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## Communicative Skill And/Or Communication Competence?

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### Abstract

The paper intends to investigate the role of communicative skill and of communication competence in making the educational process more efficient. From a theoretical perspective, we present a synthesis of different paradigms focused on understanding the personality of a dedicated teacher, with an interest in two models: the one that has as a central dimension the interaction attitudes-aptitudes, and the operational model for developing the communication competences. From a methodological perspective, the results of two applicative researches are being used: a. experimenting and validating the model focused on determining the correlation between the pedagogical attitudes and the aptitudes of the teacher; b. investigating the efficiency of a training program centred on an operational model in developing the communicative skills of the beginning teachers. The data of our research conducted within the didactic communication area opened up new vistas for continuing the approach from a triple perspective: theoretical, methodological and praxiological.

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### 1. Introduction

The topic of development of educators' professional competences has been correlated with the new institutional structures promoted in European education and with the attempts to professionalize teaching during the past decades. In this context, programs of initial teacher training have been designed and conducted with a focus on an integrated system of initial training, internship and continuing professional development. One of the main objectives of these programs was to approach the formation of future teachers' competences in relation to and in interaction with their objective evaluation, in order to motivate students and make them responsible for their professional training (Bélair, Lebel, Sorin, Roy and Lafortune, 2010; Bélair, 1998; Jorro, 2009; Paquay, Altet, Charlier and

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Perrenoud, 1996).

Psychologists discriminate among aptitudes, capacities and competences. These concepts have been developed by the psychopedagogical theory of teachers' personality, by the theory of education, as well as by the psychosociological and interactionist perspectives. Other models of teacher formation include models centred upon prescriptions and norms, future teacher personality, process, didactic approach, knowledge of teaching "anatomy", active methods (Dunkin, 1988; Paquay, Altet, Charlier and Perrenoud, 1996).

Several studies had in view the identification of difficulties encountered by beginning teachers with regard to lesson planning and development, communication and interaction with students, classroom management, transfer of theoretical models of communication into teaching practice with a view to an effective management of conflict and crisis situations in the classroom (Urzua, 1999; Johnson, 2001; Allen, 2009).

Of the strategies proposed to facilitate beginning teachers' integration, we can refer to methodical guides, models of curriculum, mentoring, psychopedagogical counselling and assistance (Roehrig, Bohn, Turner and Pressley, 2008; Maldarez and Bodoczky, 2009).

## 2. Preliminary research

The theoretical research model for teacher communicativity designed by Popescu-Neveanu and Crețu was experimented and validated by our qualitative and experimental researches centred on establishing the correlation between pedagogical attitudes and aptitudes (cf. Dumitriu and Dumitriu, 1997). Communicativity is understood as a key element/component of pedagogical aptitudes and was operationalised in the following indicators:

- verbal communication with pedagogical functions;
- simple factors of communicativity: suggestive communication, eloquent and intelligible report, adequate gesticulation, capacity to elicit dialogue, demonstrativity;
- factors of expressive communication: intonation (modelle intonative models adequate in terms of lexis, syntactic organisation, global orientation of communication); accent, tempo (slow, rapid, moderate), pause, syntactic means (phrase/syntagm, clause, sentence).

Three categories of pedagogical functions of verbal communication have been identified: organisation, management and control. Their achievement is enabled not only by verbal communication, but also by non-verbal and paraverbal communication elements which enhance and confer additional meaning to verbal expression.

In order to identify the quantitative and qualitative aspects of teacher communicativity, three grids for recording verbal communication have been designed, pretested and applied to each teacher in the sampling lot, one for each indicator of communicativity described above.

Research results demonstrated that teacher communicativity is the central defining dimension of the aptitudinal pedagogical system. According to the criterion of expressiveness/eloquence, three communication styles of teachers have become prominent:

- 1) highly expressive communicative style;
- 2) moderately expressive communicative style (average);
- 3) poorly expressive style (low).

Subsequently, in the field of professional training, the term competence was preferred to designate a special category of individual characteristics, which are closely related to the values and knowledge acquired, as well as to the strategies and cultural universe formed. The focal point was switched toward the formation of teaching skills and to the styles and strategies of achieving learning goals. Professional competence involves "assertive" knowledge, procedural knowledge and attitudes manifested by beginning teachers as "hesitant juxtapositions" and hesitant behaviour, while for experienced teachers, the "experts", these components merge and contribute to performance (Faingold, 1996). In this context, an operational model for developing the competences of beginning teachers (competences including cognitive and metacognitive, communicational and relational, methodological, evaluative, psychosocial, ICT and career management) has been designed, developed and validated.

## 3. Research design

### 3.1. Objective and general hypothesis of research

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