Focus and Rationale – Teaching and Research Proposal Project Suzanne Koski, CEP822 Summer 2011

Background Information/Introduction

In a recent teaching assignment, I was a long-term substitute, teaching computer applications during the last three months of the school year. During class, students were often distracted by communication via email to each other, the only type of online student-to-student communication that was allowed in the district (social networking sites were blocked and cell phones were prohibited). Much of the communication was gossip; some of it was innocent, some of it was destructive and bordered on bullying or harassment. The school district had adopted a policy against bullying and each student had signed an acceptable use agreement.

But what I didn't know was if the students really understood what constituted cyberbullying, how much they had been taught about cyberbullying, and if they needed a reminder about the policy they had signed at the beginning of the school year. And, were they aware of the consequences? I also questioned my responsibility as a teacher: Was I doing enough to teach them about cyber etiquette?

Issue to be Discussed

The focus of my research is to determine the rate of cyberbullying in our local high school. Examining the research data would help determine if the district's policies and educational practices are doing enough to help curb cyberbullying. This literature review examines perspectives and summarizes data from others who have already conducted research on the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

<u>Audience</u>

My audience is all K-12 educators and parents of students. I would share my work at professional conferences, in staff development workshops, with PTO or other parent groups, and in community focus groups or seminars.

Sources of Information

Sources include academic and practitioner focused journals, such as the Journal of Social Sciences, the Journal of Adolescent Health, and the Canadian Journal of School Psychology. Additional resources include dissertations available from ProQuest, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), governmental legislative sites on cyberbullying, and publications from ISTE, which articulate national standards on technology in education (NETS), curriculum standards at the state level (METS). Professional research that has been summarized in nationally recognized newspapers and websites are also referenced.

<u>Significance</u>

Although my own children have been fortunate enough not to experience any significant cyberbullying, I have observed several forms or bullying in the classroom. Cyberbullying is a form of violence, and has many far-reaching affects, including the negative affect on self-esteem, the learning environment, as well as the safety of students while they are in school.