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# An implementation of tolerance training in a Geography lesson: Students' opinions

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People around the world differ in race, language, religion, gender, and social and economic traits. Peace and calmness in the world can be created by teaching the value of "tolerance" to all people. In this age, war, violence and terror occur frequently. Thus, it was particularly important that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared 1995 as The Year for Tolerance. Tolerance training is an important subject and it cannot be restricted to certain courses and curricula. Therefore, this study is a sample practice about how tolerance training can be provided in a Geography lesson. The study also determined students' evaluations about the practice. This study employs a qualitative design. The participants are the ninth grade students in Ataturk Technical and Industrial Vocational High School. The author has recorded the process of the practice and collected the opinions of all students by means of a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions. The data were analyzed using content analysis. The study results indicated that a geography lesson offers a fine opportunity for tolerance training. However, the teaching and learning environment needs to be organized well.

**Key words:** Tolerance, tolerance training, Geography lesson, ninth grade students.

## INTRODUCTION

Tolerance means "accepting, appreciating and respecting the cultural wealth in the world" (UNESCO, 1995, p. 9). Many national and international documents emphasize the importance of tolerance. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) explains that understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, races, or religious communities should be encouraged through education and training. Article 10 of the 1982 Constitution of Turkey declares, "everyone is equal before the law without regarding their languages, races, colors, genders, political opinions, philosophical

beliefs, religions, sects, or other similar characteristics." Article 14 states that "behaviors aimed at eliminating the democratic order, violating fundamental rights and freedoms, and leading to discrimination will not be tolerated." For many years, efforts have been made to adopt tolerance around the world. Putting human rights into practice, improving democracy and enhancing economic, social and cultural lives make it increasingly necessary for people to be tolerant. This kind of training is exceptionally important in raising individuals to be tolerant of persons who differ in religion, culture, and race

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(Almond, 2010; p. 131; Rice, 2009, p. 570).

Tolerance is an essential aspect of democracy (Weidenfeld, 2002, p. 96), and it is certain that it can only be developed in a society that enhances educational, social, cultural, economic, political, religious, and legal issues of society (UNESCO, 1995, p. 12; Rice, 2009, p. 568). Relevant studies show there is an important correlation between tolerance and education, and tolerance in a society increases in direct proportion to the educational level (Colesante and Biggs, 1995, 190; Caliskan and Saglam, 2012, p. 1431; Widmalm, 2005, p. 240). On the other hand, intolerance, the opposite of tolerance, is a learned behavior and can only be altered by tolerance training (Sahin, 2011; p. 78). Intolerance may threaten the rights or freedoms of other persons (Widmalm, 2005, p. 239), and providing tolerance training in a different way or not providing it at all will increase imbalances in the world (Dagli, 1995, p. 41). With tolerance training, individuals learn that they can express their opinions freely, that being different is not bad, negative or dangerous, and that controversies can be solved in peaceful ways (Gurkaynak, 1995, p. 35-38). Tolerance training is important in raising individuals who know their rights and responsibilities, are sharing and egalitarian, accept differences, are respectful, support peace, have improved skills of communication, cooperation, empathy and democratic involvement, and have a positive attitude toward non-governmental organizations (Colesante and Biggs, 1999, p. 190; Gurkaynak, 1995; Tatar, 2009, p.75; Weidenfeld, 2002, p. 96-97).

In tolerance training, families, schools, and societies play important roles. Tolerance training should be provided with a holistic approach by all employees at schools (Raihani, 2011, p. 23), including all students (Khitruk and Ulianova, 2012, p. 23), with the aim to eliminate cultural, social, economic, political, and religious resources that create intolerance leading to violence and exclusion (Topuz, 1996, p. 145). In order to achieve this, all curricula should support the development of solidarity, understanding and tolerance between different ethnic, social, cultural, and religious groups, or groups of different language backgrounds (UNESCO, 1995, p. 12). This is the only way to contribute to the creation of a world that provides social justice (Sahin, 2011, p. 78).

Questions regarding how to conduct tolerance training at schools, which programs to employ, and how to convey the message remain significant and valuable topics to discuss in Turkey. The first use of "the dimensions of tolerance" within literature dates back to 1976 when Jane Ferrar published an article titled "The Dimensions of Tolerance" (Dagli, 1995, p.40). Based on that article, the indispensable dimensions of tolerance education are: 1) a flexible and understanding standpoint free from any kind of categorical assessment against other groups, beliefs, and lives, 2) embracing the variety

of rights and discrepancies, 3) admitting that beliefs, routines, and cultures do not have to be one of a kind, and feeling comfortable with all the beliefs and cultures. According to another study, first thing to be done for tolerance education is to teach shared and common basic rights, freedom, and democracy to individuals since tolerance is one of the building blocks of democracy (Weidenfeld, 2002, p.96-97). Through tolerance education, students should be infused with skills pertaining to democracy, peace, peaceful resolution of conflicts, cooperation, participation, communication, seeking for rights and responsibilities, and flexibility (Gurkaynak, 1995, p.38). UNESCO (1995, p.12) underpins the necessity to help young individuals improve their skills to judge independently, think critically, and reason ethically. Moreover, they also suggest using real pieces from printed and mass media with students in the class and raising pupils' awareness about these example situations in order to grow respect in them. All studies put together point that what matters in tolerance education is understanding, accepting, and respecting people's differences.

If tolerance training is supported by the curricula of different courses, it will increase the achievement of education. Geography is one of the most important relevant courses. In Turkey, Geography curriculum stresses teaching tolerance to students (the Ministry of National Education - MNE, 2011). However, there are no explanations about the learning fields, outcomes, and activities by which tolerance will be taught. Thus, it is an important issue how much and how tolerance will be included in the Geography curriculum.

A review of the relevant studies of tolerance training reveals that the studies conducted in Turkey mainly analyze students' or teachers' opinions about, or approaches to the concept of tolerance (Gurkan, 1995; Kepenekci, 2004; Kiroglu et al., 2012; Sahin, 2011, Ture, 2014) or determine its place in the curricula (Kolac, 2010; Tatar, 2009). Foreign studies include a lot of implementations of tolerance training. Lintner (2005) did a study with the purpose of demonstrating students' tolerance perceptions using photographs. The sample of that study consists of approximately 175 students whose ages range between eight and ten. In the first thirty minutes of the Social Studies lesson, the researcher shows students photographs selected from worldwide web sites, and shows physical, cultural, and economic differences. Then the researcher asks the students to write their opinions about what they saw in the photographs. The study results show that students know very little about people with different cultural, physical and economic structures.

Stevens and Charles (2005) did a qualitative study aiming to reveal pre-service teachers' perceptions of tolerance in multi cultural American society. Fifty-one pre-service teachers watched a video and then they were

given four open-ended questions. The authors conducted content analysis to analyze the study data. The study results showed that pre-service teachers emphasized that discrimination had always been common in American history, that it still was, and that the pre-service teachers had a strong awareness of racism, ethnic origins, and other similar issues.

Raihani (2011) did a study based on document analysis and made a suggestion about tolerance training. Raihani stressed that schools' policies, visions, cultures, programs, administrators, teachers, and students' activities should all be exposed to tolerance training with a holistic approach. The study described here demonstrates a sample implementation of how tolerance training could be provided and determines students' evaluations about this implementation. The research questions are:

1. How can tolerance training be provided in a Geography lesson?
2. What are students' opinions about the contribution of the activities in a Geography lesson to tolerance training?
3. According to the students, what are the pros and cons of the activities in a Geography lesson regarding tolerance training?
4. What are students' suggestions about tolerance training in a Geography lesson?

## METHOD

This section regards the research model, participants, data collection, and data analysis.

### Research model

This study employs a qualitative design since the aim in qualitative studies is to understand human behaviors comprehensively and *in vivo*. Qualitative research is free from generalizing the results of a study. Instead, in-depth description and explanation is carried out to grasp the views of participants (Bogdan and Bikken, 1998).

Through the glance of a flexible and holistic approach, the current study has described the practice of tolerance education in a Geography course and students' relevant opinions. The limitations of the research include: the opinions of 27 ninth graders studying at Ataturk Technical and Industrial Vocational High School, types of climate (seasonal variety in the world), the learning domain of natural systems in Geography course, 4 lessons per 40 min in two weeks and plans and footage of these lessons.

### Participants

The participants were the ninth grade students in Ataturk Technical and Industrial Vocational High School. The students were not included in any professional field; they will choose their fields in the tenth grade. Of the participants, 19 are males and 8 are females.

### Data collection and analysis

The study was conducted in the 2012 spring semester. Relevant

consents regarding footage, photos, plans, and students' written opinions were granted before the work started. Photos instead of videos were chosen to show the classroom environment, and pseudonyms instead of real names of students were created to publish pupils' opinions.

The authors did activities concerning tolerance training in a Geography lesson in four forty-minute lessons for two weeks. The authors recorded the process of the practice and received the opinions of all students by means of a questionnaire including open-ended questions. This research utilized lesson plans (enclosed) and video footage prepared to exemplify how tolerance education can be conducted in a Geography lesson. Moreover, printed student opinions are supported with video visuals. The data obtained from students in written form were analyzed using content analysis. The main purpose of doing a content analysis is to acquire concepts and correlations that may explain the collected data. In this context, the author tries to describe the data and reveal the facts that may be hidden in them. The main operation done in this analysis is putting similar data together within the framework of certain concepts and themes, and organizing and interpreting them in a way to be understood by readers (Yildirim and Simsek, 2013).

Within the research procedure, open-ended questions directed to the pupils were analyzed via content analysis; data were coded, categories and themes were determined, data were organized and defined in accordance with codes and themes, and the findings were interpreted. With respect to reliability concern, the researcher and two experts co-worked to attain acceptable reliability score on the formula of Miles and Huberman (1994), "Reliability=Agreement/Agreement + Disagreement X 100". Four themes were developed based on the research questions: contribution to tolerance education, positive and negative influences over tolerance education, and relevant suggestions. Categories created through grouping pupils' similar answers within these four themes and the frequency of answers are depicted in tables accompanied by students' opinions.

## FINDINGS

This section presents the tolerance training provided in the Geography lesson and the students' opinions about this implementation. Students' opinions are presented by direct quotations with their code names.

### Tolerance training in a Geography lesson

Closer examination of the Instructional Program for Geography Course reveals that the learning domain of Natural Systems is the most restrictive one for tolerance education because natural events are the focus of this learning field. However, the best learning outcome within Natural Systems domain was selected in order not to interfere with the calendar for action plan. The authors chose the unit "*Climate Types (The Seasonal Variety in the World)*" in the Natural Systems learning field for the 9<sup>th</sup> graders. The relevant outcome reads as "*The students will be able to make inferences about the aspects and distributions of different climate types.*" The activity suggested in the instructional program is as follows: The language of seasons; creative drama activity might be



**Figure 1.** Students representing the warm climate region (Arabian Peninsula).



**Figure 2.** The assessment of the activity on tolerance training.

conducted in groups assigned in accordance with certain climate types. The aim of this activity is to help students learn about different climates and their influence over people in separate parts of the world via 'doing and living' in a group and creative drama activity. So, this activity might help pupils understand different climates and their influences, which pertain to the acceptance and empathy skills crucial for tolerance education.

The course teacher administered the activity after some modifications. Initially, the students were informed about climate types. Then the teacher grouped the students in a way to represent people from different climatic regions. The students were asked to research the social, cultural, and other characteristics of the people living in the climatic regions they represented. The course teacher also asked students to prepare before they came to the lesson and to bring relevant documents, information, clothes, and materials to the class.

Using the appendix and photographs (Figures 1 and 2), the author presented the practice of tolerance training in a Geography lesson in the lesson plan.

As shown in Appendix 1 the author endeavored to teach the value of tolerance to students using cooperative learning and problem-solving methods in a geography lesson. In the conclusion and assessment process, the researcher checked the students' acquisition of tolerance.

Based on the findings obtained at the end of the activity and the assessment procedure, the researcher noticed the possibility of building a link between climate types and tolerance education, which underlines that Geography course should be taken as an opportunity for tolerance education.

### **Students' opinions about tolerance training in a Geography lesson**

Students' opinions about the tolerance training in a geography lesson are presented in the same line with the research questions. Table 1 shows students' opinions about the contributions of the activities in the geography lesson to tolerance training. Since some students expressed more than one opinions, the number of opinions is larger than that of students. On the contrary, some opinions have a low frequency because of being verbalized by few students.

Table 1 shows that students think the activities they did in a geography lesson made contributions to the tolerance training. Mainly, students said they recognized that climate influenced people's physical appearances, cultures, and lifestyles and that they were to be tolerant instead of prejudiced. Students expressed their opinions as follows:

Ahmet ". . . We learned why people living in different climatic regions were different from us. We realized that we should not be prejudiced about other people's physical appearances, languages, the food they eat and cultures. I decided to be a tolerant person thanks to this activity . . . "

Ayse ". . . The activity we did in the class helped us to see how different climates in the world influence people's lifestyles and cultures. We recognized why we should respect each other. If we use this kind of an approach, we can understand the world and people better . . . "

Ali ". . . The activity has made great contributions to myself, because I didn't use to attach much importance to other religions. I used to wish everyone to be Muslims. But this lesson made me understand that religion mainly changed by regions and the societies living there. . . . "

All the findings indicate that the activities pertaining to climate types in the Geography course contributed to tolerance education. As for tolerance education, it is of

**Table 1.** Contributions of the activities in a Geography lesson to tolerance training (N=27).

Opinions	F
I recognized the influences of climate on people's physical appearances, cultures, and lifestyles	22
I saw that I should tolerate differences and not be prejudiced	11
I believe we should respect each other's beliefs and lifestyles	8
I noticed that we can understand and get to know each other better	4
I think we need tolerance in order to be able to live in peace	4
I realized that empathizing with others makes it easier to understand people	2
I observed that geographical aspects of the regions influence people's beliefs and religions	1
Opinions in total	52

**Table 2.** Positive and negative sides of the activity done in a Geography lesson in terms of tolerance training (N: 27).

Opinions	F
<i>Positive sides in terms of tolerance training</i>	
It helped us to learn about different cultures	13
We learned about the influences of the climate on cultural life	11
We had permanent learning	7
We recognized that we should respect differences	4
The activity increased our curiosity about different cultures	2
We saw that it was possible for everyone to live in peace	1
Opinions in total	38
<i>Negative Sides in terms of Tolerance Training</i>	
There were no negative sides	11
Students were not well-prepared	10
Students did not make a sufficient use of technology and visual materials	8
Information presented by the groups was not sufficient	3
Students did not use reliable resources	2
Group works are usually difficult	2
It is not desirable that there are different religions in the world	2
No opinions expressed	3
Opinions in total	41

paramount significance for students to understand the differences, accept them naturally, and respect them. Students' opinions show that they developed an understanding as to how climate types may be influential over people's physical qualities, social, economic, and cultural lives. However, this should not be taken for granted unless students reflect their understanding in their behaviors.

Table 2 presents students' positive and negative opinions about the activities in a geography lesson in terms of tolerance training. An analysis of Table 2 shows that a majority of the students had positive opinions about the activities in terms of tolerance training. The greatest negativity from students was that not all students were well-prepared for the activity. Some students expressed

negativity concerning the notion that there are different religions in the world.

Students expressed their opinions about the positive and negative sides of the activity done in a geography lesson in terms of tolerance training with these words: Pinar, one of the students with positive opinions said, "We learned about the characteristics of climates and the influences of these characteristics on cultures. I was very impressed by different beliefs, food and clothes." Mehmet indicated he learned about different cultures and said, "If we get to know about different cultures, we can build better communication with them. It would not be difficult for us to accept the food and drinks they offer us because we learned about their food." Fatih said, "I guess the positive side of the activity was that it showed us a world

**Table 3.** *Suggestions about the tolerance training in the geography lesson (N:27).*

Suggestions	F
Computers should be used	8
Visual materials should be highlighted	7
Drama activities should be included	5
Slides should be used	4
There should be games in the activities	3
There should be non-class activities	2
There should be activities done on the theater stage	1
There should be more activities included	1
The groups should use reliable resources	1
The environment should be well-organized	1
The participants of the activities should be rewarded	1
I do not have any suggestions	1
Opinions in total	35

*where everyone could live in a free way.*" Some students emphasized the negative sides of the activities in a geography lesson in terms of tolerance training. For instance, Gul said *"Not all groups were well-prepared for the activity,"* Murat said *"No computers were used in the presentations,"* and Can said, *"Some information given by the groups was incorrect. They said the Mongolians are usually short but the Mongolian national basketball team is one of the tallest teams in the world."*

Research findings state that students accepted the activities conducted within the Geography course positively since they helped them learn about other cultures, provoked curiosity, and made it possible to see a world where everybody can live freely. Since the most serious drawback mentioned by students is lack of preparation, all the activities should be planned and prepared comprehensively; students should be carefully guided, and necessary arrangements and modifications should be conducted on the learning environment.

Table 3 presents students' suggestions about the tolerance training in a geography lesson. An analysis of Table 3 indicates that students suggest that the groups use computers in presentations, that visual materials be highlighted, that drama, slides, and games be included in the presentations, and that non-class activities be done in the training.

Students expressed their suggestions about the tolerance training in a geography lesson with these words: Sadi said, *"Computers could be used to show many things."* Umut said, *"The activities could be supported with visual materials and slides should be used while the explanations are made."* Ufuk said, *"The environment should be impressive, students should be given roles, and they should act these roles in the class."* Sema said, *"It would be impressive if there was a play on*

*the theater stage."* Merve said, *"The groups should not give incorrect information; the resources should be reliable."*

Another result of the findings point that learning environment should be carefully planned for tolerance education. Computers, the Internet, slides, and other regalia and visual materials should be employed to show the differences, and students should be engaged in drama and play activities in order to learn through living and to build empathy.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, the author made a sample implementation of tolerance training in a geography lesson. The researcher also collected students' evaluations about the tolerance training. The studies in the relevant literature indicated that tolerance training cannot be restricted to a single lesson and program (Khitruk and Ulianova, 2012; Raihani, 2011; UNESCO, 1995; Watson and Johnston, 2006). Some studies show how tolerance training can be provided in the context of different lessons such as Turkish, Pre-school Education, Social Studies and Civics in Turkey (Kolac, 2010; Tatar, 2009; Ture, 2014). However, there is no study in the literature on how to conduct tolerance education in geography course. This study intended to exemplify how tolerance education could be administered in a geography lesson.

In this study, the implementation of tolerance training was made in the context of the "Climate Types (the Seasonal Variety in the World)" subject in the "Natural Systems" learning field. The Instructional Program for Geography Course hosts ample amount of topics that can be perfectly utilized for tolerance education because of exploring various reasons leading to differences such as demographic features, migration, and socio-economic and cultural characteristics. These topics are especially inserted in the learning domains of "Human systems, A Spatial Synthesis: Turkey, The Globe: Regions and Countries, and Environment and Community" (Ministry of National Education, 2011). On the other hand, the learning field of Natural Systems is the most restricted one in terms of outcomes and activities with respect to tolerance education. Still, the most appropriate outcome within Natural Systems was selected in order to continue the research without breaking the flow of actions. Thus, the current study exemplifies how to conduct tolerance education even in the least related learning domain.

Relevant literature bears a large body of research indicating the influence of climates over people such as their physical characteristics, and socio-economic and cultural lives (Kalkstein, 1991; Hsiang et al., 2013; Lamb, 2013). What matters for tolerance education is that students should understand that climate is the source of many differences in the world, they should respond to

differences naturally, and they should accept and respect all the varieties. International Geography Union (IGU) underlines that individuals will be more aware of the differences between themselves and others, and this awareness will result in better mutual understanding via geography education. IGU also explains that people will be able to work on the resolution of human rights violations on local, regional, national, and international scales thanks to the changes in their attitudes and values (IGU, 2015). Along with studying on the topic of climates, teachers can also encourage students' participation by developing activities that help pupils learn about the effect of climate over people such as their physical qualities, social, economic, and cultural lives, which is, indeed, tolerance education.

The purpose of the Geography lesson is to teach students about the different places in and the natural structure of the world as well as people, their economies, cultures, and relationships and connections with one other. In this sense, the students are expected to learn the values, information, concepts and skills by geography lesson required for a better understanding of themselves, their relationships with the world and their connections with other people in the world (Haas, 1989; National Geography Standards, 1994; Ozcaglar, 2009). The 9<sup>th</sup> article of "Guidelines for the Application of the Program" in the Instructional Program for Geography Course clearly underlines the aim to infuse students with the value of "tolerance." Besides, the outcomes and activities in the Instructional Program for Geography Course are directed to help students assess social, cultural and economic differences with their reasons on both local/national and global/international scales, regard different regions and ways of lives as spatial wealth, and tolerate and respect different lives, cultures, beliefs, values, and attitudes (MNE, 2011). According to Cosgrove (2003), one of the most important aims of geography education is to introduce pupils with the variety and differences in the world. Koknel (1996: 67) defines tolerance as "knowing and accepting that people are diverse and that everyone may adopt different feelings, opinions, behaviors, attitudes, and actions. The studies of tolerance frequently tackle the subject of accepting differences (Koknel, 1996, p. 67; Kucuradi, 1996, p. 165-167; UNESCO, 1995, p. 9). The purpose of the tolerance training is to make students open to foreign cultures and reduce prejudices about them (Thompson, 2010, p. 347). For all these reasons, owing to both its content and purposes, geography course is an opportunity for tolerance training.

The author observed that the participant students emphasized *tolerating differences, eliminating prejudices, developing respect for all lifestyles and beliefs, and emphasizing* the contributions of the activities in the geography lesson to the tolerance training. Similarly, studies in the relevant literature explain tolerance as

respecting different beliefs, values and behaviors, being capable of empathizing with other people, being open to different opinions, managing one's anger and being patient (Keles, 1995 p. 73; Kepenekci, 2004, p. 250; Khitruk and Ulianova, 2012, p.23; Laik, 1996, p. 41; UNESCO, 1995, p.9). It is important that students reported they understood the differences climate created in people's lives since it reveals the role of tolerance training in a geography lesson.

The participant students evaluated positive and negative sides of the activities done in the geography lesson regarding the tolerance training. In their positive evaluations, students reported they learned the influences of climate on different cultures and understood they should have respect for all differences. They said the practice increased their curiosity for different societies and they realized that everyone could live in the same world in a free way. The issues reported by the students are important in terms of tolerance training. Many studies indicate the significance of geography course with respect to tolerance education (Cosgrove, 2003; Stoltman, 1990). As for these studies, geography course provides students with opportunities to comprehend how natural/physical and social/humane environment influence people's values, attitudes, and beliefs and guides students in developing social empathy, tolerance, and respect for other people (Australian Geography Teachers Association 1988 cited in Stoltman, 1990: 36). The studies in the relevant literature stress that teaching differences in religion, gender, thought, lifestyle and socio-economic levels in context of tolerance training is important since it helps children understand differences and respect them (Hansen, 2011, p. 111-112; Khitruk and Ulianova, 2012, p. 23; Ture, 2014, p. 156). Students saying they realized everyone could live freely is also important in terms of human rights and democracy training.

Participant students also made negative evaluations of the tolerance training activities in a geography lesson. The negative evaluations were: groups being ill-prepared for the presentations, groups making insufficient use of technology and visual materials as well as referring to unreliable resources, and the difficulties of the group work. These negativities expressed by the students show up the problems caused by unsuccessful planning of the teaching and learning process in many studies. A number of studies state that computer technology should be included in the teaching and learning process, as reported by the students (Herrington and Kervin, 2007; Westhuizen, Richter and Nel, 2010). With respect to tolerance education, technology, computers, and visual materials play an important role in showing the differences in the world to the students. Lintner (2005) tries to identify students' tolerance perception in a study where various photographs from different websites in three categories which are physical, economic, and



cultural discrepancies are collected and shown to pupils before asking them to write what they feel about what they see in the pictures. In their qualitative research, Steven and Charles (2005) aim to determine how prospective teachers' perceive tolerance by showing plenty of videos to teacher candidates and asking them several open-ended questions related with the videos in the United States where multi-cultural structure is at large. Computer technology saves both time and money, and offers a fruitful learning environment for tolerance education by both bringing the far-away places into the classroom and appealing to more senses of students (visual, auditory, etc.). Additionally, the group work that students mentioned is accepted as an essential practice of successful training despite all its difficulties and it seen as important in tolerance training (Bilgin and Unlu, 2007; Chickering and Gamson, 1987; Simsek et al., 2012, p. 245). Relevant literature indicates that students can learn about natural, cultural, social, and economic differences, they can accept the discrepancies, and develop empathy and respect by doing and living through group activities, creative drama, plays, and discussions (Kaymakcan, 2007; Khitruk and Ulianova, 2012). Therefore, teachers should actively employ computers and related technologies within the learning environment and organize activities requiring students' participation such as group activities, creative drama, and discussion in order to increase the success level of tolerance education.

At the end of the research, participant students made suggestions about the tolerance training in a geography lesson. They suggested that computers should be used, visual materials should be highlighted, drama activities should be included, slides should be used, games and non-class activities should be included, the theater stage should be used, reliable resources should be cited, the environment should be well-organized, and those who participated in the activities should be rewarded. Students' suggestions also show that the teaching and learning environment should be well-organized and the process should be well-managed. There are many studies explaining that the use of computers and the Internet increased students' interest in lessons, that doing so created an active and enriched learning environment, and enabled practice and direct access to information (Atal et al., 2011; O'Sullivan, 2010; Shy-Jong, 2008). Hansen (2011, p.125) reported that referring to other religions and different lifestyles in education as well as using different methods such as music and drama would help improve tolerant behaviors. Ture (2014, p. 161) stressed that it was necessary to arrange non-class activities in tolerance training. The study findings indicated that geography lessons might be suitable for tolerance training, yet if so it was necessary to make a well-organized teaching and learning environment.

This research has exemplified how to handle tolerance education within the unit "Climate Types (the Seasonal

Variety in the World)" of the learning field of Natural Systems in the geography course for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. As a result of the activities conducted in this research and based on students' opinions, *students have noticed that climate can affect people's physical appearance, cultures, and ways of lives, understood they should not bear prejudices, learned they should respect the differences, comprehended that tolerance is necessary to live in peace, and grown curiosity for other communities.* Yet, all these are cognitive-level behaviors. New longitudinal research should be conducted in order to determine the changes on behavioral level. In these studies, activities providing tolerance education opportunities should be organized, and assessments using different tools across longer periods of time should be held for the sustainability of education.

To conclude, the learning fields and activities suitable for conducting tolerance training in geography course should be determined. Guide-books full of activity samples exemplifying how to conduct tolerance education should be prepared for teachers.

### Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflicts of interest.

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**Appendix 1.** Lesson plan.**1 SECTION**


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Course Title	Geography
Grade	9
Date	04/03/2012
Learning Field	Natural Systems
Unit/Section	Our Dynamic Planet
Subject	Climate Types (the Seasonal Variety of the World)
Duration	80 min

**2 SECTION**

Students' acquisitions	A.9.11. The students create arguments about the characteristics and distributions of the climate types.
Concepts and Symbols in the Unit	Torrid Zone Climates (Equatorial, Tropical [Savanna], Monsoon, Desert) Temperate Zone Climates (Mediterranean, Oceanic, Steppe, Continental) Frigid Zone Climates (Polar, Sub-polar, Tundra)
Teaching and Learning Methods and Techniques	Collaborative Learning, Problem-based Learning
Skill or Value to Be Taught	Tolerance
Building Correlations	Students build correlations among Human Geography, Global Environment: Regions, and Countries learning fields.
Materials and Equipment	E.g., unique clothes, brochures and photographs of people from different climatic regions; the equipment they use in daily life

**Teaching and Learning Activities****Introduction**

Attracting Attention	In the previous lesson, our subject was the climate types in the world. Today, we analyze how people living under different climatic conditions are influenced by those climates.
Motivating the Students	We will have fun while learning about the influences of different climate types on people's lives from a numbers of groups.
Review	We learned there were torrid, temperate and frigid zones on the Earth. To revise: Torrid Zone Climates are Equatorial, Tropical [Savanna], Monsoon and Desert climates; Temperate Zone Climates are Mediterranean, Oceanic, Steppe and Continental climates; and Frigid Zone Climates are Polar, Sub-polar, and Tundra climates.
Starting the Lesson	I see that the groups are all ready. Now, each group will tell about the positive and negative influences of their own climatic characteristics on people's lives and respond to questions posed by other students in the class.

**Development**

1. Students in the classroom are divided into six groups of four. The groups represent people living in regions with Equatorial, Monsoon, Desert, Temperate-Oceanic, Mediterranean and Tundra climates.
  2. The students' seats are organized to form a U in order for them to see each other.
  3. Each group explains the positive and negative influences of the climate they studied on physical appearances (e.g., skin color, eye color) and lifestyles (e.g., economic, social and cultural life). During their presentations, students show the objects they brought to the class.
  4. The groups respond to the questions posed by the class after they finished making their explanations.
  5. When all groups complete their explanations, the course teacher explains the problem statement to the class.
  6. *Problem: In the first lesson, we listened to the persons living in different climatic regions and learned about the climatic characteristics and the influences of these characteristics on their physical appearances, and social, economic and cultural lives. We saw that the climate shaped many things in people's lives; from their physical appearances to social, economic and cultural lives. As we all know, people have negative opinions about and prejudgments towards those who are different from themselves all over the world. Why do you think we regard differences as odd?*
  7. The teacher asks the students to describe the problem. The lack of tolerance is emphasized.
  8. Students are asked to give examples for the lack of tolerance in the world.
  9. The class presents some solutions for these problems. The suggestions are evaluated.
  10. The teacher's effort is aimed at teaching students the value of tolerance.
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**Appendix 1. Cont'd****Conclusion**

Torrid Zone Climates are Equatorial, Tropical [Savanna], Monsoon and Desert climates; Temperate Zone Climates are Mediterranean, Oceanic, Steppe and Continental climates; and Frigid Zone Climates are Polar, Sub-polar, and Tundra climates. The physical appearances and social, economic and cultural lives of people living in different climatic regions are also different from one other. We should not think that these naturally-created differences are strange, but that we should tolerate them.

**SECTION 3**

Measurement and Assessment	The researcher distributes evaluation forms to the students and then receives their opinions by asking open-ended questions.
Exercises/Homework	The researcher distributes worksheets to students. The aim of the worksheets is to make students revise and reinforce their knowledge about the subject.

**Appendix 2. Questions for students.**

- 1.What do you think about the contributions of the research and group activities we conducted on the influence of different climatic features over people to tolerance education?
- 2.How do you think different climatic features affect people's physical appearance (eye color, complexion) and ways of lives (economic, social, and cultural lives)? Explain.
- 3.How do you judge the activities conducted in the geography course with respect to tolerance education?
- 4.What do you think about the positive effect of the activities (group work and presentations) administered in geography course over understanding and respecting the differences throughout the world?
- 5.What do you think about the negative effect of the activities (group work and presentations) administered in geography course over understanding and respecting the differences throughout the world?
- 6.What do you think can be done in Geography course in order to accept and respect differences across races, languages, religions, traditions, and etc.?