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Exploring Prosocial Behavior through Structured Philosophical Dialogue A Quantitative Evaluation

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Abstract

The problem of bullying in schools cannot be overstated. Researchers have examined the problem of bullying in schools from a variety of perspectives and have found that bullying has serious short- and long-term effects not just for the victim but for the bully as well. A variety of interventions have been implemented, and research shows that the majority, which are monological in nature, have demonstrated minimal, if any, impact on counteracting occurrences of bullying in schools. This study uses three quantitative measures to examine the impact that an instructional method steeped in the dynamics of dialogical inquiry has on students' attitudes and beliefs about aggression.

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THE PROBLEM OF bullying is one of the most significant problems in schools (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Defined as unrelenting, willful and malicious physical or psychological abuse that results in physical or psychological harm to the victim, the bully, and the bystander (e.g., Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993b; Rigby, 1996; Ttofi & Farrington, 2008; Twemlow, Fonagy, & Sacco, 2004), bullying always involves someone who is able to wield power over someone else, who is not capable of defending himself or herself (Roland & Idsoe, 2001).

It is important to recognize the importance of not conflating the terms *aggression* and *bullying* or using them interchangeably. There is a significant, qualitative distinction between the two (Hawley, Stump, & Ratliff, 2011; Cascardi, Brown, Iannarone, & Cardona, 2014). *Aggression* is a negative act intended to do harm,

and *bullying* is aggression + repeated acts + power imbalance (Olweus, 1978; Hawley, Stump, & Ratliff, 2011). Throughout this paper, I use both terms with strategic intent. For example, when referring to a potential intervention, I use *bullying*. When I explicate the dialogic interactions in which students participated as part of

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the intervention, both terms, i.e., *bullying* and *aggression*, as well as any related antecedent vocabulary, such as *caring*, *fairness*, and *respect*, are equally relevant.

Deleterious Effects of Bullying

Exposure to bullying for an extended period during students' academic careers causes some students to experience significant academic and socioemotional problems (Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver, 1991; Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000; Nishina, Juvonen, & Witkow, 2005). Victims of bullying have difficulties focusing on schoolwork and are more likely to be absent from school (Sharp, 1995). Because most bullying occurs in school or on school grounds (Garrett, 2003; Rigby, 2003), students are often apprehensive about attending school (Rigby, 2003); overall, bullying is responsible for approximately a half million students being marked absent every 30 days (Sampson, 2002). Furthermore, students who are bullied experience school-related problems, such as peer rejection and dropping out (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996a, 1996b; Reid, 1989; Slee, 1994). According to Weinhold and Weinhold (2000), repeat bullying causes 10% of high school dropouts.

The socioemotional consequences of bullying impact victims not only during their time as students but into adulthood, as well (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1997; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001; Olweus, 1991), where they translate into elevated levels of aggression, attentional difficulties, anxiety, depression (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Hanish & Guerra, 2002; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Kasen, Berenson, Cohen, & Johnson, 2004) and low self-esteem (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Furthermore, victims who are subjected to chronic episodes of bullying sustain an increased risk for long-term socioemotional and adjustment problems, such as loneliness, isolation, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and loss of self-worth (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Egan & Perry, 1998; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Hodges & Perry, 1999; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996a, 1996b; Nansel et al., 2001; Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001; Reid, 1989; Slee, 1994; Underwood, 2003).

Researchers have examined the problem of bullying in schools from a variety of perspectives and have found that bullying has serious short- and long-term effects for the bully, as well (e.g., Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Hazler et al., 1991; Olweus, 1991; Rigby, 2003). Like their victims, bullies experience psychological distress, such as depression and thoughts of suicide (Sourander, Helstelä, Helenius, & Piha, 2000; Swearer, Song, Cary, Eagle, & Mickelson, 2001), as well as adjustment problems (Nansel et al., 2001). Studies have shown that chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviors into adulthood, which negatively affects their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships (Oliver, Hoover, & Hazler, 1994). Bullies are at an increased risk for criminal activity (Olweus, 1993a) and being physically abusive in adulthood (Olweus, 1993a). In one study, 60% of the students who were identified as bullies in grades six through nine had at least one criminal conviction by age 24, and 40% of former bullies had at least three convictions by age 24

(Olweus, 1993a). However, only 10% of boys who were neither bullies nor victims had convictions (Olweus, 1993a). Thus, the effects of bullying can overtly manifest themselves for the bully, the victim, and even the bystander as depression, low self-esteem, adult psychosis, suicide, and violence toward others (such as school shootings), as well as problems that extend well into adulthood (Ballard, Argus, & Remley, 1999; Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Harris, Petrie, & Willoughby, 2002; Hazler, 1996; Olweus, 1993b). In sum, research clearly demonstrates that all students in the school environment are affected in one way or another by bullying, and the consequences can be grave. Hence, it is critical to identify an effective response to this very serious and pervasive problem.

Antibullying Interventions

Because bullying can have profoundly negative effects on those who are subjected to it, researchers and educators agree that it is critical to understand what intervention can help increase awareness of bullying and reduce or eliminate instances of bullying in schools (e.g., Eslea & Smith, 1998; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Swearer & Espelage, 2004). Rigby, Smith, and Pepler (2004) outlined the two common elements that most bullying interventions contain. First, the interventions recognize that it is important for all members of the school community (i.e., students, teachers, administrators, and parents) to be aware of the significance and severity of bullying. Second, the interventions are steeped in a schoolwide approach, in which a firm and explicit antibullying policy defines bullying, as well as its component parts and participants, and unilaterally delivers possible strategies for resolving it (Fraser, 2004).

Some of the interventions contain a secondary tier of elements. These elements include developing a positive classroom climate (Roland & Galloway, 2002); including curriculum work (e.g., information about what constitutes bullying, the harm bullying can cause, etc.) (Smith, P. K., Ananiadou, & Cowie, 2003); incorporating assertiveness training and instruction in anger management techniques (Rigby, 2003); promoting discussions that lead to rule formulation (Olweus, 1993b); and using literature, films, and role-playing to cultivate "more empathic and insightful ways of interacting with each other" (Rigby et al., 2004, p. 3).

These primary- and secondary-tier elements manifest themselves in a variety of ways across a number of antibullying interventions, which range from case-based to schoolwide approaches. Some of the early proposals for intervention programs focused on aggressive behavior (Harachi, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1999) and recommended techniques, such as anger management and conflict resolution, to assist successful peer interaction (e.g., Ross, 1996). Studies about bullying have reported that more recent interventions range from those that place the onus of enforcing antibullying policies on school administrations (Glover & Cartwright, 1998) to peer counseling, "bully courts," and increased vigilance on the part of teachers to supervise students during school (Smith, P. K. et al., 2003) to conflict resolution. Two such interventions, Respect and Protect and Students Against Bullying, have reported successes (Garrett, 2003). Studies have also reported success with schoolwide antibullying programs, such as the Olweus Anti-Bullying Program, the DFE Sheffield Project, Think

First, and Bully Proofing Your School (BPYS), which educate teachers, students, and parents (e.g., Ahmad, Whitney, & Smith, 1991; Olweus, 1993b; Smith, P. K. et al., 2003; Smith, J. D., Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004).

The Olweus Anti-Bullying Program uses a problem-solving approach, which makes it consistent with one of the main features of Philosophy for Children (P4C). However, BPYS, which is a schoolwide intervention, is most closely aligned philosophically with P4C pedagogy. The BPYS program is committed to developing and reinforcing the identities of the bystanders, or the “caring majority,” to positively affect the school climate. Through their actions and influence, the bystanders dictate the operating environment, giving strength and support to victims and defusing the power of bullies. The BPYS program, which includes teacher training and lesson plans for intervention, is presented through a five-lesson curriculum that defines important terminology, delivers important skills and strategies for avoiding victimization, and offers activities that students can complete to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts that have been presented (Bonds & Stoker, 2000).

Because of its emphasis on caring and its recognition of the potential influence of intersubjective actions of students in the school community, the BPYS program bears some similarity to the intersubjective feature inherent in P4C. However, the intervention places a great deal of responsibility on the bystanders and assumes that they are otherwise unaffected by the actions of bullies. Following research by Twemlow et al. (2004) on the triadic construction of the bully-victim-bystander relationship, it seems that an intervention that assigns the health and stability of the school climate to only one of three integral players may be misguided. Furthermore, it is important to engage all schoolchildren in a critical examination of the world around them and the pursuant dialogue in which they mediate their understandings of this world; this is not possible if only bystanders are included in the intervention.

The BPYS program includes lesson plans and a five-lesson curriculum. This is consistent with the novels and instructional manuals available as part of the P4C curriculum. However, the BPYS program’s lesson plans and curriculum follow an instructional model of transmission. Using Bakhtin’s (1981) terminology, this intervention is “monological” because it does not offer students the opportunity to arrive at their own understanding of concepts and, consequently, a deeper understanding of their impact and importance. In contrast, research suggests that approaches that feature community-driven, dialogical inquiry may be more

effective (Finn, 1998; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1985; Stone & Isaacs, 2002) because they allow students to explore bullying on a deeper, more critical intellectual and emotional level. In fact, none of the programs utilize an approach that offers students the opportunity to extensively, critically, and intersubjectively explore issues, such as caring, respect, and empathy, with the members of their community.

Despite promising results from the OABP (Olweus, 1993b), research shows that many of the interventions, including the BPYS program, have yielded mixed results as effective means by which to reduce bullying (Fraser, 2004; Olweus, 1993b; Smith, P. K. et al., 2003; Smith, J. D. et al., 2004). Meta-analyses of existing antibullying interventions suggest limited empirical support for their effectiveness, especially in the United States (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Ttofi, Farrington, & Baldry, 2008), and some studies report that schoolwide programs had modest and even negative effects (e.g., Olweus, 1993b; Rigby et al., 2004; Smith, P. K. et al., 2003; Smith, J. D. et al., 2004). Thus, recent evaluations of interventions have been disheartening (Jenson & Dietrich, 2007). The results imply that interventions based largely on a traditional instructional model of knowledge transmission, in which the teacher defines terms and concepts and issues of morality are unilaterally conveyed to students, may lack the qualities necessary to affect change and make an impact on the problem of bullying. These interventions, which are typically monological in nature, do not offer students the opportunity to arrive at their own understanding of concepts and, consequently, of their impact and importance. Instead, students are indoctrinated with discrete notions of right and wrong, without being given the opportunity to become conversant with these ideas through inquiry and dialogue.

There is, however, an interesting distinction between interventions that utilize a rules-and-consequences approach, like the OABP, and those that use a problem-solving approach (Rigby, 2002). Studies in England, Spain, Finland, and Australia of interventions that use a problem-solving approach have been unable to show reductions that were, on average, large (Rigby, 2002). Table 1 shows that the results for interventions that emphasize a rules-and-consequences approach are, in fact, mixed. In Norway, for example, Bergen showed a large decrease in bullying, while Rogaland reported an increase in bullying. Results from studies in Belgium and Switzerland showed evidence of a small but significant reduction in bullying. On the other hand, interventions that utilize a problem-solving approach consistently show evidence of reductions in bullying incidents. Table 2 shows five programs that all reported positive outcomes. Because P4C is an instructional

Table 1. Interventions that use a rules-and-consequence approach. *Note:* From Rigby (2002).

<i>Country</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Researcher(s)</i>	<i>Result</i>
Norway	Bergen	Olweus (1991)	Very positive
Norway	Rogaland	Roland (1989)	Negative
Canada	Toronto	Pepler et al. (1994)	No change
Belgium	Flanders	Stevens et al. (2000)	Positive
Switzerland	Berne	Alsaker & Valkanover (2001)	Positive

Table 2. Interventions that use a problem-solving approach. *Note:* From Rigby (2002).

Country	City	Researcher(s)	Result
England	Sheffield	Smith, P. K. & Sharp, S. (1994)	Positive
England	London & Liverpool	Pitt & Smith (1995)	Positive
Spain	Seville	Ortega & Lera (2000)	Positive
Finland	Turku & Helsinki	Salmivalli (2001)	Positive
Australia	New South Wales	Petersen & Rigby (1999)	Positive

method that emphasizes problem solving among its participants, it manifests a key feature that has been shown to be successful in other interventions.

The preceding review of antibullying interventions shows that they vary greatly and often do not include all of the aforementioned elements that researchers suggest are vital to a successful intervention. Many interventions typically utilize an instructional model of “knowledge transmission.” These interventions, which are typically monological in nature, do not offer students the opportunity to arrive at their own understanding of concepts and, consequently, of their impact and importance. Instead, students are indoctrinated with discrete notions of right and wrong, without being given the opportunity to become conversant with these ideas through inquiry and dialogue. What is required, instead, is a critical, dialogical, community-driven approach to inquiry, such as P4C. An instructional method like Philosophy for Children, which is steeped in the dynamics of dialogical inquiry, community interaction, and the (re)productive evolution of ideas, could hold the necessary transformative capacity to allow students to explore the issues underlying aggression, such as empathy and respect, in a deeper, more meaningful way.

Dialogic Pedagogy as a Possible Intervention

A possible mechanism for realizing these goals is a pedagogy that is democratic, participatory, and dialogical. P4C, which is an instructional method defined by these aforementioned tenets, is one such approach. P4C is a pedagogical approach developed by Lipman (Lipman, 2003; Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980) to promote the cognitive, aesthetic, and affective development of children through teacher-facilitated group inquiry and dialogue (Lipman, 2003). P4C uses structured, philosophical dialogue to sharpen critical-thinking skills (e.g., Banks, 1989; Camhy & Iberer, 1988) and to cultivate a sensitivity toward and understanding of others’ values, interests, and beliefs (Lipman et al., 1980).

Lipman (2003) argues that it is through philosophical dialogue that children can and should learn to arrive at their own conclusions. Lipman does not suggest that there is right or wrong answer to a specific moral dilemma. He does suggest, however, that there is a right and wrong way to *think about* moral dilemmas and that philosophy can teach children the proper technique for engaging in exploratory dialogue with one another. Specifically, students use specific rules of inquiry, such as reasoning and concept clarification, to debate reasonably with one another as they analyze questions of morality and mediate their notions of

complex issues, such as caring, empathy, fairness, and respect, through other members of the community of inquiry.

The community of inquiry is a key component of P4C and functions as the arena for inquiry, dialogue, and concept exploration. Splitter and Sharp (1995) suggest that the community of inquiry “is characterized by dialogue that is fashioned collaboratively out of reasoned contribution of all participants” (p. 336). Furthermore, it respectfully acknowledges the importance of regarding “the production of knowledge as contingent, bound up with human interests and activities and therefore always open to revision” (p. 337) and the importance of understanding that “the meanings that totally subjective experience do reveal are narrow and paltry compared to the meanings one can derive from communal inquiry” (p. 341).

Splitter and Sharp’s (1995) interpretation of the community of inquiry seems to complement Dewey’s logic of inquiry and the importance of the role that the community plays in the process. Dewey (1985) argues that one should move from the “logic of general notions” (p. 187), which proposes a universal, immutable Truth to a logic of inquiry, which “help[s] men [sic] solve problems in the concrete by supplying them [with] hypotheses to be used and tested in projects of reform” (p. 189). Thus, the epistemology of knowledge moves from seeking an immutable Truth to seeking a temporal truth that develops organically out of the testing and reconstruction of a proposed solution. In the case of bullying, schoolchildren who experience bullying can, through inquiry, move from the seemingly prescribed immutable Truth of their assumed roles as victims, aggressors, or bystanders to a critical examination and reinvention of more empathetic, caring, and just ways to treat one another. Thus, they arrive at a set of tentative results to solve a concrete problem that may have to be reconstructed based on new information and developments. It is only through a thoughtful, intelligent method of experimentation that a logic of inquiry can take place and effective change can occur.

Thus, Dewey leaves behind old-fashioned philosophical inquiry for an inquiry that proposes an ameliorative theory whose utility demands evaluation and whose substantive criteria possess a real potential for and, in fact, necessitate reconstruction. It seems, therefore, that an effective antibullying intervention would mark a shift from the staid practice associated with a didactic, monological approach, which, at its best, does not assist inquiry and, at its worst, inhibits inquiry, toward a method of inquiry that strives to (re)construct a theory that makes a positive difference and cultivates “initiative, inventiveness, varied resourcefulness,

assumption of responsibility in choice of belief and conduct” (Dewey, 1985, p. 191). The implications for a shift of this nature are substantive because “it is only [through the conversion of classrooms into communities of inquiry] that the next generations will be prepared socially and cognitively to engage in the dialogue, judging and on-going questioning that is vital to the existence of a democratic society” (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 343). Following Dewey (1997), democracy depends on the willingness of educated global citizens to engage in social interactions that serve to improve the larger social good. In order for students in schools to affect change for themselves and others, their participation in a pedagogy that promotes democracy is critical.

Internalizing social dispositions, such as empathy, fairness, caring and respect, that emerge during and are central to the process of inquiry can transform these attributes into habits that assume a position in the political fabric of the inquirer. Thus, the descriptive parameters of dialogical inquiry need to be expanded beyond purposeful moves to encompass the central role that dialogical inquiry plays in establishing and nurturing dispositions. Specifically, dialogical inquiry serves as the vehicle that facilitates the way in which the community sets acceptable parameters for social interaction. Participants learn, for example, to acknowledge the opinions of others, respect the rights of others to be heard in a fair and equitable manner and entertain multiple perspectives, and participants are afforded the opportunity to practice these behaviors. Thus, the sum total of dialogical inquiry and social interaction together constitutes *doing* good inquiry.

Doing good inquiry is not just a way for students to explore concepts in a deeper, more meaningful way; because there are certain ways individuals act when they are doing good inquiry, it becomes the way that students learn to behave toward one another and the mechanism by which they can practice socially established and accepted dispositions. “Individuals not only internalize the methods of collaborative performance, they also internalize the characteristic behaviors that come from engaging in a community of inquiry” (Burgh, Field, & Freakley, 2006). According to Lipman (1988), “These dispositions overtly represent a participant’s commitment to and full acceptance of the responsibility of citizenship” (p. 88). This has significant implications for a successful antibullying intervention because doing good inquiry requires a commitment to the dialogue and its participants. Engaging in a deeper, more meaningful exploration of the issues underlying aggression implies more than just the act of dialogical inquiry; it necessarily includes doing social attributes, such as fairness and respect.

The dialogical, intersubjective, and potentially ameliorative features of P4C are promising features for an antibullying intervention. Research on bullying suggests that “the problem of bullying and victimization in schools could be described as a function of an interaction between two people—one who has more power and who purposefully and continually bullies another” (Horne, Orpinas, Newman-Carlson, & Bartolomucci, 2004). Thus, it is imperative to cultivate and nurture a safe school environment within which individuals know and interact with each other (Finn, 1998; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1985). The community of inquiry

so central to P4C necessitates an interaction between individuals that is constrained by rules of inquiry. By virtue of the rules of inquiry, students are restricted to well-reasoned exchanges directed toward advancing the dialogue, thus severely limiting or eliminating repeated attempts at or displays of aggression. Through both dialogue and the setting of social parameters, schoolchildren address problems of significance, such as those consistent with violence, aggression, and bullying, and work to redefine the way in which the individuals in the community perceive them. As a result, bullies, victims, and bystanders can shed their social labels and engage in critical, purposeful, reconstructive, productive interaction. The social disequilibrium that students feel as victims of bullying can translate itself into a dialogical disequilibrium, which can impel discussions of empathy and understanding. With dialogue bound by rules of inquiry, affect, and caring, bystanders and victims of bullying are afforded the same chance at an even playing field, thus helping to cultivate an environment conducive to empathy, respect, trust and awareness of themselves and others.

It is important to note that there is little empirical research to support the power of P4C as a mechanism for recalibrating disequilibrium between someone in a position to wield power over someone else and the target of such power. One study of graduate students found that the ideal community arrangement did not translate into opportunities for equal participation by all (Pálsson, 1994). Pálsson found, instead, that more knowledgeable students tended to dominate the dialogue. This could present itself as a liability for an intervention that hinges on promoting equality among peers who are entrenched in a dominator-oppressor relationship. In this study, the facilitator paid particular attention to issues of power through a number of strategies. For example, he deferred to students’ nominations of one another for speaking turns¹. He also relinquished the task of agenda setting² to the students, who were encouraged to suggest the questions that would be discussed during the course of a P4C session.

As an antibullying intervention, P4C would not, by definition, teach students that bullying is wrong. Instead, it would equip students with the tools of inquiry and rely on the deliberative process and a sound value system as a means to an end. Instead of being told the right answer, students would engage in rational inquiry and thoughtful and insightful dialogue to draw their own conclusions about bullying and redefine the way in which they understand it and its impact on others. Thus, P4C would help students “both understand and practice what is involved in violence reduction and peace development. They have to learn to think for themselves about these matters, not just to provide knee-jerk responses when we present the proper stimuli” (Lipman, 2003, p. 105).

The pedagogical materials that are used to engage students in dialogue about moral issues are as significant as the dialogical and intersubjective features themselves. P4C has an established curriculum, which consists of a series of philosophical novels and corresponding instructional manuals that house discussion plans and exercises. Students use the novels as an entrée into discussions about moral issues. Teachers and facilitators can use the discussion

plans and exercises in the instructional manuals to tap students' personal experiences in connection with a particular theme.

Mark (Lipman, 1980), *Kio and Gus* (Lipman, 1982), *Lisa* (Lipman, 1983), and *Nous* (Lipman, 1996) are P4C novels that focus on moral education as character building. The novels' narrative style and corresponding instructional activities allow students to explore themes, which include (a) rights, (b) fairness, (c) friendship, (d) caring, and (e) liberation. The novels and exercises afford children the opportunity to arrive at their own well-reasoned conclusions about moral issues through inquiry and dialogue with other participants in the community. The narrative structure creates the possibility of a low-risk, low-stakes discussion within which children can use the characters to express a moral stance or explicitly defend a moral position. The use of novels and their accompanying discussion plans and exercises is supported by research on bullying, which suggests that literature, role-playing, and curriculum work are elements that can be used to cultivate "more empathic and insightful ways of interacting with each other" (Rigby et al., 2004; Smith et al., 2003).

As a possible intervention for reducing bullying in schools, P4C offers students a forum within which to evaluate and arbitrate the views and actions of characters in a book with a level of detachment and seemingly little risk to themselves, even though significant personal emotion may exist. Students who have suffered at the hands of a bully, for example, can point to a character in one of Lipman's novels and explicate the kinds of emotions that the character must be feeling, thus expressing their personal experience through the character in the novel. The individuals in the community engage in a logical inquiry, offer their individual perspectives, and regulate each perspective and one another based on the rules of logical inquiry and sound judgments. With reason, logic, and a foundation for solid judgment as the main arbiters of philosophical inquiry, students should arrive at the philosophically sound conclusion that it is ethically unacceptable to cause harm to one another.

Lipman (Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980) argues that the process of inquiry and dialogue are insufficient; it is equally as important to demonstrate sensitivity toward, respect for, and understanding of another's values, interests, and beliefs. Although committed to the procedures of inquiry, the community is equally and simultaneously responsible for adhering to conditions, such as mutual respect, fairness, and an absence of indoctrination. Layering these attributes over the process of inquiry is vital because they help to create conditions that allow participants to explore ideas freely and without marked reservation. Thus, the technique that informs inquiry must exist in concert with caring thinking.

Caring thinking is the component of P4C that requires an individual (1) to "care for the other" through love and respect, (2) to "care for his or her own beliefs" by valuing them, and (3) to "care for the inquiry" by taking judgment seriously. If thinking does not contain valuing or valuation, it is liable to approach its subject matters apathetically, indifferently, and uncaringly, and this means it would be diffident even about inquiry itself" (Lipman, 2003, p. 270). Caring thinking empowers students to establish a value

system that leads them toward making sound and compassionate value judgments (Lipman, 2003).

Lipman (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980) suggests that discussion within the community promotes personal and interpersonal growth because mediating one's ideas through others may enhance the sensitivity and judgment of the community's participants. He also contends that sound social judgment is not possible unless sensitivity is cultivated. "If it should turn out, however, that sensitivity and judgment are enhanced by the program, it may well be that the program has served not simply to accelerate children's growth, but to enlarge their very *capacity* for growth" (p. 65). Thus, Lipman suggests that P4C may have the potential for nurturing moral development.

If P4C does, in fact, have the potential to impact the way students approach each other and the type of conflicts that arise between them, the implications for reducing instances of bullying in school are significant. This study complements prior research that suggests that interventions that use a problem-solving approach (e.g., Ortega & Lera, 2000; Salmivalli, 2001) have great promise (Rigby, 2002). In concert with the shift from a monological approach to a dialogical approach, a problem-solving approach places the onus on the students to resolve their conflicts collectively by listening to and deliberating with each other. This study also examines the educational potential that a discussion about hurting another individual has on students' attitudes and beliefs about aggression. The hope is that the value of such a dialogue is more than an intellectual exercise in logic and reasoning but an opportunity for students to assess their thinking and adjust their actions accordingly. These objectives further support P4C's potential of using dialogue to promote and cultivate caring in and among individuals.

Numerous empirical studies have examined P4C pedagogy (e.g., Allen, 1988a, 1988b; Banks, 1989; Ferreira, 2004). Some of the studies documenting the efficacy of P4C are anecdotal in nature (e.g., Berrian, 1984; Fisher, 2001) and do not adhere to the exacting formalities implicit in systematic empirical research. Others (Reznitskaya, et al., 2012; Reznitskaya & Glina, 2013) are theoretically driven, empirically rigorous studies but focus primarily on students' cognitive skills, thus making it difficult to assess the impact that P4C has on the moral development of children. This study contributes to the current gap that exists in the P4C literature and the impact that this pedagogy has on moral development.

In order to test my theoretical proposition about the potential impact that a participatory, democratic pedagogical approach, such as P4C, can have on students' attitudes and beliefs about aggression, I explored the following question: To what extent does participation in philosophical dialogue about the issues underlying aggression result in changes in students' attitudes and beliefs?

Method

Site and Sample Selection

Students in four fourth-grade classrooms at a suburban elementary school in northern New Jersey participated in this study. I chose the fourth grade for three reasons. First, school bullying increases among children ages 10 to 14 (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993a;

Whitney & Smith, 1993). Second, the P4C novels that address issues of empathy, caring, trust, respect, and friendship are targeted toward fourth graders. Third, recent research shows that elementary-school children are developmentally ready to participate in dialogical discussions and engage in abstract thinking (Crowhurst, 1988; Reznitskaya, Anderson, Dong, Li, & Kim, 2008), although many educators have previously underestimated this ability in young children.

Seventy-three students in four classes participated in the study. There were 36 boys and 37 girls. The average number of students in a class was 18. The elementary school served an ethnically diverse population: 18% of the participants were Caucasian, 35% were African American, 20% were Asian, and 27% were Hispanic Latino. Sixteen percent of the participants qualified for free lunch, and 7% were eligible for reduced lunch.

Design and Procedure

Two classrooms were assigned to one of two treatment conditions: P4C or regular instruction. The school principal controlled these assignments. Students in the P4C group participated in P4C pedagogy, while students in the control group continued with their regular instruction. Prior to this study, the elementary school had not used P4C as part of its curriculum. The treatment groups were comparable in terms of gender distribution (see Table 3).

Pre-intervention Stage

This study comprised three stages: pre-intervention, intervention and post-intervention. During the pre-intervention stage, I administered three quantitative measures, which served as pretests: the Normative Beliefs about Aggression Survey (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997), the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey (Bosworth & Espelage, 1995), and a sociometric measure.

Normative Beliefs about Aggression Survey. The Normative Beliefs about Aggression Survey (NoBags) (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997) was developed to assess beliefs about retaliation and general beliefs about physical and verbal aggression. The NoBags is a 20-item measure composed of three scales: the Approval of Retaliation Aggression scale (items 1–12), the General Approval

Aggression scale (items 13–20), and the Total Approval of Aggression scale (items 1–20). The Approval of Retaliation Aggression scale asks respondents to evaluate hypothetical responses to various forms of verbal and physical aggression on a 4-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*really wrong*) to 4 (*it's perfectly OK*). For the General Approval Aggression scale, respondents use the same 4-point scale to evaluate the same forms of verbal and physical aggression *in general* and *if you're mad*. Table 4 illustrates examples of the items to which students responded. The Likert answers are presented in rotating order. Because the hypothetical format of the NoBags Survey offers student respondents a nonthreatening opportunity to evaluate their attitudes and beliefs compared to their recent experiences, it helps answer the first research question, “To what extent does participation in philosophical dialogue result in changes in students’ attitudes towards and beliefs about sustained aggression?”

A study (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997) evaluating the psychometric properties of the three scales in the NoBags Survey was conducted in two midwestern cities. The sample size totaled 1,550 ethnically diverse, low- to low-middle socioeconomic status (SES) participants. Internal consistency estimates using Cronbach’s alpha ranged from .77 to .90, indicating moderate to high reliability in its ability to test an individual’s beliefs about aggression. When associated specifically with the 766 fourth graders who participated in Huesmann and Guerra’s (1997) study, internal consistency estimates ranged from .77 for the Approval of Retaliation scale (items 1–12) to .82 for the General Approval of Aggression scale (items 13–20), and .84 for the Total Approval of Aggression scale (items 1–20). The study also reported low test–retest values that ranged from .06 to .44. Criterion or construct validity data has not been presented or published in any study.

Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey. Once the students completed the NoBags Survey (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997), I administered the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey (Bosworth & Espelage, 1995). This survey measures the ability to listen to, care for, and trust others and is targeted toward fourth through eighth graders. The five-item measure asks students to indicate how often they would make each of the five statements listed in the measure (e.g.,

Table 3. Treatment Groups by Gender

<i>P4C Group</i>		<i>Group Receiving Regular Instruction</i>	
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
18	19	18	18

Table 4. Sample Questions from the Approval of Retaliation Aggression Scale and the General Approval Aggression Scale, which constitute the Normative Beliefs about Aggression Survey

<i>Approval of Retaliation Aggression Scale</i>	<i>General Approval Aggression Scale</i>
Suppose a boy says something bad to another boy, John. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think it’s OK for John to scream at him? Do you think it’s OK for John to hit him? Suppose a girl says something bad to a boy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think it’s wrong for the boy to scream at her? Do you think it’s wrong for the boy to hit her? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, it is wrong to hit other people. It is wrong to insult other people. In general, it is OK to take your anger out on others by using physical force.

“I can listen to others” and “Kids I don’t like can have good ideas”) using one of five choices, ranging from “never” to “always.”

Internal consistency coefficients for the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey range from .62 (Bosworth & Espelage, 1995) to .83 (Dahlberg, Toal, & Behrens, 1998). Reliability estimates in a study by Mutchler, Anderson, Taylor, Hamilton, & Mangle (2006) yielded low results with a pretest alpha of .47 and a posttest alpha of .46. However, a study by Anderson, Sabatelli, and Trachtenberg (2007) showed an average alpha reliability of .70.

Both the NoBags Survey and the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey report some low psychometric properties. I still elected to use them because of the limited number of available measures that assess empathy and students’ beliefs at the middle-school level. To rely on a variety of indicators, I used multiple instruments designed to measure the student attitudes relevant to my study.

Sociometric measure. Another strategy for deriving information about bullying behaviors is to assess students’ social status among one another (Crothers & Levinson, 2004). Researchers have documented that social status can be assessed through a variety of sociometric methods, such as tabulating the nominations peers receive from one another (Boivin & Hymel, 1997; Dodge, Coie, Pettit, & Price, 1990) or asking students to sort photographs of their peers into two piles—those who bully and those who do not bully (Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1994). Borrowing from previous research on assessing social status through sociometric measures (e.g., Boivin & Hymel, 1997; Bowers et al., 1994; Dodge et al., 1990), I provided each student with a list of their classmates and asked them to place checkmarks next to the names of those peers with whom they liked working and checkmarks next to the names of those with whom they liked playing.

The final results of the sociometric instrument offered a quantitative measure of students’ attitudes and beliefs about one another. As in the case of the other two quantitative measures selected for this study, the students from the P4C groups were hypothesized to manifest a more significant shift in their positive attitudes towards peers.

It took a total of between 35 and 45 minutes to administer all three measures.

Intervention Stage

During the intervention stage, students in two classes participated in one of the two treatment conditions: P4C or regular instruction. Students in the latter treatment group continued to be taught by their regular classroom teachers, who used their usual classroom techniques and strategies. Students in the P4C group participated in eight one-hour discussion sessions using P4C pedagogy. To reduce the threat to treatment fidelity, I enlisted Dr. David Kennedy, a highly experienced P4C facilitator, a fellow of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, and a senior faculty member at Montclair State University, to mediate the discussions in both P4C classrooms. Kennedy has published extensively on the topics of P4C and community of inquiry theory (e.g., Kennedy, 1996a, 1996b, 1999a, 1999b, 2004a, 2004b, 2006). He has conducted workshops in P4C around the world and currently supervises P4C in several classrooms in Montclair, New Jersey.

During the first session, Kennedy introduced P4C pedagogy and explained the process for converting specific questions and statements into more general, all-encompassing, philosophical queries. Kennedy provided students with a list of general questions and asked students to practice generating philosophical questions. The following is an excerpt from the session during which this took place:

Kennedy: So, let’s take some of these questions and try to change the following questions into thinking questions and here’s an example. For example, if you have the question Why do you think that is a beautiful painting? to make it philosophical, it gets changed into What does it mean to be beautiful? You see how the question changes? From Why do you think that is a beautiful painting? to What does it mean to be beautiful? We start talking about what beauty is, not about that specific painting so much as about beauty, in general. So, we go from a kind of smaller to a bigger way of looking at it, and we get that idea of beauty, the concept and we think about it, what we mean when we use it.

This exercise set the stage for deriving philosophical questions for two discrete purposes. First, students were invited to offer questions for discussion based on the reading for a particular week. The questions they offered were of a more general, philosophical type, which they generated using the procedure they had learned. Second, students used the technique as a mechanism by which to both launch the inquiry and advance the dialogue.

During the second session, students began to read, aloud and as a group, chapters from the philosophical novel *Kio and Gus* (Lipman, 1982), which were selected because they exemplified issues of empathy, caring, and respect. *Kio and Gus* is part of a series of philosophical novels in the P4C curriculum. Targeted toward elementary-school children, *Kio and Gus* is about a young boy named Kio who visits his grandfather one summer. During his visit, he befriends Gus, who is blind. Gus introduces Kio to the direct personal awareness her blindness affords her and the experiences she has.

Once students completed a chapter, they read through a discussion plan, which is “a landscape through which the group and each individual in it moves as they discuss” (Kennedy, 2004b, p. 758). The discussion plans included questions, such as *Can you think without feeling something? Can you feel without thinking something? Can you think wrong? and Can you have wrong feelings?* After reading through a discussion plan, students collectively arrived at a discussion question (i.e., of their own or from the plan) and participated in a group discussion based on it. This pattern of events was indicative of the agenda for each of the remaining sessions. Thus, topics for class discussions were not prescribed but allowed, instead, to emerge organically from the week’s prompt.

The readings and exercises were paced so that each group discussed the same content each session. Students did not receive direct instruction about bullying but participated, instead, in peer dialogues where they engaged in doing good inquiry based on topics bullying, aggression, empathy, fairness, justice and power, such as *What is respect?*

Post-intervention Stage

During the third and final stage, I administered the same three quantitative instruments as post-intervention measures to the students in all four classrooms.

Scoring and Analysis of Quantitative Instruments

Normative Beliefs about Aggression Survey. I calculated the mean scores and standard deviation for the three scales that constitute the Normative Beliefs about Aggression Survey (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997). The maximum possible score is 4, and the minimum possible score is 1. A score of 4 reflects the belief that it is generally acceptable to be aggressive toward others. A score of 1 indicates the belief that it is unacceptable to be aggressive toward others.

Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey. I also calculated mean ratings and standard deviation for the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey (Bosworth & Espelage, 1995). The maximum possible score is 5, and the minimum possible score is 1. A score of 5 indicates that a student believes that he or she would *always* make a particular statement, while a score of 1 suggests that a student believes that he or she would *never* make the statement in question.

Sociometric measure. To analyze the data from the sociometric measure, I calculated proportions for each student within each class to form the measure of popularity. I used proportions because they allowed me to eliminate the effects of varying class sizes. Then, I examined mean differences in the number of nominations each student received from his or her classmates.

Results and Discussion

To answer my research question about the extent to which participation in philosophical dialogue about the issues underlying bullying and sustained aggression results in changes in students' attitudes and beliefs, I used three quantitative instruments that yielded six variables: the three scales subsumed by the Normative Beliefs about Aggression Survey (NoBags), the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey, and the two scenarios posed by the sociometric measure, *Like to work with* and *Like to play with*. Descriptive statistics for the six variables are summarized in Tables 5 and 6. The pre-intervention scores for the NoBags Survey and the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey were not analyzed against the posttest scores

to determine gain scores because of the low psychometric properties inherent in gain scores (e.g., Cronbach & Furby, 1970; Fortune & Hutson, 1984; Stanley, 1971; Traub, 1994). For example, gain scores have been shown to have low reliability when the procedures of classical test theory are implemented (Fortune & Hutson, 1984; Linn & Slinde, 1977). Instead, the purpose of administering these two quantitative measures pre-intervention was to assess the comparability of the two treatment groups at the beginning of the study. According to the descriptive statistics, the difference between the means for these two measures is small relative to the standard deviations. Therefore, there does not appear to be a notable difference between the two groups.

Although I did not use gain scores for the NoBags Survey and the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey because of the low reliability associated with them, I elected to do so for the sociometric measure because of the preexisting differences that the *t* test revealed for the two groups. The inferential statistics suggest that students in the group receiving regular instruction showed accepting relationships with significantly more classmates than students in the P4C group at the outset of the study ($p < .01$). Descriptive statistics for the NoBags Survey and the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey are summarized in Table 6. The independent samples *t* test in this study compared the difference in means of the P4C group and the group receiving regular instruction for six post-intervention variables. Because I administered multiple measures, I elected to take a conservative approach and assign the value of $p < .01$ when conducting the tests for statistical significance. Thus, *p* will be considered significant at the .01 level.

In the case of the NoBags Survey and the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey, the results of the *t* tests suggest that the treatment condition was not significantly associated with the belief that it is acceptable to be aggressive toward others in specific situations of provocation ($p < .69$), the belief that aggression against others is generally acceptable ($p < .73$), or beliefs about aggression in both specific and general situations ($p < .68$). The treatment condition was not significantly associated with the ability to listen to, care for and trust others ($p < .26$).

These are disappointing results because I have argued theoretically about the promise that P4C pedagogy seems to hold in changing students' attitudes and beliefs. These results

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations for Quantitative Measures Pre-intervention by Treatment Condition

Variable	Treatment			
	Philosophy for Children Pedagogy (<i>n</i> = 37)		Regular Instruction (<i>n</i> = 36)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Approval of Retaliation Scale (NoBags Items 1–12)	17.65	5.05	18.86	4.87
General Approval of Aggression Scale (NoBags Items 13–20)	9.24	1.91	10.69	3.26
Total Approval of Aggression Scale (NoBags Items 1–20)	26.89	5.43	29.56	6.79
Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey	15.22	3.68	13.19	2.77
Like to work with (sociometric measure)	.492	.204	.384	.134
Like to play with (sociometric measure)	.462	.159	.332	.107

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations for Quantitative Measures Post-intervention by Treatment Condition

Variable	Treatment			
	Philosophy for Children Pedagogy (<i>n</i> = 37)		Regular Instruction (<i>n</i> = 36)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Approval of Retaliation Scale (NoBags Items 1–12)	20.11	6.60	20.78	7.73
General Approval of Aggression Scale (NoBags Items 13–20)	10.11	2.38	10.42	4.87
Total Approval of Aggression Scale (NoBags Items 1–20)	30.22	8.52	31.20	11.43
Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey	15.95	3.19	15.11	3.16
Like to work with (sociometric measure)	.437	.196	.418	.163
Like to play with (sociometric measure)	.448	.173	.356	.135

are also surprising because both groups had different educational experiences: the P4C group participated in P4C pedagogy, while the group receiving regular instruction proceeded with their traditional pedagogy. I propose several explanations for the observed results. First, it can be difficult to capture changes in attitude. The attitudes and beliefs that an individual develops as a result of his or her interactions with others may not be properly quantified because these changes can occur cumulatively and over time. These data are often culled at a prescribed moment in time, thus providing an inaccurate representation of the dispositions that may, in fact, have been acquired (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

The second reason could be attributed to the duration of the treatment. Goslin (2003) argues that “learning of complex knowledge rarely takes place instantly” (p. 16) and, in fact, requires cognitive engagements, such as concentration, thinking, practice, and rehearsal. Students in this study had the opportunity to practice doing respect and caring, for example, but only for a limited amount of time. According to Goslin, internalizing complex knowledge of social behavior would require a significant investment of time.

Acquiring knowledge is one potential obstacle; transferring it to another context adds an additional layer of complexity. Therefore, the third reason for these results could be attributed to transfer of learning. Transfer of learning is defined as the ability to apply knowledge or a set of skills acquired in one context or setting to another context or setting (Cormier & Hagman, 1987). According to Haskell (2001), “Teaching that promotes transfer, then, involves returning again and again to an idea or procedure but on different levels and in different contexts, with apparently ‘different’ examples” (p. 27). The process of extending acquired knowledge to a different context is a goal that does not always occur without a great deal of external prompting (e.g., scaffolding and hints) (Barnett & Ceci, 2002; Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Detterman, 1993; Salomon & Perkins, 1989; Singley & Anderson, 1989). When students took the posttests, they were not given any external prompts or hints about the caring behaviors they practiced during the intervention, which could have reduced the possibility of transfer.

The final explanation also addresses transfer to a new context and is consistent with Dewey’s (1997) notion of habits. According to Dewey, habits are not simply the result of continually engaging in the same random behaviors but of repeating vital behaviors. At first, the individual is exposed to a number of random behaviors and eventually develops an awareness regarding the value and importance of some behaviors over others. This awareness allows the individual to focus on cultivating successful behaviors without expending resources on more extraneous ones. This pattern becomes a part of the habit and makes up a process that requires a substantial time commitment. It is, therefore, possible that students did not have an opportunity to become habituated to these attributes in a way that could be reflected in a quantitative measure.

In the case of the sociometric measure, the *t* test, whose results are reported in Table 7, suggests that the group receiving regular instruction outperformed the P4C group. Although both treatment groups had different instructional experiences, students in the group receiving regular instruction seemed to show accepting relationships with more classmates than students in the P4C group. At first, these results appear to be surprising because the expectation was for the P4C group to surpass the group receiving regular instruction. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is attributable to the consciousness that students in the P4C group may have acquired as a result of their participation in the intervention. The results of the *t* test could suggest that students may be engaging in a more thoughtful and critical consideration of their peers, which resulted in a weeding out of some students. This implies that students in the P4C group made *gains* in terms of the level of criticality with which they assessed their peers, which would be perfectly consistent with the critical thinking skills one hopes that students acquire as a result of their exposure to and participation in P4C pedagogy. If this is true, it is not necessarily surprising that the number of nominations were lower than expected because students were more judicious with the way in which they allocated these nominations, resulting in an overall decrease in nominations.

In order to resolve the difficulties associated with all three measures, it seems that students should have the opportunity to participate in P4C pedagogy for at least one academic year. First,

Table 7. Mean Gain Scores for Sociometric Measure

Variable	Treatment	
	Philosophy for Children Pedagogy (<i>n</i> = 37)	Regular Instruction (<i>n</i> = 36)
Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>
Like to work with	-.055	.034
Like to play with	-.014	.024

this would allow for the periodic administration of quantitative measures over the course of a longer study, resulting in a more accurate representation of students' perspectives and attained dispositions. Second, long-term participation in P4C pedagogy could give students the opportunity to spend more time both doing inquiry and practicing the attributes (e.g., respect and fairness) that are so critical to that inquiry.

Although the results from the quantitative measures are discouraging, the results of a quantitative content analysis of qualitative data sources suggest differences between the P4C group and the group receiving regular instruction for all but one of the coding categories (Glina, 2013). The results suggest that the dialogic indicators that I coded, which include nomination, dyadic exchanges (turn taking), and back-channeling, were present in the P4C group in a more varied sense than in the control group and that students in the P4C group, who were encouraged to practice them as part of a democratic participatory discourse, reinterpreted their roles as participants by changing the surface structure of the move.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to the present study. First, this was a quasi-experiment conducted in a naturalistic setting, and the groups were not randomly assigned. Because the principal assigned these groups, her prior knowledge of the teachers and students in each class may have biased her toward putting some of the classes in one group and others in the other group. As a result, the groups may have been unfairly weighted on a variety of variables. For example, if the principal recognized that two of the four classes each had a bully, she may have been inclined to assign both such classes to the treatment group. Second, because of standardized testing preparation and administration requirements, students in this study received limited exposure to P4C. A broader study of a longer duration with varying participants and settings is necessary.

Third, it is possible that a different quantitative measure or combination of measures could have yielded different results. While one of the three measures I selected, the Normative Beliefs about Aggression Survey, assesses students attitudes and beliefs about aggression, the intent was to use all three measures in combination—the NoBags, the Empathy-Teen Conflict survey, and the sociometric measure, which provides information about bullying behaviors through social status—in order to develop a robust, multifaceted, data-driven analysis that could be considered in various combinations and from multiple analytic

perspectives. The measures were selected because students engaged in structured discourse about issues, such as bullying, aggression, and their various iterations, within a dialogic environment that cultivated social dispositions, such as empathy and caring. Therefore, these measures were thematically aligned to what students were discussing and operationally consistent with how they were discussing it. A future study might use another measure or combination of measures that more specifically assesses the impact that dialogic interaction has on students' attitudes and beliefs about bullying. A fourth limitation is the confounding of treatment and facilitator variables. Because Kennedy was the only P4C facilitator, it is not clear if the results reflect P4C pedagogy or Kennedy's facilitation style.

Conclusion

This study argues for the potential that dialogical interaction has for addressing the significant social problem of bullying by assessing its impact on students' attitudes and beliefs about aggression. While committed to the procedures of inquiry, a dialogical pedagogy holds discussion participants equally and simultaneously responsible for adhering to conditions such as mutual respect, fairness, and an absence of indoctrination and serves as a vehicle by which participants in a school community can both practice and internalize the behaviors that promote empathy, caring, fairness, and respect. This can, ultimately, lead toward rectifying the imbalance that exists between bullies and their victims in an effort to begin to redress bullying behavior. If an educational intervention centered around dialogical interaction—such as Philosophy for Children, which does, in fact, have the potential to impact students' attitudes and beliefs and, in turn, the way they interact with each other and approach the conflicts that arise among them—the implications for cultivating safe learning communities are significant.

Contrary to my theoretical expectations, students in the P4C classrooms did not show improved performance on the outcome measures used in this study. However, it is important to acknowledge the differences in the results that emerged in the quantitative content analysis of the qualitative data sources (Glina, 2013). This study invites further research that will provide concerned educators with practical and empirically supported suggestions for addressing bullying in their schools in order to help cultivate environments that promote safe, democratic, and caring communities of learning.

Directions for Further Research

I have identified a number of natural directions for future research. First, the amount of time that students had with P4C pedagogy continually emerged as the most predominant obstacle to this study. I have argued that a lack of results from the quantitative measures can be attributed to the study's abbreviated duration. However, the results of an analysis of indicators of dialogic interaction reported elsewhere (Glina, 2013) revealed some differences between the P4C group and the group receiving regular instruction. These results suggest that students began to adapt and adopt dispositions, such as respect, fairness, and caring. A logical next step would be to conduct this study for the duration of at least one school year to assess whether the dispositions that began to manifest themselves during the discussions increase in frequency and whether this can be captured in the quantitative measures.

Second, I chose the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey because it is appropriate for measuring empathy in students at ages 10 and 11. Although it would be interesting to see if there is any change in the results of this instrument in a future study, an alternative measure to the Empathy-Teen Conflict Survey seems warranted, considering its low internal consistency and reliability estimates and the lack of information regarding any additional psychometric properties.

Third, I used a sociometric measure that asked students to identify which of their peers they like to work with and which of their peers they like to play with. Although existing research on sociometric measures supports this approach (e.g., Dodge et al., 1990; Boivin & Hymel, 1997; Bowers et al., 1994), I would suggest making the exercise more explicit. For example, it may be useful to ask students to identify which peers they perceive as bullies or which peers are nice to other people and which peers are not. This exercise could elicit clear and concise information about whom students regard as bullies, rather than relying on deducing this information from a list of those with whom students like to work and play.

Notes

1. The results of an analysis of speaking turns are reported in Glina (2013).
2. The results of an analysis of agenda setting are reported in Glina (2013).

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