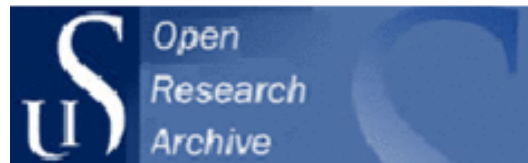




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Preventing and confronting school bullying: a comparative study of two national programmes in Norway

Paul Stephens

Efforts to prevent and curb school bullying have resulted in a proliferation of anti-school-bullying programmes, many based on intuitive appeal rather than systematic evidence. This article presents a comparative analysis of two Norwegian programmes whose developers have demonstrated the effectiveness of their interventions: the Olweus Programme and the Zero Programme. By probing the key components of these programmes, the article provides schools with information about two prominent anti-school-bullying programmes that, to varying degrees, and mainly based on quantitative evaluations, have been found to work. In weighing up the potential of lesson drawing (both nationally and cross-nationally), schools will attach significance to the probability of positive effects, to issues concerning intensity of implementation, and to the prospect of adapting programme content to school culture and school-specific problems. It is important too that schools keep up to date with current research in the field, including studies that offer qualitative insights.

Introduction

A class without discipline is like a mob. (Durkheim, 2002, p. 151)

While there is no universally agreed definition of bullying, many researchers accept that this kind of aggression is hurtful behaviour involving an imbalance of power between a stronger bully or bullies and a weaker victim or group that is being repeatedly and unjustly harassed (see Rigby *et al.*, 2004). As will be seen, this depiction of the phenomenon closely corresponds to Olweus's (2004a) claim that bullying occurs when a weaker person is repeatedly exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more stronger persons.

To ignore school bullying is to 'condemn' many victims of unprovoked aggression to pain and distress in childhood and adult life. This is unacceptable. Schools therefore have a moral responsibility to put in place measures to prevent and reduce bullying. It is particularly important that interventions are shown to have positive effects, for as Elliott (1998, p. 2) points out, 'evaluations have demonstrated that some very popular [anti-violence] programmes are *ineffective* and that a few are actually *harmful*, putting youth at an even greater risk of involvement in serious violent behavior'.

Bullying at school has a history probably as long as schools have existed, and the phenomenon has doubtless been investigated for just as long. Certainly, the problem was discussed and abhorred in mid-nineteenth-century England, after the public school novel *Tom Brown's schooldays* introduced the chattering classes to Flashman, a notorious bully expelled from Rugby for 'beastly drunkenness'. Even so, it seems that the issue of school bullying and how to tackle it only became prominent in research and policy circles in the late twentieth century (Smith & Shu, 2000). The work of Dan Olweus at the University of Bergen in Norway during the 1980s is noteworthy, for he pioneered the systematic investigation of the nature and prevalence of school bullying and set himself the task of finding ways to prevent and reduce the problem (Olweus, 1991, 2004a, 2005; Hunter & Boyle, 2002; Rigby *et al.*, 2004). Crucially, Olweus (2004b) has urged prospective users of anti-school-bullying programmes to be wary of interventions where evidence of successful outcomes is nowhere to be seen.

Not only has Olweus's research on bullying had a profound impact in many European countries, North America, Japan and Australasia, his Olweus Programme against Bullying and Antisocial Behaviour (hereafter the Olweus Programme) has gained government backing and funding in Norway. So too has another anti-bullying initiative, the Zero Programme (hereafter Zero), launched in 2003 by Erling Roland at the University of Stavanger. Roland was involved in the development of the Olweus Programme in the 1980s, and perhaps because of this, Zero shares some features with its illustrious predecessor. But comparative analysis of the two programmes that I have carried out reveals differences, and these need to be pointed out.

I also consider the 'pros' and 'cons' of the programmes in so far as it is possible to do this. The fact that I have placed inverted commas around these two antonyms shows a reluctance to push dichotomies too far. In some respects—notably, history of documented quantitative effects—the Olweus Programme does come out better than Zero (at least to date). However, in other respects—for example, symmetry between programme developers' aims and teacher responsiveness—I think schools might be more concerned about degree of fit rather than which programme is allegedly 'best'. In that regard, Zero is a more context-sensitive programme.

It is noteworthy that the Olweus Programme and Zero are both based on the collection and analysis of quantitative data. There are advantages and disadvantages with this methodology. The main advantage is that the extent of bullying can be measured before and after anti-school-bullying interventions. A disadvantage, however, is that statistical methods are rather blunt instruments as regards capturing the voices of the bullies and the victims. For this purpose, qualitative research of the kind conducted by Duncan (1999), which gets closer to the micro-cultural environment in which bullying occurs, should also be taken account of.

It is also important, as Walton argues (2005), to move the debate on bullying into the broader field of educational administration and social oppression, as well as social and political arrangements in general. That way, an over-individualizing approach to bullying that just considers the aetiology of personal psychologies of perpetrators and victims will be avoided, or at least minimized. Nonetheless, for present purposes my analysis has addressed two anti-bullying programmes that only address bully–victim problems in relation to school settings. After the fact, it may be argued that these programmes should have addressed the broader canvas of wider society. But they did not, and so I am left with what the content of the programmes did comprise, namely, school-based bullying issues within school-based frameworks.

It is also worth mentioning that neither the Olweus Programme nor Zero has paid much (if any) attention to bully–victim problems outside the conventional heterosexual framework. Given that ‘Homophobic epithets such as “faggot”, “dyke”, and “queer” are routine put-downs in hallways and on playgrounds’ (Walton, n.d., p. 13), there is a strong case for making sexual orientation a key variable among the many factors that relate to bullying in schools. As things stand, there is insufficient scrutiny of the problems facing marginalized groups, such as gay and lesbian pupils and the children of Travellers (see, for example, Jordan, 2001).

Policy responses to school bullying in Norway

The problem of school bullying is high on the political agenda in Norway, where schools are legally required to implement anti-bullying measures. Prompted by figures for 2002 indicating that some 75,000 children and young people were victims of bullying, the Norwegian government produced *The Manifesto against Bullying* (Norwegian Ministry of Education *et al.*, 2004a) in the same year. The signatories to this document, which included the then Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, pledged to adopt a zero tolerance approach towards bullying.

Today, the Norwegian state provides financial support to the developers of the Olweus Programme and Zero, leaving the schools to cover running costs, which are relatively inexpensive. By the autumn of 2004, nearly 800 schools had adopted one of the two measures (Norwegian Ministry of Education, 2004b). Schools are largely responsible for implementing the programmes, and are helped to do so by means of comprehensive intervention packages that are provided by the Olweus and Zero anti-bullying teams. The packages involve expert training, teacher materials and various support services.

Study aim

My aim is to identify, probe and compare the objectives of two internationally prominent programme developers, Olweus and Roland, as presented in the anti-bullying resources that they have prepared for schools (Olweus, 2001; Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003). Teachers are not always sufficiently prepared to tackle bullying (Smith, 2004), so it is timely that they draw lessons from the content and rationale of successful interventions, such as those developed by Olweus and by Roland.

More-over, given that bullying in schools has now become an issue of international concern (Smith *et al.*, 2004), the scope for lesson drawing from best practice stretches far beyond Norwegian shores. In fact, the Olweus Programme has already been successfully replicated in several countries, and some of the principles behind the Zero Programme have been applied in Ireland, with promising results.

I recognize that there are a plethora of anti-school-bullying programmes around, but time and space permit only a detailed scrutiny of two Norwegian models, both of which (unlike many other interventions) do conduct pre-test and post-test measurements. This is crucial if degree of effectiveness is to be measured.

Methods

The Olweus and Zero anti-bullying programmes contain implementation packages (which include teacher handbooks and videos/DVDs) that show schools how to put the respective measures into effective operation. I am primarily interested in the teacher handbooks that Olweus and Roland have produced (Olweus, 2001; Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003). These handbooks set out the interventions that the programme developers would like teachers to implement. The aim is to ensure, so far as is possible, that irrespective of who uses the handbooks, the programme ‘science’ will work as designed.

In this article, I seek to clarify programme objectives by documenting and analysing programme developers’ intentions, as stated in teacher handbooks and, as appropriate, in other writings by Olweus and Roland. The two handbooks were initially written in Norwegian, and I have used these original texts in order to probe the authors’ thoughts, as expressed in that language.

In part, the content analysis has involved the accurate reporting of straightforward details, such as the documentation of anti-bullying measures. Here the writing style is descriptive because I report things as they are stated. However, when piecing together recurrent ideas into common themes, I have used a more analytical approach. Often, programme developers’ intentions are quite easy to decipher because much of the material is openly instructive. But there are times when my interpretation must be seen as tentative, especially when I am seeking to identify an underlying but tacit philosophy.

Although the teacher handbooks are my main sources, I also searched the ERIC and PsychINFO databases using the following initial search terms: *Olweus Bullying, Prevention, Programme, Roland, Zero, and Programme*. Subsequent searches within searches—in the end, restricted to journal articles by Olweus or Roland (2001–7) on bullying—produced 10 studies, all of which I consulted: Kallestad & Olweus (2003); Olweus (2003, 2005); Solberg and Olweus (2003); Roland and Idsoe (2001); Roland (2002a, b); Roland and Galloway (2002, 2004a); Solberg *et al.* (2007).

I included these studies because: (1) they provide the self-reported views of the two programme developers, thereby capturing their ‘voices’; and (2) they were published during the same period that Olweus and Roland produced their teacher guides, thus reflecting the authors’ current or recent thinking. I also obtained information through Google searches and hand searches. In addition, and at my request, Olweus and Roland commented on earlier versions of the manuscript. Based on this feedback, I think my analysis of programme content—at least in so far as their own respective interventions are concerned—is broadly in line with their thinking.

Before considering the similarities and the differences between the two interventions, I will provide a fairly full overview of each, starting with the Olweus Programme. I believe the degree of descriptive detail I make available here is justified because much of the literature on school bullying tends to be sketchy with regard to the specific content of anti-bullying programmes.

The Olweus Programme—an overview

The Olweus Programme has a long and distinguished pedigree. The positive effects of the measure—notably, substantial reductions (up to 50% or more) in students’ reports of bullying and victimization—have been verified in numerous scientific studies over the past two decades, not just in Norway, but also in replication programmes in, for example, England, the USA and Iceland (see, for example, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Norwegian Ministry of Children & Families, 2000; Limber *et al.*, 2004; The Olweus Group, 2004; Center for Study and Prevention of Violence [CSPV], 2007).

The effects of the programme are an aggregate outcome, being founded on a co-ordinated series of school-based measures implemented in full by dedicated adults. Olweus (The Olweus Group, 2004) has found that teachers who implement more of the core programme components achieve greater reductions in the level of bully–victim problems. By incorporating fidelity evaluation into his intervention design and post-test measurements, Olweus has made it easier to establish if the programme is working according to plan. Failure to obtain programme fidelity makes it hard to draw valid conclusions from any outcome evaluation, because what is being evaluated is not actually the original programme.

The main goal of the Olweus Programme is to make school a safe and positive learning environment (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003; Olweus, 2001) in which:

- adults display warmth, positive interest and engagement;
- there are clear boundaries concerning unacceptable behaviour;
- there is consistent use of non-physical, non-hostile but negative sanctions when rules are broken;
- adults at school (and ideally at home) act with authority and as positive role models.

In schools where any of the above features are absent and where bullying occurs, the Olweus Programme describes itself as an instrument for restructuring the opportunity

and reward structure that supports bullying behaviour (Olweus, 2001). The aim is to develop an environment with fewer openings for bullying and less or smaller ‘prizes’ for bullies.

In seeking to ensure that the intervention is properly implemented, the Bergen team use certified Olweus trainers who, in turn, train and supervise ‘key persons’ in (ideally) about five schools. The ‘key persons’ then set up and lead staff discussion groups in participating schools, with meetings typically organized around central components of the Olweus Programme, as described in Olweus’s teacher handbook and also in his seminal book, *Bullying at school* (2004a).

The components of the intervention package are designed for use at the school, classroom and individual levels. Appendix 1 provides a synopsis of the programme, indicating these three levels and their corresponding measures. The success of the Olweus Programme relies on teachers, students and parents implementing it faithfully and fully, with no (or only very minor) ‘editing’. Essentially, the programme positions itself as an intervention whose core components are believed to have a good chance of producing reductions in bully–victim problems in most (or even all) schools.

Given, however, the diversity of school contexts and the fact that less well-documented forms of harassment (e.g. homophobic and racist aggression) can slip under the radar of a priori categories, claims for the universal efficacy of any one programme seem rather precipitate (see Duncan, 1999). It is also relevant in this context to note Jordan’s concerns about ‘The pathologizing of Travellers as a victim group with little choice in the face of racism in service providers’, as well as Derrington and Kendall’s (2007) disclosure of racist epithets and bullying directed at the children of Gypsy Travellers at school.

The Zero Programme—an overview

As its name signifies, zero tolerance of school bullying is the guiding principle of the Zero Programme, and it is the responsibility of adults, particularly school staff, to uphold this principle authoritatively. The ultimate goal, to be achieved through consistent and continuous whole-school measures, is to prevent bullying and to deal with it effectively when it occurs.

The Stavanger team is currently evaluating Zero. Unpublished data (Roland *et al.*, 2006) show a reduction of about 25% in the number of students aged 7–10 who were bullied ‘weekly or more often’ in a sample of 146 Norwegian primary schools that had piloted Zero for nine months from 2003 to 2004. In another initiative, the class-level elements of Zero have been piloted with large intervention and control groups of students, and the results have been encouraging (Roland & Galloway, 2004b).

Zero (Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003) sets out to make school a ‘bully-free zone’ in which:

- adults act authoritatively by supporting students and imposing legitimate rules;
- boundary-setting signals that bullying is never allowed in *our* school;

- there is consistent use of non-physical, non-hostile consequences when rules are broken.

Roland sees the initiative as a school developmental programme, with change for the better in mind. The aim is to create a school climate where students feel safe because they know their teacher sets clear standards of behaviour and is in control.

Like the Olweus Programme, Zero is a systemic intervention for use at the school, classroom and individual levels. In Appendix 2, I provide a brief outline of the Zero Programme, indicating these three levels and their corresponding measures.

Although Roland expects schools to implement faithfully the main components of Zero, his programme invites more scope for (some) adaptation than the Olweus Programme. For example, schools are encouraged to review and improve the basic plan and to adjust it (but not too radically) to local conditions.

How realistic it is to expect schools to implement the various measures, as envisaged by the programme designers of the Olweus Programme and Zero, will vary from school to school. It is all very well, for example, to expect popular students to befriend the victims of bullying. But whether they will choose to do so remains to be seen. Nonetheless, Olweus's decision to gauge the degree of staff fidelity to his programme aims does help to determine to what extent the intervention protocol as a whole is adhered to. Furthermore, the results are unequivocal: the greater the fidelity, the greater the success of the programme (Olweus, 2004b).

Comparing and contrasting the two programmes

Rigby (2002) broadly distinguishes between anti-school-bullying programmes that stress a *problem-solving approach* and those that emphasize the *use of rules and sanctions*. He places the Olweus Programme and Zero in the *rules and sanctions* category. I think this is an obliging ideal type, but comparisons indicate that the two interventions display differences as well as similarities.

Similarities

Definitions and causes. Bullying is often defined as actual or attempted hurtful action by one or more persons towards another person or persons carried out over time. This description corresponds to Olweus's (2004a, p. 17) definition that 'A person is being bullied or victimized when he or she is repeatedly exposed over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons'. Olweus (2004a) notes that bullying also involves an imbalance of power, such that the victims usually find it hard to defend themselves from the more forceful aggressors. He (2001) adds that victims seldom provoke their antagonists.

Roland (Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003, p. 7) defines bullying similarly to Olweus, describing the phenomenon as: 'psychological and/or physical violence

towards a victim on the part of individuals or groups over time in circumstances characterized by an imbalance of power between victim and bully’.

In both programmes (Olweus, 2001; Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003), bullying is viewed as externalized, proactive aggression. The bully is typically predatory rather than reacting to provocation, being motivated by the ‘power-kick’ that comes with hurting others.

Olweus and Roland believe that the causes of bullying are to be found in a mix of constitutional dispositions and socialization processes. A common theme is that a relatively stable aggressive personality, complemented by an upbringing in which there is too little love and too much ‘freedom’, provides fertile ground for the development of bullying behaviour (Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003; Olweus, 2004a).

Theoretical underpinnings. In this section, I have highlighted theories that I interpret as relevant with regard to the content of the two programmes. However, I have not attributed specific theories to Olweus and Roland if they have not made this clear. For example, even though I see echoes of Durkheim’s (2002) sociological theorizing in the two programmes, I cannot presume that Olweus and Roland are explicitly Durkheimian in their respective approaches. That said, an analysis of their teacher handbooks and other writings by them (e.g. Roland, 2002a, b; Roland & Galloway, 2002, 2004a; Olweus, 2003, 2004b; Kallestad & Olweus, 2003) divulges some shared thinking in both the Olweus Programme and Zero, as indicated below:

- Bullying is a social phenomenon. This implies *a systemic model* in which the social processes of bullying typically involve several elements, with change in one or more elements leading to changes in one or more other elements. The model resonates with Levi-Strauss’s(1963) notion of how social relations constitute and reconstitute ‘social structure’.
- From an *ecological perspective* (itself, strongly implicated in systemic models), some social environments are conducive to bullying. In schools where adult supervision is lax and a student culture bestows esteem on aggression, bullies can easily work the system. Multi-level measures that succeed in changing the system make it difficult for bullies to do this.
- When several persons engage in bullying, group mechanisms can compromise feelings of individual responsibility. Durkheim (2002) identifies this *social contagion effect* in his analysis of hot-headed mob behaviour, the experience of which is an emotionally charged sense of participating in something bigger and more powerful than that which the individual can handle. The same mechanisms which for Durkheim rouse the mob into destructive action are found in Olweus’s and Roland’s depiction of bullying: under the influence of their emotionally compelling leader, the bully’s accomplices lose grip of individual probity and behave badly.
- The process of social ‘contagion’ can work in the opposite direction to that described above: group members can follow behaviour worthy of imitation, such as the courage of a defender. I find LeBon (1896, p. 22) in this argument: ‘Whether the act is that of setting fire to a palace, or involves self-sacrifice, a crowd lends itself to it with

equal facility'. When social influences are constructive, it is perhaps better to refer to *extensive social slay* rather than social contagion.

- bullying involves *externalized, proactive aggression*. The bully's belligerent behaviour is a fairly stable trait, which tends to persist even if others try to change it. Therefore the primary aim must be to change negative school climates that allow bullying to flourish.
- bullies tend to appraise situations pragmatically, a *Machiavellian tendency* resulting in manipulative and predatory social interactions based on instrumental 'cold cognition' (see Mealey & Kinner, 2002) and tactical empathy.
- bullies exhibit a strong desire to dominate others, which is manifested in aggression towards 'weaker' peers. This theory is premised on the idea that there is an *imbalance of power* between bully and victim, such that the victim is unable to defend him/herself from the aggressor.

The fact that I have often had to look hard for theory suggests that both programmes are under-theorized, and I think this problem affects school bullying research as a whole. In that regard, there is a case for developing a general theory of bullying. It should also be noted that my distilling of common theoretical leanings within the two programme developers is not a judgement of whether the theories are more relevant than other, perhaps more recent, theories on bullying. My inclination is to propose that more attention should be given to areas that do not figure as prominently as they might do in the Olweus Programme and Zero: namely, bully-victim problems arising from inter-sexual, homophobic and racist factors.

Evidence-based interventions. To find out if an anti-bullying programme works, it must be evaluated for impact. The better interventions, such as the Olweus Programme and Zero, use baseline measurements to assess the initial extent of bullying, as well as follow-up evaluations to gauge outcomes. In most cases, researchers who are largely responsible for anti-school-bullying programmes also carry out the evaluations (Rigby *et al.*, 2004). That said, some checks (arguably too few) are in place to ensure a degree of independent appraisal.

One of the more exacting of these checks is to be found at the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPs), University of Colorado, where experts in the field have identified anti-violence programmes that meet stringent scientific standards of effectiveness. CSPs (2007) has determined that the Olweus Programme meets these standards and has designated it an exemplary, research-based measure, a so-called Blueprint Model Programme. In that context, CSPs (2007) notes that the Olweus Programme has a strong research design, a sustained effect and is replicated in multiple sites. CSPs (2007) also monitors the replication quality of Blueprint Model Programmes, such as the Olweus Programme, by conducting a detailed and comprehensive evaluation at each site.

Furthermore, a committee of experts in Norway commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and the Norwegian Ministry of Children & Families (2000, p. 93) to conduct a research-based evaluation of interventions for tackling problem behaviours in

Norwegian schools, recommended only one intervention, the Olweus Programme, ‘for continued use in schools without the need for further evaluation’.

Against this background, the claim by the Olweus team (The Olweus Group, 2006) that no fewer than (at least) six different studies have found statistically significant, positive effects as a result of the programme’s intervention should be taken seriously. What is more, Olweus’s reputation as ‘the “father” of bullying research’ (Preface, Smith *et al.*, 2004) adds weight to the argument that his programme meets the most rigorous tests of effectiveness in the field.

There is a good deal of ‘catch-up’ for the Stavanger team to do regarding measurement of effects. That said, Zero is a relatively new programme and, as indicated earlier, unpublished data on its positive effects after it was piloted in 146 Norwegian primary schools from 2003 to 2004 (Roland *et al.*, 2006) bode well. The fall in the number of students bullied weekly or more (about 25%) as a result of the intervention is not spectacular, but it does show the potential of Zero.

It is also important to point out that a precursor of Zero, the 1996 Norwegian Anti-School-Bullying Programme, was partially replicated from 1999 to 2000 in County Donegal, Ireland, with promising results. Specifically, O’Moore and Minton (2004, 2005) found a reduction of 43% in reports of victimization and of 51.8% in reports of bullying others (in the last five days) at post-test in the Donegal project.

The design of choice in the Olweus Programme is adjacent, same-age student cohorts, with a 12-month pre-test–post-test interval. The pre-test (Time 1 data) establishes the initial level of bullying/victimization, and the post-test (Time 2 data) measures the level (decreased, same, or increased) after the intervention. Although the pre-test and post-test students are not the same and may therefore have different characteristics, a key advantage of the design is that the students in the cohorts are the same age before and after the intervention. This controls for the well-known tendency for bullying to decrease between the ages of 12 and 18 (see, for example, Sullivan *et al.*, 2003).

In his first evaluation of Zero effects, Roland (Roland *et al.*, 2006) also used adjacent, same-age student cohorts and a nine-month pre-test–post-test interval. The principal research instrument in both programmes is an anonymous self-report questionnaire completed by students at pre-test and post-test.

Rules and sanctions. A key strategy of the two programmes is to develop a school climate where bullying is censured and pro-social behaviour is prized. Schools are also reminded that they have a legal duty to maintain a safe learning environment for all students.

In so far as concrete rules are concerned, Zero does not provide a definitive list. However, its soubriquet, ‘Zero’, sends a clear message: zero tolerance of bullying. The Olweus Programme suggests four rules, and these are mentioned in Appendix 1. Olweus and Roland think that maintaining rules is best achieved through a combination of positive reinforcements for pro-social behaviours and consistent sanctions for bullying.

The moral case. That bullying causes considerable pain, distress and humiliation to victims is amply documented (Mynard *et al.*, 2000; Hazler *et al.*, 2001; Roland, 2002a, b; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004). Some victims suffer psychologically debilitating effects not unlike those found in torture victims (Hazler *et al.*, 2001), and each year several young people commit suicide, partly as a result of being bullied at school (Smith & Shu, 2000). In rare cases, victims are so tormented by their antagonists that they plan and sometimes carry out retributive actions (Carney & Merrell, 2001).

The moral argument for combating bullying is to prevent these awful things from happening, which is why Olweus (2004a, p. 45) upholds ‘the fundamental democratic right (of all students) to feel safe and secure and to be spared violence and humiliation when they are at school’. Roland (Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003, p. 2) speaks to the same principle when he asserts that: ‘Children and young people have the right to be taught and brought up in an environment where they are spared from being bullied. Schools therefore have a duty to intervene when bullying occurs’.

Whole-school approach. In their programmes, Olweus (2001) and Roland (Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003) draw on the multiple levels—school, classroom and individual—of a student’s experience. The aim is to develop supportive school environments that promote caring and other respectful, helpful behaviours over time. It should be added that whole-school approaches are thought to produce the best results (Rigby *et al.*, 2004), probably because they cultivate *esprit de corps*.

Preventative and responsive intervention. Both programmes contain preventative and responsive measures. With regard to prevention, planned and spontaneous pro-social activities, such as empathy building, help to confront antisocial attitudes and encourage students to get along with peers. Emphasis is also placed on surveillance of ‘hot spot’ areas, such as toilets, changing rooms and cycle sheds. There are parallels (though more humane) with Foucault’s (1979) depiction of Panopticism, a system of surveillance in which an individual never knows that she or he is being observed at any one moment, but always knows that this might be so.

Responsive intervention mainly involves strong-minded and predictable action on the part of authoritative adults when bullying is observed or reported.

Expert support for schools. Olweus and Roland provide expert support to participating schools by means of in-service training and follow-up. Olweus uses a ‘train the trainer’ model, preparing and supervising instructor candidates who, once qualified, train and supervise key school staff. These key people are then responsible for leading staff discussion groups at school. Olweus trainers also help schools to administer the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, as well as interpreting and communicating the results to each participating school.

Roland uses in-service seminars to support key staff, students and parents. Zero experts also present a one-day conference on bullying for all school staff and are

available for consultancy. In addition, they advise schools on how to administer the Zero Bully/Victim Questionnaire, and they carry out the data analysis and prepare reports. Schools are able to discuss the results with Zero experts and other participating schools at specially arranged seminars (Midthassel *et al.*, 2006).

Swaying the majority. Research shows that the behaviour of bystanders who look on when bullying occurs, but fail to help the victim, can reinforce the problem (Salmivalli *et al.*, 2004). Disturbingly, research from England (Smith & Shu, 2000) shows that even though a majority of students have witnessed bullying incidents, about half of onlookers try not to get involved. Not only are many bystanders neutral rather than helpful, they are more likely to avoid involvement as they get older (Smith & Shu, 2000). Just by being there in a neutral capacity, perhaps prompted by a morbid fascination, is enough to satisfy the appetite of the bully who craves an audience. Things get worse when some bystanders side with the bully by joining in the action or by openly demonstrating approval of the aggressive behaviour.

Both programmes seek to tilt the social momentum towards helpful bystander behaviour, which is arguably a more realistic goal than trying to crack the cold cognition of the bully. Because 60–70% of students (in a given school term) are not involved in bullying in Norwegian schools—neither as bullies nor victims (Olweus, 1991)—much could be done if these students began to speak out (Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003). The latent moral force of this majority hangs in the balance, waiting to be mobilized. That said, would-be protectors must believe they can help the victim, so the perceived efficacy of their actions needs to be high.

It is encouraging to find that a large-scale British questionnaire study (Naylor & Cowie, 1999) of teachers' and pupils' views and experiences of peer support systems in confronting bullying in secondary schools and colleges ($n = 51$) discovered that this initiative generally reduced the negative effects of bullying for victims. Furthermore, the respondents thought that peer support helped to create a socio-emotional climate of care. However, more recent research (Cowie *et al.*, 2008) in four secondary schools, two with peer support systems, two without, and involving 931 pupils (49.5% males and 50.5% females) aged between 11 and 15, produced some multifarious results. Very little difference was found, for example, between pupils' perceptions of safety at schools with and without peer support systems. Indeed, older pupils in the schools without peer support replied that they felt safer in toilets and lessons than pupils in schools with peer support systems.

The aims of the research were to compare the perceptions of safety on the part of older and younger pupils in secondary schools with and without a system of peer support; to find out if there were differences in perceptions of safety within schools with peer support systems on the part of those who were aware of their existence and those who were not aware; and to find out if pupils in peer support schools were more likely to tell someone about bullying than those in schools without peer support. Despite the findings mentioned above, within the peer support schools there were significant differences in perceptions of safety between the substantial minority of pupils who did not know that their school had a

peer support system and those who did know. The pupils who knew, felt safer in lessons, found school a friendlier place to be in, and worried significantly less about being bullied, compared to pupils who did not know that a peer support system was in place. They were also much more likely to tell someone when bad things occurred. In light of this research, it is clear that more studies should be conducted into the potential positive efficacy of peer support in schools.

Olweus (2001) certainly believes in the latent potential of helping behaviour. His programme seeks to unlock this potential through role-play and the viewing of staged bullying incidents (on video), both of which are designed to enhance onlookers' emotional (and sympathetic) understanding of the victim's pain and predicament.

Muthoritative adults. The Bergen and Stavanger teams conclude that the success of an anti-bullying intervention is dependent on the wilfulness of what, in the Norwegian language, is termed 'tydelige voksne', which literally (and rather awkwardly) translates as 'clear adults'. I think a more accurate rendition, and one that captures the force of Norwegian usage, is 'adults who project presence'. Some commentators (and I suspect some teachers) express the view that this kind of authority is bestowed rather than learned. However, Olweus (2001) argues that most teachers can be taught to manage students confidently, even if they are not 'natural-born' class managers.

In the two interventions, the institutionalization of an 'authoritative adult-child interaction model' (see Carney & Merell, 2001) is paramount. In this model, adults, particularly teachers, are urged to take responsibility for the students' 'total situation', not just the learning aspects but the affective and social parts too. Zero also addresses the importance of dealing with bullies authoritatively, by providing schools with DVDs that show teachers how to project gravitas.

Differences

Differences between the programmes are apparent with regard to: history of documented effects; cut-off points concerning the duration of bully-victim problems; intensity of programme implementation; degree of emphasis on class management; and surveillance and reporting carried out by students.

History of documented effects. The main difference here is that, based on published scientific evidence, the Olweus Programme is known to have reduced bully-victim problems for over 20 years (see, for example, Limber *et al.*, 2004; Olweus, 2004b; CSPs, 2007), whereas Zero is still in the early stage of testing and is thus a less tried measure until more effect data are published.

It should be added that because both programmes use quantitative measures to make sense of quantified data, it is difficult to 'listen' to students' voices about bullying, as expressed in their own terms (see Currie, 2009).

Prevalence cut-off points. Although Olweus and Roland see bully–victim problems as issues that endure over time, they define prevalence (or duration) cut-off points differently. This can make it difficult to compare like with like in both national and international settings. In the Olweus Programme, the cut-off point for determining the percentage of students who have bullied another student (or students) or have been a victim of bullying during a specified period is set at ‘in the past couple of months’, whereas Zero uses ‘this school year’ for the same purpose.

Intensity of implementation: fidelity versus (degree of) adaptability. While Olweus and Roland both stress the importance of implementing the interventions ‘according to plan’ and provide schools with expert instruction to make this possible, there are different degrees of emphasis. The Olweus Programme is a ‘high intensity’ intervention, while Zero is ‘medium intensity’ in approach.

Olweus (2004b) has found that fidelity to his programme—broadly understood as teachers vigorously implementing key components of the intervention package—leads to greater reductions in bully–victim problems. He therefore wants schools to do what the teacher handbook says and to do this with conviction and emotional engagement. If teachers choose to make the programme work, there is a greater chance that it will work.

Roland takes a rather different view and has written a teacher handbook in which some of the content is presented along a continuum of core components, suggestions, and ideas. ‘Zero’, he says, ‘does not place a strong emphasis on keeping to the manual, that is to say, setting out chapter and verse what participating schools must do’ (Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003, p. 23). For Roland, successful outcomes are more contingent on context rather than on a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach. The aim is to take stock of promising ideas and to apply them in circumstances that are likely to obtain optimal programme efficacy.

This context-responsive approach echoes some of the ideas promoted by VISTA, a joint European project supported by the European Union Comenius Fund. LikeZero, VISTA is especially sensitive to the particularities of individual schools. It also considers the ways in which in-school contexts (e.g. teacher–pupil relationships) and out-of-school contexts (e.g. policy making) can impinge on each other (see VISTA, 2006).

To date, the Stavanger team has not to my knowledge conducted quantitative ‘quality control’ checks on overall programme fidelity. This might be because Roland expects teachers to make ‘intelligent’ adaptations to the Zero blueprint as and when they judge conditions to be right.

Classmanagement skills. Even though Olweus and Roland both accept that effective class management can be a powerful tool in preventing and tackling bullying, Olweus is more circumspect in his expectations. He notes, for example, that most bullying occurs outside of classrooms, with corridors, gym halls and changing rooms being notable ‘hot spots’. Olweus also thinks that teachers whose class management skills are not up to scratch can achieve good results, provided they learn and implement effective anti-bullying strategies.

If, however, a wider view of what constitutes ‘class management’ (i.e. the supervising of groups of children in a variety of locations—classrooms, canteens, playgrounds, etc.) is invoked, then some aspects of the difference between the two programmes are arguably less marked.

Student patrols. As an adjunct to adult supervision, Zero recommends the use of student patrols during school recess. The aim is threefold: to offer a reassuring presence, to report serious bullying incidents to staff, and to sort out minor episodes. Students on patrol are encouraged to wear official, brightly coloured vests in order to enhance their authority and visibility. This feature of Zero is different from the Olweus Programme, where recess supervision is considered the sole responsibility of adults.

Discussion

Among the more conspicuous similarities between the Olweus Programme and Zero are the following: a shared concept of what bullying is and its causes; an emphasis on evaluating intervention effects; comparable (in certain respects) theoretical frameworks; use of rules and sanctions; cultivation of a whole-school moral climate that upholds the intervention over time; implementing preventative and responsive measures; offering schools expert support; mobilizing the latent, positive force of onlookers; and putting teachers in control.

As regards differences (which deserve comment because they offer alternatives), these mainly concern: history of documented effects; prevalence cut-off points; expected degree of implementation fidelity; role of class management; and use of student patrols.

With its long history of reliably documented positive effects, the Olweus Programme will appeal to schools that are looking for an intervention which offers a realistic prospect of reducing bullying and victimization. The programme is based on a high threshold of scientific evidence and its successful replication in several countries justifies its promotion as an effective programme. Olweus has rightly set a high standard and one that is often difficult for other programme developers to meet.

Zero, on the other hand, must be seen as a more uncertain venture until further data become available. That said, unlike some school-based anti-violence interventions that are implemented without any plans for evaluation, Zero is beginning to gather credible research evidence for its effectiveness, with moderate effect sizes in Norway. Furthermore, partial replication of Zero principles in Ireland have shown some promising results. In light of this, Roland has developed an intervention that is beginning to prove itself and which justifies replication and evaluation in multiple sites.

It would help if Olweus and Roland were to settle on a common global measurement for determining prevalence estimates of bully–victim problems. That way, there would be less variability in bully–victim estimates in the literature (see Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Since the Olweus bully–victim questionnaire is widely used internationally, it seems good sense to use Olweus’s cut-off point. This would make it easier to find out which programmes

actually work and which do not, an essential consideration when deciding to replicate potentially useful interventions in different countries.

How schools respond to the implementation protocols of outside experts might influence programme choice. Teachers are known to be ‘key agents of change’ with regard to implementing anti-school-bullying interventions (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003), so *teacher responsiveness* to a planned goal is vital. This is why programme developers must offer something that teachers want and can use in their own schools.

The full potential of the Olweus Programme can only be achieved if teachers trust and implement the whole ‘package’. However, in schools where ‘in-house’ solutions are commonplace, Zero—which invites a degree of local adaptation without ‘watering down’ the core components—might attract more support from staff. Either way, given the less robust impact when interventions are implemented with poor fidelity, Zero programme developers need to put as much effort into finding out what hampers and what promotes favourable uptake as Olweus does. For even if Zero is less prescriptive than the Olweus Programme, Roland’s aims can only work *as intended* if teachers choose to implement his main ideas.

Against this background is the recognition that models of good practice may not easily translate from one setting to another setting. For this reason, programme developers need to take account of contextual indicators, such as the demographic profile of the school, teacher values and the level of parental commitment. Put simply, the point at which a potentially effective mechanism (e.g. more visible adult presence around the school) is likely to ‘fire’ will in part turn on the context in which it is set. By incorporating programme fidelity into his evaluation, Olweus is rightly taking account of an independent variable that might have been missed if context had been underreported or, worse, overlooked.

Even though there are differences of emphasis between Olweus and Roland regarding the extent to which the *good management of classes* can affect bully–victim problems, I do not think too much should be made of this. In the end, both programmes rely on authoritative teachers to set and impose boundaries for acceptable behaviour.

Another (perhaps relatively minor) difference between the two interventions concerns the *use of student patrols*, a feature of Zero but absent in the Olweus Programme. Perhaps Roland regards the participation of students, alongside teachers, in recess supervision as a demonstrable example of shared commitment between children and adults. On the other hand, I think that Olweus is making the point that supervisory roles are essentially an adult responsibility.

Although the Olweus Programme and Zero were developed for use in Norwegian schools, I believe there are benefits to be gained by transferring the main principles and processes in both measures to schools in other countries. I have in mind lesson drawing of the kind that uses cross-national evidence of good results as a source of policy guidance rather than lock, stock and barrel replication. This requires a degree of prospective evaluation of how a promising ‘foreign’ idea might be successfully imported and adapted to a particular national agenda.

It is also surely relevant that quantitative researchers such as Olweus and Roland should not underestimate the importance of wider society factors that tend to

stereotype certain groups as more prone to bullying than others. Ringrose (2005), for example, notes how neo-liberal discourses of the alleged problem of girls' aggression, especially racially marginalized and working-class girls in the hidden world of bullying, portray these girls as 'at risk populations' in need of increasing surveillance and disciplinary regulation.

There is a clear warning to schools here: not to lay undue emphasis on demonised groups such as 'feral children' (girls or boys) and black and working-class girls but to stick to the evidence. Part of this problem can be minimized by relying on children's self-reports of bully-victim problems (as happens in the Olweus Project and Zero) instead of allowing the preconceived categories of some adults (particularly teachers) to take precedence in the accounting.

Concluding remarks

In this article, I have compared the aims of two relatively successful anti-school-bullying programme developers in Norway. Both share a commitment to whole-school approaches when preventing and tackling bullying in schools. However, the Olweus Programme is more universalistic in its approach than Zero, which is more attuned to local school contexts.

I have indicated that I do not think there is a definitive right or wrong way here. Ultimately, to what extent programme developers' intentions will be implemented is up to school staff. It may even be possible (and wise) for schools to make a distinction between core programme aims (which are to be found in both the Olweus Programme and Zero) and context-specific aims (which are more associated with Zero). That way, school staff could maintain a common approach to, for example, adult responsibilities when protecting victims of bullying, as well as invoking 'custom-made' measures when particular forms of bullying are prevalent (e.g. homophobic bullying).

I hope that my findings and thoughts might provide a helpful framework for teachers and other professionals to begin and continue their discussions. In these talks, and to paraphrase Olweus (2005), I also hope that these people use their 'heads' as well as a robust research design when they consider the merits of anti-school-bullying programmes.

Finally, it is surely pertinent to add that researchers and practitioners should keep up with new and worrying trends in forms of bullying in schools, not least the advent of text bullying via electronic media such as SMS and the Internet. As soon as new empirical knowledge about novel forms of bullying are made available to schools, teachers will be able to enact more research-based preventative and proactive anti-bullying measures.

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Appendix 1. Overview of the Olweus Programme (largely based on: Kallestad & Olweus, 2003; Olweus, 2001, 2003, 2004a)

General prerequisites

Adult engagement, with teachers taking charge.

School-level measures

- *Anonymous self-report questionnaire survey* of students to measure the extent of bully–victim problems before and after programme implementation and at regular intervals for as long as it remains in operation.
- *School conference day* on bullying with staff, parent representatives and student representatives to promote collective support for the programme.
- *Adult supervision during recess*, with adults intervening decisively when bullying is observed or suspected and reporting bullying incidents. Vigilant supervision of students in ‘dead zones’ (e.g. changing rooms), where bullying is often out of adult sight, is essential.
- *Setting up of staff discussion groups* to promote a whole-school approach in dealing with bullying.
- *Setting up of a counter-bullying co-coordinating group* with overall responsibility for running the programme.

Classroom-level measures

- *Class rules against bullying* to foster democratic, whole-school participation regarding four main directives: ‘We will not bully others’; ‘We will try to help students who are bullied’; ‘We will make it a point to include students who are easily left out’; ‘If we know somebody is being bullied, we will tell the form teacher (or other teacher) and an adult at home’.
- *Class meetings with students*, led by the form teacher, to raise awareness of issues surrounding bullying and how to deal with it.
- *Meetings with students’ parents*, which the form teacher uses to foster a united front against bullying.

Individual-level measures

- *Serious talks with bullies and victims* in order to put a stop to bullying and to signal the setting up of follow-up measures, among which is the assurance of protecting the victim. Bullies are advised that consequences/sanctions will follow if they continue bullying. These can involve: apologizing to the victim; personally paying for any damage to the victim’s possessions; verbal reprimand; sitting outside the principal’s office during recess; ‘time-out’ in a dull location; school to contact the bully’s parents; and removal of privileges.

- *Serious talks with parents of bullies and victims*, the aim being to get the bully's parents to tell their child to stop bullying and to encourage the victim's parents to persuade their child to befriend a confident and kind student.
- *Development of individual intervention plans* which, in cases of resistant bullying, can require changing classes or schools of involved students.

Appendix 2. Overview of the Zero Programme (based on Roland & Sørensen Vaaland, 2003)

General prerequisites

Adult knowledge of the problem of bullying, with *teachers taking charge*.

School-level measures

- *Monitored transitions* from pre-school to elementary school and onto high school, with class groupings at each of the two transitions decided by lottery, the aim being a 'fresh start'.
- *Anonymous self-report questionnaire survey* of students to measure bully-victim problems before and after programme implementation and thereafter at regular intervals for the duration of the programme.
- *Clearly marked adult supervision during recess*, with adults confronting bullying and other misbehaviour and reporting serious incidents.
- *Regular visits by principal* to all classes and to after-school clubs in order to maintain a senior management presence and to inquire about bullying.
- *Establishment of co-coordinating groups* to help set up a whole-school anti-bullying policy and to monitor the running of the programme.
- *Involvement of council of student representatives* in programme implementation.
- Use of *student patrol* to maintain a reassuring presence during school recess, to report serious incidents of bullying to staff and to intervene *appropriately* in minor episodes.
- *Introduction of a 'buddy system'* so that older students can keep a friendly and supportive eye on younger students.
- *Information network* to be set up with the aim of keeping Zero in focus, both at school and among parents.
- Setting out the annual agenda of Zero initiatives in a *Whole School Policy document*.

Classroom-level measures

- *A structured start to the school year*, with the teacher establishing a confident presence from the outset.

- *Authoritative class management* in order to foster respect from students, positive classroom relations, focus on learning and clear routines.
- *Teachers support students emotionally and socially* in order to cultivate a secure classroom where students feel safe and wanted.
- *A well-organized learning climate*, with teachers signalling lesson starts and exits, setting clear tasks and providing educational support.
- *Relationship building*, both between teacher and students and between students, thereby fostering a classroom climate in which people look after each other.
- *Preventative work* by seeking to ensure that Zero norms are incorporated into the school's 'taken-for-granted' institutional practice.
- *Planned and spontaneous educational measures*, through which teachers plan and exploit openings to raise bullying issues while teaching.
- *'End of week' meetings* when form teachers and their students discuss the preceding week and plan for the next one—both with regard to bullying issues and other matters.
- *Individual talks with students* soon after the start of the school year and in spring, when the form teacher asks students if they are bullied, if they bully others and whether they know if other students are involved in bullying.
- *Meetings with parents as a group* during which form teachers seek to elicit a common cause between home and school.
- *Meetings with parents individually* during which form teachers routinely take up the issue of bullying and actual incidents.

Individual-level measures

- *Serious individual talks with victims* in order to reassure them that the teacher is taking charge, with *follow-up talks* set in motion.
- *Serious individual (and group talks) with bullies*, confronting them with the gravity of their actions and insisting that they agree to stop bullying. *Follow-up talks* for as long as it takes to crack the problem.
- *Consequences/sanctions* to follow if bullies fail to keep to the agreement, examples of which include: accompanied by teacher during recess; detention during recess; and temporary placement in another class.
- *Serious talks with parents of victims and bullies* to reassure the victim's parents that the school is taking concrete steps to remedy the problem, as well as getting the bully's parents to tell their own child about the seriousness of the matter.
- Encouraging *other students to befriend and support the victim*, particularly helpful if popular students are among the helpers.
- *Investigating the extent of bullying further* to find out if bullies are bullying other students and if the victim is bullied by other bullies.
- Discussing actual bullying incidents with the class, *if appropriate*, with the aim of developing an anti-bullying culture that condemns the sin (bullying), not the sinner (the bully), and which mobilizes class behaviours that protect victims.

- *'Oiling the machine'* by ensuring that agreed rules are kept in focus, as well as supporting students who have been bullied, and respectfully monitoring students who have bullied.
- *Raising bullying incidents in meetings with parents as a group, if appropriate*, and only if the victim/s and their parents agree to this and on how it should be done. The aim is to get parents to support the general welfare of all students in class.