

Some Psychological Aspects of Education when Dealing with Highly Emotional Topics.

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I. Present Racist Problems in Slovakia

A. Brief history of Roma people

- Roma people came from India
- Their migration into Europe began probably in 11th century
- They moved in several waves during many years
- They moved in several ways and directions
 - through Northern Africa to Pyrenean peninsula
 - main stream through the Balkans to Central Europe
- They were originally named Asincani, Atsingani and similar words derived from this root (Zigeuner /Germ., Cigán /Slov.; Gypsy /Engl.)
- First documents about their presence in Central Europe are from 13th century

A. BRIEF HISTORY OF ROMA PEOPLE /cont./

- In time of their move through lands, kingdoms and empires, they were accepted by local authorities due to letters or schedules confirming their protection by kings
- Groups of Roma came from different castes
- Some of them were musicians, others were helpful in time of wars and rebellions; prophesy or palmistry was a wide-spread mean of living
- During 15th century their black-smith mastery was welcome especially in south-eastern Europe because of threat of wars from near Turkish realm and other enemies
- Living conditions for Roma people became worse in 17th century due to the disastrous economic situation caused by wars in Central Europe

A. BRIEF HISTORY OF ROMA PEOPLE /cont./

- The number of Roma inhabitants in the Hungarian kingdom increased in consequence of discrimination in western lands
- Robberies of native inhabitants by Roma nomads were often and thus protests and complaints against them rose
- Edicts in 18th century (the Century of the Enlightenment) aimed to settle down the Nomad ethnics and assimilate them by means of changing their way of life and, beside other steps, also by education of Roma children
- In spite of many discriminating and liquidating steps, even in spite of the Holocaust during the 2nd WW, the Roma, as an ethnic group, has survived
- In spite of huge effort to assimilate them, they are still unique and stronger than ever

I. B. Typical behaviour of skinheads :

- Calling bad names to other people - mostly Roma or other minorities
- dissemination of leaflets with the articles blaming the other nationalities and races {articles against Jews, some instructions how to „ solve problems with Roma people in a simple way“, etc.}
- notices and graffiti on the wall
- special fascist greetings
- wearing the graphic symbols expressing the support to racism, neonazism, fascism on their dresses
- All these acts are usually committed on the street or other public places in front of at least 2 people.

We do have skinheads in our school – what to do with this problem ?

This kind of behaviour – often taken, unfortunately, as some common part of young people`s development, is sometimes :

- denied
- ignored {treated with no special attention from the side of teachers or parents}
- avoided {fear from coming into conflict}
- treated non adequately { sneer, anger, bad names, threats}

Punish or not ?

- If these manifestations would stay unnoticed, they can strenghten some next behaviour, that need not have only the verbal or written form, but can culminate in a physical attack to those who are „different “ and -according to them - **inferiors.**
- But sometimes they just have the „bad luck“ they were passing by and crossed their way.....
- {An example of a student in Slovakia, who was attacked recently by skinheads and beaten by them to death }

What measures should be adopted at school ?

- contact parents, tell them about some changed behaviour of their child. It is important they will try to speak with the child about the reasons why he/ she behaves like this, how he/ she got these ideas They should try to explain him, why it is dangerous
- The case should be solved with the help of the school psychologist
- Be prepared to the fact that the student will try to cheat, use various excuses, saying he did not know, what was going on, etc.
- When some aggressive, antisocial behaviour is repeated and no interventions {even the special ones} were successful , it is important to contact police who will make their own investigations and adopt specific measures.

Prevention

- Arrange more events in your school aimed at the topic of the 2nd World War, nazism, fascism, racism, human rights and tolerance, in general.
- Organize the trip to concentration camps, but also to the places where during the 2nd WW many deportations of inhabitants were done
- Organize the visits to the museums, Documentation Centers for Holocaust
- Prepare discussions in cooperation with the Anti-fascist Warriors Union, with the representatives of Roma organizations, other minorities, or humanitarian organizations
- Create the special newsboard on the topic of racism
- Prepare video- film presentations
- Even if you do not have the supporters of neofascism in your school ,it is better when young people got information from some respectful authorities, rather than from any neonazi on the street or the football playground.
- Prepare more interactive events, discussions, games, psycho-social trainings of young people with the help of the school psychologist

II. Teaching Holocaust

A. Demands on the Personality of a Teacher

- his knowledge
- educational „mastery“
- his philosophy of life
- life experience
- coping mechanisms
- emotional, social and psychological skills .

B. What is expected from the teacher?

- teacher accepts emotions and attitudes of students
- teacher rewards students by a positive feedback
- teacher uses some thoughts of students
- teacher asks students questions and keeps a constructive dialogue
- teacher listens carefully to students` ideas, replies, comments,etc.
- teacher respects the personality of students
- motivates creative thinking
- teacher gives some instructions
- inspires confidence in students
- supports the self -confidence and self-esteem of students

C.Emotional Skills

- Identification and proper naming of emotions
- Expression of emotions
- Estimation of emotional intensity
- Managing emotions
- Delay of satisfaction
- Managing impulsive behaviour
- Stress reduction
- Recognizing the differences between emotions and acts

D. Cognitive Skills

- Inner dialogue management as supportive means for managing demanding situations or topics, or serving also for strengthening of one`s behaviour
- self control
- distinguishing and right interpretation of hints and gestures , orientation in social roles/ e.g. recognizing of group influence to one`s behaviour and self-perception
- using some constructive procedures by problem solving and various solutions
- understanding the attitudes, opinions and views of other people
- understanding of behavioral norms {what is accepted and what is not}
- positive attitude towards life
- self- esteem- e.g. creating the realistic images of oneself

E. Behavioural Skills

- **Nonverbal skills-** communication through the face expression, voice colour, gestures, eyes communication and so on
- **Verbal skills** – the ability to articulate very clearly one`s claims, react to criticism in a constructive way, resist to some negative influences, listen to others and help them, share with the constructive activities of

III . Some Experiential Techniques

- Methods that enable students to develop skills necessary for role - playing
- Help students to use other than stereotype ways and patterns of behaviour
- Support creative problem solving and experimentation with solutions
- During the exercise make notes, take notice of non-verbal communication, used strategies, statements, changes in voice colour, etc.