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Germany – “Media Heroes” – Medienhelden

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

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With contributed slides from Anja Schultze-Krumbholz, Pavle Zagorscak, & Ralf Wölfer

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Background

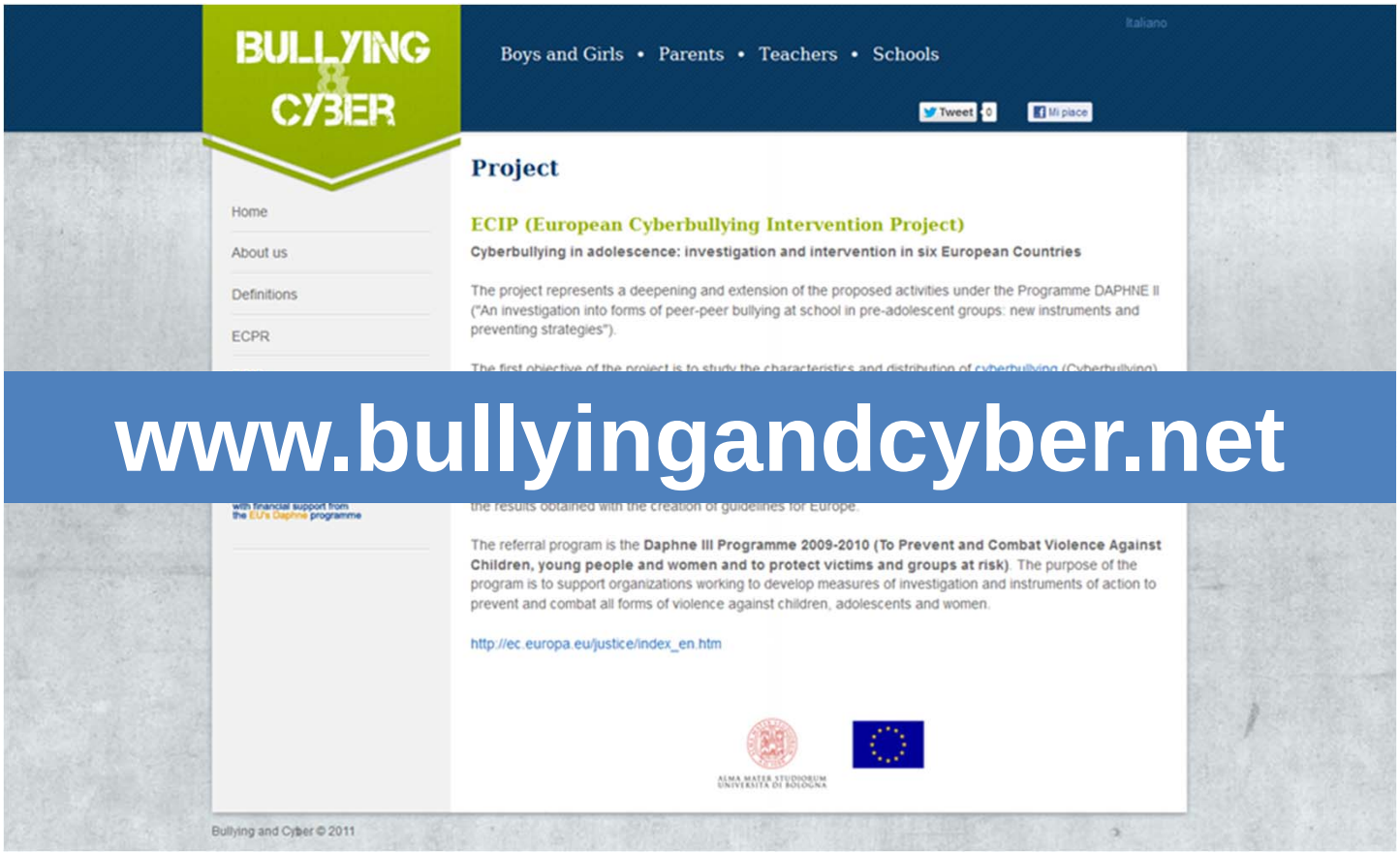
- Cyberbullying is a form of aggressive online/Internet behavior. Digital means are used to victimize, harass, humiliate, or insult others.
- Cyberbullying also describes behaviors and crime acts such as identity theft, fake accounts, harassment, threats etc.
- In Germany, up to 20% of students are involved in cyberbullying.

(Schultze-Krumbholz & Scheithauer, 2010)

- In 2010, hardly any evaluated programs existed in Germany.

Background

European Cyberbullying Intervention Project



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]

Media Heroes: Basic Information

- 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)

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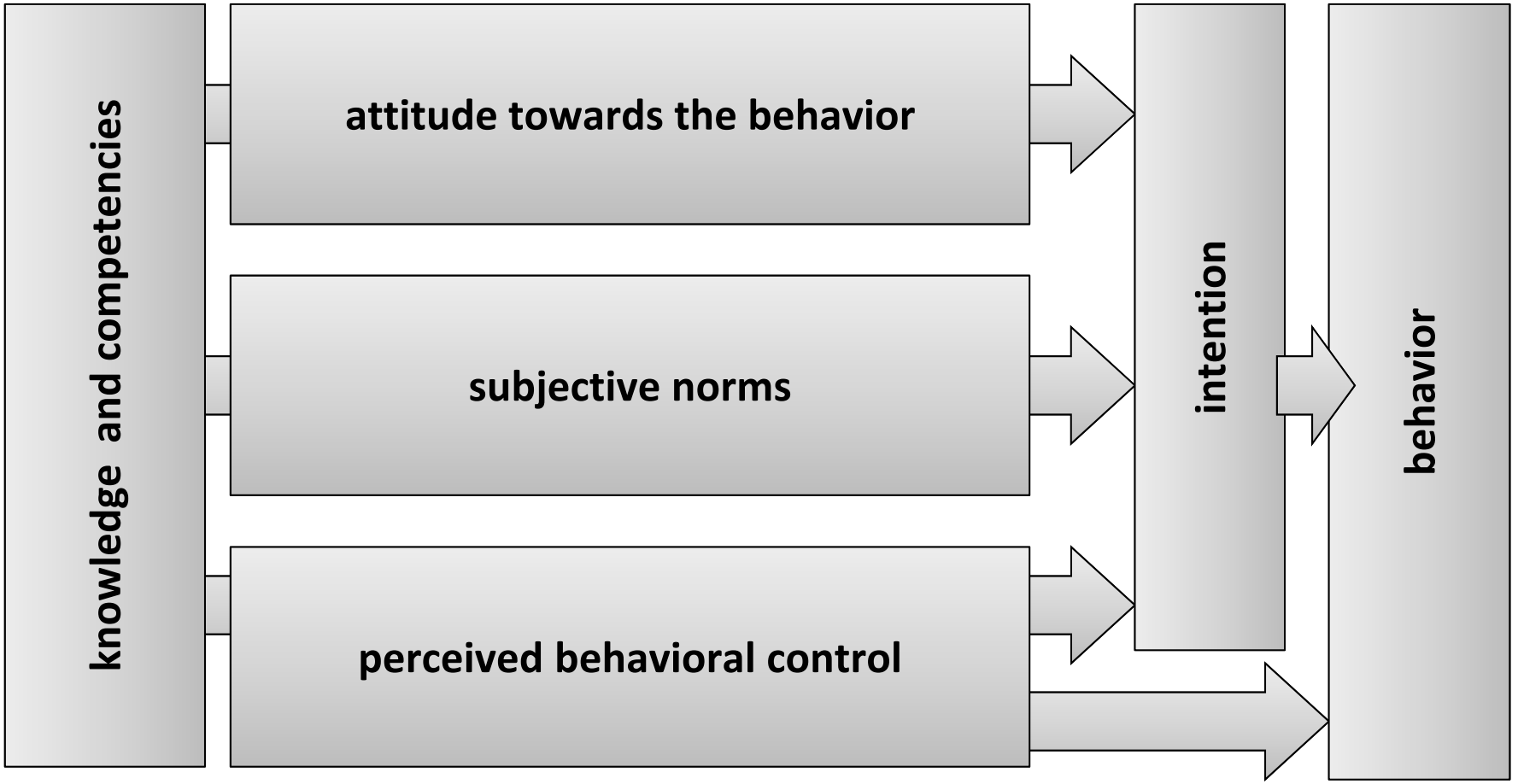
Theoretical Background



Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; 1991)

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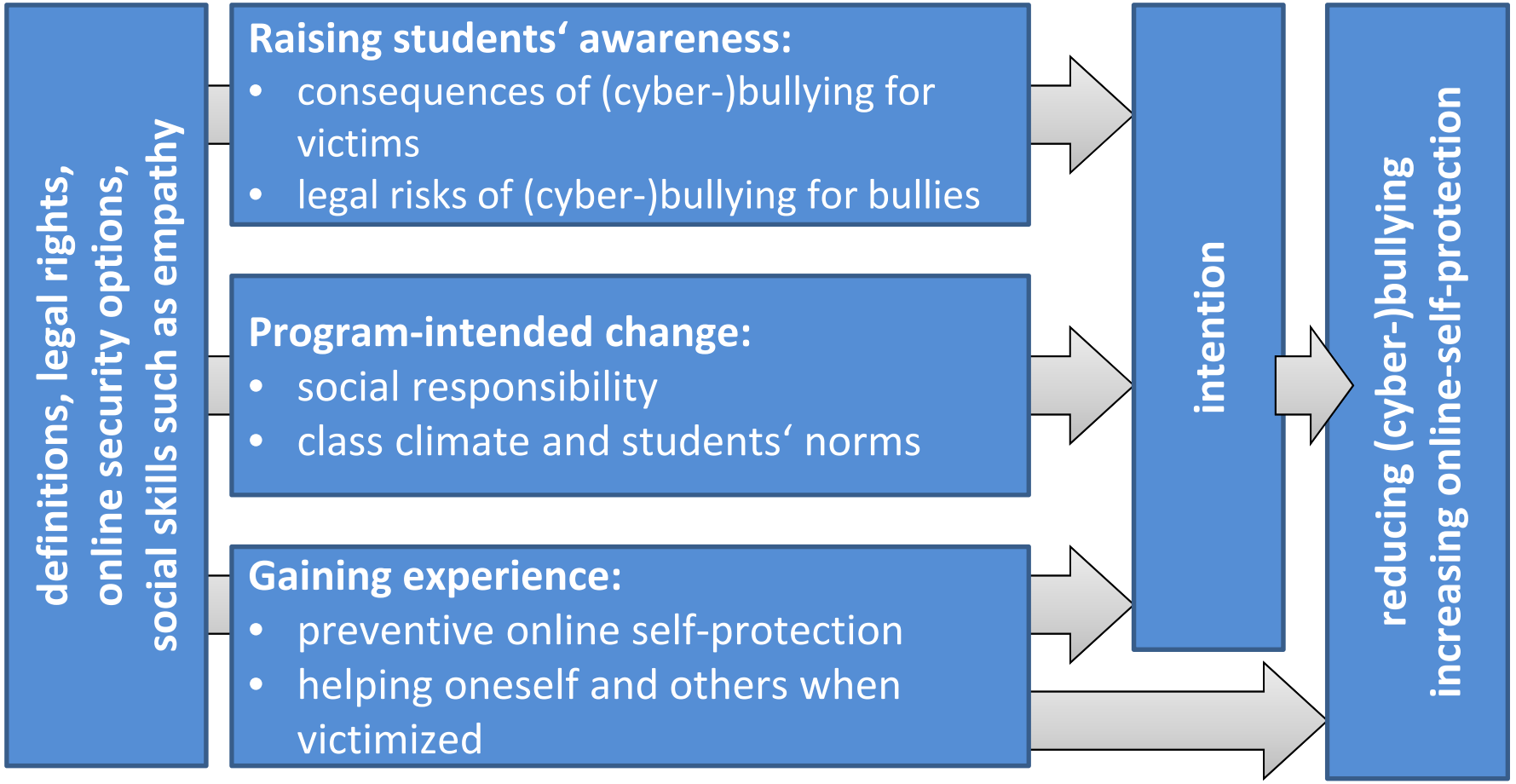
Theoretical Background



Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; 1991)

Program Versions

Long Version

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

Short Version

- **1 day (project day)**
- 4 sessions of 90 minutes each

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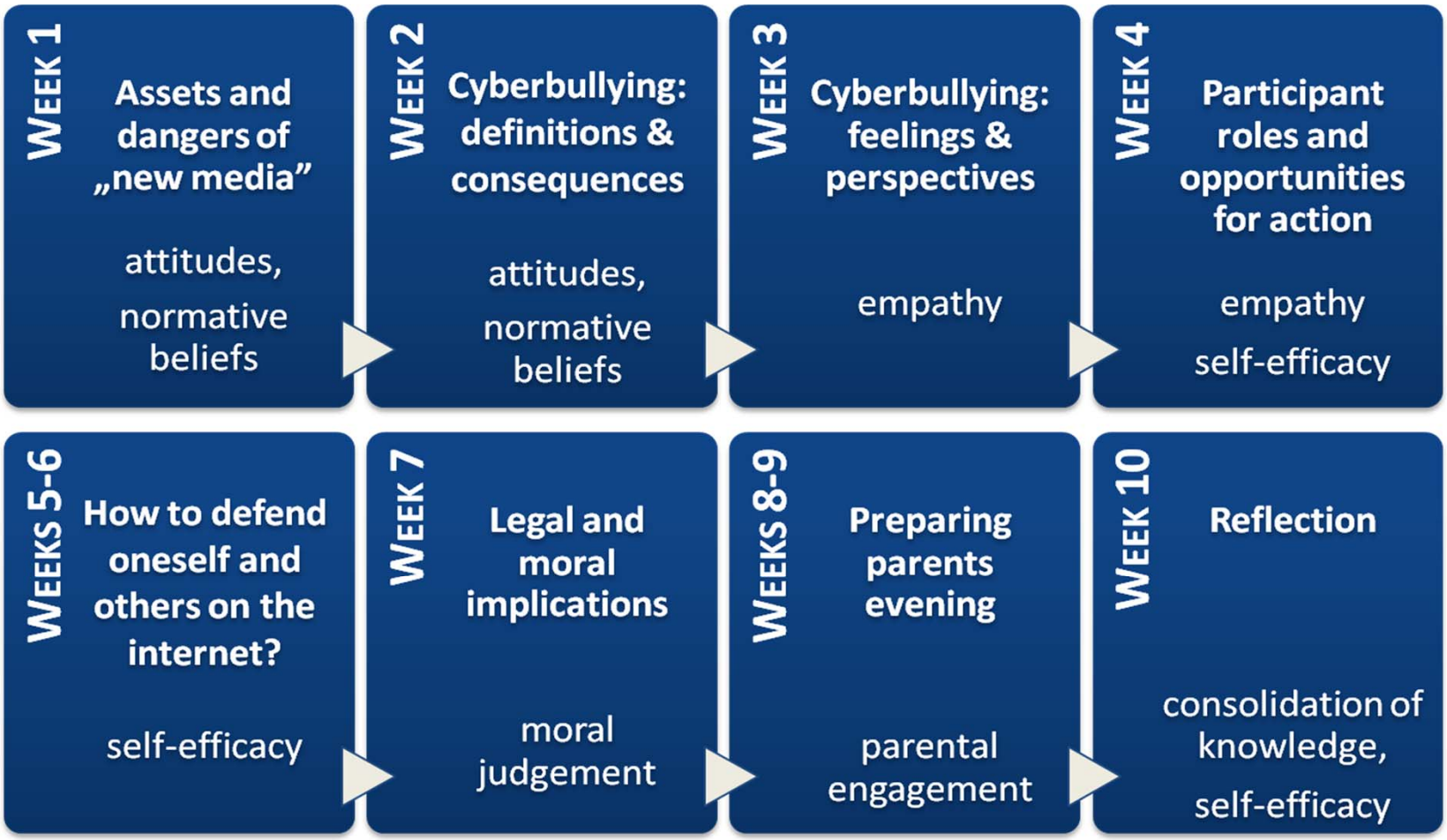
10-Week Curriculum



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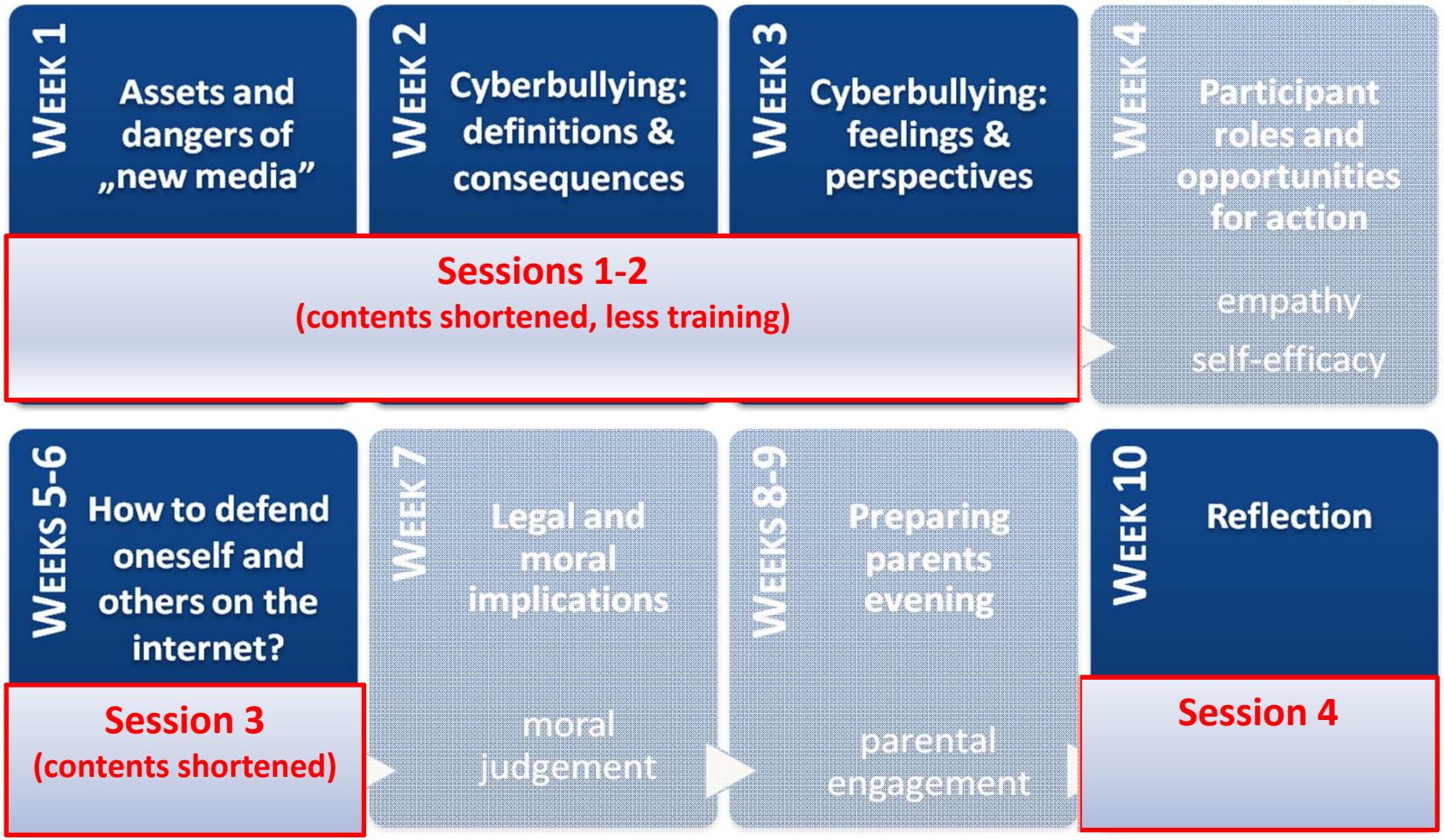
4-Session Project Day



Examples: „Opinion Line“

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Examples: „Identification Circle“

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…after watching the film
„Let‘s Fight it Together“

Examples: „Peer-to-Peer-Tutoring“

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Examples: „Peer-to-Parent-Tutoring“

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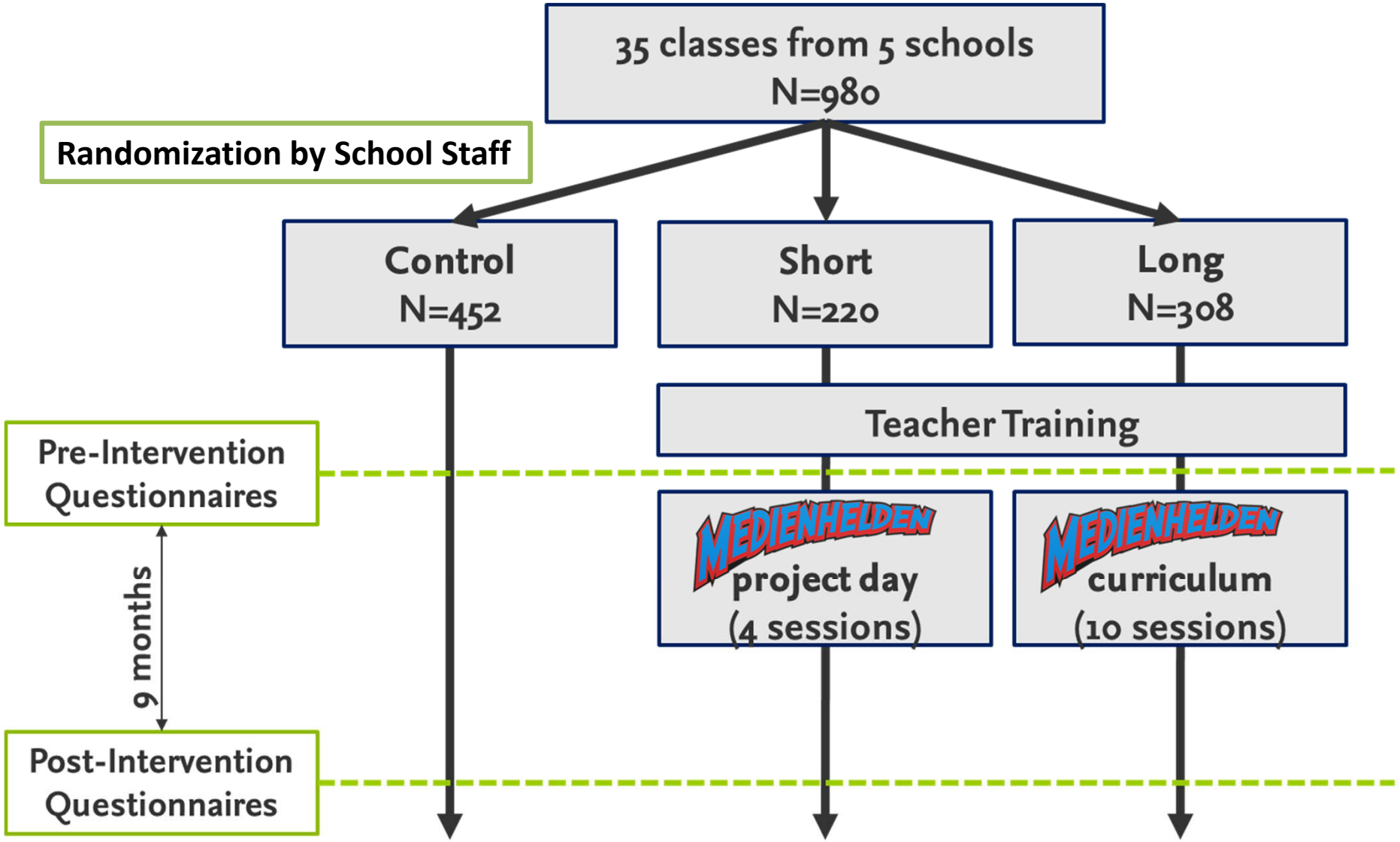
Evaluation Study Design



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Selected Instruments

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

+ Teacher reports regarding program acceptance

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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.

Selected Results II: Impact Evaluation

- 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).

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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.

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Further Reading

Program manual:

Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Zagorscak, P., Siebenbrock, A., & Scheithauer, H. (2012). *Medienhelden: Unterrichtsmanual zur Förderung von Medienkompetenz und Prävention von Cybermobbing*. München: Reinhardt Verlag. Available via publisher's website

Selected publications:

Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Schultze, M., Zagorscak, P., Wölfer, R., & Scheithauer, H. (2015). Can a classroom-based preventive intervention reduce cyberbullying? – Long-term effects of the "Media Heroes" program. *Aggressive Behavior, Online First*, 1-10. doi: 10.1002/ab.21613

Wölfer, R., Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Zagorscak, P., Jäkel, A., Göbel, K., & Scheithauer, H. (2014). Prevention 2.0: Targeting cyberbullying @ school. *Prevention Science, 15*, 879-887. doi: 10.1007/s11121-013-0438-y

Schultze-Krumbholz, A. & Scheithauer, H. (2015). Cyberbullying. In T. P. Gullotta, M. Evans & R. Plant (Eds.), *The handbook of adolescent behavioral problems. Evidence-based approaches to prevention and treatment* (2nd ed.) (pp 415-428). New York: Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4899-7497-6_22

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