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## *Prevention of Peer Violence by Implementing Teaching Contents – Example of Literature Instruction in Primary School<sup>2</sup>*

### Extended summary

The paper is structured in such a manner that its first part provides a theoretical explanation of the issue of bullying, grounded in relevant pedagogical literature and research, while the second, applicative part demonstrates the potentials of educational action in literature teaching on a specific example of methodological treatment (based on appropriate scientific-professional methodology) of selected literary work. The aim of the paper is focused on examining the ways of preventing bullying in the school environment in order to maintain and improve the effectiveness of such efforts. Bullying prevention not only ensures the physical safety of students, but also creates an environment that promotes respect, empathy, and inclusivity. The paper provides an insight into the complex structure of school activities that can have a positive impact on the development of students' personalities and points out three levels of preventive action on individuals (universal, selective, and indicated prevention). Special emphasis is placed on universal prevention which is carried out through activities that stimulate the developmental potentials of all students, regardless of whether they are simultaneously exposed to the influence of certain risk factors. The main goal of this level of preventive action is to promote healthy social development of individuals by strengthening protective factors. It has been scientifically established that certain school subjects (native and/or foreign language and litera-

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ture, history, civic education, religious studies, fine arts, and music) and related extracurricular activities provide favorable opportunities for this type of bullying prevention among students. The potential of these subjects is realized in the long term through the application of appropriate methodological strategies during classes covering mandatory and elective educational content, within various teaching systems and methods (problem-based, correlation-integration, team-based, project-based), where the student is actively engaged in collaborative and exploratory positions.

Directing attention to literature teaching, we initially focus on its educative role, linking the issue of bullying with humanistic and moral education. In order for such a role of literature teaching to be achieved, it is essential to establish an emotional (positive or negative) relationship between students and literary texts, serving as the basis for a quality, profound, and relevant interpretation of the literary text during the class, beneficial for both literary and non-literary experiences of the students. Only through such an approach can we influence their socio-emotional development and an overall spiritual growth.

Literary texts that address this issue are particularly suitable for developing students' socio-emotional competencies, directly related to their attitudes towards bullying and other forms of violence. Among such works included in the literature curriculum in elementary school, the short story "Children" by Ivo Andrić stands out. By applying an empathetic-ethical model of reading, we explore the educational potential of this text, aiming to highlight the key "active" points that are activated only through the teacher's adequate methodological guidance during collective interpretation by students. The teacher adjusts their analytical apparatus so that the discussion proceeds on two synchronously set plans: one involves analyzing the text itself (the world of the work), and the other, parallel plan, involves examining students' emotional reactions to the text (i.e., to the situations and actions of the characters). In the synthesis (the conclusion of the operational part of the class), individually interpreted experiences (of characters on one hand and of student-readers on the other, i.e., understanding the relations between the world of the work and empirical data) are elevated to the level of universal, overarching truths and values through the application of methods of abstraction and generalization.

In conclusion, we emphasize the importance of literature teaching in educating students about empathy, respect for diversity, and developing critical thinking skills, as well as the necessity for teachers to be trained and empowered to recognize and respond to potential situations of bullying. Introducing topics that deal with diversity, tolerance, and respect into the curriculum represents an important step towards creating a supportive environment in schools. Additionally, authentic interpretation of literary works and discussions held during classes can encourage students to reflect on the consequences of their own behavior and teach them conflict resolution skills.

**Keywords:** bullying, prevention, literature instruction, emphatic-ethical reading, socio-emotional competencies

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