PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DIDACTIC COMMUNICATION IN THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract. *The didactic process is originally a communication process par excellence between the trainers and the trainees. An exchange of messages is carried into effect through communication at various levels of schooling with the main purpose of achieving high efficiency pedagogical objectives. The science of requesting and offering, as well as the science of receiving and declining (objects, feelings, attitudes, etc.) lead to the satisfaction of learning and academic networking. Perforce, the study under scrutiny aims at identifying important psychopedagogical aspects that help improve academic communication. The study involved 60 students of Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael I of Romania" in Timisoara. In order to determine the level of communication within the students who were part of the sample, we used a questionnaire to determine the suitability of verbal skills, general self-efficacy scale and a questionnaire to determine the effectiveness of communication. Corollary to the application of the above-mentioned research tools, the characteristics of trainee communication at an undergraduate level representative for this institution were identified.*

Keywords: didactic communication, pedagogic objectives, Skills Questionnaire, The Scale of General Self-efficacy, efficient communication

INTRODUCTION

The teaching process supposes mainly transmitting information through communication at all levels, increasing its efficacy and diminishing troubling factors. Any form of didactic communication is also a form of educational communication because it exerts some kind of influence (the teacher produces changes in the students' personality). (DORINA SĂLĂVĂSTRU, 2004)

Building up and maintaining an effective and harmonious relationship between the teachers and his/her student needs – for a better informative-formative process - assertive, authentic, emphatic, mutual respect-based communication. In an academic setting, we need to increase the quality of the interaction with the social environment. Social groups in this environment offer newer and newer learning situations and the students need to adjust their behaviour taking into account social expectations. (HAVIGHURST, NEUGARTEN BERENICE, 1969) communicating in an academic environment means supporting the students acquire self-control in inter-personal communication. A good communication also includes acknowledging one's own specificity and the specificity of the other ones, one's own availability and the availability of the other ones within the relationships they are involved in as well as self-regulation in all the fields of psychic activity. Students' ability of self-observing, self-knowing, and self-assessing contributes to the development of an efficient communication style. Literature uses, in this respect, phrases like "assertive communication" and "assertive behaviour". (VALERIA NEGOVAN, 2004)

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This descriptive study starts from the hypothesis that the undergraduates of the Faculty of Agriculture of the Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael I of Romania" from Timisoara, Romania, enrolled in the course of the Teaching Staff Training Department should have well-developed verbal skills, range within normal limits as far as self-esteem is concerned, and have a communication style characterised by assertiveness (given that some of them will be teachers, some day).

The Communication Style Questionnaire: the sample has been developed by Solomon Marcus, a Romanian, psychologist, and it is relevant for the four fundamental communication styles: non-assertive, aggressive, manipulating, and assertive.

The Self-esteem Scale was developed in 1965 by the American sociologist Morris Rosenberg: it has a goof inner consistency and good test-retest fidelity.

The Skills Questionnaire (necessary for professional guiding) covers the survey of four types of skills: general learning skill, verbal skill, numerical skill, and eye-hand skill. Of these skills, the verbal skill is important for the future teachers who will have to be good examples of didactic communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Applying the Skills Questionnaire on the sample of undergraduates produced the results shown in Figure 1.
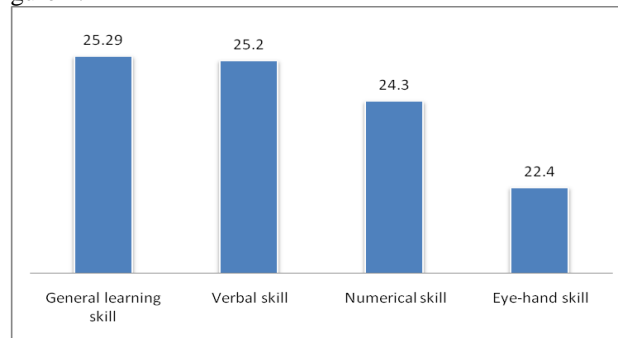

Figure 1. Results produced by the Skills Questionnaire

Verbal skills analysed with the skill tests recorded a mean of 25.2 points, ranking second; general learning skill recorded a mean of 25.29, ranking first; numerical skill recorded 24.3 points and ranked third; and eye-hand skill recorded 22.4 points and ranked fourth. All these skills ranked second at hierarchical level.

As far as the results produced by the Self-esteem Questionnaire is concerned, we can notice that 40% of the students surveyed obtained between 20 and 30 points while 60% of them obtained between 10 and 20 points. Of the latter, 40% can be said of having a low self-esteem (Figure 2).
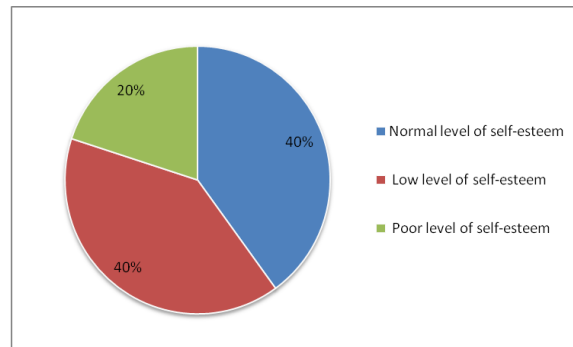
Figure 2. Results of the Self-esteem Questionnaire

"Normal" self-esteem defines a relatively normal person that self-assesses himself/herself closer to one or another of the two poles: low self-esteem or high self-esteem. Lower scores point to persons that are more modest, reserved, hesitating, or prudent. (Macarie A. E., 2007) Higher scores describe persons that think positively of themselves, that have high expectations from themselves, and that take risks while trying to overrun their own limits. Failure leaves no traces in these persons; they have a good reaction to criticism and do not try to justify failure, but they perseverate. Self-depreciation is characterised by the very low scores in self-esteem assessment or in self-esteem that is close to the lower limit. These persons have a bad opinion of themselves, have little expectations from themselves, think of themselves as limited, are afraid of being rejected, and sometimes think of themselves as a burden for themselves and for the other. Persons with high scores (close to the upper limit of self-esteem assessment) are focused on their own being and are infatuated; they excessively emphasise their successes, like to be admired, and think of themselves as somebody special. The results produced by the Communication Style Questionnaire (Figure 3) point out the following: 20.58% of the undergraduates have a non-assertive communication style, 26.59% have an aggressive communication style, 23.27% have a manipulating communication style, and 34.82% have an assertive communication style.
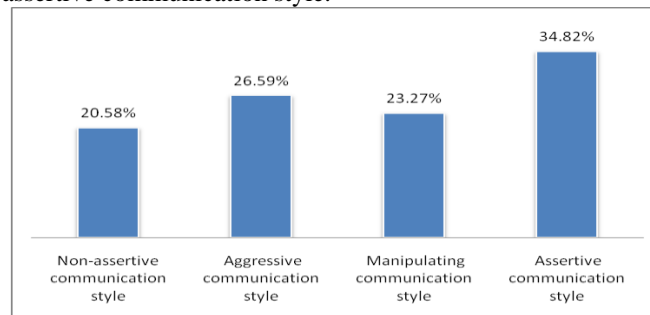

Figure 3. Results of the Communication Style Questionnaire

People with a passive communication style cannot communicate their desires and needs in a concrete way. They feel defenceless when confronted with the requirements from the other members of the society. A passive person lacks self-confidence and tend to avoid as much as possible personal displays in social activities.

People with an aggressive behaviour wish to have it all; they reach their personal goals detrimental to the others, they do not take into account the rights and needs of the others,

they underestimate the others, and they destroy the self-confidence of the others when competing. Moral consciousness is some kind of pseudo-consciousness, which turns all failures into successes.

People with assertive behaviour can express their needs concretely and explicitly; they can express their own vision of a situation or issue. They differ from the others through their positive attitude and they can self-assess properly. They are self-confident, and they can change their views when they are supplied logical arguments. They are not ashamed to ask for favours because they can be helpful and kind. Certain authors see assertiveness as a medium point between aggressiveness and passivity. (BLOOM, COBURN & PERLMAN, 1975)

CONCLUSIONS

Our descriptive study shows that the undergraduates of the Faculty of Agriculture of the Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael I of Romania" from Timisoara, Romania, enrolled in the course of the Teaching Staff Training Department have good verbal skills (they ranked second on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 points to the best results). Such well-developed skills are the warranty that these undergraduates will be able to communicate effectively if they decide to embrace the career of teacher. Results produced by the Communication Style Questionnaire show that most undergraduates have an assertive communication style. Good communication is doubled by good conduct, which requires good self-assessment. Most undergraduates ranged within normal limits and only few of them have a low level of self-esteem. Taking into account that self-esteem represents contentment with one's own person (HARTER, 1998), we can consider their scores as a motivating factor in surpassing oneself. Overall, we can talk of good communication and the building-up of interpersonal relationships based on self-knowing, self-esteem, and acceptance of the other – competencies acquired through education and training based on personal maturation and in agreement with the development of one's identity and of one's personal autonomy.

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