What is this research about?
School-based bullying has increasingly attracted the attention of educational policy makers, parents, academics, and educators over the past decade. This study investigates pre-service teachers' knowledge of, and attitudes about, school-based bullying. Specifically, this research investigates the impact of a pre-service teacher’s gender, prior experiences with different types of bullying, and the type of faculty of education program they are enrolled in (primary-junior, junior-intermediate, or intermediate-senior), on the likelihood that he/she will intervene in incidents of school-based bullying.

What did the researchers do?
The researchers administered two questionnaires on school-based bullying to 160 pre-service teachers at a faculty of education department at one Ontario university. The first questionnaire, *Teachers’ Attitudes About Bullying Questionnaire*, asked pre-service teachers to rate the degree to which they agreed to a set of statements to do with:

- teacher and system commitment to bullying;
- concern with bullying;
- the impact of gender, prior experiences with different types of bullying, and type of education program on intervention likelihood.

What you need to know:
Male and female pre-service teachers, regardless of their program, agree on the importance of bullying as a concern for students; however, they tended to consider physical bullying more serious than other types of bullying, such as homophobic, relational or cyber bullying. The researchers also found that violence prevention training increased pre-service teachers concern for, and confidence in handling, incidents of bullying.
and confidence and preparation in managing bullying.

The second questionnaire, the *Trainee Teachers’ Bullying Attitude Questionnaire* explored pre-service teachers’ attitudes about specific types of bullying, including:

- homophobic bullying,
- physical bullying,
- relational bullying (such as exclusion from friendship groups),
- and cyber bullying.

Using a 5 point Likert scale, pre-service candidates were asked to rate the degree to which the description provided in the questionnaire reflected bullying (*strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*).

**What did the researchers find?**

Results from this study suggest that the pre-service teachers in this study, regardless of program, consider bullying to be an important issue facing students; however, they tended to rank physical bullying as more serious than homophobic, relational and cyber bullying.

Teachers’ gender seemed to influence their consideration of the seriousness of different bullying behaviours. For example, female teachers considered cyber and homophobic bullying as more serious than their male colleagues.

The researchers also found that teachers who had personal experiences witnessing bullying, felt more confident in managing bullying situations amongst students.

Finally, the researchers found that teachers who had been trained in violence prevention showed more concern and were more confident in their ability to identify and manage acts of violence, than those without the training.

**How can you use this research?**

This research study raises important general questions about the way different types of bullying are perceived by educators and can be used as a starting point for discussions about bullying within schools and university teacher-training programs. Specifically, school administrators and teachers may wish to consider:

- the benefits of violence intervention training on teachers’ ability to identify...
and manage acts of bullying in schools;

- actively communicating with elementary or secondary students to identify the types of bullying students experience in their school and to develop bullying awareness campaigns;

- arranging workshops with external experts (such as community police and youth mental health professionals) who can provide training on the severity of different types of bullying on students and parents and may be able to offer advice on how to watch for and manage acts of bullying;

- developing strategies to raise awareness amongst teachers and students about emerging technology and the potential for new forms of bullying.

Original article:
To learn more about this study, we invite you to read the original research article:


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About this summary
The Ontario Education Research Exchange (OERE) is a project of the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research, an Ontario network promoting the use of research in education. The OERE’s clear language summaries of academic research aim to support this mandate.

This summary has been adapted from the ResearchSnapshot series developed by York University and ResearchImpact and has been developed according to writing and design principles unique to OERE. For more information about this summary or the OERE network please contact oere.knaer.oise@utoronto.ca.

This summary reflects findings from this study only and is not necessarily representative of the broader body of literature on this subject. Please consult the original document for complete details about this research. In case of any disagreement, the original document should be understood as authoritative.