Building Affective School Environment

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Abstract

One of the most important factors that should be fostered in a good school is students’ self-esteem, as this is the key of their success further in life. Research shows that low self-esteem is often the reason for antisocial behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse, bullying, aggressiveness, and that supporting healthy self-esteem can be a protective factor in working with youth.

The Institute R.O.K. started to implement the Building Affective School Environment (BASE) program in Slovenia in 1999. To implement the program we trained over 1.000 mentors: teachers, counselors, social and health workers etc. The program produced impressive results in increasing students responsibility and motivation for learning, improving interpersonal skills, decreasing antisocial behavior and violence in schools.

- Mentors, using the program with over 20.000 pupils in Slovenia, report:
  - less discipline and social problems – 47%
  - improved interpersonal relationship among peers – 68%
  - increased willingness for cooperation among students – 74%
  - increased motivation for learning – 84%
  - the school climate improved, which was followed by improvement of staff self-esteem

The program is designed to be implemented on the school wide level and includes didactical materials for systematic work with students, parents and teachers. With over 30 years of research behind it, the program provides manuals and teaching materials for elementary and secondary school students, with supplementary materials for teachers, administrators and parents. Assessment instruments also accompany the program.

The results of the program implementation after 10 years showed improvement in all aspects of school activities: student interest in school and after school activities rose, less discipline and social problems were registered and the number of students at risk dropped for 50%; the school climate in general improved which was also followed by the improvement of staff/teachers self-esteem.

Presently this program is being implemented by mentors throughout the country.