

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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Annotation: *This article delves into the critical role of communicative competences in the realm of professional education and its impact on career success. The article emphasizes that clear and concise communication is key to reducing misunderstandings and increasing productivity, thereby enhancing overall workplace efficiency. The significance of communicative skills in fostering and maintaining professional relationships is explored, noting that these abilities are instrumental in building trust and respect with clients, customers, and colleagues. The article also underscores the importance of communication in career advancement, suggesting that strong communicative competences often correlate with leadership opportunities and professional growth.*

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Communicative competence (or communication skills) is one of the central prerequisites for successful medical practice, of this there is probably no serious doubt. However, there is less agreement whether and, if so, how communicative competence can be acquired. The answer to this question also depends on what we mean by communicative competence. In the literature, there is now a large number of explanatory models from various disciplines (e.g. medicine, psychology, sociology, linguistics, university didactics, communication sciences) that attempt to answer this question. A complete presentation of these explanatory models would go beyond the scope of this commentary.

When we deal with the question of whether and how we should teach communicative competence, we must first define what communicative competence actually is. Unfortunately, as in the discussion about the concept of competence in general, there is no uniform definition. In the scientific literature, no systematic or clear distinction is made between “Communication Competence” and “Communication Skills”. For example, the standard work by Silverman, Kurtz and Draper is entitled “Skills for Communicating with Patients”, although it is probably the aim of the book to promote the acquisition of communicative competence even though the term “competence” does not appear in the book. Thus, for pragmatic reasons it seems obvious and legitimate to use the concept of skills when we

search for a definition of communicative competence and to ask the question of whether and, if so, what similarities exist between motor skills, social skills and communication skills.

According to Owen Hargie, who has developed a comprehensive concept of communication skills, a motor skill is an organised, coordinated, goal-oriented activity that involves a sequence of sensory, cognitive and motor mechanisms. A skill can be learned, i.e. understanding and behaviour are built up step by step through repeated experience. A skill is also serial, there is an order and coordination of different processes and activities in a sequence.

However, perhaps a communication skill is less a motor skill than an interactional or social skill. Hargie defines a social skill as a process in which an individual applies a set of purposeful, interconnected, situational appropriate social behaviours that are learned and controlled. Social skills include verbal and non-verbal behaviour, involve appropriate prompts and responses that require timing and control of specific behaviour, and are influenced by contextual factors. Therefore, the process of couple dancing is an apt metaphor for social skills: Each dancing partner brings with him/her own motives, to impress the other or to build a relationship. Couples complement each other in fluid, coordinated patterns. This requires a coordinated interlocking of the learned repertoire of both partners. Certain “moves” are expected or anticipated. If one cannot dance or tries a different dance step, it becomes difficult.

So where are the differences between motor and social skills? Social interaction is related to other people, one's own goals and the goals of others are included, and rules and routines are less strictly defined. As far as social skills are concerned, emotions and personal involvement play a greater role (self-esteem, acceptance, etc.). Perception in the process plays a greater role, as it is not only about the perception of the skill itself, but also about one's own reactions and the reactions of others. And personal factors also play a greater role (age, gender, origin etc.). A first hypothesis at this point would be that communicative competence is more similar to social skills than to motor skills.

Let us now look at the competence definition. By now a large number of definitions of the term competence do exist. In the didactic context of higher education, reference is often made to the Weinert's definition, who describes competencies as the cognitive abilities and skills available to individuals or learnable by them to solve certain problems, as well as the associated motivational, volitional and social readiness and ability to use problem-solving in variable situations successfully and responsibly”. Competences are therefore highly specific and can best be understood from the requirements side: We experience and evaluate a person as competent when he or she is able to solve certain tasks or meet certain requirements. Skills, on the other hand, can be understood as specific behavioral or action dispositions that must be organized and used in a situationally appropriate manner when solving a non-trivial task.

We believe that it makes sense, particularly with regard to educational issues, to understand communicative competence as the situation-specific use of communicative skills. Thus, the scientific findings on the teaching, acquisition and testing of skills are also valid for the field of clinical communication.

Communicative competence is the ability to achieve communicative goals in a socially appropriate manner. It is organized and goal-oriented, it includes the ability to select and apply skills that are appropriate and effective in the respective context. It includes verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The application of communicative competence is serial, different processes and activities are coordinated in a typical sequence and require appropriate timing and control of specific behaviour. It is influenced by the behaviour of the other person and by the context and requires the preparedness and willingness to communicate with the other person for the benefit of all. Communicative competence can be acquired, i.e. the necessary skills are built up step by step through repeated, reflected practice and experience quoted from.

The importance of developing communicative competences in professional education cannot be overstated. In today's interconnected and rapidly changing world, the ability to communicate effectively is crucial in almost every profession. Effective communication skills enable professionals to work collaboratively with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders. In a professional setting, teamwork is often vital, and the ability to share ideas, provide feedback, and resolve conflicts is dependent on strong communicative abilities. Clear and concise communication can significantly improve efficiency in the workplace. Misunderstandings and miscommunications can lead to mistakes, delays, and frustrations. Competent communicators can convey their messages accurately and understand others' inputs, leading to smoother workflow and increased productivity. The ability to communicate effectively is essential for building and maintaining professional relationships. Whether it's with clients, customers, or colleagues, the capacity to engage in meaningful dialogue, listen actively, and express oneself clearly and respectfully, fosters trust and respect. Individuals who possess strong communication skills are often seen as more capable and confident. This perception can play a significant role in career progression, as effective communicators are frequently identified for leadership roles and given greater responsibilities. With the global nature of business today, professionals often need to interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Communicative competence includes the ability to navigate cross-cultural differences and communicate effectively in a variety of cultural contexts. In times of crisis or significant change, effective communication becomes even more critical. The ability to convey information clearly, calmly, and persuasively can help in managing difficult situations, minimizing misunderstandings, and leading others through transitions. In professions where client interaction is a key component, the ability to communicate effectively can lead to higher levels of client satisfaction. This, in turn, can result in repeat business, referrals, and a positive reputation. Finally, communicative competence is not just a professional asset but also contributes to personal growth. It enhances an individual's ability to express their thoughts and feelings effectively, engage in meaningful conversations, and build personal relationships.

CONCLUSION

The development of communicative competences in professional education is essential for both individual and organizational success. It facilitates better collaboration, improves efficiency, builds relationships, and is critical for navigating the complexities of today's

global professional environment. As such, professional education programs should prioritize the development of these skills alongside technical and specialized knowledge.

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