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Preventive Program of Tolerance Against Violence at Schools in Slovakia

Eva Gajdošova and Zita Rijakova
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Abstract

The Tolerance Against Violence at Schools in Slovakia is an effective primary prevention program. The program helps to develop social-emotional competence and proper attitudes toward social, physical, and ethnic diversities and the facilitation of positive interpersonal interactions with schoolmates. The implementation of the program in schools is recommended within the subject of ethic education, or in complete blocks after the lessons, with a selected group of pupils. After being part of the program, pupils stressed that they were more tolerant, comfortable, more open in their actions, and they that were better able to cope with interpersonal relations. Their subjective feelings agreed with the results of objective psychodiagnostic tests measuring the development of tolerant attitudes to social, ethnic, and physical differences.

During recent years, teachers of elementary and secondary schools have drawn the attention of the public as well as of the psychologists, social and special pedagogues, educational counsellors, and prevention coordinators to the growth of unfriendliness, intolerance, discrimination, and even racism among some students.

Nowadays teachers witness more often than in the past years that pupils intentionally reject their classmates and don’t allow them to join class groups, if they are, for example, members of some other national or ethnic minority, their parents have a different socioeconomic status, or if these classmates are fans of a different sport club or music group, and even, if they don’t wear designer clothes or don’t have a high quality mobile phone or computer, or if their personality qualities, attitudes, or values are different from their own. The unfriendliness, intolerance, and discrimination in schools is growing and subsequently gives rise to verbal or physical aggression and bullying of pupils who are different.

The anonymity of a pupil or a group of pupils hidden in a crowd often represents a common feature of violence. Through their acts, they want to leave a trace on the face of the school, to
shock adults or their classmates as well, make them feel uneasy, disturb them, and to provoke negative reactions from teachers and other adults.

School psychologists know that the aggression and violence of children is not a sporadic phenomenon at schools and that no school is immune to it. In the school environment, we can almost daily witness several forms of aggression and violence acts of pupils directed on things, classmates, and even teachers. We can see that pupils say vulgar words to each other, slander and terrify their classmates, call each other names, mock their classmates because of their handicaps, imperfections, troubles, or failures, utter remarks and jokes at the expense of other pupils or teachers, make each other ridiculous, and even brawl and kick each other to do each other harm.

In addition to the relatively frequent acts of aggression committed by students against their schoolmates are destructive acts against material property, e.g. pictures, sculptures, learning aids, computers, or even infecting computer software with viruses. After entering many classrooms, we see damaged and destroyed chairs and desks, deliberately ripped notice boards, broken windows, chalked freshly painted classroom walls, and broken fences of school courtyards. Even sadder is the fact that the aggression and violence of many pupils turns very often towards younger pupils and defenseless pupils who are, for various reasons, unable to defend themselves, and even towards their own good friends.

The responses were obtained from 125 interviews with ninth-grade students in four elementary schools in Bratislava in June 2010. The pupils were asked why some of their peers behave aggressively at school. Their answers indicate that violence and acts of vandalism take place due to:

- boredom;
- desire for still stronger and more shocking experiences and sensations;
- pressure to express manhood—when a certain group of pupils compels a boy to “behave like a man,” to be harsh, not be afraid of hits and also hit others;
- perceiving it as a kind of adrenaline sport, that is, they do it because they want to feel the danger of being caught in the act;
- it is a consequence of tension, frustration, stress, burden, and conflicts within oneself or within the class;
- wanting to draw attention to themselves, “Please, notice me! Nobody likes me!”

From our analysis of curricula of elementary and secondary schools, it follows that the absence of a systematic, long-term longitudinal training of students towards tolerance, multiculturality, and interculturality applied directly in the training and educational process is a striking one in Slovak schools. The instruction of pupils on human rights and child’s rights, towards tolerance between people of different cultures, nations and nationalities, or other diversities is just sporadic; it takes place in the lessons of civic and ethic education, and it is done on the cognitive (informative) level, less on the emotional (experiential) one, that is more effective and more appealing to children and young people, regardless of their age. For all of us, it is easier to accept what we ourselves have experienced than what has been presented to us as an information or cognition.

The current situation in our schools refers to shortcomings in education of children and young people particularly in this area—they should be instructed towards a greater tolerance and acceptance of diversities, and we consider it as a serious drawback for their future, especially after Slovakia’s entry into the European Union, giving young people greater opportunities to meet different people, communicate with them, or, for example, build effective working teams.

We would thus like to stress the possibilities of a complex approach of education towards tolerance, effectiveness of participation of school governing bodies, teachers, parents, and other members of the school community in its conscious, long-term, and systematic development by
means of a complex social and educational, as well as social and psychological, intervention, especially the preventive, developmental and interventional programs in schools.

On the basis of this situation, have we, the members of The Psychology Department at the Faculty of Arts of the Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, made the decision to work out a longitudinal program of tolerance development of pupils aimed at development of cohesion, tolerance, and acceptance of young people’s diversities, and to verify its effectiveness directly in the educational and training process in selected elementary and secondary schools. We supposed that a long-term development of tolerance would have a distinctly positive influence on cohesion of the pupils in the class and tolerance of diversities, and that it would have, from the point of view of statistics, an important influence on the change of students’ attitudes.

We consider the preventive programs and tolerance development programs to be part of the basic components of development of tolerance and positive social climate at school. These programs are usually carried out during a longer period of time, systematically and with the goal in mind, in cooperation with a school psychologist, that they may become a component part of an effective planning, realization, and assessment of education towards tolerance not only in relation to pupils as subjects of influence, but also in relation to an effective training of teachers and teachers teams—the creators of tolerance at school. By means of research of views of teachers on the application of education towards tolerance and social cohesion, we have found, among other things, that the teachers are interested in obtaining information on realization of education towards tolerance covering “good” pedagogical experiences of Slovak and foreign schools and also information about the effectiveness of such an educational influence (Gajdošová & Herenyiová, 2006).

In our comprehension of tolerance, we identify with the definition of tolerance coined by Slovak psychologist Hargasová (1997), who states that tolerance is “a readiness to accept differences in opinions, culture, appearance, religion, lifestyle, national and social identity” (p. 7).

Goal, Problems, Hypotheses, and Research Methods

The goal of one part of our research was to work out and, directly in the educational process of the selected primary school, verify the effectiveness of the elaborated tolerance development program and to find out whether it can cause a positive change of pupils’ attitudes towards people with diverse ethnic, social, and physical characteristics, so that they are able to accept and tolerate their diversities, which eventually would improve social relations in the class, especially regarding the cohesion and satisfaction.

We divided the main goal of the research into the following partial goals:

- investigation of the level of tolerance of pupils of the elementary school towards the diversities and level of social relations in the classrooms;
- enhancement of the degree of pupils’ tolerant attitudes;
- reduction of the intolerant, hostile, and unaccepting attitudes;
- investigation of the degree of influence of the tolerance development program on the improvement of the quality of social relations in the class, with emphasis to cohesion and satisfaction.

In the course of the program, students had the opportunity to reflect on various manifestations and forms of violence between people in general, and especially in schools between pupils. They learned to get to know themselves and the people around them, to manage their feelings, understand opinions and attitudes of others, develop healthy self-confidence, learn to communicate effectively and to cooperate with their classmates, avoid conflicts, and, when conflicts due arise, to solve them in a non-aggressive way, preferring compromises and agreements.
The research questions related to the attitudes of pupils and their possible changes in attitude are as follows.

1. What are the attitudes of pupils of our research sample towards people with ethnic, social or physical diversities (a physically handicapped schoolmate, a schoolmate from a socially problematic background, a Roma schoolmate, an old man) prior to the application of the tolerance development program?
   • To what degree will these attitudes change after the completion of the program?
   • How significant will this change of pupils’ attitudes be and which attitudes will it influence?

2. The following research questions were related to social relations and cohesion of the pupils in the class:
   • How are the social relations between pupils in the classes prior to the application of the tolerance development program?
   • What is the level of social relations in a selected class prior to the application of the tolerance development program? We are interested in the level of cohesion, satisfaction, competitiveness, conflicts between pupils, and their learning problems.
   • Will the application of the program bring a positive change in the social relations in the classes and their components (cohesion, satisfaction, competitiveness, solving of conflicts and learning problems)?
   • To what extent will the change get reflected in the monitored coefficients?

**Shaping of Hypotheses**

In relation to the changes of pupils’ attitudes, we shaped the following hypotheses:

H1: The attitudes of pupils towards their peers as well as to other people with diverse ethnic, social, and physical characteristics (a Roma schoolmate, a schoolmate from a socially problematic background, a physically handicapped schoolmate, an old man) will be negative prior to the application to the program due to prejudices and stereotypes, regardless of pupils’ age and gender.

H2: The application of the tolerance development program will induce a statistically significant positive change of attitudes towards people with diverse ethnic, social and physical characteristics (a Roma, a physically handicapped schoolmate, a schoolmate from a socially problematic background, an old man).

In relation to changes in social relations, we shaped the following hypotheses:

H3: Prior to the application of the program, the level of social relations in class, as well as the level of selected components (cohesion, satisfaction, competitiveness, conflicts, and learning problems) will be just average.

H4: The Tolerance development program resulted in a statistically positive change in pupils’ behavior regarding social relations in class, reflected mainly in the class cohesion and satisfaction with class relations.

Hypotheses were formulated on the basis of some research results and practical knowledge and experience of teachers, educational counselors and psychologists that many pupils (especially of pubescent age) have rather negative attitudes to all kinds of diversities of people in their surroundings which is manifested in undesirable and gross behavior, humiliation, bullying, and so forth (Samajova, 2005; Hargasova, 1995).
However, developmental psychology knowledge attest to the fact that pubescent pupils are far more willing to reappraise and make a positive change of attitudes that they have adopted in family or school education, or under the influence of the society (assessment of parents’, teachers’, and other people’s attitudes) (Cap, & Mares, 2001).

Considering the fact that the effectiveness of preventive and development programs has been proven by Slovak and foreign researches (Gajdošova & Herenyiova, 2002, 2006), we suppose that there will be positive changes in pubescent pupils’ attitudes and their social relations.

Research Methods

From the point of view of the goal, the following research methods have been applied to examine the chosen variables and to verify the determined hypotheses:

1. The method of an experiment under natural conditions (in selected primary school classes).
2. Methods of data collection.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire, My Class Inventory, was developed by Australian psychologists Frase and Fisher, and its content was customized for use in the school system in the Czech and Slovak republics (Lešek & Mareš, 1989). The purpose of this questionnaire is to observe five main components of what happens in class and in social relations in class: pupils’ satisfaction in the class and in social relations in class; pupils’ satisfaction in the class and their cohesion, competitiveness among pupils, conflicts in the class and learning problems. The questionnaire has a total of 25 statements requiring only an affirmative “yes” or a negative “no” answer from the pupil.

The Method of Semantic Differential

To evaluate students’ attitudes to diverse people, the method of C. E. Osgood Semantic differential was applied. This method uses a scale ranging from 1 to 7, with lower numbers (1–3) representing positive attitudes, e.g., good-looking, good, valuable, rapid, helping, close, friendly, and high numbers (5–7) representing negative attitudes, e.g., not good-looking, bad, unvaluable, slow, unhelping, remote, unfriendly. For the purpose of our research, a semantic differential, which consisted of four concepts from categories of ethnic, social, and physical differences, was used (old person, Roma schoolmate, physically handicapped schoolmate, schoolmate from socially problematic background).

1. The observation of pupils’ behavior under natural conditions of the classes and during breaks.
2. The non-standardized interview with classroom teachers and pupils.
3. Mathematical and statistical methods of data processing: T-test for two dependent selections and the Wilcoxon test for two dependent selections.
4. Description of the Tolerance development program.

Our program of tolerance development in school consisted of three basic modules:

Module 1: 10 Meetings with Pupils

Basic language concepts: violence, intolerance resulting in violence, getting to know other people, similarities, differences, opinions, and evaluation of some selected kinds of people who live in our surroundings.
Goals of Module 1:
- educate pupils about the different forms of violence—domestic violence, school violence, public violence, political violence, and also violence among states, countries, political, and religious systems which is caused by intolerance;
- find out in what aspects are my classmates similar to me and in what aspects are they different from me;
- compare my evaluations to the evaluations made by my classmates and find out how they are seen through the eyes of their best friends, but also by peers they do not talk with, and how are they perceived by boys and by girls;
- practice speaking in front of an audience about myself, my interests, abilities, personal characteristics, attitudes, and opinions;
- find out about the attitudes of my classmates towards people who are different, e.g., old people, mentally handicapped people, Black people, Moslem, Roma.

Module 2: 10 Meetings with Pupils
Basic language concepts: barriers to tolerance—prejudices, stereotypes, discrimination, gossip, violence.

Goals of Module 2:
- learn about the causes of intolerance among people and what are the possible barriers of tolerance;
- understand and experience the process of “categorizing” and “labeling” people;
- talk about the negative consequences that one-sided information and spreading of incorrect information and gossip may have;
- draw attention to the fact how prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination affect our way of thinking and human relations.

Module 3: 20 Meetings with Pupils
Basic language concepts: factors of tolerance and tolerant behavior development—effective communication, active listening, empathy, assertiveness, respecting of human rights and children’s rights.

Goals of Module 3:
- develop empathy skills; imagine oneself in the position of someone who is being discriminated and understand his acting and needs in relations with other people;
- compare one’s point of view to another person’s point of view;
- use the techniques of active listening and be willing to solve conflicts in a compromise;
- learn how to avoid discrimination, prejudices, and stereotypes;
- learn one’s assertive rights and assertive duties and apply them to solve conflicts;
- obtain information about the universally recognized human rights and children rights and express opinions on violation of human rights, and offer one’s own suggestions how to make changes.

The structure of the tolerance program to prevent violence in schools is as follows:

Module 1:
- Similarities and differences of people I
- Similarities and differences of people II
- Comparison of opinions on selected types of people who live in our surroundings
Tolerance Against Violence

Making a selection of people—a competition
Violence, intolerance that leads to violence—evaluation scales and drawings

Module 2:
- Tolerance barriers—spreading of gossip, one-sided communication
- The process of discrimination—“categorizing and labeling people”
- The feeling of being discriminated against
- Stereotypes
- Prejudices

Module 3:
- Two points of view
- Empathy I
- Empathy II
- Techniques of active listening
- How to select people by avoiding discrimination
- Assertiveness, assertive behavior
- Make use of acquired skills
- Declaration of human rights
- Declaration of children rights
- Am I tolerant now? Final reflections

Description of Some Selected Meetings

Now we will describe one selected activity that we have successfully used in our program. However, in certain situations, some of the tasks were ineffective. Their realization depended not only on the problem we dealt with, but we took into consideration also social relations in the classroom, pupils’ self-knowledge and knowledge of their classmates, social climate and social atmosphere in class, the level of mutual trust and openness, and so forth.

“Bargots and Roters”

The game “Bargots and Roters” was intended to show pupils that prejudices are part of our life and how they influence our attitudes and opinions. We read to the children a description of two imaginary countries—Bargotia and Rotria and how is life there, written through the eyes of an inhabitant of Bargotia. Bargotia, his homeland was described in a positive manner—a sunny, warm country with kind and good inhabitants. However, Bargot described the neighboring country Rotria rather negatively, as a land of darkness, rain, with unfriendly inhabitants doing harm to each other within families, but also in public.

When we finished reading those descriptions to the children, they were told to form an opinion on the two countries, to draw the countries and to write of the personal characteristics of a typical Bargot and a typical Roter. Of course, the children were influenced by the descriptions and the negative characteristics made by the inhabitant of Bargotia. As a result, they drew the country of Rotria in dark colors and described its inhabitants as people who are evil-minded.

We put the drawings on the blackboard and discussed them. It was at that moment that the pupils realized they made a mistake and were really sorry about having themselves influenced so negatively. The children understood that before making an opinion about someone, they have to verify the information and not accept and follow opinions from one person only. They should always know the opinion of the other party. There is no person, situation, country, or problem
that would be purely negative. There are positive sides to everything. One must avoid seeing the world in black and white, for to have such an attitude is dangerous and could have far-reaching consequences.

Results

The effectiveness of tolerance development program was verified at the private primary school Ružová dolina in Bratislava, in the academic year 2009/2010. The basic research method applied was the natural experiment under conditions of the selected primary school: the tolerance development program was implemented in the school, and, when the pupils completed the program, its effectiveness was verified.

The research sample was composed of 62 primary school students—seventh, eighth, and ninth graders (30 boys and 32 girls) between the ages of 13 and 15 years. They were selected by means of a cluster selection, i.e., individuals for the experiment were not selected from the population randomly, but they were groups, naturally formed school classes. We did not have a control group. Instead, we compared selected groups (classes) of pupils and observed the changes that took place after the application of the program.

The complex tolerance development program consisted of prepared lessons dealing with selected methodical procedures and activities (see enclosure). The pupils completed the program in one academic year, altogether they had 40 lessons of the training program (the frequency of lessons was once a week for two lessons).

Based on the agreement with the primary school management, the program was systematically incorporated into the ongoing educational process and selected lessons (lessons of ethic education, civic education, creative arts, and musical education).

The meetings were usually introduced with a brief review of the subject matter taught on the previous lesson, and the objectives of the current lessons were defined. The pupils discussed the main idea and the objective of the lesson, they learned the basic language concepts and by means of some selected methodical procedures; pupils were developing target abilities, skills, habits, attitudes, and competences. During the final part of the lesson, the pupils were playing some selected psychogames, they were drawing pictures, writing stories, practicing model situations, searching for information, or, in some cases, the pupils were given homework or the task to work out a project.

Research results concerning the changes in pupils’ attitudes to diversities due to the program resulted in the following hypotheses.

H1, H2: Prior to the application of the program, the pubescent pupils’ attitudes toward people with ethnical, social, and physical diversities (e.g., Roma schoolmate, schoolmate from socially problematic background, physically handicapped schoolmate, old man) were negative regardless of pupils’ age and gender; this was typical of the prejudices and stereotypes that exist in Slovakia. After the application of the program, we found that there was a statistically significant positive change in pupils’ attitudes to people with diverse characteristics. In sum, it may be said that our supposition was fulfilled and both hypotheses were confirmed.

The analysis of the research results confirmed that prior to the application of the tolerance development program the pupils’ attitudes towards people in their surroundings with ethnical, social, and physical differences were strongly negative. In the questionnaire responses, the attitudes of pupils in our research sample showed a relatively high degree of intolerance to a Roma pupil and a schoolmate from socially problematic background, for example, with numbers ranging from 5 to 7.
The results have shown that prior to the application of the program, the highest degree of rejection and intolerance in the pupils questioned was found in relation to a schoolmate from socially problematic background (i.e., a person of social, not ethnical diversity). The attitude of the pupils was found to be strongly negative in all the adjectives observed, but most of all in the adjectives good, close, and helping. Adjectives representing the attitudes of pupils to a physically handicapped schoolmate ranged from 3 to 5 (good, friendly). Also, there was a statistically significant positive change in pupils’ attitudes in relation to the adjective close. In the case of the attitudes to an old man, in some characteristics the adjectives reached the levels of 2 to 3 (good, valuable, friendly).

The strongly negative attitude of pupils in the relation to a Roma schoolmate was changed after the application of the program on the same level in all of the characteristics (adjectives) observed. However, statistical results registered significant change only in the adjectives good, rapid, and friendly. An intolerant attitude was found with the adjectives close and good-looking. In all, after the application of the program, the attitudes of pupils were not as strongly negative and rejecting as before.

The statistically significant differences in pupils’ attitudes to people with diverse characteristics, as registered after the application of the tolerance development program are listed below. The statistically significant differences in pupils’ attitudes to diversities are shown in the Table 41.1.

- A Roma schoolmate: good (p = 0.004); rapid (p = 0.019); friendly (p = 0.008);
- An old man: rapid (p = 0.002);
- A physically handicapped schoolmate: rapid (p = 0.007); close (p = 0.034);
- A schoolmate from socially problematic background: good-looking (p = 0.036); valuable (p = 0.021); close (p = 0.020).

A different situation occurred in the case of components of social relations that were monitored by means of the My Class questionnaire. These components are satisfaction in class, conflicts in class, competitiveness, cohesion, and learning problems. The Czech approximate standards (Lešek & Mareš, 1989) name the following approximate values in the components:

- satisfaction—12
- competitiveness—12
- cohesion—10
- learning problems—9
- conflicts in class—10

In the variables satisfaction and cohesion in classes, we recorded, in comparison to the pretest, highly a statistically significant satisfaction (p = 0.001) and cohesion (p = 0.016).

The differences, however, vary significantly in dependence on gender. Whereas after the application of the program, the boys were, unlike the girls, satisfied with the social relations in the class (p = 0.001) and also had the feeling that the cohesion of the class is on a high level (p = 0.001), this result was not registered with the girls. In the partial analysis of the individual components of the social relations, after the completion of the program, the best score was gained by the ninth-grade class (satisfaction and cohesion—level 11), in comparison with the seventh- and eighth-grade classes. In the seventh-grade class, the highest degree of competitiveness was registered (level 12).

By means of the T-test, we have recorded statistically significant differences in the components of the social relations in the questionnaire and by means of Wilcoxon test in case of differences between boys and girls (see Tables 41.2, 41.3, and 41.4).
Table 41.1 Pupils’ Attitudes to Diversities (a Roma, a physically handicapped schoolmate, a schoolmate from socially problematic background and an old man) in a Semantic Differential (t-test for two dependent samples)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>N valid</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A Roma – good – pre</td>
<td>5,2462</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1,4256</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Roma – good – post</td>
<td>4,3846</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1,2079</td>
<td>3,095</td>
<td>0,004</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>A Roma – rapid – pre</td>
<td>4,6406</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1,5157</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Roma – rapid – post</td>
<td>3,8906</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1,0253</td>
<td>2,483</td>
<td>0,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A Roma – friendly – pre</td>
<td>5,0781</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1,6262</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Roma – friendly – post</td>
<td>4,1406</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1,4127</td>
<td>2,878</td>
<td>0,008</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>0,8706</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An old person – rapid – post</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>1,3546</td>
<td>3,367</td>
<td>0,002</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>A physically handicapped person – rapid – pre</td>
<td>5,3846</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1,5781</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1,6209</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A physically handicapped person – close – post</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>1,4283</td>
<td>2,229</td>
<td>0,034</td>
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<td>1,6760</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Socially problematic background – helping – pre</td>
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<td>0,9764</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1,5220</td>
<td>2,455</td>
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Conclusions

After the application of the tolerance development, we registered the following results:

1. It has been confirmed that young people have the same prejudices as their parents and other adults towards people in their surroundings who have different physical, social, and ethnic characteristics, even though they haven’t had any negative experience with those people. Regardless of their age or sex, the pupils of our research sample showed negative attitudes to:
   - a Roma schoolmate
   - a schoolmate from a socially problematic background

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Table 41.2 Pupils’ Attitudes Towards Social Relations – T-test for Two Dependent Selections – Our Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>N valid</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>2,2212</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>1,7510</td>
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<td>conflicts – pre</td>
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<td>2,9679</td>
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<td>2,9035</td>
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<td>0.657</td>
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<td>competitiveness – pre</td>
<td>11,2615</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2,4703</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>competitiveness – post</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>2,4957</td>
<td>-1,026</td>
<td>0.309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>troubles – pre</td>
<td>10,1692</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2,5407</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>troubles – post</td>
<td>10,8769</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2,0502</td>
<td>-1,697</td>
<td>0.095</td>
</tr>
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<td>cohesion – pre</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>2,7585</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cohesion – post</td>
<td>9,2462</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2,7897</td>
<td>-2,481</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- attitudes were not as negative towards a physically handicapped schoolmate or an old man.

2. After the completion of the program, we could register a statistically significant positive change in pupils’ attitudes to ethnical, social, and physical diversities:
- a Roma schoolmate (all pupils regardless of their sex and age, in adjectives good, rapid, friendly),
- a physically handicapped schoolmate (all pupils chose the adjective close),
- a schoolmate from a socially problematic background (all pupils chose the adjectives close, valuable)

Statistically significant changes were registered in several categories with male and female students.

1. After the application of the program, a statistically significant positive change was registered in classes, regarding:
- pupils’ satisfaction (boys and girls),
- cohesion among pupils (boys and girls),
- cohesion and satisfaction (in the ninth grade).

Table 41.3 Attitudes of Pupils – Boys – Towards Social Relations – Wilcoxon Test for Two Dependent Selections – Our Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>N valid</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>satisfaction – post – satisfaction – pre</td>
<td>pre-post</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>-3,252</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre&lt;post</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73,3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre=pre</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16,6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3,252</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cohesion – post – cohesion – pre</td>
<td>pre-post</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13,3</td>
<td>-3,239</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre&lt;post</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76,6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre=pre</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3,239</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. As a consequence of the program, some pupils started to apply new ways of behavior and conflict solving in everyday school situations. As it was shown, the pupils’ self-control improved, their decision making became more thoughtful, they showed the effort to solve the conflicts in a compromise, they expressed their feelings more openly, they developed their empathy skills, and the social atmosphere in the class became more positive.

3. In a semi-standardized interview, the teachers confirmed that:
violent reactions of children in solving the problems got reduced,
the efforts to solve the conflicts by means of a compromise and agreement increased,
less physical and also verbal violence was observed in the class,
the social atmosphere in the class became more considerate and a greater willingness to cooperate was observed.

It may be said that the program of tolerance development that we applied in the school is one of the effective programs of primary prevention; its goal being the development of social-emotional competences and proper attitudes of pupils to diversities and the facilitation of positive interpersonal interactions. The implementation of the program in other schools is recommended within the subjects of ethic education, or in complete blocks after the lessons.

Despite the fact that the application of the program in the selected primary school was effective, it is necessary to emphasize the following points:

• to date, no research has confirmed whether pupils apply taught patterns of behavior, performance standards, and the ways of problem solving in everyday life situations outside the school environment after the completion of the program (i.e., in relationships with their friends, parents, siblings, and peers);
• in our study we compared the results of the pretest and the posttest of the experimental group; we had no control group. At the present time, the tolerance development programs are not incorporated into the curricula of educational subjects, and therefore it would be difficult to ensure the identical conditions for control groups from thematic, methodic, or other points of view;
• we do realize that a change is valid only if the persons who are in everyday contact with the pupils regard the changes in attitudes and social relations in class as highly positive, enduring, and constructive.

### Table 41.4  Attitudes of Pupils – Girls – Towards Social Relations – Wilcoxon Test for Two dependent Samples – Our Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>N valid</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre&gt;post</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28,6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre&lt;post</td>
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<td>pre=post</td>
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<td>8,5</td>
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<td>Spolu</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>–1,960</td>
<td>0,050</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tolerance Against Violence

Table 41.5 Implications for Practice

- Provide effective education and training of pupils, teachers, parents, and other members of school community to prevent violence and intolerance of diversities in schools, as a prerequisite for pupils, the future citizens to become a part of the multicultural society.

- Conduct a survey every year to find out if there is violence, aggression, and bullying in primary schools, to find out of the situation of social-pathological phenomena in schools and school activities promoting tolerance development.

- Integrate education on the issue of aggression, bullying, and violence in schools and the ways to prevent them into the curricula designed for professional training of prospective teachers, pedagogues, special pedagogues, school, and counseling psychologists.

- Organize educational activities focused on planning, realizing, and evaluating of tolerance development education (i.e. lectures, debates, social – psychological trainings, effective development program trainings for teachers, educational counsellors, coordinators for prevention, social workers, special pedagogues, school, and counseling psychologists).

- Close and intense cooperation between primary schools and parents, pedagogical-psychological counselling centers, special pedagogical counseling centers, centers for prevention methods, local police stations etc., to prevent aggression and violence in schools.

- Involve mass media into the campaign to fight against violence in schools.

- Realize social and psychological diagnostics of the classes on a regular basis and make analyses of social relations in classes using an appropriate sociometric questionnaire in close cooperation with classroom teachers, school counseling psychologists, and educational counselors.

- Use the peer program, called “peer groups” directly in school environment and in class to develop pupils’ tolerance.

- In every school, create a working team composed of teachers and specialists who will work in close cooperation and who will work out a common procedure against violence in schools, implement it, and evaluate its results.

- Active participation of school management on realization of program, activities and projects of social–educational intervention to foster cohesion, acceptance, and tolerance and incorporate them into the basic documents of the school.

- Provide systematic and long-term education of teachers to develop their personalities and professional competences regarding tolerance, conflict solving, effective communication skills, and cooperation.

- Implement a compulsory practice at universities for psychology students, special education students, and students of other helping professions in schools dealing predominantly with the implementation of developing and preventive programmes (development of emotional intelligence and social competence skills of victims of violence and aggressors).

References


