

## ASPECTS OF THE COMMUNICATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. CASE STUDY, HIGH SCHOOL SECTOR

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### **Abstract**

*The pupil-teacher communication and the teacher communication skills seem to be key concepts to reach the objectives of the educational act. Recent studies highlight the link between the teacher communication skills, their efficiency, and the fact that these skills could play a more important role for the education than the teaching staff training, his intelligence level and teaching methods. The research goal was the investigation of the aspects specific to the educational communication, that constitute facilitator factors and barriers in the learning process and in the relation teacher-pupil. The quantitative analysis was based on a questionnaire for pupils and teachers, that aimed the investigation of the respondents perception on what it is a good teacher in order to identify those skills that make the difference, from the pupils point of view, and also from the teachers point of view, between a competent teacher and an ineffective one. The research used a double approach, quantitative and qualitative one. The quantitative study allowed the inclusion of a number of 151 subjects and the survey of some dimensions of teacher-pupil communication. The qualitative research used a number of 47 subjects, but it allowed the consolidation of the approached topics. The results obtained were interpreted based on the differences that appear in the pupils and teaching staff opinions, but also through the investigation of those dimensions that make the difference, in the case of a model teaching staff, between the pupils and teachers perceptions.*

**Key words:** *different skills, ideal teacher, messages, teaching communication*

### **INTRODUCTION**

A communication skill is a very broad concept, frequently studied and often overlapped on interpersonal skills. Research in this field emphasize different skills or very similar concepts.

Teaching communication, held in the educational context, is defined in a general sense as instrumental form of communication directly involved in supporting a systematic learning process (Iyamu, E., Iseguan, A., 2009). In this definition of teaching communication, it is observed that there are no content restrictions (learning can be focused on acquiring knowledge, developing skills, motivations, attitudes), the institutional framework (teaching communication can exist outside learning) or related to the partners. The presence of learning provides communication the status of teaching communication provides communication status. Thus, teaching communication occurs in the presence of the following 'couples':

teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil, manual-pupil. Particular case of teaching communication, teacher-pupil communication has been studied mostly from pedagogical perspective, following as main theoretical model, the scheme of communication between two people and of transmission of information (Kearney, P., Plax, T. 1985), but reported in the school context. In the classical sense, the communication is the process of the transmission of information (messages) between a transmitter and a receiver (pupil or teacher) through a specific channel or code of communication (verbal, nonverbal, para-verbal). Researches that aimed at identifying communication barriers classified the communication dysfunctions according to the communication scheme components namely related to the emitter barrier, barriers related to pupil communication problems and barriers related message due to coding system or transmission of messages or characteristics of the environment in which communication occurs (Pânișoară, 2003 Cucuș, 1996).

Regarding the factors related to teacher, the literature (Shaunessy, 2009, Cooper, 1997; Kearney, 1985; Brusckhe, 1991) has many researches that set as the center of teacher communication skills the ability to send clear messages to listen, to give feedback. Yuksel-Sahin (2008) emphasizes empathy, active listening, feed-back and self-disclosure as the attributes of effective communication in the educational context, by increasing the satisfaction level related to pupil-teacher relationship, of the feeling of trust and motivation. Teacher-pupil relationship is one of the key factors of learning (Garcia et al., 2006; Monzo 'and Rueda 2001; Piante 2006). Teacher's humour is one of the features highlighted by literature (Bradburn, N., Sudman, S., Wansink, B. 2004), enhancing the teaching act.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was made in parallel, quantitatively and qualitatively.

The **quantitative methodology** included the science approach to elaborate a questionnaire to evaluate the opinion related to the communication skills of the teaching staff. The developed questionnaire was administered to a number of 151 respondents, respectively, 104 pupils and 47 teaching staff in the high school area. The instrument includes 16 questions, descriptors of communication behaviour that respondents must evaluate depending on the frequency of manifestation.

The evaluation aims the behaviour of an ideal teacher. Teachers respondents assessed their own behaviour.

The results obtained were interpreted in terms of differences in the opinions of pupils and teachers, but also by investigating those dimensions that make a difference between the pupil and teacher perceptions regarding the ideal teacher.

The **qualitative research** used as a data processing technique, the technique of content analysis, respectively: **case analysis**.

A "case" must include mandatory the presentation of the following elements: the

communication context (where? In what context the dialogue occurred?) Communication actors (Who?) examples of messages exchanged, ways of perceiving the messages sent (or reaction to messages receiver), recorded both by the transmitter and the receiver.

The "Case" was used as the main unit of analysis for each product of qualitative research (also quantitative, where possible).

The following types of non-verbal behaviour were registered: paralanguage, looking and gestures implying eyes and hand gestures, including handling of objects.

The quantitative study used two questionnaires, one for pupils and one for teachers. The questionnaire included 16 items, with variants of answers on a Likert scale from 1 to 4.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the analysis of the information obtained, differences are founded between the evaluation of teachers and pupils. Teachers tend to evaluate their own behaviour closer to variant "ideal" than pupils. For the ideal teacher assessment, both pupils and teachers often indicate the behaviour of communication facilitating. Pupils indicate such a type of behaviour, as they go up superior high school (Figure 1).

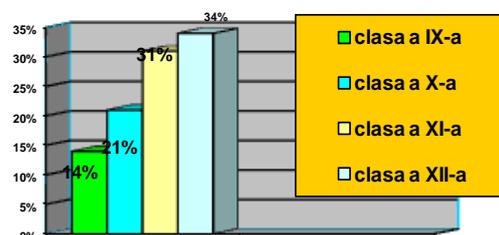


Figure 1. Percent of pupils who appreciate facilitator behaviour, on study years

In case of the teaching staff, this comparison was performed using the evaluation of their own behaviour. The results show that students make a clear distinction between opinion they have of a regular teacher and the ideal teacher

image who facilitates communication, meaning that the ideal teacher is seen as facilitating communication strategies using them often, even all the time. Regarding the evaluation made by teachers participating in the research, differences between personal behaviour and ideal teacher behaviour remain on all dimensions, except for items in the teacher's questionnaire, where teachers evaluate their behaviour as being very close as frequency of an ideal teacher behaviour. Teachers see themselves as being close to the model in terms of how to encourage creativity, to appreciate pupil to resolve conflicts and they facilitate learning by accepting questions from the pupils. (Table 1).

Table 1. Answers appreciated by all teachers, in an unitary way

| No. crt | Affirmations  | 1 = total disagree | 2 = partial disagree | 3 = partial agree | 4 = total agree |
|---------|---|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 3       | Encourage creativity  |                    |                      |                   | *               |
| 5       | He is disturbed that pupil asks questions                     | *                  |                      |                   |                 |
| 8       | Resolve conflicts that occur in t classroom in a discrete way |                    |                      |                   | *               |
| 9       | Appreciate the pupil qualities, in an open way                |                    |                      |                   | *               |

The image of the ideal teacher, the differences between the pupils and teachers opinion are present in 7 of the 16 behaviours investigated in the questionnaire. These differences shape the way in which the teachers and pupils relate to the ideal model. Thus, teachers consider the ideal teacher 'can put in the pupils shoes " more often than appreciating the pupils. Both pupils and teachers appreciate the high level of "empathy" of ideal teacher but the pupils seem to perceive more acutely the pupil-teacher gap than teachers do.

Another difference arises in assessing the extent to which the ideal teacher 'raise tone'. The pupils opinion is that the ideal teacher does not raise the tone almost never, and this opinion is clearly different from that of

teachers who believe that raising the tone is often the case the ideal teacher.

This difference can provide some clues about the relatively small number of disciplinary ways in the entire class, that teachers consider at hand, because even a "perfect" teacher has to "raise his voice".

Differences appear in terms of closeness to the pupil (item 14).

The latter ones perceive the ideal teacher as being closer to pupils than teachers see that - in their view ideal teacher keeping a distance pupil-teacher.

The importance for pupils to personalize the relationship appears also in different appreciation of the degree to which ideal teacher gives examples of personal life (item 16): pupils considered that ideal teacher is that who gives examples of personal life.

Facilitating learning by encouraging pupils to ask questions about study objects (item 5) appears to be an important behaviour rather for the pupils, who frequently quoted as the ideal teacher than other teachers. It is possible that they perceive as being less important this strategy than others.

Another behaviour related to teaching activity is pupil disruption. Teachers think that this behaviour occurs more often than pupils consider. The Paraphrase behaviour role in facilitating communication is perceived differently by teachers and by pupils, the latter considering the use of paraphrase ("reads what you said, in a way that shows you understand that." - Item 7) is more often in the case of ideal teacher than teachers appreciate. This result may indicate the perceived importance of feedback of pupils. Ability to resolve conflicts that arise in the classroom (item 8) is a skill of the ideal teacher considered as having high frequency by pupils, although both pupils and teachers consider to be frequently present in the behaviour of teachers.

Nonverbal behaviour (facial expressions and gestures) is however important for teachers than for pupils, assessing it as less frequent in the teaching act of the ideal teacher.

The humour (item 15) is a quality of the ideal teacher mentioned both by pupils and

teachers, but pupils appreciate that the model teacher uses humour more often than teachers appreciate.

Data processing shows that the "ideal" teachers is synonymous with "efficient", "professional" and appears to be related to the purpose of education seen as accumulation of knowledge. Pupils describe the ideal teacher as a charismatic, sympathetic, severe person but at the same time, close to the pupils.

It is the image of a relationship based on partnership and not necessarily focused on the activity of acquiring knowledge.

From the information collected, it appears that both pupils and teachers appreciate as ideal teacher, the person who has a series of features for their valuing. (Table 2)

Table 2. Features of ideal teacher, according to a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = very low, 4 = very high)

| No.crt | Features                       |
|--------|--------------------------------|
| 1      | Solid professional knowledge   |
| 2      | Communication skills           |
| 3      | Creativity                     |
| 4      | Authority                      |
| 5      | Self trust                     |
| 6      | Own vision                     |
| 7      | Rapid adapting to decisions    |
| 8      | Ability to make changes        |
| 9      | Assertiveness communication    |
| 10     | Sense of humour                |
| 11     | Inspiring those around         |
| 12     | Constant Stimulation of pupils |
| 13     | Generosity                     |

Most teachers believe that communication skills are acquired through practice, training and self-training.

However, teachers believe that the image you create using the communication is very important and we should not lose this perspective.

A teacher who has developed communication skills and has good listening skills and openness to pupils.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the teachers point of view, communication loses importance once with pupil growing old. Thus, the older the pupil grows, the less important communication with him is considered.

High school teachers believe that at present, the pupil is subject to a very rich communication flow compared to his capacity of detecting information and selecting useful value criteria useful value.

The increase of the number of information sources and pupils access to them, it is considered a disturbing factor in terms of behavioural patterns.

Mostly, the high school teachers considered that, at this level, the pupil knows his interests in education, has skills in community integration, and communication has as main role to support the pupil to overcome accidental moments (a day when not feeling well or a negative event in the family and so on). From the point of view of teacher-guide, communication performance at this level were presented as organizational performance and group conflict management (eg organized trips, extracurricular activities, interventions at another teacher to require fewer homework or to consent class from certain hours).

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