Germany – “Media Heroes” – Medienhelden

School-Based Prevention of Cyberbullying
Promotion of Online Self-Protection

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• Cyberbullying is a form of aggressive online/Internet behavior. Digital means are used to victimize, harass, humiliate, or insult others.
• Cyberbullying also describes behaviors and crime acts such as identity theft, fake accounts, harassment, threats etc.
• In Germany, up to 20% of students are involved in cyberbullying. 
  (Schultze-Krumbholz & Scheithauer, 2010)
• In 2010, hardly any evaluated programs existed in Germany.
European Cyberbullying Intervention Project

www.bullyingandcyber.net
Background

- Project development and evaluation: 2010-2011/2012

- Research grant from the DAPHNE III program to combat violence against children, young persons and women of the European Commission
  [Action Number: JLS/2008/DAP3/AG/1211-30-CE-0311025/00-69; project title “Cyberbullying in Adolescence: Investigation and Intervention in Six European Countries” granted to the University of Bologna, Italy]
• Prevention of cyberbullying & promotion of online self-protection
  – Structured, manual-based universal preventive program
  – Targeting middle-school students (7th-10th grade)
  – Implemented by trained and supervised teachers
  – Integrated within the existing school curriculum

Program manual
(published in May 2012)
Theoretical Background

Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; 1991)
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Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; 1991)

Definitions, legal rights, online security options, social skills such as empathy

- Raising students’ awareness:
  - consequences of (cyber-)bullying for victims
  - legal risks of (cyber-)bullying for bullies

- Program-intended change:
  - social responsibility
  - class climate and students’ norms

- Gaining experience:
  - preventive online self-protection
  - helping oneself and others when victimized

Intention

Reducing (cyber-)bullying
Increasing online-self-protection
Program Versions

- **Long Version**
  - 10 weeks curriculum
  - 90 minutes per week

- **Short Version**
  - 1 day (project day)
  - 4 sessions of 90 minutes each
10-Week Curriculum

- **Week 1**: Assets and dangers of „new media“
  - attitudes, normative beliefs
- **Week 2**: Cyberbullying: definitions & consequences
  - attitudes, normative beliefs
- **Week 3**: Cyberbullying: feelings & perspectives
  - empathy
- **Week 4**: Participant roles and opportunities for action
  - empathy
  - self-efficacy
- **Weeks 5-6**: How to defend oneself and others on the internet?
  - self-efficacy
- **Week 7**: Legal and moral implications
  - moral judgement
- **Weeks 8-9**: Preparing parents evening
  - parental engagement
- **Week 10**: Reflection
  - consolidation of knowledge, self-efficacy
4-Session Project Day

**Weeks 1-4**

**Week 1**
- **Assets and dangers of „new media“**

**Week 2**
- **Cyberbullying: definitions & consequences**

**Week 3**
- **Cyberbullying: feelings & perspectives**

**Week 4**
- **Participant roles and opportunities for action**
  - empathy
  - self-efficacy

**Sessions 1-2**
- (contents shortened, less training)

**Weeks 5-9**

**Week 5-6**
- **How to defend oneself and others on the internet?**

**Session 3**
- (contents shortened)
  - Legal and moral implications
  - Moral judgement
  - Parental engagement

**Weeks 7-9**
- **Preparing parents evening**

**Week 10**
- **Reflection**

**Session 4**
Pictures for presentation purposes only – deleted for copyright reasons
Examples: „Identification Circle“

Pictures for presentation purposes only – deleted for copyright reasons

…after watching the film „Let’s Fight it Together“
Examples: „Peer-to-Peer-Tutoring“

Pictures for presentation purposes only – deleted for copyright reasons
Examples: „Peer-to-Parent-Tutoring“

Pictures for presentation purposes only – deleted for copyright reasons
Evaluation Study Design

35 classes from 5 schools
N=980

Randomization by School Staff

Control
N=452

Short
N=220

Long
N=308

Teacher Training

Pre-Intervention Questionnaires

9 months

Post-Intervention Questionnaires

MEDIENTHELDERN project day (4 sessions)

MEDIENTHELDERN curriculum (10 sessions)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cyberbullying Behavior</td>
<td>European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire – ECIPQ (Brighi et al., 2012)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy in Virtual Context</td>
<td>Adaptation of Empathy Reactivity Instrument (Volland et al., 2008)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perspective-Taking Skills</td>
<td>IRI (Davis, 1980)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>Rosenberg (1965), Fend et al. (1984)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Health</td>
<td>Grob et al. (1991)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
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</table>

+ Teacher reports regarding program acceptance
Selected Results: Process Evaluation

• Teachers/students rated the program content - the single measures and intervention steps (sessions) - as being very positive (especially the exercises, role-plays, program materials etc.) and reported that working with the program was fun.

• Teachers/students rated their overall impression after program implementation as being very positive (e.g. teachers reported that cybermobbing decreased in their respective school classes; students reported an improvement in the social climate within their classes).

• Overall, nearly all of the teachers and students liked the Medienhelden program very much and rated students as highly motivated when working with the program materials.

• Other – critical – responses (e.g. more time for some of the sessions) were helpful for a revision of the program manual.
Selected Results I: Impact Evaluation

- Wölfer et al. (2014) used longitudinal data from 593 middle school students (MAge=13.3 years, 53 % girls) out of 35 classes. Multilevel analyses clearly demonstrate the program’s effectiveness in reducing cyberbullying behavior within intervention classes in contrast to classes of the control group.

- Schultze-Krumbholz et al. (2015) used longitudinal data of 722 students aged 11-17 years (M = 13.36, SD = 1.00, 51.8% female) before and 6 months after the implementation of the program. Multi-group structural equation modeling (SEM) shows a significant effect of the short intervention on cognitive empathy and significant effects of the long intervention on affective empathy and cyberbullying reduction. The results suggest the long-term intervention to be more effective in reducing cyberbullying and promoting affective empathy. Without any intervention, cyberbullying increased and affective empathy decreased across the study period.
• Further results indicate an increase of social competencies, self-esteem, and subjective health in participating school classes as well as preventive and interventive effects (e.g. in Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2014a, 2014b) and positive effects of the program in the reduction of traditional (!) bullying as well (Chaux et al., revision submitted).
Implementation

• Train-the-trainer approach (school teachers, social workers, school police officers) has been developed for the purpose of implementation and roll-out of the program

• Two licenced, external enterprises (stravio UG, Berlin; Celsusakademie, Bremen) offer trainings for implementation of the program in schools.

• Licenced partners (e.g. in Austria, see www.medienhelden.at) are implementing the program.

• Funding by the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation (Research Group Linkage Program; together with Universidad de los Andes, Colombia) to adapt the program for implementation in Colombia, South-America, and to investigate program efficacy.
Further Reading

Program manual:

Selected publications:


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