

The Children's Tolerance Education Project (CTEP)

Name of organization:
Save the Children – Georgia

The Stories of Our Yard

Teacher Manual
The elective Program of Tolerance
for IV and V grades



The elective program of tolerance was developed by Save the Children and the National Curriculum & Assessment Centre.

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Introduction

Since March 2004 Children's Tolerance Education Program (CTEP) has been implemented by Save the Children in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The program targets children 5-11 years old along with their teachers, parents and caregivers. The goal of CTEP is to promote the values of democracy such as tolerance, cooperation, mutual support and respect.

During Program's first phase educational television puppet shows were developed. The appropriate curricula was designed for television puppet shows as a guiding document to set learning objectives for each script and ensure CTEP topics are incorporated.

The Children's Tolerance Education Program aims to promote the skills of tolerance, compassion, cooperation and conflict resolution among children, and to develop the values essential to peace and democracy.

Since 2007 Children's Tolerance Education Program is being implemented through collaboration of Save the Children and the National Curriculum & Assessment Centre. The peace education materials were successfully piloted in 22 schools within Georgia and more than 2000 children of III-V grades were reached within the framework of CTEP school programming during 2007-2008 academic year.

The program is intended for the children aged 9-12 (grades III-V), their teachers, parents and caregivers. It should be mentioned, that the Children's Tolerance Education Program responds to the Georgian national goals of general education, according to which a student shall be developed as a tolerant citizen, s/he should possess the skills for mutual respect, protection of human rights and mutual understanding.

This program is recommended as a part of the school curriculum:

- one-year elective study course, with the duration of at least 36 academic hours (1 hour/week).
- or as a part of the study program for an elementary school

The program contains recommendations for activities in and outside the class. Efficient implementation of the program supports successful achievement of educational goals.

This manual aims at the development of the important skills for children, such as problem solving through critical thinking, acceptance of various cultures, the skills of good listening, negotiation, cooperation, conflict prevention, development of tolerant behavior, etc.

Short stories and exercises given in the manual will help students to learn how to evaluate personal opinions critically, how to prevent and manage conflict, the importance of participation in civil life, and the meaning of an active citizenship. Students will understand importance of a healthy life-style; they will learn their rights and obligations and get familiar with the Convention on the Rights of a Child. This knowledge and skills will help students to make right decisions and will improve relationships among them. Students will see how important it is to treat people politely and to have a tolerant attitude towards the whole society.

It should be taken into consideration that the main instruments for bringing up a tolerant person are: interactive learning, critical and creative thinking.

Therefore, let's once more acknowledge what do critical and creative thinking mean and how can we develop such thinking among our students.

What is Critical Thinking?

Critical Thinking represents an exercise that lasts for the whole life. While thinking critically, a person tests his own assumptions and biases. Together with compassion and mutual respect, critical thinking makes foundation for tolerance.

Children's Tolerance Education Program supports development of the skills among children that will help them solve conflicts collaboratively and successfully. Critical thinking is necessary for developing these skills. Absence of critical thinking makes it impossible to fight biases and prejudice and makes intolerant behavior prevail.

It should be pointed out that the teachers mostly use logical thinking while teaching at school. It is more productive when logical and critical thinking are used together. Let's try to identify the difference between them.

In case of logical thinking the problem is known beforehand, but in case of critical thinking the problem needs to be revealed and defined. In case of logical thinking the conclusion is made from the two prerequisites. There can be only one correct decision; although in case of critical thinking it is possible to find several right ways for solving the problem.

Critical thinking makes us to have our biases and assumptions questioned and tested, that in turn, facilitates development of tolerance.

The five main characteristics of the critical thinking include the following (according to David Cluster):

1. Critical thinking is an independent thinking;
2. Obtaining of information is a starting point of critical thinking and not its final result;
3. Critical thinking starts from problem identification and its acknowledgment;
4. Critical thinking strives for sound argumentation;
5. Critical thinking is social thinking.

Creative thinking is the skill of looking at events in a new way and finding a new, original way for problem solving. The distinctive feature of creative thinking is to find new linkages among ideas. Creative problem-solving skills help us to overcome difficult situations. Creative thinking is an ability of a human mind, that has not been invaded by computers yet, it is characteristic only to people.

Creative people are described as self-assured people of strange character who change their moods often. However, regardless of this, creative people never share prejudices and do not think in a trivial way. This is why the people of creative nature are tolerant.

Bringing up of a tolerant generation is closely tied to the development of the skills of critical and creative thinking. Parents, school and teachers should take an equal care in this process. For this, an efficient teaching environment and methodology need to be applied that will promote in students free thinking and independent problem-solving skills. This can be achieved through interactive teaching.

In nowadays pedagogics, much attention is paid to the creation of creative environment in teaching process. Below are recommendations for the creation of creative environment in class:

Remove internal barriers that block creativity from being revealed

Students are often afraid that they will make mistakes while expressing their ideas in class, and that teachers will note this. This stops them from expressing their ideas. Let's help them to get confident in their creative abilities.

Teachers should refrain from making early assessments

Teacher's untimely assessments often represent the reason for stopping the student's creative thinking. It is better if teacher gives more time to children for free discussion and thinking around the problem.

Give children time and opportunity for mental warm-up

Looking for collaborative problem solving is one of the main instruments of the teaching process. However, in the beginning such work is unusual for children and causes confusion. Children should be given time and opportunity to get used to the new form of work; they should be given easy tasks for the beginning.

Support imagination and fantasy

It is necessary to involve students' imagination in the teaching process. This is especially productive in primary classes, when imagination of children is particularly strong.

"Discipline" and control imagination

Students should know that despite the freedom of fantasy, all opinions will be reevaluated critically after the idea is mature, and part of the fantasy will be rejected.

Develop a skill for deep and diverse perception of facts and events among children

This task is easy to perform by using particular teaching materials, especially through the arts and literature.

Help students see the significance and essence of creative thinking, since otherwise development of all other skills will turn out useless.

What is an interactive teaching?

Interactive teaching is a contemporary educational system, based on the principles of humanism and searching new roles for teachers and students. It often is aimed at substituting the teacher-focused authoritarian educational process with the student-focused teaching process that considers the interests and requirements of the latter. Interactive teaching introduces new strategies of teaching and knowledge assessment.

Based on the above, the purpose of teaching is changed. It stresses not only the importance of obtaining ready knowledge, but also an importance of skill development.

This approach to teaching is based on the new direction in education – Constructivism. Constructivism teaches students to collect new information through comparing old and new knowledge, to make conclusions independently, to think independently, and therefore to construct – to build the knowledge.

The following teaching methods are mainly used in contemporary pedagogics:

- Learning of concrete assignment (“technological” teaching methods)
- Research teaching methods (search for the new knowledge, learning new skills and experiences)
- Teaching through games (situational modeling, role games)
- Teaching through discussion (dialogue, communication)

Technological Teaching Methods

The pedagogics of the world tried to technologize teaching process in the XX century. This means organization of the teaching process through technical instruments.

Presently technological teaching methods do not imply only the use of technical instruments in the teaching process, but also encompass construction of teaching process, which means:

- setting the output-oriented particular teaching goals;
- developing teaching materials according to these goals;
- Assessing the current results during the teaching process; correcting the teaching process as needed;
- Assessing the final results.

Research Teaching Methods

Research direction of the teaching process implies construction of the new knowledge, which is carried out based on first-hand experience of students.

This approach is linked with the “Contemporary Upbringing” direction that is spread in Europe, and with the American “Progressive Upbringing”. Both directions build the teaching process on children’s experience.

The goal of such teaching model is not only to acquire new knowledge, but also to elaborate already existing knowledge. A teacher should use dialogue, imagination, analogies, metaphors and other tools for the encouragement of students and to support the development of creative thinking.

Such pedagogical environment helps students to independently understand the essence of the event or concept to be studied, and solve the problem s/he is facing. A student, first and foremost, identifies a problem, then sets alternative ways for its solving, studies the problem based on the information at hand, makes a choice and then makes conclusions. And finally, draws a parallel between the developed conclusions and the new data.

Research and exploratory direction in the teaching process is linked to the development of critical and creative thinking. To achieve this, the teacher should create a creative teaching environment in the classroom.

Teaching through Games

Game is a complex social and cultural phenomenon. It is studied by many sciences, and pedagogics is among them.

Many pedagogic researches stress the importance of the use of games for teaching purposes. There are several types of games used in teaching process: modeling, imitation, competition.

There are four stages in the teaching process which is conducted through didactic games:

1. **Orientation** – the teacher introduces the topic for learning, explains game rules, reviews the game in general;
2. **Preparation** – the teacher makes students familiar with the ‘script’ of the game, game objectives, rules, roles, and other procedures;
3. **Process of conducting the game;**
4. **Discussion of the game** – the students are discussing the game, its difficulties and success. Imitation is compared to the real life.

Teaching through Discussion

Teaching through discussion occupies one of the leading places among the contemporary didactic methods. With its essence it looks like a dialogue. The method of discussion develops the culture of communication and reasoning among students. Discussion provides opportunity for students to exchange ideas, opinions, and assertions for identifying the truth.

Assessment Technique and Instruments

The use of contemporary assessment tools is essential for the successful teaching. These tools help to measure not only the knowledge, but also the acquired skills and thinking.

The following are some testing tools to be used during interactive teaching process:

1. **Folder/portfolio** – this assessment tool collects the works of students. All types of works are gathered in the folder – first draft, second draft and the final version. Based on comparison of first and final versions the degree of a student’s progress is defined.
2. **Simulation, presentation** – simulation is a creation of a situation related to the issue of discussion, presentation means presenting the studied material to the audience.
3. **Rubrics** – topic-related indicators system which the teacher defines in advance and informs the students about it. Performance levels are provided in the rubrics (e.g. low, medium, high).
4. **Self-assessment and evaluation in pairs** – students assess and define themselves what they need for further development. Students assess and evaluate each other’s works. After that they, together with the teacher, try to identify what needs to be added to the topic for making learning perfect.
5. Specially designed **questionnaires** can be used for assessment.

Three-Phase Model of the Lesson

A three-phase lesson consists of the following steps:

- I - Challenge;
- II - In-depth discussion;
- III - Reflection.

Challenge – the first stage of a three-phase model of the lesson implies activation of existing knowledge, feelings and impressions regarding the given issue or event. Students recall what they know about the issue to be learned. They start to think about the new topic. Students become more active, interest towards the topic grows that triggers research on the subject.

In-depth discussion – second phase of realizing the learning process. It supports to understanding and perception of the contents of the learning subject. Student gets familiar with new information by reading the text, audio and video materials, and experiments. At this stage the existing knowledge and new information are combined.

Major goal of in-depth discussion is to maintain and strengthen the interest triggered on the Challenge Phase.

At the stage of **Reflection** the students combine existing and newly acquired knowledge, the ideas are exchanged and discussion takes place.

Interactive Teaching Methods

Such methods are: Mosaic, an active lecture, effective reading by using the sign system ‘**SMSERT**’, etc.

‘**Mosaic**’ is a combined teaching-learning method when the ‘divided’ information is made complete through mutual teaching. In the beginning the teacher divides the text into pieces and then forms groups according to the number of text parts. In addition to main groups, so called experts groups are also formed. All the members of the main group study the contents of all the sections of the article. They should make notes about any question appeared in connection to the text and ask these questions to the expert who is responsible for the respective section. This process should be controlled by the teacher. She should pay attention to the process of learning and producing the information well. If the experts group fails to answer the questions, the teacher should answer them herself.

Active lecture is an effective tool for creating a general impression on the subject to be studied. For making the lecture active, the teacher should arise relevant interest among the audience, and there are several ways for achieving this. It is necessary to break the lecture into stages.

- I. Preparatory stage – at this stage the audience is provoked, interest is aroused. This is possible through asking questions, performing some written assignment, expressing opinion about key words, by visual aids.
- II. The stage of the lecture itself – it is desirable not to have the lecture last for longer than 10-15 minutes, since during the longer lecture the attention of the audience reduces and the result worsens.
- III. Stage of reflection. For reflection we may use a discussion, writing an essay, comparison of one’s ideas to the information provided at the lecture.

Guided Reading Method ‘SMSERT’

SMSERT means: System of Matched Signs for Effective Reading and Thinking. This method is used for better perception and elaboration of the read material. While using this method the reader puts certain signs on the edges of the text:

‘**V**’ – to denote the information that the reader has already been familiar with;

‘**+**’ – to denote the information which is new to the reader;

‘-‘ – to denote that information contradicts to what the reader already knows or thinks that knows;

‘?’ – to denote unclear information; this sign is also used in case if the reader wants to learn more about the subject.

While using this method it is not necessary to put signs along each line. Important is that these signs reveal reader’s attitude to the information s/he is reading.

Interactive teaching methods are efficient in the development of children’s critical and creative thinking skills.

Also, for achieving the teaching goals, it is very important that teacher considers the characteristics of student development. The following are characteristics of the childhood development for ages 6 through 11:

- The child’s energy is oriented on acquisition of new skills.
- The mentality of the child of this age becomes more logical, but s/he can perform thinking operations only in reference to real, particular objects.
- The child remembers the material by using various strategies.
- During this period the child’s meta-perception is developed, i.e. control of his/her skills, knowledge, memory, achievement of goals and behavior in general.
- This is the age when the will-power starts to developed.
- At this age, when interacting with peers, it is important to find a balance between cooperation and competition, and when interacting with adults – a balance between obedience and independence.
- This is the age when child’s self-assessment and ‘self’ image is further developed under the influence of a social environment.
- The child continues to acquire norms of behavior based on the examples of the ‘role models’ of peers, parents and other adults.
- Moral norms are quite valuable for this age, but the degree of cheating is also high.

Learning objectives of the Tolerance Education Program:

After completion of the program the student:

- *Discusses the diversity of people, their differentiating and common features.*
- *Reveals the skills for independent decision-making.*
- *Reveals the skills for cooperation, uses the skills of team working.*
- *Identifies main reasons of conflict.*
- *Differentiates false assumptions from arguments.*
- *Argues about the equality of different people.*
- *Links the diversity of people with their rights and equality.*
- *Identifies common characteristics and interests of different people.*

- *Shows respect towards himself/herself and other people.*
- *Shows care towards the natural environment.*
- *Uses approaches that are the result of critical thinking.*

The contents of the Children’s Tolerance Education Program:

- Tolerance
- Effective communication
- Participation
- Cooperation
- Independent decision-making
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Reconciliation
- Rights of the Child
- Inter-generational relations
- Gender
- Prejudice, stereotype and stigma
- Environmental stewardship
- Good citizenship
- Healthy life style
- Cross-cultural communication
- Equality