Jeannette **Jones,** Larinee **Dennis,** Melvina **Torres-OvRick,** and Scott L. **Walker**

Content Analysis of Adolescent Literature Related to Bullying

Adults are often indirectly involved in bullying, and "teachers are probably the most likely to witness bullying situations while both teachers and parents often hear about incidents after they occur" (Moulton, 2010, p. 23). Due to the high prevalence of bullying among adolescent youth and the significance that adults play in these situations, a content analysis of 10 adolescent literature novels was completed using our guiding question: *How do adult characters interrupt, or fail to interrupt, bullying as portrayed in adolescent literature?* We also define bullying, consider and present background information on adult intervention related to bullying, and discuss how literature in schools can be used as a tool to combat bullying through meaningful and intentional conversations. Ultimately, we present a content-analysis-based study and the results of our 10-book investigation into adult intervention and involvement in fictitious adolescent literature.

Contextualizing Bullying

Our Definition
The term bullying has many definitions and connotations associated with it. Bullying is a complex, multilayered issue that can be characterized in a variety of ways. Some researchers emphasize that bullying can include physical, verbal, and/or social/emotional harassment (Ellis, & Shute, 2007; Hazler, 1996; Suniti Bhat, 2008), while others believe bullying involves repeated taunting and the imbalance of power between individuals or groups (Holt & Keyes, 2004; Olweus, 2001; Rigby, 2004). For the purpose of this study, we are using Bott's (2004) definition of bullying from *The Bully in the Book and in the Classroom,* which states, "Bullying is the collective term that covers all forms of harassment" (p. xviii). This broad definition encompasses a wide variety of bullying without limitations and does not confine bullying to any one particular form. When asked to define bullying, some middle school students describe it as being treated badly to make someone else feel better. It can be physical or verbal, but it all hurts.

Prevalence of Bullying
Reported prevalence rates of bullying vary significantly. Although it is difficult to know exactly, researchers (Nansel et al., 2001; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 2001; Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela, 2002; US Department of Education & US Department of Justice, 2010) report anywhere from 15% to 80% of today's students have experienced involvement in bullying, either as the bully or the victim. Bott (2009), Coloroso (2008), and Harris and Petrie (2003) argue that nearly 100% of today's students have experienced bullying if you consider and include the role of bystander. This widespread phenomenon begins in elementary school and continues through high school (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Hillsberg & Spak, 2006; Quinn, Barone, Kearns, Stackhouse, & Zimmerman, 2003), but it appears to reach a peak during the middle school and adolescent years (Ma, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Roland, 2002).

One bully-related study with a sample size of over 15,000 middle and high school participants showed that 29% reported moderate to frequent involvement

in bullying; this includes both bullies and victims (Nansel et al., 2001). Also, the School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey found that "about 14% of 12- to 18-year-olds reported being the targets of bullying during the six months prior to the survey" (DeVoe & Kaffenberger, 2005, as cited in Moulton, 2010, p. 12). These data demonstrate that bullying is prevalent in schools across the United States, and researchers (Beane, 2005; Bott, 2004, 2009; Esch, 2008; Henkin, 2005; Hillsberg & Spak, 2006; McNamara & McNamara, 1997; Ross, 1996) provide evidence that bullying is a prevailing theme in children's and adolescent literature as well.

Adult Intervention

To combat the problem of bullying in today's schools, researchers (Carney, Hazler, & Higgins, 2002; Entenman, Murnen, & Hendricks, 2005; Malecki & Demaray, 2004; Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003) have argued for developing a positive school/community culture that is unaccepting of bullying behaviors. This requires the adults, teachers, administrators, school staff, and parents to intervene when bullying situations arise and to teach preventative techniques. This much-needed adult intervention is ideally mirrored in fictional literature and serves as the rationale for analyzing adolescent texts to identify how the adult characters behave in response to incidents of bullying. Perhaps as students meet caring adults through books, they will recognize the importance of allowing adult involvement with bullying in the classroom.

Teachers, counselors, and other school personnel serve on the *front lines* in our schools, making them uniquely positioned to influence the classroom climate. Their decision to intervene, or not, directly affects both bully and victim. Rigby (2004) explains that teachers can use their classroom position to identify "individuals who are likely to become 'problems,' that is, children who appear predisposed to act aggressively without concern for the well-being of others or have characteristics that suggest that they are more likely than others to be victimized" (p. 290). Teacher-directed intervention programs appear to be more successful than programs situated outside of school settings at identifying and decreasing the isolation of students at-risk with bullying (Peterson & Skiba, 2001).

Nevertheless, researchers (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Ellis & Shute, 2007; Hargrove, 2010; Hazler, Miller, Carney, & Green, 2001; Langdon & Preble, 2008; Mishna, 2004; Olweus, 1993; Varjas et al., 2008) have found that teachers do not always intervene during negative student interactions such as bullying. According to Atlas and Pepler (1998), teachers frequently do little to interrupt, and often completely ignore, bullying. This lack of teacher intervention may be due to the fact that many times students do not inform teachers that they are being bullied (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004). Studies suggest that victims of bullying are reluctant to report such incidents to adults (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Mishna, McLuckie, & Saini, 2009), because they are fearful that adult intervention would potentially escalate the problem (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Espelage & Asidao, 2001; Smith & Shu, 2000).

> **Can teens learn from adolescent literature *how* to use adult intervention to confront the problem of bullying?**

Even though bullying frequently occurs at school, it appears that students do not feel comfortable telling the adults in this environment. Instead, a victim of bullying is more likely to tell a family member (Smith & Shu, 2000). This gives parents a unique opportunity to intervene on behalf of their child. Numerous researchers in the field, including Griffith, Lazar and Slostad, and Mandel have proclaimed that parent involvement during bullying incidents has a positive impact on maintaining and/or improving student academic achievement (as cited in Hall, 2008).

Clearly, intervention from adults such as parents, teachers, counselors, and other school personnel is a proven approach to decreasing and preventing the problem of bullying. For a teen that is experiencing the problem of bullying—whether as bully, victim, or bystander—adolescent literature can be one source of information about dealing with the problem of bullying and the role adults can play. But, are adult interventions in text being portrayed as helpful? Will teens form an accurate picture of adult intervention from the roles personified in text? Can teens learn from adolescent literature *how* to use adult intervention to confront the problem of bullying?

The Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the current research by conducting a content analysis of adolescent literature to identify how texts portray the intervention of adult characters during bullying incidents. Previous content analyses have focused only on bullying in children's literature, but did not focus specifically on the role of adult intervention in the text. Recognizing the widespread problem of bullying, its prevalence in middle and high school, and the lack of research in this area, a content analysis of adult character intervention in adolescent literature is needed.

Content Analysis and Book Sample Selection Criteria

Using content analysis allowed for close examination of the role(s) adults play in the selected texts. The analysis documented 1) the type of bullying (physical, verbal, or social); 2) the role, if any, that adults played in the bullying situation; 3) the triggers that prompted adult intervention; 4) the specifics of the adult involvement in the bullying occurrence (ignoring, active intervention, passive support; and 5) the results of this interaction.

There are many pieces of adolescent literature written on the topic of bullying. To narrow our list, we used Bott's (2004), *The Bully in the Book and in the Classroom* and analyzed the 10 books listed in the chapter titled "Middle School: The Peak Years Grades 7 and 8." Each researcher analyzed three books for a total of nine books. To establish a shared analysis perspective, the researchers initially read and analyzed one common text from the list. In total, all 10 titles from Bott's (2004) middle school chapter were reviewed. We recognize this is a selection of texts within a large and continually growing category of books. Our intent was not to focus solely on these books, but instead to help prevent bullying by providing some guidelines and examples for educators and others to use to examine and analyze texts related to this topic.

Data Collection and Findings

Stargirl: Analysis of the Text

A majority of the bullying in *Stargirl* (Spinelli, 2000) is social rejection, although there are a few instances of physical and verbal abuse. The primary adult character is a neighbor friend, Archie, who takes the role of a teacher outside of school. Although there is not one specific bullying incident where Archie steps in, he does offer advice as a passive supporter when Leo voices his concern about Stargirl drawing attention to herself and being ignored by students.

When Stargirl is a guest on the school-sponsored show called "The Hot Seat," things really heat up. This show has a group of students on "the jury" who can ask any question to the guest; they are supposed to only ask questions and not make judgments or statements. Hillari and other members of the jury berate Stargirl with insulting questions and harassing statements. As the jury continues to harass Stargirl, Mr. Robineau, the school sponsor of the show, decides it is getting out of hand and actively intervenes. He stops the abuse and the taping of the show, and does not allow the show to be aired. Table 1 presents a further breakdown of the adults' interventions, involvement, and the results of their interaction.

The Shadow Place: Analysis of the Text

The main characters in Tanzman's (2002) book, *The Shadow Place,* include a middle-school-aged boy, Rodney Porter, who is a loner and outcast except for his one friend, Lissa, who serves as the narrator of the story. While being socially bullied at school is hurtful to Rodney, his life at home is much worse. He lives with his verbally abusive father who is also the local baseball coach. This text does not have any adult characters who intervene when bullying takes place (see Table 2). At moments, it seems as if Lissa's parents will step in, but instead they ignore the situation and do nothing. Lissa and both of her parents witness verbal and slight physical abuse. Rodney's father never physically hits his son in front of anyone, but the neighbors see signs of abuse. Instead of interfering, Lissa's mom makes excuses for Rodney's father's actions. When Rodney's dad publicly "explodes" and yells at Rodney at a baseball game, not one adult steps in. When Rodney is at his wit's end, he runs away, and Lissa finally tells her parents what Rodney is doing.

Although *The Shadow Place* does not have examples or role models of adult characters stepping in to help during the bullying situations, it does show youth that they can make a difference in bullying by being aware of their friends' actions and questioning incidents that look suspicious. The book can also be

Table 1. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *Stargirl*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
Stargirl	Social shunning by entire student body. Small amount of physical and verbal abuse	Neighborhood friend named Archie	Not one specific incident led to Archie intervening. Leo mentioned Stargirl being ignored and they discussed reasons why and how to help.	Archie provides passive support by talking to Leo, and Leo tries to help Stargirl act more "normal" to be accepted by the student body.	Leo somewhat accepts Stargirl
	Verbal by Hillari Kimble and the jury on the "Hot Seat" set	School teacher, Mr. Robineau	Students verbally assault Stargirl while in the "hot seat."	Actively intervenes by stopping the show that was being taped	Stargirl continues to be shunned until the end of the book.

Table 2. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *The Shadow Place*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
The Shadow Place	Parental—verbal and physical abuse from father	None—other adult characters assumed father character was doing what was right for his child.	There was no adult character intervention even when a youth tried to tell adults.	Adult characters ignored the signs of parental bullying.	None

used as an example to show youth that they may have to point out bullying explicitly to adults to entice them to intervene.

THE LOSERS' CLUB: ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Lekich's (2002) *The Losers' Club* has three main characters. Alex, the narrator, is a boy with cerebral palsy, which forces him to walk with crutches. Manny, whose real name is Rupert, is a short, overweight boy, and Winston is an Asian academic slacker, whose parents are wealthy and work in Hong Kong most of the year. Jerry Whitman, a popular student described by the school administration as a golden boy, bullies all the school's losers and steals their lunch money weekly.

Throughout the story, there are situations where adult characters can and do intervene; however, it is usually not directly related to the losers getting bullied (see Table 3). Harry, a neighbor, has both indirect and direct involvement with the bullies. When Jerry and his "goons" follow Winston home one day and harass him, Harry actively intervenes. The end result

of the confrontation is that Jerry and his friends leave Winston alone for the time being. Other examples of adult characters intervening include Mr. Sankey, the apartment manager where Alex and his father live, who lends an ear to Alex during some trying times, and Mr. Winecki, the school custodian, who occasionally provides a refuge from the bullies on campus.

This text shows that adults can provide support in a variety of ways for youth who are bullied. Harry's character has the most direct impact, both with the boys and as a deterrent against the bullying. However, it is clear that the other adult characters also played a role in stopping the abuse that was happening. The story is told from a high schooler's perspective, but it would best be used with upper elementary or middle-school-aged students because the story line is a bit juvenile.

HIDDEN TALENTS: ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

In the story *Hidden Talents* by Lubar (1999), Martin, a loud-mouthed, trouble-making middle schooler is sent to an alternative boarding school after being expelled

Table 3. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *Losers' Club*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
Losers' Club	Verbal, physical, and emotional	Multiple adult characters Mrs. Loomis, geometry teacher	No specific incident. Mrs. Loomis held the boys to high standards. She would stop by homes when students were struggling.	Mrs. Loomis questioning the boys forced other adults to step in due to lack of parental support of one of the main characters' parents.	Because of Mrs. Loomis, Harry, another adult, gets involved to help the boys.
	The main bully character, Jerry Whitman, would take all "losers" money every week.	"The Beast" Harry Beardsley, loser neighbor	Neighbor kids ask him to help with adult supervision. Then he sees the bullying happen.	"The Beast" actively intervenes by confronting the bullies in Winston's front yard. He helps the losers set up the holiday display. Provides moral support.	Eventually the bullies lose, but it is not from one adult interacting with them.

from multiple other schools. He and a group of other misfit students at this school befriend each other while trying to avoid the wrath of the school bully, Lester Bloodbath. The teachers at the school are also a group of interesting misfits. They try a variety of unique teaching methods to reach their students.

This text has many adult characters, including parents, school administrators, and teachers. However, none of them ever seem to notice or be concerned with bullying (see Table 4). One would believe, especially at a school with students who were expelled from previous schools, that teachers and administrators would look for and address the issue of bullying. Instead, they all choose to ignore it. This book's bully character is discussed throughout the story, but there is no mention of teachers acknowledging even the possibility of bullying in the school.

Although the story line and certain aspects of this text are entertaining, it is not a good example of how adults can and should intervene in instances of bullying.

THE SKIN I'M IN: ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Flake's (1998/2007) book, *The Skin I'm In,* is about Maleeka, a 13-year-old middle school student. Maleeka is harshly teased by her peers for the darkness of her skin, her homemade clothes, and her good grades. Maleeka's classmates see that the color of her skin is darker than theirs and decide to make negative remarks about this. In order to alleviate the continuous bullying, Maleeka develops an alliance with

Table 4. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *Hidden Talents*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
Hidden Talents	Verbal and physical	Many teachers, but none ever become involved enough to intervene in the bullying, even though the principal is aware it is happening.	None. Adults ignore and do not intervene.	Adults at an alternative boarding school never seem to notice or address the idea bullying might take place.	None. No interaction.

girls in her school. It is through this relationship that Maleeka finds herself doing classroom assignments for one of the girls in exchange for nice clothing. She also makes bad choices that get her in trouble in her attempt to fit in and be accepted. Such decisions backfire, and she finds herself in more trouble.

Maleeka's new English teacher, Miss Saunders, realizes her academic potential and encourages her to write. From the beginning, Miss Saunders makes a point to highlight Maleeka's skin qualities by contradicting the bullying statements of her classmates. Maleeka sees the success and confidence Miss Saunders exhibits and admires her ability to rise above the color of her skin.

Miss Saunders provides active intervention that stops the bullying against Maleeka (see Table 5). It is through her guidance and communication that Maleeka begins to realize her potential and sees how she needs to be true to herself. Miss Saunders helps Maleeka realize that her skin color is not what defines her. This story is a good example of how adult characters can be actively involved and model behaviors for youth to help them work through issues related to bullying.

TANGERINE: ANALYSIS OF TEXT

Bloor's *Tangerine* (1997) is the story about Paul Fisher, a legally blind twelve-year-old. The Fisher family moves to Tangerine, Florida. It is in this town that Paul becomes the brunt of his brother Erik's negative and malicious actions, and Paul finds the courage to finally confront his parents' secrets about their oldest son's behavior.

The character Paul does not communicate to his parents about the physical and verbal bullying he is subjected to by his brother. Research points out that victims of bullying rarely communicate the aggressions against them to adults (Fekkes, Pijpers, &Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Mishna, McLuckie, & Saini, 2009). In addition, he does not share his awareness of his brother's bullying actions toward other kids. His hesitation to talk to his parents comes as a result of his parents' admiration of Erik's abilities in sports.

At one point in the story, Paul convinces his parents to enroll him in Tangerine Middle School; it is at this new school that Paul becomes part of the soccer team. Despite his disability, he takes the position of goalie and develops new friendships. He also becomes more aware of his brother's shortcomings.

A turning point in the story is when Paul states, "But I can see. I can see things that Mom and Dad can't. Or won't" (p. 4). Paul's statement reflects his frustration with his parents as they seem indifferent and ignore his brother's bullying actions. Toward the end of the story, Paul decides to confront his parents, who seem blind to Erik's bullying and who focus solely on what he does well. Paul wants to discuss the events that caused his impairment and exactly how Erik might have been involved. His parents state, "We wanted . . . to keep you from always hating your brother" (p. 257). Their explanation reinforces the idea that they have been protecting their oldest son (see Table 6). Through characters in this text, it is easy to see why some students choose not to tell adults about the bullying they are experiencing.

DROWNING ANNA: ANALYSIS OF TEXT

Drowning Anna by Mayfield (2002) is a story about a girl who moves to a new school. Upon arrival, Anna is befriended by Haley Parkin, the most popular girl at school. Everyone wants to be friends with Haley because she is outgoing, but they are also afraid of her. As Anna starts to become just as popular as Haley, Haley begins to verbally and emotionally bully her.

Table 5. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *The Skin I'm In*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
The Skin I'm In	Verbal and physical	Miss Saunders, English teacher	Other students tease Maleeka about the color of her skin.	Miss Saunders is actively involved and complements Maleeka for the color of her skin and scholarship abilities.	At the end of the story, Maleeka finds herself with regained self-esteem and proud of her accomplishments. She is happy to be who she is.

Table 6. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *Tangerine*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
Tangerine	Verbal and physical	Parents	No adult intervention	Paul's parents ignore many situations where his brother Erik bullies him and others.	Paul's parents expected that by hiding the truth from Paul, he would not hate his brother Erik. He feels betrayal for their lack of intervention.

The reasons for Haley's attacks appear to be unknown to others, as expressed by Anna's friend Melanie when she mentions, "Haley Parkin goes off on people. I don't know why. Perhaps she gets bored with them. Perhaps she can't stand competition" (p. 12). After isolating Anna, Haley starts to deliver physical attacks against her. However, nothing changes because teachers never suspect this behavior of Haley, and she never gets caught.

With the constant bullying and increasing feelings of loneliness, Anna starts to cut herself and voice her thoughts of suicide to her friend Melanie. Anna's parents discover the struggles their daughter has been going through as Anna's mother finds her "lying on the floor with her knees crooked to her chest, like a fetus. She is motionless" (p. 23). Anna's parents attempt to help by approaching her teachers to find ways to make the bullying stop. However, these communications are ignored, and Anna continues to be the target of Haley's bullying. This book demonstrates that while adult characters may step in and try to help, sometimes their actions do not solve the problems or stop the bullying (see Table 7).

THE REVEALERS: ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

The members of *The Revealers* (Wilhelm, 2003) club, Russell, Elliott, and Catalina, have personally experienced physical, verbal, and social bullying, and they use the platform of an online newsletter to tell the story of other victims of bullying. Adult intervention is a key part of the storyline, featuring parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. Russell's mother, several teachers, and community members encourage The Revealers club to continue sharing the stories of bullying victims through the online newsletter project. This adult encouragement seems to empower all students by giving them an avenue to share their voice.

Not all adults are encouraging; however; the school principal and another parent do not necessarily advocate on behalf of the bullies, but their actions attempt to silence the victims. These adults try to shut down the online network that The Revealers club is using to post the stories of bullying victims. Table 8 presents additional results of adult intervention and involvement.

Table 7. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *Drowning Anna*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
Drowning Anna	Psychological, verbal, and physical	Parents	Anna begins to withdraw from her parents, and her behavior escalates to cutting herself. She also attempts to commit suicide.	Anna's parents are actively involved and try to seek the help of the teachers and principal at her school. The teachers and administration ignore this.	The parents' visit to the school does not stop the harassment by Haley.

Table 8. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *The Revealers*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
The Revealers	Physical	Russell's mom	Russell's mom noticed his injuries and inquired about the bullying incident.	Russell's mom provides passive support by encouraging him to take the scientific approach to solving the problem.	Russell takes the advice to handle the problem in a scientific manner. This leads him to a friendship with Elliott and Catalina.
	Physical Elliott was physically bullied when his crutches were kicked out from under him.	Mrs. Capelli, school principal	Russell's mom called the school principal Mrs. Capelli heard Elliott curse at the bully who had just tripped him.	Received phone call and it was ignored. Mrs. Capelli verbally reprimanded Elliott for using a curse word.	No action was taken as a result of the parent phone call. Mrs. Capelli gave both Elliott and Russell detention for their involvement, but no punishment was given to the bully.
	Bethany, the true bully, appeared to be the victim of bullying by The Revealers through a written note accusing her of cheating.	Mr. DeMere, Bethany's father	Bethany reported the note to her father at home.	Mr. DeMere was actively involved and came to the school to confront the principal and the member of The Revealers club.	The school principal revoked the online network privileges of The Revealers club, preventing them from continuing to tell stories of bully victims.
	Physical, verbal, social bullying of The Revealers club and the stories they reported through their online newsletter	Mr. Dallas, the teacher responsible for student access on the school network	The Revealers club sought out the advice of Mr. Dallas on how to send the newsletter out to everyone via the network.	Mr. Dallas provided moral and passive support by encouraging The Revealers club to send out the newsletter.	The Revealers club submitted their newsletter project to the Creative Science Fair because of the encouraging words of Mr. Dallas.

THE GIRLS: ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

The Girls (Koss, 2000) highlights the turmoil of bullying written from the unique perspectives of five girls, each involved in a middle school clique. Maya, Renee, Darcy, Brianna, and Candace were the best of friends until the day that Candace, the unofficial clique leader, decides that Maya is *out*. Based on Candace's verdict, Darcy hosts a sleepover and invites everyone but Maya. At the sleepover, Renee, Brianna, and Darcy begin to question why Maya had been excluded from their group, and they eventually begin to recognize Candace as a bully.

Although adults do intervene throughout the text, the problem of creating and belonging to a clique is not completely resolved. In this story, several mothers intervene, but not all step in to stop the mistreatment of Maya. Both Brianna and Renee's mothers knew of the bullying, but did little to discourage it. They communicated to their daughters that the responsibility for hurting Maya was with Darcy and Candace, and there was no need to feel guilty. Maya's mother intervened to defend Maya from further bullying when she confronted a prank phone caller. She also encouraged Maya and gave her valuable advice on how to handle the social exclusion at school. Because Darcy was acting as the bully, her mother intervened to correct this inappropriate behavior. She grounded Darcy and required her to apologize to Maya.

The only school adult to intervene in the bullying problems was the school nurse. She did not set out to intervene in the social bullying situation, but she served as a listening ear when Brianna explained

the whole story. Eventually the nurse asked three very simple questions encouraging Brianna to think about the right way to proceed with Maya. It is this conversation that leads Brianna to apologize. For more analysis see Table 9.

The Misfits: Analysis of the Text
The Misfits (Howe, 2001) tells the story of four friends who rely heavily on each other to survive seventh grade. Known as The Misfits around school, Skeezie, Addie, Joe, and Bobby are mocked and ridiculed by the other students. Collectively, they have been called almost every name in the book—Fatty, Dork, Fairy, Dweeb, Loser, Dummy, Slimeball, Freak, Beanpole, Nerdette, Brains—just to name a few. Through a series of events, Addie decides it would be a good idea for The Misfits to run for student council. Although the Misfits' No-Name Party did not win the student

Table 9. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *The Girls*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
The Girls	Social—Maya is not invited to Darcy's sleepover.	Brianna's mother	Maya called Brianna to see if they could come over.	Brianna's mom took the phone call and explained that Brianna was headed over to Darcy's and inquired if Maya was headed there as well.	Maya learned that she was being excluded from the group. Brianna's mom ignored the situation and did not do anything to help Maya.
	Social—Maya is not invited to Darcy's sleepover.	Renee's mother	Renee discusses the sleepover with her mother and mentions that Darcy invited everyone except Maya.	Renee's mom supports Darcy's decision not to invite everyone.	Reinforcement of girl bullying.
	Social and verbal—Maya receives a prank phone call from Darcy during the night of the sleepover.	Maya's mom and dad	Maya's parents are alerted to the bullying when Maya receives a prank phone call from one of the girls at the sleepover.	After the phone incident, Maya's mother provides passive support and tells Maya just to ignore the girls and go back to school the next day.	Maya returns to school the next day and takes her mother's advice to avoid and ignore the clique as much as possible.
	Social—Maya receives a prank phone call from Darcy during the night of the sleepover.	Darcy's mom	Darcy's older sister Keloryn tells their mother about Darcy's bullying behaviors.	Darcy's mom actively confronts her about the bullying and voices her disappointment.	Darcy is grounded as a result of her actions and eventually she does apologize to Maya, but it does not appear to be heartfelt—just a formality.
	Social and verbal—Brianna is excluded from Candace's clique as well.	School nurse	Brianna is feeling sick because she needs to apologize to Maya. While in the nurse's office, she confesses these feelings to the nurse.	The nurse asks Brianna what she thinks she should do, what her parents would want her to do, and what the right thing to do would be.	Brianna is forced to self-reflect and eventually she decides to face her fear of apologizing and talk to Maya.

council election, The Misfits were able to communicate the message about the harm name calling causes, and the principal adopts their idea for a No-Name Day.

The social and verbal bullying that takes place through name calling is central throughout the text, but the adults do very little to prevent it. By not intervening, they inadvertently send the message that name calling is allowed throughout the school. After The Misfits begin the No-Name Party, a few adults encourage them to continue speaking out on behalf of other victims of name calling, as presented in Table 10.

Conclusion and Implications for Practice and Research

Several findings emerge within the content analysis of these adolescent novels. In some of these stories we see caring adult characters willing to actively intervene to stop incidents of bullying. Such is the case of Harry, in *The Loser's Club* (Lekich, 2002), who direct-

ly challenges Jerry and his friends, and consequently they leave Winston alone. Adult characters can also provide encouragement and verbal support to victims of bullying and, in some instances, they become role models for those being bullied. For example, Miss Saunders, in *The Skin I'm In* (Flakes, (1998)/2007), becomes the support that Maleeka needs to begin to see herself as a valuable individual with great potential. In *The Misfits* (Howe, 2001) and *The Revealers* (Wilhelm, 2003), we see adults providing passive support by encouraging students to represent the voice of bullying victims at large. Although the adults do not step in and interrupt the bullying taking place, their endorsement of the victims demonstrates their support.

On some occasions, however, adult characters seem disconnected from the bullying. For instance, Rodney, in *The Shadow Place* (Tanzman, 2002), is the victim of bullying at the hands of his classmates and his own father, who is physically and verbally

Table 10. Content of bullying and adult involvement in *The Misfits*

Book Title	Type of bullying	Role of adult character	Trigger to adult intervention	Specifics of the adult involvement	Results of adult interaction
The Misfits	Verbal—Name calling	Various teachers	No intervention	Teachers ignore action and do not intervene.	Name calling continues between students.
	Social—Embarrassing a student in front of peers	Ms. Wyman, classroom teacher	Addie, a main character, sits on a whoopee cushion.	Ms. Wyman is actively involved and verbally reprimands the suspected bully. However, she assumes guilt of the wrong person.	The real bully is able to continue unnoticed.
	Verbal	Mr. Kellerman, store manager at Bobby's place of employment	Mr. Kellerman walks Bobby home after work, and they discuss the recent death of Mr. Goodspeed's mother.	Mr. Kellerman confides in Bobby that he had been called names in school as well.	Bobby begins to see name calling as a problem that faces more than just his group of friends, The Misfits.
	Verbal	Mr. Kiley, school principal	Student council campaign and election results	Mr. Kiley calls The Misfits into the office and explains that their No-Name Party idea has real value even though they lost the election.	Mr. Kiley chooses to use the No-Name Day idea at the middle school from then on.

abusive. However, the adults around him, who in multiple instances witness the bullying, chose to ignore it and do not intervene or try to stop the abuse. It takes the intervention of Lissa, Rodney's friend, to make the adults realize they need to step in and act on the situation. This is also the case in the text *Hidden Talents* (Lubar, 1999), where bullying takes place in the school and not one teacher seems to notice or intervene.

Through this content analysis, we also found that adolescent literature reflects the frustrations experienced by victims of bullying and their hesitation to communicate the harassment to adults. For example, Anna, in *Drowning Anna* (Mayfield, 2002), experiences increased bullying after her parents try to intervene. In *Tangerine* (Bloor, 1997), Paul's disappointment increases as his parents do not stop his brother's verbal harassment of him and other kids.

Our findings about adult character intervention from our content analysis seem to mirror the major concerns from our review of research about adult intervention in bullying (Entenman et al., 2005; Esch, 2008; Hillsberg & Spak, 2006; Moulton, 2010; Quinn et al., 2003)—that educators often fail to adequately intervene. The lack of action on the part of educators reinforces and institutionalizes school harassment and bullying, whether it is verbal, social, psychological/emotional, or physical. However, when adults in schools do intervene, either actively or passively, there are often positive results, although this did not always manifest itself in the adolescent literature we reviewed.

What is more, after analyzing this selection of adolescent literature, the researchers see that not all texts portray adult intervention in a positive light. Teachers are urged to use caution when choosing texts to use with students. We believe carefully chosen texts can provide teachers with meaningful opportunities to engage students in recognizing the important role of adults in bullying intervention and prevention. Perhaps as students meet caring adults through these books, they will be encouraged to rely upon and confide in the caring adults in their own lives.

Finally, this type of analysis of children's and adolescent literature—which looks for 1) the type of bullying (physical, verbal, or social); 2) the role, if any, that adults played in the bullying situation; 3) the triggers that prompted adult intervention; 4) the specifics of the adult involvement in the bullying occurrence (active, passive, or nonexistent); and 5) the results of this interaction—can be utilized in a variety of settings and with many other books to aid in preventing various types of bullying. For instance, at the classroom level, teachers could use this 5-point content analysis structure to determine which books to read to children or have children read in their classrooms. At the school level, school librarians could conduct similar analyses in order to recommend to teachers which books demonstrate anti-bullying messages and intervention types.

Alternatively, school leaders (principals, department chairs, grade-level leaders, etc.) could create teacher "book clubs" to evaluate fictional literature using this same structure; such evaluation could help teachers determine what students in a given grade might read, or have an option to read, as part of a schoolwide, anti-bullying campaign. Further, at a community level, parent–teacher organizations could use the same 5-point analysis to review texts for donations to school libraries or to develop a school/parent, anti-bullying awareness movement.

Finally, college and university teacher education instructors could utilize our content analysis method to have their preservice teachers analyze literature as a class exercise. This could be valuable background for preservice teachers entering the K–12 classroom environment, giving them an awareness of bullying, familiarity with related literature, tools for identifying literature that offers anti-bullying messages, and coping mechanisms for their K–12 students who might be dealing with this issue.

Jeannette Jones is an associate professor and the coordinator of Teacher Education at Northwest Vista College. She has taught preservice teachers since the inception of the Associate of Arts in Teaching degree administered by the state of Texas in 2005. She also has experience teaching ESL and Reading to community college students.

Larinee Dennis has worked in the field of education for 10 years as an elementary and middle school classroom teacher and since 2008 as an assistant professor of Teacher Education at Hannibal–LaGrange University.

Melvina Torres-OvRick has been teaching since 1997, and she is presently the instructional coach and bilingual coordinator for the Ruidoso Municipal Schools.

Scott L. Walker has worked in higher education since 1997, and is currently an associate professor and the discipline coordinator for geography and anthropology at Northwest Vista College.

References

Atlas, R., & Pepler, D. (1998). Observations of bullying in the classroom. *The Journal of Educational Research, 92*, 86–99.

Beane, A. L. (2005). *The bully free classroom: Over 100 tips and strategies for teachers K–8*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Bloor, E. (1997). *Tangerine*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Children's Books.

Bott, C. J. (2004). *The bully in the book and in the classroom.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Bott, C. J. (2009). *More bullies in more books.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Carney, J., Hazler, R., & Higgins, J. (2002). Characteristics of school bullies and victims as perceived by public school professionals. *Journal of School Violence, 1*, 91–105.

Coloroso, B. (2008). *The bully, the bullied, and the bystander.* New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Craig, W. M., Henderson, L., & Murphy, J. G. (2000). Prospective teachers' attitudes toward bullying and victimization. *School Psychology International, 21*, 5–21.

Crothers, L. M., & Kolbert, J. B. (2004). Comparing middle school teachers' and students' views on bullying and anti-bullying interventions. *Journal of School Violence, 3*, 17–32.

DeVoe, J. F., & Kaffenberger, S. (2005). *Student reports of bullying: Results from the 2001 school crime supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCES 2005–310). Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

Ellis, A. A., & Shute, R. (2007). Teacher responses to bullying in relation to moral orientation and seriousness of bullying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 77*, 649–663.

Entenman, J., Murnen, T. J., & Hendricks, C. (2005). Victims, bullies, and bystanders in K–3 literature. *The Reading Teacher, 59*, 352–364.

Esch, G. (2008). Children's literature: Perceptions of bullying. *Childhood Education, 84*(6), 379–382.

Espelage, D., & Asidao, C. (2001). Interviews with middle school students: Bullying, victimization, and contextual factors. *Journal of Emotional Abuse, 2*, 49–62.

Fekkes, M., Pijpers, F. I. M., & Verloove-Vanhorick, S. P. (2005). Bullying: Who does what, when, and where? Involvement of children, teachers, and parents in bullying behavior. *Health Education Research, 20*, 81–91.

Flake, S. G. (1998/2007). *The skin I'm in*. New York, NY: Hyperion.

Hall, H. R. (2008). Student-parent-teacher partnerships: Creating safe classrooms andcommunities. *Democracy & Education, 18*(1), 46–49.

Hargrove, K. (2010). Stop school bullying: A tale of two girls. *Gifted Child Today, 33*(4), 39–40.

Harris, S., & Petrie, G. (2003). *Bullying: The bullies, the victims, the bystanders.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Publishing.

Hazler, R. J. (1996). *Breaking the cycle of violence: Interventions for bullying and victimization.* Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

Hazler, R., Miller, D., Carney, J., & Green, S. (2001). Adult recognition of school bullying situations. *Educational Researcher, 43*, 133–146.

Henkin, R. (2005). *Confronting bullying: Literacy as a tool for character education.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hillsberg, C., & Spak, H. (2006). Young adult literature as the centerpiece of an antibullying program in middle school. *Middle School Journal, 38*(2), 23–28.

Holt, M. K., & Keyes, M. A. (2004). Teachers' attitudes toward bullying. In D. L. Espelage & S. M. Swearer (Eds.), *Bullying in American schools: A social-ecological perspective on prevention and intervention* (pp. 121–139). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Howe, J. (2001). *The misfits.* New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Koss, A. (2000). *The girls*. New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Langdon, S., & Preble, W. (2008). The relationship between levels of perceived respect and bullying in 5th through 12th graders. *Adolescence, 43*, 485–503.

Lekich, J. (2002). *The losers' club.* New York, NY: Annick Press.

Lubar, D. (1999). *Hidden talents.* New York, NY: Starscape, Tom Doherty Associates.

Ma, X. (2002). Bullying in middle school: Individual and school characteristics of victims and offenders. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 13*, 63–89.

Malecki, C. K., & Demaray, M. K. (2004). The role of social support in the lives of bullies, victims, and bully-victims. In D. L. Espelage & S. M. Swearer (Eds.), *Bullying in American schools: A social-ecological perspective on prevention and intervention* (pp. 211–225). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Mayfield, Sue. (2002). *Drowning Anna*. New York, NY: Hyperion.

McNamara, B. E., & McNamara, F. J. (1997). *Keys to dealing with bullies*. New York, NY: Barron's Educational Series.

Mishna, F. (2004). A qualitative study of bullying from multiple perspectives. *Children and Schools, 26*, 234–247.

Mishna, F., McLuckie, A., & Saini, M. (2009). Real-world dangers in an online reality: A qualitative study examining online relationships and cyber abuse. *Social Work Research, 33*, 107–118.

Moulton, E. (2010). Confronting bullying: Searching for strategies in children's literature. (Unpublished thesis). Bringham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychological adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 285*, 2094–2100.

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

Olweus, D. (2001). *Olweus' core program against bullying and antisocial behavior: A teacher handbook*. Bergen, Norway: Author.

Orpinas, P., Horne, A. M., & Staniszewski, D. (2003). School bullying: Changing the problem by changing the school. *School Psychology Review*, *32*, 431–444.

Pellegrini, A. D., Bartini, M., & Brooks, F. (2001). School bullies, victims, and aggressive victims: Factors relating to group affiliation and victimization in early adolescence. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *91*, 216–224.

Peterson, R. L., & Skiba, R. (2001). Creating school climates that prevent school violence. *The Social Studies, 92*, 167–175.

Quinn, K. B., Barone, B., Kearns, J., Stackhouse, S. A., & Zimmerman, M. E. (2003). Using a novel unit to help understand and prevent bullying in schools. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 46*, 582–591.

Rigby, K. (2004). Addressing bullying in schools: Theoretical perspectives and their implications. *School Psychology International, 25*, 287–300.

Roland, E. (2002). Aggression, depression, and bullying others. *Aggressive Behavior*, *28*, 198–206.

Ross, D. M. (1996). *Childhood bullying and teasing: What school personnel, other professionals, and parents can do*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Smith, P. K., & Shu, S. (2000). What good schools can do about bullying: Findings from a survey in English schools after a decade of research. *Childhood, 7*, 193–212.

Spinelli, J. (2000). *Stargirl.* New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Stockdale, M. S., Hangaduambo, S., Duys, D., Larson, K., & Sarvela, P. D. (2002). Rural elementary students', parents,' and teachers' perceptions of bullying. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, *26*, 266–277.

Suniti Bhat, S. (2008). Cyber bullying: Overview and strategies for school counselors, guidance officers, and all school personnel. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counseling, 18*, 53–66.

Tanzman, C. (2002). *The shadow place.* Brookfield, CT: Roaring Book Press.

US Department of Education & US Department of Justice. (2010). *Indicators of school crime and safety*. Washington, DC: Authors. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011002.pdf.

Varjas, K., Meyers, J., Bellmoff, L., Lopp, E., Birckbichler, L., & Marshall, M. (2008). Missing voices: Fourth through eighth-grade urban students' perceptions of bullying. *Journal of School Violence, 7*(4), 97–118.

Wilhelm, D. (2003). *The revealers.* New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Call for 2014 Outstanding Middle Level Educator in the English Language Arts Award Nominations

The Outstanding Middle Level Educator in the English Language Arts Award (formerly the Edwin A. Hoey Award) recognizes exceptional English language arts teachers in grades 6–8 who have demonstrated excellence in teaching and inspired a spirit of inquiry and a love of learning in their students. The language arts magazine *Scholastic Scope* sponsors this award.

Nomination information can be found on the NCTE website at www.ncte.org/awards/middle-educator and must be submitted by **May 1, 2014**. Results will be announced in Fall 2014, and the award will be presented at the 2014 Annual Convention in Washington, DC, at the Middle Level Luncheon.