

# Detecting the Symptoms of Child Abuse: Classroom Complications

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Despite the fact that teachers are generally considered to be among those best situated to detect abuse symptoms in the classroom, little research has explored those aspects of teachers' work that are problematic in identifying abuse indicators. This paper draws on data collected as part of a larger study of Ontario teachers. The study focused on the difficulties associated with detection and the initial decision to proceed with a report. The findings demonstrate that detection is profoundly affected by the main activity of classrooms, that is, concerns about academic learning, and by teachers' haphazard exposure to child abuse information. Complicating detection is a general preoccupation with maintaining discipline, the need to sustain close working ties with children and their families, and teachers' concerns for the "whole child."

En dépit du fait que les enseignants sont généralement considérés comme les mieux placés pour dépister les symptômes de mauvais traitements dont feraient l'objet leurs élèves, peu de chercheurs ont exploré les facettes du travail de l'enseignant qui nuisent à l'identification des signes de violence. Cet article repose sur des données colligées dans le cadre d'une vaste étude portant sur les enseignants de l'Ontario. Cette étude se penchait principalement sur les difficultés associées au dépistage des cas d'enfants maltraités ainsi qu'à la décision initiale de signaler ces cas. Les conclusions de l'étude démontrent que le dépistage est profondément affecté par la principale activité qui a lieu en classe, à savoir l'apprentissage, que l'on veut assurer, et par la mise en contact aléatoire de l'enseignant avec des informations ayant trait à la violence à l'égard des enfants. Autres facteurs qui compliquent le dépistage : la volonté de maintenir la discipline, le besoin d'établir des liens efficaces avec les enfants et leurs familles, et le souci de l'"enfant global" chez les enseignants.

Increasing concern about the low number of child abuse referrals originating from school personnel has focused new attention on how teachers make the decision to report. Recent American data suggest that only 10% to 15% of all filed reports to Child Protection Services (CPS) come from school personnel, and further, that teachers tend to report fewer than one-quarter of suspicious cases they encounter (Abrahams, Casey, & Daro, 1992; Kleemeier, Webb, Hazzard, & Pohl, 1988; McIntyre, 1987). These low reporting rates seem puzzling in light of the time teachers spend with potential victims (current estimates indicate that from 50% to 60% of abused children are of school age), and especially in view of the school's general concern for the development of the "whole child" (Fairorth, 1982; Volpe, 1980). Little attention has been given, however, to

understanding those aspects of teachers' work that complicate the initial detection of symptoms.

Explanations for under-reporting tend to focus on teachers' lack of knowledge of child abuse and the procedures for dealing with cases (Batchelor, Dean, Gridley, & Batchelor, 1990; Baxter & Beer, 1990; Hazzard & Rupp, 1986; Kleemeier, Webb, Hazzard & Pohl, 1988; McIntyre, 1987; Pelcovitz, 1980). In an early example, Pelcovitz's (1980) study of 135 Philadelphia elementary teachers revealed that the majority were not aware of their reporting responsibilities; 51.5% of respondents did not know that teachers are legally required to report, and 80% did not know that there is a penalty for failing to report. Follow-up interviews with a subsample of seven teachers and two principals led Pelcovitz to conclude that reporting seemed to depend on the attitude of the school principals and the administrative procedures they employ.

In a more recent survey of 440 Illinois teachers, McIntyre (1987) found that most teachers were not able to recognize the symptoms of abuse; only 4% indicated being very aware of the signs of sexual abuse and less than one-quarter said they were very aware of the indicators of physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Although 60% of those surveyed demonstrated some awareness of their legal responsibilities, only 22% said they would file a report as required, if the parent denied the abuse and the principal wished to avoid the issue.

Abrahams, Casey, and Daro's (1992) national study of 575 teachers from 40 American school districts underlines the lack of information and legal and administrative support. Two-thirds of the teachers surveyed revealed that their child abuse training was insufficient, 63% said they fear legal reprisals for false allegations, and only 57% demonstrated awareness of school child abuse policies.

Although most experimental training models indicate that exposure to child abuse information has some beneficial effect on teachers' awareness of abuse symptoms (Hazzard, 1984; Kleemeier et al., 1988; Volpe, 1981), follow-up studies so far reveal little change in teachers' reporting rates. In one example, Hazzard (1984) first surveyed 104 elementary and junior high school teachers concerning their knowledge and experience of abuse, and then conducted a one-day training workshop on child abuse for half the teachers. Following up six weeks later, she found no significant difference in reporting rates between the control and experimental groups. Treatment group teachers did appear more likely to talk with individual students and colleagues about abuse symptoms, but they agreed with control teachers on several obstacles to reporting. These included problems associated with gathering sufficient evidence before reporting, the need to discuss the case with school administrators, and the perception that school officials are not likely to take the appropriate action when requested.

Other barriers seem to arise out of teachers' concerns for maintaining good relationships with children and between the home and school. In the national study cited above, Abrahams and her colleagues found that 52% of teachers surveyed were concerned that reporting could damage parent-teacher and child-

teacher relationships. Some teachers (35%) also indicated a reluctance to invade family privacy.

Abrahams and her colleagues also asked teachers about their use of corporal punishment, which is frequently seen as conveying the negative message that physical punishment is an appropriate way to deal with conflict (Erickson, McEvoy, & Colucci, 1984; Health and Welfare Canada, 1989; Hyman, 1990; Robertshaw, 1980). Their findings reveal that many teachers do not consider corporal punishment as an issue related to child abuse; only 57% rated banning corporal punishment as a high-priority child abuse prevention strategy.

By implying that teachers may not be as well placed for reporting as their concern for the "whole child" might suggest, these findings focus attention on how teachers' reporting decisions take shape in the classroom and in the context of the other demands of their work. Herzberger (1988) claims that a professional's judgement that a certain act of parental violence is "serious" does not necessarily always lead to a judgement that "abuse" has occurred, and furthermore, that even those who use the abuse label may not always proceed with a report. This suggests several stages of decision-making, beginning with the initial arousal of suspicion and culminating in an official report. I focus on only the first stages: the factors affecting the detection of symptoms, and the initial decision to proceed with a report.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The information which follows comes from a larger study of Ontario women teachers who taught in the elementary grades in 1987/88.<sup>1</sup> I collected data in three stages, as outlined below.

##### *Phase 1: Exploratory Interviews*

The first phase involved an availability sample of 10 teachers (eight women and two men). Questions posed at this stage were exploratory, but generally focused on attitudes and knowledge of abuse and reporting requirements. Two questions were also posed about each item in a list of 51 behaviours drawn from Giovannoni and Becerra's (1979) study of child abuse definitions: (1) Would you consider the item an example of abuse? (2) How would you see yourself getting involved? The interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed prior to constructing the questionnaires for Phase 2.

##### *Phase 2: Survey of Teachers and Principals*

In the second phase, I distributed questionnaires to 500 women teachers and 100 principals (90 men and 10 women). Teachers were selected by a computerized random sampling from the membership list of the Federation of Women

Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO), which represents more than 31,000 female elementary teachers, the largest group of teachers who deal with children protected by Ontario child abuse reporting laws (i.e., children under 16).

Teachers' response rate was 52.5%. Compared to the full membership of FWTAO, the sample is representative by age, marital status, regional distribution, grade levels, years of teaching experience, and type of teaching assignment (FWTAO, 1985). The majority of the teachers were between 30 and 49 years of age (75.2%), married (72.4%), and from the East, West, and Central regions of the province (75.7%). Two-thirds of the sample had taught between 10 and 27 years (the mean experience was 17.1 years). Most classified themselves as classroom teachers (66.7%). Of those, 58% taught in the primary grades (1 to 3), 21.5% in the junior grades (4 to 6), and 10.5% in the intermediate division (7 to 9). About one-third of the teachers listed themselves as special instructors, that is, responsible for a specific subject area rather than a classroom or grade level. More than 10% of those sampled had Master's Degrees.

Principals were drawn randomly from the Ontario Directory of Education, 1987/88; their response rate was 48.5%. Respondents were predominantly male (42 men, 5 women), over 40 years of age, and in the teaching profession for more than 19 years. Three-quarters held a Master's Degree. Although it was not possible to reach men teachers through their professional association, it should be noted that a random sample of men would likely have resulted in a large proportion of principals (or vice-principals) in any case, since one in four men hold positions of added responsibility, and men hold more than 90% of the principalships in Ontario public elementary schools (FWTAO, 1985; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987).

Survey questions covered a wide range of items, including definitions of abuse, interventions, and the difficulties associated with detection and reporting. A key part of the questionnaire consisted of ten vignettes, drawn from the interviews at Phase 1. Each vignette was designed to determine how teachers define abuse, how much experience they have had in dealing with such situations, and what action they took in each case.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the survey, respondents were asked to rate the various aspects of decision-making as "easy" or "difficult"; those selecting the "difficult" option were then asked to check off specific problems listed in multiple-choice format, and encouraged to add other problems or comments of their own. In addition, teachers who said that they had suspected child abuse (N=187) were asked whether they had ever made an official report and if so, to describe the results of their case.

The main task in analyzing the survey data was to explore teachers' experience of cases and to consider how the decision to report might be explained by the independent variables. Besides difficulties with detection, which form the focus of this paper, the independent variables included: definitions of abuse, knowledge of reporting legislation and school policies, curriculum emphasis, discipline role, and demographic differences. The analysis was mainly descrip-

tive, involving simple frequencies, cross-tabulations, and Chi-Square tests where appropriate. All written comments or remarks added to the questionnaire were also transcribed and analyzed along with the interview data.

### *Phase 3: Follow-up Interviews*

The third phase involved follow-up interviews with a subsample of eight teachers and two principals, drawn at random from those whose questionnaire revealed that they had reported abuse. Questions posed at this stage focused on the actual experience of reporting. The discussion below focuses primarily on teachers' difficulties with detection (Phase 2) and draws on interview data (Phase 3) where appropriate.<sup>3</sup>

## RESULTS

In Ontario, abuse is legally defined as physical harm, sexual molestation or exploitation, emotional harm, and situations where the child requires treatment to cure, prevent, or alleviate a physical, mental, emotional, or developmental condition (Ontario Ministry of Social and Community Services, 1984; Section 37). Teachers and principals are specifically named in the legislation as professionals responsible for reporting; most reports are made through the principal's office, but teachers retain the primary legal responsibility (FWTAO, 1983; Ontario Teachers' Federation [OTF], 1984).

Although the law appears straightforward, providing a fine of \$1,000 for those who knowingly fail to report, the results of this study reveal a range of complications arising out of teachers' classroom role. Beginning with the initial arousal of suspicion, these include: lack of time and opportunity; lack of knowledge about the definitions and indicators of abuse; the difficulty of trying to establish appropriate grounds for reporting while continuing with normal school/child/family relationships; and confusions associated with the use of physical punishment.

### *Time and Opportunity*

Presumably, since abused children are surrounded in the classroom by many children who are not abused, the abused child should stand out obviously to the teacher; careful documentation of symptoms that are pervasive and long-lasting should then result in the development of a well-founded suspicion (OTF, 1984). Instead, what seems to happen is one sudden and shocking incident:

This little girl, during a lesson one day about sexual abuse, and about saying "no" and not permitting people to touch your person, I said, "If anybody ever does, tell. You can tell me and we can talk about it." This was with the whole group, and she put up her hand and very slowly and deliberately said, "My daddy does that to me." [IH]

Most teachers interviewed reported such sudden shocks. In one case, a little boy went to his teacher's home at night, knocked on the front door, and signalled her to follow him. She found three children there, alone in a filthy apartment, with no adults and no food. In other cases, it was "a large swelling on the side of the head," or "marks on his face," or a "bruise on her temple," all injuries sufficiently serious and noticeable to draw instant response.

A few cases involved disclosure. One young teenager wrote of sexual abuse as part of her regular writing assignments. In another case, also involving an adolescent, the disclosure came from a younger sibling, who confided that his father and his sister had had a fight which ended when the girl's arm was broken with a board. Another youngster told her teacher that she was often left at home alone.

Of the 10 follow-up interviews, only three represented cases where teachers followed a pattern of becoming gradually suspicious about relatively minor incidents as they accumulated over time, implying that classrooms hold no particular advantage for detecting abuse. This is reflected in the survey data. The vast majority (98.4%) of the teachers surveyed said it is difficult to detect sexual abuse, 93.7% said it is difficult to detect physical abuse, 88.5% said it is difficult to detect symptoms of emotional abuse, and 62.7% said they would have trouble picking up on indicators of neglect.

In the classroom, many children present themselves with minor injuries at one time or another and abused children apparently avoid disclosure, cover up the abuse, and generally try to blend in with the crowd. The majority of teachers (87.7% and 89.0%, respectively) said that children rarely disclose information about sexual abuse, and that physical abuse symptoms are hard to detect because most children have cuts, scrapes, and bruises at some time or other, suggesting that a child who is sporting stitches or a fresh black eye will not necessarily stand out. Furthermore, as several respondents remarked, dressed for school, most children do not present their injuries for easy viewing.

The majority (85.8%) also stated that, where they do notice an unusual injury, the child or parent may offer a plausible explanation. Frequently teachers' first reaction is to question the child. A simple, "Oh my, what happened to your face?" is a typical response. Clearly, though, "I fell off my bike" or "I was wrestling with my brother" may sound completely reasonable. Apparently, as one teacher commented, "Abused children are adept at answers that satisfy adults."

As for other clues, it is clear that even the most astute teacher can miss them under normal classroom conditions:

The mother came in and told the principal that this little boy had been sexually abused during the school year by the father. It was a real shock to me. I hadn't suspected anything. [AT]

The majority of those surveyed said that if the child is not having any trouble in school, the teacher is not likely to notice that anything is wrong. These figures stand at 75.2% for physical abuse, 75.4% for sexual abuse and, remarkably, perhaps, 70.8% for emotional abuse, which frequently has behavioural consequences that might be expected to show up in the classroom.

Many teachers move around the school and from class to class each day, so they have little time for intensive, reflective observation of individuals. A full one-quarter of teachers in this sample reported holding more than one teaching assignment (e.g., classroom teaching and part-time music, physical education, and so on); 58% work with more than one grade level; and almost 10% of the sample teach only part-time. In practical terms, these figures mean considerable shifting of children and teachers throughout the school day, implying, as one teacher remarked, that “Many times, the opportune moment to pursue the topic slips by because the teacher is scheduled to be elsewhere.”

#### *Knowledge of Abuse*

As Table 1 shows, too often teachers do not know what they are looking for. Although the majority of teachers surveyed had received reporting law information from their school boards, less than half had been required to attend child abuse in-service programmes during the past five years, and almost 40% stated that they did not know whether their school board had a child abuse policy. Of the teachers whose school boards do have a reporting policy, many are unable to articulate the document’s definitions of abuse, offering only a general statement, such as “detrimental treatment.” Remarkably, one teacher said: “I only know they have a policy. I have never seen it or heard what it contains.”

Teachers are not unaware of the gaps in their knowledge. Most feel comfortable about detecting the symptoms of neglect, but the majority said they are not sufficiently well-trained for detecting sexual, physical, or emotional abuse. Many reveal that they could easily misinterpret an abused child’s injury or distress in the classroom as related to other family difficulties (84.2%), medical problems (51.5%), or the influence of television (69.0%). Interestingly, however, analysis of these items by education and training differences indicates attendance at child abuse in-service programmes has only a marginal effect, a finding that leaves some doubt as to the benefit of current training programmes.

#### *Establishing Grounds for Reporting*

According to their responses to the vignettes and the cases described in the interviews, once teachers’ initial suspicions are aroused, many investigate the abuse informally before making their reports. This usually involves questioning the child, and, although less often, the parents, other teachers, the public health nurse, and occasionally other knowledgeable people in the community.

TABLE 1  
*Educators' Exposure to Child Abuse Policy and Related Information (N=254)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Existence of school board child abuse policy</i>		
Yes	145	58.5
No	6	2.4
Not sure	97	39.1
Total	248	100.0
Missing	6	
<i>Attendance at child abuse in-service training session</i>		
At least once in five years	120	49.4
No/Cannot remember	123	50.6
Total	243	100.0
Missing	11	
<i>Source of child abuse information</i>		
School board	189	75.0
Professional association	142	56.3
Children's Aid Society	69	27.4
Ministry of Education	92	36.5
Ministry of Community and Social Services	30	11.9
Community organizations	42	16.7
University course	73	29.0
Colleagues	61	24.2
The media	74	29.4
Other source	22	8.7
None/Cannot remember	57	22.6
Missing	2	
<i>Exposure to prevention programmes</i>		
Curriculum programme		
Comprehensive family violence	28	11.4
Sexual abuse/Street-proofing	55	22.4
Parenting skills	40	16.3
Informal in-school programme		
Developed by school staff	29	11.8
Developed by individual teacher	37	15.0
Police/Community group programme		
Comprehensive family violence	68	27.6
Sexual abuse/Street-proofing	79	32.1
Parenting skills	36	14.6
Missing	8	



This process of attempting to obtain some sort of unofficial proof is not surprising, given the difficulties associated with classroom detection and the legal requirement that teachers report only on reasonable grounds. These investigations are fraught with difficulties, however. Almost all the teachers surveyed (96.8%) said it is difficult to probe for information from parents; 89.3% said it is difficult to get information from children.

Although teachers who maintain close links with parents may be expected to hold a unique vantage point for detecting the potential for abuse, it is clear that parent-teacher relationships complicate the issue considerably. Of teachers surveyed, 53.6% said they worry about disturbing the parent-teacher rapport, a concern which, unfortunately, seems rooted in grim experience. One teacher described an angry mother who stormed into the classroom and backed her forcefully into the door. Another teacher mentioned being advised to leave her car at home after a family promised revenge. Others commented on unpleasant calls to the principal and school board. Describing a different kind of experience, one teacher said:

I think the mother felt that I didn't believe her, and that sort of strained things. I sort of had to regain her trust. I used to call her a lot about different things that had happened, and we always were able to chat very easily, but if I had to call her about marks on her little girl, there would be a lot of tension in the conversation. [PS]

Analysis of the concern for disturbing parent-teacher rapport by the past experience of discussing suspicious symptoms with parents revealed sexual abuse as a particularly dangerous area, implying that parent-teacher relationships may be especially vulnerable in these cases.

Another concern has to do with family privacy: 72.2% of the teachers surveyed said it is hard to talk to parents without worrying about invading the privacy of their family life. A substantial number (58.1%) said it is difficult to question children about private family issues. Although some concern about questioning children seems connected to the fear that "the parents will find out," it is also evident, by the concern for "nosy peers," that crowded classrooms offer little in the way of appropriate, private time with individuals.

Teachers who attempt close student-teacher relationships encounter other difficulties. One teacher said: "The ideal is to offer the child a secure classroom environment where disclosure of fears, pain, and anger is accepted and encouraged." Without an outright disclosure, however, many teachers tend to worry that talking about abuse will destroy the student-teacher relationship; 59.3% said they were concerned about disturbing the child's trust in their teacher. But even when children do tell their teachers what is happening, the dilemma may be no less difficult. As one teacher asked, what should teachers do when "Children beg you not to tell?" This is a tough question, one that obviously brings some nasty images to mind; more than 90% of respondents said they are afraid of angry parents taking out their anger on the child. One teacher remarked:

It's easy to say, "I'm sure there's incest," but you have to be sure you can support this child. If they've blabbed, they're going to get their heads knocked off or you have to be able to protect them, and I never felt there was enough protection there to go through with anything. [MC]

### *Abuse or "Just Discipline"?*

Opponents of corporal punishment have long suggested that the main problem with it is the effect it has on the norms of child-rearing and the confusion it causes in attempts to determine the boundary between discipline and abuse (Hyman, 1990; Robertshaw, 1980). These confusions are reflected in the data summarized in Table 2. Although less than 10% of this sample use corporal punishment themselves, the majority (68.8%) are clearly in favour of spanking as a disciplinary measure. Furthermore, although most teachers draw the line at bruising (one teacher called it "the kind of discipline that leaves marks"), it is interesting that approximately one-quarter of the teachers in this sample remain undecided about the abusiveness of both spanking and bruising. Finally, when asked whether it is easy or difficult to determine whether a child's injury is a sign of physical abuse, close to half (41.7%) indicated that it might be difficult to distinguish between abuse and discipline. Thus, although there is no clear statistical relationship between teachers' use of corporal punishment and confusions with regard to the boundary between abuse and discipline, the general pattern of the data suggests detection may be complicated by teachers' perception that they need to weigh children's "need for discipline" against their "need for protection" from parents who use physical punishment.

### DISCUSSION

This study highlights some of the problems associated with teachers' surveillance role. One critical aspect is the lack of appropriate time and opportunity for reflective observation. While it is often assumed that teachers are ideally placed for detection, because of their ostensible concern for the "whole child" (Fairorth, 1982; Volpe, 1980), it is evident that in the crowded and intense daily work of the classroom, teachers may be unable to engage individual children on a level sufficiently close and personal to notice when a child has been abused. Added to a general lack of knowledge of abuse definitions and shared understandings with regard to policy, it may seem a wonder that any abused children get detected at all.

Even when teachers do become suspicious, there are clearly some other issues at work. The majority of teachers seem not only reluctant to intrude on family privacy, as the findings of Abrahams and her colleagues suggest (Abrahams et al., 1992), but also quite frightened about the consequences of doing so. As shown, 90% of my sample feared that such intrusions could result in angry

TABLE 2

*The Distinction Between Discipline and Physical Abuse*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>I. Defining physical abuse: two vignettes</i>		
1. A teacher suspects that a bruise on Jimmy's face may have been inflicted by his mother.		
Abusive	172	68.2
Undecided	64	25.4
Not abusive	16	6.4
Total	252	100.0
Missing	2	
2. Sally has told her teacher that her father spanked her for going to her friend's house without permission.		
Abusive	22	8.7
Undecided	57	22.5
Not abusive	174	68.8
Total	253	100.0
Missing	1	
<i>II. Difficulty with determining physical abuse</i>		
It is difficult to determine whether a child is suffering from physical abuse because the injury may have come about as a consequence of a parent's attempts to discipline a difficult child.		
Agree	106	41.7
Disagree	148	58.3
Total	254	100.0

parents taking out their anger on the child, and more than half are concerned about disturbing parent-teacher rapport. Whether their fears are rooted in genuine, realistic concerns for abused children, or are merely an attempt to avoid conflict between the home and school, serious questions remain about the difficulty of reporting while continuing with normal home and school relationships. Although the OTF (1984) claims that it is perhaps time for teachers to begin questioning the "disputed border between home and school" (p. 5), it seems clear that reporting may be inconsistent with the traditional expectation that schools should not interfere with parents' authority to treat their children in the ways that they prefer (Erickson et al., 1984).

Closely related to this is the central importance of student-teacher relationships, as evidenced by the majority of teachers in this sample who expressed concern about disrupting the children's trust in their teacher. Teachers are among the few professionals who can be expected to be in contact with the child and the family from the time of initial suspicion through the reporting process, treatment, and follow-up. Thus, the difficulty of reporting while maintaining close relationships with children should not be underestimated, particularly since abused children may have additional special classroom needs (Broadhurst, 1980; Rose, 1985).

Beyond the problems related to maintaining good working relationships are the confusions associated with drawing the line between discipline and physical abuse. Although the school's role as disciplinarian reflects a tradition of physical punishment (Erickson et al., 1984), the majority of teachers in this sample do not use corporal punishment. Even so, there appears to be considerable disagreement about what constitutes appropriate discipline, both at home and at school. It is important to note that these disagreements are reflected in school policy; Ontario teachers are frequently reminded, for instance, about the importance of fostering a sense of "self-worth and self-discipline" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1986, p. 30), while Section 43 of the Criminal Code still provides teachers with justification for the use of force "by way of correction" provided the force does not exceed what is "reasonable" under the circumstances. Teachers' disagreements are perhaps not surprising in this context; however, they do seem to reflect the significance of the school's traditional role in discipline and the historical tendency to equate discipline with physical punishment.

Although it seems obvious that improved detection cannot come about without more effective delivery of information about child abuse, the development of pre-service and in-service training should be approached with some caution. Perhaps new programs might begin by reconsidering the assumption that abused children stand out in the classroom, and the idea that teachers are particularly well-placed for detection. While improving teachers' knowledge of indicators may improve the situation somewhat, criticisms of teachers who claim they are teaching the "whole child" and who yet fail to respond to child abuse cannot be resolved without recognition that the work of teaching may itself stand in the way of appropriate decisions in many cases.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For further information about the larger study, please see my articles in *Child Abuse and Neglect* (Tite, 1993) and *Interchange* (Tite, in press).
- <sup>2</sup> From the original list of 51 behaviours presented at Phase 1, I selected the 10 items that drew the lengthiest discussion; with some minor modifications, the vignettes were written in the actual language used by the teachers interviewed at Phase 1. For a complete analysis of the vignettes, see Tite (1993).

<sup>3</sup> Where quantitative information is provided, these data were derived from the survey responses (Phase 2); qualitative data were derived from interviews (Phase 3) and comments added to the questionnaire (Phase 2). Throughout the paper, interview information is identified by initials representing a fictional name assigned to each respondent.

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