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A review of research on the teacher's competencies in the classroom interaction discourse

Przegląd badań nad kompetencjami nauczyciela w dyskursie interakcji w klasie

Abstract

The didactic interaction in the classroom is established among peers, but above all, the relationship that has a fundamental weight is the one between the teacher and the student, since the teacher becomes a role model for the child during the entire Early Childhood Education stage. Likewise, communication and participation are fundamental elements for these interactions to take place in a beneficial way, and together with it, the teaching-learning processes take place, which will help the child's development and will positively affect cognitive, affective and social development.

Key words: didactic interaction, communication, teaching – learning processes, teacher – student role.

Streszczenie

Interakcja dydaktyczna w klasie kształtuje się pomiędzy rówieśnikami, ale przede wszystkim zasadniczą wagę ma relacja pomiędzy nauczycielem a uczniem, gdyż nauczyciel staje się dla dziecka wzorem do naśladowania przez cały etap edukacji wczesnoszkolnej. Podobnie komunikacja i zaangażowanie są podstawowymi elementami, aby te interakcje przebiegały w korzystny sposób. Wraz z nimi zachodzą procesy nauczania-uczenia się, które sprzyjają rozwojowi dziecka i pozytywnie wpływają na rozwój poznawczy, emocjonalny i społeczny.

Słowa kluczowe: interakcja dydaktyczna, komunikacja, procesy nauczania – uczenia się, rola nauczyciel – uczeń.

How to improve the teacher's role while teaching?

The role of the teacher in the didactic interaction has a fundamental and main role in the didactic processes that take place in the classroom, since he/she is in charge of directing, mediating and guiding in a direct way, the teaching of his/her students during the didactic processes. His participation in the classroom is essential for an adequate environment and to create a context that motivates action and research.

If we talk about the basic aspects that the teacher must present, we will refer to his or her training. Therefore, he/she is responsible for learning the different theoretical and practical methodologies (techniques, principles and strategies) used in the classroom based on the role he/she plays. The training required must be continuous and stable, and must also include knowledge of the child, pedagogical and sociological aspects, and teamwork.

The relationship between the teacher and the students has an educational character, for this reason, the personal characteristics, experiences, training and attitudes will be the structure on which the connections established in the group are based.

The teacher's mediation is an essential help offered to the student so that he/she can experience new environments and thus achieve to develop and even create the knowledge of oneself in a complete way. Therefore, in the didactic processes, the teacher is attributed the role of leader in the class, so he/she is in charge of getting the student to obtain feelings of self-improvement, personal value etc. although if he/she does not manage to do it well, he/she can cause contrary feelings such as frustration or apathy.

Therefore, the teacher's objective is to promote or create an optimal environment with good relationships based on trust and respect between teacher-student. This interaction is the communication established between teacher and students, which will be conclusive in the didactic processes that take place in the classroom, creating an ideal interaction climate between them or hindering this environment if it is not adequate.

It should be emphasized that the role of the teacher as a researcher in the classroom is particularly important, where the different environments of pedagogical performance (curricular development, professional improvement, methods or ways of acting, etc.) are mixed, using the studies as a method to transform.

The teacher's participation must have an educational intentionality, channeled through methodological models based on the particularities of learning. In other words, it is necessary to start from the way in which the student learns in order to later establish the repercussions in the intervention. In this way, the following points are highlighted¹:

¹ C. Coll & E. Martín, *Aprendizaje y desarrollo: la concepción genético-cognitiva del aprendizaje*. En C. Coll, J. Palacios & A. Marchesi (Eds.), *Desarrollo psicológico y educación II. Psicología de la educación*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid 1990.

- a) Knowing the data of the child's level of evolution, without forgetting the child's maturity possibilities and trusting in his or her capacity to progress.
- b) The affectivity in the didactic processes (a good self-concept and a stimulus that corresponds to their interest).
- c) The increase of autonomous intelligence.
- d) The game as a didactic resource.
- e) Importance of basing ourselves on previous knowledge in order to offer help adapted to the student's abilities if necessary.
- f) Meaningful and functional learning, based on their interests.
- g) Relationship with peers.
- h) Creation of an environment of affective security.
- i) Creation of stimulating environments taking into account what the children need and the time in which the planned activities will be carried out.

Over the years, there have been several investigations about the different types of teachers that exist, classifying them according to the communication style they use. According to the discovery theory², the teacher is given an important role in teaching his students. This promotes in the student the acquisition of their own knowledge developed through interaction and exploration of the environment. And to achieve this, it is necessary to provide them with adequate tools and quality relationships, fostering secure and trusting bonds of attachment at all times.

Likewise, this author stresses the value of the teacher-student relationship. This interaction is the teacher's responsibility, so if he or she succeeds in doing so, it will have a favorable impact on student learning. It should be noted that for it to be a positive and adequate relationship, the following characteristics must be met: respect, dialogue and communication between both members.

It is important to know who gives communication a conclusive authority when transmitting fundamentals and values in children, there is a type of teacher called assertive that catalogs as: One who establishes communicative processes characterized by dialogues, where when speaking looks into the eyes of the students, addresses them by name and if necessary, gives procuring signs of esteem as a hug, a pat, etc.³

Likewise, there are different models of communication in the classroom⁴:

- Affective communication, with the use of expressive language.
- Authoritarian communication, which seeks to achieve obedience and indifference in the child.

² J.S. Bruner, G. Ross & D. Wood, *The role of tutoring in problem solving*, "Child Psychology & Psychiatry & Allied Disciplines", 1976, 17(2), 89–100, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1976.tb00381.x>

³ J.A. Gutiérrez Vásquez, *La interacción en el aula. Guión de clases: La interacción en el aula*, 2011, <http://didactica2fmocc2010.blogspot.com.es/>.

⁴ J.D. Cabrera Cuevas, *Discurso docente en el aula*, "Estudios pedagógicos" 2003, 29, 7–29.

- Conciliatory communication, which emphasizes balance and the ability to understand the child.
- Flexible communication, in which permissiveness is given to children.
- Hierarchical communication, where the teacher is the model or mentor to the students.

In conclusion, we must understand that education is a continuous process that is mediated by the teaching that students receive and the intentions that the teacher has when teaching that subject. This process is the fundamental pillar of the teacher's role, besides being an interaction with the rest of the professionals in the school.

In relation to the above, no one doubts the fact that the teacher is the one who keeps the rhythm of the class, organizes the contents, supervises them, etc. But on the other hand, it is questioned what type of teacher is the best for the classroom⁵.

Each teacher is unique and uses his or her own methodologies, principles, etc., so demonstrating which style is best is complicated. However, there are several styles of communication and interaction with which we can obtain better results.

Likewise, these authors put special emphasis on research that deals with the different styles of relationships that can occur in the classroom⁶, from which eight different teacher-student models emerge: the strict, the authoritative, the tolerant and authoritative, the tolerant, the insecure/tolerant, the insecure/aggressive, the tolerant and the repressive.

Similarly, the different types of discourse used by the teacher in the classroom and the different models of teachers that have been created depending on their use are discussed⁷. Thus, the classification would be as follows:

- Teacher-teacher. With explanatory discourse and focused on teaching. It could be said that the conservative teacher does not encourage relationships in the classroom, the student is a passive being, and focuses only on communicating content.
- Teacher-proteacher. He/she uses an emotional discourse, taking an interest in the concerns of his/her students but disregarding education at a cognitive level.
- Teacher-presenter. Their function is to entertain with strategies and methodologies that are of interest to their students.
- Teacher-politician. This is the teacher who unconsciously manipulates the students by inculcating his ideology in the different lessons he teaches in class.

⁵ J.C. Torrego & I. Fernández, *La disrupción y la gestión del aula. Convivencia en la escuela*, 2006, 3, 1–8, https://elearning3.hezkuntza.net/013159/pluginfile.php/10155/mod_resource/content/1/DISZIPLINA_-_NEURRI_HEZITZAILEAK_-_BIDE_ALTERNATIBOAK/DISZIPLINA/La_disrupcion_en_aula.pdf.

⁶ M. Brekelmans, J. Levy & R. Rodríguez, *A typology of teacher communication style*. In T. Wubbels & J. Levy, *Do you know how you look like?* (pp. 47–55), Falmer Press, London 1993.

⁷ V. Martínez-Otero Pérez, *Discurso educativo y formación docente*, “Educação em Questão” 2008, 33(19), 9–34, <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/5639/563959965001.pdf>.

- Teacher-preacher. He wants to change inadequate habits in the students and therefore corrects them continuously. The contents he teaches are inadequate and deal with very general topics, not benefiting the development of the students.

Therefore, a definition of the ideal teacher, or also called teacher-educator, is the authentic teacher who promotes the integral formation of students. He/she cultivates intellect and ethics; transmits rigorous information, strengthens aptitudes, encourages the acquisition of positive attitudes and values that translate into congruent behavior.

The notion of “teacher-educator” implies attending to all the dimensions of personal life. From a work environment presided over by cordiality, trust and personal relationships; he explains, teaches, motivates and orients his students, that is, he educates. It adopts a dialogical perspective that facilitates exchange and the development of the participants’ personalities.

On the other hand, we can speak of three styles⁸ that teachers can adopt when working with their students:

- a) Autocratic style. The teacher alone decides all the activities or tasks to be performed, i.e., he/she is the one who makes all the decisions, organizing and distributing. He is distant from the rest of the group, working and evaluating individually.
- b) Democratic style. The teacher reaches a consensus with the rest of the teaching team and makes the student give his/her opinion and participate actively in the creation of the activities. In addition, the teacher himself also has a leading and active role, so that his way of evaluating the students will be from the inside.
- c) Laissez-faire style. The teacher who has a general lack of participation, staying on the sidelines, not encouraging students, and only intervenes by giving advice when his or her opinion is required.

Likewise, two styles⁹ different from the previous ones can sometimes occur:

- a) Dominating style. This is the dictatorial teacher who often uses strict orders and disciplines to impose the law by force, regardless of what others may think or the consequences it may have.
- b) Integrative style. The teacher has the ability to build a positive classroom environment where the good things students do are recognized and valued. All criticisms made will be constructive and objective, taking into consideration the commitment and willingness of each one of them.

⁸ K. Lewin, R. Lippit & R.K. White, *Patterns of aggressive behaviour in experimentally created social climates*, “Journal of Social Psychology” 1939, 10(2), 271–301, https://tu-dresden.de/mn/psychologie/ipep/lehrlern/ressourcen/dateien/lehre/lehramt/lehrveranstaltungen/Lehrer_Schueler_Interaktion_SS_2011/Lewin_1939_original.pdf?lang=de.

⁹ H.H. Anderson, H.M. Brewer & M.F. Reed, *Studies of Teachers’ Classroom Personalities III*, “International Review of Applied Psychology” 1945, 11, 156.

The way of teaching is conditioned more by the different school groups and the existing teaching systems than by the teachers. Therefore, he distinguishes three types of teaching styles:

- a) Instrumental style. The teacher's teaching is oriented to the learning objectives, focusing on direction and power.
- b) Expressive style. The teacher orients his/her teaching activity to cover the needs of productivity and friendship related to affection.
- c) Instrumental-expressive style. The teacher intends to unite the attraction for learning with the concern for meeting the needs of the students.

Interaction is the basis of all didactic processes and is closely related to communication. Both the characteristics of the students and the teacher make this interaction strong and natural, so we must take advantage of all the opportunities that are presented to us in class in order that students relate and communicate in all situations that occur, not only in which something can be learned.

The communication between the teacher and the child is an excellent system, but it is true that all learning has to be based on diverse activities that use diverse material, thus facilitating its realization. Likewise, there is the need to choose activities that encourage and motivate children, so they suggest using posters, murals, didactic cards or puppets, and even use songs and easy rhymes as they play an important role in teaching¹⁰.

However, the Ministerial Order contemplates that it is essential to focus attention on the routines that accompany the child's educational activity, since this is the basis for new learning.

It is essential to pay attention to the cognitive, social and affective concepts in the different routines, so it is necessary to plan in the best possible way the time of each activity and thus achieve respect for the different rhythms that children have producing concrete situations in the classroom¹¹.

The routines have a fixed organization, both in terms of time and of what is to be done, and consist of the following: entrance, welcome, reunion and farewell. These times allow the realization of other related exercises such as: assembly, distribution of materials, recess time, lunch time, time for playing in corners, collecting and ordering the materials used daily, thus benefiting the teaching-learning processes.

All these routines provoke constant interactions in the classroom that help to develop personal bonds among equals and, as a beneficial consequence, interpersonal communications will be stimulated. On the other hand, this will also affect

¹⁰ M.C. Muñoz Redondo & D. López Bautista, *Aprendizaje temprano de una segunda lengua. Encuentro revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas*, 2003, 13(14), 169–175, https://ebuah.uah.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/10017/972/aprendizaje_munoz_ENCUESTRO_2002-2003.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.

¹¹ M.R. Doblás & M.D. Montes González, *El diseño de las rutinas diarias*, "Innovación y Experiencias Educativas" 2009, 16, 1–8.

the child's social integration, provoking a development of autonomy and belonging to a specific group. Finally, it is important to value that routines give us to know the level in which each child is and the capacities and limits they have.

The resources used with the children must be adequate to the didactic processes of the classroom, therefore, the programming and methodology of the curricular and educational project of the center or the annual general programming must be taken into account. Often in early childhood education classrooms we find toys, stories, symbolic and representative games, construction games, etc., so it is recommended to make the best possible use of the resources that children already know.

How to enhance the student's role while learning?

In order to be a learner, the first to discover and assume it is the child himself. It is also essential to consider several components that determine the role of the learner: the biological, the psychological (affectivity and cognition) and the social, the potential and the difficulties that a learner may exhibit at any given time.

Although it is the child who must want to take the step to interact and develop, it is the teacher who has the responsibility to help him/her to know the nature of this learning and to teach him/her how to learn from it. This process, which must be undertaken together, helps the child to realize and assume the process with responsibility (suggests the signing of a contract between the learner and the mediator), to stimulate him/her to discover how he/she is achieving learning (metacognition, learning styles) and to help him/her to find bridges between what he/she is learning and other already consolidated knowledge (transfer of knowledge).

Everything implies that the child must be seen integrally in its biological, psychological and social aspects. Regarding this last dimension, it is considered necessary for the child to understand that he/she belongs to this real world, which demands and needs him/her. Each dimension is important for a smooth and harmonious development.

The school environment is a place of learning where children have the opportunity to interact with their peers, thus creating their social relationships. At this age, it is essential that this type of bonding occurs as it facilitates adaptation to the environment in which they will remain for a long time, but it is not always easy to deal with, since insecurities and rejection may arise both towards other classmates and the teacher himself.

Although there is a different point of these relationships, and is that social interactions require communication where the child expresses their beliefs and emotions, and try to put themselves in the shoes of others. But this only happens when situations or play experiences are lived, resources and materials are shared, thoughts or ideas are exchanged... it is then when they acquire a different point of view and their interaction improves. Therefore, interaction is considered an evolution of the individual that contributes to social functioning.

When children begin the Infant Education stage, it is important to analyze the attitudes they show, and above all, we must observe if they do their part to explore on their own, developing their natural and spontaneous capacity. On the contrary, if they lack confidence, we must stimulate them in creativity, responsibility and, in general, in their affective and intellectual evolution in order to achieve these beneficial interactions for their development.

If we refer to the cognitive position, children are active beginners who start experiences, investigate information to solve problems and restructure what they already know to achieve new meanings, thus developing their capacity.

All children in early childhood education exhibit a behavior of exploration and experimentation, which specifies the aspects they will attend to, perceive and learn, thus creating learning for their future. They do this through dialogue, their means of interacting.

In the educational environment, most of the relationships that are formalized between the teacher and the students occur mostly in the classroom, thanks to the activities created by the teacher. This bond that is created is characterized by affection, which provides a space that understands the implications of the relationship.

If we refer to the constructivist theory, we can currently observe that interaction with the environment is the means by which children are educated and in this way the adult generates his or her own learning. Thanks to this, schools can be offered the necessary resources and materials to establish beneficial relationships with students, in which the teacher provides them with the emotional and affective help they need.

It is essential to have a good relationship between the two in order to be able to teach, since without it, it is not possible to achieve success in the didactic processes¹².

Teacher-student relationship: strategies to reinforce classroom interaction discourse

The teacher-student relationship is of great importance and for this reason the teacher has to acquire a serious role from the beginning, where he/she is respected by the students, since they will gradually get to know him/her better and even gain more confidence, making hypotheses through observation and analyzing the events, in order to verify them later. In this process different difficult attitudes and behaviors can be seen, but they will have to be clarified so that the students can achieve the didactic processes.

Therefore, the relationships established between the teacher and the students are unique and decisive opportunities for their personal development and learning. In this sense, we must ensure environments with positive and affectionate relationships

¹² B.C.E. Cotera, *Disciplina ¿Cómo manejarla?* Monografías, 2003, www.monografias.com/trabajos14/disciplina.

where they are stimulated and encouraged, where challenges are posed, help is offered, achievements and mistakes are recognized, and feelings of self-affirmation and security are fostered; in this way, we will help them form a positive self-image¹³.

According to the above, relationships mainly benefit personal growth and formation and therefore affective relationships are established, which enable students to be self-reinforced and to be able to face the different scenarios that appear in their daily lives.

In the same way, children relate with their peers and with the teacher in the different educational tasks, providing the professional, who observes in a methodical way, with valid information to know the development of the child within the educational environment and the different links established.

The quality relationships that the teacher establishes with the student create a supportive support at an early age. As a positive result of this, it can be said that they can be long term, that is, lasting relationships are created that benefit the child in all aspects (linguistic, cognitive and social) of their development.

Also, positive teacher-student bonds¹⁴ instruct students to reason, to feed back on their opinions and previously acquired knowledge, and to expand their vocabulary by improving forms of communication and thus developing critical reasoning through dialogue and issues that arise in teaching tasks. In addition, they have an important effect on the student's evolution; providing positive effects since they last forever.

Finally, in the teacher-student interaction, the concept of play plays a relevant role. In view of this, the teacher acquires the role of pedagogical mediator, regulating and controlling the information offered and the children's learning. The teacher becomes one of the most important factors in the learning process, since he/she is the organizer and in charge of presenting and planning the different types of knowledge, and is ultimately the one who highlights what is considered essential.

Social relations are essential for didactic processes¹⁵. The child learns thanks to the interaction with others and the help of the adult that allows him/her to advance and develop what he/she knows and what he/she does not know. In order to do so, he provides him with the necessary supports, aids and tools.

In other words, the author catalogs it Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP), defined as follows: "the distance between the level of actual development determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development

¹³ R.V. Sánchez Jiménez, R.L. Fiestas Novoa, M.M. Garrido Ayre & M.N. Vila Torres, *Entorno educativo de calidad en Educación Inicial: Guía para docentes del Ciclo II*, Perú: Ministerio de Educación, 2016.

¹⁴ A. Razo, I. y Cabrero, *El poder de las interacciones educativas en el aprendizaje de los jóvenes*, 2016, <https://es.scribd.com/document/326324263/Libro-El-Poder-de-Las-Interacciones-Educativas-en-El-Aprendizaje-de-Los-Jovenes>.

¹⁵ L.S. Vygotsky, *Pensamiento y Lenguaje*, Argentina: La Pleyade, 1978.

determined by problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with others who are more capable¹⁶.

Likewise, to foster the creation of ZDPs through interaction among students, it is necessary to plan these interventions methodically. Cooperative learning, for example, is a way of interacting positively with each other, as they work together in a coordinated manner to obtain optimal results and successfully complete the task.

With this term in mind, the teacher should consider how to organize interactions with the learner in an effective way, taking into account the characteristics listed below¹⁷:

- Interactions should be eloquent, encouraging globalization, centers of interest, functional learning and research programs.
- The teacher has to let the children intervene in the different tasks, regardless of their level of competence, interest or knowledge. This is because if the students do not actively participate there will be no ZDP and no option to mediate on it and because it is the only way to be able to adjust to the educational support that is available.
- Create an environment in which affective and emotional relationships prevail and are subject to aspects such as trust, stability and personal approval. In addition, they should increase the interest, admiration and attraction to learn new knowledge in an autonomous way.
- Add specific modifications and adjustments during the continuous evaluation.
- Encourage the autonomous use of classroom learning, despite the fact that it implies the use of places, times and materials to develop the teaching of strategies and skills.
- Establish evident and persistent links between the topics that have been previously worked on, and the concepts that are being the beginning of knowledge. Always maintaining an adequate temporization, starting from the most general aspects and then specifying them.
- Make use of a transparent and determined language. In addition, to change the context of lived situations.

Discussion and conclusions

Roughly speaking, interaction at these ages is a communication tool that involves the relationship between peers and teacher/student, and this has repercussions on the role of the teacher in these situations. Once these interactions are initiated in the classroom, the teacher becomes an example for the child to follow, since he/

¹⁶ <https://www.actualidadenpsicologia.com/que-es/zona-desarrollo-proximo/> (Accessed: 12.05.2022).

¹⁷ L.S. Vygotsky, *El desarrollo de los procesos psicológicos superiores*, Austral, 1987.

she is the person with whom the child spends the most time after home. This will create a very positive school teaching environment that will encourage children to want to learn through the activities prepared by the teacher and which will provoke close and affectionate connections.

At the same time, it is important to remember the importance of social interaction between students, as it promotes educational well-being and cooperative learning in the classroom, and in turn stimulates different forms of contact, the expression of feelings and emotions, the consideration of the opinions and interests of other classmates and the study of values. Positive interactions between students and teachers improve students' skills and performance in their academic and social environment, but also give them opportunities to think and analyze contextual situations, generate new knowledge and reinforce existing knowledge.

Likewise, they define these interactions as a help for students because they improve their school techniques and skills and also do so at the level of relating, leaving them free to develop on a daily basis. Another positive point is that the climate created in the classroom is pleasant and beneficial for the children, as it helps to improve their self-esteem and behavior, which in turn generates good actions in terms of didactic processes.

The different scenarios of interaction among students take place either in the activities that the teacher guides, in which they participate and work together, or in the play and free time that occurs during the school day. All of them are an ideal occasion for exchanging information and knowledge, getting to know different points of view and learning about unknown topics that can later be worked on in the classroom.

After all, interaction facilitates linguistic development among children and between teacher and students. Offering this type of interactions both inside and outside the classroom, provokes an emotional and pedagogical support that affects the teaching-learning processes and the complete development of children, consolidating new tools and skills.

Finally, I believe it is fundamental to rethink teaching, changing the perspective of what the main training of students means. Likewise, this learning has to cover more concepts, not only staying in the typical subjects, but children should be encouraged to participate, taught to live together, to know how to make different decisions... and to continue their education throughout their lives.

Education is the responsibility of schools, but it is also the responsibility of society as a whole, which is why it is urgent to provide us with global educational projects that transcend the school framework. This is the great educational challenge, a challenge that goes far beyond school curricula and concerns society as a whole¹⁸.

¹⁸ P. Pérez Esteve, *La competencia de las competencias: la comunicación lingüística. Su presencia en el currículo de Educación Infantil y Primaria*. In M.P. Fernández Martínez, *La competencia en comunicación lingüística en las áreas del currículo* (pp. 9–38), Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias de España, Madrid 2007.

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