Medienhelden against Cyberbullying: Results of the German Research Team

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Introduction

- Although cyberbullying is a growing concern in Germany, hardly any evaluated programs exist.

- Therefore, we designed the preventive intervention program Medienhelden („Media Heroes“).
Introduction

- Prevention of cyberbullying & promotion of online self-protection
  - Structured, manual-based preventive program
  - Targeting middle-school students (7th-10th grade)
  - Implemented by trained and supervised teachers
  - Integrated within the existing school curriculum

Manual to be published in May.
Theoretical Background

Raising students’ awareness w.r.t.:
- consequences of (cyber)bullying for victims
- legal risks of (cyber)bullying for bullies

Program-intended change w.r.t.:
- social responsibility
- class climate and students’ norms

Gaining experience w.r.t.:
- preventive online self-protection
- helping oneself and others when victimized

intention

reducing (cyber)bullying
increasing online-self-protection

definitions, legal rights, online security options, social skills such as empathy
The Program
- Variations of Medienhelden -

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

**Short Version**
- 1 day
- 4 sessions of 90 minutes each
The Program
- Intervention Components (Long Version) -
The Program
- Intervention Components (Short Version) -

**WEEK 1**
Assets and dangers of „new media”

**WEEK 2**
Cyberbullying: Definitions & Consequences

**WEEK 3**
Cyberbullying: Feelings & perspectives

**Sessions 1-2**
(contents shortened)

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

**SESSION 3**
(contents shortened)

**WEEK 7**
Legal range of actions
Moral dilemmas

**WEEKS 8-9**
Parents evening
Peer-to-parent tutoring

**WEEK 10**
Reflection

**Session 4**
The Program
- Examples (I) -

Peer-to-Peer Tutoring
The Program
- Examples (II) -

Peer-to-Parent Tutoring
The Program
- Examples (III) -

Role-plays
Evaluation Design

- **IG Long**: Teacher training
- **IG Short**: Long Intervention
- **CG**: Project Day
- **No Intervention**: 8-9 months

Timeline:
- **2010**: PRETEST
- **2011**: POSTTEST
Sample

- 35 school classes from Berlin, Germany
- 654 students provided data at pre- and posttest
- Gender: 53% girls; Age: $M=13.34$ years ($SD=1.00$)
Instruments
- Self Reports by Teachers and Students -

• Teacher reports regarding treatment integrity

• Student reports regarding:
  – **Cyberbullying Behavior**: 12 items, Cronbachs-\(\alpha\) = .86
  – **Empathy in Virtual Context**: 7 items, Cronbachs-\(\alpha\) = .83;
    **Perspective-Taking Skills**: 8 items, Cronbachs-\(\alpha\) = .85
  – **Self-Esteem**: 8 items, Cronbachs-\(\alpha\) = .87;
    **Subjective Health**: 8 items, Cronbachs-\(\alpha\) = .76
Results

-Treatment Efficacy (Students) -

CONTROL GROUP

- Cyberbullying Behavior
- Empaty
- Perspective Taking
- Self Esteem
- Subjective Health

INTERVENTION GROUP (SHORT)

- Cyberbullying Behavior
- Empaty
- Perspective Taking
- Self Esteem
- Subjective Health

INTERVENTION GROUP (LONG)

- Empaty
- Perspective Taking
- Self Esteem
- Subjective Health
- Cyberbullying Behavior
Discussion

• Medienhelden is perceived as highly applicable as a school-based program by teachers.

• Moreover, it evidentially prevents cyberbullying, fosters social skills, and causes positive subjective side effects for students.
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