

Elżbieta Wolińska

info@elawolinska.pl

Economics and Innovations University in Lublin

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL FOR DISCIPLINING STUDENTS

1. Introduction

The word communication comes from the Latin “communicatio” and means an exchange, communication, conversation or transmission of messages (Kacprzak, 2015). It is described as a process through which one person transmits information to another person through an appropriate medium. However, only 35% of the message is transmitted through words. The remaining 65% is in non-verbal sphere. According to psychologists, this part of communication applies to all human behaviour, attitudes and objects other than words that convey information and have a common social significance (Borg, 2011). It includes: physical appearance, body movement, gestures, facial expressions, eye movement, touch, tone of voice and the specific use of time and space in the communication process. Non-verbal behaviour can strengthen, weaken or deny verbal signals, but more clearly reflects what one wants to achieve and shows the contents of the unconscious motives, and as such it is often truer (Sikorski, 2013).

There are over a million of conscious and intuitive gestures. The inconsistency of verbal and non-verbal communication can lead to confusion – the message can be difficult to decipher. It is often challenging to clearly distinguish verbal and non-verbal content. Speech is connected with many gestures that help in understanding the content, giving it greater clarity and legibility (Sikorski, 2013).

Non-verbal communication takes many forms and many experts classify it differently. J. Junova categorizes it by the body language, space and time,

J. Bonar – just like Palka – by appearance, kinetics (facial expressions, gestures), the expression of spoken language. M. Dymek lists: the facial expressions, gestures and other movements, body posture, touch, spatial behaviour, appearance and dress, and vocalization (Dymek, 1996).

However, the clearest classification is made by Harrison (cf. Matusiewicz, 1979) who divides non-verbal communication into:

- proxemic, in which information is communicated through the appropriate use of space,
- kinaesthetic, operating the movement of the body, for example gestures, hands swings, grimacing, etc.,
- paralinguistic, including different ways of expression, such as tone, intensity, etc. (Matusiewicz, 1979).

2. Teacher–student interaction

Non-verbal communication plays a very important role in the education process, primarily because it shows the true meaning and intention of the interlocutor.

The school is the perfect place to master not only the curriculum but also good communication. The task of starting the interaction and showing the student how to listen and communicate lies on the teacher's side. It is not easy and it is not always successful. What is good for one student is not necessarily good for another one (Kacprzak, 2015).

The teacher's competences should include educational skills, especially the ability to hold a clear conversation and to directly communicate opinions and goals. It affects not only a good atmosphere in the classroom but also the development of sustainable attitudes towards others, outside the classroom as well.

A student who asks the teacher for help should see, not only through words, but gestures alike, that the teacher actively listens. The teacher should show, that he or she is interested in student's problem. Spoken words should be accompanied by an appropriate body posture and gestures that inspire interest and focus attention in an attractive, aesthetic and moderate way (Mądry-Kupiec, 2015).

In teaching both the methodological and substantive preparation is appreciated, downplaying the importance of the teacher's non-verbal behaviours on the effectiveness of the education (Dymek, 1996).

Non-verbal behaviour of the teacher always takes place in a specific context set by the time and the type of roles performed by the participants of the conversation. The process of communication of the teacher with the students is characterized by a certain stability and continuity and it takes place at school within the strictly specified time, which makes it quite formal (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 1993).

The teacher who is the sender of the non-verbal messages, transfers by them some specific content, at the same time watching and giving meaning to the non-verbal behaviour of the students, in response to their messages of this type (Jakubowska, 1994). Thus the teacher creates educational opportunities and affects the well-being of students in the classroom, discharges their inner emotional tensions, and – consciously or not – can create an atmosphere of nervousness, can create stress and the sense of danger. The teacher should be aware of what influence some of their non-verbal behaviour has and should work on its improvement (Mądry-Kupiec, 2015).

Garstka (1999) lists the elements of non-verbal communication and defines their place in the teacher-student interaction, emphasizing the importance of employment of each behaviour by the teacher such as for example suitable facial expressions, which is like a mirror reflecting the mood and attitude towards students. On the basis of facial expressions, we often make judgments about interpersonal traits such as the tendency to behave in a dominant way – severity and directness, or affiliative behaviours – politeness and warmth (Morreale, Spitzberg & Barge, 2010).

The body posture is a reflection of the attitude towards others. It can show a person's internal tensions and their mental state. The way of walking, standing, sitting down may reflect bias or roles played at any given time by the teacher, their ideas about themselves, self-confidence and the emotional state (Dymek, 1996).

Gestures, movements and the teacher's facial expressions give emotional value to spoken words, emphasize their meaning, so they are easily understood and remembered (Dymek, 1996).

The teacher's movements can significantly influence the behaviour of students, e.g. walking from one part of the room to another during task assignment can cause the students to focus their attention on the teacher. On the other hand nervous walking back and forth can irritate and obstruct communication (Mądry-Kupiec, 2015).

One can generally assume that a teacher who uses a wide repertoire of movements, expressions and gestures deepens the contact with students. It does not protect him or her, however, against misunderstandings resulting from errors in sending and receiving messages. In the case of non-verbal communication the gestures used should therefore have a clear shape, should be presented bluntly, evident in their expression and difficult to confuse with others (Sikorski, 2013).

The tone of voice carries emotional states and attitudes towards others. Intonation in turn indicates, for example, if the question is a friendly inquiry or a threat. Paralanguage or vocalization most often associated with speech is the non-verbal part of the message. Changes in the volume emphasize individual words and phrases (Dymek, 1996).

3. Non-verbal communication as a tool for disciplining students

The teachers who have developed the ability to use non-verbal communication as part of their professional development could apply it to change more than 40% of inappropriate student's behaviour (Levin & Nolan, 2014).

The best non-verbal methods of maintaining discipline in the classroom include:

- 1) ignoring the inappropriate behaviour;
- 2) eye contact;
- 3) distance;
- 4) technique of signs.

The first discussed technique is the ignoring of the unwanted behaviour. This method works only for students who want to attract attention through their inappropriate behaviour (Kołodziejczyk, 2005).

If the student's behaviour disturbs the order in the classroom in a significant way, e.g. in the case of screaming or destroying objects – ignoring will not be an effective method. It should also be taken into account that improvement usually does not occur immediately. Moreover, initially the student's behaviour may worsen, especially when the teacher's attention has been paid, so the "goal" was achieved. In this case, there is often escalation of misbehaviour (Kołodziejczyk, 2005).

Furthermore, while ignoring the misbehaving student, positive effects can be achieved by showing other students how to divert attention from the misconducting colleague. By teaching proper concentration on tasks and by

explaining the reasons for teacher's response, expectations regarding the behaviour of the rest of the class in such situations are being defined.

In disciplining, the most important thing, however, is to give the student the opportunity to gain teacher's attention the moment his or her behaviour improves.

Another technique of non-verbal discipline is maintaining appropriate eye contact. The teacher sends a message in this way identifying the limit for unsuitable behaviour: I see what you do and do not approve of this. I want you to change your behaviour (Levin, 2014).

For this method to work it is important to maintain the eye contact for a long time, supporting it with appropriate facial expressions, until the improvement of the student's behaviour. Breaking the eye contact is perceived as surrender.

Many students seeing the teacher looking at them leave their current activities and join the work. But then they often return to their previous actions. So it is worth continuing your gaze for a moment.

Tension caused by the eye contact depends on the distance which divides the participants of the confrontation. The greater the distance, the smaller the tension is, but with decreasing the distance – the tension grows.

Garstka (1999) listed five spheres of the distance between teacher and student: the first is the public sphere, when a teacher sits behind a desk or walks up to the first benches. The second is the social sphere – the teacher moves around the desk and the closest seated students. The third is defined as a personal, while the fourth, when the teacher walks around the whole classroom is an intimate sphere. The fifth can be regarded as a sub-sphere, in which the teacher establishes physical contact with the students.

Psychologists emphasize the importance of physical distance between people involved in the communication process. The large distance between people conversing with each other gives them a sense of security but at the same time the relationship between them has an official character. On the other hand, trespassing into a very close personal sphere causes anxiety and discomfort. In order to discipline the students teachers can make good use of the distance separating them from the students in order to use and increase the strength of their influence (Kołodziejczyk, 2005).

Reducing the emotional distance between the teacher and the student in combination with other non-verbal techniques of discipline brings effective results. A special role is played by maintaining eye contact with the gradual

reduction of the gap between the teacher and the student. In this way, the teacher slowly increases the pressure on the student. Gentle, but smooth and not too quick, reducing of the distance plays an important role in this case, since the goal of educators is not to catch the student behaving in an unacceptable way, but to draw the student's attention and somehow force them to return to work (Kołodziejczyk, 2005).

Sometimes it happens, however, that despite maintaining eye contact and reducing the gap, this does not prevent misbehaviour. You can then try to reduce the distance separating the teacher and the student to the point where the sense of security is not threatened, or further come close to the border of the intimate sphere or even step into it.

The lack of eye contact and strict facial expression and monotonous voice often accompanying it are an expression of personal dislike for students. In response to this negative approach, students do not focus on the teacher's message, and avoid entering into the interaction with the teacher, they do not ask questions and do not undertake conversation (Kołodziejczyk, 2005).

Another method of disciplining is the technique of signs, in which the teacher implements a specific gesture to signal the students what effect he or she wants to achieve. An example can be a finger pressed to the teacher's lips to symbolize silence when the class is too loud. The essence of this method is learning the messages transmitted by these signs. While working with the class teachers can create their own system of signs which will be used to communicate with students in specific situations (Nolting, 2004).

It happens that by the inappropriate behaviour the student is trying to show the fear of problems at school, inability to reach the requirements and to adapt to the situation of the school and hence absorb the teacher's attention and destroy the course of the lesson. The basis for establishing a good teacher-student relationship is the proper non-verbal communication of the teacher, which expresses openness, affection, respect and positive attitude towards the students and which is in line with what the teacher thinks and feels (Leathers, 2009).

4. Conclusions

The foundation of proper and effective communication between the teacher and the student is a calm dialogue, active listening, acceptance of feelings and emotions and their verbalization. All of this stems from one of the most important values – respect for another human being (Palka, 2003).

Speaking of communication between the teacher and the student we think about establishing relationships of trust, respect, openness and honesty. All this can be served by the methods discussed in the article. Good relationships primarily affects the achievement of educational goals. Students who trust and respect the teacher will work harder and with greater openness to ensure themselves comfort in the sphere of education, willingness to learn and to eliminate the difficulties.

The teacher, by implementing the use of a comprehensive set of gestures, movements, facial expressions deepens the contact with the students, and thus, keeps the right atmosphere and discipline in the classroom. Incorrect sending and receiving the messages negatively affects the course of teaching. In the case of non-verbal communication, gestures used should therefore have a clear shape, should be plainly presented, evident in their expression and difficult to confuse with others.

References

- Adler, R.B., Rosenfeld, L.B. & Proctor, R.F. (2006). *Relacje interpersonalne – proces porozumiewania się*. Poznań: Rebis.
- Arcimowicz, J. (1996). *Metody poznawania uczniów i klasy szkolnej*. Łomża: WOM.
- Borg, J. (2011). *Język ciała. Siedem lekcji komunikacji niewerbalnej*. Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne.
- Czerepaniak-Walczak, M. (1998). Istota i granice wolności w interakcjach edukacyjnych In: J. Jarco (ed.), *Etyka, świat wartości moralnych. Podręcznik do szkół średnich* (p. 126–127). Warszawa–Wrocław: PWN.
- Dymek, M. (1996). Komunikacja niewerbalna też ważna. *Nowa Szkoła*, 3, 20–23.
- Faber, A. & Mazlish, E. (1998). *Jak mówić, żeby dzieci się uczyły w szkole i w domu*. Poznań: Media Rodzina.
- Garstka, W. (1997). Komunikacja niewerbalna a terapeutyczna rola nauczyciela. *Życie Szkoły*, 7, 16–26.
- Gaś, Z. (1997). *Pomoc psychologiczna młodzieży*. Warszawa: WSiP.
- Gordon, T. (1998). *Wychowanie bez porażek w szkole*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX.
- Jakubowska, U. (1994). Porozumiewanie się na lekcjach. Umiejętności komunikacyjne nauczyciela. *Psychologia Wychowawcza*, 3, 224–234.
- Kacprzak, L. (2006). Związki i zależności komunikacyjne pomiędzy nauczycielem a uczniem. In: W. Maliszewski (ed.), *Komunikowanie społeczne w edukacji – dyskurs nad rolą komunikowania* (p. 309–315). Toruń: Adam Marszałek.

- Kołodziejczyk, J. (2005). *Dyscyplina w klasie. Metody i techniki interwencji*. Kraków: Sophia.
- Leathers, D.G. (2009). *Komunikacja niewerbalna. Zasady i zastosowania*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Levin, J. & Nolan, J.F. (2010). *Classroom Management. A Professional Decision-Making Model*. Warszawa: Pearson.
- Łoskot, M. (2011). Jak utrzymać dyscyplinę w klasie. *Głos Pedagogiczny*, 11, 48–52.
- Matuszewicz, C. (1979). Komunikacja niewerbalna. Przegląd zagadnień. *Przegląd Psychologiczny*, 2, 319–339.
- Mądry-Kupiec, M. (2015). Nauczyciel w procesie komunikacji z uczniem. In: S. Kowal & M. Mądry-Kupiec (eds.), *Przygotowanie do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela. W stronę edukacji spersonalizowanej* (p. 99–118). Kraków: e-bookowo.
- Morreale, S.P., Spitzberg, B.H. & Barge, J.K. (2010). *Komunikacja między ludźmi – motywacja, wiedza i umiejętności*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Niemierko, B. (1997). *O powodzeniu nauczyciela w pracy dydaktyczno-wychowawczej*. Warszawa: WSiP.
- Nolting, H.P. (2004). *Jak zachować porządek w klasie*. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Palka, S. (2008). Dialog w dydaktyce ogólnej i praktyce kształcenia. In: A. Karpińska (ed.), *Teoria i praktyka kształcenia w dialogu i perspektywie* (p. 38–44). Białystok: Trans Humana.
- Pease, A. (1995). *Język ciała. Jak czytać myśli ludzi z ich gestów*. Kraków: Gemini.
- Perrott, E. (1995). *Efektywne nauczanie*. Warszawa: WSiP.
- Wosiński, M. (1978). *Współdziałanie nauczyciela z uczniami. Kształtowanie struktury interakcji między nauczycielem a uczniami*. Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski.
- Zaręba, E. (1994). Społeczne ramy edukacji wczesnoszkolnej. In: S. Palka (ed.), *Teoretyczne odniesienia i praktyczne rozwiązywania w pedagogice wczesnoszkolnej* (p. 101–106). Katowice: Śląsk Sp. z o.o.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL FOR DISCIPLINING STUDENTS

Summary: The article contains considerations on how to use non-verbal communication in order to maintain discipline during lessons or lectures. Verbal communication alone is often not enough to achieve the didactic objectives. Just like in daily communication, where the sphere of non-verbal communication is the most important part of the information transfer, in school it supports the effects of teaching and builds the teacher's position and respect in the eyes of the students. Wise and experienced teacher skillfully uses gestures, facial

expressions and other non-verbal methods in teaching and education of his or her students.

Keywords: non-verbal communication, communication, gestures, facial expressions, discipline

KOMUNIKACJA NIEWERBALNA JAKO NARZĘDZIE DYSCIPLINUJĄCE UCZNIÓW

Streszczenie: Artykuł zawiera rozważania nad tym, jak stosować komunikację niewerbalną w celu utrzymania dyscypliny podczas lekcji czy wykładu. Sama komunikacja słowna nie wystarczy, by osiągnąć założone cele dydaktyczne. Tak jak w codziennej komunikacji sfera niewerbalna stanowi najważniejszą część przekazywania informacji, tak w szkole wspiera ona efekty nauczania oraz buduje pozycję nauczyciela i szacunek w oczach słuchaczy. Mądry i doświadczony pedagog umiejętnie stosuje gesty, mimikę i inne metody niewerbalne w nauczaniu oraz wychowywaniu swoich uczniów.

Słowa kluczowe: komunikacja niewerbalna, komunikacja, gesty, mimika, dyscyplina