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# QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS DURING CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Summary: Communication is the basic social process in which information is provided and received, but it is also a process that allows interaction between individuals and groups, students and teachers, students and students, teachers and students. Most of interpersonal relations are conducted through interpersonal communication and the success of the educational process itself depends on the quality and success of the communication between students and teachers. It is very important that teachers, apart from their knowledge of certain subjects, teach students communication but also the skills of successful communication. This paper deals with communication skills that can be taught, improved and promoted in the teaching process as well as in extracurricular activities and these skills are very important in relations between students and teachers because bad communication is often cause of many problems and misunderstandings. The aim of the research was to determine and examine students and teachers' assessments and opinion about teaching communication skills. The survey sample consisted of 590 students and 315 teachers of elementary and high schools from the Herzegovina region (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The Likert scale was used for collecting data. The research results have shown that teaching students communication skills is present in the realization of teaching and extracurricular activities.

Key words: communication skills, teaching, extracurricular activities

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is an important aspect of the overall educational process. In or-der for students to understand the message sent by teachers, it must be clear, spe-cific, meaningful and simple. The teacher as the organizer of the teaching process realization has the responsible role for the success of each individual and class or group as a whole. In order to succeed, he/she has to lead the group democratically, communicate, direct the common activities to the purpose and systemically moti-vate all subjects in the educational process. Each student should feel good at school and to reach this, he/she should know how to communicate. Communication is the transmission of a message from one person to another so that he/she can under-stand it, check it in discussion and, if necessary, act on it. (Vilotijević, 2001:315). Communication is very important because it sets the atmosphere in the whole school.

One of the teacher's roles is to teach students how to communicate in the teaching process: to let them get to know themselves, to know how to talk, listen, observe, to get to know each other better and to respect each other.

To be able to talk about the planned and systematic approach to teaching communication skills or communicative competencies, it is necessary to mention several basic principles of pedagogical practice that enable and encourage their teaching:

- appreciate and respect the students' feelings to help them feel and become competent participants in the peer group, or classroom community,
- social or communication competence is culturally determined,
- difficulties in students' socialization are opportunities for teaching,
- social or communicative behavior is developed in a closed circle,
- direct communication enhances the effectiveness of adults ,
- important relations require content,
- optimal teacher intervention encourages social, and communication competence,
- adult expectations form children's characters, interaction and communication of teachers with students is a model of social competence (Katz and McClellan, 2005:55).

Communication skills can be defined as a transmission of messages that imply a common understanding of the context in which communication takes place (Sa-unders and Mills, 1999). Apart from that, communication skills are important for teachers in providing education to students (McCarthy and Carter, 2001). Good communication skills ensure that each teacher gets the best from the students. The study that was conducted by Sng Bee (2012) considers that good communication skills are not important only for teachers, but also for students and their academic success. Classroom communication involves face-to-face interaction and communi-cation that is necessary between class participants to ensure undisturbed learning process (Kogut and Silver, 2009; Kazi, 2012). Communication skills are very impor-tant and essential for each teacher, and they are the foundation of successful and quality communication with students. These skills are: listening, empathy, flexibility, inclusiveness, quality interaction, openness, sensitivity to mutual cooperation and appreciation. Quality and successful communication skill teaching is realized in the teaching process and it can be more common in extracurricular activities where the teacher shows that he/she cares about the students' progress and that he/she makes students' self-confidence stronger, and the ultimate outcome is increasing efficiency and quality in education and communication. Communication in the tea-ching process has been transformed during its development and it has been ranged from completely authoritative, violent and rigid to democratic, open and participa-tory. The effects of the teaching process depend, among other things, on the quality of communication between the immediate participants in the educational process;

between teachers and students. To develop his/her identity, a student must learn, in communication with the teacher, how to receive and give information, of course, in the context of mutual trust, respect and appreciation. Efficient communication skills allow the teacher to successfully modify student behavior in class. Communication skills are the tools that are used to remove the obstacles to effective communication (McPheat, 2010), which is of particular importance in the teaching process and the very nature of communication varies from person to person, from culture to culture and from society to society (Kabita, 2014) . Classroom communication directs the teaching process and learning and it is the key element for stimulating learning. The effective communication in the classroom overlaps the teaching and learning material (Civikly-Powel 1999: 63) and is at the core of any classroom quality (Polk 2006: 25).

The characteristic of interpersonal communication that favors the development of student identity and communication skills is the possibility of free choice of information by both teachers and students. Extracurricular students' activities are ideal for free communication because students select certain activities by themselves and this gives the teacher the opportunity to interact with the students, through a personal example and through certain workshops, exercises and activities. Communication in extracurricular activities is a direct exchange of messages between teachers and students. This communication process in which the teacher and the student interact with each other has the purpose to positively influence the development of the students. The efficient and clear communication is a prerequisite for starting a quality learning process. If the relationship between students and teachers is disrupted due to inefficient communication, this will not only negatively affect the acquisition of knowledge but will directly hinder learners to develop effective skills of mutual communication with the others as the students will follow the teacher's example.

According to Farrell (2009), teachers use classroom communication to achieve three things: to acquire relevant students' knowledge, to answer questions asked by students and to describe the experiences they share with classmates. Teachers should become more aware of their communication skills and communication patterns currently used in communication with classroom students and should be able to assess whether these forms provide opportunities for learners to adopt and improve their own communication skills. Communication skills include listening and speaking, as well as reading and writing.

Extracurricular activities provide great opportunities for the cultural and creative development of students' personality. Darling, N., Caldwell, LL. and Smith, R. (2005) have found that students who participate in extracurricular activities at school ac-hieve better grades, more academic aspirations than those who do not participate in extracurricular activities. The meaning of extracurricular activities is the creation of communication and other conditions to involve as many students as possible in various organizational forms in which they will find meaning and satisfaction and understand their need. Active listening, asking questions, critical thinking and dis-

cussion are certainly exercises that can be realized in a quality and well-designed way through extracurricular activities. Communication in extracurricular activities is a direct exchange of messages among teachers and students. This communication process in which the teacher and the student interact with each other has the pur-pose to positively influence the development of students because many problems and difficulties in school arise precisely because of the lack of adequate, success-ful and quality communication. Reasons for such deficiency are often insufficiently developed pupil communication skills, and these are the reflection of the child's communication within the family. Such communication should be the basis of mu-tual respect, respect, trust (Bratanić, 2002:102). Communication is very important in creating a positive climate in the classroom and good interpersonal relationships. Poor communication can cause many problems and misunderstandings between students and teachers. In order for the communication to be efficient, it is nece-ssary for the students to understand the message sent by the teacher, to be clear and intelligible, democratic and humane, and the good communicative skills that the teacher possesses will enable students to adopt them and to achieve good re-sults in the teaching process, as well as in extracurricular activities.

## **METHODOLOGY OF WORK**

Communication skills are the forms of conduct the teacher demonstrates in interaction with other students. Their aim is to motivate students, develop good interpersonal relationships with them, support them, and create a positive communicative climate in the classroom. Through active listening, asking questions, empathy, self-management, involvement and managing interaction as well as behavioral flexibility, teachers can instruct students directly and indirectly in communicative skills.

The aim of the research is to establish students and teachers' assessment of teaching students communication skills. In accordance with this goal, we have formulated research tasks:

- 1. Investigate the students and teachers' opinion of whether teachers teach students communication skills in teaching process.
- 2.Examine the students and teachers' opinion on whether teachers in the process of realizing extracurricular activities, teach students the skills of communicating

Hypothesis of research; we assume that there are no statistically significant differences in assessments among students and teachers on teaching the skills of communication in teaching and extracurricular activities.

The population we chose to be the sample of respondents for this survey was composed of students of the ninth grade of elementary schools and students of the first and second grade of secondary schools in the territory of the Herzegovina-Ne-retva Canton. The survey sample included schools, students and teachers from five cities( Mostar, Konjic, Jablanica, Stolac, Čapljina), seven elementary schools ( IV

Elementary school Mostar, Elementary school "Mujaga Komadina" Mostar, Elemenatary school "Šejh Jujo" Mostar, VI Elementary school Mostar, Elementary school Stolac, II Elementary school Konjic, Elementary school "Suljo Čilić" Jablanica) and seven high schools: (School of Mechanic and Traffic, Medical School, Karadozbey's Religious School, School of Electrical Engineering, Economic School, Jablanica Secondary School, Konjic High School)

School		students		teachers		
Elementary	7	М	293	М	91	
High school	7	F	297	F	224	

Table 1. Sample Structure

To find out the relevant information of whether the teachers and to what extent they teach the students the skills of interpersonal communication in teaching and extracurricular activities, we have constructed an instrument that consisted of 12 statements, the Likert scale for students and teachers. In this scale, respondents expressed the frequency of individual communication skills (always, often, sometimes, rarely and never) segments in accordance with the instructions that were part of the scale.

The scale was consisted of two parts: the assessment scale of students and teachers on the teaching skills of communication in teaching activities and the assessment scale of pupils and teachers on the skills of teaching communication in extracurricular activities. On the sample of 200 respondents (120 pupils and 80 teachers), using SPSS 21 statistical software we established the reliability of instrument = .844 (Kronbah's alpha coefficient).

The discrimination of the claims was calculated by means of an item total correlation, through the correlation of the results the respondents achieved on a particu-lar claim and the results achieved in the overall assessment. All assessments whose correlation is significant contribute to the assessment and have satisfactory discrimination. The final variant of the scale has a distribution that significantly deviates from normal as demonstrated by the Smirnov-Kolmogoril test, where D = .082, df = 200, p = .002, or the Shapiro-Wilk test where D = .958, df = 200, p = .16

#### **RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH**

#### DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF STUDENTS IN TEACHING

Contemporary and creative teaching enables creating the conditions for active participation of students, teachers and parents in interaction and communication. Modernization and innovation in upbringing and education put each teacher in the situation to emerge as a creator and finder of a new and more efficient way of working to achieve the best results, and the role of communication is of great importance. For good communication in teaching, the teacher should take into account that the con-

tent and methods are adequately represented by the emotional-social component. Everything the teacher makes in interaction with the students allows them to know something about him, and many of the messages are interpreted by students as the teacher's relationship with them. When communication is more common and richer, students will experience this as an interest in them, and when it is rare or absent, they will perceive the teacher as uninterested and feel neglected.

Certainly one of the ways of teaching students communication skills is by setting a personal example. By introducing quality communication as one of the ways of teaching communication skills, students learn how to clear misunderstandings and conflicts by carefully choosing their words. Quality communication is a valuable as-set in community building and often prevents any difficulties and barriers built into positive interpersonal relationships. In Table No.2 we have presented the results of the assessment of the subjects on the teaching of communication skills in the teac-hing process where on the scale the minimum evaluation is presented as never, and the maximum evaluation is presented as always.

Indicators of communication skills in realization of teaching	respondents	N	Min	Max	Mean	Deviation
Teachers interrupt students while speaking	Α	590	1	5	2,81	1,16
	Ν	315	1	5	3,47	1,31
Teachers ask other students to listen to the student speaking		590	1	5	4,52	,79
		315	1	5	4,81	,41
Teachers pay attention as the student speaks	Α	590	1	5	4,29	,85
reachers pay attention as the student speaks	Ν	315	1	5	4,83	,42
By communicating teachers strive to get all the students in the class interested		590	1	5	4,07	1,00
		315	1	5	4,77	,46
Teachers develop good relationships	Α	590	1	5	4,29	,85
with students	N	315	1	5	4,39	,84
Tarahawa awaawaa ahudawka ta diaawa	Α	590	1	5	3,49	1,01
Teachers encourage students to discuss	N	315	1	5	4,03	,83
Taashawa ammasista different aninisma	Α	590	1	5	4,38	,85
Teachers appreciate different opinions	N	315	1	5	4,50	,58

Table 2. Teaching Communication Skills in the Teaching Process

χ<sub>2</sub>= 63,362 p>0,05 df=5

Legend:S-students, T-teachers

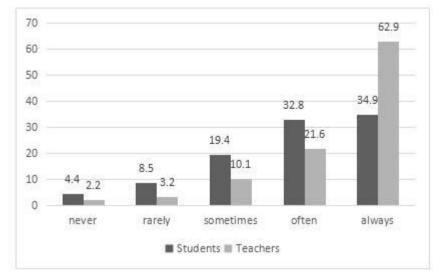
The results of the descriptive statistics indicate that students (Me = 4.52) have positive attitude and assessment about teachers' communication, or teaching of communication skills, in the teaching process in the indicator where the teacher wants students to listen to the other student while speaking. Listening is an impor-tant element of effective communication. The goal of true listening is to understand

what the co-speaker is trying to say. A good listener pays attention to the speakers' feelings and the context in which they say something. When the speaker becomes confused, a good listener asks questions to make things clear. Silence and breaks should be interpreted correctly, sometimes as interference, sometimes for moti-vating participants in communication (Brilhart, Galanes and Adams, 2001: 54). The highest mean value in teacher estimates (Me = 4.83) is observed in indicators where teachers consider that they pay attention to the students while speaking and enco-urage other pupils as well. These two indicators are related because the personal example of the teacher depends to a great extent on the behavior of the students. By teaching communication skills, the teacher creates the conditions for a student to develop the social and communication competencies needed to establish relationships and communication with students as a way of teaching communication skills, teachers teach students. By conducting quality communication with students as a way of teaching communication skills, teachers teach students how to clarify misunderstandings and conflicts with careful use of words.

The obtained data indicate that students and teachers do not have the same assessment during the teaching process; various activities are carried out with the aim of improving the students' communication skills. The lowest mean value (M = 2.81) in the student's assessment was given by the indicator teachers interrupt the student while speaking. Although we have not succeeded in verifying if the teacher interrupts the student to point to a particular interaction or connection to teaching, we still feel that if democratic communication is to be developed, it is important for the teachers to allow the students to finish what they have to say and only then give their feedback, comment or suggestion.

While 34.9% of students believe that teachers continue to teach communication skills during the teaching process, the percentage of teachers is doubled to 62.9%. With other estimates we can also notice the difference in the percentage. Small values of standard deviation concerning both students and teachers indicate low dis-persion or dispersion of numerical series of the arithmetic mean, followed by good representativeness of the arithmetic mean concerning both students.

In order to have more relevant information if there were statistically significant differences in the assessment of pupils and teachers on the teaching of communication skills during the teaching process, we have done the calculation of the  $\chi_2$  test. The obtained value  $\chi_2$  is 63,362 and is greater than the limit values at the level of 0,05  $\chi_2$  = 11,1 and at the level of 0,01  $\chi_2$  = 15,1 for the corresponding degree of free-dom (df = 5) which leads us to the conclusion that there is a statistically significant difference in the estimates of students and teachers of elementary and secondary school on the teaching skills of communication in the teaching process.



#### S. Šejtanić: Quality of communication between students and teachers during ...

Graph 1. Teaching Communication Skills in the Teaching Process

For good teachers it is not enough to have the knowledge they possess, but also their art of behavior and communication skills in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships in the classroom. When teachers 'put' themselves in the students' position, they can understand their desires and needs, and future communication will be much more successful. Positive teachers' ratings are really encouraging because successful and quality teachers express empathy towards the students and facilitate the teaching process and have good communication with them for the purpose of quality interaction.

Although it was evident that students and teachers had a positive attitude towards communication skills, the differences in their responses were noticeable, which was ultimately connected to the value of the  $\chi_2$ test. In the process of helping students learn and practice communication skills, it is very important to create the right educational strategy that will provide students with a multitude of opportunities for communication through meaningful content, play, work, and entertainment. The meaningful and systemically planned social interaction and communication in the teaching process is one of the most important factors of optimum cognitive and/or integral development of each student.

# DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF STUDENTS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Quality education sets the teacher the task to develop students in democratic, creative and creative-oriented young persons with their own attitudes and percep-tions, all through satisfying the basic interaction and communication links. Certainly, extracurricular activities can provide space for achieving this goal. Teachers have great autonomy in designing program contents of extracurricular activities, their preparation and realization. The development of communication skills can lead to very good results through debates, focused workshops, during the realization of extracurricular activities. In order for the teacher to adapt the communication instruction to the students, he/she must communicate with them on the principles of mutual respect and empathy. Only such communication opens the way for successful and free communication, which makes the realization of extracurricular activities more efficient. Table no. 3 shows the results of student and teacher estimates where the minimum estimate is 1 (never) and the maximum 5 (always) indicates the presence of the indicator.

Indicators of teaching communication skills in the realization of extracurricular activities	Respondent	N	Min	Max	Mean	Deviation
Teachers organize various activities to	А	590	1	5	3,37	1,12
help students learn and practice the skills of interpersonal communication	N	315	1	5	3,97	,083
Teachers work on the development of	A	590	1	5	3,47	1,07
interpersonal communication skills in extracurricular activities.	N	315	1	5	4,44	,069
They create and stimulate two-way	A	590	1	5	3,34	1,02
communication in extracurricular activities	N	315	1	5	4,52	,058
	Α	590	1	5	3,28	1,13
Teachers encourage students to ask questions	N	315	1	5	4,50	,058
Teachers do not provide conditions for	Α	590	1	5	2,35	1,29
open communication in the realization of extracurricular activities	N	315	1	5	1,50	,079

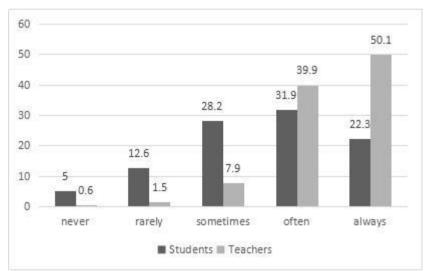
Table 3. Teaching communication skills in the realization of extracurricular activities

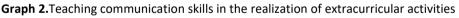
 $\chi_2$ = 129,44 p>0,05 df=5 Legend:

S- students T- teachers

Based on the results presented, it is evident that most students (Me = 3.47) think that teachers work on the development of interpersonal communication ski-lls during the realization of extracurricular activities. Interpersonal communication is one of the basic instruments of our identity development. In order to provide and ensure the development of the student's identity in the educational process, the necessary condition is the quality of interpersonal communication within the school. Respondents have estimated that teachers stimulate two-way communication during the realization of extracurricular activities (Me teachers = 4.44, Me students= 4.52). In two-way communication, students can ask questions and in this way they will inform the teacher if they have received the sent message and to what extent, but also if they have adopted certain teaching or extracurricular content.

Interpersonal communication is one of the basic instruments of our identity development. A student must learn to receive, but also to provide information in a conversation with a teacher, of course, in the context of mutual trust and respect. In two-way communication, co-speakers react and reciprocally affect one another. Both of them talk, and both of them change. At the beginning and at the end of the conversation they are no longer the same. It's a conversation that is develo-ped through listening, thinking and talking. In carrying out extracurricular activities, this communication is realized through the conversation of teachers with students, mutual interaction and discussion. Extracurricular activities cannot be realized wi-thout communication, and its goal is to direct student activities for the purpose of personal well-being and school welfare. The obtained data indicate that teachers work on the development of communication skills during the realization of extracurricular activities implies that participants have communication skills such as listening, asking questions, empathy, knowledge of the situation, involvement, management, interaction and flexible behavior. Extracurricular activities are an ideal opportunity to practice communication skills due to the flexibility of the teaching content.





Equal and partnership relations between the participants in communication are the ones that contribute most to the quality of the exchange and are reflected in mutual respect and acceptance. The ways the teachers do it determine whether they will get connected with their students or they will be interrupted in commu-nication. The obtained data indicate that students and teachers have a similar esti-mate that during the realization of extracurricular activities, teachers practice the development of communication skills. However, it is visually noticeable that the rate of agreement between the respondents is significantly different. Out of the total number of students surveyed (N 590), 22.3% of them have said that teachers always practice communication skills in extracurricular activities. This percentage has more than doubled when it comes to teacher evaluation and it is 50.1% (esti-

mate always). Particularly interesting is the estimate sometimes chosen by 7.9% of teachers and 28.2% of students. Since the value of the standard deviation is small, this indicates a small dispersion or dispersion of numerical series of the arithmetic mean, followed by a good representativeness of the arithmetic mean. The skill of communication is one of the key aspects of the development of each individual. Without advanced communication skills, we can hardly achieve well the tasks we are doing in an extracurricular activity. Therefore, teachers are obliged and accountable to develop students' communication skills, and this is achieved, among other things, by setting a personal example.

The calculated value  $\chi_2$  is 129.44 higher than the limit values at 0.05  $\chi_2$  = 11.1 and at 0.01  $\chi_2$  = 15.1 for the corresponding degree of freedom (df = 5), which suggests that there is a statistically significant difference in the estimates of students and teachers of elementary and secondary schools on the skills of teaching communication in the realization of extracurricular activities. The extra-curricular activities of students are an important segment of life and work at school. It is possible to identify individual child preferences much more than during the realization of the teaching process. The child, through our democratic choice for certain content, directs us to the area of his interest and activity.

This aspect can help teachers to use the extracurricular activities in the best possible way. Communication skills are very important in interpersonal relationships because we can make a lot of misunderstandings and problems with the wrong communication. High-quality communication skills of each student can significantly increase his or her success in the educational process.

#### CONCLUSION

High-quality communication is the valuable means in the community develop-ment and often prevents potential difficulties and barriers in building positive inter-personal relations. Teaching students communication skills in the teaching process increases the possibility for them to apply those skills in specific situations.

After analyzing the students and teachers' assessments of whether the teachers teach the students communication skills in the teaching process and in extracu-rricular activities, which were the tasks of the research, it can be concluded that teaching students communication skills is present in the teaching process as well as in extracurricular activities. This attitude was confirmed by the students and the teachers. However, it was evident that there was a difference in their estimates. While the students were reserved from having a very positive attitude to the presence of communication exercises in the teaching process and extracurricular activities, most of the teachers had a very positive attitude- 'always'.

They estimated that over 60.0% of them always teach students communication skills in the teaching process and over 50.0% of them teach those skills in extracurricular activities. The students' percentage was considerably smaller. Around 34.0% of students stated that they had communication exercises in the teaching process and about 22.0% in the realization of extracurricular activities. To be completely

sure whether there are any statistically significant differences in student and teacher assessment, we have done the calculation of the  $\chi_2$  test which, in case of realization of teaching activities ( $\chi_2$ =63,362) and in the realization of extracurricular activities ( $\chi_2$  = 129,44), was already at the limits of 0.05  $\chi_2$ = 11.1 and at the level of 0.01  $\chi_2$ = 15.1 for the corresponding degree of freedom (df = 5), suggesting that the hypothesis 'We assume that there are no statistically significant differences in assessments among pupils and teachers about teaching communication skills in teaching and extracurricular activities' could be rejected.

Although not enough attention is paid to communication exercises in the teaching process and extracurricular activities, great progress has been made. Quality communication is not inborn, but as any other skill is achieved by the conscious and frequent application of the learned. Qualitatively prepared and professionally designed extracurricular activities enhance the communicative skills of students regardless of whether a student has chosen acting, dancing, ecology, sport or any other extracurricular activity. It is important that in these activities students learn how to communicate in the correct way.

For the realization of extracurricular activities, it is important to have two-way communication that provides feedback between students and teachers. Students have the opportunity to participate in the discussions, which brings the quality of communication to a higher level. It is also very important for teachers to work inten-sively on the development of communication skills during the realization of extra-curricular activities. Communication skills are not something that people are born with, or given, they are given as a task, and they can be developed and improved. They imply knowledge, characteristics and habits, and they are made, developed an improved by learning and practicing.

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