



Norway



Social competence in Norwegian schools

Johannes Finne

Abstract

Norway is the country of the fjords situated in a northern corner of the world, slightly separated from the EU. The five million inhabitants of Norway have embraced the idea of equality and a social democratic organization of the welfare state. Norway has a well-established tradition of decentralization and school autonomy. This is especially marked in the case of primary and lower secondary schools, with a strong sense of individual schools being “owned” by their local communities and accountable to them rather than the national authorities. Many of these communities, especially in rural areas, are very small and responsible for just a few schools each. As an oil-producing country Norway’s wealth has grown and in the wake of this the level of equality seems to have decreased. However a robust economy secures a situation which is different to that experienced by many other countries and makes it possible to allocate a large share of financial resources to schools. For instance, the teacher density according to number of students per teacher is 28 % higher in Norway than the OECD average.

Norway has a well-established tradition of decentralization and school autonomy ... with a strong sense of individual schools being “owned” by their local communities ...

Nevertheless it is strange that these economic resources do not produce better results in education. Different surveys have placed Norway in a position whereby it stands out by attaining lower student achievement levels than other countries which invest similar amounts in education. These tests also indicate that there is a lot of noise and disturbance in the average Norwegian classroom. Academic results are weak and students seem to lack learning strategies, and their problem solving abilities and mathematics skills are much lower than in other comparable countries. Classroom management seems to be weak which might explain why the schools struggle with poor discipline and achieve poor academic outcomes. In a new study, only 70% of teachers reported that they perceive their authority and control in the classroom as good, meaning that a high number of teachers find themselves unable to lead their classes appropriately.

(Surveys) indicate that there is a lot of noise and disturbance in the average Norwegian classroom.

Knowledge about certain strategies with which to meet current challenges in the school can make the teacher feel safer and more secure. Such strategies are included in different programmes which are all designed to facilitate and develop social and emotional competence. Findings show that schools with a contextual perspective on behavioural problems have both a lower occurrence of such behaviour as well as less of a need for external support, compared with other schools. Effective programmes promote the school's ability to be a social equalizer, in terms of behavioural problems, learning difficulties and different cultural backgrounds.

Effective programmes promote the school's ability to be a social equalizer, in terms of behavioural problems, learning difficulties and different cultural backgrounds.

A national report describes the social and emotional learning programmes which have been approved by the Norwegian government for use in Norwegian schools, and there are nine evidence based programmes (mostly Norwegian) which have been put forward as the most effective. In this chapter examples of programmes will be given which specifically address the learning of social competencies by students, as well as examples of programmes focused on improving the social learning environment. Successful schools are characterized by dynamic leaders who promote change.

Social competence is a superior competence, which involves cognitive, communicative and emotional aspects in the development of individuals. This is also reflected and emphasized in most social competence training programmes. Interventions with a broad approach to social competence show as positive an effect for students seen as being of high risk of problem behaviour as for students with no such risk.

It is easy to take social and emotional competence for granted, since most people are led through the learning process through positive interactions with competent adults and peers. From a pedagogical point of view social skills and social and emotional competence are seen as learned behaviours that can be developed further. Positive peer relationships create opportunities to learn through imitation and through vicarious reinforcement, when observed

From a pedagogical point of view social skills and social and emotional competence are seen as learned behaviours that can be developed further.

Social competence is both a prerequisite for playing and a consequence of it. Likewise, social competence is both a result of and a prerequisite for language development.

children are successful in their social actions. A socially competent child can adapt, be aware of others and assert his/her own needs, being both pro-social and self-assertive. By observing many varied ways of using a skill in different situations, a reflexive competence will develop over time.

A systemic pedagogical approach might help children enter into a positive cycle together with other children, where the acquiring of skills and the reinforcement of such skills can take place. Social competence is both a prerequisite for playing and a consequence of it. Likewise, social competence is both a result of and a prerequisite for language development.

When we choose to see a situation through spectacles which are positively coloured by social competence we will be conscious of situations between children that we not would otherwise be aware of. And we need to wear the right glasses, given the essential mandate that we have been given to teach social and emotional competence to children and young people.

***Johannes Finne** has a Masters degree in Social Education. He is the leader and a lecturer at the Centre for Social Competence (ART-centre) at the Diakonhjemmet University College. In addition, he has several years of experience working with aggressive and violent youths, leading the implementation of programmes for social competence for youths and families in residential home facilities at the Lindoy Centre, Norway. Johannes Finne is a co-author of the Norwegian ART-manual and has been responsible for a number of seminars, presentation, supervisions and workshops in Norway and abroad.*

Social competence in Norwegian schools

Norway is a country of fjords, a thin strip reaching towards the top of the world. As the name indicates it is the way to the North. The landscape as seen from above or on maps, furrowed and weather-beaten, is poetically described in the Norwegian national anthem. Countless fjords, surrounded by steep mountains, actually make the Norwegian coastline as long as that of Australia. This proximity to the ocean has always been important to the Norwegian people. Fishing and shipping have been at the core of Norwegian society since the Viking era, more than 1000 years ago. And the ongoing willingness to keep every little village along the coast and in the deep inaccessible valleys alive is astounding. The Norwegian population of five million people confirm their origins through common leisure activities, which to a great extent include the quiet enjoyment of nature.

In many ways Norwegians are proud of their history as Vikings even though many of the stories about the rebellions are not very flattering. However, the era was characterized by expansion, trade and exploration, even though it is the fighting and looting that tend to spring to mind when we think of the Vikings. And it was during these times that Norway was established as a kingdom, 9000 years after it was first settled. The diplomatic talent of the Norwegian nation became visible already at this time and both literature and the economy flourished until the Black Death hit Norway like a hammer. Half of the inhabitants died during this catastrophe and the plague was the starting point of centuries of decline. For more than 500 years Norway was either a part of Sweden or Denmark. Due to the fact that Norway had very few nobles it was almost impossible to establish an alternative to being ruled by the country's neighbours.

So when nationalism flourished in Europe in the nineteenth century, this trend also

affected Norway and stimulated the Norwegian people to develop and to establish their own sense of national identity. The Norwegian constitution was ratified in 1814 and the parliamentary system of government was introduced in 1884. This then led to the dissolution of the union with Sweden in 1905. Norway definitely wanted to be a kingdom, but still did not have a nobility. It was because of this that the Norwegians decided to offer the crown to a Danish prince who became the first king of Norway for centuries. His ability to embrace his people was expressed early in May 1945, when he and his family returned to Norway from exile in London. The position of the royal family was again confirmed after the terrible events of 22nd July 2011. They managed to promote the strengthening of existing positive values in their people, instead of revenge and hate at a time when anger and hate had excellent growing conditions.

Since Norway won independence one hundred years ago, a strong state has been supported by its people. This desire for independence might be the reason why Norway is not part of the European Union. This desire for independence is also important in the local municipalities, which have a high level of local authority. Norway has a well-established tradition of decentralization and autonomy. This is especially marked in the case of primary and lower secondary schools, with a strong sense of individual schools being "owned" by their local communities and accountable to them rather than to the national authorities. Many of these communities, especially in rural areas, are very small and responsible for just a few schools each. Norwegians place a lot of trust in the state, which over the last century has been a welfare state based on social democratic principles. This has been important for the economic development of the country, and has also influenced how

Norwegians have looked upon government ownership of industry and business. At the end of the 1960s Norway entered a new era. Oil was found in the North Sea. This has had a great impact on the life of Norwegians as Norway gained wealth beyond all expectations.. From the very beginning of this era it was clear that the development of the petroleum enterprises should be controlled by the state.

which is the biggest Norwegian resource. From this perspective more distinct and proactive educational policies are required.

The Norwegian school system

In Norway children and young people from age 6 to 16 attend 10 years of compulsory schooling which is free of charge. In recent decades young people are increasingly expected to go on to upper secondary school

This focus on rights and equality between the people and its leaders might also explain why many teachers in Norway struggle with students' persistently challenging their authority.

The workers' legal right to influence the organization of their workplace is a typical feature of Norwegian industry and business. This focus on rights and equality between the people and its leaders might also explain why many teachers in Norway struggle with students' persistently challenging their authority. However, in recent years it seems that the level of equality in Norway has been decreasing. An increasing percentage of people seem to be part of the underprivileged sector of society and the differences between rich and poor are becoming more and more significant, as well as the gap between those with higher education and those without.

Today Norway's economy is robust and has secured a decent standard of living for future generations. How to use the country's financial resources is a hot topic and the opinion of many people in Norway is that more should be invested in education and in the development of children and youth. It is claimed that it is not oil but human capital

(age 16-19), which is still free of charge but not compulsory. The Norwegian unitary school, which the majority of children and young people attend, provides equal education to all students regardless of their academic skills, geography or parents' financial situation. The idea of the unitary school is based upon the value of an equal and adapted approach to teaching for everyone, in a co-ordinated school system. Teaching is based on curricula for the comprehensive school that includes, among other things, the purpose of and goals for developing social and emotional competences. The schools have a quite considerable local autonomy in how they teach as long as they cover the core elements of the curricula.

In the 1950s and 60s a comprehensive change took place in the Norwegian school system. Seven years of education was provided to all children, and in cities students could attend additional years at school to qualify for further and higher education.

... schools have quite a considerable local autonomy in how they teach as long as they cover the core elements of the curricula.

However, this was an alternative for just a minority of students. In the 1950s the idea of the unitary school grew and in 1959 a new school law gave communities the opportunity to provide 9 years of schooling to their children. This happened concurrently with other changes in the rest of society. The new world demanded more education, society became more modernized, fewer workers were needed on the farms and young people became less important as labour. Nine years of comprehensive schooling was legally established in 1969 as a result of these changes. In 1997 compulsory school attendance was extended to 10 years.

The Norwegian school system has gone through many reforms over the last 50 years, which has caused difficulties in developing teaching systems and teaching skills over

ary schools. It introduces certain changes in substance, structure and organization from the first grade in the 10-year compulsory school and up to the last grade in upper secondary education and training. For example, this reform strengthens the basic subjects such as Norwegian and mathematics, describes key skills in all subjects, describes new goals for academic competence and requires a new timetable structure. However, the schools are given the responsibility of choosing their pedagogical approaches and materials.

There are approximately 3000 primary and secondary schools in Norway with an average of 200 students attending each school. Approximately 7% of the schools are private. Most private schools are established as local initiatives in rural areas and small villages

Incessant changes in government demands and expectations have adversely affected the overall teaching quality in our schools.

time. Incessant changes in government demands and expectations have adversely affected the overall teaching quality in our schools. 'Knowledge Promotion' was introduced in 2006 and is the latest reform to be introduced into the 10-year compulsory schooling system and into the upper second-

where the public school has been closed down by the authorities, due to low numbers of students.

The school plays an important role as a social equalizer. The threshold to exclude students from ordinary schools is high and only 0.5%

of students receive full time lessons in special schools (the average for Europe is 2%). The maximum primary school class size is 28 students and the average density of teachers is 11.9 students per teacher in primary schools and 10.5 in secondary schools. This teacher to student ratio is 28% higher than corresponding numbers for OECD countries. The amount of money invested in the Norwegian school system is formidable. Many times I have been asked: in Norway why can't you, with such wealth, achieve better results in your schools?

Observations indicate that productivity in Norwegian primary and secondary schools is low in the sense that student achievement is low in proportion to the amount of money which is invested in schools. However, Norway is not the only country which invests heavily in education but it stands out by scoring badly in international tests such as PIRLS, PISA and TIMSS compared to other countries which also invest heavily in education.

Norway has had a social democratic society for the last hundred years. The unitary school has provided a framework in which development has taken place. This means, in terms of the objectives of the unitary school, that everybody is supposed to have equal possibilities to progress, whether you are poor or rich, live in a city or in rural areas. It also seems as if this is the reality. The level of urbanization or the number of students in a class does not seem to affect the learning outcomes or student behaviour. Nevertheless, studies indicate (Wiborg et al 2011) that parents' level of education has a greater impact on student academic results than demographic factors, ethnic background or any other factor. Differences in achievement, taking into account parents' levels of education, will increase over time, and it does not seem as if school will help this tendency, either in terms of academic achievements or in terms

of the number of years spent in education. This is critical when you consider that the main goal for compulsory schooling is to offer the same possibilities to all students, whatever their background. Results for private schools are just slightly better.

Many different explanations have been suggested as ways of understanding this cost-benefit gap. Some claim that Norwegian students achieve good results in subjects not measured in these tests. As an example, the PISA studies of 2000 and 2003 indicate that there is more noise and disturbance during teaching in Norwegian schools than in most of the other countries in these studies. The academic results are weak and show that our students lack learning strategies and do not find the outcome of the school years as valuable as students in other countries do. Further indications show that problem solving abilities and mathematical skills are much lower than in other countries, even when compared with the other Nordic countries. PISA raises a fundamental question about to what extent the Norwegian school has succeeded in promoting the fundamental competencies, such as problem solving and learning strategies, that will contribute to lifelong learning for children and youth, about which there is broad international agreement (Kjærnsli & Lie, 2005).

Kjærnsli and colleagues (2007) draw attention to the issue of classroom management and a weakening of the teacher's leadership role, in an attempt to explain why Norwegian schools seem to struggle with poor discipline and poor academic outcomes. A recent study by Vaaland and Ertesvåg (2013) investigated how teachers perceive their own authority, in particular in relation to classroom control. In a representative sample, about 70% of teachers reported that they had good authority and control, meaning that a high number of teachers (i.e. 30%) find themselves unable to

lead their classes appropriately. In addition to the trouble that disruptive and negative pupil behaviour causes for teachers, it also has undesirable consequences for pupils' learning.

The school system seems not to be meeting the needs of boys, who, at an increasing rate are becoming a minority in the upper secondary schools and at the universities which

not changed at the same rate and in a similar direction to those of children and young people, which has led to teachers feeling insecure and being unclear about their role and level of authority. Within this context of greater equality between students and teachers it is hard to be an authoritative adult, as we have traditionally understood this role. Many models, programmes and approaches

It seems as if the tendency is for students to focus more on rights than on duties. This has concealed the teacher's right to set limits, to demand and to expect effort from students.

demand a high level of effort and good results. One third of boys drop out of upper secondary school before they have finished their education, and it seems that this trend is increasing. This is a particular problem at schools where boys are in the majority and which are perceived as easy to get into.

The school system has been through many changes in the last decade, and student behaviour, has been particularly focused upon. These changes have included an increase in the students' level of influence through increased involvement. A wave of democracy in the school includes for example more student engagement, project work and self-evaluation. This corresponds with the trends in adults' working lives. This new student role has caused the teacher's role to be put under pressure (Kjærnsli & Lie, 2005). It seems as if the tendency is for students to focus more on rights than on duties. This has concealed the teacher's right to set limits, to demand and to expect effort from students. It is claimed that in schools the adults' roles have

in school seem to be oriented towards strengthening the teacher's ability to be authoritative. From the student perspective, rules, guidelines and systems seem to strengthen the teacher's role and strengthen the school as an authoritative collective.

We have today collected a lot of knowledge about the connection between behaviour problems and academic success (Nordahl, 2005). We know also that social competence correlates positively with high academic achievement. This means that developing social competencies is not just a goal in itself, but also has the purpose of strengthening students' learning abilities. In recent years the term "early intervention" has received much attention both in professional and political debates. It is much easier to build positive behaviour at an early age than to change behaviour when children or young people are older. Many students could benefit from a greater focus on social competence in the early school years instead of later which requires more extensive intervention in the

... social competence correlates positively with high academic achievement.

higher grades. Nevertheless, the reality is that twice as many students require special education in secondary schools compared to primary schools. Despite all the good will and concrete actions which have been taken the schools have only to a limited extent succeeded in helping students to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and values needed to create a good life for themselves.

Social competence in Norwegian schools

It is easy to take social and emotional competence for granted, since most people are led through the learning process and have positive interactions with competent adults and peers. However, as our knowledge about such competencies and social interactions increases, we also realize that well-adapted children possess a great number of skills and well developed abilities to reflect on and adapt to different situations (Ogden, 2006). Social competencies are not given as innate abilities, nor do they develop through maturation or

competence can be understood as social skills together with the knowledge of when to use different skills, and how to use skills differently in different situations. Being socially competent is often a question of balancing different goals simultaneously. It is expected that children can take into account both individual and collective goals, meaning that they are able to be both pro-social and self-assertive at the same time. This can create a clash of interests that needs to be solved by what we can call a reflective competence. For example, a student may choose to sit down and talk to a friend in trouble and will therefore be late for class. He/she will have to choose between being a good friend and a good student.

When a pupil has problems with friendship or is worried about what will happen in the break, this will result in a lack of concentration in the learning situation. It has been estimated that about 75% of children with

Social competence can be understood as social skills together with the knowledge of when to use different skills and how to use skills differently in different situations.

through incidental learning. From a pedagogical perspective social skills and social and emotional competence are seen as learned behaviour that can be developed further (Gundersen, 2010). Nobody is totally without skills and nobody is fully trained. Social

learning difficulties also lack social skills (Kavale and Forness 1995). It is important to stress that social competence correlates positively with academic achievements (Nordahl et al., 2006; Caprara et al., 2000; Wentzel, 1991)

Social competence is a superior competence, which involves cognitive, communicative, emotional and proprioceptive aspects in human beings (Vedeler, 2000). Traditionally, social competence and social skills have been described in medical terms. The reason for a lack of social skills was seen as psychological

and cooperative. It seems as if teachers and parents have different expectations in this area, where parents' expectations go more in the direction of self-assertion and teachers seem to prefer cooperation. To be a good friend requires skills such as the regulation and recognition of emotions, sharing, listen-

Children with behavioural problems are likely to be isolated or to form friendships with others who also lack social competence.

“damage”, requiring diagnosis and treatment. Probably this is the reason why social competence and social skills have only in recent years been integrated into teaching curricula (Hargie and Hargie, 1995). In recent years there has been a greater focus on the interaction between contextual conditions and individuals and their environment in order to explain why individuals behave as they do.

It is claimed that accumulation of social capital, such as social resources and social competencies, is more complex than it used to be. A more knowledge-based acquisition of social competencies demands more from the parents. This strengthening of the family's position might increase the differences between children, because parents have different levels of ability to invest in the development of their children (Frønes, 2010). This will strengthen the purpose of the school as an equalizer and/or increase differences in society.

A Norwegian study of students aged 10–13 (Ogden 1995) and their social competence indicates that they are simultaneously expected to be self-assertive, self-controlled

ing, waiting one's turn and showing consideration to others. Children who possess such skills are in a positive cycle, where they are likely to establish positive and lasting friendships with others with similar skills. Because of mutual reinforcement of pro-social behaviour, the initially positive competence is further strengthened. In the other direction, aggressive and self-centred behaviour is negatively correlated with the acceptance of others. Children with behavioural problems are likely to be isolated or to form friendships with others who also lack social competence. This will set up a negative cycle, where rule-breaking behaviour is reinforced while the individual develops an identity as a “behaviourally difficult” child (Dodge, 2006). For this reason the ability to establish friendships is the key to social competence. It seems as if young people with behaviour problems feel best when acting out problem behaviour, and pro-social young people feel best when they are being pro-social.

Students who experience a positive relationship with their teachers also have good relationships with their peers (Nordahl, 2005). Both at age 10 and 13, there is a positive

correlation between social competence and high motivation for school and high academic achievement. Students with high social competence also appear to be the most preferred members of a collaborative group during teaching or to be together with in the breaks (Ogden, 1995). Social competence is an underlying prerequisite for children and youth to behave in social situations. For a student to thrive as a competent member of the school community he/she has to have the self-belief that he or she has acquired the skills to meet his/her obligations towards other students and teachers and is able to promote individual and collective well-being. In fact, Bandura (1997) thought that self-efficacy is more important for problem solving than actually mastering the social skills required to resolve the problem. This belief is further reinforced when skills are successfully applied to real life situations.

Building social and emotional competence in Norwegian schools

Today a large number of resources are put towards preventing and reducing problems among children and young people, such as bullying, discipline problems and behaviour problems. The efforts which are made and the number of different programmes in use are, in many cases, weakly anchored in theory and empirical data. Mostly such programmes are implemented after discipline, behaviour or other such problems have occurred. At the same time many interventions are not appropriately evaluated. The result of this is that a lot of both pro-active and reactive pedagogical practice in Norwegian schools is based on the wrong prerequisites. Interventions do not or only partly address the problems they are meant to solve.

There is no general, nationwide strategy for social and emotional education in Norway. However, the authorities have set some clear guidelines in which they delegate the re-

sponsibility for choosing and implementing such programmes to the leaders of each community and each school. A number of programmes in use are to a greater or lesser degree evidence based and to a greater and lesser extent well implemented in Norwegian schools and kindergartens (Nordahl et al. 2006).

Even if training in social and emotional competence in Norwegian schools is strongly recommended by the government, it is left up to each community and each school to choose the level of implementation (for example, will a certain group, a certain grade or the whole school take part in a programme?) and which programme to implement. In 2006 a committee established by the government completed a report (Nordahl et al.) that describes good practice in social and emotional learning programmes to be used in schools, and indicates which programme is suitable for which group. A high number of programmes were taken into consideration, but only nine programmes scored highly enough to be rated as “a programme with documented effects”. These nine programmes are divided into two groups. The first group consists of programmes which specifically address students’ learning of social competence. All of the programmes are manual based and consist of pedagogical activities to increase students’ cognitive and behavioural capacities. The following four programmes fall into this group: Aggression Replacement Training (ART), The Incredible Years, You and I and Us Two, and Zippi’s Friends.

The second group consists of programmes which focus on the learning environment of the school. They provide tools to prevent bullying and to establish, for example, a matrix of problem solving approaches, systematic reinforcement of positive behaviour and common rules for the school. These kind of programmes include students through

Table 1. Programmes with documented effects which specifically address the learning of social competencies (Nordahl et al., 2006)

Programmes which specifically address the learning of social competencies

Programme	Description
*ART (Aggression Replacement Training), American, Norwegian adaptation. Diakonhjemmet University College	Group based training for students from 1st-10th grade (6-16 years old) using role play, a fixed training structure, games and positive reinforcement. Consisting of three equal components; social skills, anger management and moral reasoning. Used for the prevention and treatment of behavioural problems for young and older students.
The Incredible Years American C. Webster-Stratton	Used for prevention and treatment of behavioural problems of young students, 1st-3rd grade (3-8 years old). Group-based treatment programme involving both parents and children. Prevention programme for classes and teachers.
**“You and I and us two!” Norwegian Kari Lamer	Programme for systematic promotion of social competence among children and developing competence among staff. Kindergarten and primary school (3-9 years old).
Zippy’s Friends UK Partnership for Children	Conversation and dialogue-based programme promoting the solving of everyday situations. Early intervention in primary school (6-8 years old). Focuses on strengthening of power of resistance in addition to mastering coping and social skills.

*Programmes marked with * are presented in the case study section of this chapter.*

pedagogical activities which establish a positive learning environment. The following five programmes have qualified to be a part of this group: Respect, LP-Model (Learning Environment and Pedagogical Analysis), Olweus Anti-Bullying Programme, PALS (Positive Behaviour, Supporting Learning Environment and Interaction) and Zero Anti-Bullying Programme.

Knowledge about certain strategies to meet the current challenges at the school can make the teacher feel safer and more secure (Visser, 2000). Such strategies are developed

through different programmes which have the goal to facilitate and develop social and emotional competence.

From a contextual perspective one looks upon behaviour as a result of the social environment and the quality of the relationships between staff, between staff and students and among students. Nordahl and colleagues (2009) found that schools where staff had a contextual perspective on behaviour problems had both a lower occurrence of such behaviour as well as less of a need for external support, compared with other schools.

Table 2. Programmes with documented effects which focus on the school's learning environment (Nordahl et al., 2006)

Programmes which focus on the school's social learning environment

Programme	Description
Respect Norwegian University of Stavanger	Emphasizes a whole school approach where all students, staff and parents get involved. Focuses on discipline, concentration and the prevention of bullying. Principle-based programme for 1 st -10 th grade (6 - 16 year olds).
LP-Model (Learning Environment and Pedagogical Analysis) University of Stavanger	Promotes social and academic learning conditions in grades 1-10 (6 - 16 year olds). An analysis method targeting teachers' understanding of the factors which arouse and maintain problem behaviour.
Olweus, Anti-bullying programme Norwegian University of Bergen	Reducing and preventing bullying and anti-social behaviour in 1 st -10 th grades (6 - 16 year olds). Establishes understanding and rules and promotes peer support and problem solving with regard to bullying.
PALS (Positive Behaviour, Supporting Learning Environment and Interaction), Norwegian University of Oslo	Whole school approach for grades 1-7 (6-12 year olds) for the prevention of problem behaviour. Consisting of an intervention programme targeted at all students, a training programme for staff and implementation strategies.
*Zero Norwegian University of Stavanger	The main focus is to reduce and prevent bullying in grades 1-10 (6-16 years old) and emphasizes the authoritative leadership of classes. Organizational implementation works within the existing structure and organization of the school.

*Programmes marked with * are presented in the case study section of this chapter.*

From a contextual perspective one looks upon behaviour as a result of the social environment and the quality of the relationships between staff, between staff and students and among students.

In the following section examples from three different Norwegian schools using programmes for social and emotional competence in different ways will be described.

These are just ordinary schools, which do not have a dramatic back-story nor a desperate need for a SEE programme. However, the school staff realized that they needed

more structure and a more systematic approach to promoting social and emotional competence in their students. In addition, a programme for use in kindergartens will briefly be presented.

The programmes which will be described represent interventions with different target groups and the breadth of programmes currently being implemented in Norwegian schools and kindergartens. The first is an anti-bullying programme named Zero which addresses the school's learning environment and the prevention of bullying. Secondly ART (Aggression Replacement Training) is presented as a group-based programme for students. Thirdly Whole-ART is described as an effective way of combining programmes for student training and improvement of the learning environment. Finally "You and I and us two" is briefly described as the most used

it in terms of actual numbers of students and not as a percentage; more than 50 000 students are bullied every month. The fact that the number of students affected decreases with increasing age, means that the percentage of bullied students who are younger is even greater. Despite more than a decade of anti-bullying initiatives in schools many children still feel unsafe at school. Bullying is a safety issue, and the fact that these issues are generated by their peer group and often in private contexts makes it difficult for adults to control. The recent upsurge of cyber bullying is a case in point (Cowie, 2011)

How to understand bullying as a mechanism

Two types of aggression are described in the literature. The first, *reactive aggression*, is understood as a tendency to react with anger when one is becoming frustrated or has been

Studies (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011) show that 8.5% of the students in Norwegian schools are bullied several times a month ...

programme in kindergartens in Norway to promote social competence among children, and pedagogical competence among staff.

Case Study 1: Zero-Programme to Reduce and Prevent Bullying Vaagen school

Introduction

Studies (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011) show that 8.5% of the students in Norwegian schools are bullied several times a month, and this percentage has remained steady for a number of years. As a percentage this might not seem too bad until we understand

provoked. This is not important as a variable in bullying behaviour. The second, *proactive aggression*, is a stable tendency to act aggressively to achieve social goals without any provocation. There is a strong positive correlation between proactive aggression and bullying, especially in the higher grades.

Bullying creates a feeling of power over the victim and a sense of belonging with the other bullies, since this tends to be a group activity. The relationship between the bullies is strengthened through committing acts of bullying as a group and the fact that the victim is outside the bullying circle makes this

feeling of fellowship even greater. Despite their actions, most bullies say that bullying is wrong, and theoretically they are against such behaviour. Because of the group, each individual's sense of responsibility is pulverized. For this reason it is important, as a part of the problem solving process, to speak individually with each of those involved. Another mechanism that makes bullying possible is the construction of false facts about the victim that places the responsibility for the actions of the bullies onto the victim. The bullies feel that their actions are no longer wrong, because the victim deserved to be harmed by them. Such explanations will typically be given when bullies are confronted about their actions. It is important that adults working with bullies understand the function of such arguments and do not allow any discussion about whose fault it was.

Bystanders are described as having an important role in bullying. They do not participate in tormenting the victim, but they are present as a silent majority. Bystanders seem to believe that other bystanders support the tormenting, but in most cases they are wrong. If peers step in and support the victim in many cases it will effectively stop the bullying.

Classes in which behaviour problems and bullying are experienced are characterized by a number of students feeling insecure about their place in the class, groups of students exhibiting destructive behaviours and isolated students. The insecurity leads to a real struggle for position with bullying being used as a tool. Authoritative teachers are in position to stop the ability of potentially aggressive students to play out their behaviour. In other words much effective prevention lies in the style of management used by the teacher and in the school as a whole (Martinussen & Eng 2010; Roland & Vaaland, 2006).

The Vaagen School

Driving from the west coast into the countryside towards the mountains, which run from north to south through the middle of Norway, you will come across a village called Ølen. There you might see several oil-platforms anchored for repairs in the shipyards along the sea shore in the fjord which will lead you to understand that the oil industry is a key part of this society. The small school of Vaagen is based in this little village. Vaagen School has approximately 90 students in the 1st - 7th grade (aged six to twelve) and a staff of 16 people. Everybody knows each other, and for villages like Ølen, the families have been here for generations, with their traditions, histories and relationships.

During lessons it is quiet in the hallways. In the breaks one can hear the sound of children's play as one would expect in a school with just one class in each grade. As a symbol the Zero poster hangs intact and clean on the outside wall leading to the soccer field. Maybe the students feel more ownership of common property in a small school? The headteacher Liv Ingunn Heie Medhaug has her office behind the first door in the hallway just beside the main entrance. Immediately one can see that everyone is welcome to visit her in her office – pupils, staff and parents. Tools for communication and problem solving are readily available and well used. She spoke to me about her school and why they decided to implement a programme to improve the learning environment.

Prior to the implementation of the programme there was no significant problem with bullying or problem behaviour at the school. However, there was a shared belief that a systematic approach to preventing unpleasantness among students and building pro-social behaviour would positively contribute to the learning environment of the

school. Liv explains why she felt that this was the right programme for the school:

"We wanted a programme that was not too extensive and a programme that we could implement and use at a level suited to our needs. Zero has a lot of positive qualities and is research based. It contributes to the institutional authority of the school to anchor a process and implementation in evidence and in the expertise of a university, it gives us more confidence and authority when communicating with parents."

Zero - anti-bullying programme

Zero is a universal preventive bullying programme for primary and secondary schools developed by The Norwegian Centre for Learning Environment and Behavioural Research in Education at the University of Stavanger. Since its introduction in 2003 the programme has been implemented by 370

"People around us interpret signals differently. Sometimes a disagreement between the school and parents occurs about whether an incident is a bullying incident or not. If there is a culture characterized by respect and everybody knows that even a minor incident will be dealt with, then it is easier to report incidents to the teachers. The other side of a safe and friendly environment is that fewer incidents are likely to be interpreted as bullying. You are less afraid from the beginning onwards."

The programme consists of three key elements. Firstly; *Authoritative management* of the class is a key element in preventing bullying. Teachers are supposed to lead the class in a firm and caring way. The teacher should be both the formal and informal leader of the class, having authority, control over what happens in the classroom and the trust of the students. Individual feedback is emphasized

Authoritative management of the class is a key element in preventing bullying.

schools. The main goal of the programme is to reduce and prevent bullying, increase student well-being at school and reduce worry about bullying. This is not a manual based programme but it is built upon principles that offer guidelines for the work. It is up to each school to choose the activities and the Zero principles they will include in their programme, based on their own needs and resources. *Zero tolerance* is one of the main principles, which means that no unpleasantness against others is allowed, and this includes minor episodes. Students, parents and staff must all be clear that bullying is not acceptable. The headteacher told us.

and students know that the teacher will pay attention to what is happening in the classroom and will intervene when needed. The second key element *consistency* refers to the fact that this work should be integrated into the school's existing activities. Good leadership of a class is described as preventive in itself. And finally *continuity* is needed if such a programme is to produce any positive outcomes. Attention needs to be paid to the standard of the intervention and the quality needs to be sustained over time. The implementation of a Zero programme lasts for a year.

Plan of action

The structured plan of action runs as a thread through the whole implementation process, which last for approximately a year. The implementation process takes place in the spring with preparation of the new school year as the first step. Early on in the process a resource group consisting of key people from the school community is established. The core of this group is supposed to be composed of the leadership group of the school, supplemented by representatives from the student council and from the parents' committee. The main task of this group is to ensure the implementation of the Zero programme, involving the staff, the parents and the student council.

Involving parents is essential. *"A programme like Zero is almost without value if you don't collaborate with the parents,"* the headteacher claims.

Also in this first phase a student survey takes place. The school carries out an anonymous student survey in the spring to reveal bullying among students at the school. This same student survey is repeated a year later. Based on the results from the survey a local plan of action is created. This plan is highly valuable as a guideline for implementing the Zero programme in the school, and the process of creating the plan is of value in itself. The resource group and groups of students, staff and parents take part in the process of developing rules for the school, a matrix for problem solving, information materials and pedagogical activities.

"For us the process has been most important. Sub-processes like writing our own documents, deciding what we want to focus on and so on, these are the things that give content to such a programme."

The structured plan of action consists of four parts. The first is to reveal bullying. Both the annual survey and daily communication between adults and students play an important role in this work.

Secondly, the school develops a common strategy to ensure that teachers, students and parents who report bullying know that the school will intervene as described in the Zero programme guidelines. The third part of the initiative is prevention. The best way to prevent bad behaviour is to build good behaviour. The teacher's relationship with each student, with his/her class and with the parents, and the students' peer relationships, are all important. Focusing on positive behaviour and reinforcing positive behaviour has a great impact on how each student behaves, but the social environment of the school also plays a crucial role. The composition of new classes in first grade (when children move from kindergarten to school at the age of six) and the eighth grade (when the children move from primary to secondary school at the age of thirteen) has a great impact on the extent of bullying.

Fourth and last is continuity. To solve a problem at the lowest possible level is an important principle and the staff know what to do when incidents occur. Numerous studies emphasize how important it is that the leader keeps a firm grip on the implementation process and continues to keep it alive.

"If we think a process will just continue by itself, it will fall apart. We need to discuss the initiative and have it on the agenda at all times. New colleagues will definitely solve problems in their own way if we don't include them in our culture and verbalize what we believe in and how we live out our principles in the organization. As a headteacher I need to be alert all the time."

Collaboration between school and home is critical

Teachers and parents are often powerless to intervene in the private world that children and young people create for themselves (Cowie, 2011). Sometimes it is not necessarily a question of bullying, rather it is more about inclusion and exclusion. Inviting others to a birthday party is a typical example. This issue has been put on the agenda by the students, the headteacher told me. *"A common approach is established concerning how to deal with this question. When parents allow their children to exclude classmates from, for example, birthday parties they might legitimate and strengthen the exclusion."*

Example of common approaches for the whole school, decided on by the parents' committee:

- 1 You invite all your fellow students of your own sex to your birthday party, movie nights and other kinds of events until the 7th grade (age 12 years old). You are allowed to invite everyone, of both sexes.
- 2 The parents' representative has the responsibility to ensure that every class has at least one positive social happening each year, either for a group of friends or for all students. The school can be helpful in establishing friend groups if required (to ensure that no students are left out). You can ask the headteacher if you can borrow the school premises for such events.
- 3 At our school we respect the limit of 13 years of age before using Facebook. When children of 13 years of age are allowed by their parents to use Facebook, the child's parents will also be friends with their children on Facebook.
- 4 If parents are worried about the safety or well-being of their children at school or when they are on their way to school, please let the teacher know. It is important to look into and stop negative behaviour as soon as possible. Parents are also allowed to contact the headteacher, the health vis-

itor or the PPT (pedagogical psychological services). These professionals are all bound by confidentiality.

Now and the future

After implementing the Zero programme the parents are more conscious about how to solve bullying incidents and they have more procedural tools than before. They want the school to play an active part and to be the meeting point when problems occur. However, they are clear that what is happening outside school is supposed to be solved outside school. A teacher might offer to parents to be present as an observer, for example, when families want to solve a problem or an incident. The headteacher explains:

"The fact that parents want to involve the school says something about our authority and the trust parents have in us. We experience that parents can openly discuss difficult questions, because we as a school have established clarity and guidelines with regards to our attitudes and how we lead processes when problems occur." Zero has contributed to us setting a high standard, Liv describes. *The students express a higher level of verbalizing what is acceptable and what is not – they have greater clarity about what and cannot be done. In this spirit the programme slogan has changed. It used to be "Zero, a programme to prevent bullying". Now it is "Zero, a programme for a healthy psycho-social learning environment". It had a considerable focus on bullying, which is not that surprising since it is an anti-bullying programme. However, now the whole focus is more on building something positive than about preventing something negative. In many ways this is a total turnaround, maybe not in terms of actions or organizational structure, nor in the matter of consciousness, but in the ability that students now have to express what they see, who they are and what they want.*

"This year we have children and media on the agenda. It's all about building attitude and values and setting limits for oneself. Social media exists and we have to deal with it. But it can't be the school alone which owns the responsibility for this. Discussions and group work together with parents and students make it possible to create common limits and attitudes."
(Headteacher Liv Ingunn Heie Medhaug)

Children's right to feel safe at school is indisputable. Knowing that one is surrounded by adults and peers who will positively contribute to making the school an inclusive and good place to be is priceless. The school of Vaagen has cultivated what they had, by adding consciousness and structured tools to reduce the likelihood of bullying incidents occurring in the future. Zero has been translated into English and Spanish and has been implemented in several parts of the world, including Latin America.

Case Study 2: Aggression Replacement Training (Art) When self-assertiveness is a goal for the school - Smeaheia School

ART - a description

Aggression Replacement Training (ART) (Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs, 1998) is a multi-modal programme for the training of social competencies. Originally the programme was designed for young people with major behavioural problems. The programme has been found to be very effective in prisons or as an alternative to imprisonment (Hollin, 1999; Barnoski & Aos, 2004). More recently ART has, especially in Norway, been adapted and used in kindergartens, schools, residential homes for children and young people and also in working with people with Asperger's syndrome and autism. Both in terms of prevention and in terms of intervention ART has been the most used programme for training in social competence in schools and residential homes

in Norway. Three Norwegian effectiveness studies of ART confirm a general increase in measures of social competence and a reduction in problem behaviour (Gundersen & Svartdal, 2006; Gundersen et al., 2010; Langeveld, Gundersen & Svartdal, 2011). Because of its good results ART has been recommended for use in youth institutions for treatment of behaviour problems (Andreassen, 2003) and schools (Nordahl et al., 2006).

The programme consists of three components; Social skills training, Anger management training and training in Moral reasoning. The programme has a fixed structure and makes considerable use of role play, exercises and games. Usually there are 4-8 participants and two trainers in a group which is made up of young people with different levels of behavioural problems and social competencies. There is a particular focus on student involvement, both to make the sessions more exciting but also to increase learning through observation. Various strategies for reinforcement, generalization (i.e. the transfer and maintenance of learning) and implementation have been developed.

Social skills training

The goal of the social skills training is to teach students relevant and pro-social behavioural options for use in everyday situations. Fifty different skills are described and built up in three to six steps, which are like a recipe for pro-social behaviour. For example, a skill, such as giving a compliment, consists of thinking steps, verbal steps and behavioural steps.

Example of a skill: Giving a compliment

- Step 1. *Decide what you want to compliment the other person about*
- Step 2. *Decide how to give the compliment*
- Step 3. *Choose the right time and place*
- Step 4. *Give the compliment*

The first three steps are thinking steps. They contain a number of different thinking skills, such as empathic thinking, reflection about what will best suit this actual situation, and timing. Many children and young people are not successful at using skills because they have developed few alternatives and have poor timing in terms of when and where it is acceptable to offer compliments to others or to ask for help. The actual communication requires many micro skills such as body language, facial expression, tone of voice and so on. When giving a compliment face to face,

in a fixed structure which includes defining the skill, the trainer's demonstration of the skill, the student's role play and the student receiving positive feedback from other students and trainers.

Anger management is the second component, and it concerns the student's ability to regulate his/her anger and to solve potentially difficult situations in a way that is acceptable to everyone involved. The programme focuses on physiological responses, cognitive processes and behavioural re-

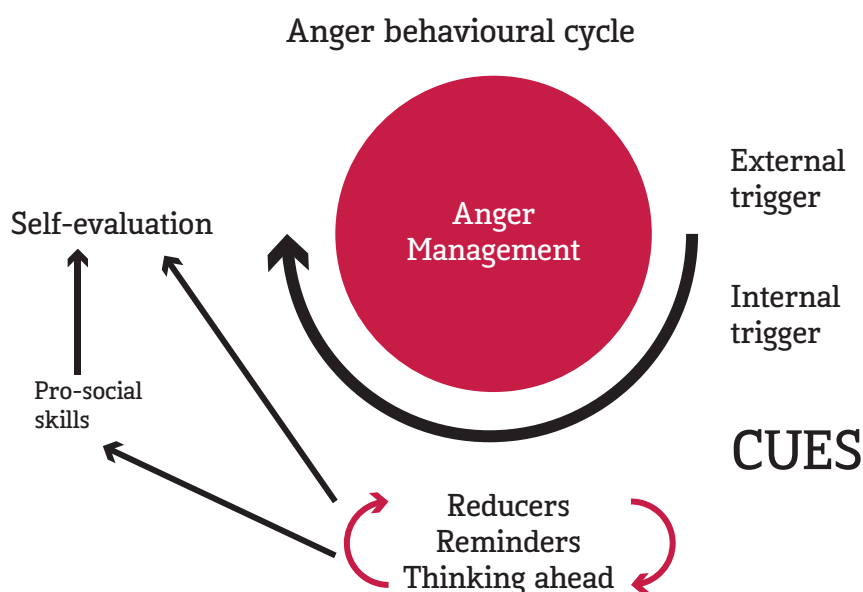
To communicate in a positive manner is actually quite complicated.

for example, you should have open and inviting body language, look the other person in the eye and have a friendly tone of voice. If you can also smile when saying the words, you will probably reduce the risk of misinterpretation and ensure that you will be understood in the way that you want. To communicate in a positive manner is actually quite complicated.

ART emphasizes the need to think before you act, for example, interpreting the situation, others' body language and intentions, and being aware of contextual rules and expectations that might affect the consequences of your choice of actions or words. We can say that there are at least three goals for the training; Preventing misinterpretation of difficult situations, increasing one's behavioural repertoire and reducing the chance of aggression being used as a solution, since other alternatives have been added. We want the students to be reflective about their behavioural choices and to use good alternatives suited to the situation. The skills are learned

sponses. The physiological responses involve the student's ability to identify external and internal triggers and their own anger cues, and to use techniques to curb their anger (such as deep breathing, counting backwards, and so on). Cognitive processes make visible the typical thought patterns used by people who tend to be aggressive and impulsive. Through cognitive restructuring strategies students are helped to identify irrational thought patterns and to replace them with a more rational analysis of the situation. The behavioural component involves rehearsal of new pro-social alternatives which can replace previous inappropriate performance patterns, where verbal or physical aggression or withdrawal from the situation are the most common behaviours.

Moral reasoning is the third component in ART. Various studies show a correlation between behavioural problems and immature or delayed moral judgments. The goal of training in moral reasoning is to help students to identify dilemmas and expand their



understanding and perspectives when reflecting on possible solutions.

The Theoretical Foundations

ART is founded on Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). The method is also based upon significant contributions from cognitive behavioural approaches and behavioural analysis. It is presupposed that aggression, like every other type of behaviour, is learned.

Observational learning forms the most important learning basis in ART. Bandura (1977) described how learning can take place through observation: The method that has given us the most significant results consists of three parts. The first part is that alternative skills are modelled (demonstrated) many times, preferably by different people who demonstrate how the skill can be used in many different situations. Secondly, students

By observing many different ways of using a skill in different situations, a reflexive competence will develop over time.

This approach posits that it is also possible to change such behaviour. Cognitive restructuring is an important part of the method. Essentially, it is a process by which individuals are directed to assess their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs and attitudes in order to identify new ways of thinking that reduce risky behaviour (Glick and Gibbs, 2011).

need to rehearse these skills in safe settings. However, these new skills are probably not going to be used if the students do not connect these rehearsals with positive reinforcement. The training should contain arranged success, as the third part. This is especially important when a new skill is introduced and rehearsed. If a method includes

modelling, and the student receives help when rehearsing the skill in safe settings and experiences positive results, it will almost always lead to good results.

By observing many different ways of using a skill in different situations, a reflexive competence will develop over time. When a person has a significant repertoire of alternatives, there is a good chance that he/she will manage to achieve an adequate level of social interaction in everyday situations. An increased repertoire will also lead to a less frequent use of aggression as a side-effect, since in many situations other behavioural alternatives are more appropriate.

A number of skills are required to function well as a student at school, and everywhere else for that matter. Skills such as receiving instructions, asking questions, collecting information and listening are needed every day just to manage adequately well as a participant in the classroom. Other skills, such as giving compliments, expressing one's own feelings, helping others, dealing with group pressure and so on are important in order to be well-liked as a student.

ART – a supplementary intervention at the school of Smeaheia

In many schools ART is a programme used to replace inadvisable and aggressive behaviour, to prevent negative behaviour or to build pro-social behaviour. To a greater or lesser degree every school experiences problems with students who cannot behave as expected, or rather as required. The reality at Smeaheia was that some incidents of fighting, negative interaction among some groups at school and foreign students revealed a need for an intervention. The need was not for an intensive programme to tackle aggression, but for a programme to be used both in the lower grades (for children aged 6–9 years old) and in the seventh grade (for children

aged 12 years old) to build social competence and prevent negative behaviour. The programme is used as described above, but the goal of the intervention is quite unusual. In most schools teachers want the students to adapt and to focus in class as a collective. In this case increased individual self-assertiveness was an important purpose of the training.

Stig Hølland is the deputy headteacher and also ART-trainer at the school of Smeaheia. In several other schools he has experienced different programmes for social and emotional competence.

The school of Smeaheia is located in an area characterized by high levels of education and high levels of income, in a city with a population of 70 000 called Sandnes. The modern and colourful school buildings are to be found on the outskirts of a residential area close to a small forest and green areas. A characteristic of the people who live in this area is that they tend to have quite set expectations about outer image and behaviour, and the students' parents have high expectations about both the academic and sporting achievements of their offspring. National test results are above average compared to both the region and the rest of the country. In terms of student well-being and bullying the school receives average scores. The school had already implemented a programme known as Respect (Norwegian Centre for Learning Environments and Behavioural Research in Education, see also Table 2) in order to systematically support the social learning environment. Still they wanted, in addition, a more specific programme which addressed the needs of individuals with problem behaviour and who had other developmental needs. *"We needed ART because the existing programme didn't meet students who had the greatest need for such training. It became a programme for those who were already socially competent."*

To a certain extent the school staff and the parents hold different views with regard to children's behaviour. This can be a subject of great frustration for many children. However this provides an opportunity for children to develop the important ability to reflect on different perspectives on a situation, considering both what is their interest and what will be preferred by those around them. A class group takes shape through students trying to establish relationships and earn the acceptance of others. Over a period of time the class's sense of "We" and a certain conformity will be established. In every group, roles are distributed and a structure of popularity and influence is established. In smaller groups like groups of friends or family members there is more room for individuality and behaviour based on emotions and impulsivity. This fact is important to Stig Hølland who is both a school inspector and an ART trainer.

"An important purpose of a social competence programme at our school is to build self-assertiveness. To fit in our students need to get inside quite a tight framework of expectations and demands. Parents are well aware of incidents which occur outside of what is expected and there is in general a low level of acceptance of behaviour which occurs outside this framework. It's an important task for the school to create acceptance for each individual to develop as they are, so they dare to feel okay about being themselves, with their own body and their own mind."

Listening to others' reflections and gaining access to one another's thinking during discussions about everyday situations are appreciated by most participants. To observe the example of other peers and to get reinforcement after one's own attempts contributes to a certain self-efficacy, making it easier to try

out new reflections and new behaviours in real life situations. Nevertheless, all changes have to be anchored in the individual's desire to change. A change will not take place if the person does not want it to.

"It's an important task for the school to create acceptance for each individual to develop as they are, so they dare to feel okay about being themselves, with their own body and their own mind."
(Stig Hølland)

Including parents

It is essential that both children and parents are co-participants in the training. If such learning is not based on the free will of all participants, it is not likely to achieve positive outcomes of any significance. If parents do not want their child to participate in such a training they will not be supportive of the behavioural changes that their child tries to make.

On the whole the collaboration with parents at the Smeaheia School appears to be good. However, parents became increasingly sceptical about the fact that their children, as they got older, would benefit from training in, for example, ART. It is easier to accept that your child needs help with his/her development when he/she is young. It is as if parents feel that they have failed in raising their child if he/she chooses to participate in a SEE programme when he/she is in a higher grade.

The main goal for social skills training is for participants to acquire new skills to be used in different situations and in different arenas. If teachers and parents are aware of small changes and reinforce them when they occur, it is likely that the child's ability and willingness to use the new skill will increase. If children expect new skills to work well, they also are likely to try them in new arenas and

in different situations. Such transferring of skills requires a high level of consciousness among teachers (and parents). If a student who often shouts out his need for help in class, raises his hand, waits for his teacher to respond and asks for help in a pro-social way, his teachers should reinforce his behaviour. The student will then probably ask for help in a pro-social way the next time, especially in this teacher's class. A lot of the skills are classroom skills such as listening, asking a question, following instructions, concentrating on a task and so on. When teachers and parents know which skill the students are practicing each week, they are more able to respond properly. The more success a student has in using a skill the more likely it is that this skill will be repeated and in the long

even better results than those in the seventh grade (aged 12 years old). "In second grade we can still build competence, but in seventh grade it's more like repairing what's not good enough", Stig Hølland points out. This corresponds with findings from our own studies (Langeveld, Gundersen & Svartdal, 2012), which show that the younger the participants the better results they are likely to achieve. Teachers and parents report that children are more able to be students with pro-social classroom skills once they have completed the training.

What does this training mean to us?

The deputy head at Smeaheia School, Stig Hølland, states that programmes enhancing social competences have a huge impact on the

At school there are many possibilities to practice skills in different situations. To be able to transfer skills from school to home requires parents' collaboration.

term become a lasting part of his / her behavioural repertoire.

At school there are many possibilities to practice skills in different situations. To be able to transfer skills from school to home requires parents' collaboration. Information about the content of the training and a reminder of how to reinforce good efforts and positive behaviour at home, will promote transfer and maintenance (described as generalization) of skills.

ART has been proved to be effective for use with teenagers, but studies also show that younger children benefit from participating in the training. Researchers report that pupils in the second grade (aged 7 years old) achieve

learning environment and on each individual participant. He underlines that the correlation between social competence and academic achievement is significant (Wentzel 1991; Caprara et al., 2000)

"This is a school which achieves a high score on most measures and studies. It's certain that our focus on training in social competence is important. We can't focus on academics if the pupils are struggling with surviving in the classroom. The relationships with and between peers are of the highest importance. I have never seen any programme that fulfills this purpose, and I am familiar with a lot of programmes. For use with troubled students ART is the best we

have. This programme gives us both a useful fixed structure and necessary content!"

Students whose mother tongue is not Norwegian often have a limited vocabulary in Norwegian and probably understand less than we think. When we use words

help in understanding and describing situations and emotions that will occur.

Semantics are important. When everybody understands the same meaning of a word it becomes concrete and useful. It makes it possible to both understand and describe what we feel and think. In this way new words can

“We can’t focus on academics if the pupils are struggling with surviving in the classroom.” (Stig Hølland).

other than those that are the most common, it can be hard for them to understand what we are saying. A lot of frustration and anger is connected with this lack of understanding and with a lack of ability to express oneself in Norwegian. ART puts words and terms into context and gives them meaning. When learning new words during role plays and communication in the ART training, the participants are provided with verbal tools to be used in different situations. This training also has to continue outside the ART training room, Stig Hølland says. *“It’s when we verbalize what we see during the training, in the*

create new understanding and a more precise conception of what happens inside us. The ability of constructive reflection, or what we can call an inner dialogue, correlates negatively with aggression (Meichenbaum, 1977).

Social competence means the ability to choose behaviour and social strategies from situation to situation, meaning that different social contexts demand different skills or different uses of skills (Nordahl, 2000). This implies that there is a need for children and youth to learn what rules apply where and how they should behave in one setting without destroying the possibilities in another sit-

The ability of constructive reflection, or what we can call an inner dialogue, correlates negatively with aggression (Meichenbaum, 1977).

breaks and in classroom that we promote learning the most.” Using specific terms and focusing on the subject of social competence whenever possible enables students to become fluent in new words which

uation or in another relationship. For example, if a child wants to play soccer and his friend does not want to play, he needs to take into consideration how to express this wish to his friend without disturbing their

friendship. He has to be aware of both situations and his own wishes together with the wishes of his friend. A socially competent child can adapt, be aware of others and assert his/her own needs, being both pro-social and self-assertive. Social competence demands that one reflects on one's actions before acting. This means that problem behaviour might be rational behaviour from the student's point of view, and that such actions can be understood as part of the student's behavioural repertoire. A student might, for example, choose to behave rudely in front of a teacher in order to build up his status as a leader among his friends. He knows that this is wrong, but is willing to pay the price for a higher purpose.

"This programme helps students to be confident. They can be sure it's okay to be who they are and think as they do. And it gives them security to act reflectively in different situations. I think security underlies everything. For that reason the structure is important; they have to role play and to be a part of the structured positive feedback, both to themselves and others. A group of students can be in a negative spiral during training when they figure out that it's possible to say nice things to each other. When they have transferred the skill of giving compliments as a useful response to peers and they say nice things every time they meet, it has an invaluable effect," Stig Hølland says.

Closing words

Implementing a programme is no quick fix. Rather, it demands a great deal of effort over a certain period of time, normally at least two to four years when implementing adequately. The way a programme is implemented seems to be as important as the programme itself (Andrews, 1995). Stig Hølland, knows this. *"It's a tradition in Norway to change to something new when you have been doing something for a few years. But it's important that*

we adhere to ART as the programme for social competence training."

I find it interesting that this school combines different kinds of programmes, i.e. the Respect programme as an overall programme to ensure a good learning environment and ART. The staff have a clear view and knowledge about how to make complementary programmes fit together. It is an art to make two components more valuable than their mere sum.

Case Study 3: Whole School Art The School of Sandes – a whole school approach

The Sandnes School is located in Arendal, a small city with a population of approximately 43,000 located in the south of Norway. When you leave the highway and drive towards Arendal, you can feel the "tastes" of summer and vacation as you drive along the seaside and pass by several harbours with small boats and you get some glimpses of the sea beyond. The school is placed in a beautiful environment bordering on to a forest with big areas for children's play, football and other activities. The Sandnes school has approximately 200 students in grades 1 – 7 (aged six to twelve). The school used to be well-known for its ability to take care of students in need of special tuition. This reputation was the reason that parents applied to send their kids to this school.

Some years ago there were many conflicts between pupils during the breaks and it took up a lot of staff time to solve the problems and to resolve the conflicts during the breaks and in lesson time. Both teachers and assistants asked for tools, common rules and consequences that would provide them all with a common approach. The students tried and succeeded in setting the staff up against each other, and it was a challenging time for

students and staff alike. Due to the lack of a common approach, the fact that staff interpreted the rules differently and the fact that there were no guidelines for dealing with different kinds of behaviour, many unnecessary discussions took place among the staff.

At the same time as the ongoing and never ending discussions among the staff were taking place, two former students committed suicide within a short period of time. These tragedies made a formidable impression on the staff and it became clear that something had to be done. As the principal, Synnøve Solheim Pedersen, said: “You can’t wait until they are teenagers to help develop their self-esteem and their ability to deal with their own lives. You have to start earlier and not wait until it’s too late.”

The Headteacher

Synnøve Solheim Pedersen was brand new as a headteacher when she started the process of turning the school around, developing unified rules and systems for the reinforcement of positive behaviour and problem solving. She had been the deputy headteacher for some years and when the principal announced that he wanted to resign, she was afraid that he would be replaced by someone less competent. She applied for the position herself, while thinking that this would be a good chance to do something about the current situation at the school. She wanted to do something systemic, stimulating and lasting; she wanted to help bring about a change that could influence everyday life at the school and in all grades and not just do something that would happen now and again. The search for a good programme had begun.

The Arendal local authority contacted the University of Agder (UiA) in the spring of 2008, to discuss a common research and development project. The background was a desire to make the school a better place to be. But

it also represented a great wish to establish a better learning environment at the school, through reducing problem behaviour and increasing academic achievement. The request for a systemic and competence building programme was answered by the partners being referred to the city of Larvik 130 km away, where about twenty schools and twenty kindergartens had implemented this programme. A large group of leaders visited the community of Larvik to be introduced to how they had recently anchored and implemented the Whole School ART programme. Then the programme leaders of Larvik were invited to Arendal and a large number of teachers were introduced to this approach, became enthusiastic and from the beginning were ready to give the Whole School ART programme a try.

- A. Understanding why the Sandnes School was more successful than other similar schools at implementing the programme is easy and complex at the same time. The easy answer is that it was due to the headteacher and her energetic and fearless leadership of the process. The complex answer is how the school went about it. She asked the local authorities for three years in which to turn the school around. After three years, in 2011, the University of Agder completed their report which consisted of an evaluation of the implementation of the Whole School ART at Sandnes, and recommendations about how to go further. Some of the results are quite astonishing and well worth reading. See also page 40 for further descriptions of the findings. Time spent teaching, on average, increased by 4 minutes per hour.
- B. The number of disturbances in the classroom has, on average, decreased significantly.
- C. Less time is taken in dealing with misbehaviour.
- D. Concentration lasts for a longer period of time in class.

ART - The Whole School Approach -

"Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, let me do it and I will learn!"
(Confucius)

The Whole School ART (H-ART) is a school-wide preventive approach that provides a comprehensive framework that can be used by any school to form their own way of creating a positive environment, in which positive behaviour can develop and grow. One of the foremost advances in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviours to create positive school environments. Instead of using the piecemeal approach of issuing individual behavioural management plans, a continuum of positive behaviour support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, the school grounds and the toilets).

Along with the school-wide focus some groups of students have the opportunity to be trained in ART each year, as ART is a group-based programme for approximately six to

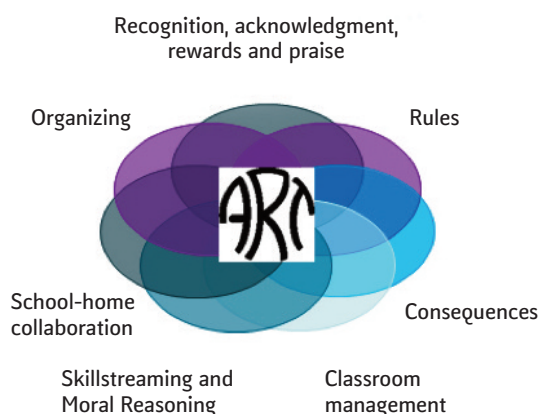


Fig. 2. The Whole School ART (H-ART)

Training in social skills, moral reasoning and empathy

Through the work with Whole School ART a set of universal expectations for pro-social behaviour were established for all students attending the Sandnes school. These expectations generally promote character traits such as respect, responsibility and cooperation. Once a month the teachers introduce to all grades in the school a new character trait and the corresponding social skills. Each week there is a lesson where the skills are discussed, the students receive training in

Once a month the teachers introduce to all grades in the school a new character trait and the corresponding social skills.

eight participants. A group can consist of some students from a certain grade, some students from a class with some challenges or a group of students that is in need of more intensive intervention. The ART programme consists of 30 lessons, normally delivered over the course of 10 weeks.

the use of the skill and the connection between the character trait and the skills is discussed. A character trait can be "Caring" (defined as showing concern for others through words and actions). A corresponding skill might be "Helping others"

Steps:

- 1 *Decide if the other person might need and want your help.*
- 2 *Think of the ways you could be helpful.*
- 3 *Ask the other person if he/she needs and wants your help.*
- 4 *Help the other person.*

At Sandnes School they have at least one ART-group running each semester (in Norway a school semester is approximately 20 weeks long in the autumn and approxi-

what is acceptable behaviour, and this knowledge will contribute to their understanding and repertoire of behaviours, which contributes to the goal of students achieving better social adaptation and behavioural regulation. It is far more effective to reinforce pro-social behaviour and to acknowledge what we want more of than to correct what is wrong. Students will, when receiving reinforcement in front of other students, be valuable role models for each other.

The rules and expectations of a school have to be explicitly expressed.

mately 25 weeks long in the spring). Each grade is invited to apply for ART training. When a grade has their application granted, each student can apply to be a part of the group, putting forward arguments as to why they will benefit from the training. The head-

A system of positive reinforcement is implemented with all students, for example by using “pogs”. A pog is a piece of paper or a card given to a student when he/she uses a pro-social skill or sets a good example in terms of the displaying behaviour connected to the

Students need to know that their actions make a difference, that what they do or do not do is significant for others.

teacher and the grade teacher put together a group of students with different levels of social competencies. Students who are role models should also be part of the group.

Acknowledgment, reinforcement and motivation

The rules and expectations of a school have to be explicitly expressed. Students will then more easily apply their knowledge about

desired character traits. This offers the possibility to teachers to verbalize what students are doing, emphasizing both reinforcement for this student and vicarious reinforcement for those observing the interchange. Students need to know that their actions make a difference, that what they do or do not do is significant for others. Verbalizing pro-social behaviour communicates to the student in question why and how his/her action was

noticeable, and it expands the repertoire of, for example, how to care, show respect, and give a compliment of all students present.

A relationship describes a preferred communication pattern, which will lead to the repetition of certain communication actions, which means that the pattern reproduces and confirms itself. A relationship confirms itself through communication (Øvreeide 2002). Through observation, modelling and rehearsal, students learn how to build relationships. Immediate positive feedback about competent behaviour or attempts to produce such behaviour reinforces peer relationships and student-teacher relationships. Students showing low levels of social competence might actually have a high level of social competence but might not use these skills according to others' expectations. Social skills will be used only when asked for and appreciated.

Teaching behavioural expectations and rewarding students for meeting them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehaviour to occur before responding. The

A process to agree the rules and expectations adapted for use in the classroom, with the staff and with parents is expected to lead to a few clear and effective main rules (between 3 and 7 rules is an appropriate number). These rules should be visible and teachers are supposed to verbalize when students follow the rules well. Rules are supposed to be internalized and followed independently of external control, simply because the students find them important and not because of the fear of the consequences of not following the rules.

At Sandnes they have three main rules:

- 1 At Sandnes we arrive on time and are prepared.
- 2 At Sandnes we take care of our own and others' possessions.
- 3 At Sandnes we show respect to one another.

The consequences of disobeying the rules need to be known by the students, parents and staff. A consequence matrix should be used by the staff as a tool to become more

The teacher is the most important single factor when it comes to learning achievement and student behaviour (Roland, 1998).

purpose of the Whole School Approach (H-ART) is to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm.

Rules and consequences. It is essential to have a common understanding of an agreement about the school's rules and expectations. Staff, students and parents should be involved in the preparation of these. In this way everybody takes ownership of the rules.

clear and unified. When rules and consequences are kept consistently by both students and teachers, this creates a more predictable environment in which the teachers have the mandate to solve problems and conflicts as they occur.

Classroom management has to be emphasized. The teacher is the most important single factor when it comes to learning

achievement and student behaviour (Roland, 1998). Authoritative classroom management includes clear rules and routines. Together these create security and predictability about what is going to happen and what is expected. For example, will mathematics teaching that starts and ends with a summary in plenum result in a good level of learning for the students (Nordenbo et al, 2008)? At Sandnes every lesson starts and ends in the same structured way, no matter whether the subject is mathematics, history or art. This makes it easier for the teachers to substitute for each other, and it creates a secure and predictable framework for each and every lesson. Procedures at the beginning and at the end of each lesson only take a few minutes. Learning social skills is more about awareness than the mechanical learning of certain skills. Observing others receiving positive reinforcement when they have helped others is likely to give students good examples to follow. When a teacher has the ability to promote good behaviour in a firm and kind way to a much greater degree than she corrects bad behaviour, it is likely that students will pay attention.

School-Parents Collaboration can be promoted, for example, by inviting the parents to outline the values, rules and expectations on which they would like the school to focus. Collaboration with parents starts with establishing a Parent Committee. This committee needs to support the school in implementing the Whole School ART. If implementing a social learning curriculum is only anchored in and accepted by a certain section of the parents, implementation of the programme will be against some parents' wishes and the lack of support from these parents will probably obstruct a successful implementation.

The Gardener group¹ consists of some resource persons (headteacher and a representative from each team at the school)

whose task is to make the ongoing use of the programme flourish. The group is responsible for the progress of H-ART by making sure that staff members are doing as expected, supervising when needed, and have the task to sustain the enthusiasm and belief in the programme among the staff. Many studies confirm that one or more enthusiastic programme leaders are critical to successful implementation.

The QuARTer is a 15 minute meeting each week dedicated to discussions with the whole staff about what is working, what needs to be changed, adjusted or receive greater attention. This is perhaps the most important single element, to enable the staff to continue to run the programme appropriately.

The implementation - a fighting headteacher

A lot of research has been done and many articles and reports have been written about the critical factors promoting the adequate implementation of programmes for social and emotional competence in schools and other organizations. Both our studies and studies of other programmes point to the same conclusions; the leader is the key factor in any successful programme implementation. The significance of the headteacher is indisputable, but leadership includes more than formal positions (Larsen 2005).

Torill is a teacher at the Sandnes school. She states *"We have a leader who is so enthusiastic. She has pushed this process and used a lot of resources and money. Synnøve has spent a lot of money over several years, and she has got a lot of criticism from the government. But they have forgiven her for three years now. The Gardener group has got time, training and support when needed to keep the programme on track."*

Despite a hard struggle it seems to be worth

it, according to the headteacher. *"You are supposed to stick to the budget as a leader. But it's exciting to get positive feedback from all over. Sports coaches say that students from this school are better team players and better at encouraging each other than students from other schools."*

Findings and observations – does H-ART work?

What is the outcome of this hard work over several years? The answer might be difficult to divide into meaningful parts. Interviews with teachers, the principal and numerous classroom observations by researchers give us some indications.

opposite direction, the level of loneliness is growing. This is a counterflow that appears to lead to better results and better well-being."

The everyday life for a headteacher consists of dealing with many conflicts between students or between students and teachers. *"Earlier, much of my time as principal was dedicated to conflicts. With our new tools conflicts are solved at a lower level and before they escalate. Students still come to my office, but it's more often students who want to show me something or just want to talk with me. I have more time I can use for other purposes. It's all about giving the staff a clear mandate to solve problems at a low level. And it's much better that they solve the prob-*

"It's all about giving the staff a clear mandate to solve problems at a low level. And it's much better that they solve the problems themselves instead of using the principal as a threat." (Synnøve Solheim Pedersen).

Sandnes has the highest number of students with special needs in the region and this trend is continuing. However, even though the number of students is increasing, due to the fact that the school has a reputation as a good place to be for students with special needs, the number of students at the school requiring remedial education is decreasing. Most student get their needs covered by the Whole School ART programme. The school has had a huge financial deficit for the last three years and it has been a quite high price for the principal to pay in terms of thought and attention. But as she says: *"I believe in this and can't give in. If they don't allow me (to do this), I can't be a headteacher. We need to work towards a friendlier society. It is so much pointing in the*

lems themselves instead of using the principal as a threat."

Some statistics indicate that H-ART is an approach that might be useful. A short summary (Nærbø, 2011):

- A** Time spent on teaching, on average, increased by 4 minutes per hour. This is despite the introduction of the use of the various H-ART procedures at the start and at the end of each lesson. (4 minutes per hour is 20 minutes per day or more than 2 hours more time for tuition each week.)
- B** The number of disturbances in the classroom has, on average, decreased by approximately 20%.

- C Less time is taken up in dealing with misbehaviour.
- D The number of disturbances per hour has, on average, fallen by 30% when students work independently on their schoolwork during class.
- E Students concentration lasts, on average, for a longer period of time in each class and their ability to work efficiently has increased. Pre-observations suggest that in 2009 students' level of concentration decreased earlier in each hour. Two years later disturbances are occurring to a lesser degree in each lesson.
- F National test results from before the implementation of the programme were below national average. Last year the school scored above average on every measure.

The headteacher underlined further that the teaching is more efficient and the learning tempo has increased. Of course the politicians have noticed this too. *"I think just our changed expectations have been important for the improved results"*, the headteacher reflects.

"Nevertheless, expectations should be expressed often enough and if we lose our focus it is easy to forget tell the students what they are mastering," she continues. *"If we lose the focus, our results go down as well. Sometimes the students say 'We almost never get positive reinforcement anymore!'"* And then we can see that this is the same class that we have been struggling with lately. After a while, by focusing on positive behaviour, we are on track again with the class behaving well. This also means that we have to be

aware of the power we have to shape students' behaviour."

Many of the skills include self-assertiveness as well as caring-related skills. Training in social skills is wide-ranging and useful for all students even if they are already pro-social. This is not only important for the regulation of behaviour. It is at least as important in, for example, language learning. Children's language develops in interaction with others, and the outcome of the interaction depends on language skills (Løge & Thorsen, 2005). It means that social competence is both a result and a prerequisite for social and language development. The headteacher agrees with this. *"We can see that children already in first grade have a vocabulary which differs from other students (in other schools). They are better at naming their feelings, expressing what they mean, at negotiating and so on. They use more precise terms. They verbalize, and use words instead of their fists. Social skills training affects your way of thinking."*

Closing thoughts

Two statements from the headteacher summarizes this section very well: *"I like the ethical principles of this approach. I remember 22nd of July last year (2011) after the terrorist attacks when our Prime Minister Stoltenberg said we not should react with hate but continue working with positive values. Then I thought; 'We are already working with this and that makes me happy!'"* We don't rest on our laurels. We know we can always improve and develop this further. We have to, because it is a great mandate we have to teach social and emotional competence to students."

**"After a while, by focusing on positive behaviour, we are on track again with the class behaving well."
(Synnøve Solheim Pedersen).**

"We want the students to look back at their school years, and what they were learning here; Yes, we had Whole School ART and that was about life. I think that will be the summary."

Case Study 4: "You And I And Us Two" Kindergarten – the best place to learn social and emotional competence

In Norway there is a legal right for children between one and six years old (they start school at 6 years old) to go to kindergarten. Because the cost to parents is limited, about 90% of children of pre-school age spend on average 35 hours a week at kindergarten (The Norwegian Statistical Central Bureau, 2010). Groups are organized by age. The activities and pedagogical focus might differ a lot from one kindergarten to another. However, most kindergartens are characterized by certain types of activities following the seasons and the holidays through the year. Children's free play is an important part of the programme all through the year, and normally at least one day a week is dedicated to a trip. Different themes are focused on during the year such as nature and the environment, electricity, children in other cultures and so on. Most of the kindergartens have implemented a programme for social and emotional

The development of social competence is supposed to happen in the area where games, upbringing and care overlap. The Nordic kindergarten tradition focuses a large share of the day on free non-organized play and informal interaction. This represents relevant and varied social challenges and learning possibilities. The opportunity to learn basic social skills in the meeting with other children and adults happens just here (Lamer, 2010). Those missing this competence might find it hard to access interactions where social training, fellowship, joy and language practice occur.

Being together with other children offers opportunities for learning through imitation and through vicarious reinforcement, when other children are successful in their social actions. Peer relationships are based on equality, unlike relationships with parents or other adults, and promote valuable experiences. An equal peer relationship has to be renegotiated over and over again whenever peers are together. In this process children need to develop a number of skills which are necessary in order to participate in and contribute to social interactions with other children. However, simply bringing children together does not

The Nordic kindergarten tradition focuses a large share of the day on free non-organized play and informal interaction. This represents relevant and varied social challenges and learning possibilities.

competence. Nevertheless, free play is an important part of the day to day life for Norwegian children in day-care institutions, unlike most other countries in Europe.

guarantee social development. Children organize themselves just as other groups do, including excluding and positioning (ibid). A systemic pedagogical approach might help

children to enter into a positive cycle together with other children, where the acquiring of skills and the reinforcement of such skills takes place. Social competence is both a prerequisite for playing and a consequence of it.

“You and I and us two!”

“You and I and us two!” is a programme for SEE in the kindergarten which focuses on children, staff and the organization. Reports indicate that the level of diffusion of this programme in Norwegian kindergartens is as high as 60-70%. A more limited diffusion in primary schools is also reported (Nordahl et al., 2006).

The programme “You and I and us two!” was developed by Kari Lamer. Three books have been published describing the framework programme; The Theory book, the Handbook and the Children’s book (Lamer, 1997 a, b, c). The programme framework has been developed through research-based testing and evaluation in collaboration with 55 kindergartens over a period of 15 years.

The programme consists of both a structured and an unstructured part. In structured gatherings stories about different aspects of social competence are read from the story book that is about two children and their life in a kindergarten (Lamer, 1997c). Conversations about the stories lead to reflections and new ideas about subjects such as friendship, responsibility and morality. I have been amazed many times by the ability of little children to reflect and to be empathic with others. A pre-school teacher said to me once that “I think we need to reconsider our understanding of the empathy of small children. When we stimulate them and help them to express such reflections their ability to understand different perspectives is overwhelming.”

The structured aspects, described as the programme’s five key elements, are procedural guidelines to promote a common focus, level of knowledge and organizational conditions, promoting this way of thinking through the whole organization. These elements are:

- 1 The consistent understanding and use of the term social competence;
- 2 The understanding and use of the term learning – meaning the synthesis of caring, development and learning;
- 3 Personal behaviour and interventions considering different ways of learning and actual discourses;
- 4 Learning, competence development and the willingness of the staff to change;
- 5 Clear leadership at all levels.

The unstructured part embraces the total everyday life in the kindergarten and emphasizes the role of the staff. Through reflections and discussion it is possible to balance loyalty to the programme and pedagogical freedom. To create individual and common reflections about key elements of the programme is important, as a kindergarten leader said:

“Social competence starts with the adults, with me (the leader), with the pre-school teachers and then the children. Which set of values do I have and which set of values am I supposed to have? We worked hard to agree a common set of values for our organization. From that point on we were ready to start the implementation of the five key elements.” (Lamer, 2008, p 113)

During the day-to-day life in the kindergarten planned training and spontaneous situations occur where the staff can reinforce and verbalize what they observe. By verbalizing positive behaviour children receive re-

inforcement and input for further thinking and behaviour and staff will increase their consciousness of different behavioural perspectives. To help the staff be aware of different kinds of behaviour, the skills are divided into five groups. In the first group are empathy and role taking. The second group contains pro-social behaviour, the third self-control. The next is self-assertion and finally we have play, joy and humour (Lamer, 1997a). *"This project has changed our way of thinking. We have learned to verbalize what we observe,"* a teacher said.

Specific behaviours are more easily recognized when described clearly using simple words. Different kinds of behaviour might be seen as competent by some and not competent by others. Sometimes they also might conflict, like, for example, self-assertion and empathy. In most situations a little dose of both might help achieve a preferred outcome for both parties. Reflecting and new terms enable the staff to notice and describe qualities in the interactions between children that earlier might not have been acknowledged. As a leader of a kindergarten said: *"As adults we can choose to see or not to see, for example, an empathic dimension in a situation. When we choose to see a situation with glasses coloured by social competence we will be conscious of situations between children that we would not be aware of with other glasses"* (Lamer, 2008).

In the matter of interpreting the intent and content of another's action adults have a great responsibility. If you look for something good, you might find it. And if you are looking for something bad you might find that as well. It is all up to the adult to be aware, observe and create an understanding of the observation.

We can easily imagine how chaotic it might be when twenty children and a few adults are getting dressed to go outside to play in the

winter time. How do you as an adult reflect and respond when a little boy helps an even smaller girl with the zip on her jacket? Different staff members might reflect differently about this situation. For example; *"I saw what he did but I didn't have time and energy to remark on it in the situation", "I saw what he did but I don't feel it's right to reinforce children all the time", "I believe in reinforcing children as a matter of course", "I looked at them and smiled"*. Somebody might say; *"How nice that you are helping each other"* or *"When you help each other you also are helping me when so many children need me at the same time"* (Lamer, 2008).

Learning processes should include systematic procedures where reflections and discussions take place, such as in frequent meetings. Positive outcomes of such meetings demand an overall willingness to receive and give constructive feedback to each other. A staff member said: *We have been more open and dare to ask each other when we are pondering on something somebody said or did. "What did you think when you said or did that...?" We give each other ideas and suggestions about how to act differently* (Lamer, 2008).

Such processes will often lead to more motivation and a feeling of being more professional, even if some staff members find this more demanding. A leader in a kindergarten said:

We have experienced a great change for the better in the staff. They have developed very useful competences and are now more conscious about their professional approach to the children than before. It also has resulted in the fact that everybody pictures themselves as pre-school teachers (Lamer, 2008).

Through discussion and participation in the implementation process staff members are

To help children avoid accumulating poor behaviour strategies from the start, and instead provide them with the opportunity to enter a positive cycle of interaction patterns we will protect them against a lot of negative experiences both in the present and future.

able to take part in important reflections and decisions concerning their professional approach. The ability to try out and adapt a programme to a certain group of children might have a great impact on the feeling of ownership about the new approach. The feeling of ownership might in turn affect one's level of professional consciousness. A teacher was very clear about this:

When we are talking about children and social competence it is impossible to get around the fact that it all starts with the adults. We are models, rule makers and suppliers of terms when it comes to what children are supposed to do or not do. Implementing a programme like "You and I and us two!" will affect teachers' reflections about their professional approach to the children and the behaviour of the staff. It is important to look upon such a project as something more than an intervention for the children. As teachers we have developed and changed in how we express our social competence and in turn it is forwarded to the children and their parents (Lamer, 2008).

A better working environment is a common by-product that in turn will promote better behaviour among children. The daily work with children, and the culture in the group of children should be characterized by relationships of good quality. In this context it is important to emphasize that environments are,

first of all, created by adults and it is their responsibility to ensure that the children receive experienced-based learning that is in line with the goals for acquiring social competencies.

It is documented that children in kindergartens using "You and I and us two!" reduced their levels of both extrovert and introvert problem behaviour, compared with other kindergartens (Lamer and Hauge, 2006). It is particularly interesting that reduced problems were also measured among children who were aged 1.5 and 2 years old when the programme evaluation began. This confirms the hypothesis that early intervention is efficient at preventing problem behaviour.

To help children avoid accumulating poor behaviour strategies from the start, and instead provide them with the opportunity to enter a positive cycle of interaction patterns we will protect them against a lot of negative experiences both in the present and future. An environment characterized by positive behaviour and relationships provides a foundation on which young heroes are able to acquire new skills and valuable perspectives about themselves, others and relationships.

Conclusion

To enable a social competence programme to succeed the headteacher has a significant task to ensure that the programme guidelines

are carefully followed and developed in the school. At the same time studies show that the teacher's ability to appear as a firm authority, intervening when negative situations occur and to care for and support students, correlates with the students' feeling of freedom (Thuen and Bru, 2005). In our culture it is more common to think that the opposite is true, that the more children are left free to decide, the more that they feel free.

To ensure that programmes such as those I have presented are effective, the school culture is probably more important than the programme (Berg, 1999). However, the programmes which I have described contain effective tools to promote the ability to be an authoritative teacher in a positive school culture. The work with SEE programmes needs to be systematic and must last for a number of years (at least two to four years according to Fixsen et al., 2005) to produce the expected results. Interventions with a broad approach to social competence show as positive effects for students with a high risk of problem behaviour as students with no such risk (Nordahl et al., 2005). Successful schools are characterized by a dynamic form of leadership which promotes change (the ability to involve and give responsibility to the staff), and a professional attitude among the staff (Hajnal et al., 1998).

Results from these kinds of studies seem to show that where SEE programmes are implemented teachers and leaders are more enthusiastic about their work. It is then necessary to ask if you become more enthusiastic when you are working with a programme in which you believe, or if you are achieving success because the teachers are more enthusiastic (Zins et al., 2004)?

Endnotes

- ¹ The group is called this because in Norwegian the word for gardener is *gartner*, which includes the acronym ART (*gARTner*). The subtext is that this group will take responsibility for enabling ART to flourish in the school.

References

- Andreassen, T. 2003. *Behandling av ungdom i institusjoner. Hva sier forskningen?* Oslo: Kommuneforlaget.
- Andrews, D. A. 1995. The Psychology of Criminal Conduct and Effective Treatment. In James McGuire (ed.). *What Works: Reducing Reoffending: Guidelines from Research and Practice*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Arnesen, A., T. Ogden og M.-A. Sørli. 2006. *Positiv atferd og støttende læringsmiljø i skolen*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Bandura, A. 1977. *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Barnoski, R. and Aos, S. 2004. *Outcome Evaluations of Washington States' Research-Based Programs for juvenile Offenders*. (Rep. No. 04-01-1201). Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
- Berg, G. 1999. *Skolekultur. Nøkkelen til skolens utvikling*. Oslo: Ad Notam Gyldendal.
- Bergem Trygve (2005): *Læreren i etikkens motlys*. Gyldendal Norsk Forlag AS 2000.
- Caprara, G. V., Barnaraneli, C, Pastorelli, C., Bandura, A. & Zimbardo, P. G. 2000. Prosocial Foundations of Children's Academic Achievement. *Psychological Science*, vol. 11 no. 4, pp 302-306.
- Cowie, H. 2011: Peer Support as an Intervention to Counteract School Bullying: Listen to the Children. *Children & Society*, 25, 287-292.
- Dodge, K. A. 2006. Translational science in action: Hostile attributional style and the development of aggressive behavior problems. *Development and Psychopathology*, 18 (3), 791-814.
- Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., Friedman, R. M., and Wallace, F. 2005. *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature*. Tampa, Florida: USF, University of Florida.
- Frønes, I. (2010). Kunnskapssamfunn, sosialisering og sårbarhet. Om utvikling og barnevern under kunnskapssamfunnets betingelser. I Befring, E., Frønes, I. & Sørli, A.-M. (red.), *Sårbare unge – Nye perspektiver og tilnærminger* (s. 31-45). Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag AS.
- Fullan, M. 2001. *The new meaning of educational change*. (3rd ed.). New York: Teacher College Press.
- Hargie, O. D. W. og Hargie, C. (1995). Sosiale ferdigheter må inn på skolens læreplan. I: Ask, F.F. og Sletta, O.(red.). *Kommunikasjon som sosial og tverrkulturell kompetanse*. Trondheim: Tapir. S.73-83.
- Hollin, C. R. 1999. Treatment Programmes for offenders. Meta-analysis, «What works», and beyond. *International Journal of Law Psychiatry*, 22, 361-372.
- Glick, B and Gibbs, J. 2011. Aggression Replacement Training. A comprehensive intervention for aggressive youth. Champaign, Ill: Research Press.
- Goldstein, A. P., Glick, B., & Gibbs, J. C. 1998. *Aggression replacement training a comprehensive intervention for aggressive youth*. Champaign, Ill: Research Press.
- Goldstein, A. P. and Martens, B. K. 2000. *Lasting Change. Methods for Enhancing*

- Generalization of Gain*. Champaign, Ill: Research Press.
- Gundersen, K. 2010. Reducing behaviour problems in young people through social competence programmes. *The International Journal of Emotional Education*, 2, 48-62.
- Gundersen, K. and Svartdal, F. 2006. Aggression Replacement Training in Norway: Outcome evaluation of 11 Norwegian student projects. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 50, 63-81.
- Gundersen, K. and Svartdal, F. 2010. Diffusion of treatment interventions: Exploration of secondary treatment diffusion. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 16, 233-249.
- Hajnal, V., Walker, K. & Sackney, L. (1998). Leadership, Organizational Learning, and Selected Factors Relating to Institutionalization of School Improvement Initiatives. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLIV, s.70-89.
- Hollin, C. 1999. Treatment programs for offenders. Meta-analysis, "what works" and beyond. *International Journal of Law Psychiatry*, 22, 361-372.
- Kavale, K. A. and Forness, S. R. 1995. Social skills deficit and training: A meta-analysis of the research in learning disabilities. *Advances in Learning and Behavioral Disabilities*, 9, 119-160.
- Kjærnsli, M. & Lie, S. 2005: Hva forteller PISA-undersøkelsen om norsk skole? I *Horisont*, 2, 22-31
- Kjærnsli, M., Lie, S., Olsen, R. V., & Roe, A. (2007). *Tid for tunge løft. Norske elevers kompetanse i naturfag, lesing og matematikk i PISA 2006*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget
- Langeveld, J., Gundersen, K. & Svartdal, F. (2012): Social competence as a mediating factor in reduction of behavioral problems. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*.
- Kunnskapsdepartementet/ Utdanningsdepartementet. 2006. Lærerplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet
- Lamer, K. 1997a. *Du og jeg og vi to! Et rammeprogram for sosial kompetanseutvikling. Håndboka*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Lamer, K. 1997b. *Du og jeg og vi to! Om å fremme barns sosiale kompetanse. Teoriboka*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Lamer, K. 1997c. *Du og jeg og Truls og Trine! Barneboka*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Lamer, K. og S. Hauge 2006. «Fra rammeprogram til handling». *Implementering av rammeprogrammet «Du og jeg og vi to!» med fokus på veiledningsprosesser i personalet, sosial kompetanseutvikling og problematferd hos barna*. HiO-rapport nr. 28, Høgskolen i Oslo, Avdeling for lærerutdanning.
- Lamer, K. 2008. Kompetanseutvikling i personalet for å fremme barnas sosiale kompetanse. En sluttrapport fra et 3-årig prosjekt om implementering av rammeprogrammet «Du og jeg og vi to!» i alle førskoleenheter i Spånga-Tensta stadsdel i Stockholm. Eget kompendium, kan fås ved henvendelse til forfatteren.
- Lamer, K. 2010. Sosial kompetanse og inkludering i barnehagen som lærende organisasjon. I: *Barnas barnehage 2*, red. Ø. Kvællø, s. 229-255. Gyldendal Akademisk
- Langeveld, J. H., Gundersen, K. K. and Svartdal, F. 2012. Social Competence as a Me-

- diating Factor in Reduction of Behavioral Problems. *Scandinavian Journal of Education Research*, 4, 381-399.
- Løge, I. K. og Thorsen, A. 2005. *Sammenheng mellom språk og atferd*. Stavanger: Senter for Atferdsforskning, Universitetet i Stavanger.
- Martinussen, M. og Eng, H. 2010. *Beskrivelse og vurdering av tiltaket: Zero*. www.ungsinn.no
- Meichenbaum, D. 1977. *Cognitive-behavior modification*. New York: Plenum Press
- Midthassel, U.V. 2003. *Handlingsplan mot mobbing*. Mal. Stavanger: Senter for atferdsforskning.
- Mishara, B. & Ystgaard, M. 2006. Effectiveness of a mental health promotion program to improve coping skills in young children: Zippy's Friend's. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21, 110-123.
- Nordahl, T. 2000. *En skole – to verdener. Et teoretisk og empirisk arbeid om problematferd og mistilpasning i et elev- og lærerperspektiv*. NOVA Rapport 11/00. Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring.
- Nordahl, T. 2005. *Læringsmiljø og pedagogisk analyse. En beskrivelse og en evaluering av LP-modellen*. Rapport 19/05. Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst.
- Nordahl, T., Sørli, M.-A., Manger, T. & Tveit, A. (2005). *Atferdsvansker blant barn og unge*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Nordahl, T., Ø. Gravkrok, H. Knudsmoen, T. Larsen og K. Rørnes (red.). 2006. *Forebyggende innsatser i skolen*. Oslo: Sosial- og helsedirektoratet og Utdanningsdirektoratet.
- Nordenbo, S. E., Sjøgaard Larsen, M., Tifticki, N., Wendt, R. E. and Østergaard, S. 2008. *Lærerkompetencer og elevers læring i førskole og skole*. Dansk Clearinghouse for Utdanningsforskning. Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsskole, Universitetet i Århus.
- Nærbø, J. and Quarles, J. 2011. *Implementering av programmet ART og Hel-skole-ART*. Universitetet i Agder.
- Ogden, T. 2006. *Sosial kompetanse og problematferd i skolen. Kompetanseutviklende og problemløsende arbeid i skolen*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag AS.
- Ogden, T. 1995. *Kompetanse i kontekst: En studie av risiko og kompetanse hos 10- og 13-åringer*. Rapport 3. Oslo: BVU
- Olweus, D. 2004. The Olweus bullying prevention programme: design and implementation issues and a new national initiative in Norway. In P. K. Smith, D. Pepler, & K. Rigby (Eds.), *Bullying in schools: how successful can interventions be?* Cambridge University Press.
- Roland, E. 1998. *Elevkollektivet*. 2. utgave. Stavanger: Rebell.
- Roland, E. & Galloway, D. 2004. Can We Reduce Bullying by Improving Classroom Management? *ACPP Occasional Papers*, 23, 35-40.
- Roland, E. and Vaaland, G. S. 2003. *Zero, SAF's program mot mobbing. Lærerveiledning*. Senter for Atferdsforskning, Universitetet i Stavanger.
- Vaaland, G.S. and Ertesvåg, S.K. 2013. *Leading or losing? -Lost in the classroom*. Stavanger: Centre for Behavioural Research, University of Stavanger

Vedeler, L. 2000. *Sosiale mestringsstrategier*.
Spesialpedagogikk 4/00.

Webster-Stratton, C. 2006. *Incredible Years
Teacher Classroom Management Program*.
Seattle, WA: Author.

Wentzel, K. R. 1991. Relations between Social
Competence and Academic Achievement
in Early Adolescence. *Child Development*
Volume 62, Issue 5, pp 1066–1078.

Wiborg, Ø., Arnesen, C.Å., Grøgaard, J.B.,
Støren, L.A. and Oppheim, V. 2011.
*Elevers prestasjonsutvikling – hvor mye
betyr skolen og familien? Oslo: Nordisk
institutt for studier av innovasjon,
forskning og utdanning*

Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Wang, M. C., &
Walberg, H. J. (Eds.). (2004). *Building
academic success on social and emo-
tional learning: What does the research
say?* New York: Teachers College Press.