

Addressing Bullying in the Context of English Language Arts (ELA) Part of the School/Community Bullying Prevention Strategy

Every language uses forms of language or **registers** for particular situations and purposes. Joos (1967) labelled them as frozen – language that is very formal and respectful (e.g., a formal prayer, the national anthem); formal – language that uses the standard structures and word choices of work and school; consultative – language that is formal but appropriate in conversation; casual – language that is used between friends; intimate – language that is very specific to the audience. This register includes the language used between lovers or twins but also can be the language of harassment or verbal abuse. **It is this latter usage that bullies often resort to and use to intimidate, put down, and control others.**

If verbal bullying, for example, is to be addressed and stopped:

- all adults need to make it clear that the use of intimate register to intimidate, put down, or control others is unacceptable
- when students use an inappropriate register, teachers, parents, and others must take time for direct and explicit instruction and modelling of the appropriate register and its associated language
- all students need to learn how much the appropriate use of the language registers affects their lives, their relationships, and their ability to participate in the community at large.

Information for Elementary Level Teachers

Language usage is best learned in a caring and respectful environment where students explore and learn about language in a variety of contexts. At the Kindergarten and Elementary Level (1-5), the following contexts allow students and teachers to explore appropriate language usage and behaviour and to address issues associated with bullying. For example,

Contexts	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Personal and Philosophical In this context, students are looking inward and focusing on self-image and self-esteem.	Feelings (e.g., How do we feel when someone says that s/he is better than we are?)	Safety (e.g., When do we feel 'safe' on the playground?)	My Body (e.g., In what ways are we all the same and yet different?)	Making Choices (e.g., How do we deal with others who may hurt our feelings?)	School Life (e.g., How can we ensure that our school is a safe place to learn and play?)	Heroes (e.g., Why were these people good models for us when it comes to accepting others?)
Social, Cultural, and Historical In this context, students look outward and examine their relationships with others, their community, and that of the world.	Friends (e.g., How can we be a good friend?)	The Playground (e.g., How do we treat others on our playground?)	Life in Our Community (e.g., What are the responsibilities of a good citizen?)	Other Communities (e.g., What can we learn about how people treat each other in other communities?)	Life in Northern Saskatchewan (e.g., How do people work together and support each other?)	Early Explorers (e.g., How did people support and work together in the past?)
Imaginative and Literary In this context, students consider imaginary worlds and possibilities.	Make Believe (e.g., What would we say and do to help a new student in our school feel welcome?)	Fairy Tales (e.g., What do we learn about how to treat others in these stories?)	Humour (e.g., When is our treatment of others funny and when is it inappropriate?)	Author Study (e.g., What did we learn about the children in these stories and how they were affected by bullying?)	Trickster Tales (e.g., What does the trickster show us about how we should behave?)	Glimpses of Other Worlds (e.g., What did people do to make this place a better place to live?)
Communicative In this context, students consider the role of communication in their lives.	Celebrations (e.g., How do we celebrate individual and class achievements?)	The Telephone (e.g., How do we respond to others on the phone?)	Play on Words (e.g., How do we use words to be funny and how can they also hurt others?)	Communicating Electronically (e.g., What is inappropriate in a chat room?)	Words and Advertising (e.g., How do ads use language to celebrate or put down others?)	Values and Messages on the WWW (e.g., How might these messages hurt or insult someone?)
Environmental and Technological	In this context, students explore the elements of nature, environment issues, and the role of technology and development in their society.					

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Information for Middle Level Teachers

Language is best learned in a caring and respectful environment where students explore and learn about language in a variety of contexts. At the Middle Level, the following contexts allow students and teachers to explore appropriate language usage and behaviour and to address issues associated with bullying. For example,

Contexts	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Personal and Philosophical (In this context, students are looking inward and focusing on self-image and self-esteem. They reflect on self and life, on their beliefs and values and those of society.)	Growing Up (Self and Relationships) (e.g., How have others dealt with the challenges of growing up including bullying?)	Finding the Courage (e.g., What can we learn about courage from characters, both real and fictional, who triumph through determination, talent, or inner strength?)	Become Myself (e.g., What can we celebrate about ourselves? About others?)	Exploring Loyalty, Love, and Relationships (e.g., What does it mean to be a loyal and true friend?)
Social, Cultural, and Historical (In this context, students look outward and examine their relationships with others, their community, and that of the world. They also can consider the historical context.)	Looking for Answers (e.g., What is the best way to deal with conflict? How can I help another person who is having a difficult time with his or her relationships?)	A Better World (e.g., How can we make the world a better place for all people?)	Is it Fair – In Search of Justice (e.g., What are our responsibilities to others?)	Surviving and Conquering (e.g., How can we help one another 'survive'?)
Imaginative and Literary (In this context, students consider imaginary worlds and possibilities (e.g., what if...) as well as a range of genres and authors.)	Tales - Heroes (e.g., How do these tales help us see our own potential and inspire us to support others?)	Actions and Reactions (e.g., How do the tales of others help us learn to be better people?)	Greek Narratives and Legends (e.g., What types of obstacles do the characters in these narratives face and how do they grow because of the help of other characters?)	Indigenous and Norse Narratives (e.g., What lessons do we learn about people through these stories and tales?)
Communicative (In this context, students consider the role of communication in their lives and the ideas and technology that help people become effective communicators.)	Media Messages (e.g., How can the media help us learn how to treat others better?)	Lighten Up - On the Funny Side (e.g., What makes something funny to one person and not funny to someone else?)	Burning Questions (e.g., How can searching for answers to problems in our relationships help us grow as caring individuals?)	Image and Information (e.g., How can visuals present all people in a positive light?)
Environmental and Technological	In this context, students explore the elements of nature, environment issues, and the role of technology and development in their society.			

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Information for Secondary Level Teachers

At the Secondary Level, students must complete five required 100-hour credit courses and may take one or more language arts electives. Three of the compulsory ELA courses are organized around themes (ELA A10, ELA 20, ELA A30) and two are organized around issues (ELA B10 and ELA B30) that are of interest to students at this level.

Compulsory Courses	Focus Themes/Topics/ Issues	Possible Sub-themes/Sub-issues
English Language Arts A10	Canadian Frontiers and Homeland – Journeys and Discoveries	Roots and Identity, Traditions and Celebrations, Beliefs and Search for Meaning, Cultural Encounters
	Challenges – Opportunities and Obstacles	Questions and Adventures, Courage and Leadership, Struggle and Achievement, Conflict and Search for Peace
English Language Arts B10	Decisions – Action or Apathy	Life Pressures, Values, Consequences, Career Decisions, Apathy versus Action
	Equality – Pain and Pride	Judging and Misjudging Others, Rights and Responsibilities, Inequalities, Racial Tensions, Justice and Fairness
English Language Arts 20	Recollection – A Journey Back	Innocence and Experience, Family and Peer Relationships, School and Education, Wonder and Imagination, Triumphs and Defeats
	Anticipation – On the Threshold	Roles and Responsibilities, Choices and Commitments, Perspectives and Passages, Values and Goals
English Language Arts A30	Canada – Diverse Landscapes and Peoples	A Vast and Varied Land, Nature and the Seasons, Regional Landscapes, Identity and Diversity, Personalities and Values
	Canada – Diverse Voices	Aboriginal Voices, Voices Through Time, Regional Voices, Multicultural Voices, Female and Male Voices, Marginalized Voices
English Language Arts B30	The Human Condition – In Search of Self	Identity and Sense of Self, Human Qualities and Ideals, Human Relationships, Joy and Inspiration, Doubt and Fear
	The Social Experience – Beyond Personal Goals	Individual and Social Responsibility; Truth and Justice; Ambition, Power, and the Common Good; Social Criticism; Causes and Crusades

More Information for Secondary Level Teachers

Each elective course offers opportunities for students to explore language and its impact in contemporary communication and the media. The issue of bullying could be explored in a number of modules associated with each course.

Elective Courses	Focus	Modules
Communication Studies 20	Communication Studies 20 provides students opportunities to develop and refine their language knowledge and skills for various “real-world” situations requiring effective oral, written, and visual communication.	Students must complete an introductory module (20 hours) and then select from 15 other 10-20 optional modules to a total of 100 hours of course time. Optional modules include Writing Technical Articles and Reports, Writing and Presenting Proposals, Enhancing Written and Spoken Presentations, Negotiation, and Information Talks.
Creative Writing 20	Creative Writing 20 provides students opportunities to refine their creative writing skills and abilities beyond those developed in the required ELA courses.	Option A Module 1: Introduction Module 2: The World Around Us Module 3: Popular Culture Module 4: Imagination Module 5: Differing Perspectives Module 6: Independent Project
		Option B Module 1: Introduction Module 2: Writing Poetry Module 3: Writing Short Fiction Module 4: Writing Plays Module 5: Writing Non-fiction Module 6: Independent Project
Journalism Studies 20	Journalism Studies 20 provides students with an opportunity to explore responsible journalism as they use their thinking and communication skills and strategies in print and other media.	Module 1: Print Journalism Module 2: Electronic Journalism Module 3: On Assignment
Media Studies 20	Media Studies 20 provides students with an opportunity to explore the mass media and to become critical listeners, readers, and viewers as well as effective users of the media available to them.	Module 1: Media Awareness Module 2: Exploring the Medium of Television (or Radio and Recording, Print, Film and Video, Photographs, Posters, Billboard, Emerging Communication Technologies) Module 3: Exploration of Other Media and/or Advertising Module 4: Media and Cultural Studies Project