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English 1102

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Research Paper Draft

Bullying is important because it is a recurring issue that many teens go through during high school. While researching bullying, I have found many articles on teen’s committing suicide because of bullying and I have even found a song, “September’s Children” that talked about some of the children who have committed suicide because of anti-gay bullying. Another reason bullying is an important topic to speak about is that technology has made it easier to harass others. Cyberbullying has made it to where the victim of bullying may never be free from harassment, even in the comfort of their own home.

There are currently no federal laws against bullying but there all states in the USA have passed laws against bullying. Georgia was the first state to pass anti-bullying laws in 1999. Montana is the most recent state to adopt anti-bullying laws. In 2010 Georgia strengthened their anti-bullying legislation by allows students who have bullied a child to be sent to another school so the victim and the bully are both separated. Later, In 2015 Georgia passed another set of anti-bullying laws, the House Bill 131, also known as HB131. HB 131 redefines bullying as threatening to cause someone injury, giving someone reasons to believe that they may cause them bodily harm, a written, verbal or physical act to threaten, harass, or intimidate someone else. Georgia’s anti-bullying laws apply to someone who is being bullied on school property. This includes the campus, school busses, bus stops, and school activities. Other state laws against bullying vary from state to state but there are many consequences for bullying in every state.

When bullying leads someone to commit suicide, a state would usually strengthen their anti-bullying laws. For example, in 2010 Tyler Clementi jumped off the George Washington Bridge because of incidents of bullying. Tyler Clementi was attending Rutgers University in New Jersey and shared a dorm-room with, Dharun Ravi. Clementi asked Ravi if he could use the room during the evening. Ravi allowed him to use the room but he left the computer webcam to watch Clementi on while he was gone. During this time, Clementi had a guy over and they were kissing while Ravi was watching them through the webcam. He later tweeted “I went into molly's room and turned on my webcam. I saw him making out with a dude.” (Ed Pilkington). Clementi then sent an online request for a single room since his roommate was spying on him. A few days later, Clementi and the same guy met at Clementi’s dorm room again. Before they both went to the room, Ravi said he would live stream the second time Clementi and his guest was over and he gave instructions on how others could watch the video. The day after the second incident, Clementi jumped off the Washington Bridge. After Clementi’s death, the government passed the “Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act”. It required schools to rules against bullying and to imply punishments to bullies if schools wanted to continue receiving federal funding.

As more studies are being done about the effects of bullying more people starting to understand not only the short-term effects of bullying, but also the long-term effects. The British National Child Development conducted a study to show if there are still visible effects that of bullying even if the bullying took place fifty years ago. The study took seven thousand children whose parents explained that they were being bullied and described some incidents of bullying and followed up on how bullying still affected the children after forty years. Dr. Ryu Takizawa says that the study showed that even after forty years the effects of bullying are “still visible nearly four decades later” (Science Daily). Professor Louise Arseneault also adds that this can be prevented by focusing on trying to prevent bullying and intervene it even at an early age.

 There are many pieces of literature that discuss bullying. For example, Shane Koyczan’s poem “To this Day Project: For the Bullied and Beautiful” talks about how bullying can affect someone. The tone changes throughout the poem. When the poem first starts with being very welcoming and full of humor. The mood quickly changes to something sad and depressing. He uses this tone to explain how victims of bullying feel without making anyone feel bad. He also expresses empathy. At the end of the poem, the tone becomes more accepting and happy. It becomes inspiration instead of understanding. Koyczan encourages others to be optimistic for the future. Koyczan used the tone of his voice to express these further in his spoken word poetry. Unlike his poem “Trolls”, Koyczan uses this poem to reach out the victim rather than try to make the bully think about what he is doing and how he is affecting someone else. His poem “Trolls” also speaks about how you can stop cyberbullying while “To this Day Project: For the Bullied and Beautiful” does not speak about how to stop bullying or how to prevent bullying. “Trolls” tone is also darker and more depressing than “To this Day Project: For the Bullied and the Beautiful.” Another difference. This poem has had many positive reviews. For example, Moving tales says that “To This Day reminds us that it is always the right time to do what is right” (Moving Tales).

 “Trolls” is another descriptive spoken word poem that was also written and spoken by Shane Koyczan. Koyczan uses this piece to explain how cyber bully’s act and explain some of the things they have done. During his poem, Koyczan uses figurative language to compare some of the things that cyber bullies have said and done to horrible things that are able to cause physical harm to other people. For example, Koyczan says that “you all had smiles like one-way barbed wire not meant to keep us out, meant to keep us in,” (Shane Koyczan) which refers to cyberbullies using their words to continue and hurt other people. The tone of “Trolls” is very gloomy while describing the acts of cyberbullies while also being very serious and inspiration to someone who is being or have been cyberbullied. Koyczan’s use of figurative language can make the meaning of the poem hard to understand or find, but it makes the poem more effective by comparing some of the things cyberbullies to real objects that are able to physically harm someone else.

 “Make this Stop” is a song written by all of Rise Against’s band members and was performed by Rise Against for the It Gets Better campaign. The song lists five different names, “Tyler Clementi, age 18; Billy Lucas, age 15; Harrison Chase Brown, age 15; Cody J. Barker, age 17; Seth Walsh, age 13,” (Rise Against) these names are the first of the nine people who all took their own lives during September of 2010 in the United States alone. The song is a fiction piece written about non-fictional events. Rise Against also used figurative language in their piece to express some of the things that victims of bullying do to things related to death and suicide. The piece is very gloomy at first but towards the end of the song, it becomes more optimistic. The person the song is describing is becoming more optimistic for the future and says that they will stand proud of who they are and will “go on living.”

 “Mean” is a fictional song written and performed by Taylor Swift. Swift used the song to tell others that people will always want you to changes something about yourself but they are not willing to change themselves. Throughout the song Swift remains optimistic and very hopeful for a better future, to a time when others can no longer bully her. Swift uses figurative language such as simile’s, “You, with your words like knives” (Taylor Swift). “Mean” has mixed reviews. Despite these mixed reviews, the song debuted at #11 on the Hot 100 dated November 6, 2010.

 Hayes used the song “Invisible” to people who are “outcasts” do not fit in because they are different from others and people do not try to understand this difference. The song used simple language. It was written in the first person point of view and is easy to understand because it does not use figurative language throughout the song. While figurative language was not used throughout the whole song, there were a few examples of where it was used. For example, “words cut deep” (Hunter Hayes) is used to describe that words hurt, but words cannot actually cut you. At first, the tone of the song is very sad and depressing but it soon changes to something more comforting. Hayes did a good job at reaching out to victims of bullying while also encouraging others “to reach out and be that friend that someone may need at that very moment” (Heather Allen).

 “Hey Bully” is a non-fiction song that uses simple language, just as “Invisible” by Hunter Hayes. The simplistic language makes the song very easy to comprehend. Though figurative language is not used throughout the song, there are examples of alliteration such as the repetition of words that begin with “w” in “why, why you wanna” (Morgan Frazier). The tone of the song varies throughout the piece. The tone is sad but then it changes to something that is more optimistic, understanding, and happy. The song has mixed reviews, many people argue that the “scattered lyrics don't quite latch on as tightly as one hopes” (Billy Dukes)

 “Hopeful” by Bars and Melody is a non-fictional song about events that have happened to a member of the group, Leondre Devries. The song has a more hopeful and optimistic tone than pieces such as “Trolls” or “To this Day Project”. The song also uses some figurative language. An example of this is "Take this music and use it let it take you away" (Bars and Melody).This would be personification because music can’t actually “take you away”.

“Dare to be Different” is written and sung by Racheal Lynn. The tone of the song is depressing and also very serious because she believes bullying is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. She uses this fictional piece with a straight forward meaning, just as “I Give Up” by Izzy Dix, to effectively present this problem. Unlike “I Give Up”, though, “Dare to be Different” uses simplistic style of writing that does not involve the use of any figurative language throughout the song, while “I Give Up” has some examples of personification evident in the speech. For example, in her poem Dix wrote that she felt “pricks of stinging begin to pinch my eye” (Izzy Dix). While Dix relied on figurative language to add more emotion to her poem, Racheal Lynn relied on her voice and this helped her present her song more effectively. Another difference between the two pieces is that “Dare to be Different” has not gotten much attention while “I Give Up” has received attention from millions of people, many claiming that the piece is a “­heart-breaking poem about her torment” (Richard Smith).

While I was doing my research, I learned just how many people are effected by bullying and major events that effected the community and caused many states to form better laws against bullying. I have also learned that many people who speak and write about bullying usually share the same tone, which is sad, depressing, and serious. While looking at how bullying has effected many people, I am able to understand why the tone is one that is depressing and serious because it is an issue that is still going on and an issue that many writers have faced themselves, which causes them to be more passionate about their topic. I think that the literature that I was able to find and read made my believes on bullying stronger, I think it is an issue that many people are going through but it is not something that anyone should have to go through. Bullying has effected many people and have caused many people to want to commit suicide. I also learned that when people go through with suicide that is usually when a community will act to try and stop bullying. “Trolls” perfectly describes what bullies are like. It shows that bullies take comfort in others pain and misery and it makes them feel better about themselves. It also has a very gloomy tone that adds more emotion to the work itself. Bullying is still an issue that does not currently have a working solution.

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