

# Palliative Care goes School

## Results from a Project for Upper School Classes in Vorarlberg

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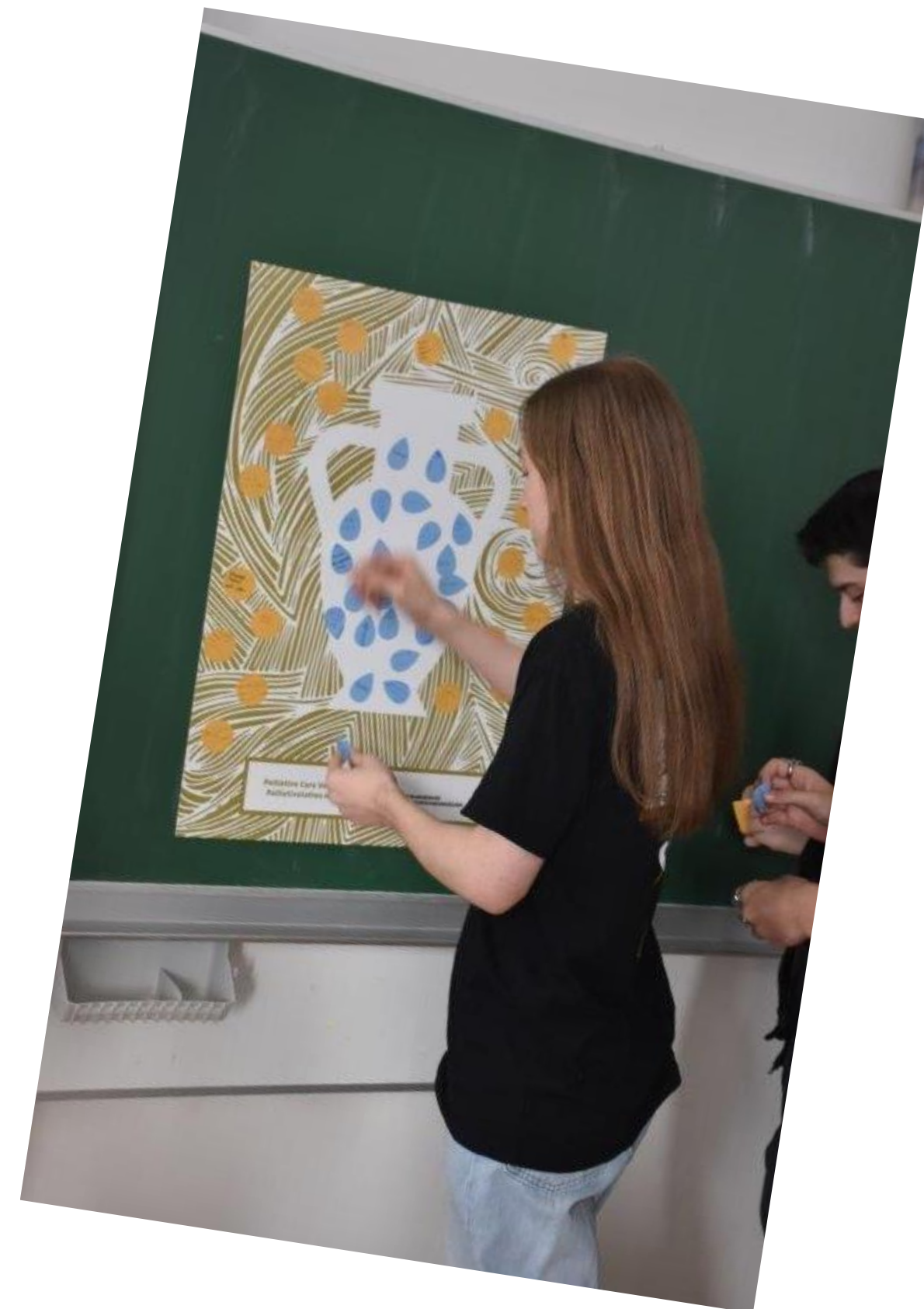
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### Background - Aim

The aim of the project is to provide pupils from upper school classes with an insight into palliative care through the perspectives of a nurse and a physician from a palliative care unit.

By sparking interest in palliative work, the project aims to show pupils that assisted suicide is not the only option for those with severe illnesses. Gaining an understanding of the daily roles of palliative care professionals may influence student's perceptions of palliative care and broaden their views on end-of-life care.



### Methods - Sample

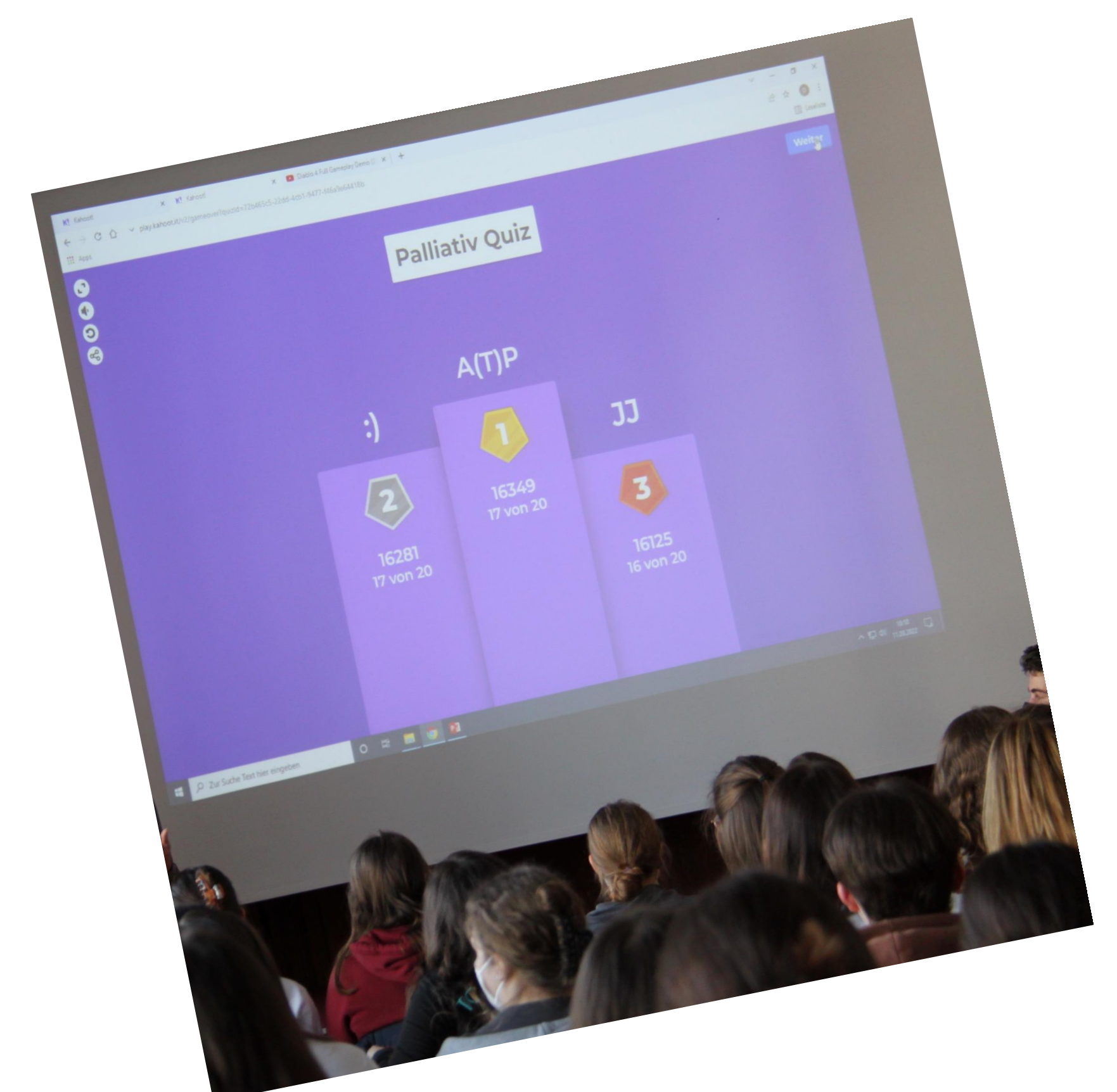
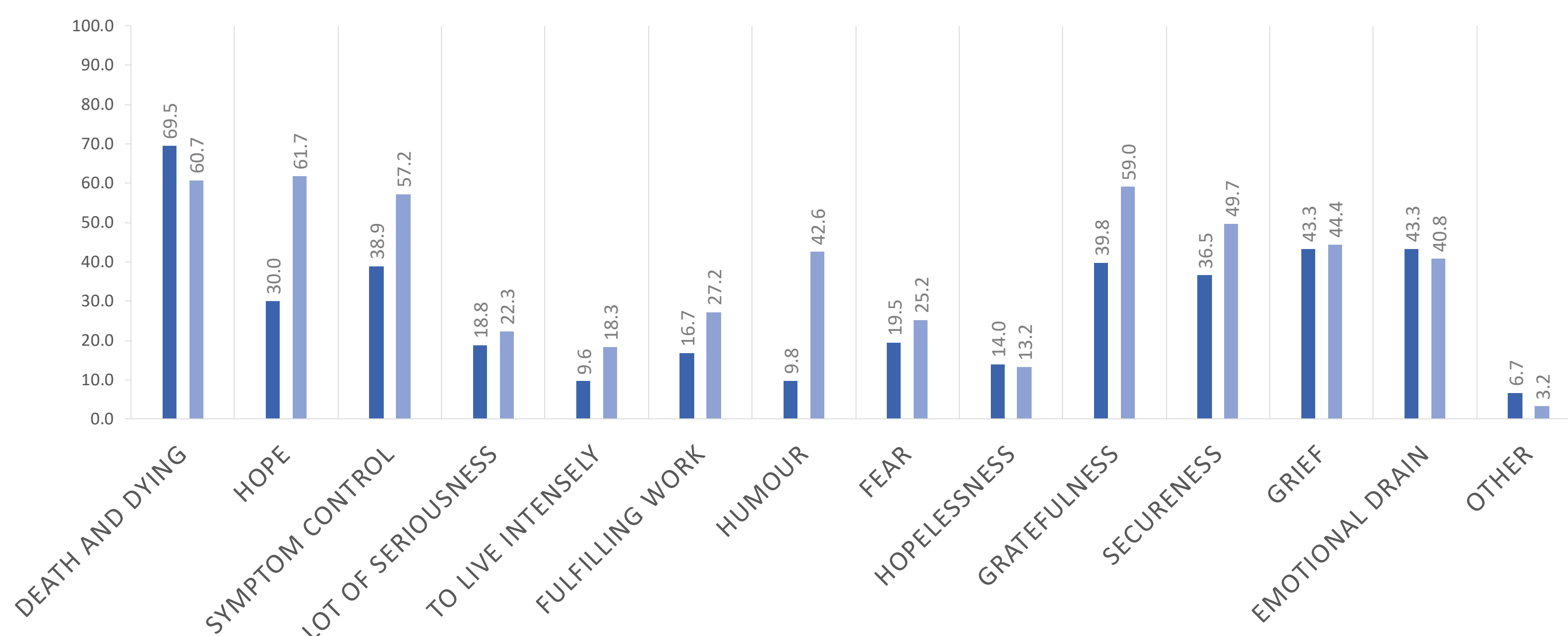
The school visit by a multiprofessional palliative care team was evaluated using a questionnaire, which was completed one week before (T0) and one week after (T1) the visit. The evaluation of the survey, that included open-ended questions for personal comments as well as questions with rating scales, was conducted by the University of Applied Sciences in Dornbirn.

Between January and June 2023 n=776 T0 and n=516 T1 questionnaires were completed. The pupils' age ranged from 15 to 21 years.

COMPARISON QUESTION T0/T1

WHAT TERMS COME TO YOUR MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF PALLIATIVE CARE?

■ T0 ■ T1



### Results

There was a significant difference between the main associations with palliative care before and after the visit ( $p < 0.001$ ). Before the lesson, pupils primarily associated palliative care with terms such as death and dying, emotional drain and hopelessness. After the visit these terms were chosen less frequently, while positive associations like hope, fulfilling work, humour and gratefulness became more prevalent.

64% (T0) had witnessed loss in their personal lives. In response to the question „Should assisted suicide only be permitted in individual cases?“ 41,3% answered „sure“ or „very sure“ on the T0 questionnaire. After the school visit this number increased to 48%.

### Conclusion

An introduction to practical palliative care led to a shift in attitudes towards assisted suicide. Also the associations with palliative care changed after visit, with significantly more positive terms such as hope and humour being mentioned.



Comparison question T0/T1  
Should assisted suicide only be permitted in individual cases?

■ T0 ■ T1

