

ERD 2021**9th International Conference Education, Reflection, Development****TEACHING – AN ACT OF EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION**

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Abstract

Education seen as a communication relationship involves the interaction between teacher and student. The success of the teaching act is largely conditioned by the success of the act of communication. Didactic communication appears as a particular form, one that is obligatory in conveying certain contents and specific to a systematic, assisted learning act. The interlocutors of the didactic act are the teacher and the student, who assume alternate, successive, complementary roles of transmitting and receiving the message. The present research observes the didactic communication as it takes place when pedagogical objectives are being achieved (the transmission and assimilation of information, problem solving, the formation of skills and attitudes, the evaluation of results, etc.), when training-bearing content is circulated, when the learning takes place, together with the student's development through active involvement in the act of communication. We focused in the current endeavour on teaching as an act of effective didactic communication which can be analysed through the prism of the model offered by communication theory. We performed an analysis of the barriers in didactic communication and presented ways to prevent or eliminate these barriers, through effective communication conditions and contexts.

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1. Introduction

In the “Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language”, the term “communication” indicates the action of communicating (getting in touch, in contact with, talking to) and its result. Communication is an action through which people transmit ideas and feelings, on the one hand, and find out about the ideas and feelings of others, on the other hand. The term “communication” has its origin in the Latin “communis”, hence the verb “communico”, which means to do something together, to put together.

Given that didactic activity, and the teaching activity in particular, permanently involves diversified types of interactions between the educator and educated, it is necessary to consider this act as one that especially involves interpersonal communication. The interactions manifested within the class activity have a value equivalent to the contents proposed for learning, with the efficiency of the whole approach depending on the quality of said interactions.

1.1. Definitions of communication in the literature

Didactic communication is a “complex, multiphase transfer achieved through several channels of information between two entities (either individuals or groups) who simultaneously or successively assume the roles of transmitters or receivers, transferring desirable content in the context of the educational process” (Cucos, 1996, p. 18).

The relationship of teachers with students is a dynamic construction, which constantly adapts to the circumstances and educational purposes. The relationship with students should not be reduced to a few formal, administrative aspects, but will be permanently adjusted and nuanced in accordance with the specifics of the school collective and the particularities of its members (Cucos, 2002, p. 331).

1.2. Principles regarding the act of communication

Specialized literature promotes certain principles regarding the act of communication which are possible to be applied both in the context of didactic communication and outside of it, in the sphere of interpersonal relationships (Pârvu, 2000):

- Communication is a continuous process, in which a permanent stimulus-response interaction is achieved.
- The communication process that is based on differences and equalities is symmetrical and complementary. The whole didactic act and its efficiency are based on this complementarity of the teacher-student relationship.
- Communication is inevitable, any human behaviour providing a way to convey a message.
- Communication is irreversible, any act of communication producing effects on the receiver.
- Communication involves efforts to adjust and accommodate the message transmitted, given that it must carry with it our personal experience.
- Communication is not limited to the transmission of information, the message sent having not only a functional role but also the role of changing the behaviour of the addressee.

1.3. Didactic communication

The process of defining didactic communication is an elaborate one, but we still propose two possible starting points.

- Pedagogical communication represents a complex, multiphase transfer achieved through several channels of information between two entities (either individuals or groups) who simultaneously or successively assume the roles of transmitters or receivers, transferring desirable content within the context of the educational process. Pedagogical communication involves a feedback interaction, regarding both explicit and adjacent information (intentional or formed in the very course of communication) (Cucos, 2002, p. 333).
- Didactic communication – is a particular form of human communication indispensable in conveying certain contents, specific to a systematic and assisted learning act (Ciobanu, 2003, p. 6).

2. Problem Statement

The structure and process of didactic communication (sending, receiving, the message, the channel or medium, the environment, favourable and disruptive factors, feedback)

Didactic communication, being a particular type of interpersonal communication, is characterized by several specific elements that the specialized literature has identified (Cucos, 2002; Pânișoară, 2015; Postelnicu, 2000).

A first feature is that the message transmitted during the didactic communication is selected and logically structured by the teacher in accordance with scientific reasoning, with the provisions of the school curriculum, or with the educational objectives provided in the school documents or in the educational policy.

Furthermore, the communication that takes place in a teaching environment takes into account the individual and age-specific particularities of the students. This aspect makes it possible to increase the level of effortless understanding of the transmitted message, increasing the efficiency of the whole process.

The message is transmitted to students through teaching methods appropriate to the level of intellectual development of the receivers. The didactic methodology does not only target the contents but also aims to present the most appropriate way of providing the information to the learners.

Another aspect that characterizes didactic communication is that in this type of communication the messages that are being conveyed carry a specific content. This message is calibrated, verified, and structured in accordance with the educational values promoted by the Romanian education system.

Starting from the idea that the specifics of interpersonal communication are particular to each field, we can, therefore, identify certain aspects in relation to the teaching environment as well.

Because many factors are involved in didactic communication, managing everyone's influence is a challenging activity. There are situations in which various sources of distortion appear, as the literature names the factors or conditions that, when inserted in the teaching activity, generate confusion or misunderstandings, distorting the educational environment.

3. Research Questions

Are there any barriers in didactic communication and what are some methods of preventing them or improving the communication?

4. Purpose of the Study

Ciobanu (2003) structures the barriers that appear in didactic communication by categories and, thus, we have a possible classification of them:

- **Language barriers**, which arise when:
 - The words used have multiple meanings.
 - There are significant differences in experience between the speaker and the listener, which determine the inadequacy of communication.
 - The emotional state of the receiver can distort the meaning of the message heard.
 - Preconceived ideas and routine influence receptivity.
 - Difficulties in expressing themselves, either on the side of the transmitter or receiver.
 - The use of words, idioms, or phrasings that cause confusion.
- **Environmental barriers** are represented by:
 - Inappropriate work climate (high noise pollution).
 - The use of inadequate information media.
 - A workplace climate that causes group members to not speak their minds with honesty.
- **The position of the transmitter and receiver in communication** can be disruptive factors because of:
 - The self-image of the transmitter or the receiver. Among the factors that influence self-respect we note egocentrism, resistance to change, lack of interest, preconceived ideas, etc.
 - The differing characterization of the context in which the communication takes place by the transmitter and receiver.
 - The different intentions with which the interlocutors participate in the act of communication.
- A fourth category can be constituted from **barriers of conception**, represented by:
 - The existence of unfounded assumptions.
 - Routine in the process of communication.
 - A clumsy phrasing on the side of the transmitter.
 - Lack of attention in receiving the message, both on the side of the transmitter and the receiver.
 - Hasty conclusions on the message (no active listening).
 - Lack of interest of the receiver towards the message.

Another classification can be made according to the place of occurrence of any disturbing factors, in relation to the scheme of didactic communication presented above. Thus, we have

- **factors related to the teacher:**
 - Poor health
 - The degree of fatigue
 - Illegible writing
 - Problems in adapting the complexity of the message to the age of the children
 - Emotional blockages
 - Lack of information
 - Deficiencies in teaching methodology
 - A low interest in the activity.
- **factors related to the student:**
 - Excessive shyness
 - Poor health
 - Emotional blockages
 - Passive listening
 - The degree of fatigue
 - A poor vocabulary
 - Difficulties in expressing themselves
 - Knowledge gaps
 - A lack of feedback
 - Misunderstanding of learning tasks
 - Speech difficulties
 - Behavioural disorders
 - A fear of expressing one's ideas
 - A low interest in the activity
 - A lack of desire or fear to share ideas.
- **other factors:**
 - Non-stimulating teaching materials
 - Discontinuous didactic approach
 - Low attractiveness of homework
 - Noise
 - Low brightness
 - Excessive stimuli present in the classroom
 - Inadequate oxygenation of the classroom.

Another possible classification of communication blockages would be that of **physical barriers**: speech or hearing impediments, the environment in which the communication takes place, the time of day, the meeting duration, inadequate information media; **semantic barriers**: vocabulary, sentence

syntax, emotional connotations of some words, difficulties of expression; **barriers determined by internal factors**: positive involvement, negative involvement, fear, subjective assumptions, etc.

5. Research Methods

Knowing these factors determines us to search for measures to improve the current situation or to completely prevent possible disturbances, by studying the specialized bibliography and by studying the opinions of teachers.

6. Findings

One possible way to prevent or lessen the impact of these barriers is to increase the attention to feedback and the awareness of its regulatory role. This inverse connection valued within the communication process is oriented in reverse, from the receiver towards the sender, and involves the transmission of information, both verbally and nonverbally, in order to regulate and self-regulate the teaching process. The teachers can then take measures to improve the learning situations, can complete the teaching process with additional explanations, can avoid crisis-triggering situations, can adapt teaching methodology or adjust their teaching style, all in accordance with the information obtained through the feedback received.

The continuous adjustment of the communication process and, implicitly, of the teaching act is done through feedback. Feedback represents the principle of the didactic communication process and refers to obtaining information about the effects of the communication made by the sender. At the classroom level, feedback can be provided and received by both teachers and students; it can refer to both the action by which the teacher obtains information about the effects of what is communicated (the act of teaching) as well as the action by which the students obtain information about the effects of their learning efforts. Therefore, feedback is the fundamental principle of effective communication and, thus, of any teaching and learning activities.

Depending on the moment in time in which the feedback is given in relation to the teaching sequence, we note the presence of formative feedback, which is done systematically throughout the sequence and has the role of supporting the students' learning activity, and summative feedback, which is performed at the end of the sequence and has the role of providing information about the performance of students and teachers.

We mention the fact that, far from being a simplistic and formulaic relationship, didactic communication is a complex reality, full of challenges. A real educational communication requires generous amounts of tact be used by the teacher.

Forms of communication (verbal-paraverbal-nonverbal, vertical-horizontal, direct-mediated)

Within the didactic activity, the educational discourse employs the most diversified forms of communication. That is why the criteria according to which we make their classifications are different. We will present below three such classifications.

- According to the nature of the signs used in the coding of the message and the channel used, we have:
 - *Verbal communication* occupies the main role in the didactic activity, most of the information being transmitted in this way. It is achieved through oral or written language and involves the exchange of messages through dialogue between two or more partners who alternately take the role of listener and speaker. The message is encoded by linguistic means and transmitted through them. Oral and written forms of verbal communication allow the transmission of contents of increased complexity, being suitable for the teaching environment. Oral communication requires certain conversational standards. This type of communication is accompanied by nonverbal and paraverbal communication, by emotional “empathic and participatory” aspects (Ionescu-Ruxăndroiu, 1995). Therefore, the conversation partners, the teacher and the students, require the ability to spontaneously construct their speech, to communicate it clearly, correctly, and logically, on the one hand, and to listen to it carefully, in a civilised manner, with interest, on the other hand. The dysfunctions of an optimal oral communication are: “the receiver does not show interest in the message, the message is transmitted with long, disruptive pauses, misunderstanding of the message because the receiver has a completely different position, the receiver does not have the ability to listen and repeatedly interrupt the communication, insufficient willingness to participate in the conversation” (Molan, 1997, p. 22).
 - *Nonverbal communication* contributes to the broadening of the transmission of the educational message and its meaning through complementary ways. Posture, facial expressions, gestures, movement, appearances sometimes convey more than what we say in words. The nonverbal and the verbal act together, the role of the nonverbal being to accentuate, elaborate, or substitute the verbal message. More than 60% of the social meanings conveyed in interpersonal exchanges are transmitted nonverbally, that being the reason why we must take note of it.
 - *Paraverbal communication* occurs during the act of communication, representing a special mechanism. Thus, the characteristics of the voice, the intensity, the rhythm, the flow of speech, the intonation can all contribute to the increase of the level of understanding of the meaning and significance of the transmitted message.

- According to the status of the interlocutors involved in the communication, we distinguish the following two categories:

- *Vertical communication* or communication that takes place between interlocutors of unequal status within an activity or a system of interactions.
- *Horizontal communication*, also called lateral or transversal communication (Postelnicu, 2000), within which the interlocutors have the same status.
- According to the degree of proximity of the interlocutors, we have:
 - *Direct communication* or interpersonal communication happens between two or more people, in close proximity and interacting with each other or influencing each other. In this case, the situational context is a shared, common one.
 - *Mediated communication* uses diversified means of transmitting the message and is used when direct communication is not possible. The use of technical means for transmitting the message within an educational environment represents a novel option, its capitalization depending on the alternation of the two forms of communication.

7. Conclusion

7.1. The conditions of effective didactic communication

As the fundamental way of interacting between teacher and student, the efficiency of didactic communication depends on certain conditions that we have identified and mention below.

- **Empathy** of the speaker or listener.
- **Openness** to the other.
- **The support** provided within the communication act.
- **Positive attitude** of the interlocutors.
- Attentive and active **listening**.
- **The adaptability** of the discourse to the educational context.
- **Accessibility** of speech.
- **Variation of content** in order to avoid boredom.
- Determining what represents **the essential parts of the content** in order to facilitate learning.
- **Motivating discourse**, as a support factor in learning.
- **Creating a pleasant emotional climate**, as a supporting element of didactic communication.
- **Presenting the didactic message**. A good didactic communication implies that the message sent by the teacher is received by the student in an integral and correct way.
- **Transmitting the message as accurately as possible**. The student receives the message and retains it in its entirety or partially.
- **Accepting the message**. Based on his own conception of the world, the student not only retains the message, but also accepts it as true. We communicate not only to inform, but

to change something in the student's behaviour. He is not a passive receiver, but a conscious, educable personality.

- **Attitude change.** The student not only believes the message, but also makes a verbal or mental commitment to change his behaviour as a result of a didactic message with instructive content.
- **Behaviour change.** The student changes his previous behaviour or learns a new pattern of behaviour.

The teacher must determine through feedback that these conditions are met correctly. By ensuring feedback, he will know how the didactic message was received and understood, the student will control his learning process, and the interpersonal relationship between those involved in the didactic act will be improved.

All the above-mentioned aspects allow us to state that the teacher-student relationship represents the fundamental aspect of didactic mediation, highlighting the importance of the interaction between the two educational actors and the reciprocal attitude towards the act of communication.

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