SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND CHARACTER EDUCATION APPROACHES TO BULLY PREVENTION & INTERVENTION

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University of Illinois Anti-Bullying Research Program

- Indiana University Teen Conflict Survey (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Espelage et al., 2000, 2001)

- University of Illinois Bullying Research Program
  - EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE STUDY (Espelage, 1998)
  - SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS STUDY (Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003; Espelage, Green, & Wasserman, 2007; Espelage, Green, & Polanin, in press)
  - SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DATING VIOLENCE, & BULLYING STUDIES (Holt & Espelage, 2003; Holt & Espelage, 2005; Espelage & Holt, 2006)
  - THEORY OF MIND, EMPATHY, & BULLYING (Espelage et al., 2004; Mayberry & Espelage, 2006)
  - HOMOPHOBIA, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, & BULLYING (Poteat & Espelage, 2006; Espelage et al., 2008)
  - Sexual Orientation, Bullying, & Mental Health Outcomes (Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008; Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009)

- Federally-funded Grants:
  - Bullying & SV Overlap (CDC 2007 - 2010), Dating Violence (NIJ 2012-2014), SNA study (NIH 2012-2016)
  - Randomized Clinical Trial of Middle School Second Step Program (Committee for Children, 2008) in Reducing Bullying & SV (2009-2013)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misperception</th>
<th>Scientific Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying is an epidemic.</td>
<td>Bully Rates Have Not Changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully-suicide linked.</td>
<td>Bully Only One of Many Predictors</td>
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<td>Bully are young criminals.</td>
<td>Bullies are diverse in their outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bullies need to be punished.</td>
<td>Ignores Group Phenomena</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bullies – dysfunctional families</td>
<td>Good kids get involved in bullying</td>
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### Domain of Study

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Functions of risky and aggressive behavior</th>
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<td>• Both Prosocial and antisocial behavioral strategies function to control resources</td>
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<td>• Bullying is a common animal behavior that increases access to physical, social, and sexual resources</td>
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<th>Sample Implications for Intervention</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Many antibullying interventions fail because they are based on false stereotypes about the social incompetence of bullies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interventions need to alter the cost-benefit ratio of bullying so that it is no longer an adaptive strategy in the school ecology</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interventions should try to substitute more prosocial strategies that yield outcomes that are comparable to those achieved through bullying</td>
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Social-Ecological Perspective

(Society, Community, School/Peers, Family, Child)

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Espelage & Horne, 2008; Hong & Espelage, 2011)
Bullying Prevention – Meta-analysis (Merrell et al., 2008)

- Evaluated effectiveness of 16 bullying efficacy studies across some six countries (six studies in US).
- Only two of six US studies published.
- All showed small to negligible effects.
- Small positive effects found for enhancing social competence and peer acceptance, and increasing teacher knowledge and efficacy in implementing interventions.
- Reality—No impact on bullying behaviors.
- Farrington & Tfoti (2009) – programs that are effective in European country include parents, use of multimedia, and target teacher’s competence in responding to bullying.
Bullying Prevention – Why little success in US schools?

- All programs fail to address the extent to which demographic variables (such as gender and race) impact efficacy.
  - FOR EXAMPLE, IN ONE STUDY OF THE OBPP Program; reductions in victimization were found only for white students, not for the large sample of Asian or Black students (Bauer, Lozano, & Rivara, 2007)

- Need to consider how classroom management skills and implementation levels impact a program’s effectiveness.

- Overlapping risk and protective factors need to be targeted in school-based programs in order to address spectrum of problem behavior (Cataliano et al., 2002).

- What about skills to manage life?
Realistic Strategies

- 2008 meta-analysis by Ttofi, Farrington, & Baldry found that reductions in bullying were associated with:
  - Parent training
  - Increased playground supervision
  - Non-punitive disciplinary methods
  - Home-school communication
  - Effective classroom rules
  - Effective classroom management
  - Embed in curriculum
What skills are we asking of them?

http://www.hrc.org/videos/category/c/parenting-schools
Social Emotional Learning

Can it be this simple?:

Social-Emotional Learning

Goal 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.

- Identify and manage one’s emotions and behavior.
- Recognize personal qualities and external supports.
- Demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals.
Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

- Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.
- Recognize individual and group similarities and differences.
- Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
- Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.
Social-Emotional Learning

- Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.
  - Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.
  - Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.
  - Contribute to the well-being of one’s school and community.
SEL: Addresses Multiple Issues

- SEL Skills Promotes Pro-social Behavior
- Reduces Aggression
- Improves Academic Achievement
- Focuses on multiple issues

Durlak et al., 2011; Espelage et al., 2012
SEL Framework

- Research Foundations
  - Risk and Protective Factors
  - Bullying
  - Brain Research
  - Positive Approaches to Problem Behavior
  - Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents
    - (Espelage & Low, 2012)
IMPACT OF A SCHOOL-RANDOMIZED TRIAL OF

STEPS TO RESPECT: A BULLYING PREVENTION

PROGRAM®

Eric C. Brown, Sabina Low, & Kevin P. Haggerty

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University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Brian H. Smith
Committee for Children
Seattle, WA

Funded by: Raynier Foundation
Study Design

• **School-randomized controlled trial**
  – Elementary schools matched on key demographic variables (size, %FRPL, mobility rates)
  – Randomized to intervention or wait-listed control
  – Selected four 3\textsuperscript{rd}-5\textsuperscript{th} grade classrooms to collect data
  – One-year, pre-post data collection from school staff, teachers, and students

• **Participants**
  – 33 elementary schools
    - in 4 counties in northern, central California
    - 25\% rural, 10\% small towns, 50\% suburban, 15\% mid-sized cities
    - Average \(N\) of students = 479 (range = 77 to 749)
    - Average \(N\) of teachers = 24
    - Average 40\% of students receiving FRL
Study Design

- **Participants**
  - School Staff
    - \( N_s = 1,307 \) (pretest) and \( 1,296 \) (postest)
  - Teachers
    - \( N = 128 \)
  - Students
    - \( N = 2,940 \) Students
      - 94% of target population
      - 51% Male
      - 52% White
      - 42% Hispanic
      - 6% Asian
      - 35% Other race/ethnicity
      - Age range = 7 to 11 years
Results

• Teacher Report
  – Social Competency (+)
  – Academic Competency
  – Academic Achievement
  – Physical Bullying Perpetration (-)
  – Non-Physical Bullying Perpetration

  ❖ $d = .131$ for Social Competency
  ❖ AOR = .609 for Physical Bullying Perpetration

Note: Bolded outcomes indicate significant ($p < .05$) intervention effects.
Results

Student Report

- Student Support
- Student Attitudes Against Bullying
- Student Attitudes Toward Bullying Intervention
- Teacher/Staff Bullying Prevention (+)
- Student Bullying Intervention (+)
- Teacher/Staff Bullying Intervention (+)
- Positive Bystander Behavior (+)
- School Bullying-Related Behaviors
- Bullying Perpetration
- Bullying Victimization
- Student Climate (+)
- School Connectedness
- Staff Climate

Note: Bolded outcomes indicate significant ($p < .05$) intervention effects.
MULTI-SITE EVALUATION OF SECOND STEP: STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH PREVENTION (SECOND STEP – SSTP) IN PREVENTING BULLYING & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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Sabina Low, Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Wichita State University

Research supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01/CE001677)
Levels and Lessons

- 50 minutes to teach a complete lesson
- Each lesson is divided into two parts that can be taught separately

Grade 6
Stepping Up
Handling new responsibilities
15 lessons

Grade 7
Stepping In
Decision making, staying in control
13 lessons

Grade 8
Stepping Ahead
Leadership, goal setting
13 lessons
Five Program Themes

- Each level includes the following five themes:
  - Empathy and communication
  - Bullying prevention
  - Emotion management
    - Coping with stress (grades 7 and 8)
  - Problem-solving
    - Decision-making (grade 7)
    - Goal-setting (grade 8)
  - Substance abuse prevention
### Study Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 1</strong> (2010-11)</td>
<td>6th Graders</td>
<td>X_1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O_1</td>
<td>X_1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 2</strong> (2011-12)</td>
<td>7th Graders</td>
<td>O_2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X_2</td>
<td>O_3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 3</strong> (2012-13)</td>
<td>8th Graders</td>
<td>O_4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X_3</td>
<td>O_4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**O** = Assessment

**X** = Intervention

**Intervention Schools**

**Comparison Schools**
## Demographics of Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mobility Rate</th>
<th>%Hispanic</th>
<th>%African-American</th>
<th>%White</th>
<th>%Free/Red Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>24.72</td>
<td>21.69</td>
<td>38.91</td>
<td>26.86</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographics of Baseline Sample
\(N = 3681\ 6^{\text{th}}\ \text{Graders}\)
Demographics of Baseline Sample

\(N = 3681\) 6th Graders

- Caucasian: 26%
- African-American: 26%
- Hispanic: 33%
- Asian: 2%
- Biracial: 11%
- Other: 2%
Year 1: Pre-Post Results

• The HGLM analysis indicated that students from the Second Step intervention schools had a significantly decreased probability of self-report fighting ($\gamma_{01} = -.36$, $p < .05$, O.R. = .70) in comparison to students in the control schools.

• The adjusted odds ratio indicated that the treatment effect was substantial; **individuals in intervention schools were 30% less likely to self-report fighting other students.** No intervention effects were found for the other outcome variables.
CAUSAL LINK: Bullying – Homophobic Teasing

**Figure 1.** Standardized parameter estimates from the panel model of the relations among bullying and homophobic teasing.
Figure 2. Standardized parameter estimates from the panel model of the relations among bullying and homophobic teasing by gender. Note. For the autoregressive paths the boys parameter estimates are above the line while the girls are below. $\varphi =$ females, $\delta =$ males. $b =$ parameter equated to be equal in both groups. Within time correlations are described in text.
Implications for Prevention Programming

- Need to give kids life and social skills, not just knowledge about bullying
- Need to develop secondary and tertiary programs, not just primary prevention programs
- Bullying programs need to consider incorporating discussion of sexual harassment and (homophobic language; Birkett & Espelage, 2010).
  
  - 67 bullying prevention programs in US, only five discuss sexual harassment or sexual orientation issues.
- Peers influence has to be considered in developing and evaluating prevention/intervention programs
  
  - 67 bullying prevention programs, only one attempts to target and shift peer norms.
Realistic Strategies

- Simple strategies can help to decrease bullying
  - Use data to make decisions (i.e., Increase hallway monitors; reduce time between classes)
  - Involve PE teachers and coaches in stopping bullying behaviors

- With your support, students can play an important role in decreasing bullying
  - Implement a procedure to allow students to confidentially report bullying incidents
    - Take all bullying reports seriously!
    - Create a confidential reporting system
  - Have an open door policy with counselors to address the needs of students involved in bullying
Realistic Strategies

- Make sure your school has an anti-bullying policy that is consistent with state and federal policies
- Make sure the adult workplace models healthy social relationships
- Work respectfully and collaboratively with families
- Use videos and classroom discussion guides to talk about the detrimental effects of bullying
- Use social-emotional learning activities to create a positive school climate
- Use a positive behavioral interventions and supports to respond effectively to student behaviors