
DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS OF TEACHERS - IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN TEACHING PROFESSIONS AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract: The article describes the first part of the project on improving communicative skills of teachers. It is designed for the teachers of any kind of school institution within the school system, e.g. elementary schools, secondary schools, grammar schools, etc. Students of the pedagogical faculties usually attend the subject dealing with communication at universities during their studies. The project is based on the practical training programme, not only on the theory. Participants are actively involved during all ten sessions. The recommended length of the session is ninety minutes. The main topic of the article is communication, various strategies and attitudes how to develop specific communicative skills. There is presented an opinion that the communicative element represents the basis for all possible social relationships. The process of communication entails the following components: recipient, percipient, message, channel, feedback, context and barriers. The complete programme deals with the following topics: 1. importance of communication in the teaching professions, 2. verbal communication, leading of conversation, 3. listening, 4. negative and positive strategies of reactions in communication, 5. non-verbal communication, 6. harmony between verbal and non-verbal communication, 7. giving feedback, 8. expressing criticism, 9. conflicts and their solving. The first part of the programme consists of the first two topics, i.e. importance of communication in the teaching professions; verbal communication, leading of conversation and listening.

Keywords: communication, verbal, non-verbal, strategy, skill, training programme

1. INTRODUCTION

The project on communication is designed for primary and secondary school teachers who have not undergone communication skill training at universities. Students of some faculties of education and teachers extending their qualifications have experience in training communication skills.

The content of the project consists of activities that help develop communication skills. Communication was analysed from various points of view. Petrášová et. al. (2022) examined linguo-acoustic aspects of communication. Matějka and Miština (2022) analysed issues connecting with teaching profession. We consider communicative skills very necessary in the teaching profession. Welnitzová, Jakubičková (2022) examined relation between cultural and communicative competences. During ten sessions of the project lasting ninety minutes (2 lessons), participants will be introduced to the following topics:

1. the importance of communication in the teaching profession
2. verbal communication - conducting a conversation
3. listening
4. inhibiting and supporting reactions to communication
5. non-verbal communication, the importance of eye contact
6. consistency between verbal and non-verbal communication
7. expressing feedback
8. expressing criticism
9. conflicts and their resolution

The first part of the project focuses on themes 1 and 2. Participants learn communication skills through role-playing, problem-solving, experiential activities. We follow the procedure that is also applied in ethics education classes.

Step 1 - cognitive sensitization - understand the new reality

Step 2 - value reflection - reflecting on one's experiences and becoming aware of the ethical values that have been experienced

Step 3 - practice - learning the corresponding competences

Step 4 - Connecting to life - linking new knowledge and competences to everyday life

A prerequisite for the success of the project is the active participation of the participants in the activities and their personal involvement and openness to the issue of communication.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Aim: To become aware of the importance of communication in the teaching profession. The first part of the session will be devoted to introducing the participants to each other. This is a good start for creating a positive climate in the meetings.

2.1. Activity Familiarisation

Original activity

Time: 10 minutes

All participants sit in a circle. Everyone says their name and mimes what they like to do. E.g. My name is Andrei and I like to run (imitates running).

2.2. Let the person sit here

Original activity

Time: 10 minutes

Sitting in a circle. One chair is not occupied. The person who has the empty chair on the right says: "Let the person who likes to..." (adds an activity, hobby, something he/she wants to know about others, e.g. who reads books. Whoever fulfils this requirement takes the empty seat. He continues and invites to the empty chair the one who in turn has an empty chair on his right.

2.3. Brainstorming

Original activity

Time: 15 minutes

After introductions, participants will brainstorm on the topic "What do you know about communication?" All associations are written on a large board or paper. According to the results we will find out the level of knowledge about communication. Based on that we can modify the project or make some of the knowledge about communication clearer, more complete.

2.4. Communication in the teaching profession

Original activity

Time: 25 minutes

Participants will individually reflect on the importance of communication in the teaching profession. In groups of three or four they write these reasons on paper. One participant per group informs the others about the result of their group work. Values reflection: What is the importance of communication? Which functions of communication have you not yet realised? The project coordinator will add reasons that have not yet been mentioned and are important.

Communication is a specifically human skill. It is related to the very nature of human beings. It is essential in shaping the identity of a human being. Many researches prove that the quality of communication also influences the physical health of a person. Stewart (in: Myers, Herndon, 1988) argues that socially isolated people die prematurely, divorced people die twice as much from cancer, heart disease, stroke, five times more from high blood pressure, suicide, seven times more from diseases of the anus, ten times more from tuberculosis. Communication helps mental health. Some social needs (the need for acceptance, the need for security) are met within the context of established relationships and communication.

Different communication competencies enable us to get better jobs. The quality of our communication determines whether we become close or alienated. Whether we strengthen mutual friendship or develop indifference. Whether we grow in trust of others or develop distance from others. According to (Lencz, 1997), the most important reason to communicate, which the literature generally does not discuss, is to commune with someone, to build a relationship.

A connection with life: Each teacher will think of one reason why they wanted to improve their communication.

3. VERBAL COMMUNICATION - CONDUCTING A CONVERSATION

Aim: To learn how to start, sustain and end a conversation.

First, explain the concept of verbal communication to the participants.

Verbal linguistic communication is "a special form of transmitting information using language." (Mistrík et al., 1993, p. 203). The development of speech is also related to the development of thinking. People can exchange information, new knowledge, experiences, emotions, opinions by means of language. Through direct contact with the speaker but also through the described or heard word we are constantly communicating, getting to know. According to Krivohlavý (1986), speech is the developmentally highest, i.e. phylogenetically and ontogenetically most advanced form of social communication. Speech has the ability to determine the object of communication as precisely as possible, to suggest various alternatives, to express causal relations, to express much more precisely what logic deals with. Conversation is a kind of verbal communication. The condition for a successful conversation is:

- (a) defining the conversation
- (b) mutual clarification of expectations
- (c) organising the time of the meeting

3.1. Successful dialogues

Original activity

Time: 15 minutes

Each participant will individually attempt to write a short interview using the conditions of a successful interview.

We will read all the excerpts. Value reflection:

1. What does a successful interview depend on?
2. What did you realize during this activity?

Make participants aware of the mistakes that can occur during an interview:

-treating pupils too authoritatively, too friendly treatment, quick alternation of questions and answers, constantly directing the pupil, parent: "that doesn't belong here", "cut to the chase", unpreparedness of the conversation, running ahead, premature closures, impulsiveness, interrupting the respondent and asking the next question, reluctance to listen to the other, unnecessary emotionality

3.2. Interview

Source:Methodological material I.

Time: 40 minutes

The participants' task is to work out what a good interview should look like, based on the errors above. They work in groups of four or five. After reading all the works, the coordinator can add the conditions of a good conversation: obvious eye contact, appropriate facial expression, receiving and transmitting posture: orientation of the body towards the interlocutor, appropriate distance, calmness and refraining from impatient movements, not interrupting the other in speech. In pairs, participants are asked to prepare a demonstration of a conversation in which they use the conditions of a good conversation.

3.3. Orientation

Original activity

Time: 20 minutes

In terms of good conversation, we mentioned orientation, the mutual position of the participants in the communication. The facilitator will familiarize the participants with the types of relationships according to the orientation of the partners. Orientation is one of the manifestations of non-verbal communication.

We define non-verbal communication as "the deliberate use of means of a non-verbal nature to communicate with each other, to influence each other and to express mutual relations (Vykopalová, 1992, p.43).

Non-verbal communication conveys information mainly about the feelings and attitudes of the participants in the communication. The mentioned type of communication is also of particular importance in influencing behaviour and attitudes. With the help of facial expressions, gestures we can indicate our attitude towards the behaviour of the other. A communication participant who cares about effective communication, who often comes into contact with people, should be able to determine from non-verbal expressions how they manifest themselves, e.g. self-confidence, fear, signs of over-saturation, boredom, disinterest. Based on these identifiers, the communication process can be guided in the desired direction. Often communication and its transparency is hampered by inappropriate non-verbal means. In order to reduce or even nullify many undesirable non-verbal expressions, we first need to identify them.

According to Danek (2014), there is a blending and complementing of verbal and non-verbal communication elements at different levels of education. According to Myers, Myers (1991, p.97), we can define nonverbal communication as "any kind of communication other than speech." We can divide nonverbal communication into two categories:

1. speech of silence - it includes all kinds of behaviors or messages that are conveyed without words or by means of seeing, touching, smelling or unconscious processes.
2. speech of sound - includes within itself messages and types of behaviour that are conveyed by sound and we become familiar with them by listening. It includes paralinguistics.

The basic manifestations of non-verbal communication include:

1. mimicry - Gr. mimos = subtly and sensitively imitating, this includes expressions associated with facial muscle movements
2. gaze - the speech of the eyes, they are among the most active, transmitters of information
3. proxemics - the distance of partners in communication, by the size of the distance we can determine how close the partners are to each other. Four distance zones are defined:
 - a) intimate (0-45cm) -allows immediate touch of partners

- b) personal (45-120 cm)- represents the maximum distance at which it is possible to walk side by side, holding hands
- c) social (120-360 cm) - represents the distance for official negotiations
- d) official (over 360 cm) - this is the distance at which large meetings, lectures, conferences take place
4. gesticulation - lat. *gestus* = speech movement of the hand, it is a special part of kinesics dealing with the movements of the hands and fingers
5. haptics - gr.*haptēin* = to touch, it is communication by touch, it is realized only in intimate and personal zone, the most common forms of touch are hugging, shaking hands, kiss. Lack of touching by close persons, e.g. mother, father, towards children, etc. causes stuntedness, fear, apprehension, but sometimes also aggression, violence. Perceiving, interpreting and correctly understanding the signals of haptics is more difficult than with verbal speech (Noskova, 2019, p. 50).
6. posturistics - fr. *posture* = posture of the body, deals with the transmission of information expressed by the position and posture of the body, as well as the configuration of its parts. The four basic postures of the body are kneeling, lying, standing and sitting.
7. kinesics - notes the movement of the human body or some part of it
8. grooming, appearance, environment - grooming indicates what social group a person belongs to, whether he or she cares about his or her appearance.
9. paralinguistics - deals with how words are pronounced, this includes volume, stress, speed of speech, etc.
10. orientation - American authors classify it as nonverbal speech. It deals with the angle of our body in relation to the interlocutor. According to how partners sit, we define these types of relationships:
- a) conversation - a 90° angle between partners facilitates conversation
- b) co-operation - partners sit next to each other
- c) competition - partners sit opposite each other
- d) coexistence - a situation between people who do not know each other, but share a table in a restaurant, in a library, etc. (Tubbs, Moss 1991)

In pairs, participants choose a type of relationship and write down as many situations as possible in which it is realised at school. They then choose one situation and write a short dialogue to read in the appropriate orientation. Values reflection: 1. What did you realize during this activity? Did you find problems in your communication? Connection with life: Each participant writes one problem they have encountered in their practice while having a conversation. All the problems, problem situations will be collected. Then each one chooses one and at home tries to write a conversation that would help to solve the problem.

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