

Reviewed by Richard L. Mehrenberg
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*Generation Bullied 2.0* is a 2013 educational compendium distributed by Peter Lang Publishing. It is edited by sj Miller, David Burns, and Tara Star Johnson. The majority of the book’s ten chapters are also either authored, or co-authored by members of the editorial staff.

The book can be informally divided into three main sections. The first section (chapter one) provides an overview of bullying. It includes definitions, statistics, and a history of bullying intervention programs and strategies.

The second section (chapters 2-7) focuses on victim demographics. Most of these chapters target populations that have been traditionally perceived as victims (e.g., queer-related bullying, people with disabilities weight discrimination). It is both somewhat surprising and disappointing that the authors did not include a specific chapter about girl-on-girl bullying, especially since it has emerged as an increased concern for schools over the last ten years or so.

The third section (chapters 8-10) explores various needs and successes regarding the implementation of bullying prevention programs at the school level and beyond. These chapters highlight how to align theory and practice, and ensure that intervention programs find success in the classroom and beyond.

I agreed to write a review for a book titled *Generation Bullied 2.0*, under the assumption that the text would focus mostly on bullying within the classroom of the twenty-first century. I assumed that the title of the book implied it would focus on topics like cyber-bullying, electronic “burn books,” and other, newer forms of social antagonism. I was eager to learn how bullying has morphed since my own school days and what we are doing about it.

However, this was not the case. The topic of cyber-bullying was confined to one 12-page chapter. As mentioned earlier, there also was no dedicated chapter to the emerging girl-on-girl types of bullying popularized by movies such as *Mean Girls*. Instead the majority of the book covered groups whom would be equally as victimized in the 1950’s as today (e.g., children with disabilities, foreigners, the obese). In an indirect way, the inclusion of such chapters indicates how little has changed over the last 50+ years.

The introductory first chapter serves as a good resource regarding the bullying epidemic. Readers with limited to no familiarity with the topic will learn much from the various definitions, the impact on its victims, and what has been done, both individually and at the school level to alleviate, if not eliminate, the problem. An additional important topic discussed is possible motives for those who bully. Readers will gain insight into the possible
environmental, social, and psychological factors that drive bullies.

One of the biggest strengths of the book is the extensiveness of research cited throughout. Most chapters provide a thorough literature review. By including such studies, the reader has a better sense of what is already known about a topic, and what still needs to be explored. Further resources can be obtained by consulting the reference section at the conclusion of each chapter.

Many chapters open with a case study. These vignettes are designed to enlighten the reader, and personalize the struggles that victims face on a daily basis. However, the cases appeared to be inconsistent in objective background knowledge. Some chapters relied more heavily on emotional appeal than empirical data to make a point. For example, chapter one begins with a discussion of the Columbine school shooting. The author concludes the case study by asking the reader if the shooting could have been avoided if bullying awareness and intervention strategies had been in place.

This particular line of thinking goes against what is commonly known and reported about the massacre. Although bullying is a factor many school shootings, Columbine experts agree that bullying was not a factor in the motives of shooters Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold. The overwhelming evidence, described by investigative report Dave Cullen (2010) and others is that the shootings were not precipitated by revenge, but by mental illness.

Harris (a classic psychopath) and Klebold (a manic depressive) were very well known and popular among classmates and teachers. No particular student or group of students was sought out for revenge. The shootings were the back-up plan for a series of unsuccessful school bombings. Harris and Klebold aspired to be the perpetrators of the largest terroristic act in the history of America. By reinforcing the outdated and inaccurate bullying angle, the authors call into question their credibility of other, less well known, illustrations throughout the book.

Another example of a case study skewing facts occurs in the chapter of bullying children with disabilities. The
The story describes Elsa, a young girl with a severe brain injury who was teased incessantly by her middle school classmates. Elsa, in turn, retaliated, and became a bully herself. Her actions turn so severe that she is recommended for expulsion by the school superintendent.

The events of the case study fly in the face of federal special education laws. Students with disabilities are eligible for a plethora of behavioral interventions and practices (IDEA, n.d.). Techniques such as the functional behavior assessment and the behavior intervention plan are tools that Elsa’s teachers would use to pinpoint a relationship between antecedent and behavior. Furthermore, the administration would be required to hold a special meeting to determine if there is a relationship between the Elsa’s disability and her behavior.

Special education students cannot simply be denied a free public education because of their misbehaviors. The author of this case study was either unaware or chose to ignore these facts in order to increase emotional appeal. Once again, overall credibility is brought into question.

Beyond the problematic case studies, a few of the chapters include research studies with limited value. Most egregious was a study referenced in the chapter on Black ritual insults. The author polled a total of 12 Black males to discover that half of them enjoy giving out such insults, yet none of them enjoy receiving them. The inclusion of such a superficial study undermines the impact of the chapter’s other, more reliable, citations.

The tome ends on a more positive note. The final three chapters of the final section give the reader practical advice and suggestions for how to implement bullying intervention and prevention programs in a wide variety of settings. Most importantly, the final chapter focuses on the role of teacher education and how to prepare pre-service teachers to incorporate anti-bully strategies in a wide variety of classroom and teaching situations. Specific tips, projects and lesson plans provide detailed advice and support. Those new to the field would benefit from exploring this material as it pertains to their teaching, classroom management, and curriculum.
In conclusion, *Generation Bullied 2.0* is a mixed bag. Strengths include solid introductory material, ample references, and practical tips for new teachers. Drawbacks include a possibly misleading title, content that draws too heavily on emotional appeal, and research studies with limited value. My recommendation is to first check it out from the library or borrow it from a friend to ensure that it is a good match for your needs.

**References**


**About the Reviewer**

Dr. Richard L. Mehrenberg is an assistant professor of special education at Millersville University of Pennsylvania. Research interests include behavior management, co-teaching, and the needs of beginning special education teachers.