

LEARNING TO BE PROJECT RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Even though there is some evidence about successful implementation of the international Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs to the national context (Cefai, Bartolo, Cavioni, Downes, 2018; Gol-Guven 2016, 2017; Matischeck-Jauk, Krammer & Reicher 2018; Talvio, 2014; Talvio, Berg, Litmanen, & Lonka, 2016), some meta-studies on the effectiveness of SEL education programs point out difficulties in transporting educational practices and materials across different countries and stress out the importance to examine cultural factors that influence the effectiveness of SEL education (Wigelsworth et al., 2016).

Therefore, the project Learning to Be, attempted to examine different SEL assessment methodologies in practice in five different European countries aiming to develop a comprehensive and relevant model that would enable positive changes in education policies across Europe. The project is to highlight the necessity to develop positive social and emotional skills among pupils by offering teachers practical assessing solutions on how social and emotional learning could be integrated into existing education systems and providing policy recommendations for supporting social, emotional learning at schools.

Teachers' Professional Development in SEL

With the view to developing a comprehensive model for the development and assessment of SEL skills, the goal of the Learning2be -project was to develop and examine a set of innovative assessment methodologies in practice by conducting a number of field trials in schools in five partner countries. Further, evaluating the impact of these assessment practices on the development of students' SEL skills and other learning outcomes (involvement in the community, motivation to learn etc.) was one of the core goals.

Research on teachers' SEL is still relatively scarce (Talvio, 2014). The lack of this research has been explained by the hypotheses that the development of teachers' skills is part of the tacit knowledge of the teaching profession (Elliott, Stemler, Sternberg, Grigorenko, & Hoffman, 2011), or, that teachers' SEL develops as part of their role (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). If it is suggested that teacher's SEL is best learned as part of their teaching practice, it follows that such knowledge may not be easily recognized or transmitted.

There are some studies that have investigated the benefits from SEL to teachers. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) found that teachers need to spend less time on classroom management when SEL is implemented effectively in the classroom. Another study stated that implementing SEL in the school settings results to the teacher higher levels of efficacy and personal accomplishment at the end of one year compared to the comparison sample. In addition, positive effects of the SEL workshops on school climate, student behaviors and conflict resolution strategies were reported (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Gol-Guven, 2017). In addition, an Austrian longitudinal study found reduced bullying and fighting among the pupils whose teachers had participated in the training on SEL compared to the control group. They also found that the higher the implementation level of SEL is the more positive effects were found (Matischeck-Jauk, Krammer & Reicher, 2018).

In order to succeed in promoting SEL in classrooms, teacher's knowledge of the content taught and how to apply it is important. The extent of how faithfully the principles and activities are replicated, how much of the content is delivered, and how effectively the students' other studies and background are considered, are dependent on instructor's competence (Talvio, Lonka, Komulainen, Kuusela, & Lintunen, 2013 2015). Accordingly, teachers' own development of SEL is crucial in the successful implementation process. Studies on teachers' development during the SEL intervention indicated that teachers' knowledge and knowledge application on SEL increased (Talvio, Hietajärvi, Matischeck-Jauk, & Lonka, 2019). Teachers learned to develop their social interaction skills, such as expressing their feelings in constructive ways. In addition, their readiness to use skills increased, non-desired ways of interacting decreased, and they started thinking about how to support their students'

autonomy (Talvio & al 2013;). Hence, teachers benefit SEL both directly and indirectly; when they learn the skills themselves and when they teach the skills to their students.

Students' social and emotional learning

Previous research of students indicates that SEL increases their chances of success in school and later life (Clarke, Morreale, Foield, Hussein, & Barry, 2015; Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015). Elias et al. (1997) states that socio-emotional competence helps pupils to recognize and regulate their emotions effectively, communicate better with their peers and adults and form healthy and warm relationships with them. SEL is helpful also in meeting personal needs, setting realistic goals and making responsible decisions, all important elements for school motivation and school engagement (Zins, 2004).

The problem of these reviews was the design of some studies investigated which did not employ a comparison design. Accordingly, the effects and benefits found could not be proved as the results of the SEL intervention (Corcoran et al., 2018). The meta-analysis of Durlak et al. (2011) was an exception focusing on SEL intervention studies with comparison conditions in school settings. It revealed statistically significant benefits for students including improved social and emotional skills and attitudes towards self, others and school. In addition, SEL promoted pupils' prosocial behavioral and i.e. reduced conduct and internalizing problems. Positive effects on academic performance were found too.

Another problem according to Corcoran et al. (2018) was that there have been several reviews on the area of the benefits on SEL. In addition, very few of them focus exclusively on SEL interventions but, for example, reducing bullying and victimization (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009), reducing problem behaviors and delinquency (Piquero, Jennings, Farrington, & Jennings, 2010) and investigating the benefits of the use of mindfulness in the classroom (Maynard, Solis, & Miller, 2015).

Problem behavior in this study is defined as a behavior that violates definitions of appropriate conduct and norms shared by the members of a social system (Clinard and Meier 2004; Stark 2007). For students, it typically consists of behavioral patterns that are correlated with adverse social, psychological and physical consequences, such as substance abuse and physiological or psychological violence (Steffgen, 2009).

Accordingly, the purpose of this evaluation was to look in the school context at the students' development of their SEL per se as a result of the effect of the intervention provided to their teachers. The design included two age groups as both intervention groups and comparison groups to capture the effect of the SEL intervention in five European countries. Another aim was to look if there was a negative development in students' deviant behavior.

In this report the research questions are:

Does the *SEL competences assessment practices* intervention developed in the Learning to Be -project have a positive impact on:

- 1) teachers' perceived readiness to implement SEL learning; This was operationalized as following variables: teachers' *perceptions of the importance* of teaching SEL and teachers' *perceptions of their competence* in teaching SEL (scale 17).
- 2) students' SEL competencies (scale 19).
- 3) reducing students' problem behavior (scales 4, 6, 7.2, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3)

In this report also significances under .01 (10%) are presented in an attempt to capture the possible trends of development.

METHOD

Intervention

An intervention for teachers in primary and lower secondary schools was designed in an attempt to make SEL more visible in schools by proposing methods for teachers to assess students' progress and support their further learning. The intervention included a Toolkit (Agliati, & al 2017) for teachers. The manual for the Toolkit includes: a theoretical introduction to SEL providing guidelines for consistent practice, descriptions of teaching methods, assessment tools for teachers and students and SEL learning standards that present learning objectives for two age groups of students.

The length of the training provided for teachers in the intervention group was 16 hours. Additionally, the country coordinator arranged an additional 9 hours of monitoring to gather data for qualitative research purposes. The length of the training for principals and headmasters varied from 10-16 hours. Despite the variation in the length of the training for the administration, both the pre-tests and the post-tests were conducted at approximately the same time in each of the participating countries.

Participants

Data were collected from teachers and their students in five participating countries (Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, & Spain). The randomly selected schools for both intervention and comparison groups in each country were designated to represent typical schools in the country including both urban and rural schools having not participated in SEL interventions previously. Overall, the sample of the study was intended to be as representative as possible aiming at exploring the average change in ordinary schools and in ordinary learning groups in each country. See tables 1 and 2.

Teachers. Table 1A shows the total number of teachers participating in the pre-test and the number of teachers who participated in the post test. Because of the study design only those teachers who answered both to the pre- and post- test questionnaire participated in the analyses of the present study (see Table 1B). In order to be eligible for participation in the evaluation part of the project, teachers participating in the present study had to meet the following criteria: not participate in previous SEL training and work in either elementary or secondary school (or another national equivalent). In addition, the intervention group teachers needed to participate in the training whereas the comparison group teachers did not participate in any SEL training during the time of the study. The comparison groups should be as similar as possible with the intervention groups.

As Table 1B describes, total research sample of teachers consisted of an *intervention group* ($n = 243$) who participated in the intervention and a *comparison group* ($n = 159$) who did not take part in the intervention. As can be seen in the Table 1 the biggest group of teachers in the intervention group was in Latvia ($n = 61$) and smallest in Slovenia ($n = 33$). The biggest number of teachers in the comparison group was in Spain ($n = 41$) and smallest in Slovenia ($n = 11$). Participants for both groups were selected by the national research coordinator from randomly selected schools. Educators had to be schoolteachers, or other personnel directly involved in educational work with children in the school community e.g. social workers/educators, school psychologists, educators of non-formal learning programs (art/sports groups, community & youth organizations etc.).

The difference in background information were compared to report the possible differences between the intervention and the comparison groups as well as between genders in each country by using Chi-square test. As Table 1B. presents there was a significant difference in the number of male and female teachers.

Table 1A. Number of teachers participating in the Pre-test and/or in the Post-test

	Italy		Latvia		Lithuania		Slovenia		Spain		Total	
	Int	Com	Int	Com	Int	Com	Int	Com	Int	Com	Int	Com
Training	220	*	304	*	204	*	108	*	136	*	972	*
Pre-test	145	102	156	77	126	93	95	53	123	82	645	407
Post-test	49	50	125	73	108	81	44	30	71	71	397	305

Note: Comparison group participated in the training intervention only after the Post-test.

Table 1B. Number of teachers participating in the Pre-test and in the Post-Test according to genders in all participating countries and in total.

G	Italy		Latvia		Lithuania		Slovenia		Spain		Total													
	Int	comp	Int	Comp	Int	Comp	Int	Comp	Int	comp	Int	Comp												
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%												
F	38	100	37	94,9	57	93,4	27	87,1	61	89,7	37	100	26	78,8	10	90,9	29	67,4	28	68,3	211	86,8	139	87,4
M	0	0	2	5,1	3	4,9	2	6,5	5	7,4	0	0,0	4	12,1	1	9,1	13	30,2	13	31,7	25	10,3	18	11,3
D	7	0	0	0	1	1,6	2	6,5	2	2,9	0	0,0	3	9,1	0	0,0	1	2,3	0	0,0	16	6,6	2	1,3
T	38	100	39	100	61	100	31	100	68	100	37	100	33	100	11	100	43	100	41	100	243	100	159	100

Note: The number of teachers in each country consists of those who participated in both pre-test and post-test participants in the intervention group is .016 and for male .394

G = gender, F = female, M = male, D = did not wish to tell, T = total

Students

Table 2 shows the number of students in the pre-test, post-test and those participating in both pre-test and post-test. This report focuses on the group of students who attended both pre- and post-tests.

The students were grouped into two age groups: 8-11 –years old and 12-15 –years old. Table 2 shows the exact numbers of students and their gender in both age groups in each country. Students whose teachers had participated in the intervention belonged to the intervention group. Those students whose teachers had not participated in the intervention group belonged to the comparison group.

Table 2. Students' number within countries, gender and age groups

Italy (n = 1826)

Italy (n = 1826)																																																							
Only Pre-test (n = 305)						Both Pre-test and Post-test (n = 1521)																																																	
8-11			12-15			8-11			12-15																																														
Int (n = 202)			Com (n = 103)			Int (n = 986)			Com (n = 535)																																														
g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%																																												
47	40	63	1	7	0	117	40	47	38	45	7	8	85	15	31	28	57	6	12	49	15	28	38	70	1	2	54	234	50	208	45	25	5	467	186	36	325	63	8	2	519	145	54	117	43	9	3	271	117	44	138	52	9	3	264

Note: g = girls, b = boys, d = do not wish to

Latvia (n = 1820)																																																							
Only Pre-test (n = 624)						Both pre-test and post-test (n = 1196)																																																	
8-11			12-15			8-11			12-15																																														
Int (n = 327)			Com (n = 297)			Int (n = 704)			Com (n = 492)																																														
g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%																																												
53	41	73	57	3	2	129	83	42	106	54	9	5	198	45	43	56	54	3	3	104	79	41	106	55	8	4	193	187	50	172	46	13	3	372	183	55	134	40	15	5	332	126	55	100	43	4	2	230	131	50	116	44	15	6	262

Lithuania (n = 1216)

Lithuania (n = 1216)																																																							
Only Pre-test (n = 467)						Both Pre-test and Post-test (n = 749)																																																	
8-11			12-15			8-11			12-15																																														
Int (n = 183)			Com (n = 284)			Int (n = 379)			Com (n = 370)																																														
g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%																																												
42	45	50	53	2	2	94	42	47	45	51	2	2	89	82	54	62	41	7	5	151	70	53	59	44	4	3	133	85	49	82	47	8	5	175	121	59	76	37	7	3	204	91	47	94	48	9	5	194	97	55	76	43	3	2	176

Slovenia

Slovenia																																																						
Only Pre-test (n = 271)						Both Pre-test and Post-test (n = 296)																																																
8-11			12-15			8-11			12-15																																													
Int (n = 93)			Com (n = 178)			Int (n = 203)			Com (n = 93)																																													
g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%																																											
13	37	18	51	4	11	35	37	64	18	31	3	5	58	45	38	54	45	20	17	119	26	44	26	44	7	12	59	83	53	70	44	5	3	158	23	51	22	49	0	0	45	18	34	25	47	10	19	53	24	60	16	40	0	40

Spain

Spain																																																							
Only Pre-test (n = 859)						Both Pre-test and Post-test (520)																																																	
8-11			12-15			8-11			12-15																																														
Int (n = 505)			Com (n = 354)			Int (n = 280)			Com (n = 240)																																														
g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%	g	b	%																																												
113	46	123	50	10	4	246	118	46	132	51	9	3	259	63	49	59	46	7	5	129	82	36	136	60	7	3	225	83	51	72	44	8	5	163	37	32	72	62	8	7	117	87	56	59	38	8	5	154	37	43	39	45	10	12	86

Note: g = girls, b = boys, d = do not wis

Students' intervention group. Total research sample of *students'* intervention group consisted of 203-704 students depending on the country (see Table 2). In order to be eligible for participation in the evaluation part of the project participants had to meet the following criteria: age between 9 – 11 and 13 – 15 years old. However, there were some students who reported to be 8 or 12 years old but were accepted to the target group on account of their soon upcoming birthday at the time of the pre-test. This is why the final age groups are defined as 8-11 and 12-15. These age groups were selected based on a fact that generally education is compulsory until 16 years old, thus placing these age groups at dropout risk.

Students' comparison group. Total research sample of students' comparison groups was 93-492 depending on the country (see table 2). In order to be eligible for participation in the evaluation part of the project the participants had to meet the following criteria: age between 9 – 11 and 13 – 15 years old. In this group there were also students who reported to be 8 or 12 years old and due to their upcoming birthday, the age groups were widened to 8-11 and 12-15.

Data collection

The data from the teachers and their students were collected before (pre-test) the intervention. It was collected from both intervention and comparison groups at the beginning of the school year. When participants started filling in the electric questionnaire, they were first asked to read the cover letter of the questionnaire where they were informed that their information and responses would remain anonymous. Participants were also informed about the possibility of withdrawing their responses from this study at any time without warning or explanation in advance. Students' parents were informed by the school for their right not to let their child to participate in the study. In the "Some instructions for data collection" document it was described what students unwilling or not allowed to participate in the data collection would do in order to feel included and equal while the others filled in the actual questionnaire. Post-test data from teachers and their students in both intervention and comparison groups were collected right after the intervention at the end of the school year. The questionnaire used to collect the data in both pre- and post-tests was on an electronic platform called Survey Gizmo. A paper-version of the same questionnaire was available in cases where it was impossible to use the electronic version, for example, due to a poor internet connection or other problem with the electronic system. These paper versions were added manually to the electronic file by the country coordinators.

After the data were collected, it was cleaned. Accordingly, the participants who did not give the consent, or saved empty, nearly empty or clearly implausible (for example only answering maximum or minimum values) answers were removed from the database.

Materials

There were altogether 121 questions for the teachers and 78 questions for their students. There was no significant difference to be found in how to phrase the questions differently in order to ensure the questions will be comprehensible in both age groups, so questionnaires for both age groups of students (9-11-year-olds and 12-15-year-olds) were the same.

Teachers' perceived readiness to implement SEL learning was measured using scale (for scale validation see, Talvio, Berg, Litmanen, & Lonka, 2016) that consisted of two components, teachers' *perceptions of the importance* of teaching SEL and teachers' *perceptions of their competence* in teaching SEL.

Perceptions of the importance of teaching SEL was measured using 7 items, that participants evaluated on seven-point Likert scale with response options ranging from "not at all important" (1) to "very important" (7). Examples of statements used to measure participants' perceptions of the importance of teaching SEL included "It is primarily the teacher's duty to create a classroom environment where all students feel valued" and "It is the teacher's duty to teach interactive skills such as listening and conversation skills".

Perceptions of competence was measured using 7 items, that participants evaluated on seven-point Likert scale with response options ranging from “*strongly disagree*” (1) to “*strongly agree*” (7). Teachers` opinions of their competence was investigated using statements such as “*I am very skilled at creating a classroom environment where all students feel valued*” and “*I am very skilled at teaching interactive skills such as listening and conversation skills*”.

Students` SEL competencies were investigated using Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ) (for scale validation see, Zhou & Ee, 2012), that consisted of 25 items and five components: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management and responsible decision-making (Table 3.). Participants evaluated the items on seven-point Likert scale with response options ranging from “*Not at all true of me*” (1) to “*Very true of me*” (7). Self-awareness relates to skills in recognizing and identifying one`s own emotions, strengths and weaknesses and understanding how they affect one`s behavior. Example of an item used to investigate self-awareness: “*I know what I am thinking and doing*“. Social awareness is the ability to understand other persons` feelings and accordingly respond to their feelings. Example item: “*If a friend is upset, I have a pretty good idea why*“. Self-management is the ability to manage one`s own emotional experiences and impulses. Example item: “*I can control the way I feel when something bad happens*“. Relationship management refers to skills in building and maintaining relationships, conflict management and cooperation. Example item: “*I am tolerant of my friend`s mistakes*“. Responsible decision-making is the ability to consider ethical and societal factors in making decisions. Example item: “*When making decisions, I take into account the consequences of my actions*”.

The content of the teacher and the student questionnaires and the number of questions regarding each topic is presented in the tables below (Table 1 and Table 2).

All items were rated using a five-point or seven-point Likert scale with response options ranging from “*not at all important*” (1) to “*very important*” (7) or “*totally disagree*” (1) to “*totally agree*” (7). participants had not chosen systematic use of either the maximum of the scale nor the minimum of it.

Table 3. Items, variables and Cronbach`s alpha and internal validities of the sum variables that measure students` social and emotional competence across all countries

Items	Sum variable`s name	Cronbach`s alpha
1. I know what I am thinking and doing. 2. I understand why I do what I do. 3. I understand my moods and feelings.	S1 (Self-awareness)	0,721
5. I can read people`s faces when they are angry. 6. I recognise how people feel by looking at their facial expressions. 7. It is easy for me to understand why people feel the way they do. 8. If someone is sad, angry or happy, I believe I know what they are thinking. 9. I understand why people react the way they do. 10. If a friend is upset, I have a pretty good idea why.	S2 (Social awareness)	0,8
11. I can stay calm in stressful situations. 12. I stay calm and overcome anxiety in new or changing situations. 13. I stay calm when things go wrong. 14. I can control the way I feel when something bad happens.	S3 (Self-management)	0,801
16. I will always apologize when I hurt my friend unintentionally. 17. I always try and comfort my friends when they are sad. 18. I try not to criticize my friend when we quarrel. 19. I am tolerant of my friend`s mistakes. 20. I stand up for myself without putting others down.	R1 Relationship management)	0,762

21. When making decisions, I take into account the consequences of my actions.	R2 (Responsible decision-making)	0,835
22. I try to make choices that have the most positive outcomes expected.		
23. I weigh the strengths of the situation before deciding what I will do.		
24. If I make a recommendation, I think about the criteria behind my recommendation.		
25. I consider the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy before deciding to use it.		

Data analysis

Both the statistical differences in the post-test scores between the groups and the statistical differences between the scores of the pre-test and the post-test were examined with repeated measures ANOVA (GLM). SPSS 25 was used in the analyses. The internal consistency of the students' SEL scales varied between .721- .835 (Cronbach's alpha) showing moderate to good internal consistency. The results reported are based on the sum scores of the post-test.

Research hypothesis that were tested were:

1. Teachers' experienced importance and competence to implement SEL
- As well as
2. Students' experienced social and emotional competence
 3. Students' reported problem behavior

RESULTS

Results country by country

Research question 1: Did the *SEL competences assessment practices intervention* have a positive impact on teachers' perceived readiness to implement SEL learning?

Table 4. Teachers' perceived importance and competence in SEL

		Intervention				Comparison				F (df)	p	Partial Eta Sq
		Pre		Post		Pre		Post				
		n	M(SD)	n	M(SD)	n	M(SD)	n	M(SD)			
Italy	Im	38	6.6(0.37)	38	6.6(0.45)	37	6.3(0.52)	37	6.3(0.67)	.187(1,75)	.67	.003
	Co	38	5.3(0.91)	38	5.5(0.74)	37	5.3(0.74)	37	5.3(0.76)	1.09(1,74)	.30	.15
Latvia	Im	62	6.2(0.65)	62	6.0(0.65)	30	6.0(0.59)	30	6.0(0.46)	1.96(1,91)	.17	.021
	Co	62	5.3(0.62)	62	5.3(0.62)	30	5.4(0.9)	30	5.3(0.50)	.23(1,91)	.63	.003
Lithuania	Im	66	6.1(0.60)	66	6.3(0.49)	35	6.0(0.79)	35	6.1(0.74)	.93(1,100)	.34	.009
	Co	66	5.5(0.56)	66	5.6(0.56)	35	5.6(0.78)	35	5.5(0.70)	.95(1,100)	.33	.010
Slovenia	Im	41	6.3(0.67)	41	6.2(0.78)	41	6.3(0.48)	41	6.2(0.65)	2.05(1,43)	.16	.046
	Co	41	5.4(0.79)	41	5.6(0.87)	41	5.3(0.78)	41	5.4(0.84)	1.21(1,42)	.28	.029
Spain	Im	33	6.4(0.45)	33	6.6(0.49)	11	6.5(0.6)	11	6.4(0.85)	.21(1,81)	.65	.003
	Co	33	4.7(0.9)	33	4.5(0.8)	10	5.7(0.90)	10	6.0(0.66)	.43(1,81)	.51	.005

Note: Im = perceived importance, Co = perceived competence

As Table 4 shows, the intervention group teachers in the pre-test scored their perceived *importance* of social and emotional learning between 6.1-6.6 on Likert scale 1-7 showing relatively high perceived importance concerning SEL. The lowest mean value was in Lithuania and the highest was in Italy. Concerning their perceived *SEL competence* the intervention group teachers scored in the pre-test between 5.3-5.5 on the Likert scale 1-7. The lowest mean value was in Latvia and the highest in Lithuania. Repeated measures ANOVA (GLM) was used to test the gain scores between and within (pre- and post-tests) groups examining the effect of the intervention with regards to mean change over time across the groups. The analyses were conducted separately for each country and to all countries combined. The investigations of the data revealed that no statistically significant changes were found in the analysis concerning teachers' SEL competencies.

Research question 2: Did the *SEL competences assessment practices intervention* have a positive impact on students' perceived SEL?

First, we studied the possible change in the five core components of SEL in within the intervention and comparison groups as well as between these two groups in both of the age groups between pre- and post-tests in each of the participating countries. In the second phase we studied the possible change in the five elements of SEL as well as the possible change in Problem behavior within intervention and comparison groups as well as within both age groups between pre- and post-tests and between the intervention and the comparison groups with all the participants from all countries combined.

Table 5 describes the number of participants, mean values, standard deviations in pre- and post-tests in both intervention and comparison groups. Interaction effects of all variables of SEL are provided here country by country. The scores are presented for both age groups individually. As can be seen, significant and almost significant changes took place only after taking the variance between the age groups within both the intervention and comparison groups and between measurement points (pre-test and post-test) into account. The interaction between only the intervention and the comparison groups was almost significant among younger age group in social awareness in Latvia and in self-management in Lithuania.

Table 5. Number of participants, mean values, standard deviations and interaction effects of all variables of SEL country by country in alphabetical order.

Country	Age group	Variables	Intervention				Comparison				T x IntCom			T x IntCom x Age			
			Pre		Post		Pre		Post		F (df)	p	d	F (df)	p	d	
			n	M(SD)	n	M(SD)	n	M(SD)	n	M(SD)							
Italy	8-11	S1	584	4.8(0.7)	449	4.6(0.6)	320	4.7(0.7)	310	4.7(0.6)	1.578(1, 1350)	.21	.001	1.656(1,1350)	.20	.001	
		S2	584	4.1(0.9)	449	3.9(0.8)	320	4.0(1.0)	310	4.1(0.8)	0.011(1, 1351)	.91	0	4.087(1,1351)	.04*	.003	
		S3	584	3.8(1.1)	449	3.4(1.0)	320	3.7(1.1)	310	3.4(1.0)	2.227(1, 1349)	.14	.002	0.165(1,1349)	.69	0	
		R1	583	4.7(0.9)	449	4.5(0.8)	319	4.5(0.9)	310	4.5(0.8)	0.127(1, 1346)	.72	0	0.333(1,1346)	.56	0	
		R2	583	4.8(0.9)	449	4.5(0.8)	318	4.7(0.9)	309	4.5(0.7)	1.212(1, 1345)	.27	.001	3.241(1,1345)	.07	.002	
		S1	465	4.8(0.7)	370	4.7(0.6)	263	4.8(0.7)	262	4.7(0.6)							
	12-15	S2	465	4.0(1.0)	370	4.0(0.8)	263	4.1(1.0)	262	4.0(0.8)							
		S3	465	3.7(1.1)	370	3.4(1.1)	263	3.8(1.1)	261	3.5(1.0)							
		R1	464	4.7(0.8)	370	4.5(0.8)	262	4.7(0.8)	261	4.4(0.8)							
		R2	465	4.7(0.9)	370	4.5(0.8)	262	4.7(0.8)	261	4.5(0.8)							
		S1	501	4.5(1.0)	530	4.4(0.9)	335	4.6(1.0)	434	4.6(0.7)	0.534(1, 1187)	.47	0	0.153(1,1187)	.70	0	
		S2	498	3.8(1.1)	524	3.7(0.9)	333	3.8(1.1)	431	3.9(0.9)	3.395(1, 1178)	.07	.003	0.299(1,1178)	.58	0	
Latvia	8-11	S3	493	3.9(1.0)	523	3.7(1.0)	328	4.1(1.0)	431	3.9(0.9)	2.145(1, 1168)	.43	.001	1.981(1,1168)	.16	.002	
		R1	494	4.5(1.0)	515	4.3(0.9)	328	4.6(1.0)	428	4.5(0.8)	0.626(1, 1170)	.43	0	0.402(1,1170)	.53	0	
		R2	496	4.5(0.9)	515	4.1(0.9)	327	4.6(1.0)	425	4.3(0.9)	0.041(1, 1165)	.84	0	0.015(1,1165)	.9	0	
	12-15	S1	370	4.5(1.0)	330	4.5(0.8)	230	4.7(0.8)	263	4.6(0.8)							
		S2	367	3.9(1.1)	327	3.9(0.9)	230	3.9(0.9)	263	4.0(0.9)							
		S3	367	4.0(1.0)	325	3.8(1.0)	230	4.1(1.0)	261	3.9(1.0)							
R1	368	4.5(0.9)	327	4.4(0.8)	229	4.7(0.9)	262	4.4(0.8)									
R2	367	4.4(1.0)	325	4.2(0.8)	230	4.6(1.0)	262	4.3(0.9)									
Lithuania	9-11	S1	269	4.6(1.2)	293	4.8(0.9)	346	4.7(1.0)	309	4.9(0.8)	1.549(1, 735)	.21	.002	3.682(1,735)	.06	.005	
		S2	268	4.2(1.3)	293	4.3(1.1)	346	4.4(1.0)	308	4.2(1.0)	0.098(1, 733)	.75	.002	1.977(1,733)	.16	.003	
		S3	265	4.0(1.3)	294	4.3(1.0)	343	4.3(1.1)	305	4.0(0.9)	3.13(1, 726)	.08	.004	0.424(1,726)	.51	.001	
		R1	268	4.4(1.2)	294	4.9(0.9)	344	4.8(0.9)	309	4.6(0.8)	0.134(1, 730)	.71	0	1.868(1,730)	.17	.003	
		R2	268	4.5(1.1)	294	4.8(0.9)	344	4.6(1.1)	308	4.5(0.9)	0.109(1, 731)	.74	0	2.294(1,731)	.13	.003	
		S1	173	4.7(1.0)	203	5.0(0.8)	191	4.7(1.0)	173	4.8(0.8)							
	12-15	S2	173	4.3(1.1)	203	4.5(1.0)	189	4.2(1.2)	173	4.3(1.0)							
		S3	172	4.0(1.2)	203	4.5(1.0)	186	4.0(1.2)	173	4.0(1.0)							
		R1	171	4.5(1.1)	202	5.0(0.9)	188	4.7(1.1)	173	4.7(0.8)							
		R2	172	4.4(1.2)	203	4.8(0.9)	188	4.5(1.1)	172	4.6(0.9)							
		S1	193	4.9(0.8)	126	5.0(0.8)	168	5.0(0.8)	98	5.0(0.7)	0.002(1, 287)	1.0	0	0.009(1,287)	.9	0	
		S2	193	4.2(1.1)	126	4.3(0.8)	166	4.1(1.2)	98	4.1(0.8)	1.846(1, 285)	.18	.006	6.781(1,285)	.01*	.023	
Slovenia	8-11	S3	193	4.3(0.8)	126	4.2(1.0)	163	4.3(1.0)	96	4.1(0.9)	0.286(1, 282)	.59	.001	0.703(1,282)	.40	.002	
		R1	193	4.9(0.8)	126	4.9(0.7)	171	4.6(1.0)	98	4.9(0.7)	0.314(1, 289)	.58	.001	1.361(1,289)	.24	.005	
		R2	193	4.8(0.8)	124	4.7(0.8)	171	4.5(1.0)	98	4.7(0.7)	0.005(1, 289)	.95	0	0.086(1,289)	.77	0	
	12-15	S1	158	5.2(0.8)	45	4.9(0.9)	53	5.0(0.7)	40	5.0(0.8)							
		S2	157	4.3(1.1)	45	4.4(1.0)	53	4.1(1.0)	40	4.4(0.9)							
		S3	157	4.3(1.2)	45	4.1(1.1)	53	4.4(1.0)	40	4.0(1.0)							
R1	157	5.0(0.8)	45	4.8(0.8)	53	5.0(0.8)	39	5.1(0.8)									
R2	157	4.9(0.9)	45	4.5(0.9)	53	4.7(0.9)	39	4.6(1.0)									
Spain	8-11	S1	409	5.2(0.8)	346	5.0(0.7)	282	5.1(0.7)	416	5.0(0.7)	0.349(1, 576)	.56	.001	11.549(1,576)	.001*	.02	
		S2	406	4.4(1.1)	345	4.2(0.9)	280	4.1(1.1)	415	4.3(0.9)	0.878(1, 570)	.34	.003	0.009(1,570)	.91	0	
		S3	404	4.5(1.1)	341	4.1(1.0)	279	4.2(1.1)	412	4.1(1.1)	2.422(1, 564)	.12	.004	0.142(1,564)	.70	0	
		R1	405	5.1(0.8)	341	4.9(0.8)	279	5.1(0.9)	415	4.9(0.8)	0.467(1, 566)	.50	.001	3.039(1,566)	.08	.005	
		R2	403	5.1(0.9)	343	4.7(0.9)	278	4.9(0.9)	413	4.8(0.9)	2.117(1, 563)	.15	.004	5.114(1,563)	.02*	.009	
		S1	162	5.4(0.7)	84	4.7(0.9)	152	5.1(0.9)	182	4.9(0.8)							
	12-15	S2	162	4.5(1.2)	84	4.1(0.8)	151	4.2(1.0)	180	4.4(0.8)							
		S3	159	4.5(1.2)	84	3.7(1.0)	151	4.3(1.1)	179	4.0(1.1)							
		R1	157	5.3(0.7)	84	4.6(0.8)	152	5.2(0.8)	179	4.8(0.9)							
		R2	157	5.3(0.7)	84	4.4(1.0)	152	5.0(0.8)	177	4.7(0.9)							

Note: * = p < .05. S1 = Self-awareness, S2 = Social awareness, S3 = Self-management, R1 = Relationship management, R2 = responsible decision making

As table 5 shows, when investigated students' SEL country by country there were almost significant ($p = 0.07 - 0.08$) trends in some of the variables studied: Social awareness improved in the Latvian student sample in both age groups as well as in Slovenian 8-11 –year old student sample. There was also a positive change in the Lithuanian 8-11 –year old student sample in both self-awareness and self-management as well as in self-awareness and relationship skills in the 8-11 –year old Spanish student sample. Responsible decision making improved in the age group of 12-15 –year old students in the Italian sample, whereas there was a negative change in the same variables in the 8-11 –year old Italian student sample.

Some of these changes were negative indicating that the change in question was not desirable: Italian 8-11 –year old students slightly decreased in their experienced social awareness and responsible decision making. Spanish 12-15 –year old students slightly decreased in their self-awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making during the intervention. There was also a slightly negative development in the Slovenian 12-15 –year old students' social awareness.

The mean sum scores were conducted from the multi-item measures and used these as variables in further analyses. Repeated measures ANOVA tested the 'time*group' and 'time*group*age group' interaction effect examining the effect of the intervention with regards to mean change over time across groups in the variables. The analyses were conducted separately for each country and to all countries combined.

Furthermore, the difference between genders was tested as well as the possible change between pre- and post-tests between and within the age groups and it was statistically controlled for different age groups in evaluating the effect of the intervention. The possible effect of students' age and gender as background variables were thus taken into account.

Statistical analysis revealed that no statistically significant differences were found between these measurements, when the countries were looked at separately.

Results after combining the countries

During the second phase the perceived SEL was studied across all five core components of SEL as well as Problem behavior with all the countries together. Table 6 shows the summary of the combined results.

Table 6. SEL and Problem behavior in both age groups separately in pre- and post-tests and in intervention and comparison groups. S1= Self-awareness, S2 = Self-management, S3 = Social awareness, R1 = Relationship skills, R2 = Responsible decision making

Variable	Age group	Intervention				Comparison			
		Pre		Post		Pre		Post	
		<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
S 1	8 - 11	1386	4.87(0.81)	1386	4.94(0.81)	915	4.83(0.83)	915	4.87(0.82)
	12 - 15	1051	4.69(0.76)	1051	4.66(0.76)	938	4.78(0.74)	938	4.74(0.77)
S 2	8 - 11	1379	4.10(1.06)	1379	4.18(1.05)	911	4.03(0.99)	911	4.09(0.00)
	12 - 15	1046	3.99(0.87)	1046	4.06(0.87)	935	4.13(0.90)	935	4.15(0.88)
S 3	8 - 11	1371	4.13(1.10)	1371	4.11(1.11)	898	4.04(1.05)	898	4.06(1.08)
	12 - 15	1044	3.71(0.99)	1044	3.69(1.04)	928	3.84(1.02)	928	3.79(1.06)
R 1	8 - 11	1371	4.84(0.88)	1371	4.86(0.86)	907	4.76(0.88)	907	4.80(0.86)
	12 - 15	1043	4.57(0.82)	1043	4.51(0.83)	931	4.61(0.85)	931	4.59(0.87)
R 2	8 - 11	1373	4.80(0.92)	1373	4.76(0.93)	905	4.69(0.93)	905	4.69(0.91)
	12 - 15	1043	4.45(0.86)	1043	4.41(0.85)	926	4.44(0.85)	926	4.52(0.91)
Problem behaviour ¹	8 - 11	1033	-0.95(3.68)	1033	-1.34(3.32)	748	-0.99(3.34)	748	-1.24(3.82)
	12 - 15	877	0.61(5.05)	877	1.29(5.91)	758	0.19(4.85)	758	0.63(5.85)

Note : ¹ calculated from the z-scores

Age group 1 (8-11 years old)

Table 6 shows that the results of repeated measures GLM regarding *Self-awareness* (S1) in younger age group. (8-11-year old) indicated no significant change across both groups [$F(1.2299) = 7.552, p = .12, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .028$]. In addition, no statistically significant interaction between the training (i.e., pre- and post-test) and the group [$F(1.2299) = 0.523, p = .47, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$] could be found. However, when examining the intervention group and comparison group separately it was found that the change was significant in the intervention group [$F(1.2299) = 7.58, p = .006, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .003$] but not in the comparison group [$F(1.2299) = 1.702, p = .192, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$]. (See table 6)

In the *Self-management* (S2) a significant positive change could be found across intervention and comparison groups [$F(1.2288) = 8.992, p = .006, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .003$]. However, the interaction between the training and the group was not significant [$F(1.2288) = 0.136, p = .712, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$]. When investigating the intervention group and the comparison group separately, it was found that the change was significant in the intervention group [$F(1.2288) = 7.13, p = .008, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .003$], but not in the comparison group [$F(1.2299) = 2.871, p = .09, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$]

In the *Social awareness* (S3) no differences across the groups [$F(1.2267) = 0.004, p = .951, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$] or between the training and the group [$F(1.2267) = 0.324, p = .569, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$] were found. No significant changes between the measuring points were found in the intervention group [$F(1.2267) = 0.162, p = .687, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$] or in the comparison group [$F(1.2267) = 0.165, p = .685, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$].

The results regarding *Relationship skills* (R1) showed no changes across both groups [$F(1.2276) = 1.70, p = .193, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$] or between the training and the group [$F(1.2276) = 0.330, p = .566, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$]. Changes between pre- and post-test in both intervention group [$F(1.2276) = 0.333, p = .566, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$] and in the comparison group [$F(1.2276) = 1.464, p = .226, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$] were not significant.

No significant changes [$F(1.2276) = 0.805, p = .370, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$] were found across both groups in *Responsible decision making* (R2). In addition, no change was found between the training and the group [$F(1.2276) = 0.946, p = .331, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$]. Further, the changes between the measuring points remained non-significant in both the intervention group [$F(1.2276) = 2.200, p = .138, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$] and in the comparison group [$F(1.2276) = 0.002, p = .124, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$].

Age group 2 (12-15 years old)

According to the results of the repeated measures GLM *Self-awareness* (S1) among older students (12-15 years old) no significant change was found across the groups [$F(1.1987) = 3.737, p = .053, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .002$]. In addition, the change between the training and the group remained non-significant [$F(1.1987) = .001, p = .971, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$] as well as the changes between the measuring points in both the intervention group [$F(1.1987) = 2.055, p = .152, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$] and in the comparison group [$F(1.1987) = 1.703, p = .192, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$]. (See table 6).

In the *Self-management* (S2) the difference across groups was significant [$F(1.1979) = 5.364, p = .021, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .003$]. However, the change between the measuring point and the group [$F(1.1979) = 1.605, p = .205, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$] was non-significant. Further investigations revealed positive significant change in the intervention group [$F(1.1979) = 6.800, p = .009, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .003$] but not in the comparison group [$F(1.1979) = 0.521, p = .470, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$].

No significant changes were found in the differences of *Social management* (S3) (Sacross groups [F(1.1970) = 1.894 p = .169, partial η^2 = .001] or between the training and the group [F(1.1970) = 0.673 p = .412, partial η^2 = .000]. No significant changes between measuring points in the intervention group [F(1.1970) = 0.164 p = .685, partial η^2 = .000] or in the comparison group [F(1.1979) = 2.278 p = .131, partial η^2 = .001].

The results regarding *Relationship skills* (R1) showed a significant change across groups [F(1.1972) = 4.532 p = .033, partial η^2 = .002]. However, the interaction between the training and the group was non-significant [F(1.1972) = 0.862 p = .353, partial η^2 = .000]. The significant negative development of the intervention group was found between the measuring point [F(1.1972) = 4.954 p = .026, partial η^2 = .003] whereas no development was found in the comparison group [F(1.1972) = 0.682 p = .409, partial η^2 = .000].

The results of repeated measures GLM regarding *Responsible decision making* (R2) indicated a significant change across both groups [F(1.1967) = 1,972, p = .16, partial η^2 = .001]. However, no statistically significant interaction between the training (i.e., pre- and post-test) and the group [F(1.1967) = 0.499, p = .48, partial η^2 = .000] could be found. However, when examining the intervention group and comparison group separately it was found that there were no significant differences between measurements in the intervention group [F(1.1967) = 2.368, p = .124, partial η^2 = .001] or in the comparison group [F(1.1967) = 0.230, p = .632, partial η^2 = .000].

Problem behavior

In the group of younger students the results of repeated measures GLM revealed a significant change across the intervention and the comparison groups [F(1.1779) = 11.819, p = .001, partial η^2 = .007] in Problematic behaviour. However, the interaction between the training and the group was not found significant [F(1.1779) = 0.620, p = .431, partial η^2 = .000]. However, when investigating the differences between measurements in intervention and comparison group separately there was a statistical positive development in the intervention group [F(1.1779) = 10.628, p = .001, partial η^2 = .006] but not in the comparison group [F(1.1779) = 3.028, p = .0082, partial η^2 = .002].

The results of the older students of the Problematic behaviour showed that across groups there was a significant change over time [F(1.1663) = 19.151, p < .001, partial η^2 = .012] whereas the interaction between the training and the group was non-significant [F(1.1663) = 0.937, p < .333, partial η^2 = .001]. The significant negative development between measuring points was found both in the intervention group [F(1.1663) = 15,401, p < .000, partial η^2 = .009] and in the comparison group [F(1.1663) = 5,404, p < .020, partial η^2 = .003].

To conclude, the interactions of the time (pre and post) and group (intervention and comparison) were not significant showing that the effect of the intervention was vague. Pairwise comparisons showed some statistical both positive and some negative changes in the intervention group, even when the change in the comparison group remained non-significant (i.e. younger students' Self-awareness, Self-management and Problem behavior and older students' Self-management and Relationship skills).

Research question 3: *Did the SEL assessment practices intervention have a positive effect on reducing students' problem behavior?*

Table 6. Change in a sum variable called *problem behavior* that combined items concerning bullying, substance abuse and skipping school.

	Intervention			Comparison			Intcom		
	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std Dev	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std dev	F(df)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Problem behavior	1963	.04	.28	1548	.04	.29	.54(1, 3510)	.46	0

Note: intcom = between subjects effects

Due to the sensitive nature of the sum variable, all the participating countries were tested as one group. Univariate analyses of Variance was used to study the possible effect of the intervention. No statistically significant change was found.

Ethical considerations

Ethical review board in the humanities and social and behavioral sciences of the University of Helsinki was requested to give a review for the project.

The comments from the Board were taken into consideration. Initially, participant’s gender was asked in the questionnaire by giving three alternatives: 1.boy, 2. girl or 3. other. Some partners found it very difficult to have “other” in their questionnaires because of a probable confusion among students. It was replaced by “I do not want to tell”. Ethical review board of the University of Helsinki wanted to get explanation why it was not “other”. After a detailed clarification the ethical review board of the University of Helsinki accepted it as 1. boy, 2. girl, 3 I do not want to tell. Furthermore, the GDPR regulations were taken into account in protecting the privacy of the participants who were instructed to create a 6-digit code, which then was replaced in Helsinki by a participant number. As the collected data concerning the participating countries was provided to the partner researchers, all data that might enable the identification of an individual participant (id-code, school name) was deleted and replaced by the participant number. The data file matching the participant numbers to the id-codes was saved in a separate file to enable the matching of pre- and post-test answers.

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the effectiveness of the toolkit designed for assessing social and emotional skills in school. The main results showed that there was no statistically significant change in the answers between pre and post-test given by the teachers. For the students no significant changes were found when looking at the results country by country.

When we combined the countries, it appeared that there was favorable development in the intervention in terms of the experienced self-awareness and self-management of the younger age group (8-11). In the older age group (12-15), only the experienced self-awareness increased over time in the intervention group, but not in the comparison group. In this age group, the relationship skills even decreased in the intervention group. It appeared that the intervention had some added value especially among the younger participants that could not be explained based on the development during the six months. However, considering that the interactions were not significant, we cannot conclude that the intervention was the reason for the changes among the students.

Because the intervention was about assessing the SEL skills, it is possible that it only raised the self-awareness of the students but did not quite reach the level of improving their skills. The puberty may have had an effect on the teenager group, it may have made it difficult for them to manage themselves and becoming aware of their self-management problems may have made the experience their relations skills even lower than before the intervention. Looking at these results makes sense: starting to assess and reflect one’s SEL skills is the first step toward starting to develop such skills. It is possible that

teachers and their students learned from the intervention in the way that the students started to be aware of their own behavior. This is a good start for future learning of these skills, and it is valuable to further continue the efforts in teaching SEL more concretely

The research methods should also be reflected on. The analysis method including the questionnaire just did not capture participants' learning in this case. Despite the satisfactory psychometric properties of the questionnaire, the instrument may have been too long and in some respect inappropriate for the targeted age groups of the students. It may also be that the questionnaire despite the back-translation process did not yield to different cultures due to translation difficulties regarding cultural expressions. However, on behalf of the teachers, probably the problem did not lie in the measurement instruments, because the same instruments had previously captured teachers' development of SEL in different countries. These previous studies were on well-established and well-structured instructional procedures such as Lions Quest (Talvio, Berg, Litmanen, & Lonka 2016; Talvio, Hietajärvi, Matichek-Jauk, & Lonka 2019). Such programs do not only aim at assessing SEL, but also provide concrete tools for developing the related skills. Because there could have been even six months between the pre- and post-tests, there may have been other development taking place in the students that could not be differentiated from the effects of the intervention.

Collecting post-data right before the end of the school year might have affected the answers of both the teachers and their students. For teachers the measurement point may have been too wide apart so that the contents possibly learned during the intervention had been forgotten due to the heterogeneous nature of the teachers' workload. Teachers might also be busy with evaluation processes as well as different school activities concerning the end of the school year. At the same time, students might be disengaged and focused on the upcoming summer holiday. Therefore, it is possible that teachers and their students learned more than what the post-test showed.

Of course, it is also possible that the interventions were not effective at short term. They were newly developed and the time for their testing and their further development might have been too short. Indeed, many established SEL trainings have been available over 30 years, during which time they have been continuously developed, based on the feedback of teachers and their students. Accordingly, developing SEL interventions might need more time and continuous interaction between the program developers, practitioners and policy makers. In addition, in the studies of expertise, it takes time to proceduralize the knowledge into skills (e.g. Ericsson, 2007). From this point of view it is possible the measuring points were too close to each other for the teachers to become experts in teaching SEL and accordingly the students to gain knowledge (from the teachers) that would have then transformed into skills with sufficient amount of practice.

It was important, though, that the research partner was independent of those who carried out the interventions. This applies especially in the case like this, where the results are not quite desirable. We think, however, that this is also an important research result: there were no obvious changes in the actual relationship skills by using this kind of intervention design. More work is needed to develop the interventions further, from assessing the SEL skills into systematically training them during a longer period of time. It would be also important to test the actual skills in different contexts and with more fine-grained research instruments.

More contextual information about specific schools would have been enriching, but the current ethical and GDPR regulations of EU did not allow us to risk the anonymity of the participants. Some schools were so small that there were only two teachers. Revealing the school name would have also revealed their identity. Large-scale studies have their benefits, but may hide some important contextual variation. However, participating countries are preparing additional analysis regarding the data content concerning exclusively the teachers and students of their own country. In addition, the

qualitative research based on the monitoring procedures of the intervention is being conducted at the University of Latvia by Dr. Baiba Martinsone (in progress) and it may reveal more about the contextual aspects of the interventions.

We shall also see, whether some starting points of the teachers and students would have resulted in so called ATI (aptitude-treatment interactions). Such questions were not included in the research problems of the project goals, but we shall be able to use the data in order to test some new hypotheses. In all, the project produced important added value of the complexity of SEL issues and inspired many new research questions.

CONCLUSIONS

Even the most popular SEL approaches used at school do not always present strong evidence of effectiveness in learning SEL (Corcoran et al. 2018), even though many intervention studies with quasi-experimental design carried out by using a pre-validated questionnaires have been practical in assessing well-known established SEL interventions. We found out that already starting to focus on the assessment of SEL appeared to change the participants' self-awareness regardless of the age group. The younger participants even learned some self-management skills that were more difficult for the teenagers. Assessing SEL was an important starting point for This may indicate that interventions should be started before the stormy phase of puberty. However, regarding new SEL interventions more contextual and qualitative approach in investigations would probably give more understanding of how the interventions could be further developed.

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Appendix 1

Learning2be STUDENTS` QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDYING. Here are some questions about school and how you feel about things concerning it

1. Name of your school

1. School 1
1. School 2
2. School 3
3. School 4

2. Think about going to school and your feelings concerning school work.

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree
1. I like being at school	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am often tired	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am often excited about school work	1	2	3	4	5
4. There is no point in going to school	1	2	3	4	5
5. I cannot cope at school	1	2	3	4	5

3. What do you think about studying and your school?	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree
1. I feel happy in my school	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel comfortable in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Teachers encourage me to express my opinion in class.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers are interested in how I'm feeling	1	2	3	4	5
5. The teachers treat us pupils fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I can have an influence on issues and decisions in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel my teachers accept me as I am.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel that most of my teachers care about me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel a lot of trust in most of my teachers.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Bullying means intentional and frequent or repetitive hurting someone physically or by saying mean, threatening or insulting things or causing damage to someone's possessions. How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school during the last month? Choose one alternative.

1. I have not bullied another student(s) at school during the last month
2. It has only happened once
3. 2-3 times

4. Once a week
5. More than once a week

5. How often have you been bullied at school during the last month?

1. I have not been bullied at school during the last month
2. It has only happened once
3. 2-3 times
4. Once a week
5. More than once a week

6. During the last month, how many times were you in a physical fight?

1. I have not been in a physical fight during the last month
2. 1 time
3. 2 times
4. 3 times
5. 4 times or more

7. How many schooldays have you been absent for the following reasons during the last month?

	None	1-2 days	3-5 days	More than 5 days
1. Due to illness	1	2	3	4
2. Due to skipping the class by purpose	1	2	3	4
3. Due to other reason	1	2	3	4

8. Do you have DIFFICULTIES in following issues?

	Not at all					Very much
1. Following teaching in class?	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Doing tasks that require writing?	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Doing tasks that require reading?	1	2	3	4	5	

9. Have you been diagnosed with a learning disorder? (e.g. reading, writing or math learning, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or specific language impairment) Choose the alternative that best describes you.

1. No
2. I do not know.
3. Yes, what:

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

10. Here is a slider. On the right of the slider "10" means the best possible life for you and on the left "0" means the worst possible life for you. In general, where on the slider do you feel you stand at the moment?

0_1_2_3_4_5_6_7_8_9_10

11. If one of your best friends were to offer you any of these, would you use it?

	I do not know what that is	Certainly not	Probably not	Probably yes	Certainly yes
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1. Smoking & tobacco	1	2	3	4	5
2. Alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
3. Other drugs	1	2	3	4	5

12. Have you used any of these during last two of months?

	No	I have tried it once or twice	I use it now and then
1. Smoking & tobacco	1	2	3
2. Alcohol	1	2	3
3. Other drugs	1	2	3

13. How is your health in general? Choose one alternative.

1. Very good
2. Fairly good
3. Average
4. Fairly bad
5. Very bad

14. In this questionnaire, physical exercise is any activity that increases your heart rate and causes shortness of breath for a while, for example in sports activities, playing games with friends, on the way to or from school, at recess or in PE class.

Think about all the moving around you have done over the past 7 days. On how many days have you been on the move for at least one hour per day? Choose one alternative.

1. On 0 days
2. On 1 day
3. On 2 days
4. On 3 days
5. On 4 days
6. On 5 days
7. On 6 days
8. On 7 days

15. Have you had any of the following symptoms during the last month?

	Not at all	Sometimes	Often
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1. Neck or shoulder pain	1	2	3
2. Stomach ache	1	2	3
3. Difficulty falling asleep, or waking up at night	1	2	3
4. Headache	1	2	3

16. How do you feel at school? Choose one alternative.

1. I often feel happy
2. I sometimes feel happy and sometimes feel sad
3. I often feel sad

17. How do you feel at home? Choose one alternative.

1. I often feel happy
2. I sometimes feel happy and sometimes feel sad
3. I often feel sad

18. How do you feel (about yourself) at the moment?

	Compl etely disagre e	Partly disagree	Disagre e	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Partially agree	Completel y agree
1. I feel I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Sometimes I think I am no good at all.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I wish I could respect myself more.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. All in all I am satisfied with myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

19. Read each statement and decide how well it describes you.

	Completely false	False	Fairly false	Fairly true	True	Completely true
1. I know what I am thinking and doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I understand why I do what I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I understand my moods and feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I know when I am moody.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I can read people's faces when they are angry.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I recognise how people feel by looking at their facial expressions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. It is easy for me to understand why people feel the way they do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. If someone is sad, angry or happy, I believe I know what they are thinking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I understand why people react the way they do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. If a friend is upset, I have a pretty good idea why.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I can stay calm in stressful situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6

12. I stay calm and overcome anxiety in new or changing situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I stay calm when things go wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I can control the way I feel when something bad happens.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. When I am upset with someone, I will wait till I have calmed down before	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I will always apologize when I hurt my friend unintentionally.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I always try and comfort my friends when they are sad.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I try not to criticize my friend when we quarrel.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I am tolerant of my friend's mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. I stand up for myself without putting others down.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. When making decisions, I take into account the consequences of my actions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I try to make choices that have the most positive outcomes expected.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I weigh the strengths of the situation before deciding what I will do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. If I make a recommendation, I think about the criteria behind my recommendation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I consider the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy before deciding to use it.	1	2	3	4	5	6

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

20. Gender	1. Girl	2. Boy	3. I do not want to tell
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21. Age	
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22. In which country were you, your parents or your guardians born?

22.1. You

Country 1	Country 2	Country 3	Country 4	Country 5	Other:
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22.2. Your mother/guardian

Country 1	Country 2	Country 3	Country 4	Country 5	Other:
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22.3. Your father / guardian

Country 1	Country 2	Country 3	Country 4	Country 5	Other:
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23. Compared to your friends, is your family richer, poorer or about the same?

1. Richer
2. Poorer
3. About the same
4. I don't know

24. How much do you have your own money that you can use?

Very little			Very much	
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 2

Learning2be

Teachers questionnaire

1. Name of the school your are working at

1. School 1
4. School 2
5. School 3
6. School 4

2. Think about your work and matters related to it.							
	Never	A couple of times a year	Once a month	A couple of times a month	Once a week	A couple of times a week	Every day
1. At work, I feel bursting with energy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Time flies when I'm working.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. At work, I feel strong and vigorous.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I am enthusiastic about my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My job inspires me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I am immersed in my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I'm always in a hurry and I'm competing against time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I feel guilty if I do not work all the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I often work even when all my co-workers have finished.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I'm always in a hurry and I do many things at the same time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Think about your work and matters related to it.						
	Completely disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Completely agree
1. I am overloaded with work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I feel dispirited at work and I think of leaving my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I often sleep poorly because of the circumstances at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I frequently question the value of my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I feel that I have gradually less to give.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. My expectations to my job and to my performance have reduced.	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. I constantly have a bad conscience because my work forces me to neglect my close friends and relatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I feel that I am gradually losing interest in my students or my colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Honestly I felt more appreciated at work before.	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Each statement has two parts A) General belief B) How this belief is applied in your work. Please answer both A) and B) of each statement.	Completely disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Completely agree
1. A) In my opinion, it is essential to utilize on the knowledge produced by the students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I reserve a lot of time for this in my instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. A) In my opinion, it is important that students generate new ideas together.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I reserve a lot of time for this in my work as a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. A) The most important promoter for my pupils' learning is that they learn to know how they think	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I use varying methods to enhance this particular skill.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. A) It is important that the teacher can always confirm the correct answers to problems at hand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) This is essential in my teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. A) It is important that pupils repeat central facts until they know them by heart.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I encourage my students to memorize central facts in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. A) It is very important that learning goals are being set together.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I set learning goals together with my students	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. A) By learning to know their own ways of thinking, students achieve much better learning results.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I use many different kind of methods to enhance this particular skill.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. A) One must get unambiguous answers from the teacher or the study materials.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) This is essential in my teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. A) It is important to evaluate how student thinking and understanding develops.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I primarily try to evaluate how the thinking and understanding of my students have developed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. A) In my opinion, it is essential that students have the chance to reflect on different matters together.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) In my class students have a lot of time to reflect on matters together.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. A) The main aim of teaching is to offer certain facts about the subject of study.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) This is essential in my teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. A) The most important purpose of assessment is to motivate students to learn more.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) My focus in evaluation is to motivate students to learn more.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. A) The text book is the best tool for the teacher to structure of the content to be learned.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I mainly structure the matters to be learned by using the textbooks.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. A) It is important that the students themselves can evaluate how well they know the materials to be studied.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I reserve a lot of time to enhance this skill in my students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. A) It is important to go through the content step by step.	1	2	3	4	5	6

B) During my lessons, I encourage my students to do this (go through the content step by step).	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. A) In my opinion, it is essential to develop students' critical thinking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I reserve a lot of time for this in my lessons	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. A) It is important that my pupils/students get constructive feedback on how they are developing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) During my lessons I spend a lot of time to make sure that my pupils get constructive feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. A) It is important that the challenges are reasonable in relation to my pupils' skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) During my lessons I focus on making sure that the challenges are fitted for my students' skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. A) In my opinion, it is important to develop students' creativity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I reserve a lot of time for this in my work as a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. A) The primary purpose of assessment is to compare students with each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) Assessment helps me in comparing my students with each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. A) It is important to especially memorize such content that will help in the exams.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B) I emphasize this (that it is important memorizing such content that will help in the exams) in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

5. How would you rate your health compared with others of your age? Choose one alternative.

1. Poor
2. Quite poor
3. Average

4. Quite good
5. Good

6. Have you had any of the following symptoms during the past 6 months and if so, how often?

	Rarely or never	About once a month	About once a week	Almost every day
1. Neck or shoulder pain.	1	2	3	4
2. Headaches	1	2	3	4
3. Difficulties in falling asleep, or waking up in the night	1	2	3	4
4. Felt tired during the day	1	2	3	4

7. During the past month, how would you rate your sleep quality overall? Choose one alternative.

1. Very bad
2. Fairly bad
3. Fairly good
4. Very good

8. Which of the following alternatives best describes your current smoking? Choose one alternative.

1. I have never smoked
2. I have tried smoking
3. I am not currently smoking or have quit smoking
4. I smoke more rarely than once a week
5. I smoke once a week or more often, but not daily
6. I smoke once a day or more often

9. How often do you use alcohol? Choose one alternative.

1. Once a week or more often
2. Couple times a month
3. About once a month
4. More rarely
5. I don't use alcohol

10. How often do use alcohol to get drunk? Choose one alternative.

1. Once a week or more often
2. Couple times a month
3. About once a month
4. More rarely
5. I don't use alcohol

11. Please evaluate your life situation.

	Completely disagree	Partly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Partly agree	Completely agree
1. For the most part my life is near my ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The circumstances in my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. So far I have reached the important things in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If I could relive my life, I would not change anything much	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Answer the following questions using the scales provided to define the degree to which these activities add importance to each situation. (12-14)

12. What is important to do at the beginning of a group process?

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
1. Getting members of the group acquainted with each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Using activities for trust building	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Giving room to free mingling without setting clear performance expectations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Monitoring the group and individuals without disturbing the process and allowing the group to define its own dynamic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. You want to teach your students about important values in their lives. How do you proceed?

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
1. Being a role model of those values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Teaching your own opinions, beliefs and values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Questioning and then praising the answers that reflect the values I want to promote	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Reflecting together on behaviour and impact of others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. What are the different ways to strengthen the pupil's self-esteem?

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
1. Praising	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Ensuring the tasks are within the reach of the pupils	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

even if they have to stretch a little							
3. Giving constructive feedback	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Predicting success in every possible situation such as saying: "You will become something great one day"	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

What would you do in the following situations? (15-16)							
15. Your group has a student who is very shy. How would you handle him or her?							
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
1. Nothing. A student has right to be alone if he/she wants to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The only thing I would do is inform the parents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I would assign the pupil a group role that would encourage his/her participation without overly exposing them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would make the use of exercises as part of the lesson in order to encourage pupils to engage with each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. The previous parents' night you organised for the parents of your group had a formal atmosphere. How might you be able to get the parents to participate in discussions and to express their own opinions?							
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
1. Adopt a relaxed and informal approach	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Telling funny stories to make people laugh	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Conduct activities that promote self-disclosure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Using pre-prepared questions to get parents to disclose their feelings and thoughts on key issues that concern them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Next we will ask how important you believe these objectives to be today, and currently, how skilled you consider yourself in promoting them?							
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important

17.1. It is primarily the teacher's duty to create a classroom environment where all students feel valued.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely disagree	Partly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Partly agree	Completely agree
17.2. I am very skilled at creating a classroom environment where all students feel valued	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
17.3. It is the teacher's duty to support the self-esteem and self-confidence of the student	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely disagree	Partly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Partly agree	Completely agree
17.4. I am very skilled at supporting my students' self-esteem and self-confidence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
17.5. It is the teacher's duty to support the student to make responsible decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely disagree	Partly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Partly agree	Completely agree
17.6. I am very skilled at supporting my student to make responsible decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
17.7. It is the teacher's duty to teach interactive skills such as listening and conversation skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely disagree	Partly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Partly agree	Completely agree
17.8. I am very skilled at teaching interactive skills such as listening and conversation skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
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17.9. It is the teacher's duty to teach emotional skills such as self-control	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely disagree	Partly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Partly agree	Completely agree
17.10. I am very skilled at teaching emotional skills such as self-control	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
17.11. It is the teacher's duty to motivate students to live a healthy lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely disagree	Partly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Partly agree	Completely agree
17.12. I am very skilled at motivating students to live a healthy lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Not important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Important	Very important
17.13. It is the teacher's duty to prevent substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely disagree	Partly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Partly agree	Completely agree
17.14. I am very skilled at preventing substance abuse among students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

18. Gender	1. Female	2. Male	3. I do not want to tell
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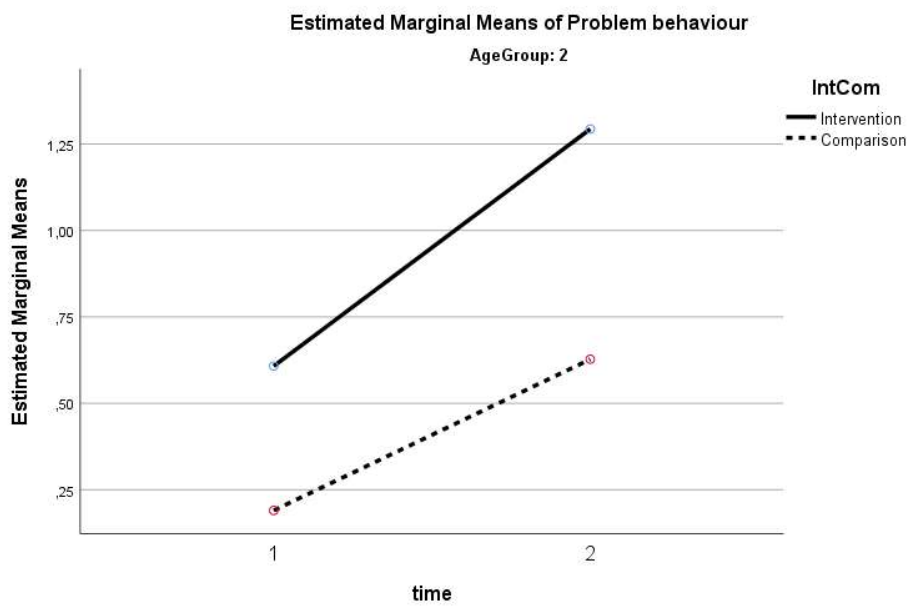
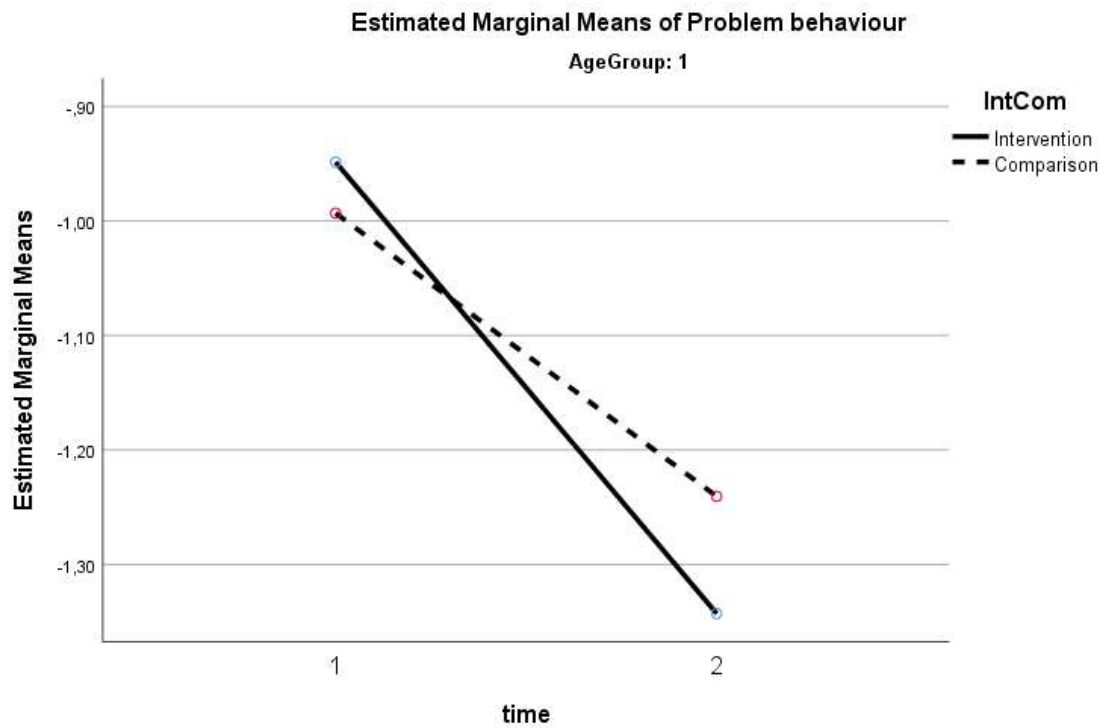
19. Age	
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20. Choose one alternative. Are you a...

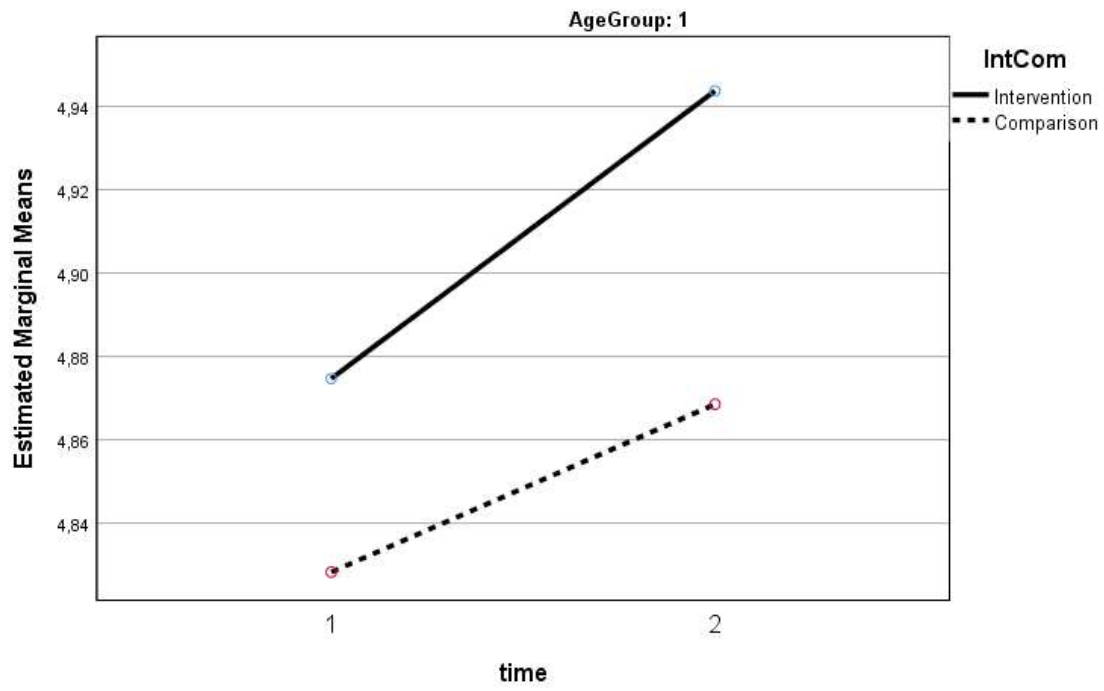
1. Class teacher
2. Subject teacher
3. Special needs teacher
4. Teacher student
5. Other

21. How long have you been teaching?	_____ years
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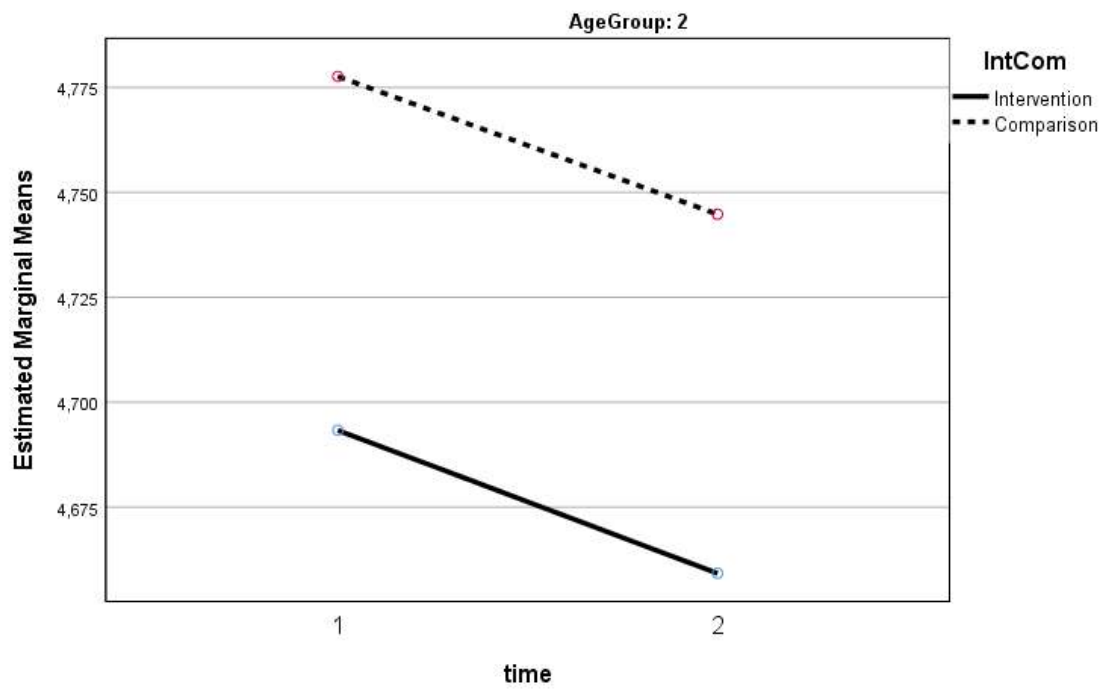
APPENDIX 3 Diagrams on Student's perceived development of SEL and Problem behavior in all countries, intervention and comparison groups and in two age groups.



Estimated Marginal Means of Self-awareness

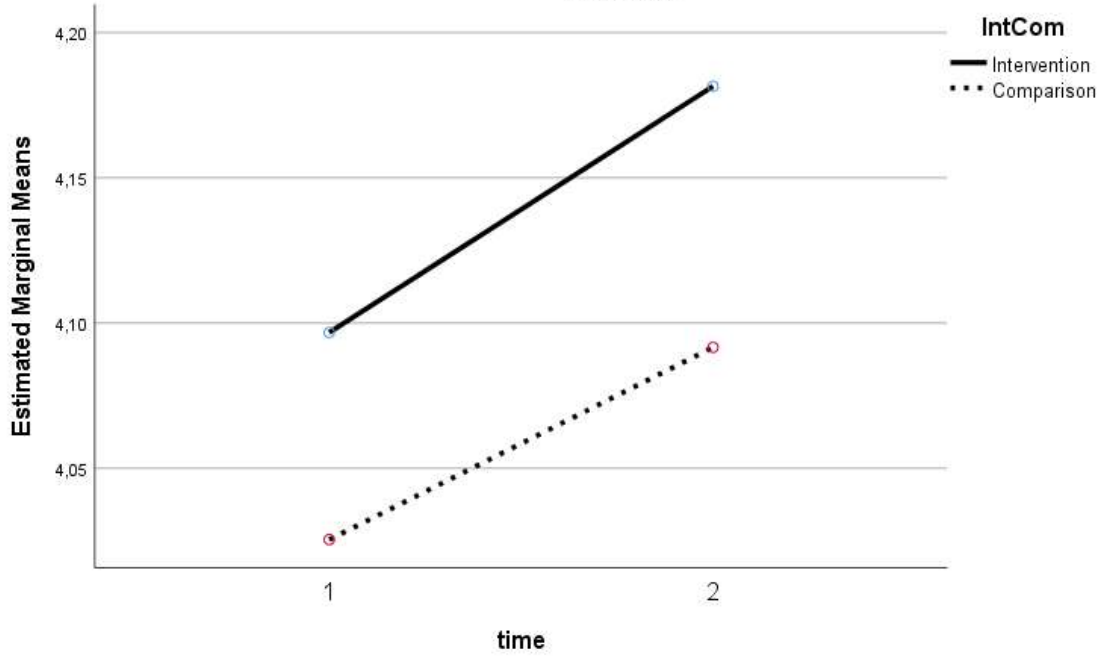


Estimated Marginal Means of Self awareness



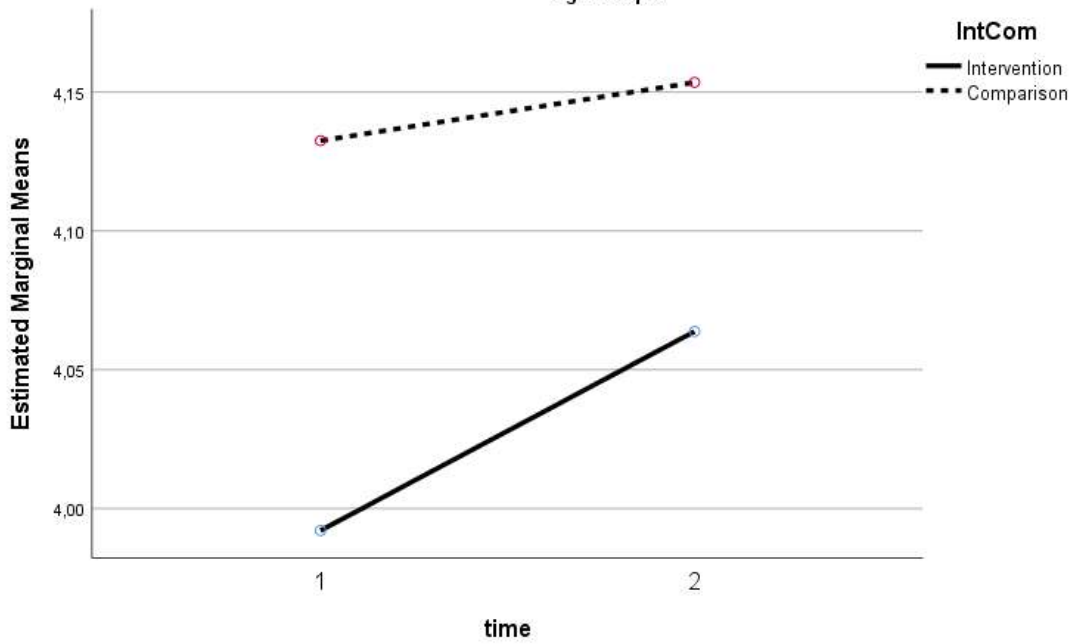
Estimated Marginal Means of Self management

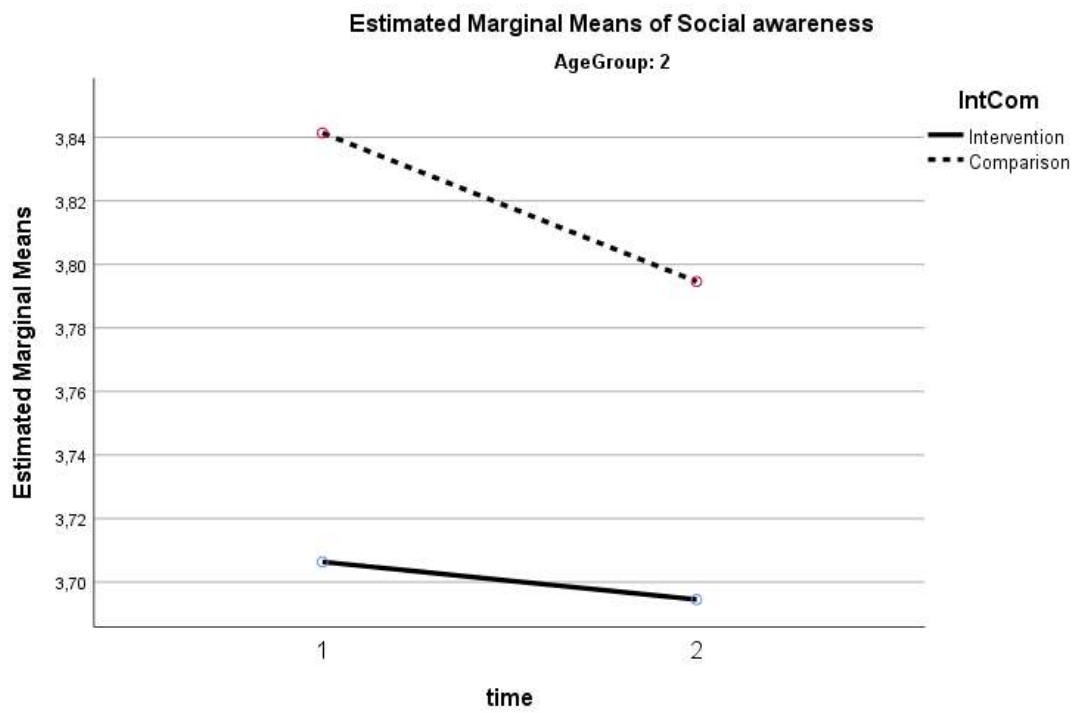
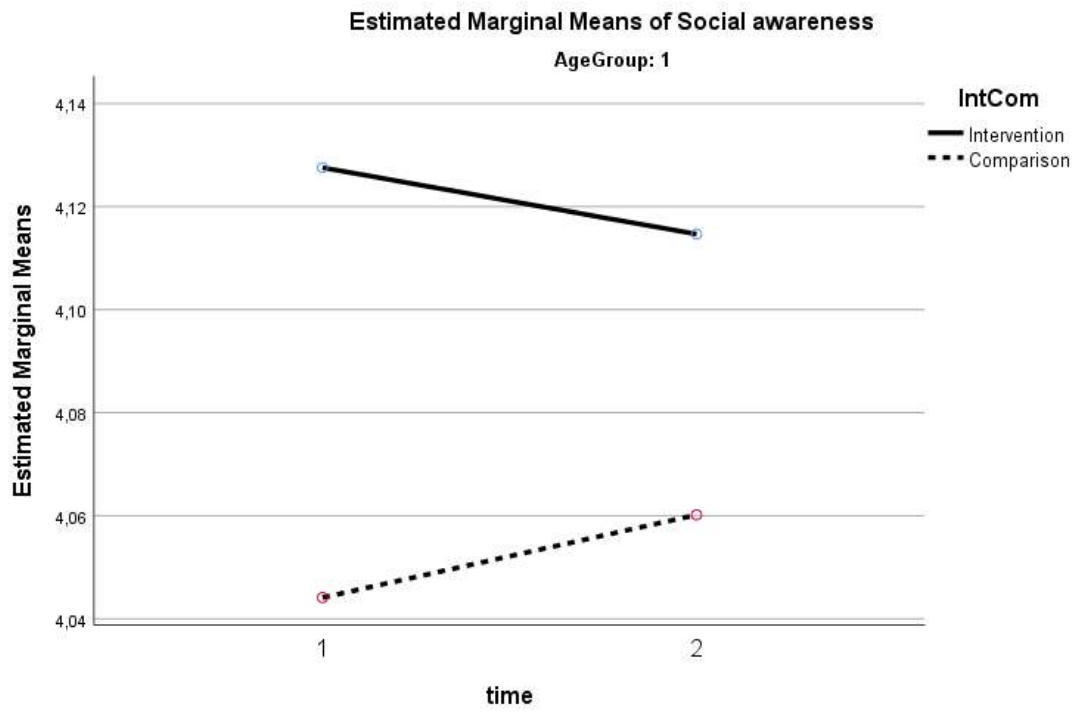
AgeGroup: 1

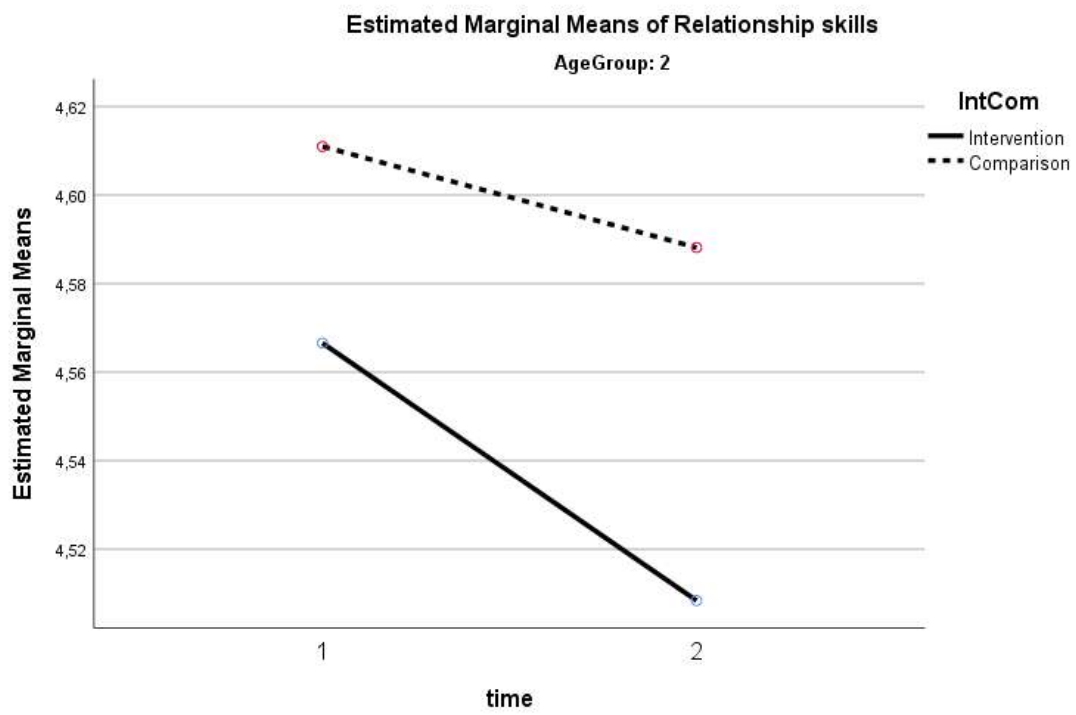
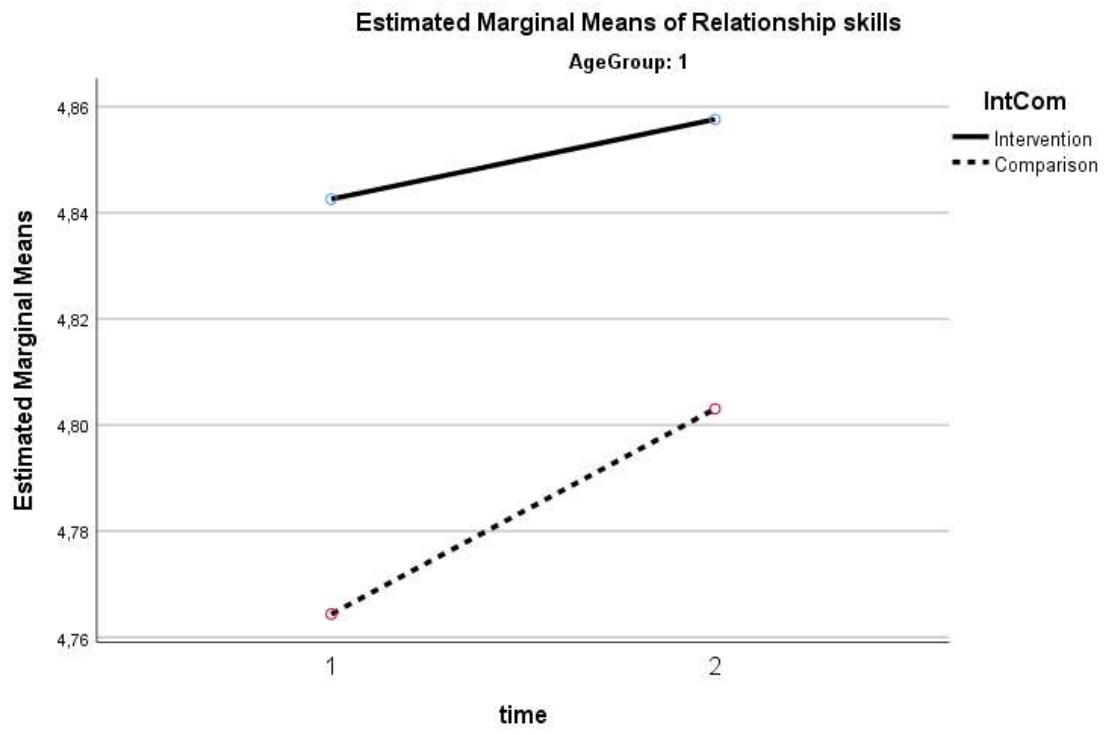


Estimated Marginal Means of Self management

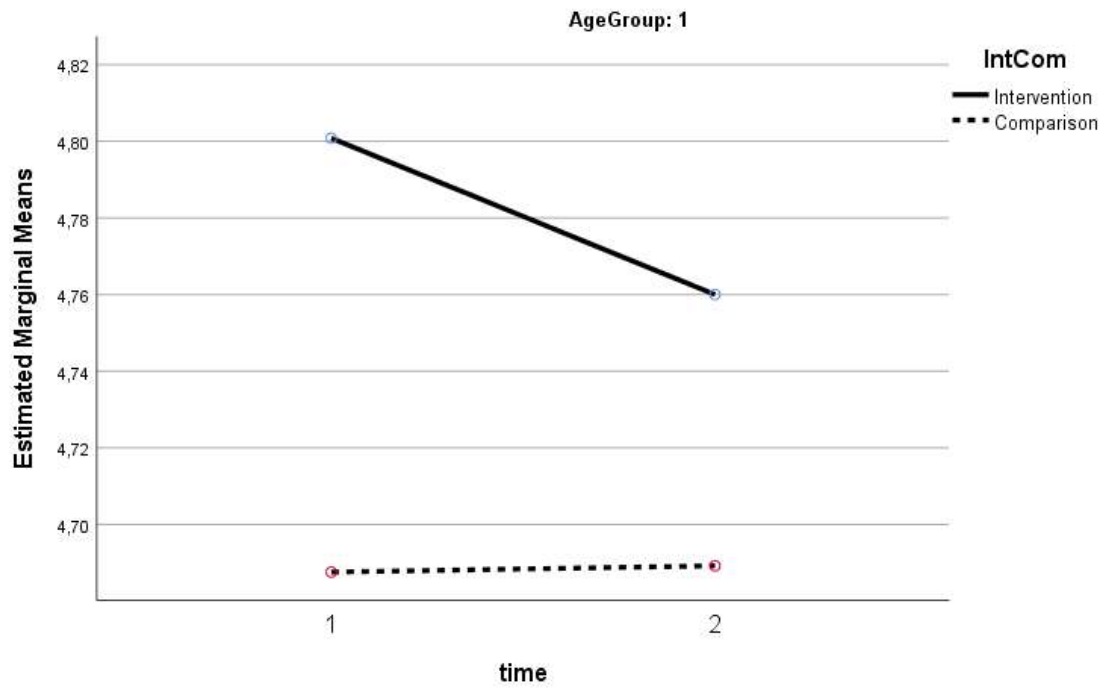
AgeGroup: 2







Estimated Marginal Means of Responsible decision making



Estimated Marginal Means of Responsible decision making

