

## Personal and Social Training as a Part of Class Teachers' Lifelong Learning

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### **Abstract:**

**Introduction:** The presented paper deals with the issues of the work of class teachers and their further education in the field of personal and social training. The main goal of the research was to find out about changes in personal and social development after the realization of social-pedagogical training.

**Methods:** On the level of personal development, the authors were interested in the field of values and attitudes. On the level of social development, they focused on the changes in communication and opinion scales. The changes in the above fields were measured by means of a pre-test and a post-test which were administered before and after the realization of the training.

**Results:** In the participants of the realized research, the research team, to a certain extent, succeeded in reducing prejudice and beliefs and the participants learnt about the necessity of considering students' individual abilities and specific environmental influences on their behavior and manifestations at school. On the level of opinions, there was a shift towards a stronger belief in the significance of the impact of the environment and the family background on students' behaviour and their personality traits.

**Discussion:** The presented data are the results of a pilot probe and have brought initial insights related to the presented issues for the purposes of a longer and deeper research, which is in the phase of its realization.

**Limitations:** As the project was realized with ten groups of teachers showing a deep interest in participating in it, it is not our ambition to generalize the obtained results; nevertheless, we find them interesting and inspiring.

**Conclusions:** Along with knowledge from pedagogy and psychology, class teachers need a huge amount of creativity, ideas, techniques and methods, which can promote the development of students' value orientation. The authors can see a clear perspective for teachers' lifelong learning here.

**Key words:** class teacher, personal and social training, teachers' lifelong learning.

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## **1 Introduction**

Researchers, policy makers and educators agree that teachers are one of the most important school-related factors. Especially the work of a class teacher is generally considered demanding. It is a long-term process in which teachers build their relationships with the class as a group and with individual students, gradually develop the necessary competencies for this job position – according to Čilić, Klapan and Prnić (2015), competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation and personal characteristics enabling individuals to act actively and efficiently in a certain (specific) situation – and work on the improvement of their teaching and communication skills in order to become even better professionals. Class teachers gradually become mediators of experiences or mentors. From the professional point of view, teachers are not only in charge of education, but also of leading and managing their class of students as a whole. However, in this context, it must be emphasized that teaching cannot be deconstructed into a number of discrete and separately identifiable parts (Hayes, 1997, p. 166).

## **2 Class teachers**

Průcha, Walterová and Mareš (2003, p. 253) define class teachers as *“persons who manage and educate a collective of students in a particular class. At the same time, they coordinate the educational work of teachers teaching in that class of students”*.

In the current society, the job position of a class teacher requires more complex professional skills than it was in the past. In the modern era, these teachers must be professionals which are able to communicate with the young generation efficiently; they must keep up with their students. From the professional point of view, teachers do not become good class teachers immediately after starting their professional career. Practicing teachers working on this job position for several years confirm the need for further education (Tamášová, 2015) especially in this field. In relation to the educational work with students, they ranked the need for professional training for class teachers as the third most important within an analysis of their educational needs (see Tamášová & Geršicová, 2014). Only professionally well-prepared teachers willing to dedicate their time to students are able to motivate their students for the improvement of their social skills. They can help them solve various life situations, can offer students the opportunity to make independent decisions in problem solving and can become role models for their students.

Teachers' managerial abilities have been found to positively relate to students' behavior and achievement in every process-product study to date. Classroom management involves responding effectively when problems occur, but also preventing problems from occurring by creating environments that encourage learning and appropriate behaviour (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). The basic requirement for efficient classroom management is a good knowledge of students. Horváthová (2003) indicates that class teachers gain and gather information, and based on them, they make assessment. In the educational process, they monitor their students' behaviour, school achievement, and their school attendance. Along with knowing their students well, the educational process is of a great importance from the aspect of class teachers' educational work in the classroom. Class teachers should also have a solid knowledge from several fields, especially from the field of psychology. They should not only know their students very well, but they should also work on the improvement of the quality of the relationships in

the classroom. They should make efforts to improve communication and to try to be helpful in finding solutions for conflicts that arise in the class as, in current practice, various educational problems, especially with bullying, occur quite frequently (see Adamík Šimegová & Kováčová, 2011).

Generally, teachers instructing the same class of students perceive it differently. The more teachers instruct a class, the more attitudes towards it occur. One of the tasks of class teachers is to become their students' tutors, not to remain only teachers, but rather mediators of knowledge. The relationship between the class teacher and the students should be intense and the communication frequent and warm. In everyday school life, students often enter into conflicts with teachers that usually require solutions on a higher pedagogical level and the presence of the class teacher is required. If that teacher is present in the classroom, students often seem to be less aggressive and show more respect. Under such circumstances, class teachers feel more responsible for their students.

According to Spousta (1994, pp. 8-9), class teachers have the following duties in the classroom:

- teaching (teach their curriculum content of their teaching subjects – especially students in their class but also other students);
- education (especially in their class of students – formation of the collective of students and the student board);
- leading and managing the educational process in every class they teach;
- coordinating the educational work of all the teachers teaching in the class;
- collaborating with all the organizations and institutions which are in contact with the students in the class.

The work of a class teacher is demanding and comprehensive in many aspects. Teaching and managing a class are among teachers' duties. Teachers often ask the question how to communicate with students efficiently and to improve the process of class management. Štúr (2013, p. 4) claims that *“students are happy to go to school if they feel that their teachers understand them and are always willing to help. For this, it is not enough to apply a range of teaching principles, it requires a mature personality, trust in own knowledge and emotional stability on the side of the adult. Not to control by hierarchy, but by the power of human understanding”*. In this context, the authors would like to highlight two of the roles of a class teacher.

### *2.1 The social role of a class teacher in relation to students*

Class teachers should maintain a certain social status of dignity attributed to their profession. Their way of behaviour and self-expression should be in accordance with the generally accepted standards and the social role assigned to teachers in order to fulfil the expectations for decent and professional behaviour. All the relationships of these teachers should be based on the generally accepted social norms. Only good relationships in the classroom can be considered a proof of the teacher's professional behaviour. Benešová and Kollárová (2002) claim that it should be clear for all participants of the process that good communication is the result of a high level of functioning of the existing relationships, even if it is not visible at the first sight. Even though we do not realize them, they are gradually developing. If a conflict occurs, it is

often solved by itself. Individuals engaged in these relationships should be personally and socially mature.

Teachers should be sufficiently qualified and professionally skilled for their roles. Along with teaching responsibilities, they should self-sacrifice to a certain extent and be willing to help students in solving their problems related to their education and personal lives. They should be able to give advice and help solve conflicts. Class teachers should frequently encourage and praise the students in their class as it helps develop their self-confidence. Self-confidence and self-assured performance contribute to their preparedness for their personal lives in the future. The promotion of students' development helps to create friendly relationships between students and teachers.

Based on the above, the work of a class teacher does not include only education, but the social aspect of their work has an important role to play, too. There is a large scale of factors, which have a significant impact on their work and bring the requirement for solving various conflicts in the classroom, dealing with various situations and problems not only during the time they spend at their workplace but also after leaving the school building.

### **3 Personal and social training**

The notion of personal and social training can be characterised based on Valenta's (2006, p. 13) definition, who considers personal and social training "*a practical discipline focusing on the development of key life skills, more precisely, on personal and social skills necessary for everyday life. In other words – a discipline dealing with developing life competencies, especially developing the relationship with oneself and the life in interpersonal relationships*". According to Gymerová et al. (2009, p. 7), personal and social training is "*a practical discipline dealing with the issues of the development of key life skills or life competencies*".

The above authors have pointed out the importance of the development of key life competencies and life skills. The authors assume that personal and social training focus on the development of key competencies – personal, social, and moral – which a young person needs for living a successful and happy life. It means gaining knowledge, development of abilities, skills and creation of opinions, attitudes, and of the value orientation necessary for coping with a variety of real life situations. Turek (2008, p. 200) indicates that "*key competencies are the most important ones from among the entire set of competencies. These are useful for the solution of many, usually predictable problems. They help individuals to cope with rapid changes at work, in personal and social life successfully*". For young people, it is advantageous if they are offered the opportunity to develop these skills and try them out in practice. By means of practical skills, they gain knowledge and improve the way of realization of a particular activity. Flexibility, communication, integrity, collaboration, problem solving, friendship, tactfulness, care, responsibility, patience, endurance, self-confidence, self-organization, sense of humour, etc. can be included among life skills.

Students as individuals, groups of students and everyday life situations of various frequency represent the subject of personal and social training (Valenta, 2006). According to Gymerová et al. (2009), the most important issues to deal with are young people, their personalities and personal relationships. It comes to an agreement between the above two authors – students are in the centre of personal and social training's attention and they need an individual approach. Students become the objects and, at the

same time, the subjects of education. The main goal of personal and social training is to prepare a harmoniously developed personality. Personal and social training should contribute to the development of the ability for learning, self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-organization. They promote students' creativity, good interpersonal relationships, and communication skills; and help them develop certain values, attitudes, opinions and practical ethics.

### *3.1 Goals of personal and social training*

*"Personal and social training should help every student find their own path towards life satisfaction based on good relationships with themselves, other people and the world"* (Valenta, 2006, p. 45). In practice, it means leading students and helping them find themselves and such a life trajectory which will satisfy them. It is important to support students and, by means of personal and social training, teach them how to cope with various life situations, make good decisions, take full responsibility for their own behaviour and actions, maintain good interpersonal relationships and not only respect themselves, but also others. Young people should be sufficiently equipped for dealing with various personal and social roles successfully in their future lives.

Valenta (2006) mentions the following basic goals of personal and social training in the field of knowledge, skills and abilities:

- understanding oneself;
- creation of positive interpersonal relationships in the classroom and outside it;
- development of good communication skills and gaining knowledge related to it;
- development and improvement of basic cooperative skills;
- development of the basic social skills in the process of coping with demanding situations;
- development of study skill;
- promotion of skills and gaining knowledge in the field of psychohygiene.

In the field of attitudes and values:

- creation of a positive attitude towards themselves;
- recognition of the value of cooperation and support;
- development of the moral aspect in communication situations and various forms of behaviour;
- prevention of social pathological phenomena and destructive forms of behaviour.

Another definition and specification of the goals of personal and social training is offered by the National Institute for Education (Štátny pedagogický ústav, 2012) in Slovakia, which in the cross-section theme personal and social training, introduces the following list of goals:

- development of a positive attitude towards oneself and others;
- taking control over own behaviour;
- creation of good interpersonal relationships both in and outside the classroom;
- development of basic communication and collaborative skills;
- development of basic social skills necessary for dealing with a variety of situations;
- respecting the diversity of people, opinions, and approaches to problem solving;

- following the basic principles of healthy lifestyle and involvement in low-risk behaviour in everyday life situations ([www.statpedu.sk](http://www.statpedu.sk)).

The above goals of personal and social training should be considered when introducing the thematic fields of personal and social training into the educational process.

### *3.2 Thematic fields of personal and social training*

To achieve the above goals, specific content containing the thematic fields of personal and social training was drafted. *“The fields of personal and social training are identical with the fields of human skills, personality traits, characteristics, abilities, attitudes models of human behaviour, etc. The themes contain practical phenomena, which are generally well known and constitute a part of each individual and their lives.”* (Valenta, 2006, p. 15). These thematic fields are focused on personal, social and moral development. All the three components of development are closely related to each other. Gymerová et al. (2009), along with personal, social, moral development, include also spiritual development here. The thematic fields serve as a tool for developing and practicing practical life skills and abilities. Valenta, Srb et al. and Gymerová et al. introduce the same classification of thematic fields in their publications.

Srb et al. (2007) distinguish between eleven thematic fields divided into three groups:

#### *Personal development:*

- cognitive skills;
- self-knowledge and self-concept;
- self-regulation and self-organizations;
- psychohygiene;
- creativity;

#### *Social development:*

- learning about people;
- interpersonal relationships;
- communication;
- collaboration and competition;

#### *Moral development:*

- problem solving and decision-making skills;
- values, attitudes and practical ethics.

In the current society, many changes related to the life style of young people and the expectations they have to face have occurred. The content of personal and social training is identical with these eleven thematic fields and corresponding exercises support young people in gaining skills and abilities, which help them adapt to various changes in the course of their lives, to integrate into the society successfully, and to live an active life.

Personal development means improving individuals' ability to learn, their self-knowledge and self-concept, self-regulation, self-organization, psychohygiene and is helpful in developing creativity. It is focused on students themselves; they can gain more information about themselves and thus, improve their self-knowledge. Individuals can learn how to manage their time dedicated either to learning or their hobbies efficiently

and will have the opportunity to develop own creativity. They will learn to think positively and to cope with stressful situations in order to live a happy and successful life.

### *3.3 Exercises focused on personal and social development*

Exercises focused on personal development are derived from the individual thematic fields.

#### *Development of the ability to learn*

- Practicing sensual perception – with a focus on senses. They constitute the basis of our lives. Along with the increasing amount of experiences and knowledge, perception is improved.
- Practicing attention and concentration abilities – it is beneficial to find out more about own personal predispositions for keeping concentration and paying attention. Students can learn to focus attention intentionally.
- Practicing the ability to remember – students can develop a range of strategies for remembering and recalling information. It is important to introduce those which suit their needs and desires best.
- Practicing problem-solving skills – learning to identify the problem and then searching for various solutions.
- Ability to plan own learning and studies – i.e. identification of own learning style, searching for appropriate learning methods.

#### *Self-knowledge and self-concept*

- Me as a source of information about myself – leading students towards self-observation, self-reflection, recognition of what they can learn about themselves by themselves.
- Others as a source of information about myself – students can learn how one's self-concept can influence others, to select important information from among the reactions of others, not to refuse criticism, but, at the same time, not to let others hurt them.
- My body, my mind – learning about own thinking, feelings, temperament, character, attitudes, values, and communication.
- What I do and what I do not know about myself – students learn to gain realistic information about themselves and to find out what other people think about them.
- Reflection on my personality in my behaviour.
- My relationship to myself – working on the development of students' relationship with themselves and building their self-confidence.
- My learning – learning to learn, seeking new learning strategies.
- My relationships with other people – to realize what students' existing relationships are like. The goal is to find out how they can improve interpersonal relationships using own resources.
- Development of a healthy, well-balanced self-concept – i.e. self-image, self-reflection, and self-evaluation.

*Self-control and self-organization*

- Exercises focused on the improvement of self-control, self-regulation, regulation of own actions, experiencing and will.
- Time management, planning and organization of own learning, setting goals and steps leading towards their achievement.

*Psychohygiene*

- Stress prevention – ability to think positively and having a good relationship with themselves, development of social skills helpful in stress prevention in the context of interpersonal relationships, good time management.
- Behaviour in adverse situations – ability to cope with stressful situations, thinking about the problem, release – relaxation, efficient communication, seeking help in demanding situations.

*Creativity*

- Development of the basic features of creativity – flexibility of ideas, originality, ability to see things differently, sensitivity, ability to put ideas into practice.
- Creativity in interpersonal relationships – getting rid of stereotypes in solving interpersonal problems, optimising own relationships by means of other approaches (Valenta, 2006).

People rarely engage in the process of self-evaluation; they more frequently evaluate others. Self-knowledge can represent a big advantage. When learning about themselves, students can find out what their strengths are. Along with that, they learn to improve the weak sides of their personality. It can also help them in decision making in various life situations.

Social development is focused on getting people to know each other, build interpersonal relationships, improve communication, cooperation and competition. Students learn how to maintain good interpersonal relationships, how to learn about their friends, classmates, family members, how to communicate, listen or solve problems.

Games and exercises in the field of social development are focused on the following:

*Getting people to know*

- mutual learning about each other within the group;
- careful manipulation with information about others and from others;
- development of sensitivity towards differences and diversity; looking for the advantages of being different;
- mistakes in the process of getting people to know.

*Interpersonal relationships*

- maintaining good relationships;
- behaviour promoting good relationships, the ability to experience closeness with others, trust and sharing, empathy, seeing the world through other people's eyes, showing respect, support and help;
- human rights as regulators of relationships;



- relationships in our group, working with the natural dynamics of the particular social group;
- showing respect for the opposite gender.

#### *Communication*

- ability to distinguish between the signs of respectful and disrespectful communication;
- ability to show and promote own opinions, needs and rights in a sophisticated manner;
- training observation, and empathetic and efficient listening;
- training verbal communication skills (technique of speech, verbal expression), practicing and conscious use of non-verbal communication (body language, the language of objects and the environment created by people, the language of actions);
- practicing leading a dialogue, its rules and managing it;
- communication in a variety of situations – providing information, refusal, thanking, assertive communication, solution of conflicts, negotiation;
- protective communication skills against aggression and manipulation, the ability to make interesting presentations;
- ability to lead, engage in and contribute to group discussions.

#### *Cooperation and competition*

- development of individual cooperative skills – self-regulation in the case of disagreement, opposition, the ability to compromise, the ability to build on the ideas of others and to develop an own line of their thoughts, positive thinking;
- development of cooperative social skills – clear and respectful communication, solution of conflicts, subordination, leading and managing group work;
- development of individual and social skills necessary for ethical coping with competition (Gymerská et al., 2009).

The development of moral values is focused on problem solving and decision-making skills, values, attitudes and practical ethics. In the process of gaining these skills, students learn to distinguish between good and not good, they acquire certain attitudes and create own values. Based on the above, they learn how to solve problems and can make decisions.

Exercises and games focused on the development in this field can be divided into two fields:

#### *Problem-solving and decision-making skills*

- development of a positive approach to problem solving – seeing problems as challenges;
- development of effective techniques of problem solving and decision making;
- problems in interpersonal relationships;
- dealing with educational problems;
- problems with self-regulation.

*Values, attitudes and practical ethics*

- analysis of own and others' attitudes and values and their reflection in behaviour;
- refusal of any manifestations of aggression or addiction;
- leading youth towards responsibility, reliability, justice and respect;
- awareness of real problems that young people can influence and their solution;
- supportive and pro-social behaviour;
- application of decision-making skills in ethically demanding everyday situations (Gymerská et al., 2009).

Without morals and set values, there would be no civilised societies. If young people's moral attitudes and values are developed, it can represent a big advantage in the future. This will contribute to the creation of a successful, decent and educated generation.

*3.4 Opportunities for the implementation of personal and social training into the work of schools*

The attitudes of schools to the themes of personal and social training vary. The question how to implement the topics of personal and social training into own curricula must be answered by every school individually with regards to their own specific conditions and possibilities. In general, authors focusing on these issues, present four possible ways of including personal and social training into school curricula.

Valenta (2006) suggests:

1. the themes of personal and social training should be reflected in teachers' behavior and actions;
2. using the potential of the themes of personal and social training in various (everyday) school situations;
3. integration of the themes of personal and social training into other subjects, other fields of education or programs of study;
4. inclusion of the themes of personal and social training into the schools's work in independent time units, subjects, etc.

Srb et al. (2007) recommend to:

1. change the way teachers usually communicate with students and how they treat them;
2. change how teachers use spontaneous, unplanned situations in personal and social training;
3. implement the content of personal and social training into various school subjects that teachers teach;
4. modify the forms and methods of working with the themes of personal and social training and to include them in independent time units.

Gymerská et al. (2009) consider personal and social training an integral part of school life depending on:

1. the way we usually communicate with young people and how we treat them;
2. the way we use spontaneous, unplanned situations in the work with young people;
3. integration of individual thematic fields of personal and social training into the educational process;
4. realization of independent programs of personal and social training.

It is clear at a glance that the suggestions of all the above authors concerning the inclusion of personal and social training in school curricula are similar, or even identical in some aspects. The research team opted for the fourth path for the purposes of the implementation of personal and social training in schools and used whole-class sessions with the class teacher as independent blocks.

Based on the state of the above-mentioned class teachers' preparedness for personal and social training, the research team decided to apply the form of social-pedagogical training. In this context, social-pedagogical training requires an individual approach by its drafting as well as by creating its structure. The research team decided to use the methods of experimental learning, experiential learning and learning by doing for the purposes of social-pedagogical training, which they complemented by theoretical knowledge from the given field. This is the authors' way of creating a link between practical and theoretical learning. As a basis, the authors use Kolb's experiential learning cycle accentuating the meaningfulness of learning in a closed cycle. They have divided a two-week course into three independent blocks. On the first day, the first two blocks are introduced – getting to know each other within the group and increasing group cohesion; and the third block – development of social and pedagogical competencies – is realized on the second day of training, within which the participants focus on the role of creative drama and structured drama in social-pedagogical training. The main goals of the social-pedagogical training drafted by the authors of the paper, and realized using the methods of experiential learning are as follows:

- to show teachers the path leading towards the development of their students' personal and social skills both as class teachers and as subject teachers;
- give teachers an opportunity to try out various methods in the course of the training and to find out whether these promote their personal development – as team members (members of a collective) or as teachers – professionals.

Among the partial goals of social-pedagogical training are:

- deepening self-knowledge, optimisation of self-regulation and self-control;
- improvement of the participants' social competencies, understanding the processes on group level and their dynamics, developing the competence to solve interpersonal conflicts constructively and efficiently;
- development of the ability for empathy, acceptance, recognition of the impact of own behaviour on other people.

#### **4 Research on the changes in personal and social development with an accent on class teachers' opinions and attitudes**

Within the pilot probe, the main goal was to find out about the changes in personal and social development after the realization of social-pedagogical training. On the level of personal development, the authors were interested in the field of values and attitudes. On the level of social development, they focused on the changes in communication and opinion scales. The changes in the above fields were measured by means of a pre-test and a post-test which were administered before and after the realization of the training. The selection of the sample was intentional as it consisted of practicing teachers, who were class teacher as well and were willing to participate in the realized research. The research sample consisted of 267 participants – 97 males and 170 females. The authors are aware of the fact that it is a group of respondents with already developed (and

usually grounded) attitudes and values. Therefore, even the smallest shift in their attitudes and values can be considered the results of a successfully managed and effective project. In the next phase of the research, the authors would like to focus on secondary school students and primary school pupils as a higher efficiency in the effect of projects on personal and social development can be presumed in them. In cooperation with class teachers and their students, we will organize whole-class sessions with the class teacher using the methods and forms of personal and social training. By means of pre-tests and post-tests, we will find out more about the efficiency of the selected methods and techniques on students' personal and social development. The pilot probe was carried out in years 2016 and 2017.

The items of the pre-test and the post-test were divided into two groups. The following set of pre-test and post-test items was used for measuring the changes in the field of personal development (values, attitudes):

2. Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by inheritance and it can be changed by upbringing/education only to a small extent.
5. Conflicts and disputes are manifestations of emotional weakness and the result of a lack of understanding from important others.
7. For me, the first impression is decisive when categorising others and evaluating their personality.
8. People should respect others even at the cost of suppressing own opinions or interests in order to prevent conflicts. There are no conflicts between good friends.
9. Only emotional and irrational people engage in conflicts. Rational people are capable of self-control.
12. Everyone must take full responsibility for own addiction, I see its main cause in one's inability to solve problems.

The second one is the field of social development (*communication, opinion scales*). The following test items were focused on it:

1. Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by those people who they spend their time with.
3. Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by upbringing/education; inheritance can be overcome by it.
4. Inappropriate communication can be considered the main cause of misunderstandings, disputes and conflicts among people.
6. A change in the environment, influence of peers, loss of safety (in family or peer group) can contribute to addictions.
10. Most values, attitudes and opinions regarding life are developed in family environment, schools have only a small impact.
11. People should apply more reason and logic. In such a case, they can avoid conflict situations. They take a sober look at reality and are able to react to most situations appropriately.

For the purposes of the pre-test and the post-test, the following 5-item Likert scale was used: 1 – strongly agree; 2 – agree; 3 – neither agree nor disagree; 4 – disagree; 5 – strongly disagree.

Table 1

*Gender specific differences in individual items in the pre-test*

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Degrees of freedom</u>	<u>Arithmetic mean Males</u>	<u>Arithmetic mean Females</u>	<u>Chi – square</u>	<u>Statistical Significance</u>
1	4	2.144	1.976	5.134	
2	4	3.526	3.506	2.278	
3	4	2.619	2.735	2.659	
4	4	2.041	1.812	8.091	
5	4	2.835	2.894	1.223	
6	4	2.278	2.000	10.45*	p < 0.05
7	4	2.773	2.906	5.154	
8	4	3.206	3.418	3.020	
9	4	3.237	3.506	4.724	
10	4	3.134	3.100	4.915	
11	4	2.351	2.706	9.412	
12	4	2.577	2.953	6.623	

Based on the data shown in Table 1, it can be assumed that in the group of respondents, the selected components of personal development (values, attitudes), as well as of social development (communication, opinion scales) were on a relatively high level. Statistically significant differences between males and females were found only in item 6 (*A change in the environment, influence of peers, loss of safety (in family or peer group) can contribute to addictions.*). In the pre-test, the arithmetic mean was 2.28 in the case of males, while in the case of females it was 2.00. It follows that females are more likely to believe in the effect of the environment on students' behaviour than males. In other items, no significant differences were found.

*Will there be any changes in the observed values after the realization of social-pedagogical training? If yes, in which items will they be the most significant?* An overview of the data gathered by means of the post-test administered immediately after the realization of the social-pedagogical training is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Gender specific differences in individual items in the post-test*

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Degrees of freedom</u>	<u>Arithmetic mean</u> <u>Males</u>	<u>Arithmetic mean</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>Chi – square</u>	<u>Statistical significance</u>
1	4	2.010	1.959	7.093	
2	4	3.278	3.059	12.29*	p < 0.05
3	4	2.763	3.059	10.78*	p < 0.05
4	4	2.052	1.782	8.025	
5	4	2.660	2.647	6.096	
6	4	2.082	1.700	18.84**	p < 0.01
7	4	2.928	3.365	10.66*	p < 0.05
8	4	3.227	3.388	6.534	
9	4	3.093	3.376	12.72*	p < 0.05
10	4	2.856	2.918	9.911*	p < 0.05
11	4	2.371	2.724	8.077	
12	4	2.608	2.941	8.768	

As shown in Table 2, in the post-test, statistically significant differences between the two genders were found in six items, which represents a 50 per cent shift compared to the results of the pre-test. In the field of personal development (values, attitudes), it is item 2 (*Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by inheritance and it can be changed by education/upbringing only to a small extent.*), item 7 (*For me, the first impression is decisive when categorising others and evaluating their personality.*) and item 9 (*Only emotional and irrational people engage in conflicts. A rational person is capable of self-control.*). It can be assumed that in both genders, there was a shift towards neutral opinions, but this trend proved to be stronger in females than in males. The statistical significance is on the level of 5%. In item 2, there is a shift in attitudes from “disagree” to “neither agree or disagree” in males. In females, the results are similar, but the shift is much stronger (the difference between arithmetic means is 0.447). In item 7, there is a shift from “agree” to “neither agree or disagree” and this shift is stronger in females again (the difference between arithmetic means is 0.459). And, finally, as for item 9, there is a shift from “disagree” to “neither agree nor disagree” on the opinion scale. In this case, the shift in attitudes is similar in both genders. In the second field of social development (communication, opinion scales), there was a shift in three items, too, particularly in items 3 (*Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by upbringing/education, inheritance can be overcome.*), item 6 (*A change in the environment, influence of peers, loss of safety (in family or peer group) can contribute to addictions.*) and item 10 (*Most values, attitudes and opinions regarding life are developed in family environment, schools have only a small impact.*). The existence of differences between the opinions of males and females was confirmed in item 6. The statistical significance is on the level of 1%. In the case of females, the shift on the scale was from “agree” towards “strongly agree”, and the difference in the arithmetic means is 0.3. In the case of males, a shift from “neither agree or disagree” towards “agree” can be

observed. Similarly, in item 10, there is a change in the direction from “neither agree nor disagree” to “agree”. A shift in the opposite direction, i.e. towards a neutral opinion, can be observed in item 3.

The obtained results can be interpreted from the aspects of emotionality and experiencing various situations during the realized social-pedagogical training with a different intensity in females and males. The authors consider interesting that, in the attitudes of both genders, there was a shift towards neutral opinions. Based on these results, they assume that in the participants of the realized research, the research team, to a certain extent, succeeded in reducing prejudice and beliefs and the participants learnt about the necessity of considering students’ individual abilities and specific environmental influences on their behavior and manifestations at school. On the level of opinions, there was a shift towards a stronger belief in the significance of the impact of the environment and the family background on students’ behaviour and their personality traits.

## 5 Conclusion

The presented data are the results of a pilot probe and have brought initial insights related to the presented issues for the purposes of a longer and deeper research, which is in the phase of its realization. As the project was realized with ten groups of teachers showing a deep interest in participating in it, it is not our ambition to generalize the obtained results; nevertheless, we find them interesting and inspiring. In the post-test, we noticed a significant shift and significant differences as for gender in the field of attitudes and values as well as in the field of opinions. This fact could indicate a positive impact of the class teacher on students’ personal and social development during the whole-class sessions with the class teacher.

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