DEVELOPING EMPATHY AS A METHOD OF COMMUNICATION IN EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING

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Abstract

The role of empathy in educational counseling is very important. Empathy is the ability to place yourself instead of another person, to understand how that person thinks and relates to the surrounding reality, by perceiving a sitation lived by someone ele as your own. Developing empathy is through the development of specific skills verbal and nonverbal communication. This study examines how future teachers in primary and preschool education understand adoption and implementation of this concept in class. The research is based on questionnaires applyed tothe targeted groupof students.

Keywords: empathy, educational counseling, verbal communication, nonverbal communication

A specific form of human communication is educational communication, which is a process of transmitting - receiving messages. These messages are in the form of knowledge, feelings, emotions, habits, etc. Communication skills in education are based on interpersonal communication that takes place in a specific context, assuming active interaction of those involved in communication, and also interaction type as feedback between educator and educated. In the paper, *Educational Communication*, 2008, intended for students, author Alexandra Silvaş defines educational communication as a complex, multiphase transfer and through multiple channels of information between individuals or groups that simultaneously or successively assume the roles of emitters and receivers, meaning desirable content in the learning process.[46]

[46] Alexandra Silivaş, *Comunicare educațională*, Târgu Mureş, 2008, p. 32.

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The purpose of educational communication is to participate in the development or spiritual growth of a person, leading to changes in the personality of both the educator and the educator. Through educational communication or pedagogical communication, educators influence their education.

The communication techniques used in educational communication are[47]: verbal communication, nonverbal communication and paraverbal communication; the latter two being intended to emphasize verbal communication and to complete the verbal message.

The importance of communication in educational counseling consists in a civilized dialogue, listening and speaking, asking questions and responding, in the ability to emit and decipher verbal messages, as well as paraverbal and nonverbal messages.

1. NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION. POSTURE. MIMIC. GESTURE

Body language has always communicative value, and messages always exist, even if it cannot be read at any time accurately and also on time.

The posture of the body relates both to the attitude that a person usually takes at a particular moment, and to the movements that can change the position of the body.

A mimic regulates human communication, and provides permanent information. The mimic signals are emphasized when they are inconsistent with the verbal message.

What can give people a facial expression?

- ✓ the event that generated the expression;
- ✓ the thoughts, the plans, the memories of the person who displays the expression;
- ✓ the person's emotional state (eg "feels sad");
- ✓ what I think the interlocutor is about to do;
- ✓ what the viewer wants from his / her interlocutor.

Gestures comprise the movements of the whole body, and refer to a person's way of acting faster or slower, more pressed or easier.

[47] Diana Melnic, Cristi Petcu, *Comunicare educațională*, 2011, p. 62-67.

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2. PARAVERBAL COMMUNICATION. THE VOICE

An important factor in communication is the voice through which we can find out a lot of information about a person. We can easily recognize most of the time, whether the person who speaks is a man or a woman, whether they are young or old, cheerful or sad, calm or nervous, energetic or soft, hurried or patient, sincere or pretended, friendly or merciless. [48]

Voice tone is important both as a vocal technique and as a tool of conviction. While words only transmit information, it is the tone of voice that conveys the feelings and attitudes.

The volume of voice may be a personality of great strength and vitality, but also of the need to feel important or, on the contrary, betrays a fragile personality, self-directed and fearful of others.

Speech rhythm is another feature that provides information about who communicates.

3. VERBAL COMMUNICATION. THE WORD

The *Word* is the most powerful and important tool we can use to reach our goals, it has the power to influence.[49]

Each word symbolizes a code and its use makes sense insofar as its meaning is perceived and shared by the communicators. Words suggest images and experiences that can bring positive emotions, stimulate, energize, and mobilize, but also negative emotions that can demobilize us.

4. EMPTHY

But all these communication techniques would remain inoperative if they did not help to implement essential principles of communication based on development from all points of view. One of the essential elements is empathy.

R. Dymond defined empathy as "*the imaginative transposition of the self into the thought, feeling, and action of another, consistently, structuring the world after that person."* [50]S Marcus defined empathy as follows: "*It is a psychic*

[48] *ibidem*

[49] Ionuț Vlădescu, *Rolul mijloacelor de învățământ în educația didactică*, in Revista Științifică a Universității de stat din Moldova, 2009, no. 9 5(25), p. 109-110.

[50] Elvira Repetto Talavera*, Fundamentos de orientación: la empatía en el proceso orientador*, Ed. Morata, Madrid, p.110.

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phenomenon of rethinking the states, thoughts and actions of the other acquired through the psychological transposition of the ego into an objective model of human behavior, allowing understanding of the way the other understands the world."[51]

Empathy is accomplished by imaginative - ideational positioning into the other's reference system, namely by taking the way of thinking and fulfilling a social role, by emotional transposition, activating an experience, affective identification with the partner, taking over his or her state of mind. Being empathetic involves the ability to transpose into the situation and state of the other, in such an implication, that the realities of the other are lived as such by the transposed one. As a concrete example, if a student tells you that on his way to school, when he was on the pedestrian crossing, he fell and saw a car coming at speed to him, in this case, the idea of empathy involves the ability to transfer you in the place of the student at that very moment he tells you about. You do not look at a remote situation, but you are a fallen student to which a car is heading with speed. How do you feel at that moment? This is the state of empathy.

To investigate whether students who are preparing to become teachers have this ability and to what extent, we apply a questionnaire[52] on 40 students from the Education Sciences Program, more precisely Conversion Program and the Pedagogy of Primary and Pre-school Education (III year), from University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Sciences.

The students who participated in the study were all girls, aged between 48 and 22 years.

The questionnaire contained 33 questions, each answer containing several variants of intensity to allow tone or disagreement: +/- 4, +/- 3, +/- 2, +/- 1.

The quotation according to this questionnaire was as follows:

¬ -132 - 33 non-emphatic person

¬ - 33 +66 weak empathic

¬ +66 +99 good empathy

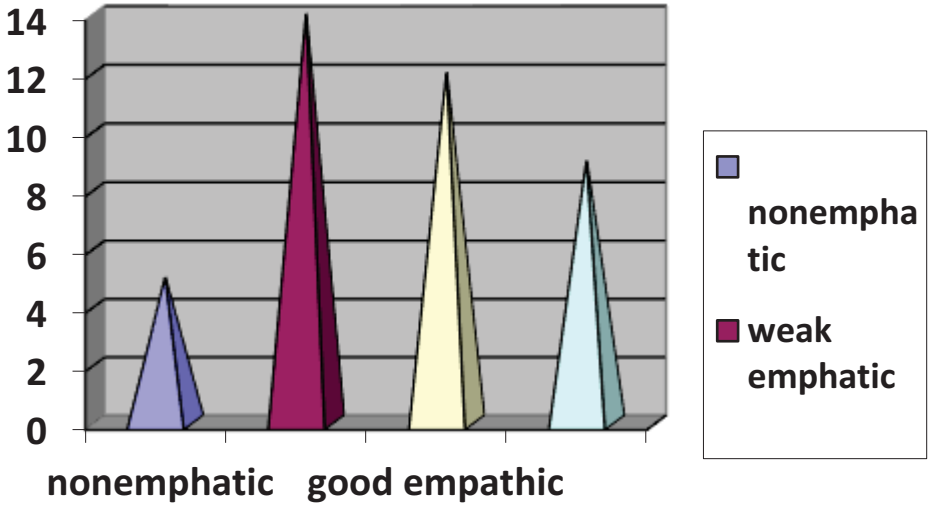
¬ +99 +132 proper empathic

[51] Leonardo BADEA, Nicolae Alexandru PANĂ, *Rolul empatiei în dezvoltarea inteligenţei emoţionale a liderului,* Economie teoretică şi aplicată Volumul XVII (2010), No. 2(543), p. 41-51

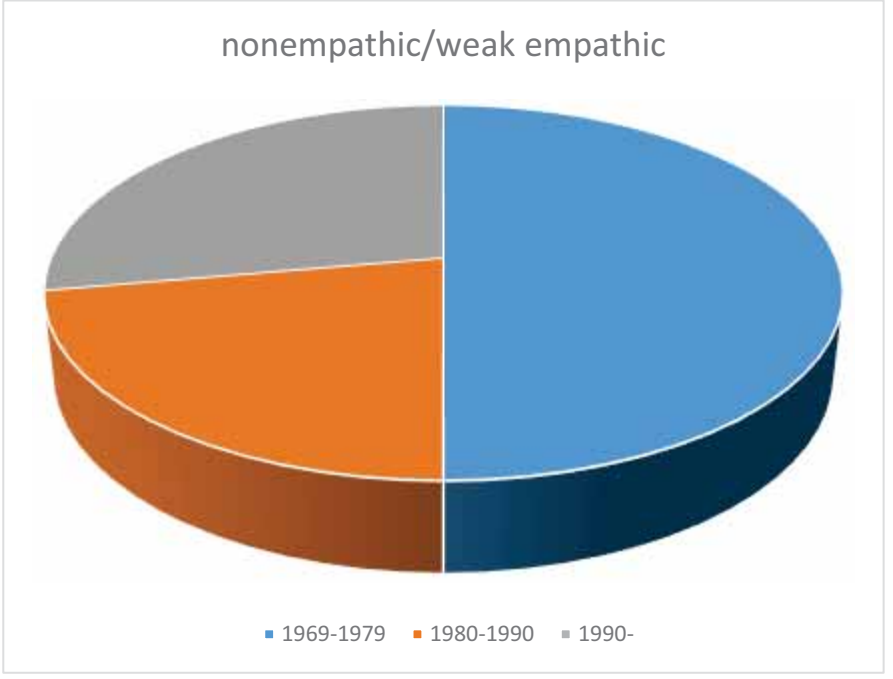
[52] Chestionar Q.M. E. E. (LA. Mehrabian, A. Epstein).

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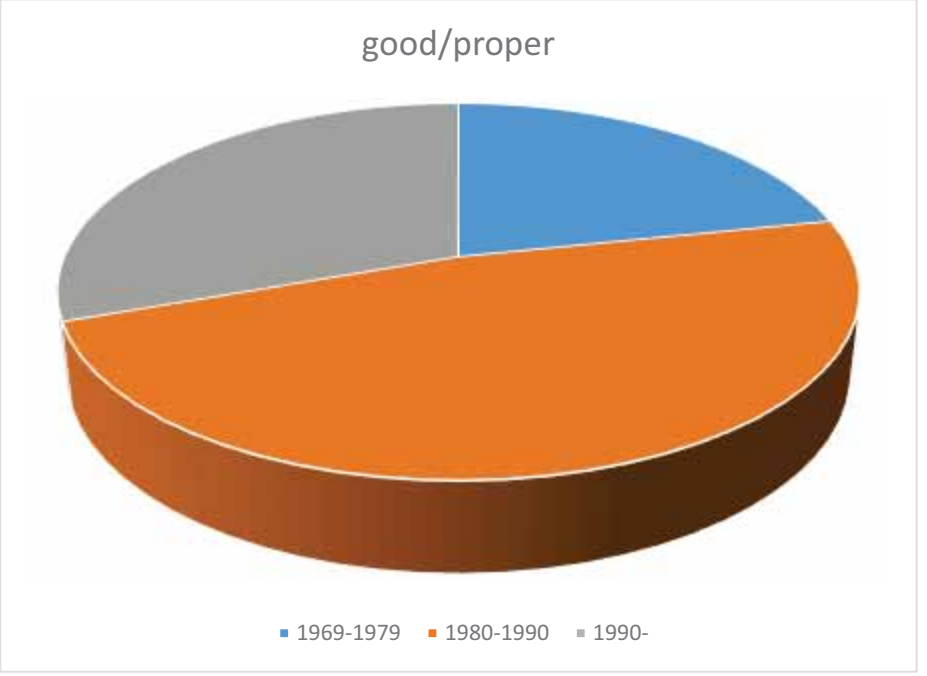
The responses were as follows:



Regarding the age category, the response graph is as follows:



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What is particularly interesting to note is the fact that the most predisposed to empathy are students born between 1980 and 1990. It is also surprising that those born in 1969-1979 show a lower share of empathy, although theoretically, with experience and not to mention that some of them are teaching, we think it would have been expected to get a higher index on the scale of empathy.

The importance of these results is particular, especially since modern didactics requires the presence of teachers not only capable of reproducing certain information, but of knowing how to involve the pupil in learning and gathering useful information and how to put it in daily use. The pupil's involvement in the process of teaching / learning cannot be done without the development of empathy.

It should not be forgotten that "educational relations highlight the attitudes of teachers and pupils in contexts specific to educational situations".[53] The link between the application of this concept and the results of the questionnaire lies in the fact that a person who generally has a low level of empathy will be less willing to use it in a given situation, especially when

[53] Claudiu Marian Bunăiașu*, Dezvoltarea competențelor de relaționare comunicare didactică, în cazul viitorilor profesori pentru învățământul primar și preșcolar*, în Craetivity, Imaginary, Languge, Ed. Sitech, 2014, p.201.

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teaching, while a person who is a good or proper empathic or empathetic will use this aptitude in the daily aspects of life, so also in the classroom as a teacher.

Moreover, the empathic ability can really help to create an emotional connection with the student. The teacher in the classroom should not dissociate himself from the emotional affections of the students, because, just as in life, the emotional state of an individual influences his way of referring to a given situation.

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