
Communication abilities applied since School

Beatriz Peña Acuña, Associate Professor, Education and Business Dpts. Catholic University of Saint Anthony, Murcia, Spain.

Francisco Moreno Lucas, Assistant Professor, Education Dpt., Catholic University of Saint Anthony, Murcia, Spain.

Patricia Blanco Díez, Lecturer, Law and Business Dpts., Catholic University of Saint Anthony, Murcia, Spain.

Abstract: *We understand that the interest in developing communication abilities from early childhood in Schools lies in the fact that these abilities are very important tools for the individual in order to know how to adapt in social and professional life. This text is divided in three parts. In this dissertation it will be explained first the concept of Communication, second it will be exposed main authors that highlighted communication abilities that should be developed early at Schools as empathy, social abilities, social intelligence, emotional intelligence, assertive communication, equality in relationships, and active listening. Third we introduce to communicative structures in order to know how to organise a classroom and advise teachers to know about dynamics of groups.*

1. Introduction

We are going to see the Communication and the scientific discipline which is currently studied in Communication departments at the University and applied in the Educational world, seen as a mindset of being and doing. Paulo Freire says that the Education is communication because it is not only knowledge transfer, but people who look for the significance of meanings.

2. Definition of Communication

Communication is based on the interaction between people to transmit or exchange information, ideas or feelings. Communication is the basis of all social life, to the extent that if all exchanged signals (oral or written) are cut out in a social group, it disappears.

There are many models about communication. Let's see two paradigms which fit into las idea of communication and that it help us to understand what communication is in relation to a social context (classroom and family):

- Aristotelian paradigm that says that human nature is individual as well as social.
- Interactionist paradigm that was drawn up by Mead and Blumer in 1930. Both speaker and receiver are seen as active and free members, who make up the meanings which interpret the social reality by social interaction.

If we resume and synthesize the process of Communication elements in a classroom, we will speak about: Speaker-message-receiver. In a classroom context, it is teacher-message-student or vice versa, or between students; and teacher-message-parents or vice versa.

The means used to communicate is spoken language, corporal language, written language, social network, etc. The one who is communicating (teachers usually and students often too) must learn how to give a clear and consistent message, he/she must check that it has been understood and he/she must avoid contradictory or ambiguous messages. The student must know how to get on with the oral language when speaking with other students, and he must also know to express himself in a classroom or in an oral presentation.

The teacher must create an emotional climate, in which all students can participate and communicate and take part in the same way. He/she also may learn how to communicate in the correct moment and place.

3. Concepts that contribute to interpersonal communication in Education.

The cultural and historic contexts are modeling the way in which human acts at ease. We can think about the proxemic distance that takes a Chinese to approach someone and when you find yourself in a crowd surrounded by English man, no one will touch you or be near. The French revolution emphasizes the equality value between citizens and it is an idea that will be established in European countries and it has been never been disputed.

Many scholars helped to define the interpersonal communication capacity of the humans. We will show them by order. In 1917, Edith Stein goes in depth on the empathy. It is the ability to walk in another's shoes (it is said in Spanish “ponerse en la piel del otro”), understand his personality, his feelings and his emotions.

Communication abilities applied since School

In the same way, Dale Carnegie (1936) spoke about the social abilities where the first golden rule is not wound the other's pride. Another author, Edward de Bono (1985) studied how is important to learn to stand at the various points of view of others: how they feel, perceive , and are affected by living things from their angle.

In 1983, Howard Gardner drew up the concept of interpersonal intelligence, which is the knowledge about the others and our relationship with them, it distinguishes different characteristics, moods, intention, motivations of others. It is the intelligence which helps us to work and relate with others, knowing that there are some social rules and values that rule the behavior and that tell us when, how, where and in which intensity we can use them.

The word “emotional intelligence” was spread by Daniel Goleman in his book *Emotional intelligence* in 1995. He says that the emotional intelligence can be organized in five capacities: identify one's emotions and feelings, recognize, manage (self-control), self-motivate and know how to run the social relations. The five basic emotions are: happiness, sadness, anger, fear and surprise.

In Spain there are two specialists in emotional intelligence education application that the investigations carried out have achieved renown. In the School of Psychology at the University of Malaga a research group devoted to the issue of emotional intelligence led by Pablo Fernandez Berrocal (emotional.intelligence.uma.es) and another by Professor Rafael Bisquerra Alzina at the University of Barcelona (rafaelbisquerra.com). Also had previously formulated concepts about social skills are those that enable us to communicate (Salter, in EE. UU. to Argyle and Kendon 1949 and 1967). These range from hello, make friends, start or maintain a conversation, asking for favors, ask, do not tell, reveal our feelings, express our opinions, etc. They have to do with what we think, we feel and do.

Social skills are learned through positive reinforcement of observational experiences, interpersonal and cognitive feedback expectations. We can learn social skills, which means learning to communicate better. Social skills are always oriented to achieve goals such as self-acceptance, feeling socially reinforced.

They are also characterized by having a situational specificity, in the sense that according to different situations, we use various social skills and

because they are heavily influenced by the cultural environment in which the person develops. In short, the main functions of social learning skills are reciprocity, adopting roles, control of situations, solving personal and interpersonal conflicts, maintain a cooperative behavior, self-control and regulation of behavior, emotional support from peers, trading solutions and make social connections.

The social incompetence is associated with low acceptance by peers, school problems with school maladjustment with personal problems such as low self-esteem, with psychological disturbances such as depression and helplessness, with juvenile maladjustment and mental health problems adolescence.

After ten years, Goleman highlights another kind of intelligence: the social intelligence (2006). This is understood as the human capacity to mix with others. It is integrated by the social sensitivity, which includes feelings for other people and the capacity of relation that facilitates the social sensitivity development.

The social sense is developed for young people aged five years old and up. Primary students can develop these skills which reinforces the social learning for a desirable classroom climate, and the abilities they will need for the teamwork.

Karl Albrecht defined as the ability to relate to others in turn ensuring that they cooperate with one. The powers are social sensitivity to understand the behavior of others in the environment, presence (impression), authenticity builds confidence, clarity and empathy to communicate the feelings of connection with others and ability to develop joint interests.

Daniel Pinazo holds that the concept of non-verbal communication includes three aspects of the actor: paralinguistic, kinesis and proxemic.

- a) Paralinguistic is about non-verbal behavior expressed by voice (tone, volume and rhythm).
- b) Kinesia is the science which studies non-verbal communication showed by body movements with the whole body, and the ones done by the hands, arms and head, the facial expression and the gaze.

Communication abilities applied since School

c) Proxemic: According to Edward Hall (who is credited with this word), proxemic is the science which studies the human relations with the space next to them, in which they can communicate with the facts and signals. Interpersonal communication face to face or face is basic and necessary because this is where we can best ensure that we understand the other not only for what it tells us orally, but also empathy and interpret body language. Children sometimes do not usually know what happens emotionally because they cannot identify yet well their emotions, but the teacher if you are sensitive and know the body language know what state you are , how they affect things , if it is blocked in the and learning how to motivate .

Some functions of nonverbal communication are:

- To express feelings and emotions
- Go with Verbal expressions
- Highlight Verbal expressions
- Reassure Verbal expressions
- Validate or invalidate verbal messages
- Adjust Interaction

There are also three styles of communication. Two communicative styles can be distinguished in an oral communication (listen and speak): assertive (it affirms with calm) which is positive and effective, and the non-assertive (passive and aggressive) which is negative and ineffective.

We understand assertive communication as the one in which someone has an effective communication with others; which implies that he recognizes and respects the other's rights and, at the same time, he defines his own interests. It implies the direct expression of someone's feelings, necessities, rights and opinions without treating or punishing others, and without infringing the other's rights.

Active listening is an ability which must be trained and practised well because the fast operation of our thoughts that compete with advantage above what the other's say. It is harder to follow an explanation and reconstruct the thread of something that someone has told us, than follow a track of our thoughts. There are some techniques that can be learned and trained.

There are some resources of active listening:

- Help the others to be expressive.
- Paraphrase other's thoughts (reproduce his words or ideas to see that you have understood what the other has said).
- Make some questions as a pressure tactic or to clarify. Throughout one question, we can create some doubts, recover a topic, make suggestions, etc.
- Summarize. We must let know to the others of our degree of understanding. As an example, we can use the sentence: "If I'm not wrong..."
- Say words of reinforcement or compliments: These words mean praise or reinforce the speech. Some examples: "I love speaking with you", "This is very funny",...

4. Dynamics of classroom communication

In 1951, Leavitt created four communicative structures in groups of five to check how communication could affect to the working and the efficiency of the group. Here there are:

- Communication is easier in a circle because of it flows between all members equally.
- Rather, in a wheel structure, there are four people who communicate with someone in the middle and it makes that this person has a recognized place and he/she allocates the information. The communication between the students is limited.
- Y structure: Someone is the central focus of the communications, but without relating directly with all group members, someone receives the information through intermediaries. Two people are in a higher place and three of them have the same communicative level.
- Chain structure: There is someone who stays in the central position, two are in an intermission, and two are at the end. It produce communicative inequality.

It is basic for a Primary school teacher to know some dynamics and techniques for groups to carry out the class encourage communication, linguistic abilities, self-esteem and group cohesion.

References

Argyle, M. y Kendon, A. (1967). The experimental analysis of social performance. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. 3:55-98.

Communication abilities applied since School

- Albrecht, K. (2006), *La inteligencia social, la nueva ciencia del éxito (Social intelligence, the new science of success)*, Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Imprint
- Carnegie, D. (1936) *Cómo ganar amigos e influir en las personas (How to win friends and influence people)*. Disponible en <http://files.biblioteca-uaca.webnode.es/200000159-7bb637cadd/28.pdf>.
- Davis, F., (2003) *La Comunicación No Verbal (Non verbal communication)*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- De Bono, E. (1985). *Six Thinking Hats: An Essential Approach to Business Management*. Little, Brown, & Company
- Fast, J., (2003) *El lenguaje del cuerpo (Body language)*, Barcelona: Kairós.
- Frutos T., Las habilidades comunicativas, un arma al alcance de todos (Communication abilities, a weapon available to all). Available at http://www.infoamerica.org/articulos/textospropios/frutos/habilidades_comunicativas.htm
- García Lozano, J. (2004) *Habilidades sociales (Social abilities)*, Murcia: UCAM. Keynotes.
- Gardner H., (1983) *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Basic Books.
- Goleman, D. (1995) *Inteligencia emocional (Emotional intelligence)*, Madrid: Kairós
- Goleman D. (2004) *Inteligencia social (Social intelligence)*, Madrid: Kairós
- Knapp M. L. (1982) *La comunicación no verbal (Non verbal communication)*, Barcelona: Paidós, 8ª edición.
- Leavitt H.J. Some effects of certain communication patterns on group performance. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1951, 46, 38-50
- LOE (Spanish Educative National Law) *Habilidades sociales (social abilities)* Available at http://www.madrid.org/dat_capital/loe/pdf/loe_boe.pdf.
- Navarro, P. Blog habilidad social (Social ability blog). Disponible en <http://habilidadesocial.com/el-lenguaje-corporal/>
- Pease, A. y B. (2006) *El lenguaje del cuerpo. Cómo interpretar a los demás a través de sus gestos (Body language. How to interpret others through their gestures)*, Barcelona: Editorial Amat.
- Peña Acuña, B. *Hablar en público (How to speak in public)*. Presentación en Slideshare. Disponible en <http://es.slideshare.net/beatrizpenaacuna/hablar-en-pblico-9445830>

- Peña Acuña, B., Diaz Frutos M. y García Gómez M. La necesidad de la inteligencia emocional en maestros de Infantil y Primaria (The necessity of emotional intelligence in teacher of Early School and Primary). En Peña Acuña B. (Coord.) 2011, *Desarrollo humano*, Madrid: Vision libros.
- Peña Acuña, B. Pintado Giménez M.M. y Muñoz Sánchez P. (2015). Destrezas de comunicación interpersonal para construir una cultura común (Abilities of interpersonal communication to create a common cultura). III Congreso Internacional de Ciencias Educativas y Desarrollo. San Sebastián. 24-26 Junio.
- Pinazo Calatayud, D. El lenguaje no verbal (Non verbal language). Disponible en <http://www3.uji.es/~pinazo/2001Tema%205.htm>
- Poyatos, F. (1994) *Comunicación no verbal II. Paralenguaje, kinésica e interacción (Non verbal communication II)*, Madrid: Istmo.
- Rizo García, M. (2011) Taller de comunicación interpersonal (Workshop about interpersonal communication), Murcia: Universidad de Murcia. Keynotes.
- Stein, D. (2004) *Sobre el problema de la empatía (About empathy's problem)* Madrid: Trotta.