

## Writing About Feelings and Develop the Communication Competences in a Different Cultural Space

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**Abstract:** The study presents some aspects of problem of student integration in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural reality. Having linguistic competences is not enough for student to interact with people who provided from different cultural spaces. The emotional expressing is one of the very good modalities to develop the communication between people from different cultural space. From this reason, the school have to encourage the students to know the specific forms of communication in different country, to express their feelings adapted to cultural particularities. In this respect, the paper proposes a few theoretical aspects and learning strategies for develop the communication, especially from the social and cultural perspective. These didactical modalities contribute to develop the positive students' interaction, social collaboration, desire of knowing and working with other which is different, to appreciate him.

**Keywords:** learning strategies; emotional competences; cultural communication; higher education

### 1. Introduction

The contemporary society is more and more confronted with effects of the technological explosion and an amazing social mobility on the geography and virtual space. This reality had imposed two types of human reactions: *rejecting* of thing/human being what is different, respectively, *accepting* and *harmonizing* of differences as an opportunity to diversify life and human activity. Both human reactions may easily be turned into extreme behaviors, gestures and attitudes which will affect the democratic principles lying at the base of the free world. For this reason, the education of people in a formal context needs to solve different problems like the communication with people who proved by the different space, an ethnic and

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cultural one, also the integration of people in a social, professional in cultural space which can be not uniform.

As it is predictable, the issue regarding the communication competences of people has become a permanent subject for education; the school is interested developing to students the ability, capacity to communicate and relate with the others who provide from different cultural spaces, to be tolerated, to accept the differences between people and to use them in a constructive way. Therefore, schools have to use many collaborative strategies that allow to students to learn and action together. But, firstly, education ought to seeing each pupil/student/people as a unique person. This last subject is not developed enough in the Romanian educational system, especially in the higher education. It still is a problem of education how can be respected the individual students' particularities and may encourage them using the own potential for develop their learning. How it is better to adapt the learning contents and to varying the educational and management strategies for to offer students the chance to develop their personality?

Generally, the communication competences are aimed like a transmission and reception of information (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980), also an interpersonal, social and cultural interaction (Doncheva, 2015; Iconomescu, 2014; Hymes, 1972). This is reason of fact that the specialists are interested on using the communicational techniques (Lehmann, 2007) more than the capacities to self-reflecting, thinking about why is happened in that way and not in the other, understanding own gestures, attitudes, verbal actions. It can be always a problem when somebody wants to express, on the verbal or nonverbal way, him feelings or to understand the feelings of others. The problem is more difficult if people/students belong to different cultural spaces.

Of course, having linguistic competences is not enough for people to really communicate with others. The human being must be responsible for their actions and more interested developing own potential for a better integration in a personal, social, professional, cultural life, for a really relationship. From this perspective, it is very important to pay attention on the emotional component of communication (Scharfe, 2000; Saarni, 1999). The students have to understand own favourable or unfavourable feelings and controlling them for develop communication and cultural dialogue, also. Neglecting the expressing people feelings can has an unwanted repercussion over interest and responsibility shown the communication and relationship, in general. Therefore, the capacity to understand, control and express of feelings must be methodically build-up and developed.

## **2. Premises, Observations, Discussions**

This paper starts from the notice that the higher education is more oriented preparing the students for a specific professional field or job than preparing them for accept and collaborate with others who are different (from a social, ethnic or human perspective). The last aspect must be an essential objective of all teachers.

Our research emphasizes this need of the present-day school and it reiterates that its accomplishment can be done with the help of some reflection abilities of students which can be developed in the higher education. For example, reflecting on the emotional effects of actions, gestures, attitudes, the students become more responsible and interested in a real communication and work with others. Implicitly, they can improve the own communication competences, far away from the cultural stereotypes and clichés.

In consequence, the paper provides a series of arguments and ways of achieving education focused on student, on own potential, interests and motivation. We demonstrated that the reflection about own feelings related with learning process is a great solution for increase efficiency and quality of communication and social relation in the higher education. For a practical contribution, we propose some theoretical and methodological aspects for develop the positive students' interaction, social collaboration, desire of knowing and working with other which is different, to appreciate others.

Our proposal may positively contribute to the configuration of some educational strategies centred on the development of the (self) reflexive competences to the students, as a modality of emotions awakening and control of expressing of them.

The feelings directly accompany verbal and nonverbal human reactions; they enhance, control and influences its. Learning by hard and using automatically some linguistic and gestural clichés in the appropriate cultural context do not represent a constructive educational solution. Also, students, in this way, are not responsible for what they saying or doing, not preoccupied in the quality of the own communicational acts. On the other hand, it is known that awareness of feelings and control of own emotions, even if are not exactly mentioned between the student's competences, but they can be recovered among abilities and capacities which facilitate develop of those competences. For example, looking into list of European key competences (Council of Europe, 2000), we can notice that there are knowledge, abilities, skills that have subsumed some positive emotions, feelings, affects, like the following:

- a. student's *linguistic competences* as a communicative, social and cultural tools that must be used in an interactional manner, relating with both the others and the environment which he lives in. For develop these, it is necessary having a good relation with others people, a great cooperation with them;
- b. student's *social and civic competence* that are corelated with values and attitudes as interest, motivation, tolerance, implication, empathy, autonomous;
- c. the *competence to express of the cultural sensibility* that allows to student knowing, understanding the others who provide from different cultural spaces, to be tolerate, to develop his artistic skills, to integrate of him in the heterogenous groups.

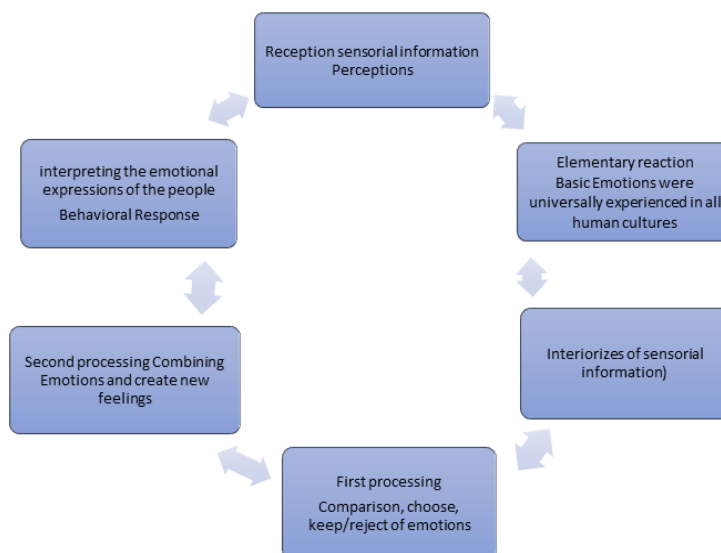
As can be seen, the values, gestures and attitudes which are included in the emotional domain are developed by the human interaction. Therefore, we can say that the *transversal competences* have a *cognitive* and *practical* component, but also an *emotional- volitional* one. For this reason, there are new educational concepts as *interculturality, multiculturality, integration, collaboration* and *cooperation*, as a few solutions of the inclusion of human feelings into educational process. Generally, the emotions accompany the messages communicated and influence the human reactions: (*non*) *accepting* of things what is different at the cultural, personal, social and professional level (Mark, 2007).

Starting from these notices, our proposal is focused on the following issues:

### **2.1. Self-Recognize of Feelings**

Having feelings is a normal human reaction, even if has a definite or identifiable cause. An emotion has a quite short-life, but intense one. It is able to influence human decisions, relationship and behaviors. Generally, feelings are implied in every cognitive and practical experience of people.

A possible graphical representation of the relation between the feelings and cognitive and gestures, abilities and skills can be noticed in the *Figure 1*.



**Figure 1. Feelings from the subjective experience to physiological and psychological reactions**

As a rule, feelings, basically or elaborative level of them, are expressed through the following reactions:

- facial expressions (mimic);
- Body language (voice, posture, physical reaction);
- gestures (approving or non-approving, accepting or non-accepting);
- verbal response (linguistic constructs);
- actions (attitudes, behaviors).

It is really important for student identifying own emotion and their showing level. Knowing their feelings, students can understand their expressing, can control them and use them in an appropriate case. For this ability, psychologists introduced the concept of *emotional intelligence*, that means the ability to using own affects for adapting, learning and actioning in the social space (Goleman, 2001; Guntersdorfer, 2018; Lyusin, 2004).

## 2.2. Awareness of Own Feelings and of the Others

Knowing types of feelings and their causes is not enough for understanding and using them for a better communication with the others. Simple or elaborate emotions must

be well identified, compared with emotional experience, associated with physical and psychological reaction and used in an appropriate situation. For a better knowing of emotions and feelings we propose the following steps of analyse of them and a few essential questions for realize it:

Identifying emotions and feeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What I feel now? Why I feel that? What feels he / she just now? Why?</li> <li>•What I need feel about that?</li> <li>•Do I like this experience? Am I agree / disagree with ...? Why?</li> <li>•Did I/they/enjoy this feelings? Why yes, why not?</li> </ul>
Comparing them with other emotional experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Have I felt the same sometime? How often? Were and when I felt that? Who are feel like me? Why? How I feel when...?</li> <li>•What are the others feelings?</li> </ul>
Including new affects in a type (category) of emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Is it another emotion like this?</li> <li>•What is the state in which I find myself after ...?</li> </ul>
Comparing feelings with cultural/ national/ communitarian stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Is it a cultural or social stereotype?</li> <li>•Can I change something?</li> <li>•What I can do? Why?</li> </ul>
Associating emotions and feelings with gestures, attitudes, behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Do I want that? Why not?</li> <li>•What expect the other I do?</li> <li>•In the future, how will I use this emotional experience?</li> </ul>
Identifying the effects of expressing of feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What values or principles should I adopt? How should I feel about others? How should I judge others?</li> <li>•If I would be able to change anything, what would that be? How would I like to feel to next activity? What would I/they/we like to add?</li> </ul>

**Figure 2. Steps of analysing of feelings**

### 2.3. Reflection on Own Feelings

Generally, reflexivity covers a larger field which by means of the “looking back” action will allow student to understand the emotional state in which he finds himself (Buck, 1991). He will understand the experience he has lived by comparing his reactions with the ones generated in other situations and he will also analyse the things which took place, be they lived experiences or ones which were discovered.

Next, in Table 1 we present a few modalities of reflection activities regarding the effects of feelings in the communication.

**Table 1. Feelings and communication competences**

<b>Level of personal reflection</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Ways to stimulate the communication, in a different cultural space</b>
<i>Simple Reflections</i> (mimics and gestures, ton, posture)	The emotional reactions have a stronger impact over own personality, but especially over others, influencing "the dialogue"	Learning activities that allow manifesting and understanding emotional reactions regard on interaction with the others who belong to different cultural background, the satisfaction towards the colleague's participation at the activity, the satisfaction towards the results accomplished and towards the efforts done, etc.
<i>Realized reflections</i> (construction language concerning the emotional experiences)	Reflections about impressions, emotions, feeling must be lean more on the ration of them and the solutions that should assure the successful integration and communication.	Learning activities which encourage the verbal express of feelings, talking about what are own feelings, what feel the others and causes of that. It is important to focus the exercises on the cultural differences as a main cause of some feelings.
<i>The elaborate reflexivity</i> (completed understand of feelings and actions, behaviours)	These reflections are superior in the sense that they are dependent on the behavioral changes. More than, this kind of reflection creates different motivational situations.	It can be recommended some activities that allow communication on-line, like a space for reflection and for personal expression (the oracle, the shows, essays, interviews, ePortofolios, on-line diary, e-mail, blog, site etc.). Students are encouraged writing down own impressions, thoughts and feelings regarding some events, happenings and facts which took place in the world, community or school. Some examples can be the following: personal diary, class / team diary, "the logbook", "the double entrance journal", the essay of five minutes; Students can critically reflect over both the social/cultural experiences, positive or negative one and the causes and implications of its.

Starting from the above observations, we propose a concise presentation of educational intervention techniques, which are focused on feelings that allow development of communication competences.

In order to build-up a social behavior adequate (Madalinska-Michalak, 2015) for the contemporary society, it is necessary to gain a set of values and attitudes which dependent on the using and control of own feelings and contribute to the development of the individual's personality in the context of the social / cultural expectations; the simplest method is to think upon the values of one's intentions and actions and upon the effects the gestures have.

Understanding and reflecting over the consequences of feelings expressed determines the building-up and consolidation of the moral values and behavioral pattern which will be used in certain situations (like a relationship between people (Mackie, 1989; Cerghit, 2008; Alexandrache, 2014). who came from different cultural spaces, stimulation and orientation the human behavior according on cultural differences).

In the next section of paper, we propose a few didactical modalities which encourage development of communication competences using feelings expressed.

**Table 2. Didactical strategies for develop communication competences**

Didactical strategies	Communication competences and emotional experience expected	Learning activities
Strategies which encourage confrontation of opinions, ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the ability to communicate the results of the research activity, according to the audience;</li> <li>the ability to listen to other's opinions and ideas and to build answers starting from the information received;</li> <li>the ability to support/deconstruct others argumentations</li> <li>respect, optimistic relationship, emotional support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presentations and discussions of the case studies;</li> <li>role playing and discussion;</li> <li>different types of debate.</li> </ul>
Interrelationships within the groups of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cultivating students' tolerance for those that are different, understanding and accepting their differences;</li> <li>to develop positive emotions;</li> <li>to manifest positive attitude, flexibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exercises of the cooperation;</li> <li>examples of involvement in the successful of a team;</li> <li>exercises to respect the cultural differences;</li> <li>examples of intercultural and non-discriminatory approaches during professional interactions.</li> </ul>
Reflection strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the ability to construct impressions and to communicate them to others as a result of the reflecting activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>individual and group theoretical reflections, free and guided by the tools which were specifically elaborated</li> </ul>
Intercultural education strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the ability to promote cultural values in relation to other countries;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exercises based on find out the solutions and decisions based on viable data from real situations</li> </ul>

As can be noticed, the reflection exercises allow to students establishing a harmonious relationship with the social and cultural environment.

### 3. Conclusion

Student s communication competences can be great improved using the strategies which encourage to express feelings, especially which are referred to the cultural difference. One of them is collaborative learning, that allows to student to understand the own emotional experience by comparing his reactions with the others. Also, the student will get used to examine from the moral perspective some emotional reactions. Certainly, it is possible getting more didactical techniques and methods for develop capacity of student to improve his communication competences expressing own feelings. On the other hand, working in a group/team student pays



more attention on his gestures, words, basically emotions. In this way, he become responsible and interested to develop relationship and a long-life dialogue.

In the school, students learn about how is appropriate model to express his opinion/solution/arguments, logically, correct and coherent. In the same way, they need to learn to express his feelings, what are their feels at a given moment, especially the own emotions. However, the students' linguistic capacities become both an instrument that generates emotions, and a factor that facilitates interacting with others. By reflecting on what they feel, by recognizing the causes of their emotions and their manifestation, students learn that it is important having linguistic abilities to prove the understanding of the other one's feelings and that they respect and accept them as important. They learn how to build their conversation to verbally transmit their emotions. In this way, the interest and the responsibility towards the communication act are improved.

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