005), Orpinas & Horne (2006), Swearer & Espelage (2004).

Individual factors. Although early research (e.g., Olweus, 1991) suggested that boys are more involved in bullying than girls, more recent research has attributed these gender differences to other factors such as type of bullying (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Paquette & Underwood, 1999), and differences in emotional arousal/emotional regulation skills (Knight, Guthrie, Page, & Fabes, 2002). Studies typically find that girls use more indirect forms of aggression such as social exclusion and gossiping, whereas boys tend to use more direct physical or verbal aggression (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Espelage, Mebane, and Swearer (2004) contend that finding gender differences in bullying/victimization can depend on the age of participants, as well as the definitions employed and the measures used.

Age has also been cited as a factor that influences rates of bullying (P. K. Smith, Shu, & Madsen, 2001). Studies typically find that younger children report higher levels of bullying than older children. P. K. Smith et al. (2001) provide several possible reasons for the age declines in bullying, including age differences in definitions of bullying, and an increasing reluctance to report bullying. According to Tremblay (2000), physical aggression is normative for younger children but it tends to decrease as children mature and learn that this is socially undesirable behaviour. Some researchers (e.g., Ortega & Lera, 2000) have found higher levels of victimization in middle school students. Pellegrini and Bartini (2000) explain this spike in bullying at the transition from primary to middle school with dominance theory and empirical evidence. Dominance theory proposes that aggression is often used when individuals enter new social groups in order to establish status within the peer group; after dominance is established, aggression decreases. A study of grade 7-11 students (Marsh, Parada, Craven, & Finger, 2004) illustrates how complex the issue of age can be. Among the results that these authors report were that verbal bullying peaked at grade 10 for boys and grade 9 for girls; verbal victimization peaked at grade 9 for boys and girls; and social and physical victimization peaked at grade 8 for both boys and girls. Looking only at frequent aggressors in a nationally representative sample of 5-11-year-old Canadian children, Lee, Baillargeon, Vermunt, Wu, and Tremblay (2007) found decreases in physical aggression with age for girls but not for boys. It is clear that there are many factors, such as type of bullying, operational definitions, and gender confounding the age issue when it comes to rates of bullying.

Many other individual characteristics have been linked to bullying and victimization. Among these are attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and low self-control (Unnever & Cornell, 2003), rejection-sensitivity (Downey, Lebolt, Rincon, & Freitas, 1998), maladaptive emotional regulation (Mahaday Wilton, Craig, & Pepler, 2000), social skills deficit (DeRosier, 2004), poor

self concept (Marsh et al., 2004), lack of empathy (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 2000; Espelage, Mebane, & Adams, 2004; Menesini et al., 2003), internalizing problems (Swearer et al., 2004), anger (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999), anxiety (Goldbaum, Craig, Pepler, & Connolly, 2007), and depression (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Marsh et al., 2004). Children who bully are more likely than uninvolved youth to drink alcohol, smoke or chew tobacco, cheat on tests, and bring weapons to school; and victims are more likely than their non-victimized peers to report that they dislike themselves, worry, and want to stay home from school (Berthold & Hoover, 2000). Those who bully are more likely to hold beliefs supportive of aggression than are non-bullies (Bentley & Li, 1995; Marsh et al., 2004), and are likely to have a strong need for dominance (Roberts & Morotti, 2000). In a study by Bosworth et al. (1999), middle school students who reported bullying others were also more likely to have reported recent acts of misconduct, access to guns, higher levels of anger, impulsivity, feelings of depression, feeling that they did not belong at school, and beliefs supportive of violence. All of these individual risk factors are influenced by other socio-cultural factors and must be considered within those contexts (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005; Swearer & Espelage, 2004).

Family factors. After reviewing several studies conducted in Europe, Australia, and North America, P. K. Smith and Myron-Wilson (1998) concluded that family factors such as lack of parental warmth, a hostile punishment style, and inconsistent monitoring are related to the development of bullying behaviour. According to Patterson's coercion model (described by Eddy, Leve, & Fagot, 2001), a cycle of negative parent-child interaction can develop as follows. Inconsistent parenting practices can lead to children testing limits; for example, a child may ignore parental requests or make unreasonable demands of parents because sometimes they get away with this. When such a child's behaviour frustrates parents, they may respond with harsh or abusive

discipline. This hostile punishment style will likely be reinforced when the child submits to the parent. The parent is modeling aggressive behaviour which the child will likely emulate in the future. When the child acts with anger and aggression towards the parent, the parent may try to de-escalate the situation or pacify the child, and this in turn may reinforce the child's aggressive behaviour. The parents, in turn may be reinforced for appeasing the child because their conciliatory behaviour has led to a return of positive behaviour on the part of their child. Consequently, the child learns that aggressive behaviour can be functional.

In a study by Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij, and Van Oost (2002) students who bullied others and those who both bullied others and were victimized reported more conflict, more punishment, and a less close relationship with their families than did exclusively victimized and non-involved students. Parental responses, however, did not coincide with those of their children. Parents presented a more positive picture of their family life compared to their children's responses.

Smith and Myron-Wilson (1998) cite studies indicating that parents who are overprotective are more likely to have children who are victims of school bullying. However, a more recent study conducted by Stevens et al. (2002) did not confirm these findings. Children who are bullies and victims of bullying are also likely to report higher frequencies of sibling bullying and victimization (Duncan, 1999), and are less likely to report that they were read to by their parents (J. Smith, Twemlow, & Hoover, 1999).

Peer factors. Researchers now conceptualize bullying within a larger social context such as the peer group in which many different people play a variety of different roles, such as victim, bully, reinforcer of the bully, assistant to the bully, defender of the bully, and outsider (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996). Bullying is often pervasive and systemic in schools and may persist, in part, because of lack of intervention by peers (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas,

2000; Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Ground-breaking research using video cameras and remote microphones to observe a sample of 41 teacher-nominated aggressive children and 41 teacher-nominated socially competent children in two Canadian elementary schools revealed that peers were present in 85% of bullying episodes observed but intervened to help victims only 11% of the time (Craig & Pepler, 1995; 1997). Using a sample of Craig and Pepler's (1995) data, O'Connell et al. (1999) found that peers spent 54% of their time reinforcing bullies by passively watching, 21% of their time actively modeling the bullies, and 25% of their time intervening on behalf of the victim. Further analyses of Craig and Pepler's (1995) data revealed that when students did intervene to help peers that were being victimized the bullying stopped within 10 seconds in 57% of the cases observed (Hawkins et al., 2001). Boys and girls who intervened were just as likely to use aggression compared to assertion, and these were equally effective in stopping the bullying (Hawkins et al., 2001). Students were observed intervening in cases of bullying in the classroom just as infrequently as on the playground, but interventions in the classroom tended to be less aggressive and more prosocial (Craig et al., 2000).

There is evidence that having friends and being liked by one's peers can serve a protective function for potential victims of school bullying (Hodges, Malone, & Perry, 1997; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; P. K. Smith et al., 2001). However, while having friends who are physically strong may inhibit victimization (Hodges et al., 1997), having a friend who is a victim of bullying does not seem to serve a protective role (Pellegrini et al., 1999). Other research indicates that having a reciprocal best friend may protect children from being bullied (Boulton, Trueman, Chau, Whitehand, & Amatya, 1999; Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro & Bukowski, 1999). Quality of friendships also appears to be important; that is, friendships characterized by warmth, intimacy, and trust seem to protect children from victimization (Goldbaum et al., 2007).

Negative aspects of school and links to bullying. Several researchers have described aspects of the school environment that contribute to bully/victim problems. For example, poor classroom management (Kasen, Berenson, Cohen, & Johnson, 2004; Roland & Galloway, 2002), a poor professional climate (Roland & Galloway, 2004), lack of supervision on the school yard (Olweus, 1991), lack of organized activities at recess (Leff, Power, Costigan, & Manz, 2003) and modeling of aggressive behaviours (Kasen et al., 2004) can contribute to problems with bullying. Roland and Galloway (2004) found that schools with the highest levels of bullying in their study were characterized by poor leadership, little professional cooperation, and low consensus about professional matters, compared to schools with less bullying. Khoury-Kassabri, Benbenishty, Astor, and Zeira (2004) found that overcrowded classes had higher levels of victimization. They suggest that this may be because teachers of large classes may have a hard time developing positive interpersonal relationships with all students, and may have more difficulty effectively monitoring student behaviour.

Research in Norway found that the prevalence of bullying on the school yard was inversely related to the number of teachers on yard duty (Olweus, 1991). In this same study, students reported that teachers usually did little to stop the bullying. Staff members who ignore or tolerate bullying among students are sending a message that bullying is acceptable behaviour, and this can lead to further aggression among students (Holt & Keyes, 2004). In Craig and Pepler's (1997) observational study of playground behaviour, school staff were observed intervening in only 4% of bullying episodes observed. This low rate of adult intervention can be partly attributed to the lack of awareness of bullying problems; for instance, the observers in Craig and Pepler's study judged that staff were unaware that bullying was occurring in 80% of the episodes. In another analysis of observational data, teachers were observed intervening in 15% of bullying episodes observed in the

playground and 18% of episodes observed in the classroom (Craig et al., 2000). Some teachers may be unintentionally encouraging bullying when they ignore aggressive behaviour or when they fail to encourage respectful interactions among students (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; O'Moore, 2000).

A qualitative study on teachers' understanding of bullying revealed that many teachers were unaware that their students were being bullied, and when they were made aware of bullying they were often uncertain of how to respond to it, especially to indirect bullying (Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005). Most of the teachers interviewed in the Mishna et al. study reported that they had not received any training about bullying and they expressed a desire to learn; however, they also expressed concern about having enough time to deal with issues of bullying when they felt so much pressure to cover the academic curriculum.

Building on Patterson's theory of coercion that begins with family relationships, Reinke and Herman (2002) suggest that teachers sometimes contribute to the progression of childhood aggression by participating in coercive interactions with their students. Similar to the coercive parenting practices discussed above, coercive school practices can unintentionally reinforce undesirable behaviours. "School personnel have the power either to reproduce coercive family relationships in the classroom, sustaining the child's working model, or to create a structured and supportive environment that elicits prosocial behaviors from the student" (Reinke & Herman, 2002, p.551).

Positive aspects of school and links to bullying. Teachers can have a powerful influence on setting norms in the classroom. Children's attitudes towards aggression can be affected by their teacher's attitude and behaviour (Chang, 2003). In Chang's study, aggressive behaviours were more rejected by students in classes in which the teacher displayed a dislike of aggressive behaviours. Teachers who feel empathy for children who are victimized are more likely to implement

components of an antibullying program (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003) and intervene when a child reports being bullied (Mishna et al., 2005).

The way teachers manage their classrooms and principals manage their schools (i.e., authoritarian or democratic) can also make a difference in how students treat each other. Ortega and colleagues (2004) maintain that through democratic management of schools and classrooms, students and teachers can achieve an environment that is characterized by *convivencia*, defined as “a spirit of solidarity, fraternity, co-operation, harmony, a desire for mutual understanding, the desire to get on well with others, and the resolution of conflict through dialogue or other non-violent means” (2004, p. 169). The Seville Anti-Violence in School (SAVE) model is based on the concept of fostering *convivencia*, and has achieved success in reducing the incidence of bullying and victimization (Ortega et al., 2004). In an evaluation of the SAVE program, democratic involvement in school life was a component that students identified as being an effective way to improve relations among them (Ortega et al., 2004). The authors describe various ways that democratic classroom management can be realized; for example, establishing rules by consensus, debates, and suggestion boxes. Also important in democratic schools is “agreement from everyone regarding rules about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and a positive emphasis on liberty, solidarity, and equality among everybody in the school” (Ortega et al., 2004, p. 171).

Students who are actively involved in school and feel a sense of personal connection with peers and staff at school are less likely to engage in aggressive behaviour (Karcher, 2004). Organized sports and clubs are examples of ways to enhance student engagement with school. Empirical studies (e.g., Doll, 1996; Leff, Costigan, & Power, 2004) indicate that positive interactions among children increased and aggressive behaviour decrease when fun, organized games are made available on the playground. In the study by Leff et al. (2004), the presence of

organized games, even in the absence of adult support, was related to higher rates of cooperative play than when there was adult supervision in the absence of organized activities.

Community. Welsh, Stokes, and Greene (2000) note the following community factors that are often associated with school misbehaviour and delinquency: “high population density, high residential mobility, high poverty rate, availability of weapons and drugs, and a high rate of adult involvement in crime” (p.252). Using data gathered from police records, a large school district, and a U.S. census, Welsh et al. (2000) looked at differences between the communities immediately surrounding schools (the local community) and the communities from which the students were drawn (the imported community). They found that the local community that had a stronger influence on “school disorder” than the imported community. That is, there were more incidents reported to police from schools in poorer neighbourhoods than from schools in areas with a higher socio-economic status. In the U.S., the property tax base of the local community often impacts the resources available to the local school (Welsh et al, 2000). These authors suggest that poverty in the local community may have a negative impact on schools by limiting financial and social resources. On the other hand, in a survey of over 10,000 students in Israel, Khoury-Kassabri et al. (2004) found that students in schools located in neighbourhoods with higher socio-economic status, report lower levels of victimization.

Benbenishty and Astor (2005) list poverty, crime, and lack of opportunities for education and employment as risk factors for interpersonal violence. However, these authors point out that within the same communities there can be large variations in rates of victimization from school to school.

Culture. Bergeron and Schneider (2005) reviewed 36 studies looking at cultural differences in peer-directed aggressive behaviour and found that cultures characterized by collectivistic values,

high moral discipline, and a high level of egalitarian commitment showed lower levels of aggression than cultures that did not exhibit these characteristics. Also associated with lower levels of aggression were cultures whose members prefer rules, norms, and rituals that provide stability and predictability (i.e., low uncertainty avoidance), and those cultures with Confucian values, that is, those that emphasize social order and the creation of dedicated, responsible citizens.

Eslea et al. (2003) found differences in rates of bullying across the seven countries that they studied; for example, the percentage of students who reported being victims of bullying ranged from 5% in Ireland to 26% in Italy, while the percentage of students who reported that they bullied others ranged from 2% in China to 17% in Spain. However, these authors admit that some of these differences could be due to different definitions and ways of conceptualizing bullying in each country. Eslea et al (2003) also point out that different cultures have “different attitudes towards sex and age, so that behaviours may be considered acceptable for one sex but not the other, or at one age but not another” (p 81).

In Israel, Khoury-Kassabri et al. (2004) found that Arab students reported higher rates of victimization than Jewish students. However, they also note that the Arab population in Israel is more economically disadvantaged than the Jewish population. A study which compared Jewish Israeli adolescents living in areas with a high incidence of terrorism to those living in areas with a low incidence of terrorism suggests that exposure to terrorism may have an impact on adolescent aggression (Even-Chen & Itzhaky, 2007).

Exposure to certain aspects of popular culture such as violent imagery in television, movies, and video games has also been associated with increases in aggressive behaviour in youth (Anderson, Gentile, & Buckley, 2007; Browne & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005; Bushman & Huesmann, 2006).

Visible minorities are over-represented as both victims and perpetrators of violence in American schools (Soriano, Soriano, & Jimenez, 1994). These authors discuss several socio-cultural factors, such as poverty, lack of opportunity, and discrimination that likely contribute to this situation. They also stress that “a significant percentage of the acts of violence in schools are precipitated by the lack of cultural sensitivity and the limited awareness of cultural differences” (p. 216).

School Climate as a Promising Factor in Bullying Research

An important reason to focus on school climate is that this is where the most impact may be made; that is, it may be more feasible to try to change aspects of the school climate rather than individual characteristics, family situations, neighbourhoods, or cultures. In recent empirical testing of the social-ecological model, social climate has emerged as a promising factor for future research into bullying (Espelage, 2006). Indeed, several researchers have identified school climate as a factor that is associated with school violence and bullying (e.g., Kasen et al., 2004; Skiba et al., 2004). Using data from over 6,000 students from 125 schools, Brookmeyer, Fanti, and Henrich (2006) found that students who attended schools with higher levels of positive school climate engaged in less violence over time. Using hierarchical linear regression to analyze the survey data from over 2,000 grade 6-12 students, Skiba et al. (2004) found that students' perceptions of school climate, connectedness, and civility made the largest contribution to their overall feelings of safety at school. Student perceptions of the extent to which they feel welcome, are treated fairly, and whether their teachers care about them, for example, made larger contributions to their overall perceptions of safety at school than their perceptions of delinquency/major safety items (e.g., I have seen drugs or alcohol at school; Robbery/theft over \$10 is common). The item “I feel welcome when I am at school” made the single largest contribution to students' perceptions of school safety.

Two aspects of school climate (i.e., school policies and teacher-student relations) were found to be related to lower levels of school violence in both Arab and Jewish schools (Khoury-Kassabri, Benbenishty, & Astor, 2005; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2004). In this study of over 10,000 students from 162 schools across Israel, schools where students perceived that the rules were clear, consistent, and fair had lower levels of violence. Positive teacher-student relations were also associated with lower levels of peer victimization.

Kasen et al., (2004) used the following four school climate scales in their study on aggressive, bullying-related behaviours: 1) conflict scale: a high score indicates poor classroom management and student disregard for authority; 2) learning focus scale: a high score reflects a well-organized setting where learning is a priority; 3) social facilitation scale: a high score indicates an open and informal atmosphere where personal concerns may be voiced and social ties are encouraged; 4) autonomy scale: a high score signifies that students are encouraged to have a voice in school politics and in decisions about school programs. Drawing from existing measures of child behaviour, Kasen et al. created the following scales to measure behaviours related to bullying (i.e., associated with interpersonal difficulties): 1) physical aggression (e.g., gets into a lot of fights), 2) anger (e.g., angers other by teasing, quarrelsome), 3) deviance (e.g., cheats, takes things from classmates), 4) rebelliousness (e.g., breaks rules, does not feel guilty), and 5) school problems (e.g., gets in trouble a lot, argues with teachers). In their survey of over 500 grade 5-12 students, Kasen et al. (2004) found that students at schools where there was poor classroom management and student disregard for authority reported more physical aggression, rebelliousness, school problems, and anger than students where there was better classroom management and higher regard for authority. In this same study, students at well-organized, harmonious schools reported fewer school problems, and less deviance and rebelliousness compared to students at schools where learning was less of a

priority. Interestingly, students in high conflict schools with an open, informal, sociable atmosphere reported experiencing a significant increase in bullying-related behaviours over the 2.5 years of the study. This study illustrates the complexity of the relationships between school climate variables and bullying-related behaviours, and the need for more qualitative designs to explore these interactions.

In a study of over 6,000 sixth graders from 148 schools and over 6,000 eighth graders from 92 schools across New Brunswick, different components of school climate were associated with less bullying in different grades (Ma, 2002). For grade 6 students, a positive disciplinary climate and strong parental involvement was associated with less bullying, while for grade 8 students, high academic press (i.e., teachers expect all students to do well; students value school work) was related to less bullying. Victims of bullying, however, were more likely to come from schools with a poor disciplinary climate, whether in grade 6 or 8.

A model developed by Orpinas and Horne (2006) includes the following components of school climate that they argue are important to creating a bully-free environment: 1) policies and accountability, 2) school values, 3) caring and respect, 4) excellence in teaching, 5) positive expectations, 6) teacher support, 7) awareness of strengths and problems, and 8) physical environment characteristics. Although these components make sense based on theory and previous research, Orpinas and Horne have not yet empirically tested their model.

Antibullying Programs

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was the first comprehensive “whole-school” antibullying program implemented on a large scale and systematically evaluated (Olweus, 2004), and many other antibullying programs have been based on this model (see P.K. Smith et al., 2004). Whole-school programs include: information on bullying for school staff, students, and parents;

clear, consistent school-wide policies for bullying; classroom activities that promote antibullying attitudes and teach pro-social methods of conflict resolution; and interventions for students affected by bullying.

Despite the positive results shown by Olweus (1991) and the wide-spread use of such programs, recent research questions their effectiveness. J. D. Smith et al. (2004) quantitatively synthesized the results of 14 evaluation studies of whole-school antibullying programs that shared properties of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus, 1993). They examined two key program outcomes, self-reported victimization and self-reported bullying. Effect sizes were calculated for each study and classified as large, medium, small, negligible, or negative (c.f. Cohen, 1988). Outcomes were mostly negligible (i.e., effect size $r \leq .09$) or negative. Only one study yielded an outcome that was categorized as medium (i.e., the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program), and none was categorized as large.

Two other reviews of antibullying program evaluations have also shown mixed results (Baldy & Farrington, 2007; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). Of the 16 antibullying program evaluations reviewed by Baldy and Farrington (2007), eight showed desirable results, four produced small or negligible effects, two showed mixed results, and two produced undesirable effects. In Vreeman and Carroll's (2007) review, of the 21 studies which measured direct behavioral outcomes for bullying and victimization, only three programs yielded consistently positive outcomes while eight yielded a mix of positive and non-positive outcomes (e.g., no change in self-reported bullying but small reduction in victimization). Ten of the programs yielded null or negative results on rates of bullying and victimization.

Several possible factors have been suggested to account for the limited success of some antibullying interventions, including: type of intervention; length and comprehensiveness of

program; support by researchers; effort invested by schools; and, age and gender of students (P. K. Smith & Ananiadou, 2003). These authors also noted that sensitization effects may account for negligible post-intervention changes in rates of bullying/victimization. That is, antibullying programs raise student awareness of bullying, which, in turn increases the likelihood that students will identify and report bullying in post-tests. Interventions that do not explicitly focus on bullying have an advantage of controlling for this confound.

Another reason that antibullying programs may not be achieving desired outcomes could be that teachers are unable to invest the sustained time and effort necessary to implement a program that focuses on only one problem, such as bullying, when there are so many other daily concerns such as discipline, classroom management, and student motivation (Galloway & Roland, 2004). Roland (2000) argues that general classroom management approaches, such as teachers caring for students, effective teaching practices, monitoring of student behaviour, and appropriate teacher intervention for student misbehaviour in general may work to prevent a wide range of behaviour problems including bullying. This line of thinking was supported in a survey study of over 2,000 grade 4-6 students and 100 teachers from 22 elementary schools in Norway (Roland & Galloway, 2002). These researchers demonstrated through a path analysis that classroom management had a direct impact on the prevalence of bullying and an indirect impact on bullying through the social structure of the class. That is, the better the classroom management, the less bullying was reported. Furthermore, high quality classroom management was positively correlated to better social structure which, in turn, was negatively correlated to bullying. The social structure of the class was measured using items concerning informal relations between students, student concentration on schoolwork, and informal norms. These authors also included measures of home conditions in their analyses, and despite class-level variations on this variable, no impact of home conditions on bullying was found.

Because data were only collected at one time point, it is difficult to verify the direction of influence between variables; for example, it is possible that pre-existing bullying may impact the social structure of the class and the teacher's classroom management style.

Based on Hargreaves' (2001) work suggesting that initiatives which are low-profile and require low energy input are more likely to be successful in the long-term, Galloway and Roland (2004) propose that a general program aimed at school improvement may have a wider impact on a variety of undesirable student behaviours, including bullying, and may be easier for teachers to adopt and maintain compared to a program focused solely on bullying. In a small pilot study, Galloway and Roland provided teachers in the experimental group with professional development focused on care for students, implementation of routines for task-oriented work, monitoring students' work and social interactions, and intervening when problems occur. Surveys were administered to grade one students in experimental and control conditions only after the intervention as it was not possible to collect pre-test data. Children from the experimental group reported significantly lower rates of bullying and victimization at post-test compared to children in the control condition. Due to lack of resources, the researchers could not provide follow-up data to test whether positive changes were maintained.

Two other research groups (Orpinas, Horne, and Staniszewski, 2003; Ortega et al., 2004) have also looked at rates of bullying and victimization after an intervention focussed on changing the school environment including teacher behaviour. In a study by Orpinas et al. (2003), a more positive school environment was established when teachers identified basic values for their school and created rules and consequences based on these principles, modeled the values, and avoided behaviours that are were incongruent with these values. Their rules were: "The Five Bee's: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Honest, Be Ready to Learn, and Be Your Personal Best" (p.436).

Their initiative led to decreases in student self-reported victimization among K-5 students, and a reduction in reported aggression among K-2 students. Since the program was evaluated in only one elementary school with no comparison school, the results must be interpreted with caution. As well, their evaluation did not provide information about which program components were most important in reducing victimization and aggression.

The Seville anti-violence program (SAVE) is another program that involves a general effort to improve teaching and classroom management, and aims to enhance relations between students, staff, and parents (Ortega & Lera, 2000; Ortega et al., 2004). The program is very flexible and teachers design their own interventions using SAVE model concepts such as democratic management of interpersonal relationships; co-operative group work; activities aimed at exploration of feelings, attitudes, and values; and direct interventions with students at risk or involved in bullying (Ortega et al., 2004). In an evaluation of the SAVE program, students in 3 elementary and 2 secondary intervention schools reported greater satisfaction with school life in general, better peer relationships, and fewer problems with bullying compared to students in 2 elementary and 2 secondary comparison schools (Ortega et al., 2004). However, as schools were not randomly assigned to experimental and control conditions, and program components varied from school to school, it is difficult to determine the effects of SAVE.

In a review of peer-reviewed antibullying program evaluations conducted between 1997 and 2007, Ryan and Smith (2008) found that very few studies (less than one-fifth) included any qualitative methods in their design. This is unfortunate because qualitative data can provide rich description about environmental factors to improve the “meaning and clarity of statistical effects” in experiments and quasi-experiments (Chatterji, 2007, p. 252). Qualitative components in the program evaluations that were reviewed by Ryan and Smith (2008) included interviews, diaries,

observations, and open-ended questionnaires. These were either used as the main form of data or were included to supplement quantitative data by providing richer details about the context in which the antibullying program took place and provide a means of triangulation. Among these studies with qualitative components, only two studies mentioned any outcomes related to school climate (i.e., Jennifer & Shaughnessy, 2005; Naylor & Cowie, 1999). Analysis of data from interviews, observations, and facilitator diaries yielded eight key themes (i.e., philosophy and ethos; leadership and management; home/school/community relationship; behaviour policy and practice; teaching and learning; communication; training and development; and environment) that led to generation of three models of readiness for change (Jennifer & Shaughnessy, 2005). The circular model best characterizes schools that are likely to implement the *Checkpoints* intervention; that is, as an organization, they have a clearly focused mission, and are reflective and responsive.

Naylor and Cowie (1999) conducted interviews with staff, peer supporters, users, and potential users of the peer support service in order to supplement survey data in assessing the impact of the peer support service. Teachers and students participating in their study perceived that the peer support initiative helped to foster a caring socio-emotional climate (Naylor & Cowie, 1999).

Kilian, Fish, and Maniago (2006) studied the effects of the Project ACHIEVE Social Skills Program on one elementary school. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from grade 3-6 students, teachers, school aides, and parents before the intervention and after 9 months of implementation. Pre- and post-intervention observational data collected on behavioural checklists by teachers and school aides showed significant reductions in bullying behaviours across grades. Although survey data from students, teachers, and parents did not show any statistically significant

pre-post differences on any variables, Kilian et al. (2006) noted that unsolicited positive feedback was received from parents, staff, and students regarding improvements in the overall school climate.

The above research suggests that aspects of school climate are malleable and that improvements in school climate are associated with reduced levels of bullying. Although some antibullying interventions refer to aspects of the school climate, the construct is rarely defined or conceptualized in a broader sense. The next section will aim to provide this.

School Climate

School climate is a complex construct that is difficult to define and measure. Perhaps the easiest way to conceptualize it is to use Halpin and Croft's (1963) analogy: "Personality is to the individual what 'climate' is to the organization" (p. 1). The academic literature on school climate is more nebulous, however.

Defining School Climate

A major problem in studying school climate is the lack of consensus among researchers as to how to define and measure the construct (Anderson, 1982; Lehr & Christenson, 2002). Anderson's (1982) review, based on over 200 references, identifies differences in definitions, theoretical models, choice of variables, and units of measurements among school climate researchers. Twenty years later, Lehr and Christenson (2002) open their paper by presenting three different definitions of school climate and outlining various ways of organizing climate variables. The range of conceptualizations among school climate researchers have led to a complex and confusing body of research.

Anderson identifies Tagiuri's (1968) typology as the most comprehensive conceptualization of school climate. Tagiuri (1968) includes the following categories in his taxonomy of school climate: 1) ecology (physical/material), 2) milieu (composition of the population), 3) social system

(relationships), and 4) culture (beliefs, values); however, he does not explain these categories in detail, nor does he provide a method of measuring these dimensions. In Anderson's review, she provides examples of variables measured in 40 major school climate studies and organizes them according to Tagiuri's categories. Examples of ecology variables include building characteristics and school size. Milieu variables include: teacher characteristics such as level of education, salary, morale, and hours of teaching preparation; and, student body characteristics such as race, socio-economic status, and morale. Social systems variables include: administrative organization, instructional program, ability groupings, administrator-teacher rapport, teacher shared decision making, good communication, teacher-student relationships, student shared decision making, opportunity for student participation, teacher-teacher relationships, community-school relationships, and principal's involvement in instruction. Culture variables include: teacher commitment, student norms, cooperative emphasis, teacher expectations of students, emphasis on academics, rewards and praise, consistency, consensus, and clear goals.

Anderson (1982) presents an overview of the dimensions of school climate measured by researchers and shows how these map onto Tagiuri's categories, illustrating that most researchers exclusively measure within the social system and culture dimensions. Anderson draws the same conclusion as Tagiuri; that is, measures of school climate tend to focus on only a few dimensions and fail to "capture the essence of the climate" (Tagiuri, 1968, p. 28). However, Tagiuri and Anderson also recognize that although countless variables may make a difference to student behavioural outcomes, it would be impossible and impractical to measure everything. One recommendation that Anderson (1982) makes is to focus on variables that can be changed.

In her review, Anderson (1982) describes nine major school climate instruments, all of which are quantitative (i.e., surveys). Out of the 40 major studies reviewed, only eight of them

include any qualitative measures of school climate such as interviews or observations. This may be because the term “culture” instead of “climate” is more commonly used by researchers who use more qualitative methods (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

Over twenty years later, the same issues regarding school climate are evident. Consensus and clarity are still lacking in the literature, and many researchers that claim to be measuring school climate fail to provide a clear definition of the construct and measure only limited dimensions (e.g., DeRosier & Newcity, 2005; Furlong et al., 2005). There are still very few researchers using any qualitative methods of measuring school climate. Freiberg and Stein (1999) describe some qualitative methods such as student drawings, teacher journals, and cafeteria observations, but acknowledge that these are rarely used by school climate researchers.

Other issues that concern school climate researchers are the distinctions between classroom climate and school climate, and between climate and culture. These issues will be described briefly below and I will present the position I adopt for this dissertation. Finally, I will present the conceptualization of school climate that I use in this study.

Classroom climate and school climate. According to Fraser (1986; 1991), classroom climate and school climate have historically been studied as separate and distinct fields of research. Fraser points out that much of the theory, instrumentation, and methodology in the study of school climate have been based on studies of organizational climate within business contexts, and that this feature distinguishes school climate research from classroom environment research. Hoy’s work, based on Halpin and Croft’s (1963) conceptualization is an example of school climate work based on organizational theory (e.g., Hoy & Clover, 1986; Hoy et al., 2003; Hoy et al., 1991). They conceptualize school climate as “a set of measurable properties of the work environment of teachers and administrators based on their collective perceptions” (Hoy & Clover, 1986, p. 94).

Johnson and Johnson (as cited in Fraser, 1986) view the school climate as a sum of the classroom climates within a school. More commonly, however, researchers view school climate as “distinct from and more global than” classroom climate (Fraser, 1986, p. 9). Fraser gives the example that “classroom climate might involve relationships between the teacher and his/her students or among students” whereas “school climate might involve relationships between teachers and their teaching colleagues, head of department and school principal” (p. 9). A look at the measures of classroom climate presented in the appendices in Fraser (1986) reveals that many of the items included in these instruments have also been included in measures of school climate. Although aspects of classroom climate may be unique to themselves, these dimensions are ultimately linked to and influenced by the overall school climate (Anderson, 1982). Because of the overlap between classroom climate and school climate, in this dissertation classroom factors will be viewed as components of a school’s overall climate.

Climate and culture. The terms school climate and school culture are often used interchangeably in the school effectiveness literature (Van Houtte, 2005). However, other authors have made a clear distinction between the two constructs. For example, Hoy and Feldman (1999) make a distinction between climate as “shared perceptions of behaviour” and culture as “shared assumptions, values and norms” (p. 85). Hoy et al. (1991) explain that studies of climate usually have their intellectual roots in psychology and tend to use quantitative research methods such as surveys and multivariate statistics, while studies of culture usually come from anthropology or sociology and use ethnographic methods.

Distinctions are not always so clear though. Welsh, Stokes, and Greene (2000) describe “school culture” as:

unwritten beliefs, values, and attitudes that characterize the style of interaction among students, teachers, and administrators ...factors such as communication patterns, norms about what is appropriate or how things are to be done, role relationships and role perceptions, patterns of influence and accommodation, and rewards and sanctions (p. 248).

However, this same definition is used for “school climate” by Reinke and Herman (2002, p. 552). Welsh et al., (2000), however, view school climate as a broad construct including their above description of school culture as well as three other dimensions including: organizational structure, social milieu, and ecological environment. This is consistent with the four factor model of school climate that Anderson (1982) outlines based on Tagiuri’s (1968) work: 1) ecology (physical/material), 2) milieu (composition of the population), 3) social system (relationships), and 4) culture. Although researchers often refer to this model (e.g., Birnbaum et al., 2005; Creemers & Reezigt, 1999), it has not been expanded on, clarified, or tested.

Schools as Communities

Although there is a tradition of viewing schools as organizations (e.g., Halpin & Croft, 1963; Hoy et al., 1991), some authors (e.g., Sergiovanni, 1994) argue that schools are best viewed as “communities”. Sergiovanni (1994) notes that in communities, people are connected by commitments and common purpose, not contract. He further argues that communities “are socially organized around relationships and the felt interdependencies that nurture them” and that this bonding and the “shared values and ideas are the defining characteristics of schools as communities” (p. 4).

Sergiovanni (1994) uses Tonnies’ conceptualization of *Gemeinschaft* to make sense of how schools become communities. He argues that “*Gemeinschaft* of mind... the bonding together of people that results from their mutual binding to a common goal, shared set of values, and shared

conception of being” is essential for creating a sense of community in schools (p. 6). Using Tönnies’ conceptualization of *Gesellschaft*, Sergiovanni argues that when community values are replaced by contractual ones, life becomes more impersonal, and loneliness, feelings of isolation and disconnection may result. Sergiovanni theorizes that when students do not experience a sense of community at school, they either attempt to create their own community in which they can feel a sense of belonging, or they live with negative psychological consequences such as feelings of loneliness and isolation.

The Child Development Project is a comprehensive intervention for the enhancement of pro-social behaviour in children which is grounded in the belief that schools are communities (Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Schaps, & Solomon, 1991; Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997). Communities are defined by Battistich, Schaps, Watson, and Solomon (1996) as “places where members care about and support each other, actively participate in and have influence on the group’s activities and decisions, feel a sense of belonging and identification with the group, and have common norms, goals, and values” (p.137). These authors articulate the following theoretical model that is useful in understanding the success of their Child Development Project: Caring school communities facilitate student intellectual and sociomoral development, while satisfying their basic needs for autonomy, competence, and belonging, which in turn, results in student attachment to the school community. Attachment to school promotes acceptance of school norms and values and the behaviour consistent with them. This theoretical model may also be useful in understanding potential impacts of the Tribes program since Tribes also aims to create caring school communities that promote the healthy development of the whole child.

Measuring School Climate

School climate is clearly a multidimensional construct, and the term means different things to different people. There is an evident overlap in the construct of school climate and other constructs, such as school connectedness (Wilson, 2004); interpersonal conflict (Kasen, Cohen, & Brook, 1998; Kasen, Johnson, & Cohen, 1990); bullying (DeRosier & Newcity, 2005), safety (Furlong et al., 2005); school engagement (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003); and school bonding (O'Farrell & Morrison, 2003). Similar items are found across measures of these constructs.

A problem that has led to some confusion in conceptualizing school climate is that some measures focus on only one or two dimensions of the construct (Van Houtte, 2005). For example, DeRosier and Newcity (2005) only measure student perceptions of interpersonal and intrapersonal character traits in their School Climate Survey. Other measures such as the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) for Elementary Schools and for Secondary Schools look at two dimensions, teacher and principal behaviour (Hoy et al., 1991).

Other measures of school climate, however, are very comprehensive, covering an extensive list of factors. For example, researchers at the Yale Child Study Center School Development Program (Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997) have published the following list of components characterizing a "healthy supportive school climate": achievement motivation, collaborative decision making, equity and fairness, order and discipline, parent involvement, school-community relations, staff dedication to student learning, staff expectations, leadership, school building, sharing of resources, caring and sensitivity, student interpersonal relations, and student-teacher relations (pp. 326-327).

Freiberg and Stein (1999) distinguish between direct and indirect measures of school climate. Commonly used direct measures include surveys, observations, interviews, and focus

groups. Journal narratives and drawings are direct measures that are seldom used to assess school or classroom climate, but provide rich qualitative data. Indirect measures include attendance records, visits to the nurse's office, disciplinary referrals to the office, suspensions and expulsions, staff turnover rates, physical appearance of the school building, hallways and classrooms, and noise levels in the hallways or cafeteria. Freiberg and Stein promote using a combination of the above mentioned measures in order to provide a balanced assessment of a school. Many of these measures are described in the chapters of Freiberg's (1999) book. Also see Anderson (1982) for an extensive review of school climate measures.

Model of School Climate

Recently, a thematic analysis of variables measured in school climate studies was undertaken to develop a broad model of school climate that captures the wide range of conceptualizations of the construct that are currently being used (Ryan, Miura, & Smith, 2008). Articles reviewed for this analysis were limited to empirical studies that were peer-reviewed, written in English, and published between 1996 and 2006. Only studies in which school climate is measured quantitatively were included in the analysis. The resulting 3-factor model will be described below and used as a conceptual definition in this dissertation.

School climate, for the purposes of this dissertation, consists of three inter-related dimensions: 1) individual characteristics/behaviours, 2) social relationships, and 3) organizational factors. These three factors operate together to create a school's "personality". The model is presented in the form of a mind map to illustrate the three basic categories of factors and their components (Figure 2). The write up below will describe specific constructs that fit under each category. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the three elements and their components do overlap and influence each other. The bi-directional arrows represent these inter-relations.

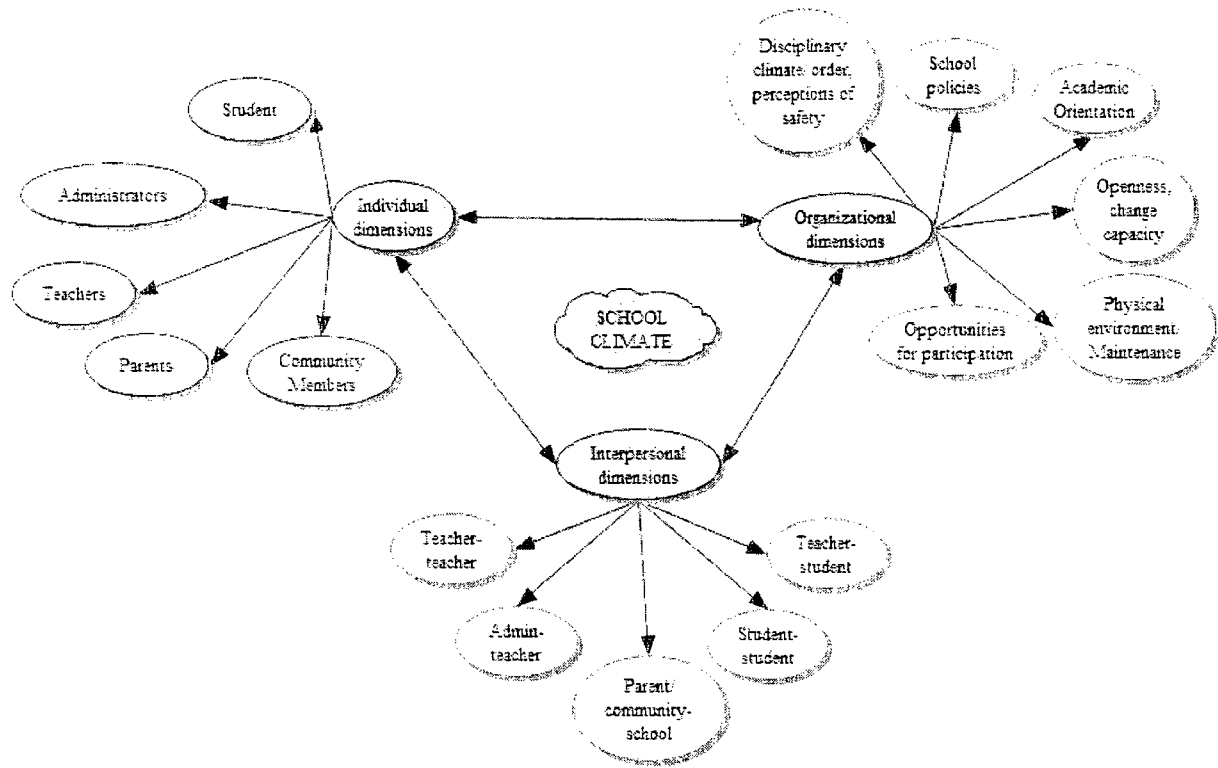


Figure 2. School Climate Model

Individual dimensions. The individual characteristics (i.e., the values, attitudes, and behaviours) of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and members of the community can reflect school climate and have an impact on it. Student factors include: absenteeism, disruption of or skipping of classes, and substance use/abuse (Corten & Dronkers, 2006); social skills (Slaughter-Defoe & Carlson, 1996); achievement motivation (Kuperminc, Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatt, 1997); satisfaction with classes (Loukas & Robinson, 2004); liking for school and perceptions of fairness (Graham, Bellmore, & Mize, 2006). Teacher factors include: absenteeism and turn-over (Corten & Dronkers, 2006); morale (Farmer, 1999); work pressure, feelings of autonomy, professional prestige, financial security (Sava, 2002); engagement in the teaching task (Ma & Wilkins, 2002); and teacher efficacy (Robinson, 2002). Administrator (principal) characteristics include leadership style (Gaziel, 2004; Sterbinsky, Ross, & Redfield, 2006). Parental and

community factors include: level of involvement and supportive behaviour (Kuperminc, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 2001; Shaunessy, Suldo, Hardesty, & Shaffer, 2006).

Interpersonal dimensions. School climate is impacted by the extent to which relationships are built on respect, trust, caring, sensitivity, support, inclusion, participatory/collaborative decision-making, autonomy, and open communication. Teacher-student factors include: teacher commitment to students (Ma & Wilkins, 2002); high or low expectations of students (Ross & Lowther, 2003); strictness with students (Corten & Dronkers, 2006); support of students (Astor, Benbenishty, Vinokur, & Zeira, 2006; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2005); and extent to which students and teachers respect each other (Kitsantas, Ware, & Martinez-Arias, 2004). Teacher-teacher factors include: staff collaboration/colleague support, degree of commonality of purpose and the sense that members of the school can depend upon each other to solve problems (Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein, 2004). Administrator-teacher factors include the degree to which teachers trust and respect the administrator, and the degree to which principals are supportive, directive, or restrictive with teachers (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998). Student-student factors include the levels of conflict, cohesion, or competition among students (Loukas & Robinson, 2004). Parent/community-school factors consist of levels of communication and collaboration between parents or community members and the school (Ross & Lowther, 2003).

Organizational factors. School climate can be impacted by organizational factors such as school policies, the disciplinary climate, emphasis on academic achievement, the physical environment, safety, and openness. School policies usually reflect school values and may include the extent to which the school has consistent and explicit goals, and the perceived fairness and clarity of rules (Wilson, 2004). Perceptions of substance use, safety, social support, and personal violence victimization impacts the disciplinary climate (Furlong, Casas, Corral, Chung, & Bates,

1997), as does the extent to which the principal and other staff maintain good discipline at the school (Ma, 2002). Aspects of the physical environment such as maintenance of school grounds and classrooms (Astor, Benbenishty, Zeira, & Vinokur, 2002), and availability of materials and resources (Billingsley et al., 2004) can have an impact on school climate. Instructional management issues that can have an impact on school climate include staff dedication to student learning and high expectations of students (Corten & Dronkers, 2006). Extra-curricular management includes creating opportunities for student involvement in activities (Hanna, 1998). An openness in communication (Kallestad et al., 1998), opportunity for input, continuous academic and social growth (Johnson, Johnson, Gott, & Zimmerman, 1997) are also factors that can impact a school's climate.

All of the above components taken together make up a school's climate according to the qualitative analysis conducted by Ryan, Miura, and Smith (2008), and will serve as the conceptualization of school climate used for the current study. It is important to keep in mind that the Ryan et al. (2008) school climate model is simply an attempt that we have made to organize and refine the school climate construct. Our model still remains to be tested to determine whether it is a viable model for those currently working in the field of school climate research. That being said, this conceptualization of school climate was chosen for the current study because it is the most comprehensive one available. Some of the components outlined in this model may have more impact on school climate than others. The qualitative design used in this dissertation will allow the most important dimensions to emerge, and will permit links to be made between school climate factors and bullying.

Research Objectives

Antibullying programs have varied greatly in their outcomes, with some studies reporting positive results while others have reported little or no positive impacts. This could be due, in part, to insufficient attention on dimensions of school climate that may be linked to bullying. My dissertation aims to explore the influence of school climate on bullying and victimization. Because Tribes is a well-developed program intended to improve school climate and is increasingly popular in schools, it will be used to explore the links between school climate and bullying/victimization.

Case studies can provide description, test theory, and/or generate theory (Eisenhardt, 2002). This dissertation will attempt to combine aspects of all three of these goals to explore the links between school climate and bullying. Below are my research questions that may be categorized as descriptive and theory-testing. Theory generation will occur in the discussion section of the thesis where I propose possible mechanisms through which school climate can be changed to produce an environment which is less conducive to bullying.

Descriptive Questions

1. In each case study school, how do stakeholders such as students, teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff, and parents perceive the impact of the Tribes program on school climate and rates of bullying/victimization?
2. What are some barriers and challenges to implementing the Tribes program?
3. What aspects of school life do staff and students identify as being in need of change in order to improve school climate and reduce bullying?

Theory-testing Question

4. What components of school climate emerge as being important in the case study schools in promoting a bully-free environment?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodology for the thesis. I will begin with a justification of the research design, and will proceed to describe the methods used to recruit participants, the characteristics of the participants and the community that they were drawn from, the data collection instruments used, and the procedures followed for each component of the study. The data analysis plan will be described and, finally, limitations of the methodology will be discussed.

Justification of Research Design

Educational research has been defined as “critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action” (Bassey, 1999, p. 39). Empirical research refers to “the kind of research which focuses primarily on data collection” (Bassey, 1999, p. 40). My dissertation is both educational and empirical in nature.

Bassey (1999) provides the following definition of an educational case study which aptly describes the nature of my study:

An educational case study is an empirical enquiry which is: conducted within a localized boundary of space and time; into *interesting* aspects of an educational activity, or programme, or institution, or system; mainly in its natural context and within an ethic of respect for persons; in order to inform the judgements and decisions of practitioners or policy-makers; or of theoreticians who are working on these ends; in such a way that sufficient data are collected for the researcher to be able (a) to explore *significant* features of the case, (b) to create *plausible* interpretations of what is found, (c) to test for the trustworthiness of these interpretations, (d) to construct a *worthwhile* argument or story, (e) to relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature, (f) to convey

convincingly to an audience this argument or story, (g) to provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments (Bassey, 1999, p. 58, italics in original).

Bassey explains that the italicized words in his definition indicate that these terms imply that value judgments are being made by the researcher.

A case study methodology is appropriate for addressing “problems in which understanding is sought in order to improve practice” (Merriam, 1988, p. xiii). This fits well with the aims of this dissertation, namely to understand what aspects of the school climate are important for creating an environment where bullying is less likely to occur. By delving deeply into this problem, insights may be gained into the benefits and/or disadvantages of certain teaching practices and school policies.

Yin (2003) promotes using multiple sources of data, both quantitative and qualitative, in conducting a case study. In the current study, I have collected evidence from the following sources: surveys, documents, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and observations.

Participants

After ethical approval from the University of Ottawa’s Research Ethics Board (Appendix A), approval was sought and attained at the school board level to recruit participants for the study. Over a period of approximately six months, eight school boards in Central Canada were contacted and specific procedures were followed in order to gain permission to conduct the study within their jurisdiction. Of the eight school boards applied to, three approved the project. Principals of elementary schools in approved school boards were emailed a letter asking for their permission to conduct the study within their school (Appendix B). Of the 146 email invitations sent out to

principals in the three approved school boards, only two principals at two elementary schools, referred to henceforth as MB and FZ, in one school board agreed to participate.

Community and school characteristics. Both MB and FZ are part of the same community of over 200,000 people which is part of a larger metropolitan area of over 1.1 million people. Information from the city's website reveals that the average family income in 2001 was \$59,270 which was slightly lower than the national average of \$64,100 for that same year. The unemployment rate for the city was 5.7% in 2006, slightly lower than the national average of 6.3%.

The School Success Plan (2008) of FZ school indicates that this school is one of three elementary schools within walking distance of each other in this school board. According to this same document, the socio economic factor for FZ school is 15.17% which is slightly below the provincial average of 16.80%, and this means that about 15% of FZ students start school "at risk" and require early intervention and support in order to succeed. This information was not available for MB school, but since these schools are within walking distance of each other, it may be safe to assume that the situation is similar.

MB school is about double the size of FZ school in terms of student and staff population. Four years ago when two schools combined to create MB school, it became a goal to promote a school culture that was common and unified at both campuses. The introduction of the Tribes program aimed to do this among other goals, such as improving teaching methods and decreasing student behaviour problems. The principal of FZ school indicated that FZ school has experienced two boundary changes and two changes of location in recent years, resulting in a displacement of students and a decreased sense of community. The Tribes program was introduced as a way to help build a sense of community and feelings of belonging among students and staff. See Table 1 below for a comparison of the two schools in terms of demographic data. This information was collected

from principals through a short survey and interviews, and was confirmed by consulting school documents.

Table 1

MB and FZ population characteristics

	MB school	FZ school
Student Population (total)	615	300
French immersion	57%	52%
Special needs	12%	21%
Daycare (before and after school)	40%	30%
Teachers	31	18
Non-teaching staff	25	10

At both schools, most of the special needs students are in the regular English program. All students with special needs are integrated into regular classrooms, and teachers create and implement Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for each of these students. Twenty-four special needs students at FZ school are identified as having serious handicaps; this information was not available for MB school.

Recruitment procedures. Principals from participating schools were asked to read a consent form (Appendix C) and complete a brief on-line survey (Appendix D), participate in a semi-structured interview, and forward a recruitment letter to staff members (Appendix E). Interested staff members were asked to contact the researcher directly by email. All teachers from participating schools were eligible to participate in an on-line survey, an individual semi-structured interview, classroom observations, and a focus group. Other members of the school community

(e.g., educational assistants, day care staff, parents, school volunteers) were also invited to participate in an individual semi-structured interview with the researcher. These informants were recruited by principals by email (Appendix E) or word of mouth.

Those who volunteered to participate in the study were asked to read and sign a consent form before data collection began. There were separate consent forms for grade 4-6 teachers (Appendix F), other teachers (Appendix G), non-teaching staff (Appendix H), parents (Appendix I), and school volunteers (Appendix J).

Participating grade 4-6 teachers were asked to recruit student participants in their classes (see Appendix K for the recruitment script) and obtain informed consent from parents (Appendix L) and assent from participating children (Appendix M).

All gr. 4-6 students whose teachers were willing to participate and whose parents had given their consent were eligible to participate in the survey and focus group. In order to motivate children to give the forms to their parents and return them in a timely manner, those who returned completed consent forms (regardless of response) within a timeframe specified by their teacher were given a token incentive provided by the researcher (pencil). Students' parents and the students themselves had the option of providing consent/assent for participation in the survey and/or the focus group. Participation in the survey did not require participation in the focus group. Student focus groups consisted of students of the same gender and grade level, with an average of five participants per group.

In MB school, 38 students completed paper versions of the student surveys. Participating grade 4, 5, and 6 homeroom teachers administered the surveys to their own students. Fifty-five percent of the participating students from MB school are female and 45% are male. Twenty-nine of these students participated in a focus group interview.

At FZ school, computers were available so participating students gave assent and completed surveys on-line. Because the homeroom teachers declined to participate, the core French teacher recruited student participants from two of her classes (grade 5 and grade 6). Grade 6 student surveys were administered by the core French teacher; grade 5 student surveys were administered by the researcher. Seventeen students from FZ completed the survey, 61% are female and 39% are male. Fourteen of these students participated in a focus group interview.

The number of adult informants varied considerably between the two schools. In MB school, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, the vice-principal, eight teachers, five non-teaching staff, and one school volunteer. Seven teachers from MB school completed the on-line survey. In FZ school, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, a core French teacher, one teaching assistant, and one parent. Because of the low teacher response at FZ school, an extra incentive (i.e., a draw for a gift basket) was offered to those who completed the on-line survey before a set deadline. This incentive resulted in an extra five teachers completing the survey, bringing the total to six completed teacher surveys for FZ school.

Characteristics of participating staff. The principal at MB elementary school has been at the school for 4 years, three years as vice-principal and one year as principal. She is very keen about the Tribes program and is herself a Tribes trainer. It is the vice-principal's first year at MB school, but she has used Tribes as a teacher in previous years. The principal at FZ school is an experienced school administrator who is scheduled to retire at the end of the 2007/08 school year. Four years ago, she was principal at another school and was trained in the Tribes process with several of her staff members at that time.

Of the 31 full-time teachers at MB school, eight volunteered to be interviewed for this study. Most of them were very experienced teachers. One of the teachers interviewed has been teaching

for 41 years and has been at MB school for 20 years. Two teachers, one with 30 years experience and the other with 20 years experience, had been teaching at another school until it amalgamated with MB school four years ago. Another interviewee has been at MB for 14 years and two other interviewees have been at MB school for 17 years. One young teacher with only 2 years of teaching experience was also interviewed. The six teachers who agreed to classroom observations also had a range of experience from two to 41 years.

Of the 25 non-teaching staff at MB school, five agreed to be interviewed for this study. Participants included: 1) a daycare technician who oversees the other day care educators and the 246 students in daycare. She has been at MB for 7 years; 2) a daycare educator and teaching assistant, in her first year at MB school who is also a parent of two children that attend MB school; 3) a daycare educator who has been at MB school for 9 years; 4) a daycare educator who has been at MB for 15 years in various capacities. She had been a secretary, teacher's aide, and behaviour technician in the years before the daycare opened at MB school; and 5) a daycare educator and teaching assistant who has been at MB for 11 years.

Of the 18 teachers and 10 non-teaching staff at FZ school, only one teacher, the core French teacher, and one teaching assistant agreed to be interviewed. The principal and teacher interviewed indicated that teachers at FZ school are stressed because of all of the changes they have experienced recently, such as a new provincial educational curriculum and a new report card. These same stressors were present at MB school.

Data Collection Instruments

A variety of instruments were used in this study to collect data aimed at answering the research questions. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and observations. Below are descriptions of the student surveys on bullying and school climate, teacher surveys on level of

Tribes implementation, principal survey, interview and focus group guides and observation instruments.

My Life in School Checklist. Arora's (1994) *My Life in School Checklist* is a student self-report survey which has been used by several researchers to measure bullying in schools (e.g., Jennifer & Shaughnessy, 2005; Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Van Oost, 2000; Thompson, Arora, & Sharp, 2002). Students are given the prompt, "This week another child...", and are asked to "tick the boxes that are right for you" on a frequency scale with the options "never", "once" or "more than once". The original *Checklist* by Arora (1994) includes 40 items that describe events that might happen to a student during any one week. Approximately half of the items are positive or neutral, while the other half are unpleasant or negative. There are four underlying dimensions to this *Checklist*: 1) verbal victimization (e.g., "called me names"); 2) physical victimization (e.g., "kicked me/hit me"); 3) indirect (social/relational) victimization (e.g., "told a lie about me"); and 4) prosocial behaviour (e.g., "smiled at me").

One of the advantages of the *Checklist* is its flexibility (Arora, 1994). The wording and number of items can be changed to meet the needs of any school. As well, some researchers (e.g., Stevens et al., 2000) have used a 5-point scale instead of the 3-point scale that Arora uses. I pilot tested modified versions of the *My Life in School Checklist* with grade 3-6 students in the Spring 2005 for a doctoral course. Parental consent and child assent was attained from 88 students for the pilot study that aimed to compare the measure administered on a daily basis versus only at the end of a week. Classes were randomly assigned to the weekly or daily condition. Results indicated that respondents reported proportionately similar amounts of bullying if asked to remember a week's worth of incidents compared to if they were asked on a daily basis. Teachers reported that the survey was easy to administer, and students reported that the items were easy to understand.

The modified weekly version of the *Checklist* (see Appendix N) that was used in this study has three main scales: victimization (26 items, $\alpha = .93$), bullying (26 items, $\alpha = .90$), and positive peer interactions (13 items, $\alpha = .86$). The victimization scale has the following subscales: verbal (7 items, $\alpha = .77$), physical (10 items, $\alpha = .83$), and social/relational (9 items, $\alpha = .85$). The bullying scale has the following subscales: verbal (7 items, $\alpha = .72$), physical (10 items, $\alpha = .67$), and social/relational (9 items, $\alpha = .81$). Students are given the prompts “This week at school another child...” and “This week at school I...” Response options are: “never”, “1-3 times”, “4-6 times”, “7-9 times”, and “10 times or more”. Students are also asked to indicate whether they are a boy or a girl.

A second advantage of the instrument is that it avoids the question “Are you being bullied?” (Arora, 1994). This is important because: a) there are many different kinds of bullying behaviours; b) children can define bullying in different ways; and c) the word “bullying” may cause emotional reactions and pupils may not answer honestly. A third advantage outlined by Arora is that the *Checklist* refers to the immediate past. The student is only asked to report on those events that happened during the past week. Memories of events from a month or two before can be less accurate than recall of events from the previous week (Shrimpton, Oates, & Hayes, 1998).

School Climate Survey (Child Development Project, Caring School Community Program scales). In this dissertation, the school environment scales (Appendix O) used by Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, and Lewis (2000) were used as one indication of school climate for the following reasons: 1) the psychometric properties have been well established (see Table 2 for alpha reliabilities from the current study); 2) the Caring School Community Program of the Child Development Project which has been evaluated using these scales has similar objectives and components to the Tribes program that will be examined in this dissertation; 3) the scales share

many of the same constructs and items outlined in other measures of school climate (e.g., Haynes et al., 1997); and 4) measures of classroom climate are also incorporated into these scales.

Table 2

School Climate Survey

Scale (number of items)	Alpha reliability
Overall School Climate (71)	.95
Student autonomy and influence in the classroom (10)	.67
Classroom supportiveness (14)	.88
Sense of school as a community (14)	.87
Liking for school (7)	.85
Enjoyment of class (4)	.51
Trust in and respect for teachers (10)	.89
Quality of group interaction (12)	.82

Although originally developed to measure students' sense of school as a caring community (Roberts, Hom, & Battistich, 1995), these scales are also regarded as useful measures of school climate (CASEL, 2008). The student and teacher versions of this measure are highly correlated with other measures of school climate such as positive teacher-student relations and a stimulating learning environment (Battistich et al., 1997). As well, measures of students' sense of community and teachers' perceptions of students' sense of community are highly correlated (Battistich et al., 1997). These strong positive correlations indicate that construct validity and convergent validity are present. The scales have also consistently shown acceptable levels of reliability (e.g., Battistich et al., 1997; Solomon et al., 2000).

Students are asked to answer how often (i.e., never, hardly ever, sometimes, often, always) various events occur at their school (e.g., the teacher lets me choose what I will work on), and how much they agree or disagree with certain statements (e.g., I like my school). Scores are calculated for each scale using the coding procedures outlined by the Developmental Studies Center (1997).

Measure of Tribes implementation fidelity. Because program implementation can vary widely from teacher to teacher, participating teachers were asked to complete a measure that aimed to shed light on how each teacher was implementing the program and how they perceived school level implementation (Appendix P). This measure was developed by the author of the Tribes program, Jeanne Gibbs, and a group of Tribes trainers by examining the unique components of the Tribes process (CenterSource Systems, 2001). In the current study, the alpha reliability for classroom use of Tribes (39 items) was 0.95 and the alpha reliability for school use of Tribes (5 items) was 0.86.

Teachers are asked to rate how often, on a 5-point likert scale (0=never, 1=sometimes, 2=often, 3=most of the time, 4=all of the time), each type of interaction usually takes place in their classroom. Items include types of interactions falling under the following categories: beginning the Tribes process (e.g., meet in small groups and a community circle to relate as peers), following community agreements (attentive listening, appreciation/no-put-downs, right to pass, mutual respect), working through stages of group development (inclusion/a sense of belonging, influence/to feel of value, community/working together creatively), and using processing questions (e.g., incorporate Tribes' cooperative strategies, use reflection/processing questions). Teachers are also asked to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with four statements on the use of Tribes in their school overall. Scores are calculated for each scale using the coding procedures outlined by Center Source Systems (2001).

CBAM Levels of Use Questionnaire. This scale is based on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), a framework to help understand common concerns about change in organizational settings (Hall & Hord, 1987). The Levels of Use (LoU) framework was developed to explore how individuals behave in response to an innovation that has been introduced into their organization (Hall & Hord, 2006). Individuals are rated on their level of use of an innovation on an ordinal scale from 0 to 6 (i.e., non-use, orientation, preparation, mechanical use, routine, refinement, integration, renewal). Those operating at levels 0-2 are considered non-users of the innovation. Evaluation of an innovation should ideally be done when users are at the routine level of use (Hall & Hord, 1987). Research has shown that level of program implementation has an impact on outcomes (Hall & Hord, 2006).

Participating teachers were asked to indicate the level at which they believed they were using the Tribes program on the CBAM Levels of Use Questionnaire (Appendix Q). This information was attained through a single-item survey, and supplemented with information from interviews and observations. Hall and Hord (1987; 2006) argue that ratings should be based on interviews and observations, but various researchers (e.g., Knezek & Christensen, 1999) have used paper/pencil versions. When used to measure levels of use of a new technology in schools, test-retest reliability estimates for the single-item measure generally fall in the range of .84 to .87 (Knezek & Christensen, 2000, cited in Christensen, Parker, & Knezek, 2005, p. 189).

Principal survey. Participating principals were asked to complete a brief on-line survey (Appendix D) which asked them to indicate the number of teaching and non-teaching staff in their school and how many of these were trained in the Tribes process. Principals were also asked to list any school-wide antibullying or character education programs that were being implemented at their school.

Semi-structured interview guides. Principals, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, and school volunteers were given the opportunity to participate in a semi-structured interview with the researcher in order to share their perceptions of their school's climate and student interpersonal relations, and to share their experiences with the Tribes program. Semi-structured interviewing was chosen for its flexibility (Merriam, 1998). Open-ended questions were asked, and interview guides served as a starting point for discussions with participants. There were separate interview guides for staff (Appendix R), parents (Appendix S), and school volunteers (Appendix T). Additional questions that occurred to the researcher in the midst of the interview were recorded and explored, and new lines of thought initiated by the participant were explored if deemed relevant. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Focus group interview guides. Grade 4-6 students in each school were invited to participate in a focus group interview to share their perceptions of their life at school, including their perceptions of their school's climate, student interpersonal relations, and their opinions of the Tribes program. Focus group interviewing was chosen for the following reasons outlined by Flick (1998): efficiency (the ability to interview several students at once), the possibility of rich data to emerge, the likelihood that participants may come up with thoughts provoked by others in the group, and the opportunity to observe social interactions. A focus group moderator's guide (Appendix U) served as a starting point; however, additional questions that occurred to the researcher in the midst of the interview were recorded and explored, and new lines of thought initiated by the participant were explored if deemed relevant. Sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Observation guides. I developed a general school observation instrument (Appendix V) based on the Comer Visitor Observation sheet (Aguilera, Crane, Hamer, Morrison, & Serrano, 1998) and ideas from Freiberg (1999) on cafeteria behaviour. Most items were from the Comer

Visitor Observation sheet; however, instead of using a rating scale, I provided space below each item to write comments. The instrument provided a guide to record observations on such things as the maintenance and appearance of the school; whether the school mission statement and school rules are posted; student behaviour in hallways, the cafeteria, and the playground; whether staff and students make visitors feel welcome; and evidence of parent or community involvement. Extra space was also allotted for any other observations that seemed relevant but may not have fit under any existing category.

I developed a classroom observation instrument (Appendix W) using the format and several items from Timms' (2000) observation instrument. Specifically, the instrument is organized so that observations of classroom activities can be recorded at five-minute intervals using check marks in boxes for classroom organization (individual, pair, small group, whole class); teaching style (teacher-led, student-led); and student engagement (low, moderate, high). Additional items were added for observation of noise level (low, medium, high); mood (smiling, neutral, frowning); and interpersonal interactions (pleasant, neutral, hostile) as an indication of social psychological climate (Teddlie & Meza, 1999). Blank observation spaces were placed on the instrument to facilitate the documentation of other observations that did not fit under the listed categories, and for anecdotal observations.

Procedure

Recruitment procedures were followed as described in the section describing participants. Consent was obtained from all participating adults either on-line or on paper. Parental consent for students was obtained in writing, and participating children provided their assent on-line at FZ school and on paper at MB school. Survey participants were assigned a number by the researcher in

order to protect their identities. Only identifying numbers, not names, were used on the surveys. Student survey administration took place during a 30-40 minute period of class time.

To assist teachers in following a standardized survey administration procedure, they were given an instruction sheet including a script to be read to students (Appendix X). Where paper versions were used, teachers gave each participating student a copy of the *My Life in School Checklist*, the *School climate survey* and an envelope, all containing the identifying number that corresponded with their name on a list created by the researcher. After completing the surveys, participants sealed them in their envelope and return it to the teacher. Non-participants were asked to do quiet reading/writing assignments while participants were completing the surveys.

Consent forms for teachers (Appendixes F & G) gave them the opportunity to indicate which components of the study they would like to participate in: the on-line survey, a semi-structured interview, classroom observation, focus group. Interested staff members were interviewed individually at their convenience during a 30 minute period. General observations and classroom observations were completed on days that the researcher was scheduled to be in the school for interviews.

Grade 4-6 students who had parental consent were invited to participate in a focus group interview in order to provide the researcher with more details on their perceptions of their school's climate, student interpersonal relations, and their experiences regarding the Tribes program. Interviews were arranged during lunch break so as not to disrupt class time. A special lunch (pizza) was provided for students to eat during the focus group interview. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and took place in an empty classroom in the school. Separate focus groups were run for each of the following groups: gr. 4 girls, gr. 4 boys, gr. 5 girls, gr. 5 boys, gr. 6 girls, gr. 6 boys. In all, 29 students in MB school, and 14 students from FZ school participated in focus groups.

General observations were undertaken at several times throughout the school year at both schools. These observations occurred either on days when I was scheduled to be in the school to conduct interviews or when I was specifically invited by the principal to observe Tribes assemblies, for example. A total of eight hours of observations were undertaken at MB school, and three hours of observations at FZ school. An observation guide (Appendix V) was used and a research log was kept to record thoughts, feelings, and observations.

Classroom observations were undertaken in only MB school as no teachers in FZ school volunteered for this component. Six teachers at MB school ranging from grade 1-5 consented to have me observe a lesson. This amounted to a total of four hours of classroom observations. An observation guide (Appendix W) was used.

Documents such as school newsletters and reports were collected from the school principals. Information from each school's website was used as data. From MB school, the following documents were collected: 1) Annual General Report: 2005/2006, 2) Professional Development Initiative Grant (PDIG) proposal: 2007/08, 3) Tribes activities summary sheets for teachers, 4) Tribes week schedule, 5) Tribes day information package, 6) Think sheet, 7) Spirit week information package, and 8) Scripts of Halloween and Christmas plays with Tribes theme. From FZ school, the following documents were collected: 1) School Success Plan (2008-2011), 2) Governing Board's Report (2006-2007), 3) Tribes assembly agenda. Photos of the school interior were taken at each school with permission from the principals.

Quantitative Data Analyses

Data collected through the *My Life in School Checklist* were scored using a method that I pilot tested during a doctoral course. Basic descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and scale alpha reliabilities were calculated to summarize results. Levels of bullying/victimization

and ratings of school climate were summarized for each school. The same types of descriptive statistics were also calculated for each scale in the *School climate survey* and the *Tribes implementation survey* for each school. Independent samples t-tests were used to test for statistical significance between schools on all measures, using scale scores as the dependent variable and school as the independent variable.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Semi-structured and focus group interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The total number of single-spaced pages of transcription that resulted from the study is 181. Analysis occurred throughout the study as transcriptions were produced. An effort was made to transcribe interviews as soon as possible after the actual interview, so that subtleties could be more easily recalled. A thematic coding method which drew on techniques described by Miles and Huberman (1994) as well as Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) was used to analyze this data. That is, I repeatedly read the word for word transcriptions, highlighting relevant text and recurring ideas. As patterns emerged through this process, I identified themes and created codes. These initial themes and codes were worked out in pencil on paper copies of the transcriptions. I discussed these themes and codes with a research assistant whom I trained to help with the analyses by reviewing several transcripts together. After training, the research assistant was asked to read several transcriptions on his own and make suggestions for any additional themes or changes to codes. Transcriptions were reviewed in such a manner on an ongoing basis throughout the data collection period to re-organize themes as new ones emerged. The research assistant and I worked together, discussing any differences in themes and reached a consensus to create a final list of codes (Appendix Y). After the list of codes was finalized, the research assistant coded several transcripts independently and I reviewed these to verify whether I had coded in a similar way. Because we had created the themes

and codes together, inter-rater agreement was close to 100%. After being satisfied with the reliability of the coding scheme, I reviewed all transcriptions and re-coded using the final list of codes. The research assistant helped to enter these codes on the electronic versions of the transcripts, so that examples of themes could be easily searched and found. I coded my research log and observation notes using the same list of codes that was created for the interview transcripts. Photos were used as reminders of the physical characteristics of the schools; for example, seating arrangements in classrooms, colourful murals, hallway and classroom displays. Data collected on general school and classroom observation checklists were reviewed and summarized. Thematically coded data were searched for potential answers to the research questions. Data relevant to the research questions were then summarized in a richly descriptive manner.

Methods of ensuring trustworthiness of the data

Since my study has a large qualitative component, I use Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of "trustworthiness" to address the issue of rigor. The validity and reliability of the quantitative measures used in this study have already been presented in the section on data collection instruments.

For ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative data, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as substitutes for the more quantitative criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Methods of ensuring credibility may include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I have attempted to use several of these methods in my study. I made myself available to engage with participants and conduct observations in the two case study schools throughout the course of this study, taking all opportunities available to me to conduct observations, and accepting

all volunteers (prolonged engagement and persistent observation). I have used multiple methods to collect data from multiple sources (triangulation). As well, I have used a form of member check. That is, in the spring, interested staff members at each school were invited to participate in a focus group to review and comment on preliminary findings that the researcher had compiled for their school. A focus group moderator's guide (Appendix Z) provided a framework for the interviewer to follow. The session was audio-recorded and transcribed. Ten teachers from MB school participated in the focus group held at their school. The results of this focus group are discussed in the final chapter. There were no FZ staff members interested in participating in a focus group. This is reflective of the general reluctance of staff members at this school to participate in interviews.

In an attempt to ensure transferability, I have tried to provide enough details so that readers can compare characteristics of the case study contexts to other settings. By using multiple methods I have tried to ensure dependability. I endeavoured to keep detailed notes throughout the study in order to ensure confirmability.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present context for and answers to the research questions. The first section contains a description of Tribes implementation at each school and addresses the research question: “What are some barriers and challenges to implementing the Tribes program?” The second section contains descriptions of the climates at each school, and answers the question “In each case study school, how do stakeholders such as students, teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff, and parents perceive the impact of the Tribes program on school climate and rates of bullying/victimization?” The third section addresses the question “What aspects of school life do staff and students identify as being in need of change in order to improve school climate and reduce bullying?” The fourth section provides the findings to the question “What components of school climate emerge as being important in the case study schools in promoting a bully-free environment?”

Tribes Implementation

Tribes is a “way of learning and being together” (Gibbs, 2001). It is a process that uses a learning-community, whole-school model to create a positive school climate through improved teaching and classroom management, positive interpersonal relations, and opportunities for student participation (Benard, 2005). The Tribes process consists of four key agreements that staff, students and parents are expected to abide by: 1) Attentive listening, 2) Appreciation/no put-downs, 3) Mutual respect, and 4) Participation/right to pass. These serve as a stable foundation for building positive interpersonal relations throughout the school community. Teachers who follow the Tribes philosophy model respectful behaviour and encourage respectful interactions among students; they also aim to use the most effective teaching methods in order to meet the learning needs of all

students. Ideally, all members of a school staff are trained in the Tribes process and agree to follow the principles, and parents are informed about the Tribes agreements and encouraged to model them at home. Then, consistent positive behavioural expectations are more likely to occur in each classroom, on the school yard, and at home.

In classrooms that are committed to the Tribes process, students participate in daily community circles where there is an opportunity to share ideas, thoughts, and feelings. This can be a time where problems encountered on the schoolyard can be discussed and worked through together; or, it can be a time to celebrate successes or get to know classmates better. Students also work together in long-term, small, heterogeneous groups called tribes, in which social skills, such as active listening, problem solving, and conflict resolution are fostered. In addition, a series of fun activities (e.g., energizers) are interspersed throughout the day to help students develop feelings of inclusion and a sense of community.

The Tribes Basic Course consists of 24 hours of training over four days. During the course, participants are taught Tribes principles and are provided with the opportunity to experience Tribes activities such as energizers, community circles, and working in small groups.

All teachers at MB school completed the Tribes Basic Course four years prior to data collection during PD days. Day care staff who were willing to give up two week-ends of their free-time (72%) were trained during the 2007/08 school year. Some of the day care staff also work as teaching assistants during the school day. Having the training on the week-end may have been a barrier for some non-teaching staff. However, those who were interviewed indicated that the training was “well worth giving up their week-end”. Several members of the daycare staff mentioned that they feel more accepted and respected by teaching staff now that they are Tribes

trained. They felt that Tribes was a way of bringing them together and now they are “all on the same page”.

FZ school began implementation of the Tribes program at the beginning of the 2007/08 school year. All teachers were trained at the end of the 2006/07 school year during PD days. Some non-teaching staff (40%) volunteered to participate in training during two week-ends during 2007/08. The principal and teacher informant at FZ school indicated that not all staff are “on board”, and that many teachers feel that it is “just one more thing” to add to their job and their stress levels. When interviewed in February 2008, the principal of FZ school estimated that only about half of her staff had “embraced the Tribes philosophy”.

In order to measure Tribes implementation levels at each school, data were collected from documents, interviews with staff, and focus groups with students, as well as the *CBAM Levels of Use* item (Hall & Hord, 1987) and the *Tribes implementation survey* (CenterSource Systems, 2001) completed by participating teachers. As well, general observations were conducted in the two schools, and classroom observations were undertaken at MB school. No teachers at FZ school volunteered to participate in the classroom observation component of the study. Quantitative and qualitative findings will be presented together in order to describe Tribes implementation in each school.

Seven teachers at MB school (22.6%) and six teachers at FZ school (33.3%) completed the *CBAM Levels of Use* item and the *Tribes implementation survey*. Independent samples t-tests were conducted in order to determine whether mean differences between schools on these measures were statistically significant. No significant difference was found between the average scores from the two schools on the *CBAM Levels of Use* item. The mean and the mode level of use of the Tribes program in the two schools was level 4b (refinement). This means that the most commonly

endorsed description for level of use was “I vary the use of the Tribes Program to increase the expected benefits within the classroom. I am working on using the Tribes Program to maximize the effects with my students.” Hall and Hord (1987) indicate that evaluation of an innovation should not be undertaken until users are at least at the routine level (4a) of use. Five of the seven teachers at MB school who completed the *CBAM* item and four of the six teachers at FZ school who completed the *CBAM* item reported using Tribes at the routine level or higher. Unfortunately, because of the low levels of survey participation and because it was a convenience sample, no generalizations can be made as to the average level of use of Tribes in each school.

No statistically significant difference was found between the two schools on the *classroom use* scale of the *Tribes implementation survey*, suggesting that the teachers who participated in the surveys at MB and FZ schools perceived that they were using Tribes to a similar degree in their classrooms (See Table 3). However, participating teachers at MB school perceived a higher level of *school use* of Tribes than did the participating teachers at FZ school. This difference was significant at the $p=.05$ level, $t(6)=2.48$. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variances indicated that variances were not equal between the two groups on the *school use* variable; therefore the modified analysis with reduced degrees of freedom was necessary in order to put the data to a more stringent test. Qualitative data collected through observations and interviews support these teachers’ perceptions of MB school’s higher level of use of Tribes. These data are presented next.

Table 3

Comparison between MB and FZ teachers –Tribes implementation

Scale (number of items)	Average rating (SD)	
	MB school (n=7)	FZ school (n=6)
Classroom use of Tribes (39)	3.28 (0.46)	3.53 (0.61)
School use of Tribes (5)	4.49 (0.32)	3.50 (0.93)*

Note. 1=never, 2=hardly ever, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

* $p < .05$.

Although the two schools have similar policies for the use of Tribes, several differences were revealed through interviews and observations. Similarities and differences are described below. Common to both schools is the use of the Tribes agreements as the “school rules”. These rules (mutual respect, attentive listening, participation/right to pass, and appreciations/no put-downs) are posted in every classroom, and every hallway in both schools. All parents of children at both schools were sent a newsletter at the beginning of the year explaining the Tribes Agreements. Children and parents were asked to sign the bottom portion of the form indicating that they have carefully read and discussed the Tribes agreements and return the signed portion to the child’s homeroom teacher. The Tribes agreements are also incorporated into the student handbook at each school, and are on the schools’ websites. Observations and interview data from staff and students at MB school indicate that the Tribes agreements are often referred to throughout a typical school day. At MB school, the Tribes agreements seemed to be present in all school activities that I observed or heard about. For example, Halloween and Christmas plays written and performed by staff members each had a clear Tribes message. Another example is that for their Tribes Activity Day in the spring, a newsletter informed parents that awards would be given to tribes (groups of students) that had the

most points not only for activities, but for showing the best listening skills, mutual respect, appreciations, participation and enthusiasm. Observational data indicate that the Tribes agreements are frequently referred to as a guide to behaviour in classrooms, on the school yard, and in assemblies at MB school. On the other hand, at FZ school, student focus group participants indicated that the Tribes agreements, although widely posted, were rarely referred to by staff. Although I did observe FZ staff members referring to the Tribes agreements at assemblies, I did not observe staff members using the Tribes agreements as a guide to behaviour in other settings such as classrooms, hallways, or on the school yard. It is important to keep in mind, however, that I had no teachers who volunteered for classroom observations at FZ school, and my observations on the school yard were limited.

Both MB and FZ schools have token incentive systems in place to promote pro-social behaviour, including compliance with Tribes agreements, outside and inside the classroom. Students are given coloured popsicle sticks on the school yard and coloured tags in classrooms for behaviours that comply with the Tribes agreements. Each Tribes agreement is represented by a different colour. A group reward is delivered after the school accomplishes the goal of filling a container full of popsicle sticks; for example, the students of MB school were rewarded with ice-cream and an afternoon trip to a local park. An individual reward (i.e., a Tribes star with your name on it) is given when a child receives one of each colour of Tribes tag. This star goes up in the hall on a bulletin board called the “Tribes Wall of Fame”. Interview data indicates that these incentives are not used consistently at FZ school. Students at FZ school expressed frustration that their teachers “forgot” to reward them for following the Tribes agreements in class and on the school yard. The principal of FZ school also expressed concern that staff were not using the incentives on a regular basis. On the other hand, interviews at MB school indicated that the incentive system was

widely used at their school and was working very well as a way of encouraging pro-social behaviour. A longer term incentive was recently created at MB school; that is, after a student collects 7 Tribes stars, they will be able to paint their name on a ceiling tile in the school hallway. Several students expressed excitement about this.

Other incentive systems at MB school were not observed or reported at FZ school. For example, the principal of MB school gives individual awards (i.e., a certificate and a pencil) to those students identified by classroom teachers as having put in an extra effort in school work or behaviour. These “principal’s awards” are given out at assemblies. At the MB assemblies that I attended, several students were given awards for putting forth a special effort in following the Tribes agreements. MB school also has an incentive system for good behaviour in assemblies such that classes earn points on a thermometer chart for following the Tribes agreements. When a class reaches the top of the thermometer, the principal comes into the classroom, and there is a draw for a variety of small prizes. Several students and staff who were interviewed indicated that they thought this incentive was making a notably positive difference in student behaviour in assemblies.

Differences between the two schools were also apparent in terms of professional development and support. MB school has applied for and received 3 Professional Development Initiative Grants (PDIG) towards implementing Tribes at their school, according to the principal at this school. These grants have allowed all of the teachers to be trained, provided manuals and other resources for teachers, and allowed some teachers to visit other school boards to observe Tribes in action and pick up new ideas. There is an active Tribes Committee at MB school that consists of 10 teachers and the principal. This committee meets on a regular basis to plan strategies to facilitate Tribes implementation at their school. A grant (PDIG) helped to fund four school days during the 2007/08 school year during which the Tribes Committee could meet to plan learning activities that

they would share with the rest of the teachers. The committee had these full-day meetings in September, November, January, and March. As a result of each of these special PD days, the Tribes Committee was able to provide the rest of the teachers with lesson plans and activity ideas linked to the provincial curriculum. According to information gathered from the PDIG grant proposal for 2007/08 and an interview with the principal of MB school, the activities and lessons developed by the Tribes Committee focused on building a more positive classroom climate, building inclusion, and promoting a sense of community. On regular PD days when all teachers were available to meet, members of the Tribes Committee took turns volunteering to model to the rest of the teachers how they actually used specific Tribes activities in their classroom, according to some teachers who were interviewed. Members of the Tribes Committee model the Tribes “way of learning and being together” for the rest of the teachers. According to the principal and to information in the PDIG grant proposal, Tribes processes such as community circles and following the Tribes agreements, are used during staff and cycle meetings at MB school. In contrast to the very active Tribes committee at MB school, the teacher informant at FZ school stated “there’s a Tribes committee that’s shrinking daily – and there’s only a few of us on it to begin with...” When asked why this was the case, she replied that teachers were “overwhelmed”. The FZ Tribes Committee organizes school assemblies to promote the Tribes program and build feelings of inclusion and a sense of community.

Non-teaching staff at MB school do not seem to have the same kind of professional development opportunities that teaching staff have, nor are they included in the Tribes committee. One of the reasons for this, suggested by a non-teaching staff member that was interviewed, may be that daycare staff work before and after school, and on PD days, so are not available to participate at

these times which are more convenient for teachers. Inclusion of non-teaching staff in the FZ Tribes committee was not apparent either.

The principal at MB school used several methods of motivating and supporting staff members in the implementation of Tribes. At the beginning of the school year, a schedule of Tribes activities and examples of energizers were given to teachers for a six-week period. Activities were linked to the provincial curriculum. A number of fun activities (energizers) and assemblies were planned for the first week. During the second week, teachers were asked to focus on teaching their students a specific Tribes agreement on each of four consecutive days. They were asked to complete a “looks like, sounds like, feels like” chart with their students for each of the agreements and to do a recommended activity linked to the provincial curriculum. For the remainder of these 6 weeks, teachers were encouraged to do the Tribes activities outlined on the schedule. Teachers were provided with all of the resources to do these activities as well as links to the curriculum. The links to the curriculum were given to justify their inclusion in the school day as something valuable and mandated, and not just an “extra”.

Throughout the school year, teachers at MB school are provided with resources that they can use in implementing the Tribes philosophy. For example, students are taught to use “I” messages instead of blaming others, and so, teachers were provided with a sheet that they could use with students that had “I feel (your feeling or emotion), when (describe the situation without using a name or ‘you’). Whenever there is a school-wide event at MB school, such as “Tribes Day”, a large number of staff members on the Tribes committee are involved in planning for it. The Tribes committee consults the rest of the staff and provides teachers with detailed information and resources.

Neither the principal nor the other staff interviewed at FZ school mentioned any of the kinds of teacher support (i.e., in-school professional development) for implementing the Tribes program as was available at MB school. The principal at FZ school did not talk about applying for grants to help implement the program. It is important to keep in mind that FZ school was only in their first year of Tribes implementation, so the principal may not yet have had the opportunity to apply for grants or initiate supporting activities for teachers.

The Tribes philosophy includes the promotion of teaching methods that aim to meet the needs of all learners. In the classes that I observed at MB school, teachers were using a wide variety of teaching techniques to engage learners. I observed a variety of instructional methods such as individual seat work, pair work, small group work, and whole class instruction including community circles, and a mixture of teacher-led and student-led instruction. In the lessons that I observed, the level of student engagement was moderate to high, and most students seemed to be having fun while learning. The four Tribes agreements are posted in all classrooms in MB school, and the teachers that I observed tended to manage student behaviour by referring to the agreements and praising students for following them. Teacher-student and student-student interactions that were observed were rated as neutral to pleasant. No hostile or aggressive interactions were observed in any of the classrooms.

Although the small, convenience sample of teacher survey respondents from MB and FZ schools indicated a similar level of use of the Tribes principles in their classrooms, overall school use of Tribes was rated as being higher at MB school. Interview and observational data reported above help support this finding that MB school is implementing the Tribes program to a greater extent than FZ school. The difference between schools in terms of time spent implementing Tribes

(i.e., 4 years for MB school versus 1 year for FZ school) may at least partially account for these observed differences.

Barriers and Challenges to Implementing Tribes

The themes that emerged for the research question, “What are some barriers and challenges to implementing the Tribes program?” were similar for the two schools, so the results will be combined in answering this question. Any findings that were particular to one school will be noted as such.

Through interviews with staff and students, it became clear that not all staff members at the case study schools were implementing the Tribes program to the same extent in their classrooms. Although all teachers had the Tribes agreements posted in their rooms, some teachers admitted that they did few other Tribes activities with their students. A few teachers mentioned that they did not want to do activities such as energizers or community circles because it made student behaviour management even more of a challenge. Other barriers included stress, workload, lack of time, characteristics of students, physical environment, parental apathy, absence of pedagogical leadership, and lack of French materials. These are discussed below, and my own reflections as a former teacher are offered.

Stress, workload, lack of time. Some teachers who were interviewed indicated that their workload and stress were barriers to implementing the Tribes program. One teacher indicated that most teachers already felt overwhelmed with their workload, and explained that some teachers felt that Tribes was just an “extra” instead of something that could be incorporated into what they were already doing. This teacher also expressed the view that having only 35 or 40 minutes a day with a group of students did not make it feasible to add activities such as energizers. Several teachers mentioned that they were very busy and found it difficult to make time for Tribes activities

throughout the day. This was especially the case when the teacher was scheduled with a certain group of students for limited times each day. For example, one teacher said that on days that she is scheduled to teach the grade 5 students for only one 40-minute period, she is very unlikely to do a community circle with them, whereas if she had the same group of students scheduled with her for the full day, she might find time for that type of activity. Some teachers expressed pressures to cover materials from the provincial curriculum in key subject areas such as language arts and math, and indicated that they did not have time to spend on the more general social goals outlined in the curriculum.

Characteristics of students. Some teachers mentioned that Tribes activities were easier to implement with certain groups of students. One teacher spoke about a group of students who were very difficult to do Tribes activities with because they were over-excitable: "...they don't need an energizer, they need de-energizers... anytime you try to do anything that is unstructured, they go completely ballistic and literally someone will be hurt...they are just not suited to it..." This same teacher said that Tribes activities tended to work better with younger students, as the cycle 3 (grade 5 and 6) students sometimes thought some of the Tribes energizers (e.g., the lollipop song) were silly.

Physical environment. According to some of the teachers interviewed at MB school, not all classrooms are suited to conducting certain Tribes activities such as community circles. That is, many of the rooms are set up like a traditional classroom with rows of individual desks, and no large, open space in which to sit together in a circle. However, many teachers reported that they make adaptations such as getting students to move their desks or they go to another room, such as the Tribes room, which has a large open area with a colourful carpet where students can sit in a community circle. There is a schedule for the Tribes room at MB school and several of the teachers

I interviewed said that they bring their students there once or twice a week. However, one teacher said that bringing her students to the Tribes room was often not worth the trouble because of the potential for extra behaviour problems in getting to the room. The issue of classroom layout did not seem to be a barrier at FZ school where most classrooms have an open space in which students can sit in a circle, and tables for students to work together at. Several of the classrooms that I saw at FZ school were very well suited to Tribes activities; for example, small round tables for students to work together in small groups and a large open carpeted area that would be suitable for community circles.

Parental apathy. Some teachers and an administrator mentioned that when parents are uninvolved in their child's education or have a negative attitude towards schooling, this can be a barrier to successful implementation of Tribes. This experienced teacher expressed her thoughts on the importance of parental support:

I think what needs to be done is ... to work that out also at home so that it's a continuum for the kids, you know so that it's not just at school that we do that...ok these are rules that should be applied everywhere, and we can see that it is not... so for certain kids, it's difficult for them, you know, even though they spend a lot of time here...they go back for the weekend... they come back and it's almost kind of...start again.

The principal at FZ school expressed the desire to have parents more involved and committed to the Tribes process.

Lack of French materials. A French teacher at MB school mentioned that the Tribes manual and activities are in English-only because the program was created in California. Teachers at this school have translated some of the energizers into French; however, implementation would likely increase if the manual and activity sheets were available in French.

Absence of pedagogical leadership. Although the principal of FZ school was observed actively participating in Tribes assemblies, she was not observed undertaking any pedagogical leadership and expressed regret that she did not have time for this. When asked how she usually feels when she's at school, the principal of FZ school stated:

I would say in the last couple of years that it has become more and more stressful for administrators. Our job seems to get bigger and bigger and with very little support. I love it when I'm in the classrooms and doing pedagogical leadership. But, I find that the administrative part is taking over that, and so it's a disappointment for me because I feel that my most important job is as the pedagogical leader, but I don't get to it enough.

This lack of pedagogical leadership may have been a barrier to implementing Tribes at FZ school. In contrast, the principal and vice-principal of MB school were observed modeling Tribes activities at their school on several occasions. For example, I observed a cycle 1 (grades 1 and 2) assembly where the principal asked the students to form a community circle with her and she read a story to them and led a discussion about one of the themes in the story (bullying). She modeled for teachers how to interact with students in a respectful manner and used teaching techniques which actively engaged the students. The principal referred to the Tribes agreements whenever she corrected student behaviour during the assembly and made links throughout the story to application of Tribes principles. Another example of instructional leadership was observed at a cycle 3 (grades 5 and 6) assembly where the vice-principal led a similar activity. Besides pedagogical leadership at assemblies, MB staff indicated that they benefited from such leadership at staff meetings and PD Days, and they appreciated being given resources that link Tribes activities to competencies in the provincial curriculum. The strong leadership present at MB school may have facilitated

implementation of the Tribes program at that school, whereas the lack of pedagogical leadership at FZ school may have been a barrier to Tribes implementation for staff at that school.

Summary of barriers and challenges. Issues of student behaviour management, teacher stress, workload, and lack of time were identified as barriers to fully implementing the Tribes program in both schools. Other challenges identified included student characteristics, parental apathy, and a lack of French materials. Unsuitable classroom layout was identified as an additional challenge at MB school. The lack of pedagogical leadership at FZ school appeared to be an additional challenge at that school.

My reflections. As a former teacher who has used Tribes in elementary school classrooms, I can identify with many of the barriers and challenges identified at the case study schools. Like the teachers of MB and FZ schools, I usually found it more difficult to do Tribes activities such as energizers and community circles when I was scheduled with certain groups of students for limited periods of time or when the classroom layout was not conducive to these activities. I also had colleagues who felt pressure to cover materials from the core curriculum in certain subject areas and did not have the extra pedagogical support in order to integrate Tribes activities in an efficient manner. Lack of resources and inadequate support can be challenges in implementing any program.

MB and FZ School Climates

For this study, school climate was measured using the *School Climate Survey* from the Caring School Community Program of the Child Development Project (Developmental Studies Center, 1997), a modified version of the *My Life in School Checklist* (Arora, 1994), as well as data from observations and interviews. A broad model of school climate based on a systematic literature review (Ryan et al., 2008), which was described in the second chapter of this thesis, was used as a way of defining the construct of school climate at the outset of the study. However, in keeping with

my constructivist values associated with the qualitative aspects of my study, I was open to other factors that might emerge.

Because I was unable to collect quantitative data on school climate and bullying before the introduction of the Tribes program at each school, it will not be possible to make any inferences about the impact of the program. Instead, a snap-shot of school climate at one point in time at each school will be presented based on the quantitative data collected. Qualitative data will provide further insights into the climates of each school.

MB school had been implementing the Tribes program for 3 years and 4 months when the grade 4-6 students completed the surveys. FZ school had been implementing the program for about 6 months when the grade 6 students completed the surveys and about 7 months when the grade 5 students completed the surveys. Survey data collected in late February and early April from FZ students were combined for analysis.

Results from the *School Climate Survey* indicate that in both schools grade 4-6 students' sense of school as a community was slightly more than "sometimes" on all scales except for the "student autonomy and influence in the classroom" where it was slightly more than "hardly ever" (See Table 4). An independent samples t-test was conducted using the overall school climate score as the dependent variable and school as the independent variable. The difference between schools on overall school climate was not statistically significant.

Table 4

School Climate Survey Results

Scale (number of items)	Average rating (SD)	
	MB school (n=38)	FZ school (n=18)
Overall school climate (71)	3.40 (0.62)	3.37 (0.56)
student autonomy and influence (10)	2.36 (0.49)	2.15 (0.58)
classroom supportiveness (14)	3.29 (0.87)	3.38 (0.65)
sense of school as a community (14)	3.34 (0.77)	3.25 (0.73)
liking for school (7)	3.71 (1.01)	3.50 (1.22)
enjoyment of class (4)	3.57 (0.85)	3.94 (0.73)
trust in and respect for teachers (10)	3.77 (0.94)	3.94 (0.92)
quality of group interaction (12)	3.87 (0.61)	3.77 (0.57)

Note. 1=never, 2=hardly ever, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always

These quantitative results show that, on average, grade 4-6 students at both MB and FZ schools mostly enjoy class, like school, trust and respect teachers, have for the most part high quality group interactions, and feel a sense of school as a community slightly more than sometimes.

According to data from interviews and observations, other aspects of MB and FZ school climates, such as interpersonal relations among students and among staff, also appeared quite similar in the two schools. The principal at FZ school indicated that although she was concerned about the extent of physical altercations among her male students and verbal bullying among her female students, she recognizes that there are many more positive interactions among students than negative ones, and that “the majority of students treat each other with respect, and are very helpful with integrated special needs students and the younger students”. The two other staff members that

were interviewed expressed similar views. The principal at FZ school also indicated that the staff at her school works well together. Similarly, at MB school, mostly positive relations between students and among staff were talked about in interviews and/or observed by the researcher. Most interview participants said that students usually get along well with each other, and are generally caring, kind, and helpful towards one another. Staff relations were talked about as collaborative and friendly. Several teachers mentioned that lots of sharing of resources and ideas takes place amongst staff. Staff and students from both schools indicated that there were still some aspects of interpersonal interactions among members of the school community that they would like to see changed.

Although some data from interviews and observations and data from the *School Climate Survey* used in this study suggest that the climates of MB and FZ schools are similar, other data suggest that other aspects of school climate may differ between the two schools. For example, according to the results from the *My Life in School Checklist* (reported in Table 5), FZ students reported that they bullied more than MB students. This difference was significant at the $p=.05$ level, $t(54)=1.97$. Further t-tests on the bullying sub-scales indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the two schools on the amount of physical bullying, $t(54)=2.58$, $p=.013$. This is consistent with findings from student focus group interviews at FZ school in which themes of bullying emerged more frequently than they did in MB student focus groups.

Overall, however, results from the *My Life in School Checklist* indicated that grade 4-6 students at both schools experience few incidents of victimization on a weekly basis, and a moderate amount of positive interactions from their school mates (see Table 5). Independent samples t-tests were conducted for the victim, bully, and positive interactions scales, using scale scores as the dependent variable and school as the independent variable. The only significant difference between the two schools was the amount of bullying reported.

Table 5

My Life in School Checklist

Scale (number of items)	Mean times per week (SD)	
	MB school (n=38)	FZ school (n=18)
overall victimization (26)	1.27 (1.34)	1.31 (1.57)
verbal victimization (7)	1.04 (1.36)	1.05 (1.49)
physical victimization (10)	1.47 (1.47)	1.21 (1.58)
social victimization (9)	1.31 (1.49)	1.65 (2.00)
overall bullying (26)	0.27 (0.44)	0.61 (0.86)*
verbal bullying (7)	0.26 (0.43)	0.50 (0.99)
physical bullying (10)	0.21 (0.42)	0.60 (0.70)*
social bullying (9)	0.34 (0.58)	0.73 (1.02)
positive interactions (13)	5.79 (1.89)	4.91 (2.09)

Note: Maximum score = 10.

* $p < .05$.

The quantitative findings suggest that the climates of MB and FZ schools are similar except for frequency of bullying. However, based on observations and interviews, the two school climates appeared to have some differences, most notably in the area of the principal's characteristics; student perceptions of disciplinary climate and safety; opportunities for participation in fun, meaningful activities; and parent/community support.

Principal's Characteristics

At MB school, students and staff described the principal as "positive" and "energetic", and gave examples that indicated that she was firm but respectful in dealing with student behaviour. On

the other hand, data collected from student focus groups at FZ school indicated that the principal often expressed negative feelings towards students and was unpredictable in how she dealt with student behavioural issues. Observations of how the principal at FZ school interacted with a group of students at an assembly support these student perceptions.

Another difference between the principals at the two schools was in the area of pedagogical leadership. Data indicate that the principal of MB school is an active pedagogical leader. On the other hand, the principal of FZ school indicated that although she wanted to provide pedagogical leadership, she did not have time due to all of her administrative duties. These aspects of principal behaviour, although not measured in the school climate scales, appeared to make a difference in the school climates.

Opportunities for Participation

Another aspect of school climate that emerged as being an area of difference between the two schools was the availability of opportunities to participate in fun, meaningful activities at school. Observations, interviews, and documents suggested that there are a greater number and wider variety of extra-curricular activities available to MB students and staff than to FZ students and staff. These activities were talked about by MB staff as fun ways of bringing the school community together and sometimes had the additional goal of engaging students in pro-social activities. During the 2007/08 school year, MB students had the opportunity to participate in several fundraising activities such as dances, BBQs, and bagging groceries towards the goal of buying a new play structure for the school yard. Other special events in the 2007/08 school year included a visit from a CFL football player, a professional theatrical production, and a children's singer.

During lunchtimes at MB school, besides intra-mural sports and preparing for School Board sports tournaments, cycle 3 students also have the opportunity to participate in a Leadership

program where they go over to the junior campus to help the younger children with their lunches (e.g., opening packages and cleaning up) and facilitate safe play on the school yard. A program called “Power Play” takes place every recess, where 3 students from each class are randomly chosen to go to the gym and play an organized game with a day care worker. The goal is to teach students games that can be transferred to the schoolyard. Other lunchtime activities, such as science club and dance, are also offered at MB school.

At MB school, assemblies for students of the same cycle (a cycle comprises two grades) take place every two weeks, and there is a whole-school assembly every six weeks. The Tribes agreements are emphasized at every assembly, and the school community is given the opportunity to participate in fun energizers. At whole school assemblies, groups of students and/or teachers make presentations to the rest of the student body. Often these assemblies follow a Virtues theme; for example, love was the theme for February, so skits and songs were performed around this theme. During the 2007/08 school year, MB staff collaborated to create and perform special plays at Halloween and Christmas time.

Although data from FZ student focus groups indicate that there are not as many fun, meaningful activities for students to participate in on a regular basis, newsletters from FZ school revealed that there are some offered. For example, in 2007/08 students were able to participate in a trip to a local farm where they harvested pumpkins to sell as a fundraiser for their school; a Terry Fox cancer fundraising walk; noon hour programs such as dance, karate, tae kwon do, and science club; and assemblies, including Tribes assemblies. Cycle 3 students also had the opportunity to participate in School Board sports tournaments. Staff at FZ school use the Virtues program in a manner similar to MB school; that is, one virtue is chosen as a focus for each month and is emphasized at assemblies. Active student participation at FZ school assemblies was also observed.

Disciplinary Climate and Safety

Student perceptions of disciplinary climate and safety at school differed between MB and FZ schools. Data from student focus groups at FZ school revealed that students felt a sense of insecurity because of the inconsistency of staff behaviour. Some FZ students reported that staff on supervision duty at recess often ignored aggressive student behaviour and did not seem to care about student safety. One boy stated: "...most of the supervisors, they don't do anything, they just stand around talking to each other". Another boy added that when some supervisors see students fight "they look at us and then walk away". Another boy claimed that some supervisors actually encourage fighting: "I thought that before she was a supervisor, she was a wrestling referee cuz usually she encourages people to fight, like 'get in there! don't be a baby!'" Some girls at FZ school also expressed that they felt "scared" at times on the school yard because of bullying, and felt insecure because they could never predict how staff would react if they told them about a problem.

At MB school, however, students remarked that they felt "safe" because they knew that staff consistently dealt with any unsafe or aggressive behaviours on the school yard. Many students pointed out that the Tribes agreements were posted everywhere and that all staff members referred to the Tribes agreements when dealing with student behaviour. Illustrating how central the Tribes agreements are to MB school's disciplinary climate, one student explained "...if you don't respect them [the Tribes agreements] you always have to go in the principal's office or something". Several MB students expressed feeling safe at school because they were confident that action would be taken if someone tried to bully them. One student explained what she does if she gets bullied: "...I go tell some teachers and they [the bullies] get in trouble". The consistency with which staff members address any instances of bullying at MB school appears to help students feel safe and secure.

Connections with Parents and the Community

Differences were found between MB and FZ schools in terms of connections with parents and the wider community. MB school has an active Home and School Association with their own website. According to MB school's Annual General Report for 2005/06, the Home and School Association hosted a BBQ, four dances, a Christmas Bazaar, a garage sale, a book fair, Jump Rope for Heart, and teacher/staff appreciation week activities. They also launched a "spirit wear" campaign where members of the school community could purchase articles such as t-shirts, caps, and mugs with their new school logo on it. The MB Home and School Association also purchased some new playground equipment, renovated the library at the senior campus, funded a theatrical production for students, funded the Winter Activity Day transportation and bought gifts for the grade 6 graduating students.

A local newspaper article (reference withheld to protect identity of the school and staff) provided evidence of very strong connections between the MB school and the wider community. A handicapped-accessible play structure was erected at the junior campus of MB school in memory of a student who had passed away a few years previously. The \$80,000 needed for the play structure was raised through school fundraising activities as well as large donations from local politicians and community organizations. Although this play structure is on school grounds, it is accessible to all community members.

The principal at FZ school indicated that she was "disappointed in the actual overall community involvement". She explained that they had "a very small dedicated group of volunteers who have been excellent", but in general there is a large portion of the parent population that does not value school. The FZ Parent Participation Organization (PPO) organizes fundraisers in order to

buy new playground equipment. For example, school newsletters revealed that the PPO organized a holiday craft and bake sale, a movie night and a BBQ in 2007/08.

Both MB and FZ schools provide monthly newsletters to inform parents about school activities. These newsletters are sent home with students and are available on the school's website. All MB school newsletters have "Proud to be a Tribes School" at the top along with the 4 Tribes agreements. MB school newsletters contain information about school activities, nutrition tips, environmental tips, and a Tribes message. Besides their regular monthly newsletter, FZ school also produced two Tribes newsletters in the 2007/08 school year to help inform parents about the Tribes activities that are going on at school and to provide parents with suggestions on how they can reinforce the Tribes agreements at home.

The principal at MB school indicated that she was very pleased with parental involvement at her school and support for the Tribes program. She expressed the belief that parents who reinforce the Tribes agreements at home are also contributing to the positive changes happening at school. This principal also remarked that parents and other members of the community who volunteer at the school often help to promote the Tribes philosophy while helping to facilitate school activities. The principal of FZ school, on the other hand, expressed disappointment at the lack of parental involvement and support.

Discrepant Data on School Climate

If one were to look only at the results of the *School Climate Survey* used in this study as a measure of school climate, one might conclude that the climates of MB and FZ schools are very similar. However, qualitative measures revealed differences between the two school climates in the areas of principal characteristics; opportunities for participation in fun, meaningful activities; student perceptions of disciplinary climate and safety; and parent/community support. Data from

another quantitative measure, the *My Life in School Checklist* revealed another difference between the two schools, that is, student perceptions of levels of bullying.

The potential problem with using a single quantitative measure of school climate such as the *School Climate Survey* was illustrated by the apparent discrepancy between this quantitative measure and the qualitative measures used in this study. The *School Climate scales* may provide a valid and reliable measure of constructs such as student autonomy and influence, classroom supportiveness, sense of school as a community, liking for school, enjoyment of class, trust in and respect for teachers, and quality of group interaction. However, as outlined in the literature review, the construct of school climate includes much more than these elements. In order to capture the essence of a comprehensive conceptualization of school climate including a wider range of components, it is necessary to use a variety of methods of data collection such as interviews, observations, and surveys. Looking at school climate through multiple lenses helps provide a fuller picture of the construct.

One discrepancy that cannot be easily resolved without further study is that of the level of perceived bullying at FZ school. Results from the *My Life in School Checklist* indicate that these students experience bullying relatively infrequently. However, focus group interview results indicate that bullying may be a more serious problem at FZ school than the quantitative measure suggests. An alternate explanation is that students exaggerated the seriousness of bullying problems in the focus group. It could be that in a group situation, if one student begins by telling a negative story, others will be inspired to follow with stories of a similar tone especially if the instigator is a dominant member of the group (Hollander, 2004). Since it was the same students who answered survey questions and participated in focus group discussions, it would be interesting to have a follow-up study to ask these students about discrepancies between the two measures.

Stakeholder Perceptions of the Impact of the Tribes Program

The research question “How do school stakeholders perceive the impact of the Tribes program on school climate and rates of bullying/victimization?” will be addressed separately for each school because the answer to the question varied according to school context. It is important to keep in mind that FZ school is in its first year of Tribes implementation while MB school is in its fourth year. It has been estimated that educational changes may take from three to five years to have a notable impact (Hall & Hord, 2006). It is also worth highlighting that only one teacher and one teaching assistant volunteered to be interviewed at FZ school. This may have constrained their responses if they were concerned about the principal reading the results of the study. These participants may have been less reserved if they could have been assured that their descriptions would be hidden among those of several other colleagues.

MB School

The following themes emerged from staff interviews and student focus groups at MB school related to perceived changes over time attributed to the Tribes program: 1) School life is better, 2) decreased bullying and increased feelings of safety, 3) increased fun, and 4) a more consistent approach to discipline. These will be described below.

School life is better. Overall, staff and students agreed that the Tribes program was making their life at school better. A comment from this grade 6 girl illustrates some recurring themes:

I like the Tribes program. Like since we started being a Tribes school, I’ve noticed that there hasn’t been as many fights...and, people have been friends, people who you never thought would be friends are friends. And, I think it’s fun... we do some activities, we do a lot of activities with the Tribes rules and stuff... I find it just makes the school better.

Staff members echoed these perceptions. A daycare worker and teaching assistant that had been at the school for 11 years said that she noticed that there is a more positive focus now and students have more rewards to work towards and look forward to. The principal stated “I think life at school is better... I think students are happier because they feel safe -they know there’s people they can talk to if they have a problem -that they can go to any adult...And, I think it works so well because it is school-wide”.

Decreased bullying/increased feelings of safety. Teachers, administrators, daycare staff, and students at MB school generally agreed that there seemed to be less bullying and fewer conflicts since the Tribes program was introduced four years ago. Reflective of comments from other staff members, one teacher reported:

The other thing you’ll notice in our school...well, in the past... after every recess, there would be like 20 kids lined up because they had done something wrong out on the school yard. But, what we’re finding now is we probably have 5 or 6 out of 300 and some kids that are going outside. So, that’s been a really big difference.

Other staff also mentioned this decrease in the number of students at the principal’s office after recess. The daycare workers who spend the most time on the school yard at lunch time, for example, were very vocal about the positive effects they were seeing.

Students at MB school also reported positive changes. A grade 6 boy commented “I noticed there were a lot less bullies after the Tribes thing started”, and other boys in the group agreed. Later, in the discussion, this theme re-emerged, and another boy said “When there’s arguments, now it doesn’t really end in physical anymore...” Grade 4 boys thought that the Tribes program made people “much nicer”. A grade 4 girl stated “...there is less fighting, less fooling around and less put downs.” Other girls mentioned that they liked how people listen to each other better, that “there are

less fights in the yard” and that they “feel safer”. One grade 4 girl said that life was better at school because of the Tribes program “because no one bullies each other”. A student who went to another school before stated “...in other schools people fight and all that, but a Tribes school is different”.

Another grade 4 girl attributed her feelings of safety and comfort at school to the Tribes program:

...if there were no Tribes agreements, everyone would start acting stupid and doing stuff that was not appropriate at this school...with them, I feel comfortable at this school, but I think if there were none, I wouldn't feel too comfortable cuz everyone would start being mean...

Others agreed that “it's better with the Tribes agreements because people don't get hurt as much”.

Some participants in student focus groups admitted that there were still bullies at their school, however, as this grade 4 boy said “there's still bullies in this school...but when they like punch someone, they get in trouble right away”. In other words, the school staff seemed to be taking bullying more seriously and putting an end to it more quickly.

Increased fun. Many students mentioned that school was more fun because of the Tribes program. Grade 6 girls mentioned the Tribes fun day and other activities. When asked what she thought about the Tribes program, one grade 5 girl compared MB school to her old school and said “it's better than the other school I used to go to...we have a lot of fun”. Specifically, she mentioned the Tribes assemblies and other special activities that they did not have at her old school. The two administrators, several teachers, daycare staff and students said that they liked the Tribes energizers because they were fun. Some teachers reported that they used energizers to give students a break in a lesson and to prevent behaviour problems. Administrators also reported using energizers in assemblies to get everyone participating and having fun.

A more consistent approach to discipline. Most staff indicated that they thought there was a more consistent approach to discipline within the school since Tribes was introduced. Many

emphasized that having a common language and school-wide policies has really helped to reduce student behaviour problems. Many staff members commented that they like the consistency provided throughout the school with a clear, simple set of rules (i.e., the Tribes agreements), and that they like the policy that students are expected to follow the Tribes agreements wherever they are in the school and with whomever they are with.

FZ School

Data collected from interviews with FZ stakeholders related to perceived changes over time attributed to the Tribes program will be discussed in terms of perceptions of staff and student behaviour as these were the two dominant themes to emerge.

Staff behaviour. Grade 5 and 6 students who participated in focus groups indicated that they did not think the Tribes program was having an impact on staff behaviour. The general consensus among these students seemed to be that the principal, teachers, and non-teaching staff know what the Tribes agreements are and expect the students to follow them, but do not follow these guidelines themselves. Several students told stories of staff members yelling or “barking orders” at them. The students perceived this as disrespectful behaviour that was in violation of the Tribes agreements. Some students expressed a sense of fear and insecurity at school due to staff behaviour. One girl recounted, “...when I was at the office...you know that tingling butterflies in your stomach? you know, like whenever you’re afraid you’re going to get fired or something? well, I was like shaking...my hands were like shaking...it was crazy.” Another girl added, “...you never know what [the principal] will say to you...you will never know...” Several boys told stories about the principal acting in ways that they thought was disrespectful and unfair. One boy recalled that one day when he and his friends were coming in from recess, the principal yelled at them “you have two seconds to get into the classroom or you’ve got detention for a week”. Other boys told stories of

recess supervisors yelling and swearing at them. This type of behaviour by staff, they argued, was an indication that Tribes was not helping.

Student behaviour. The grade 6 girls interviewed at FZ school in February stated that they thought the Tribes program was having an effect on student behaviour. They perceived that there was less fighting going on and students were more respectful. One girl said that the Tribes activities had “brought the students closer, like to know each other...” She spoke of community circle activities where she was able to learn about her classmates’ backgrounds, and their likes and dislikes. Another girl said that “everybody is starting to respect each other...and they’re starting to listen to other people’s ideas ...” This same girl said that they were able to “learn more” than they used to because students were being more respectful. One girl articulated that “you feel like you’re in a safer place and a more respectful place...so, I think it helps out.”

Contrary to those views, the grade 5 girls and boys interviewed in April thought that the Tribes program was having little impact. One grade 5 boy said that he thought people just did the opposite of the Tribes agreements on the school yard:

...outside, like, everybody’s like breaking the rules... if someone asks “can I play with you?”, they’ll be like “NO!” “go away!”, and if you talk to someone, sometimes they cover their ears and say “la la la, I can’t hear you”, and for the mutual respect, they just pick on everybody...

When asked what percent of the students outside are breaking the rules, the same student estimated 50%, and another boy estimated 70%. All of these boys reported that there was a lot of fighting going on outside and that the adults supervising the schoolyard did not seem to care. These boys said that although the Tribes rules were posted on the wall, “no one really follows them” and the

incentive systems attached to following the Tribes agreements were not being followed through by staff members. The grade 5 girls also told stories about the bullying that goes on in the school yard.

The grade 6 girls (interviewed in February) also recounted stories of physical aggression on the school yard, and students in their class that were teased by other students. However, they also said that they thought the fighting and bullying going on at their school had decreased because of the Tribes popsicle stick incentive. One girl explained it this way: “because the teachers said that we’d get an ice-cream party or something, so I think they try to work for that, and if the teachers say something like that I find it makes them try harder ...” Perhaps by April, this incentive had lost its effectiveness because the students had not yet received any tangible rewards. The grade 6 girls also mentioned that they thought there were less fights on the school yard in the winter.

The staff members that were interviewed at FZ school expressed the belief that “change takes time”, and since they were only in their first year of Tribes implementation, change had been limited. The principal indicated that the Tribes program seemed to be having a greater impact on the younger students than the older ones, especially in terms of respectful behaviour. One staff member expressed the view that the Tribes program was helping students to experience more of a sense of inclusion and belonging and that this was important after having had many new students come to their school because of recent changes to school catchment areas.

The parent that was interviewed stated that she thought that the Tribes program was having a positive effect on her child’s behaviour, and that what she was teaching about respect at home was being reinforced at school. She also expressed the opinion that children felt empowered, in part, due to the Tribes philosophy that was being promoted by some teachers:

when I talk about respect at home with *Bobby* (pseudonym), he gets it...he gets it from home, but he also gets it because it’s being reinforced at school...and so, those kinds of

concepts of respect, and the right to say 'no'...I think they feel empowered knowing what they have to say matters, and how they feel matters...

This parent went on to say that it was also helping her as a parent, knowing that her child was getting consistent messages from home and school, and that she was actually learning from her child at times:

...it helps me as a mom, that when I try to have those discussions at home, I know that the same sort of culture's existing in the school...that those principles are being taught...and, I think that the school helps the parents as well, that it's being taught in school environment, and I have my son coming home and teaching me...

This mother of three young children talked about being overwhelmed at times with the daily tasks of parenting and was impressed that now her eldest child (the only one of school age), has the vocabulary to express himself when he feels uncomfortable with the way she is interacting with him. She admitted that, like any other parent, she sometimes raises her voice when she is frustrated, but now her child has the skills to say 'I don't like it when you yell at me', and this reminds her to communicate in a more positive manner.

This parent also stated that she thought that her eldest child had a tendency to act like a bully at times, but she felt that the Tribes program helped to diminish those types of behaviours. When asked what aspects of the Tribes philosophy she attributed that to, she replied:

... the whole concept of Tribes and being part of a larger community -the sense that I'm part of a larger community and everything I do is going to have consequences throughout the larger community...and that also being instilled at home...

She spoke of her son beginning to understand how his behaviour can have an impact on others and how this can then come back and affect him negatively. She gave the following example from home to illustrate the type of thing she says to help him make cause and effect connections:

...‘ if you don’t pick up that dirty plate from the table, it means that I have to do it, and then if I have to do it, it’s going to slow me down and I’m not going to be able to play that game of Monopoly with you...’

She commented that she was happy to see that these types of connections were being made at school as well.

Being a volunteer at the school, this parent has had the opportunity to spend time in different classrooms with different teachers, and observe differences in classroom management style. She knows which teachers “really subscribe to the Tribes” philosophy and notice that these classrooms seem to be more positive learning environments. She commented that generally what she sees in Tribes classrooms is “...children who are having fun, laughing, smiling...and they’re listening and they’re following directions...”, as well as much less conflict between students and between the teacher and the students. This parent also recognized that other factors could be responsible for these differences, such as teacher experience and personality; however, she perceived that Tribes was making a positive difference in the classrooms where teachers were fully implementing it.

Summary

Students and staff who were interviewed at MB school perceived that the Tribes program was having a notable impact on school climate and rates of bullying. Many MB informants stated that they thought school life had improved in many ways including decreased bullying, increased feelings of safety, increased fun, and a more consistent approach to discipline. Results were more mixed at FZ school. Many grade 5 and 6 students who were interviewed did not think the Tribes

program was having any impact on student or staff behaviour. The principal of FZ school also stated that she saw no effect on the grade 4-6 students, but it seemed to be making a difference with the younger children evident in more respectful behaviour. A parent informant from FZ school indicated that Tribes seemed to be having a positive impact in the classrooms that were implementing it.

Changes Still Needed

The themes that emerged for the third research question, “What aspects of school life do staff and students identify as being in need of change in order to improve school climate and reduce bullying?” were very similar in the two schools, so the results will be combined where appropriate. Any data that were particular to one school will be noted as such.

No school environment is perfect, so it is important for members of the school community to be able to identify problems as well as strengths in their environment. This awareness makes change more likely to occur. At both schools, some stakeholders who were interviewed commented that although there were many positive aspects about their school, there were still some aspects that they would like to see changed. This section will outline some of the problems that were identified.

Staff Behaviour

Students from both schools and from each grade level interviewed said that they did not like it when teachers or supervisors yelled at them. They thought adults were being disrespectful when they yelled. One grade 5 boy even went so far as to say that some staff were bullying students, and was very vocal about staff abuse of power:

Really, I think sometimes...who will watch the watchers? ...my daycare supervisor abuses her power, uses her position to bully us, and then if we try to fight back, she tells another grown-up who will, of course, trust her that it was all our fault.

He also recounted how some of his teachers have been abusive or disrespectful in the past.

Another theme that emerged was that of fairness. A number of students mentioned that teachers were not always consistent with their enforcement of the Tribes rules. One grade 6 girl commented:

Well, sometimes the teachers have their favourites and they'll treat them with more respect than the others... so if one person puts down another person, and it's the teacher's pet, so they'll say "it's no big deal", but everyone else will get in trouble...

One boy suggested: "I think that teachers should be a bit more consistent. If they don't know who did it, they should just say that... sometimes they just blame the wrong people." Some students also complained that teachers sometimes kept the whole class in for detention at recess when they were not sure who caused the problem. Students perceived this as highly unfair.

Grade 6 boys commented that: "The boys are not being treated nearly as well as the girls" and "The little kids get treated better". Another boy said that teachers are "... not being respectful to the gr. 5 or 6 boys... They're always treating us like we're aliens... They're treating the girls 95% better than us". One boy tried to make sense of this by saying "There's more girl teachers and they respect their own kind..." The grade 6 boys talked about a couple of teachers that they thought did treat all students equally and fairly. They appreciated this and expressed the desire to have all teachers treat them with that kind of fairness and respect.

Students agreed that teachers need to model the behaviour that they want students to show. Grade 5 boys in MB school voiced that they did not like it when teachers told them not to talk in the gym during assemblies when the teachers themselves were chatting amongst themselves. These students also said that they did not like it when teachers "talked about them behind their backs".

The grade 5 girls at FZ school felt that the adults were not following the same rules they asked the students to follow. One girl explained it like this:

...[staff] always tells us to follow them, like to participate and listen and stuff and be respectful, but sometimes I find that [staff] aren't really respectful to us, but they get mad at us when we don't do all that stuff, like they don't do it to us either.

The grade 5 girls at FZ school felt resentful that the teachers are allowed to wear flip flops and spaghetti strap tops, but the students are not. A grade 5 boy at MB school emphasized that he thought it would be more effective if students were taught why certain rules must be followed: "telling them actually why in real life it would be good to be respectful to other people and stuff like that..."

Some students at FZ school commented that they would like to see more caring behaviours from some staff members. For example, boys and girls mentioned that they would like to be shown more care when they are feeling sick. One boy said that staff will not let students go home sick "unless you're dying or you're on fire or your arm's decapitated or something". Some boys from FZ school expressed the desire for staff to be more vigilant to problems on the school grounds.

The above data suggest that students perceive that there is a need for staff to model respectful and caring behaviours at all times. Some students expressed a desire to have staff follow the same rules that they ask students to follow. It was also suggested that teachers explain the rationale behind specific rules so that students can better understand why the rules are important to follow. Although it is commonly found that consistency of responses to student misconduct is not always high (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001), this is something that students in both case study schools identified as being important to them. Students in both schools commented that they would like staff members to be more consistent in their approach to discipline. This finding is consistent

with survey results from a study of 1,900 students which indicated that improvements to school climate were needed especially in the area of student perceptions of fair enforcement of rules (Soderstrom & Elrod, 2006).

Teacher Stress

As is commonly reported in the academic literature (e.g., Easthope & Easthope, 2000), staff from both case study schools commented that they have a very heavy workload and that they often feel overwhelmed. Some teachers said that they thought that the job of a teacher was getting more and more difficult each year. Most teachers pointed above to the school board and Ministry of Education levels as the source of their stress. One teacher said that she “did not feel respected by above” because of all of the extra work and demands placed upon teachers in recent years. She felt that sometimes “agendas are put before people” and “that is not a very respectful thing”. Teachers from both MB and FZ schools suggested that reducing teacher stress may be an important area to focus on in order to improve school climate.

Student Behaviour

MB school. Many staff and students commented that some students still need to improve their behaviour. For example, in talking about their math class, the grade 6 boys admitted that it’s “loud, very loud” and that “no one stops talking. Everyone’s in everybody’s business”. Grade 6 boys and girls also admitted that students’ behaviour was worse when there was a supply teacher. For example, one student said “all the class talks and they don’t get their work done... she tries to be strict and keep them in for recess, but they don’t care”. Several staff members and many students acknowledged that there were a few students who were very disrespectful at times. However, both students and staff agreed that it was the “same group of people in front of the office” every recess.

FZ school. Although this was not evident from survey results, both the principal and the grade 5 students at FZ school indicated that there was too much physical fighting on the school yard. When asked how they usually felt when they were at school, one girl replied “I feel threatened”, another said, “I’m scared”. A grade 5 girl reported: “there’s definitely a bullying issue, there’s kids that are so mean that they will actually come up to you and take you by a strand of hair and like throw you in the snow bank...” The grade 5 boys also agreed that bullying was a problem at their school. One boy estimated “there’s at least 10 bullies in every class”. The principal indicated that it was mostly the cycle 3 (grade 5 and 6) students that were physically aggressive on the school yard.

The teacher informant from FZ school commented that respect was still lacking in the classroom. She said:

...respect is still lacking – they don’t respect each other’s learning time, I think, a lot of the time. I don’t think they realize that words can hurt. Or, maybe they do, but they’ve been hurt so much –at least the kids I am teaching – maybe it’s been so much overload of nastiness that they just don’t realize it anymore...

The principal also commented that she would like to see less verbal aggression in classrooms and less physical aggression in the hallways and outside.

These findings suggest that in order to improve school climate and interpersonal relations, students need to make a concerted effort to behave respectfully and avoid using aggression in their interactions with others. Students need to learn that it is just as important to show respect to substitute teachers as it is to regular staff members. The importance of respecting other students’ learning time should also be reinforced.

Parent-School Relations

FZ school. The principal of FZ school gave several examples that indicated that relations were not very positive between staff members and parents. When talking about the parents, she lamented:

...we have a large percentage of the population that either had a very difficult schooling themselves and they've carried that negative opinion about schools and school staff into their adult life, thus they don't always value getting to school on time, getting to school at all, they leave early which is disruptive not only to their child's needs but to the other learners...

She identified parental attitudes and behaviours as something she would like to see changed. She said that the "abusive behaviours by parents" led to teachers being "turned off" and asking themselves "why are we here?".

These data indicate that measures need to be taken at FZ school in order to improve staff-parent relations. Chapman and Harris (2005) suggest that creating opportunities for parents to come to the school to celebrate their child's successes in an informal, social atmosphere may help to break down barriers between staff and parents. Sporting and charitable events can also help bring parents and staff together in a non-threatening environment where collaborative relationships can be developed.

Summary

Stakeholders at both schools identified staff behaviour, teacher stress levels, and student behaviour as areas that still needed change in order to improve school climate and potentially reduce levels of bullying. Parent-school relations were also identified as needing improvement at FZ school.

Components of School Climate that are Important for Promoting a Bully-free Environment

In order to address the fourth research question “What components of school climate emerge as being important in the case study schools in promoting a bully-free environment?” it may be useful to revisit the broad conceptualization of school climate outlined in Chapter 2. This model proposed that school climate is made up of individual, interpersonal, and organizational dimensions that interact to form a school’s climate. I used this broad model as a starting point, but remained open to newly emerging themes. Data from semi-structured interviews with staff members, focus groups with students, and observations were gathered from two case study schools and recurrent themes were identified. The following themes emerged from the data: 1) interpersonal and leadership skills of the principal, 2) caring and respectful interpersonal interactions, 3) clear, fair, and consistent school policies and systems of accountability, 4) opportunities to participate in fun and meaningful activities.

Interpersonal and Leadership Skills of the Principal

Students and staff at MB school described their principal as “positive” and “energetic”. Students appreciated the fact that this principal rewarded them for good behaviour, and they enjoyed the fun activities that she facilitated. Staff commented that this principal was very intolerant of aggressive behaviour and dealt with it immediately when any incidents were reported. At MB school, the principal had a clear vision of the way the school community should operate and had strong leadership skills that enabled her to garner support from the vast majority of members of the school community. Being a strong believer in the Tribes program, she promoted school policies and systems of accountability that were based on the Tribes philosophy. This principal modeled the behaviours that she wanted to see in staff and students, and provided opportunities for student and staff participation in enjoyable activities at school.

Positive comments about both the principal and the vice-principal were provided by staff members. A teacher with 20 years of experience said:

...the climate is really good, the change of principal and vice principal, I think is a big help. I find that we're all wanting to get more involved in different aspects of what goes on in the school, which for me is a nice... I enjoy coming in and, it's nice to be able to talk with other teachers, the exchange is a lot broader now than it was.

Speaking of both the principal and the vice-principal, a teacher with over 30 years of teaching experience commented that the current administration was "extremely supportive of the teachers. They are visible in our hallways. They follow through with what they say." A younger teacher also commented on the positive impact of the current administration:

... I know that they've been trying to bring it in for the last 4 years, but I think that it's only this year, because of the change in principal...and our principal believes so strongly in it...that people are really starting to understand it, and realise that it's not just kinda like a book with a bunch of games in it, it's more like a philosophy... it's our whole way of life. You know, it's like...everybody lives by the Tribes rules.

Several staff members who were interviewed identified the principal as playing an important role in the successful implementation of the Tribes program, and as having a positive impact on the school's overall climate.

Only two staff members (i.e., a teacher and an educational assistant) at FZ school were interviewed, and neither of them mentioned the principal's impact on the school's climate. Students at FZ school stressed that it was important for a principal to model the types of behaviours that he/she expects from students and staff. Students provided examples that indicated that they believe it is important for the principal to be kind, caring, respectful, fair, and a good listener. Many

students indicated that the principal's behaviour played an important role in the school's overall climate and contributed to how they felt about being at school.

Caring and Respectful Interpersonal Relations

Staff and students at both case study schools identified caring, respectful relationships amongst students, amongst staff, between students and staff, and between parents and staff, as something that makes a difference in their feelings about being at school. Students and staff indicated that when caring, respectful relations are present, school life is much more enjoyable. Many informants at MB school attributed drops in levels of bullying to the caring, respectful behaviours that had increased since the introduction of the Tribes program which emphasizes mutual respect and cooperation. Students indicated that they were more likely to treat each other with care and respect when they observed staff members being caring and respectful to each other and to students. This is consistent with Bandura's (1986) social learning theory of aggression which highlights the importance of modeling. This is also consistent with other research that indicates the importance of positive staff-student, staff-parents, staff-staff, and student-student interactions for a positive schools climate (e.g., Brown, 2004; Chapman & Harris, 2004; Doll, Song, & Siemers, 2004).

Policies and Accountability

Interviews and observations revealed that MB school has very clear policies and that all members are held accountable for their actions. It is the policy of the school to have the Tribes agreements as the "school rules". These rules (mutual respect, attentive listening, participation/right to pass, and appreciations/no put-downs) are posted in every classroom and every hallway. They are also incorporated into the student handbook, on the school's website, and on every school newsletter. Data collected from documents and interviews at MB school reveal that students are

held accountable for their behaviour if they breach a Tribes agreement. This is communicated to all members of the school community. For example, a page on the school website outlined the following “procedures to be followed in case of an infraction of the Tribes agreements: a) inform the student of the behaviour that is in violation of the policy, b) communicate with a parent when necessary, c) impose an appropriate in-school sanction or school suspension.” I was told by informants that when a student is sent to the office for breaking a Tribes agreement, they are usually asked to complete a “think sheet” on which they are asked to write down (or draw a picture) of which Tribes rule they broke and what they would do differently next time. A very experienced teacher, who has been at the school for 20 years, voiced the opinion that the current school administrators at MB school are less tolerant of aggressive behaviours than other administrators in the past, and they consistently follow through with consequences for students who break the Tribes agreements. In an interview with the principal, she made it clear that staff members were also expected to follow the Tribes agreements and were held accountable if they did not. The clear, fair policies at this school and the consistent manner in which all members of the school community are held responsible for any breaches of these policies is an indicator of, and possible contributor to a positive school climate. MB students commented that they feel safe because they know instances of bullying are dealt with right away.

Opportunities for Participation and Contribution

In MB school, having the opportunity to participate in fun activities such as sports, leadership programs, assemblies, and fund raisers seemed to make a difference in how students and staff felt about being at school. Students and staff both indicated that they enjoyed coming to school because of the fun activities and the opportunities to socially interact in enjoyable, meaningful ways. Students appreciated having the opportunity to participate in organized sports and leadership

activities at lunch time; they enjoyed school assemblies and special events; and they enjoyed the energizers that some teachers facilitated in class. Some students also spoke about being able to have fun while learning in class. For example, some students said that they liked it when their teacher did math games with them, some mentioned that they liked being able to talk with others in small groups or a community circle, and others said they enjoyed the “energizer” breaks teachers provided where they could get up and move. Having opportunities to participate in fun activities was a theme that emerged in MB school as an important component of a positive school climate. Some stakeholders commented that when students are able to get to know each other better and have fun together, bullying is less likely to occur.

Summary

This section will summarize the answers to the research questions.

- 1) *What is the perceived impact of the Tribes program on school climate and rates of bullying/victimization?*

Staff and students at MB school perceived that implementation of the Tribes program has had the following impacts on life at their school: more consistent discipline, less bullying, increased feelings of safety, and more fun. These impacts were not evident at FZ school, most likely because the program is in its early stages of implementation.

- 2) *What are some barriers and challenges to implementing the Tribes program?*

Stress, workload, lack of time, characteristics of students, physical environment, parental apathy, inadequate pedagogical leadership, and lack of French materials were identified as being barriers and challenges to implementing the Tribes program.

- 3) *What aspects of school life do staff and students identify as being in need of change in order to improve school climate and reduce bullying?*

Aspects of student and staff behaviour were identified as being in need of change in both schools. Although most informants stated that interpersonal relations were positive, there was still acknowledgment that interactions amongst students and between staff and students could be more respectful and that staff could show more consistency in delivering consequences. In FZ school, parent-school relations were also identified as being in need of change.

4) *What components of school climate emerge as being important in the case study schools in promoting a bully-free environment?*

The following components emerged as being most important in promoting a bully-free environment: interpersonal and leadership skills of the principal; caring and respectful interpersonal interactions; clear, fair, and consistent school policies and systems of accountability; and opportunities to participate in fun and meaningful activities.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the links between school climate and student interpersonal relations, in particular, bullying. The Tribes program was used as an example of a program that aims to produce a positive school climate. The two schools that were studied were at very different levels of implementation of the same program. MB school was in their 4th year of implementation, with a very dedicated, motivated administrator and a staff that was actively implementing the program to the best of their abilities. FZ school was in its 1st year of implementation, with an administrator that, while keen about the Tribes program, was planning to retire at the end of the school year, and a staff that was under a lot of stress and had not yet fully embraced the Tribes philosophy. Findings that were presented included descriptions of the climates at each school; barriers and challenges to implementing the Tribes program; stakeholder perceptions of the impact of the Tribes program and changes still needed; and, a description of the components of school climate that emerged as being most important for promoting a bully-free environment.

In this chapter, I propose a model, based on study findings, that describes possible mechanisms through which school climate may be changed to produce an environment which is less conducive to bullying. Next, I discuss study results in relation to existing theories and empirical research. Then, contributions to knowledge are described and study limitations are outlined. Finally, implications for practice and research and recommendations for future directions are provided.

Possible Mechanisms through which School Climate impacts Bullying

In this study, the following components of school climate emerged as being most important in creating a bully-free environment: 1) interpersonal and leadership skills of the principal, 2) policies and accountability, 3) caring and respectful interpersonal relations, and 4) opportunities for

participation. A model describing possible mechanisms through which school climate can have an impact on rates of bullying was developed based on the findings of this study. Figure 3 below presents a visual representation of this model. This model is largely based on the data collected at MB school due to the low level of participation from FZ school staff.

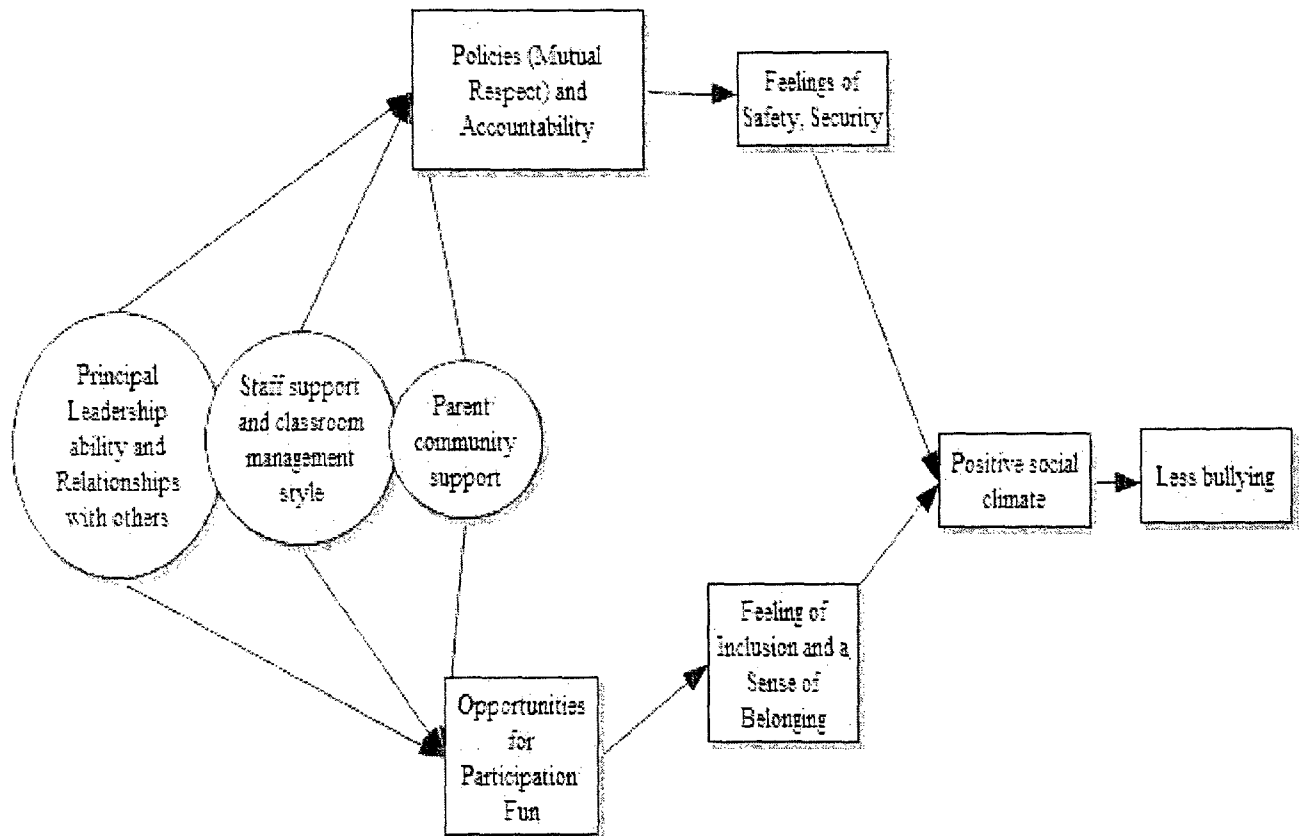


Figure 3. Model of Mechanisms through which School Climate may impact Bullying

In this study, principals appeared to have an impact on the school's climate. The strong leadership and interpersonal skills exhibited by the principal at MB school seemed to help her in garnering staff and community support for policies and procedures and encouraged enthusiastic participation in extra-curricular activities. This was evident from observations and from comments provided by staff and students during interviews. Staff and students that were interviewed at MB school indicated that the principal was very positive and that her positive disposition along with her

clear vision of being a Tribes school helped contribute to a positive school climate. Principals have a large impact on the policies and procedures set in their schools and are influential in creating opportunities for children's participation in fun activities; however, staff and community support is necessary in order for these to succeed. Both principals interviewed indicated that staff and parent support were essential in successful implementation of the Tribes program. They indicated the importance of teacher buy-in to the policies (i.e., four Tribes agreements) and token incentive systems to reinforce respectful behaviours in students. The principal at MB school indicated that parents who reinforce the Tribes agreements at home are also contributing to the positive changes happening at the school. As well, parents and other members of the community who volunteer at the school often help to promote the Tribes philosophy while helping to facilitate school activities. Teachers play an important role by providing opportunities for meaningful interactive learning experiences in the classroom. Having the opportunity to work in small collaborative groups and interact with others during community circles or energizers, as well as opportunities to participate in fun, meaningful activities may help students develop feelings of inclusion and a sense of belonging. When school rules are clear, fair, and consistently applied throughout the school, this seems to lead to feelings of safety and security among students. Feelings of safety, security, inclusion, and belonging can lead to a positive school climate and less bullying. Evidence from staff and student interviews indicate that having mutual respect as a key value and school norm seems to be instrumental in building a positive school climate that is less conducive to bullying.

This model suggests that principals can play a key role in producing a positive school climate through their relationships with others. Some writers (e.g., Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991) have argued that principals may not be able to have as much impact on school climate compared to teachers. The short-term appointment of principals as well as the "sheer numbers" of teachers and

their presence in the classroom can provide teachers with much more power to effect the school culture (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). This is also reflected in studies of school climate which tend to measure teacher-student factors but not administrator-student factors (e.g., Astor et al., 2006; Kitsantas et al., 2004; Ross & Lowther, 2003). It is interesting to note that administrator-student interpersonal relations did not emerge in the model of school climate based on a systematic review of the literature conducted by Ryan et al. (2008). This indicates that administrator-student relations are not currently being measured in quantitative measures of school climate. However, findings from this study indicate that administrator-student relations may be an important reflection of and/or determinant of school climate.

Although there are several qualitative studies linking school climate to student academic achievement (see Pink, 1982, for a review), there are very few qualitative studies linking school climate to student behaviour. One exception to this is the qualitative portion of the Safe School Study (National Institute of Education [NIE], 1978). Case studies of 10 schools in the United States revealed that the single most important difference between safe schools and violent schools was “a strong, dedicated principal who served as a role model for both students and teachers, and who instituted a firm, fair, and consistent system of discipline” (NIE, 1978, p. iv). That is, safe schools had principals who were visible and available to students and staff on a daily basis, and who were strong leaders and positive role models. In these case study schools, the principal was also credited with initiating a structure of order that was firm, fair, and consistent. An additional factor that distinguished safe from violent case study schools in the NIE study was school spirit or pride, which revealed itself through extra-curricular activities, a well-maintained building and yard, collaborative activities involving students and staff, and support from parents and the community (NIE, 1978).

The findings in the current study and the model proposed are consistent with the results of the Safe School Study (NIE, 1978).

Interpersonal and Leadership Skills of the Principal

The idea that principals play an important role in a school's climate is not new (Hoy & Clover, 1986). In the school effectiveness and school improvement literature there are frequent references to the importance of the principal. For example, Stoll and Fink (1996) synthesized the results of several studies to create a list of factors that are characteristic of ineffective schools; these include: unfocused leadership, lack of vision, and dysfunctional staff relations. On the other hand, in the improving schools described by Chapman and Harris (2004), clear and purposeful leadership was evident. These principals in the improving schools described by Chapman and Harris fostered continuous professional development, and teachers were given the time and opportunity to work with colleagues and participate in mentoring, coaching, and peer review. Teachers were given the time to visit other classrooms and reflect on their own teaching. Professional development workshops were directly related to classroom practice, and teachers were encouraged to take active leadership roles and work in teams. Honesty, trust, and openness were perceived as important traits of an effective principal. Leadership in effective and improving schools was described as instructional, that is, the focus was on teaching and learning as opposed to administrative duties. It is interesting to note that, in my study, the principal of FZ school lamented that she did not have enough time to accomplish instructional leadership as she was bogged down with administrative duties. In contrast, the principal at MB school was often observed in a role of instructional leader. It is possible that the principal of MB school was able to share her administrative duties with the vice-principal, thereby freeing up more time for instructional leadership. FZ school does not have a vice-

principal, therefore the principal has to accomplish all of the administrative tasks alone, perhaps leaving little time for instructional leadership.

There is a substantial body of research which examines the role of the school principal on student academic achievement (e.g., Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Kruger, Witziers, & Slegers, 2007; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). However, in antibullying research, the principal's leadership skills, and staff relations are rarely considered. One exception to this is a study by Roland and Galloway (2004) which found that schools with the highest levels of bullying were characterized by poor leadership, little professional cooperation, and low consensus about professional matters, compared to schools with less bullying. The methodology that Roland and Galloway used consisted of administering questionnaires to elementary school teachers and students in 22 schools in Norway once during a school year. To build on the findings from Roland and Galloway's study, a longitudinal design would be beneficial as would the collection of qualitative data.

Policies and Accountability

Having clear school policies that state the unacceptability of aggression, the method of handling problems with aggression, and the accountability of offenders is an important aspect of creating a positive, bully-free school climate. Schools with a positive climate usually have clear policies about what is acceptable behaviour (Brown, 2004; Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Roland & Munthe, 1997; Welsh et al., 2000), and students should feel confident that adults will deal with all instances of bullying immediately (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2004). There is some empirical evidence that a positive disciplinary climate is associated with lower rates of victimization for middle school students (Ma, 2002).

The clear, fair policies at MB school and the manner in which all members of the school community are held responsible for any breaches of these policies is an indicator of, and possible

contributor to, a positive school climate. These findings are consistent with research by Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, and Gottfredson (2005) which found that in schools in which students perceived greater fairness and clarity of rules, there was less student victimization and less delinquent behaviour. Promoting mutual respect as a key value and school norm seemed to be instrumental in achieving a positive school climate that was less conducive to bullying at MB school.

Opportunities for Participation and Contribution

Schools with positive school climates provide a variety of opportunities for students to become involved in school life and contribute to the school community in a positive manner. This can occur through curricular and extra-curricular activities. Research by Leff, Costigan, and Power (2004), for example, indicates that providing children with opportunities to play organized games on the playground is associated with higher rates of cooperative play, lower rates of rough play, and higher levels of inter-ethnic interactions. Similarly, Doll (1996) found that children were more likely to have positive interactions when interesting organized games were available to them on the playground. School clubs and sports teams also provide opportunities for students to become more actively involved at school (Chapman & Harris, 2004). In the improving schools studied by Chapman and Harris (2004), all members of the school community were provided with opportunities to participate in interesting, meaningful activities. For staff members, social events were organized, and opportunities were made for staff to work together. For students, clubs were set up, trips were organized, student-staff committees and student councils were established. For parents, opportunities were created for them to come to school to talk with teachers, and to help out with social, sporting, or charitable events. These activities provided opportunities for developing more positive relationships between and amongst students, staff, and parents. Research has shown

that students who are actively involved in school life and feel a sense of personal connection with peers and teachers are less likely to engage in aggressive behaviour (Karcher, 2004).

Hanna (1998) found that the availability of intramural sports at school had an impact on three areas of school climate: teacher-student relations, parent and school-community relations, and instructional management. Hanna explains his results by suggesting that intramural programs promote fun, and this may be attractive to students, teachers, parents, and members of the community. These positive feelings may then transfer to the classroom context where learning is facilitated by better student-teacher relations.

A model proposed by Hargreaves (1995) may help explain why clear, fair, consistent rules as well as opportunities for positive social interactions are both important in creating a positive school climate. Student academic achievement requires a certain level of social control over students and staff in order to focus on learning, achieve tasks, and avoid distractions. Hargreaves refers to this as the “instrumental-social control function” of schools. On the other hand, it is important for schools to foster supportive and satisfying social relations. Hargreaves labels this the “expressive-social cohesion function” of schools. These two goals of task achievement and maintaining good social relationships must be balanced in order for a school to function effectively. To illustrate, Hargreaves provides the following examples of unbalanced schools: a school that is high in social control and low in social cohesion may be characterized as “custodial” or “coercive”; in a school where social control and social cohesion are both high, members may feel strong pressure to participate in all school activities and the climate created may be characterized as “frenetic”; where social control is low and social cohesion is high, the atmosphere may be relaxed, friendly, and informal, but academic goals may be neglected because work pressure is low; and schools where both social control and cohesion are low, may be characterized as “at risk” and

“close to breakdown” as social relations are poor and little time is spent on academics. The ideal school, according to Hargreaves is able to achieve optimal levels of social cohesion and control:

Expectations of work and conduct are high –the principal’s expectations of staff and the teachers’ of students. Yet these standards are not perceived to be unreasonable; everyone is supported in striving for them and rewarded for reaching them. For both teachers and students, school is a demanding but very enjoyable place to be (Hargreaves, 1995, pp. 28-29).

In MB school, the clear, fair policies (Tribes agreements) and systems of accountability (token economies to reinforce compliance to Tribes rules) appeared to help achieve the optimal level of instrumental-social control, while the opportunities for participation in fun activities (e.g., lunchtime sports, recess cooperative games, leadership opportunities, fundraising events, assemblies) seemed to help achieve the optimal level of expressive-social cohesion.

This type of a positive climate may discourage bullying for several reasons; for example, students may identify with the positive values held by members of the community and because they want to continue belonging to this group, they abide by the norms to be respectful (Payne, 2004). Another possibility is that students know that there are consistent consequences to breaking school rules and they do not want to risk the negative consequences that they are likely to experience if they bully.

School Attachment, Connectedness, Engagement, Bonding, Inclusion

There is a great deal of overlap between the areas of school climate, school connectedness, school attachment, school bonding, engagement, and inclusion (Jimerson et al., 2003; Libbey, 2004). Definitions are varied and the methods of measuring these concepts include many of the same items. In a review of this literature, Libbey (2004) identifies nine constructs that appear in

measures of school connectedness and related measures: “1) academic engagement, 2) belonging, 3) discipline/fairness, 4) extracurricular activities, 5) likes school, 6) student voice, 7) peer relations, 8) safety, and 9) teacher support” (p. 278). These constructs all appear in the conceptualization of school climate proposed by Ryan et al. (2008) and adopted for this dissertation.

For the purposes of the model proposed in this dissertation, sense of belonging is defined as: “feelings that one is a significant member of the school community, is accepted and respected in school, has a sense of inclusion in school, and includes school as part of one’s self-definition” (Voelkl, 1996, p. 762). In the Tribes process, inclusion/a sense of belonging is a key stage of group development along the “Tribes trail” (Gibbs, 2001). When individuals come together in a large group such as in a school, classroom, or an organization’s meeting, individuals who do not know or feel connected to anyone else may feel anxiety which may interfere with their ability to perform optimally in the group. When a group of individuals come together for the first time, it is the facilitator’s job to provide opportunities for individuals to get to know each other in smaller groups such as pairs or triads. That way, individuals begin to develop connections and a sense of belonging. As individuals come to know each other better, they start to feel more comfortable sharing ideas in a larger group. Several teachers at MB school mentioned that Tribes “inclusion activities” were important, especially at the beginning of the year in order to build a safe learning environment. Inclusion activities help students get to know each other better and promote a sense of belonging.

An example of an inclusion activity that MB teachers did with their students at the beginning of the year was “Life Map”. In this activity students are asked to create a visual representation of their life to date and share it with other students in partners or small groups. The activity allows students to get to know each other better and practice attentive listening. Another inclusion activity called “Something Good” gives students the opportunity to share a positive

experience that happened to them in the recent past. This activity usually takes place in a community circle so that everyone has a chance to hear everyone else's "something good".

Results from my study can be explained using an existing theory, the social development model (Hawkins & Weis, 1985). The social development model combines ideas from social control theory (Hirschi, 1969) and social learning theory (Akers, 1977). In Hirschi's theory, student bonding to school may restrain students from deviant behaviour if they value the bond and do not want to damage it. According to social learning theory, deviant behaviour is learned and maintained when it results in a reward; on the other hand, behaviours that are either punished or not rewarded are more likely to decrease in frequency or disappear (Akers, 1977). The social development model proposed by Hawkins and Weis (1985) suggests that students who are provided with opportunities for positive involvement in "conventional activities" with "conventional others", have the necessary skills for full participation, and are positively reinforced for this will experience social bonding with conventional others. This bond with "conventional society" will "prevent delinquent behaviour, both directly and indirectly, by decreasing the likelihood of association with delinquent peers" (Hawkins & Weis, 1985, p. 80). At MB school, there were many opportunities for student participation in extracurricular activities such as lunchtime sports, recess cooperative games, and leadership opportunities as well as participation in Tribes activities such as energizers, community circles, and assemblies. These positive, prosocial activities provided opportunities to interact with other students in a structured, supervised environment where bonds could be created. School wide incentive programs were in place and used consistently at MB school to reinforce students for prosocial participation in school activities. In the classroom, Tribes learning activities helped students to develop skills such as active listening and problem solving so that they could fully

participate in school activities in a prosocial manner. Not enough data were collected from FZ school to comment on the opportunities for participation offered at that school.

It has been suggested that effective teaching practices along with opportunities to interact with peers in a structured, supervised setting may enable students to develop social bonds at school (Baker, 1998). This seemed to be the case at MB school where several teachers reported that they were regularly providing opportunities for structured, supervised interactions in the classroom. Both students and teachers reported that working in small groups (tribes), and participating in community circles or energizers provided opportunities to interact with others in a positive, meaningful way, and that this contributed to their positive feelings towards being at school. Insufficient data were collected at FZ school, so it is difficult to know whether these types of opportunities were available.

There is some empirical evidence that school connectedness may act as a mediator of school climate effects (Loukas, Suzuki, & Horton, 2006). In a study involving 489 middle school students, Loukas et al. found that compared to students who reported little connection to school, students who reported feeling more connected to school also reported less friction and more cohesion with their classmates as well as more satisfaction with their classes. The students who reported feeling more connected to school were also involved in fewer conduct problems one year later compared to students who reported feeling less connected to school.

A study of over 4,000 middle school students revealed that student-school bonding was positively correlated with perceived school climate ($r = 0.77$) and negatively correlated with problem behaviours such as bullying and fighting ($r = -0.39$) (Simons-Morton, Crump, Haynie, & Saylor, 1999). Based on survey data collected from over 300 junior high schools, Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1985) found that student victimization was lower in schools where students reported greater attachment to school. Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health in

the U.S. indicate that students who feel more connected to their schools demonstrated reductions in violence over time (Brookmeyer et al., 2006).

The Child Development Project (Battistich et al., 1991; Battistich et al., 1997) operates under the assumption that caring school communities facilitate student intellectual, social, and moral development while satisfying student needs for autonomy, competence, and belonging, which in turn, results in student attachment to the school community. Attachment to school promotes acceptance of school norms and values and the behaviour consistent with them. In an evaluation of the Child Development Project, the five schools in the study that showed the greatest increase in implementation after the baseline year showed the most positive results compared to matched control schools (Solomon et al., 2000). Statistically significant positive differences were found on students' sense of school as a community, liking for school, conflict resolution skills, and intrinsic prosocial motivation. In a study of 232 elementary school classrooms, Solomon, Battistich, Kim, and Watson (1997) found support for their model linking teacher behaviour to student behaviour and students' sense of classroom as a community. Analysis of survey results revealed high positive correlations between teacher's encouragement of cooperation and student positive behaviours (i.e., helpfulness, concern for others, friendliness) and influence (e.g., teacher gives students choice of activities, students participate in planning). Teacher warmth and supportiveness was positively correlated with students' engagement in learning. Student engagement, positive behaviour, and influence were positively correlated with student sense of school as a community.

The above theories and empirical research on school bonding support the findings in the current study. Stakeholders at both case study schools expressed the belief that Tribes inclusion activities are an effective way to help students get to know each other better and promote feelings of belonging. Many students at MB school indicated that they enjoy participating in fun activities at

their school. When students are able to participate in enjoyable, social activities at school, feelings of school bonding are likely to strengthen. Evidence suggests that when students feel connected to school the likelihood that they will engage in antisocial behaviours such as bullying diminishes if they value the bond to school and do not want to damage it.

Factors Related to Program Implementation

Researchers seem to agree that high quality implementation is important for the success of prevention programs (Greenberg, Domitrovich, Graczyk, & Zins, 2005). However, implementation quality of school-based prevention programs is generally poor (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002). In a study of over 3,000 school-based prevention activities, Gottfredson and Gottfredson found several school and program characteristics that were related to program implementation quality. Program fidelity and level of intensity (e.g., level of use by school personnel, frequency of student participation, number and duration of sessions) were used as measures of implementation quality. Results of their analyses suggest that higher quality program implementation can be achieved through more extensive local planning and involvement in decisions about what program to implement; better integration of program components into regular school activities; organizational support (i.e., high-quality training, supervision, and principal support); and standardization of program materials and methods. Similarly, Payne, Gottfredson and Gottfredson (2006) used structural equation modelling to analyze data from 544 schools that were using a variety of different programs aimed at improving school safety and/or preventing or managing problem behaviours such as substance abuse, high risk sexual behaviour, and classroom misbehaviour. These researchers examined intensity of program implementation in these schools (i.e., level of use, frequency of operation, student participation, or program duration) and found that higher intensity of program implementation occurred in schools where the program had been selected locally, where

there was high quality training, and where principals were rated as supportive of the program. Schools that implemented standardized programs that could be integrated into normal school activities also had higher levels of implementation intensity.

These results are consistent with what was found in the current study. In particular, at MB school where the implementation level of the Tribes program was observed to be higher, teachers were observed integrating Tribes program components into regular classroom lessons. MB school staff had chosen the Tribes program, the staff underwent high quality standardized training, and the principal herself was very supportive of the program and went on to take further training becoming a staff trainer herself. Tribes has the additional advantage of having a standardized set of materials and methods in the form of a manual (see Gibbs, 2001) that can help teachers choose and implement activities that can be integrated into regular lessons. All of these characteristics likely contributed to the success that this school had in implementing the program. It was not clear from the data collected whether staff at FZ school had been involved in the decision to have Tribes as a school-wide program. The principal at FZ school indicated that although all of her teachers were trained in Tribes, only about half of them were actually using it in their classrooms. She said that some teachers have “embraced it and some have not”, noting that those who have not “feel it’s an extra... rather than incorporating it into their daily routines and their teaching”. So, although the principal at FZ school expressed a commitment to the Tribe’s program, she realized that some of her teachers were not willing to commit the time that was necessary to understand the philosophy and reflect on the process.

There is evidence that school climate factors can have an impact on the implementation of prevention programs (Gregory, Henry, Schoeny, and the Metropolitan Area Child Study Research Group, 2007). In their study of 12 schools using the *Yes I Can* violence prevention curriculum,

Gregory et al. found that teachers who perceived administrators as open and collaborative had a higher rate of program implementation over 3 years, and teachers who reported higher support among colleagues and between teachers and students reported implementing more lessons from the curriculum during a single year of implementation.

The importance of principal support for program implementation was highlighted in a study by Kam, Greenberg, and Walls (2003), which examined teacher rated student behaviours (i.e., aggression, behaviour dysregulation, socioemotional competence, and attentional control) in three schools that were implementing the Promoting Alternative THinking Skills (PATHS) Curriculum and three control schools. The program was implemented for four months, and teacher ratings were collected pre- and post-intervention. As well, measures of implementation quality and principal support for the program were collected by the PATHS coordinator in the intervention schools. The PATHS coordinator observed teachers and rated how well they taught program concepts and skills, and how well they generalized PATHS skills across the school day; the PATHS coordinator and her supervisor also rated principals on whether or not they supported staff in the use of PATHS, spoke positively about PATHS with staff, used PATHS materials in their office, and had a welcoming, collaborative attitude towards the coordinator. Results indicated that the intervention was successful in reducing aggressive behaviour, decreasing behaviour dysregulation, and increasing socioemotional competence only in schools where both the principal showed support for the program and implementation quality was high. However, neither principal support nor high implementation quality on its own predicted intervention effectiveness.

Using qualitative data collected from seven case study schools that were invited to implement the *Checkpoints* program, Jennifer and Shaughnessy (2005) developed a model describing schools that were more “ready to implement the intervention” (p. 64). Jennifer and

Shaughnessy (2005) list the following characteristics of a school that is likely to implement the *Checkpoints* program:

- The school clearly articulates its educational vision
- The school ethos is explicit through all areas of school life
- Emphasis is placed on children's participation and empowerment
- Emphasis on the wider curriculum and emotional literacy
- Places value in children's social time outside the classroom to enhance learning across the school day
- A responsive and reflective leadership and management style
- The school displays good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and can prioritise targets
- Strives for consistency between behaviour policy and practice
- An emphasis on communication and dynamic relationship with children, staff, parents, governors and the wider community
- Training and development is linked to the school review process
- The school rationalises and selects from initiatives at both national and local level (Jennifer & Shaughnessy, 2005, p. 62).

It is interesting to note that MB school, in the current study, had many of these same characteristics. The Tribes program formed the basis of MB school's educational vision and the values of the Tribes program (i.e., the four Tribes agreements) were promoted in all areas of school life. In MB school, student participation and emotional literacy were emphasized, and value was placed on students' social time. MB school stakeholders appeared to have an awareness of school strengths and weaknesses, and seemed to be striving for consistency between policy and practice.

Although FZ school espoused the same educational vision and values (i.e., the Tribes agreements) as MB school, it was not clear from the data collected whether FZ staff members strived for consistency between policy and practice, emphasized student participation and emotional literacy, and valued students' social time.

Summary

The theoretical concepts and empirical evidence presented above provide support for the model proposed in this dissertation. Specifically, providing opportunities for participation in enjoyable, interactive activities at school can lead to feelings of inclusion and a sense of belonging which may contribute to a positive social climate and less bullying. At the same time, having policies and systems of accountability that are clear, fair, and consistently applied can foster feelings of safety and security which also support a positive school climate that is less conducive to bullying. Principals with good leadership and interpersonal skills may be instrumental in garnering support from staff and parents for school policies, systems of accountability, and school activities.

Contributions

In this section, I will first outline several means of contributing knowledge to a field, and then describe the contributions made in conducting this study.

According to Bassey (1999):

A claim to knowledge may: contribute incrementally to the accumulated knowledge of the topic under study; challenge existing theoretical ideas; offer significant improvements to existing practice; give new insights into policy; introduce a new methodology of potential power; provide a 'significant piece in a jigsaw of understanding'; bring together disparate findings and integrate them into a new theoretical structure (p. 89).

Through this study, I believe that I have been able to contribute to the accumulated knowledge in the combined areas of school climate and bullying. These two areas had not been adequately explored together under a constructivist paradigm. I have added some pieces to the 'jigsaw of understanding' in that I have been able to provide evidence of several aspects of school climate that students and staff perceive as being important for reducing bullying.

I believe there are three main contributions of my study. The first contribution is in the area of theory testing. A broad conceptualization of school climate based on the model created by Ryan, Miura, and Smith (2008) was used as the conceptual definition of school climate for this study. This conceptualization of school climate includes a wide variety of factors that are organized under individual, interpersonal, and organizational dimensions. As it would be impractical to develop an instrument to measure each factor, it is important to have some rationale for measuring some factors and not others. The data generated by this study served to highlight specific components of school climate that appear to be most important to creating a bully-free environment, and therefore some insight is provided into what factors might be most important to measure. The four components that seemed to have the most noticeable impact on school climate are the interpersonal and leadership skills of the principal, having caring and respectful relationships, opportunities for participation in fun activities, and clear school policies that are fairly and consistently enforced. As illustrated earlier in this chapter, these components are also highly prevalent in the theoretical and empirical literature on school climate. Although these factors appear to fit into the model created by Ryan et al., there are also some reasons to believe that the model may need to be revised. The factors that emerged as most important fell most notably into the interpersonal and organizational dimensions outlined in the model. This raises questions as to the appropriateness of the individual dimensions. Perhaps individual characteristics only take on significance within interpersonal relationships, and

these two dimensions could be collapsed for a more elegant model. It is important to keep in mind that the data for this study were gathered from only two elementary schools; therefore, more comprehensive testing of the model will be necessary in order to revise the model with any confidence.

The second contribution is in the area of theory development. This study resulted in the identification of a model which describes possible mechanisms through which school climate may be changed to produce an environment which is less conducive to bullying. Principals seem to have an impact on policies and procedures and are able to create opportunities for participation in fun activities, but they require staff and community support for successful implementation. Having strong leadership and interpersonal skills seem to aide in gaining support from staff and members of the wider school community. School rules that are clear, fair, and consistently applied can contribute to feelings of safety and security among students. Providing opportunities for students to participate in fun activities at school can contribute to feelings of inclusion and a sense of belonging. Feelings of safety, security, inclusion, and belonging seem to contribute to a positive school climate and less bullying. Promoting mutual respect as a key value and school norm can be instrumental in achieving a positive school climate that is less conducive to bullying. This model is also supported by theoretical and empirical research, as illustrated earlier in the chapter.

The third contribution is at the local level, providing practical information for school administrators at two specific elementary schools. This new knowledge may help these schools to continue to improve their climate and make their school less conducive to bullying. The following list of ideas for improving the climate in MB school was presented to the school staff during the spring focus group discussion:

- Continue to reward students for following the Tribes agreements

- Continue the fun, inclusive activities
- Brainstorm ways to make Tribes energizers more age-appropriate/appealing for grade 5/ 6 students
- Increase the use of interactive teaching strategies such as small group work, community circles to further develop students' interpersonal skills
- Allow students the means of showing their appreciation for staff members' respectful behaviour (e.g., give them tags, notes of appreciation that they can award to staff members). This may serve to: a) make staff feel appreciated, b) empower students to make a positive difference in their school climate, c) make students feel that their opinions, feelings, needs are valued, d) help students practice showing appreciation for the efforts of others
- Consistently model the Tribes agreements and address violations of the agreements consistently across students and contexts –take time to reflect on your own behaviour
- Brainstorm barriers to using Tribes and ways to facilitate wider implementation
- Open communication with administration about ways to reduce teacher stress
- Duty teachers could wear yellow vest on school yard to increase visibility and deter aggressive behaviours

Staff members discussed the suggestions and agreed that they would like to implement these ideas.

After further analysis of the data, the following additional idea for improvement emerged:

- Develop a method of mentoring and supporting non-teaching staff in their implementation of Tribes

All of the above suggestions for MB school are applicable to FZ school, plus the following additional list of ideas that was generated based on the data collected from FZ school:

- Apply for funding to increase resources for supporting teachers and non-teaching staff in Tribes implementation
- Set aside time on professional development days where teachers can meet and share ideas on how they use Tribes activities
- Develop a set of common criteria for delivering Tribes reinforcers such as coloured popsicle sticks and tags
- Provide yard supervisors' kits that includes: a) a yellow vest for increased visibility, b) small first aide equipment such as swab pads and band-aides, c) coloured popsicle sticks to hand out as reinforcers
- Provide Tribes training for all untrained teaching and non-teaching staff on a work day so that personal time does not have to be sacrificed. This can be funded through a professional development grant.
- Increase the amount of whole-school fun, inclusive activities

These ideas were not presented to staff at FZ school because no one expressed an interest in participating in a focus group for that purpose. As promised, a summary of study results will be given to each principal after the dissertation has been completed. At that time, I will also offer the principal of FZ school the above list of suggestions.

Limitations

Issues of resources and access hampered the methodology for this study. I did not have the time and money to continue my study into another academic year to continue to search for willing participants. After 6 months of recruitment efforts in 8 different school boards, and 146 email invitations sent out to principals in the three approved school boards, only two principals from one school board agreed to participate in my study. Therefore, that left me with 2 schools as cases for

my study. This is less than the ideal 4-10 cases that Stake (2006) recommends. Since I accepted the only two schools that volunteered for the study, I did not have purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007). In reality, because of the lack of interest I was facing, the best I could do was to get a convenience sample. There are many problems with this, of course; for example, quality of information and credibility may be reduced, and applicability of findings to other school contexts may be limited (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, it must be emphasized that the two schools that did participate represented good examples of: a) a school in its initial stages of implementing a new program, and b) a school with a well established program being implemented with an acceptable level of program fidelity.

Within the two schools, participation rates also varied, with one school having many more participants than the other. The number of participants from FZ school was very low compared to the number from MB school. Again, I was only able to get a convenience sample in each school, i.e., anyone who volunteered was taken as a participant. In MB school, six teachers ranging from grade 1-5 consented to have me observe a lesson, and interviews were conducted with the principal, the vice-principal, eight teachers, five non-teaching staff, and one school volunteer. In FZ school, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, one teacher, one teaching assistant, and one parent. Because of the lack of participation of staff members, it is difficult to know whether the views expressed by those interviewed are representative of the staff in general. The one teacher interviewed at FZ school was the core French teacher who was teaching all grade levels so I did get her view on students from different grades. However, it would have been preferable to interview a sample of homeroom teachers from different grade levels as well. Within FZ school, no one volunteered for classroom observations. It would have been preferable to observe a few classes throughout FZ school; however, I was only able to conduct general observations on the school yard

and at assemblies. The reasons for the low participation rates at FZ school are unclear, but likely indicative of the stress and work conditions referred to by the principal and the one teacher who was interviewed.

Since the participants for interviews were self-selected, it is possible that their opinions are not representative of opinions in their school. More confidence can be placed in the results obtained from MB school since a wider variety of staff members were either interviewed or observed, compared to at FZ school. Data collected from the one parent from FZ school and the one school volunteer from MB school who consented to participate in an interview must also be interpreted with caution as these opinions may not be representative of parents or volunteers from those schools.

Another limitation was that the student focus groups took place at different times of the year. At MB school, student focus groups took place in January. At FZ school, the grade 6 girls were interviewed in early February while the grade 5 students were interviewed in mid-April. Time of the year can have an impact on levels of bullying.

It could be argued that the number of hours of observation, 14 hours in MB school and 3 hours in FZ school, was an insufficient amount from which to draw any conclusions. This would be a serious limitation if there had not been several other forms of data collected in this study (i.e., surveys, interviews, focus groups). Although some researchers advocate corroborating survey or interview data with observations, relying solely on perceptual data from interviews and surveys is widely accepted among school climate researchers (Anderson, 1982). Most school climate researchers work under the assumption that “the actual behavior is less important than perceived behavior because perception is what controls one’s responses” (Anderson, 1982, p. 387). It is also

acknowledged that observations may not always correspond with data from other sources such as surveys and interviews. Anderson explains:

...the behavior that leads to perception may be infrequent but intense, so that while an outsider probably would not observe an incident of it, such behavior (available only by participant report) may be a crucial dimension of climate. Second, the behavior that leads to perception may take place regularly but in a place not observable to the outsider (p. 387).

That being said, the few hours of observations that were collected in this study did serve to support some of the perceptual data collected from participants.

Hall and Hord (2006) indicate that “most changes in education take three to five years to be implemented at a high level” (p. 4). One of the two case study schools in this dissertation was only in their first year of implementation of the Tribes program. It is very likely that this school was not yet implementing the intervention at a high enough level for members of the school community to perceive an impact. Therefore, it might not have been fair to ask interview questions on perceived impact at this early stage. However, in order to be consistent with interview procedures at the other case study school these questions on perceived impact were asked and some limited insights were gained. These data must be interpreted with caution.

Authenticity

In the methodology section of this dissertation, I outlined the methods I had built into my design in order to ensure trustworthiness of the data. The criteria I used were based on Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) concept of “trustworthiness”. Now that the study has been completed, I would like to use Guba and Lincoln’s (2005) more recent conceptualization of “authenticity” to reflect on the rigour of my study. This is more of a reflection on the process than the results of my study.

Guba and Lincoln (2005) use the term authenticity as the constructivist counterpart to the positivist notion of validity. They propose the following criteria as characteristics of trustworthy, rigorous constructivist research: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. These will be described below and used to assess the trustworthiness of my study.

Fairness

In order to be considered fair, an inquiry should aim to include the views of all stakeholders. In the current study, I tried to gather opinions from the following stakeholders: students, teachers, principals, non-teaching staff, school volunteers, parents, and other school board employees. I was not successful in recruiting as many participants as I would have liked, and, as a result, it is possible that I do not have a representative sample of stakeholders from each of these categories. However, according to Guba and Lincoln's (2005) conceptualization of fairness, my inquiry can be considered fair because I deliberately attempted to include all stakeholders and prevent marginalization of any groups.

Ontological and Educative Authenticity

Guba and Lincoln (2005) indicate that ontological and educative authenticity are connected with awareness raising. The present study did serve to raise the awareness of individual research participants by engaging them in discussions about their school's climate and their perceptions of levels of bullying. As a result of participation in these discussions, participants may have also made others more aware of issues around these topics.

Catalytic and Tactical Authenticities

Guba and Lincoln (2005) specify that catalytic and tactical authenticities refer to "the ability of a given inquiry to prompt, first, action on the part of research participants and, second, the

involvement of the researcher/evaluator in training participants in specific forms of social and political action if participants desire such training” (p. 207). My study did seem to prompt action on the part of some participants. For example, one student said that he realized that a member of the staff had been bullying him, and expressed the intention of speaking to the principal about that. Another example is that the members of the Tribes committee in MB school met with the researcher to discuss preliminary results and recommendations for change.

Implications for Practice

The data collected for this thesis has several implications for teachers, administrators, and other school officials. Galloway and Roland (2004) proposed that a general program aimed at improving teaching, classroom management, and care for students may be effective in improving student behaviour in general and reducing bullying. The Tribes program was studied in this dissertation as an example of this type of program. A program such as Tribes that promotes caring and respectful interpersonal relations, and provides clear guidelines for behaviour may be instrumental in improving staff and student perceptions of their school’s climate. Bullying is a relationship problem in which respect is lacking. A program such as Tribes, which emphasizes mutual respect, may have a notable impact on school climate and may help reduce perceived levels of bullying. Results of this study imply that having school policies that are intolerant of disrespectful behaviours, including aggression and bullying, may contribute to student feelings of safety and security in the school environment. When rules are the same from classroom to classroom throughout a school, it appears to make it easier for students to understand what is expected of them. Consistent application of school policies by staff appears to contribute to student feelings of safety because they know that action will be taken if bullying occurs. In order to effectively implement the Tribes program, it is important that all members of the school community

agree to the basic principles (i.e., mutual respect, attentive listening, participation/right to pass, appreciation/no put-downs), and adopt them as school policies then develop a system of accountability to accompany these policies.

Another implication of the data collected in this study is that staff behaviour may be an important contributing factor to student perceptions of school climate and may even be linked to perceived rates of bullying. For instance, when students observe adults at school behaving respectfully towards others, they may perceive the climate to be positive and learn to behave respectfully themselves (Bandura, 1986). On the other hand, when students observe adults acting aggressively towards others at school, they may perceive the school as having a negative climate and may learn to behave aggressively themselves (Bandura, 1986). Instead of focusing only on student behaviour when it comes to reducing bullying, it is also important to acknowledge the impact that staff behaviour can have. Staff members should always model the caring, respectful behaviours that they want students to show, and consistently reinforce students for their prosocial behaviours. Focusing on the positive behaviour of students is an important way of maintaining good relationships and increasing morale.

The importance of the principal's leadership ability and interpersonal skills emerged as a key finding of this study. A principal with good leadership and interpersonal skills can help garner support from all members of the school community to reinforce school policies and norms. For a program such as Tribes, it seems that staff and parent support are important for ensuring successful implementation. On the other hand, a principal unable to gain staff and parent support for a school initiative such as Tribes may find that the program is not being implemented as intended. A principal who takes the role of pedagogical leader can inspire staff by modeling innovative teaching techniques and methods of managing student behaviour. As well, when respectful interpersonal

behaviours are modeled by the principal, it may make it more likely that students, teachers and other adult workers in the school behave more respectfully themselves.

Galloway and Roland (2004) suggest that a general program that can be incorporated into regular teaching activities may be easier for teachers to adopt and maintain compared to a program that specifically focuses on bullying. Tribes is designed to be this type of program. Teachers should be able to use Tribes values and techniques in any subject or lesson. However, data collected in this study suggest that there may be some barriers and challenges to implementing aspects of the Tribes program. Some teachers indicated that the physical classroom environment, for example not having enough open space in the classroom, could make it challenging to conduct some activities such as community circles. One school (MB) compensated for this barrier by providing a large empty room that teachers could share for activities such as community circles. Some teachers also mentioned that planning lessons that incorporated Tribes techniques sometimes took extra effort and creativity, adding to their already heavy workload. Support and mentoring from colleagues can help overcome this challenge. In MB school, for example, teachers reported sharing lesson ideas and resources, thereby making it easier to implement the program.

Findings from the present study suggest that measures need to be taken to improve working conditions for teachers in order to reduce teacher stress and potentially improve school climate. Teachers in this study expressed the view that changes needed to occur not only at the school level, but at the school board and the Ministry of Education levels. Principals need to be aware of barriers and challenges to program implementation such as teacher stress, lack of time, and characteristics of the physical environment, and provide staff with additional support where necessary. Providing professional development opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share implementation successes can also be helpful. Principals should try to work closely with teachers to create a

timetable that attempts to evenly distribute workload while also attempting to accommodate individual teacher's needs and preferences. Scheduling educational assistants and behaviour technicians to classrooms where the need is the greatest can also help reduce teacher stress.

Principals should also provide teachers with resources and support on an ongoing basis to cope with their stress. Parents may be able to provide additional support for teachers by volunteering in their child's classroom when they have time. To make an even broader impact, principals and parents could act as advocates for teachers and make specific recommendations to the school board and Ministry of Education regarding teacher workload and conditions.

Extra-curricular activities such as sports, cooperative games, and fund raisers can be a way to bring together members of the school community in enjoyable and meaningful activities.

Providing students and staff with opportunities to participate in fun activities at school together can help to promote positive interpersonal relations as well as feelings of inclusion and belonging.

Having school-wide goals and incentives may help promote collaboration and sense of belonging.

Implications for Research and Recommendations for Future Directions

The results of this study suggest that it may be important to focus future research efforts on the role of the principal in promoting a positive school climate that is less conducive to bullying. Traditionally, antibullying initiatives have focused intervention efforts on students with little thought given to teacher or principal attitudes and behaviour. Very few teacher-focused initiatives are found (e.g., Galloway & Roland, 2004; Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004) and no principal-focused initiatives could be found. Since there are indications that principal leadership style and interpersonal skills may have an important impact on school climate and bullying, future research could focus on developing an antibullying intervention that focuses on educating and changing the behaviour of the principal. Principals need to be educated about the seriousness of bullying and

informed that they have the power to model behaviours and set policies that can help create a school climate that is less conducive to bullying. Further research is needed to develop a principal-focused antibullying intervention. A systematic analysis of the academic literature should be undertaken to provide guidance for the development of such a program. Research should be undertaken to determine best practices for principals in the following areas: how to promote positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community, how to get the cooperation and active involvement of staff members in implementing a school behavioural policy, and how to establish and maintain cooperative and collaborative relations with parents and community members.

Further research is also needed to explore the meaning of “mutual respect” to students and other members of the school community and the best ways to promote this as a school norm and key value. Tribes is a program that promotes mutual respect, but certain teaching environments may present barriers or challenges to its successful implementation. More in-depth exploration of contemporary teaching conditions may provide insights into changes that could occur at the school board or government level which may be instrumental in facilitating cultures of mutual respect in schools.

Although the concept of inclusion was not explored in any depth in the current study, this may be an area for future research. For example, a longitudinal study might provide insight into how groups actually move through the stages of inclusion, influence, and community along the Tribes trail, and identify outcomes associated with each stage.

Future qualitative studies should include a longer time in case study schools and increased opportunities to interact with students and staff. It may also be useful to add other qualitative measures such as student drawings and teacher journals (Freiberg & Stein, 1999) or observation time in the teachers’ lounge (Ben-Peretz, Schonmann, & Kupermintz, 1999). Innovative methods

such as photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) can allow members of a school community to capture their school's strengths and weaknesses through photographs and promote critical discussions about their concerns.

A future study using a quantitative design and path analysis could be beneficial in testing the proposed model developed in this dissertation. It may also be valuable to use a rigorous quantitative design, such as the randomized control trial, in order to determine the impact of the Tribes program on school climate and rates of bullying.

An area for further theoretical consideration is the interconnectedness of the constructs of school climate and bullying. It seems that bullying can be a cause, a characteristic, or an effect of a poor school climate. It makes sense that if there is bullying in a school, then the climate would not be considered very positive. As well, a positive school climate by definition would have caring, respectful interpersonal relationships and therefore little bullying. This tautological relationship requires more in-depth study. It is important to take a more critical look at how researchers define and measure these two concepts.

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Appendix B:

Recruitment Email to Principals

Dear Principal,

My name is Wendy Ryan. I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Ottawa, and my thesis project entitled “Effects of school climate on bullying and victimization” has been approved by your School Board’s Research Advisory Committee. I am currently looking for schools interested in participating in my study. Benefits of participating include the possibility that the results of this research will help to improve the quality of school life for children and youth through improved understanding of factors that influence school climate, and a better understanding of how a positive school climate can affect rates of bullying and victimization in schools. If you decide to participate and are interested in the results, you may request a summary of the study results which may serve to help your school learn how to decrease rates of bullying and victimization.

In my study, the Tribes program is being used as an example of a program intended to improve school climate. I am currently looking for Tribes schools that are interested in participating in the study. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a short survey on-line, and send a recruitment letter to your staff. You will also have the opportunity to participate in a semi-structured interview and/or focus group. Interested staff members will be asked to contact me directly by email. I will then send interested individuals additional information on their potential role in the study.

In the fall, interested teachers will be asked to read a recruitment script to their students and hand out consent forms to interested students. Only those students whose parents sign consent forms and who themselves give assent, will be permitted to participate. Student participants will be asked to complete 2 on-line surveys, one on student interpersonal relations and the other on classroom/school climate. These surveys would be completed during class time and could be read out loud to younger students by homeroom teachers. The surveys will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participating teachers will also be asked to complete a questionnaire on classroom interactions which will take about 20 minutes to complete.

In the winter, any staff member (e.g., principals, yard staff, teachers, educational assistants, cafeteria staff) may participate in semi-structured interviews, and any student who has parental consent may participate in focus group interviews. Interviews will last approximately 30 minutes. Principals will be asked for permission for the researcher to conduct brief observations of the general school climate on such factors as noise levels in hallways, building/yard maintenance, décor, staff and student behaviour towards visitors, and content of bulletin boards. Teachers who agree to have observations of their classrooms will have aspects such as class organization, teaching style, student engagement, classroom noise level, student-student interactions, and student-teacher interactions recorded. The general school climate observations will be done on days that the researcher is scheduled to do classroom observations. Classroom observations will be scheduled at the convenience of participating teachers and will last approximately 30 minutes.

In the spring, interested staff members will be asked to participate in a 30 minute focus group interview to review a summary of the data collected from their school and to provide feedback to the researcher about emerging findings.

I believe that participating in this study would benefit your school and I would appreciate it if you would consider allowing your school to participate. If you are interested, please email me and I will send you a web link, and identity number, and the recruitment letter for your staff. If I receive any emails from your staff expressing their interest, I will arrange to visit your school to supply the necessary consent forms or send these forms by mail.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions or concerns about this study. The easiest way to contact me is by e-mail wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. David Smith at 613-562-5800 extension 4344 or at david.smith@uottawa.ca.

Thank you for your help. Sincerely,

Wendy Ryan

Appendix C:

Consent Form for Principals

Researcher: Wendy Ryan, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Thesis advisor: Dr. David Smith, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Research Topic: Effects of school climate on bullying and victimization

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Wendy Ryan, a doctoral student at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the study aims to explore the influence of school climate on bullying and victimization.

Participation: My participation in this study will involve a short survey (approximately 10 minutes to complete) that I will answer on-line, and a recruitment letter that I will email to my staff. I will be asked to give permission for Wendy to conduct interviews and observations in my school. I may opt to take part in a semi-structured interview and/or focus group interview with Wendy in order to provide her with my perceptions of my school's climate and student interpersonal relations. The interviews will take approximately 30 minutes in the winter, the focus group will take 30 minutes in the spring. These would be scheduled at my convenience. Interviews will be tape recorded and summarized. If I consent, observations will be conducted on aspects of the general school climate such as noise levels in hallways, building/yard maintenance, décor, staff and student behaviour towards visitors, and content of bulletin boards. Teachers who agree to have observations of their classrooms will have aspects such as class organization, teaching style, student engagement, classroom noise level, student-student interactions, and student-teacher interactions recorded. The general school climate observations will be done on days that the researcher is scheduled to do classroom observations. Classroom observation will be scheduled at the convenience of participating teachers and will last approximately 30 minutes each. Wendy may also contact me by e-mail or phone if she needs further information.

Benefits: The researcher hopes that through my participation in this study, insights into the benefits of the Tribes program may be gained. It is possible that information gained through my participation may help researchers and policy makers gain a deeper understanding of school climate variables that may have an impact on rates of bullying and victimization. If I want, I can contact Wendy Ryan at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com and I will be e-mailed a summary of the research results which may serve as a basis for school improvement.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information that I will share will remain strictly confidential and carefully stored, and my identity will not be identified in the dissertation or in any publication related to the research. All data will be stored in a locked office at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa for a period of 5 years after publication of the study results.

Voluntary Participation and Acceptance: I understand the purpose of the study and what is required of me, and I agree to participate. I understand that by accepting to participate I am in no

way waiving my right to withdraw from the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to answer any questions without adverse effects on me, and I am also aware that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. I am aware that any concerns about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the protocol officer of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, 613-562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca

I may print a copy of this consent form to keep or may request a paper version from Wendy. If I have any questions about the research project, I may contact Wendy Ryan by e-mail at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com or her thesis advisor, Dr. David Smith, at 613-562-5800 extension 4344 or david.smith@uottawa.ca.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Participant's contact information (e-mail address and/or phone number):

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix D:
Principal Survey

Number of teachers in your school:

Number of teachers using Tribes in their classrooms:

Number of non-teaching staff members (administrators, educational assistants, yard supervisors, etc.) employed at your school:

Number of non-teaching staff members who are Tribes trained:

Are any school-wide anti-bullying or character education programs being implemented at your school?

If so, please list these programs:

Appendix E:

Recruitment Email to Staff

Dear Colleagues,

Wendy Ryan, a Ph.D. student at the University of Ottawa, is currently looking for schools to participate in her thesis project entitled “Effects of school climate on bullying and victimization”. Her project has been approved by our School Board’s Research Advisory Committee, and I have given her my support.

Benefits of participating include the possibility that the results of this research will help to improve the quality of school life for children and youth through improved understanding of factors that influence school climate, and a better understanding of how a positive school climate can affect rates of bullying and victimization in schools. If we decided to participate, we can request a summary of the study results by contacting Wendy Ryan at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com. This may serve to help our school improve the social climate and decrease rates of bullying and victimization.

In her study, the Tribes program is being used as an example of a program intended to improve school climate. She is currently looking for Tribes schools that are interested in participating in the study. If you are interested in participating, you should contact Wendy directly by email at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com. She will then send you additional information on your potential role in the study.

In the fall, the study involves surveys for gr. 4-6 students and teachers. Interested teachers will be asked to read a recruitment script to their students and hand out consent forms to interested students. Only those students whose parents sign consent forms and who themselves give assent, will be permitted to participate. Student participants will be asked to complete 2 on-line surveys, one on student interpersonal relations and the other on classroom/school climate. These surveys would be administered to participating students during class time by their homeroom teacher. The surveys will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participating teachers will also be asked to complete a questionnaire on classroom interactions which will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

In the winter, any staff member (e.g., principals, yard staff, teachers, educational assistants, cafeteria staff) may participate in semi-structured interviews, and any student who has parental consent may participate in focus group interviews which will take approximately 30 minutes. Observations of aspects of the general school climate such as noise levels in hallways, building/yard maintenance, décor, staff and student behaviour towards visitors, and content of bulletin boards will be recorded by the researcher. Teachers who agree to have observations of their classrooms will have aspects such as class organization, teaching style, student engagement, classroom noise level, student-student interactions, and student-teacher interactions recorded. The general school climate observations will be done on days that the researcher is scheduled to do classroom observations.

Classroom observations will be scheduled at the convenience of participating teachers and will last approximately 30 minutes each.

In the spring, Wendy will be asking for interested staff members to participate in a 30 minute focus group interview to review a summary of the data collected from our school and voice your opinions as to the validity of these findings.

I believe that participating in this study would benefit our school, but you are under no pressure from anyone to participate. If you decide that you are interested, please e-mail Wendy Ryan for further information at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]

Appendix F:

Consent Form for Teachers (gr. 4-6)

Researcher: Wendy Ryan, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Thesis advisor: Dr. David Smith, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Research Topic: Effects of school climate on bullying and victimization

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Wendy Ryan, a doctoral student at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the study aims to explore the influence of school climate on bullying and victimization.

Participation: My participation in this study will involve: 1) answering questions on my level of use of the Tribes program/nature of classroom interactions, 2) informing students about the study, 3) distributing and collecting consent forms, and 4) administering student surveys that will take about 30 minutes to complete during class time. I understand that Wendy will provide me with a recruitment script to read to students, and detailed written instructions on how to administer the surveys.

In addition, I may volunteer to participate in an individual semi-structured interview and/or focus group with Wendy in order to provide her with more details on my perceptions of my school's climate, student interpersonal relations, and use of the Tribes program. Individual interviews would take approximately 30 minutes in the winter, while focus groups would take 30 minutes in the spring. These would be scheduled at my convenience. Interviews will be tape recorded and summarized.

Aspects of the general school climate such as noise levels in hallways, building/yard maintenance, décor, staff and student behaviour towards visitors, content of bulletin boards will be recorded in my school, if my principal agrees. If I agree to have observations of my classroom, aspects such as class organization, teaching style, student engagement, classroom noise level, student-student interactions, and student-teacher interactions would be recorded. The general school climate observations will be done on days that the researcher is scheduled to do classroom observations. Classroom observation would be scheduled at my convenience would last approximately 30 minutes each.

Wendy may also contact me by e-mail or phone if she needs further information.

Benefits: The researcher hopes that through my participation in this study, insights into the benefits of the Tribes program may be gained. It is possible that information gained through my participation may help researchers and policy makers gain a deeper understanding of school climate variables that may have an impact on rates of bullying and victimization. If I want, I can email Wendy Ryan at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com, and I will be given a summary of the research results which may serve as a basis for school improvement.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information that I will share will remain strictly confidential and carefully stored, and my identity will not be identified in the dissertation or in any publication related to the research. All data will be stored in a locked office at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa for a period of 5 years after publication of results.

Voluntary Participation and Acceptance: I understand the purpose of the study and what is required of me, and I agree to participate. I understand that by accepting to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to answer any questions without adverse effects on me, and I am also aware that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. I am aware that any concerns about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the protocol officer of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, 613-562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca

I may print a copy of the consent form to keep, or I may request a paper version from Wendy. If I have any questions about the research project, I may contact Wendy Ryan by e-mail at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com or her thesis advisor, Dr. David Smith, at 562-5800 extension 4344 or david.smith@uottawa.ca.

I would like to participate in the following portions of the study:

survey	Yes/No
semi-structured interview	Yes/No
observations in my classroom.	Yes/No
focus group interview	Yes/No

Participant's signature:

Date:

Participant's contact information (e-mail address and/or phone number):

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix G:

Consent Form for Teachers (other than gr. 4-6)

Researcher: Wendy Ryan, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Thesis advisor: Dr. David Smith, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Research Topic: Effects of school climate on bullying and victimization

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Wendy Ryan, a doctoral student at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the study aims to explore the influence of school climate on bullying and victimization.

Participation: My participation in this study will involve answering questions on my level of use of the Tribes program/nature of classroom interactions.

In addition, I may volunteer to participate in an individual semi-structured interview and/or focus group with Wendy in order to provide her with more details on my perceptions of my school's climate, student interpersonal relations, and use of the Tribes program. Individual interviews would take approximately 30 minutes in the winter, while focus groups would take 30 minutes in the spring. These would be scheduled at my convenience. Interviews will be tape recorded and summarized.

Aspects of the general school climate such as noise levels in hallways, building/yard maintenance, décor, staff and student behaviour towards visitors, content of bulletin boards will be recorded in my school, if my principal agrees. If I agree to have observations of my classroom, aspects such as class organization, teaching style, student engagement, classroom noise level, student-student interactions, and student-teacher interactions would be recorded. The general school climate observations will be done on days that the researcher is scheduled to do classroom observations. Classroom observation would be scheduled at my convenience would last approximately 30 minutes each.

Wendy may also contact me by e-mail or phone if she needs further information.

Benefits: The researcher hopes that through my participation in this study, insights into the benefits of the Tribes program may be gained. It is possible that information gained through my participation may help researchers and policy makers gain a deeper understanding of school climate variables that may have an impact on rates of bullying and victimization. If I want, I can email Wendy Ryan at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com, and I will be given a summary of the research results which may serve as a basis for school improvement.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information that I will share will remain strictly confidential and carefully stored, and my identity will not be identified in the

dissertation or in any publication related to the research. All data will be stored in a locked office at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa for a period of 5 years after publication of results.

Voluntary Participation and Acceptance: I understand the purpose of the study and what is required of me, and I agree to participate. I understand that by accepting to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to answer any questions without adverse effects on me, and I am also aware that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. I am aware that any concerns about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the protocol officer of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, 613-562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca

I may print a copy of the consent form to keep, or I may request a paper version from Wendy. If I have any questions about the research project, I may contact Wendy Ryan by e-mail at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com or her thesis advisor, Dr. David Smith, at 562-5800 extension 4344 or david.smith@uottawa.ca.

I would like to participate in the following portions of the study:

survey	Yes/No
semi-structured interview	Yes/No
observations in my classroom.	Yes/No
focus group interview	Yes/No

Participant's signature:

Date:

Participant's name and contact information (e-mail address and/or phone number):

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix H:

Consent Form for Non-teaching Staff

Researcher: Wendy Ryan, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Thesis advisor: Dr. David Smith, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Research Topic: Effects of school climate on bullying and victimization

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Wendy Ryan, a doctoral student at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the study aims to explore the influence of school climate on bullying and victimization.

Participation: My participation in this study will involve a semi-structured interview and/or focus group interview with Wendy in order to provide her with more details on my perceptions of my school's climate and student interpersonal relations. The semi-structured interview would take approximately 30 minutes in the winter, while the focus group interview would take about 30 minutes in the spring. These would be scheduled at my convenience. Interviews will be tape recorded and summarized. Wendy may also contact me by e-mail or phone if she needs further information.

Benefits: I hope that through my participation in this study, insights into the benefits of the Tribes program may be gained. It is possible that information gained through my participation may help researchers and policy makers gain a deeper understanding of school climate variables that may have an impact on rates of bullying and victimization. If I want, I can request a summary of research results which may serve as a basis for school improvement.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information that I will share will remain strictly confidential and carefully stored, and my identity will not be identified in the dissertation or in any publication related to the research. All data will be stored in a locked office at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa for a period of 5 years after the publication of study results.

Voluntary Participation and Acceptance: I understand the purpose of the study and what is required of me, and I agree to participate. I understand that by accepting to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to answer any questions without adverse effects on me, and I am also aware that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. I am aware that any concerns about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the protocol officer of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, 613-562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which I may keep. If I have any questions about the research project, I may contact Wendy Ryan by e-mail at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com or her thesis advisor, Dr. David Smith, at 613-562-5800 extension 4344 or david.smith@uottawa.ca.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Participant's contact information (e-mail address and/or phone number):

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix I:

Student Recruitment Script

To be read to students by homeroom teacher

Wendy Ryan is a student from the University of Ottawa. She is studying how elementary school children feel about their life at school and how students get along with each other. She is doing a study and would like students from our school to participate if you are interested. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete two surveys during class time. The surveys should take about 30 minutes to complete. An example question is: "My classroom is a fun place to be." You would indicate how much you agree or disagree with this statement. Another example question is: "Within the past week, how often has another student called you a bad name? You would be asked to indicate the approximate number of times this has happened to you in the past week. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Wendy simply wants to know about your experiences and feelings.

You do not have to participate in the study if you do not want to. The survey is anonymous, that means you don't have to give your name and your teachers and parents will not be able to know how you answered the questions. Even if you say yes at first and then decide that you don't like answering the questions you don't have to continue if you don't want to. No one will see your answers except the researchers at the University of Ottawa, and a number not your name will be used to identify your questionnaires. Your parents will be given a letter explaining the study and asked if they'll give permission for you to take part in the research if you decide to. There won't be any negative consequences for you (that means nothing bad will happen to you) because of any of the answers you give to the questions or if you decide not to fill out the questionnaires at all. On the other hand, if you do participate, you will be helping Wendy with her research project and helping teachers to better understand how to make life at school more enjoyable for you.

Wendy would also like a few students to volunteer to give her more detailed information about how they feel about their life in school in a discussion group. Anyone from our class who is interested and who has parental permission can take part in a discussion group with other students of the same sex and grade. Discussion groups will take about 30 minutes during a lunch break in the winter. There will be 5-7 students in each discussion group.

If you are interested in participating in any part of this study (the survey and maybe interviews) you must give the consent form to your parents to read and sign. You will not be able to participate unless you return a signed consent form to me. Bringing back a signed consent form allows you to participate, but you can always decide that you do not want to participate and that would be fine too. However, on the day of the survey you will not be allowed to participate if you haven't returned a signed consent form.

Do you have any questions?

Appendix J:

Information Letter/Consent Form for Parents

Dear Parents,

Wendy Ryan, Ph. D. Candidate, and David Smith, Ph.D. of the University of Ottawa, are conducting a study on the effects of school climate on bullying and victimization. This study has been approved by the School Board's Research Advisory Committee, the school principal, and your child's homeroom teacher.

Your child has been told about this research study, and has expressed an interest. The purpose and procedure of the study has been explained to your child in easy to understand language and your child has been assured that he/she is not required to participate and that anyone who decides to participate may discontinue at any time without any pressure to continue. Your child's identity will be protected as all surveys will be anonymous and data will be pooled into groups. Children may rest assured that there will not be any negative consequences for them because of their answers to the questions or if they decide not to fill out the questionnaires at all. On the other hand, if your child does participate, it will be helping researchers and teachers to better understand the effects of school climate on bullying and victimization.

If you grant permission for your child to participate in the research study, your child will be asked to answer questions on two surveys, one on student interactions and the other on school climate. Survey questions will be administered by your child's homeroom teacher during regular school hours, and would take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your child will be sitting so that no other child can see his/her answers. Your child will not be asked to put his/her name on the survey, but will be identified by an assigned number. Only the researchers will have access to your child's survey answers.

Wendy would also like some students to volunteer to give her more detailed information in a discussion group. Interested students who have parental consent will be interviewed in a small group of 5-7 students of the same sex and same grade. The discussion group would take place during a lunch break in the winter and last approximately 30 minutes. These sessions would be tape recorded so that the researcher can refer back to the contents of the discussion. Tapes will be stored in a secure location and only available to the researchers. If bullying is reported during the discussion group, it will be handled in a manner consistent with school policies.

Please sign below if you permit your child to take part in our research study if he/she chooses to participate. If you have any questions or concerns about this study please feel free to contact Wendy Ryan at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com or her supervisor Dr. David Smith, University of Ottawa, at 613-562-5800 ext. 4892. Any information about the rights of a research participant may be addressed to: Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, 550 Cumberland St., Room 160, 613-562-5387 or ethics@uottawa.ca. There are two copies of the consent form, one of which you may keep.

Please sign and return one consent form. If you wish to receive a summary of the findings of this research, please contact Wendy at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com.

I, _____, give permission to my child, _____, to participate in the following components of the research study on children's peer relations and school climate that will be conducted at my child's school:

survey Yes/No

discussion group Yes/No

Parent's signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date

Appendix K:

Assent Form for Children

I agree to participate in the research conducted by Wendy Ryan and Dr. David Smith of the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education. The purpose of the research is to help teachers and researchers to better understand how to improve school life for children.

My participation will include answering two surveys. If necessary, survey questions will be read out loud to the class by the teacher. Surveys will be completed on-line during class time and will take about 30 minutes to complete. I don't have to put my name on the surveys and my teachers and parents will not be able to know how I answered the questions. Even if I say yes at first and then decide that I don't like answering the questions I don't have to continue if I don't want to. I will be sitting so that no other student can see my answers. No one will see my answers except the researchers at the University of Ottawa. A number, and not my name, will be used to identify my questionnaires. Nothing bad will happen to me because of any of the answers I give to the questions or if I decide not to fill out the questionnaires at all.

I can volunteer to give the researcher more detailed information about how I feel about my life in school in a discussion group. Anyone from our class who is interested and who has parental permission can take part in a discussion group with other students of the same sex and grade. Discussion groups will take about 30 minutes during a lunch break in the winter. There will be 5-7 students in each discussion group.

If I have any questions about the research, I can ask Wendy Ryan at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com or Dr. Smith at the University of Ottawa (613-562-5800 ext. 4892).

By participating in this research study, I will be helping researchers and teachers to better understand how to improve school life for children.

I would like to participate in the following parts of the research study on children's peer relations and school climate that will be conducted at my school.

surveys Yes/No

discussion group Yes/No

Child's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix L:

Consent Form for Parents

Researcher: Wendy Ryan, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Thesis advisor: Dr. David Smith, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Research Topic: Effects of school climate on bullying and victimization

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Wendy Ryan, a doctoral student at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the study aims to explore the influence of school climate on bullying and victimization.

Participation: My participation in this study will involve answering questions on my perception of the Tribes program and its effects on the school climate and student interpersonal relations at my child's school. I may provide this information through an email, by phone or in person. If I decide to be interviewed by Wendy in person, the interview would take approximately 20 minutes and would take place at my child's school, in a private room, at a time that is convenient for me. Interviews will be tape recorded and summarized.

Benefits: The researcher hopes that through my participation in this study, insights into the benefits of the Tribes program may be gained. It is possible that information gained through my participation may help researchers and policy makers gain a deeper understanding of school climate variables that may have an impact on rates of bullying and victimization. If I want, I can email Wendy Ryan at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com, and I will be given a summary of the research results.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information that I will share will remain strictly confidential and carefully stored, and my identity will not be identified in the dissertation or in any publication related to the research. All data will be stored in a locked office at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa for a period of 5 years after publication of results.

Voluntary Participation and Acceptance: I understand the purpose of the study and what is required of me, and I agree to participate. I understand that by accepting to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to answer any questions without adverse effects on me, and I am also aware that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. I am aware that any concerns about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the protocol officer of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, 613-562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of this consent form, one of which I may keep for my records. If I have any questions about the research project, I may contact Wendy Ryan by e-mail at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com or her thesis advisor, Dr. David Smith, at 562-5800 extension 4344 or david.smith@uottawa.ca.

I would like to participate in the study by (circle one):
email, phone interview, face-to-face interview

Participant's signature:

Date:

Participant's name and contact information (e-mail address and/or phone number):

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix M:

Consent Form for School Volunteers

Researcher: Wendy Ryan, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Thesis advisor: Dr. David Smith, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Research Topic: Effects of school climate on bullying and victimization

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Wendy Ryan, a doctoral student at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the study aims to explore the influence of school climate on bullying and victimization.

Participation: My participation in this study will involve answering questions on my perception of the Tribes program and its effects on the school climate and student interpersonal relations at the school that I volunteer at. I may provide this information through an email, by phone or in person. If I decide to be interviewed by Wendy in person, the interview would take approximately 20 minutes and would take place at the school, in a private room, at a time that is convenient for me. Interviews will be tape recorded and summarized.

Benefits: The researcher hopes that through my participation in this study, insights into the benefits of the Tribes program may be gained. It is possible that information gained through my participation may help researchers and policy makers gain a deeper understanding of school climate variables that may have an impact on rates of bullying and victimization. If I want, I can email Wendy Ryan at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com, and I will be given a summary of the research results.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information that I will share will remain strictly confidential and carefully stored, and my identity will not be identified in the dissertation or in any publication related to the research. All data will be stored in a locked office at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa for a period of 5 years after publication of results.

Voluntary Participation and Acceptance: I understand the purpose of the study and what is required of me, and I agree to participate. I understand that by accepting to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to answer any questions without adverse effects on me, and I am also aware that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. I am aware that any concerns about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the protocol officer of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, 613-562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of this consent form, one of which I may keep for my records. If I have any questions about the research project, I may contact Wendy Ryan by e-mail at wendyryan.ottawa@gmail.com or her thesis advisor, Dr. David Smith, at 562-5800 extension 4344 or david.smith@uottawa.ca.

I would like to participate in the study by (circle one):

email, phone interview, face-to-face interview

Participant's signature:

Date:

Participant's name and contact information (e-mail address and/or phone number):

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix N:

Modified *Life in School Checklist*

Date: _____ Student Rating Scale –Part A # _____

Purpose: to find out how other children treat you

Tick the boxes that are right for you. ✓

I am a girl

☐

I am a boy

☐

This week at school another child:	Never	1-3 x	4-6 x	7-9 x	10 x or more
1. Called me names					
2. Said something nice to me					
3. Insulted my family					
4. Kicked me / hit me					
5. Made me happy					
6. Wouldn't let me play a game					
7. Shared something with me					
8. Said they'd beat me up					
9. Tried to make me give them my lunch					
10. Tried to make me give them money					
11. Played with me					
12. Made a mean face to me					
13. Listened to me					
14. Got a gang after me					
15. Thanked me					
16. Smiled at me					
17. Butted in line in front of me					
18. Helped me					
19. Told others not to play with me					
20. Swore at me					
21. Told others not to talk to me					
22. Invited me to play with them					
23. Hurt me / Tried to hurt me					
24. Made a rude gesture to me					
25. Took something from me					
26. Laughed at me meanly					
27. Shouted at me					
28. Tripped me					
29. Worked cooperatively with me					
30. Ruined my work					
31. Shared with me					
32. Told a lie about me					
33. Physically fought with me					

34.	Made fun of me					
35.	Problem solved with me					
36.	Tried to break something of mine					
37.	Ignored me					
38.	Complimented me					
39.	Pushed me					

Student Rating Scale –Part B

Purpose: to find out how you treat other children

This week at school I:		Never	1-3 x	4-6 x	7-9 x	10 x or more
1.	Called another student a bad name					
2.	Insulted another student's family					
3.	Kicked / hit another student					
4.	Wouldn't let someone play a game with my group of friends					
5.	Threatened to beat someone up					
6.	Tried to make someone give me their lunch					
7.	Tried to make someone give me money					
8.	Made a mean face to another student					
9.	Got a gang after another student					
10.	Butted in line in front of someone					
11.	Told others not to play with one of my classmates					
12.	Swore at someone					
13.	Told others not to talk to one of my classmates					
14.	Hurt / Tried to hurt someone					
15.	Made a rude gesture to someone					
16.	Took something from someone					
17.	Laughed at another student meanly					
18.	Shouted at another student					
19.	Tripped another student					
20.	Ruined another student's work					
21.	Told a lie about another student					
22.	Physically fought with another student					
23.	Made fun of someone					
24.	Tried to break something of another student's					
25.	Ignored someone to make them feel bad					

26.	Pushed another student					
-----	------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

Have any of your previous teachers used the Tribes process? Yes/No If so, how many?

Appendix O:

School and Classroom Climate Questionnaire for Students

		Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Always
1.	In my class students have a say in deciding what goes on					
2.	The teacher lets us do things our own way					
3.	In my class the teacher is the only one who decides on the rules					
4.	The teacher lets me choose what I will work on					
5.	In my class the teacher and students together plan what we will do					
6.	In my class I get to do things that I want to do					
7.	In my class the teacher and students decide together what the rules will be					
8.	The teacher in my class asks the students to help decide what the class should do					
9.	Students in my class can get a rule changed if they think it is unfair					
10.	In my class the students get to help plan what they will do					
		Disagree a lot	Disagree a little	Neutral	Agree a little	Agree a lot
11.	Students in my class are willing to go out of their way to help someone					
12.	My classmates care about my work just as much as their own					
13.	My class is like a family					
14.	The students in my class don't really care about each other					
15.	A lot of students in my class like to put others down					
16.	Students in my class help each other learn					
17.	Students in my class help each other, even if they are not friends					
18.	Students in my class don't get along together very well					
19.	Students in my class just look out for					

	themselves					
20.	Students in my class are mean to each other					
21.	When I'm having trouble with my schoolwork, at least one of my classmates will try to help					
22.	Students in my class treat each other with respect					
23.	Students in my class work together to solve problems					
24.	When someone in my class does well, everyone in the class feels good					
25.	When I'm having a problem, some other student will help me					
26.	Students at this school really care about each other					
27.	Students at this school are willing to go out of their way to help someone					
28.	Teachers and students treat each other with respect in this school					
29.	People care about each other in this school					
30.	Students at this school work together to solve problems					
31.	Students in this school don't seem to like each other very well					
32.	Students in this school are just looking out for themselves					
33.	Students in this school treat each other with respect					
34.	My school is like a family					
35.	The students in this school don't really care about each other					
36.	I feel that I can talk to the teachers in this school about things that are bothering me					
37.	Teachers and students in this school don't seem to like each other					
38.	Students in this school help each other, even if they are not friends					
		Disagree a lot	Disagree a little	Neutral	Agree a little	Agree a lot
39.	I like my school					
40.	I wish I didn't have to go to school					
41.	I wish I could go to a different school					
42.	I'm bored in school					

43.	I am glad to get back to school after summer vacation					
44.	I would be very sad if I had to go to a different school					
45.	I hate being in school					
46.	My classroom is a fun place to be					
47.	What we do in class is a waste of time					
48.	I would rather be in my class than any other one					
49.	I enjoy what I do in class					
50.	The teachers here really care about me					
51.	Teachers can't be trusted; they say one thing one time and something different the next time					
52.	The teachers here always keep their promises					
53.	The teachers here don't care what I think					
54.	The teachers here always try to be fair					
55.	Teachers here punish kids without even knowing what really happened					
56.	I feel safe and comfortable with the teachers in this school					
57.	Teachers in this school get mad whenever you make a mistake					
58.	When my teacher tells me not to do something I want to do, I know he or she must have a good reason					
59.	Our teacher will always listen to our ideas about how to make the class rules better					
60.	When you've been in groups in your class where everyone in the group worked together on something, how often did group members:	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Always
a.	Pay attention to what every member had to say?					
b.	Make sure that every member had a chance to participate?					
c.	Work together to solve the group's problems?					
d.	All agree before writing down a group answer or making a group decision?					
e.	Share supplies and materials with each other?					

f.	Ask questions of each other when they didn't understand something?					
61.	How often do the following things happen when you work in groups? When I work in groups:					
a.	I have a good time working with other students					
b.	I get upset because the group doesn't do as good a job as I could by myself					
c.	The other students do nothing but ask stupid questions					
d.	I learn a lot while helping the other students					
e.	The other students act like I don't know anything					
f.	The other students just take over and I don't get to do much					

Appendix P:

Tribes Implementation measure for teachers

The following describes what we do in our classroom:		Never	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	All the time
1.	Meet in small groups and a community circle to relate as peers.					
2.	Take time to build a sense of belonging in the group.					
3.	Make sure that everyone participates equally.					
4.	Use Tribes inclusion strategies.					
5.	Pay attention and look at the person who is speaking.					
6.	Know when and how to take turns speaking in the group.					
7.	Paraphrase what people have said to let them know they have been heard.					
8.	Use appropriate body language in response to the speaker, like nodding and smiling.					
9.	Avoid put-down remarks and actions.					
10.	Compliment, appreciate, and recognize each other's gifts and talents.					
11.	Choose how much we will share about ourselves in a group activity.					
12.	Respect each other's right to pass.					
13.	Show respect for and welcome others –no matter what their uniqueness, i.e., ethnicity, gender, age, etc.					
14.	Show respect for and welcome newcomers.					
15.	Respect each other's property.					
16.	Respect individual skills, talents, and contributions					
17.	Respect individual privacy (no rumors or gossip).					
18.	Introduce ourselves and offer a short description of our feelings, interests, resources, talents or special qualities.					
19.	Express hopes of expectations for what will happen during the group's time together.					

20.	Listen to others, not only for what they say but how they feel.					
21.	Express appreciation (positive regard and recognition) for each other.					
22.	Reflect on our experiences.					
23.	Feel a sense of belonging and being a part of the group.					
24.	Participate in setting goals for the group.					
25.	Feel comfortable in saying what we think and feel.					
26.	Respect people's differences.					
27.	Build on each other's strengths.					
28.	Think about how we can contribute to the group.					
29.	Work together to make decisions so that everyone feels they can influence others and feels of value to the group.					
30.	Work to resolve, rather than avoid, uncomfortable problems and conflicts that begin to separate members.					
31.	Solve problems creatively.					
32.	Work together successfully to complete tasks.					
33.	Share leadership in the group and share responsibility.					
34.	Assess improvements and reflect upon individual and community experiences.					
35.	Take time to celebrate achievements and successes.					
36.	Incorporate Tribes' cooperative strategies in the content areas/curriculum.					
37.	Use reflection/processing questions.					
38.	Have more time for creative teaching.					
39.	Spend less time managing student behaviour.					

		Never	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	All the time
40.	As a staff member, reflecting on your school, how often are Tribes principles implemented?					
	To what extent do you agree with the	Disagree	Disagree a	Neutral	Agree a	Agree a

	following statements:	a lot	little		little	lot
41.	Most teachers use Tribes in their classrooms at this school.					
42.	Tribes principles are followed during staff meetings.					
43.	Teachers at this school meet in small groups for collaborative work.					
44.	The principals and support staff are trained in Tribes.					

Appendix Q:

Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)

Levels of Use of an Innovation

Instructions: Please read the following descriptions and circle the level that best fits where you are in the adoption of the TRIBES Program.

Level number	Level name	Description
0	Non-use	I have little or no knowledge of the TRIBES Program, no involvement with it, and I am doing nothing toward becoming involved.
1	Orientation	I am seeking or acquiring information about the TRIBES Program
2	Preparation	I am preparing for the first use of the TRIBES Program
3	Mechanical Use	I focus most effort on the short-term, day-to-day use of the TRIBES Program with little time for reflection. My effort is primarily directed toward mastering tasks required to use the TRIBES Program.
4a	Routine	I feel comfortable using the TRIBES Program. However, I am putting forth little effort and thought to improve TRIBES Program or its consequences
4b	Refinement	I vary the use of the TRIBES Program to increase the expected benefits within the classroom. I am working on using the TRIBES Program to maximize the effects with my students.
5	Integration	I am combining my own efforts with related activities of other teachers and colleagues to achieve impact in the classroom.
6	Renewal	I reevaluate the quality of use of the TRIBES Program, seek major modifications of, or alternatives to, the TRIBES Program to achieve increased impact, examine new developments in the field, and explore new goals for myself and my school or school board.

Appendix R:

Semi-structured Interview Guide -Staff

Intro:

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. The purpose of the interview is to get more details about your perceptions of your school's climate and student interpersonal relations, and to find out more about your experiences with the Tribes program.

You are being tape recorded so that I can refer back to our discussion when I write my report. Your real name will not be used in my report but I will give you a fake name to hide your identity. No one else will hear this tape but me and possibly, my supervisor at the University of Ottawa. If you feel uncomfortable being recorded please say so and, of course, you are free to decline participating without fear of any negative repercussions. Because you are being tape recorded, I need you to speak in a loud and clear voice.

Please be assured that your participation is voluntary and that there are no consequences of any sort should you wish to withdraw before or during the interview. In addition, your responses and the audio-taped recordings will remain anonymous, confidential, and carefully stored, and you will not be identified in the research or in any publication related to the research. Neither the organization you work for, nor any other organization will be informed of any individual responses.

I will also be taking some notes during the discussion to help me keep track of the main points that come up in the discussion.

Any questions before we begin?

Warm-up:

What are some things you like about your school?

Questions focusing on perceptions of school climate:

1. How do you usually feel when you are at school?
2. Are students and staff respectful to each other? Give examples.
3. How would you describe the overall climate of your school?

Questions focusing on perceptions of student interpersonal relations:

4. What kinds of things do students usually do at recess?
5. Do students generally get along at recess? Give examples.
6. Do students generally get along in class? Give examples.

Questions focusing on impact of Tribes program:

7. What do you think of the Tribes program?
8. Do you think this program has an effect on the way people treat each other at your school? In what ways? How?
9. Is your life at school better because of this program? Are students happier at school because of this program? If so, how? Why do you think this is so?

10. What aspects of the Tribes program do you think contribute to a more positive climate and more prosocial student interactions?

Would you like to add anything else?

Thank you very much for participating.

Appendix S:

Semi-structured Interview Guide -Parents

Intro:

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. The purpose of the interview is to get your opinion about the Tribes program and your perceptions of the school climate the nature of student interpersonal relations at your child's school.

(If the interview is face-to-face) You are being tape recorded so that I can refer back to our discussion when I write my report. Your real name will not be used in my report but I will give you a fake name to hide your identity. No one else will hear this tape but me and possibly, my supervisor at the University of Ottawa. If you feel uncomfortable being recorded please say so and, of course, you are free to decline participating without fear of any negative repercussions. Because you are being tape recorded, I need you to speak in a loud and clear voice.

Please be assured that your participation is voluntary and that there are no consequences of any sort should you wish to withdraw before or during the interview. In addition, your responses and the audio-taped recordings will remain anonymous, confidential, and carefully stored, and you will not be identified in the research or in any publication related to the research. No one will be informed of any individual responses.

I will also be taking some notes during the discussion to help me keep track of the main points that come up in the discussion.

Any questions before we begin?

1. What do you know about the Tribes program? How did you hear about this?
2. What kinds of changes, if any, have you seen in your child's attitude towards school or behaviour since the Tribes program started at the school?
3. What is your perception of how children interact with each other at your child's school?
4. Do you think the Tribes program has had an impact on how children treat each other at your child's school? If so, how?
5. What is your perception of how students and staff interact with each other at your child's school?
6. Do you think the Tribes program has had an impact on how students and staff treat each other at your child's school? If so, how?
7. How would you describe the overall school climate at your child's school?
8. Does your child seem happier at school because of this program? Please explain.

9. What aspects of the Tribes program do you think contribute to a more positive school climate and more positive student interactions?

Would you like to add anything else?

Thank you very much for participating.

Appendix T:

Semi-structured Interview Guide -School Volunteers

Intro:

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. The purpose of the interview is to get your opinion about the Tribes program and your perceptions of the school climate and student interpersonal relations at the school where you volunteer.

(If the interview is face-to-face) You are being tape recorded so that I can refer back to our discussion when I write my report. Your real name will not be used in my report but I will give you a fake name to hide your identity. No one else will hear this tape but me and possibly, my supervisor at the University of Ottawa. If you feel uncomfortable being recorded please say so and, of course, you are free to decline participating without fear of any negative repercussions. Because you are being tape recorded, I need you to speak in a loud and clear voice.

Please be assured that your participation is voluntary and that there are no consequences of any sort should you wish to withdraw before or during the interview. In addition, your responses and the audio-taped recordings will remain anonymous, confidential, and carefully stored, and you will not be identified in the research or in any publication related to the research. No one will be informed of any individual responses.

I will also be taking some notes during the discussion to help me keep track of the main points that come up in the discussion.

Any questions before we begin?

1. What do you know about the Tribes program? How did you hear about this?
2. What kinds of changes, if any, have you seen in students' attitude towards school or their behaviour since the Tribes program started at the school?
3. What is your perception of how children interact with each other at this school?
4. Do you think the Tribes program has had an impact on how children treat each other at this school? If so, how?
5. What is your perception of how students and staff interact with each other at this school?
6. Do you think the Tribes program has had an impact on how students and staff treat each other at this school? If so, how?
7. How would you describe the overall school climate at this school?
8. Do students seem happier at school because of this program? Please explain.

9. What aspects of the Tribes program do you think contribute to a more positive school climate and more positive student interactions?

Would you like to add anything else?

Thank you very much for participating.

Appendix U:

Focus Group Moderator's Guide -Students

Intro:

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this discussion group. The purpose of the discussion group is to find out what you think about your school.

You are being tape recorded so that I can refer back to the discussion when I write my report. Your real names will not be used in my report but I will give you fake names to hide your identity. No one else will hear this tape but me and possibly, my supervisor at the University of Ottawa. If anyone feels uncomfortable being recorded please say so and, of course, you are free to go. There will be no negative consequences for you if you if you decide that you don't want to participate. Because you are being tape recorded, I need you to speak in a loud and clear voice. It is also important that only one person speak at a time.

I will ask you to follow a few rules. Please stop me if you have any questions about these rules or disagree with any of them. 1) Be honest and say what's on your mind. I just want to know what you honestly think and feel. You don't have to agree with others in the group. In fact, it's important that you speak up and voice your opinion, if you disagree with someone else; 2) Because we have limited time, I may need to stop you and re-direct our discussion at times if we are getting off track; 3) Anything said in this room, should not be repeated outside the room.

I will also be taking some notes during the discussion to help me keep track of the main points that come up in the discussion.

Any questions before we begin?

Warm-up:

What are some things you like about your school?

Questions focusing on perceptions of school climate:

1. How do you usually feel when you are at school?
2. Are students and staff respectful to each other? Give examples.
3. What kinds of activities do students seem to like to do in class?

Questions focusing on perceptions of student interpersonal relations:

4. What kinds of things do students usually do at recess?
5. Do students generally get along at recess? Give examples.
6. Do students generally get along in class? Give examples.

Questions focusing on impact of Tribes program:

7. What do you think of the Tribes program?
8. Do you think this program has an effect on the way people treat each other at your school? If so, how? Why?

9. Is your life at school better because of this program? If so, how? Why do you think this is so?

Wrap-up:

Summarize major points.

Member check:

How many of you felt that?

Closing statement:

Please remember that you are not to tell anyone outside this room what someone else said in the room. Thank you very much for participating.

Appendix V:

General School Observation Instrument

Date:

Time:

Location:

School climate: -based on Comer Visitor Observation sheet (1998) and Freiberg (1999)

*** mark Y/N and comments**

1. Hallways are quiet and orderly.
2. The school is generally well maintained.
3. The school has a bright and pleasant appearance.
4. The office makes visitors feel welcome.
5. The school has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere.
6. Staff welcomes visitors.
7. Students welcome visitors.
8. The classes are orderly. (students are on task)
9. The playground is peaceful. (no obvious conflicts or unsafe behaviour)
10. The noise level in the cafeteria is at an acceptable level.
11. The cafeteria is clean and orderly.
12. School mission statement and/or school rules are posted.
13. Bulletin boards display student work.
14. There is evidence of parent/community involvement. (e.g., volunteer badges/sign-in sheets)
15. Other observations:

Appendix W:

Classroom Observation Instrument

Date:

Time:

Location:

Context:

*check all that apply

	Minutes	5	10	15	20	25	30
class organization	-individual seat work						
	-pair work						
	-small groups						
	-whole class						
teaching style	-teacher-led						
	-student-led						
student engagement	-low engagement						
	-moderate engagement						
	-high engagement						
noise level	-low						
	-medium						
	-high						
student mood	-lots of smiles, laughter						
	-some smiles						

[illegible]

Appendix X:

Instructions for Teachers – Survey Administration

Data Collection

In regards to disclosures of bullying or victimization, please read the following to students before the commencement of the data collection: “No one except for researchers at the University of Ottawa will see your answers to the questionnaires. Bullying is a problem that needs to be taken very seriously. Your principal and teachers will not be able to see the answers you give on the questionnaires. However, if you have a specific bullying problem that you would like help with, your principal would like you to come and talk to him/her so that he/she can help.”

Please ensure that desks are sufficiently separated in order to prevent students from looking at each other's answers and ensure that students will not be permitted to leave their seats or communicate with each other during the times that the questionnaires are being completed.

Please ensure that non-participants have quiet reading/writing assignments to do while participants are completing questionnaires.

Students with parental consent have been assigned an identity number by the researcher. Please see the attached list of student names and numbers, and give participating students their personal identity number to be entered on the on-line surveys..The identity number will allow students to take a break between surveys if necessary and finish it another time.

Once students are logged onto the website: www.wendyryanottawa.com, please read the questions out loud, in a neutral tone, to your students if reading abilities are weak in your class. If reading abilities are sufficiently strong, please ask students to complete the surveys in silence and raise their hand if they need assistance.

Please keep all student data confidential. For example, if you happen to gain knowledge of a student's answers while helping him/her with a question, you must keep this knowledge strictly confidential.

Appendix Y:

Coding for thesis data

+EFF	Positive effects of Tribes program
↓BUL	decreased bullying
SAF	feelings of safety
+SC	Positive school climate
CAR	caring
RES	respectful behaviour
COM	sense of community
TEAM	team work/collaboration
INF	influence
INCL	inclusion
LIS	listening
PAR	participation
APP	appreciation
MBN	common language
NEG-SC	Negative school climate
BUL	bullying, violence, conflict
DIS	disrespectful behaviour
DAN	feelings of danger/lack of safety
-CAR	uncaring
STR	stress

IND Individual characteristics

[ST=student, TE=teacher, DC=daycare staff, PR=principal, VP=vice-principal, PA=parent, SE=secretary]

+/-TEACH positive/negative teaching methods/strategies

+EXPECT positive expectations

FUN fun, energetic

+ACT positive activities

+INC incentives

+/-CONS consistency/inconsistency

+/-FAIR fair/unfair

POL-AC policies and accountability

SV school values

+ awareness of strengths

PROB awareness of problem

BAR barrier to implementing Tribes

SUP-TE support for teachers

PHYS physical environment/resources

HOME home life/parents

Appendix Z:

Spring Focus Group for Staff: Moderator's Guide

Intro:

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this focus group. The purpose of the focus group is to give you an opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary findings I have compiled for your school.

The session is being tape recorded so that I can refer back to our discussion when I write my thesis. All participant identities will be withheld from any reports. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. No one else will hear this tape but me and possibly, my supervisor at the University of Ottawa. If you feel uncomfortable being recorded please say so and, of course, you are free to decline participating without fear of any negative repercussions. Because you are being tape recorded, I need you to speak in a loud and clear voice.

Please be assured that your participation is voluntary and that there are no consequences of any sort should you wish to withdraw before or during the focus group interview. In addition, your responses and the audio-taped recordings will remain anonymous, confidential, and carefully stored, and you will not be identified in my thesis or in any publication related to the research. Neither the organization you work for, nor any other organization will be informed of any individual responses.

You are asked to keep the views voiced by your fellow focus group participants confidential. That is, you are asked to refrain from discussing what other participants have said in this focus group outside of this forum.

In order to facilitate an effective session, please observe the following:

- Speak up and voice your opinion (particularly if you disagree with someone)
- Because we have limited time, I may need to stop you and re-direct our discussion at times if we are getting off track

I will also be taking some notes during the discussion to help me keep track of the main points that come up in the discussion.

Any questions before we begin?

Ok, please take a look at the summary sheet I have given you.

Summary for MB – Effects of Tribes Program on School Climate and Bullying

Evidence gathered from:

- interviews: 2 administrators, 8 teachers, 5 daycare staff, 29 students (total taped: 8 hrs)
- surveys: 38 students, 1 administrator, 6 teachers
- classroom observations: 6 classes (4 hrs)

- general observations: assemblies, lunchtime, recess, on school yard, in hallways and in the gym (7 hrs)

more positive school climate:

- warm, welcoming, comfortable, safe environment –students and staff generally happy
- staff respectful to each other, work well together; principal very positive
- fun, energetic: high levels of participation, i.e., assemblies, energizers and other activities
- positive emphasis on behaviour management -lots of positive reinforcers for good behaviour (in individual classrooms and school as a whole) - lots of praise and incentives (popsicle sticks, tags)

less fighting/bullying:

- ends up in physical fighting less
- fewer problems at recess/lunchtime; fewer students at principal's office after recess/lunch

consistency:

- most staff like the consistency in rules, same language facilitates consistent discipline
- some students felt like the rules are not always applied consistently

respectful behaviour:

- most students and staff felt that Tribes helped students and staff be more respectful towards each other
- many staff members felt that some students still needed more work at being respectful towards each other and towards staff
- some students felt that some staff treat some students better than others, some staff are not always respectful to students

Ideas for school improvement:

- Continue to reward students for following the Tribes agreements
- Continue the fun, inclusive activities
- Brainstorm ways to make Tribes energizers more age-appropriate/appealing for grade 5/ 6 students
- Increase the use of interactive teaching strategies such as small group work, community circles to further develop students' interpersonal skills

- Allow students the means of showing their appreciation for staff members' respectful behaviour (e.g., give them tags, notes of appreciation that they can award to staff members). This may serve to:
 - make staff feel appreciated
 - empower students to make a positive difference in their school climate
 - make students feel that their opinions, feelings, needs are valued
 - help students practice showing appreciation for the efforts of others
- Consistently model the Tribes agreements and address violations of the agreements consistently across students and contexts –take time to reflect on your own behaviour
- Brainstorm barriers to using Tribes and ways to facilitate wider implementation
- Open communication with administration about ways to reduce teacher stress
- Duty teachers could wear yellow vest on school yard to increase visibility and deter aggressive behaviours

Question:

What do you agree/disagree with about this summary?

Wrap-up:

Summarize major points.

Member check:

How many of you felt that?

Closing statement: Please remember that you are not to tell anyone outside this room what someone else said in the room. Thank you very much for participating.