Promoting positive youth development: The ViSC social competence program to prevent bullying at school

In the last years many programs with the aim to reduce or prevent aggressive behaviour have been developed. The majority of these programs applied a fixed set of components and strategies independently of the group dynamics in the respective school classes. However, within a sample of 86 single school classes (1910 pupils, grades 4 to 9) we found a tremendous variability in prevalence rates for bullying ranging from 54.5% to 0% bullies (mean =12.3%) and for victims ranging from 41% to 0% (mean 10%) per class. The Vienna Social Competence Training (ViSC) systematically takes into account differences between school classes. The training is based on social information theory (Crick & Dodge, 1996) and results of research on bullying as a group process (Salmivalli et al, 1996). The two main principles are behavioural enrichment and participation. In the first pilot phase of ViSC we applied a summative evaluation model using a cohort-sequence design. Results showed higher democracy in the two training classes (9th and 10th grades) and lower perceived aggression than in the control classes. In the second pilot phase we also applied a formative evaluation. Trainers and pupils (4 classes; grades 6 and 8) were asked to assess the training components. In addition, students were asked to describe what they have learned during the training. Analyses show that behavioural enrichment was very effectively implemented, and that students liked the interactive components of the training most. Integration of the ViSC program in a national strategy for violence prevention will be discussed.


### ABSTRACT

So far, psychology in the field of education and learning lacks an integrative and compelling model or framework that would allow for systematic representations of activities...
within the discipline and incorporate the lifespan perspective. The paper presents the thematic conceptualization of “Bildung-Psychology”. The German term “Bildung”, which has no precise equivalent in English, encompasses the broad area of education and learning, but has however implications beyond this field in its meaning. Bildung-Psychology is systematically structured with a strong focus on lifelong learning and the process from basic principles and research to evidence-based practice. Bildung-Psychology anchors its issues and activities within a structural model along three dimensions: (a) the chronological lifelong educational career of an individual, (b) the activities in the discipline, and (c) the levels of these activities (microlevel, mesolevel, macrolevel). To illustrate the theoretical approach of Bildung-Psychology, examples from the fields of promotion of self-regulated learning are presented. In addition, the significance of Bildung-Psychology and its place within science and application are discussed.