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The Importance of Interactive Methods in the Development of Communication and Interpersonal Skills as Sources of Self-Awareness in Primary School Pupils

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Abstract: *The smooth running of the educational process and the results obtained depend on the methods used. Active-participatory methods are methods that ensure the applicability of knowledge, offer the prospect of practising skills and abilities in different contexts and situations, lead to conceptual clarification and operationalisation of acquired knowledge. The interactivity of the teaching-learning-assessment process is carried out according to the individual needs of each pupil, enhancing and stimulating creativity and originality. The aim of the research is to reveal the theoretical aspects of the formation and development of social competences and through them the development of self-awareness skills by using interactive methods. As a hypothesis, we have stated that the judicious, rational and systematic use of active-participatory methods in the integrated subjects taught leads to the development of emotional, communicative and relational skills as sources of self-awareness and the gradual development of interest in self-appraisal and self-training, premises that will lead to the efficiency of the instructional-educational process. Modern methods tend to come as close as possible to scientific research methods, involving pupils in direct investigation and research of phenomena. The research was carried out in parallel on two groups of subjects, one control and one experimental, each of 23 students of young school age, respectively classes A and B of the National College „Mihai Eminescu" in Petroşani, students having specific characteristics of psychological development of their age. Initial assessment tests were applied to the two groups, and similar results were obtained from the subjects in the experimental group and those in the control group in the initial tests. In order to achieve the objectives and to confirm the hypothesis we used different research methods and tools.*

Keywords: *interactive methods, skills, communication, relationship, self-awareness.*

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I. Argumentation

Taking into account the current trends to align Romanian schools with European standards, we can state that the quality of the educational process is an imperative requirement of modern society,

The use of interactive teaching-learning methods in the didactic activity contributes to the improvement of the quality of the instructive-educational process, having an active-participative character and a real active-formative value on the pupil's personality. Through them, pupils are actively involved in the task, being more aware of the responsibility they are assuming and exercising their analytical and decision-making skills. Interactive methods in the development of communication and interpersonal skills in primary school pupils are essential for the development of a social, empathetic individual who is able to understand the perspectives of others. This is fundamental in a modern society where interpersonal relationships are increasingly complex and interdependence between people is growing. In this perspective, interactive methods play an important role in the training of students, contributing to the development of a positive and inclusive learning environment.

One of the advantages of interactive methods is the possibility to encourage direct interaction and collaboration between learners. For example, group activities allow pupils to work together, develop their communication skills and hone their social skills. In this way, pupils can improve their self-confidence and expressive skills by being encouraged to engage in discussions and express their views.

Interactive methods also contribute to the development of empathy and the ability to listen and understand others' perspectives. By interacting with other learners, young people can improve their ability to put themselves in other people's shoes and understand how they perceive the world. This ability to empathise with others is essential in forming healthy and lasting interpersonal relationships, which are essential for a happy and fulfilled life. Interactive methods can also be sources of self-awareness, as learners can discover their personal traits, interests and values through interaction with others.

II. Notional boundaries

The success of the learning process and the results achieved depend on the methods used. Active-participatory methods are methods which ensure the applicability of knowledge, offer the prospect of practising skills and abilities in different contexts and situations, lead to conceptual

clarification and operationalisation of acquired knowledge. The interactivity of the teaching-learning-assessment process is carried out according to the individual needs of each pupil, enhancing and stimulating creativity and originality(Ionescu & Radu, 2001). All these criteria stimulate the formative-educational values that require the use of these interactive methods as successful practices for learning and assessment.The great educationalists have highlighted the fact that using different methods makes essential differences in the training of pupils, that the acquisition of knowledge or behaviour can be achieved more easily or more difficult, depending on the methods used, these being important tools available to the teacher, on whose knowledge and use depends the effectiveness of educational work. Knowing the variety of methods, the particularities of the pupils I work with, the objectives I set myself to achieve, I have acted on the communication and socialisation side in the interest of self-awareness so that pupils can fully develop their personality.

III. Aim of the research

The aim of the research is to reveal the theoretical and practical aspects of the formation and development of social competences and through them the development of self-awareness skills through the use of interactive methods, the experimental validation of the theoretical and practical benchmarks of self-awareness with the aim of forming emotional, communication and relationship competence and self-stimulation of underdeveloped traits towards a psychological support that supports successful activity, the contribution of interactive methods both to the development of social-emotional competences of primary school pupils and to the development of self-awareness skills, monitoring and recording changes in behaviour after the implementation of the intervention programme through the use of interactive methods in integrated teaching.

IV. Research objectives

The research objectives are: To determine the psycho-pedagogical foundations of the correct knowledge and interpretation of the defining indicators of personality in the process of self-discovery through communication and relationships, individual methods and techniques of evaluation, mechanisms of compensation and self-stimulation of untrained or underdeveloped skills and competences (motivational system, emotional processes and their cognitive functions, the model of own values, self-knowledge and interknowledge through communication and relationship

and the development, testing and validation of the didactic model of training communication and relationship skills by involving students in activities using interactive methods in the implementation of strategies for the realization of the curricular content of the subjects taught in an integrated way.

V. Research hypothesis

The judicious, rational and systematic use of active-participatory methods within the integrated subjects taught determines the development of emotional, communicative and relational competences as sources of self-awareness and the gradual development of interest in self-appraisal and self-training, premises that will lead to the efficiency of the instructive-educational process (Şerdean, 2005). It is assumed that after the implementation of the intervention programme, an improvement in communication and interpersonal skills, and implicitly in self-awareness, will be achieved, and students will develop cognitively.

VI. Conduct of the research

In this paper, starting from the explanation of theoretical notions, I have proposed to argue that interactive methods play a very important role in the development of communication and interpersonal skills in primary school students. By applying some of the interactive methods on a daily basis, in subjects taught in an integrated way, communication and interpersonal skills have improved, a performance demonstrated parametrically. My paper comprises four chapters. In the first chapter I present notional delimitations from the perspective of the formation of communication and interpersonal skills, framed in the field of social and civic competences, as an end of the educational process for the purpose of the training profile of the fourth grade graduate. Also here I explain what interactive methods mean, what interactivity implies. The second chapter explains the need to form and develop social competences in today's education system and what the National Curriculum for Primary Education implies, the third chapter deals with the role of active learning in the development of social competences, in the fourth chapter I describe the experimental research I have undertaken, the fifth chapter - conclusions and recommendations. In essence, interactive learning is based on the interchange of information and ideas, experiences and reflections, interpretations and resolution suggestions, opinions and beliefs, impressions and attitudes, social interactions that take place within the classroom or micro-groups. It is about reciprocal exchanges and influences,

which are ultimately structured by joint processing and the elaboration of shared acquisitions. It is about everyone participating in an exercise of interactivity, interactively practising their own thinking, their own mental operations, doing constructive work and recording progress, developing the skill of working with others in understanding and harmony. In this way, the knowing subject becomes the subject of a set of interactions and interrelationships developed in the learning process, through school dialogue, entirely subordinated to the achievement of didactic and educational tasks. Together with others, it becomes the creator of a common context, based on the mechanisms of social influences, generating new knowledge. At the same time, because the interchanges enable the subject to expand his personal base of knowledge and ideas and to arrive at new cognitive schemes, he becomes the beneficiary of deeper classifications and understandings.

Interactive learning can also be defined as cooperative or collaborative learning, which is increasingly promoted in school practice. What is common to both is that they offer a wealth of ideas and solutions and facilitate greater knowledge transfer. The advantages of modern interactive methods (Bărbulescu & Beşliu, 2009) in the development of social competences are: it transforms the learner from an object to a subject of learning, he is a co-participant in his own training, in his own process of self-discovery, it engages all the psychic forces of knowledge, it develops critical thinking and motivation for learning, it allows evaluation of one's own work.

Modern methods tend to be as close as possible to scientific research methods, involving students in direct investigation and research of phenomena. The research was carried out in parallel on two groups of subjects, one control and one experimental, each of 23 students of young school age, respectively classes A and B of the National College „Mihai Eminescu" in Petroşani, students having specific characteristics of mental development of their age. Initial assessment tests were applied to the two groups, and similar results were obtained from the subjects in the experimental group and those in the control group in the initial tests. In order to achieve the objectives and to confirm the hypothesis we used different research methods and tools.

VII. Instruments used in the research

The research methods used at the stage of data organization are scientific documentation, scientific analysis and synthesis, generalization and systematization, theoretical abstraction and modeling, observation and experimental method, these methods were chosen with skill and used in psychological tests, surveys, questionnaires. Thus, we used the following

tests: Kern-jirasek school maturation determination, survey, assessment of the level of school motivation-Luskanova, House-homecopac-Buck test, standard progressive matrices-Raven, test of Mental State-Eisenck, adapted COS1 Communicative Skills Questionnaire and Self-motivation Level Examination Questionnaire (Cojuhari, 2020), most of them are part of the Minimum Diagnostic Test Battery for Students, an intervention programme based on modern, innovative, active-participatory methods such as the Thinking Hats method, the cube method and the brainstorming method. The experiment consists in applying during one year 2021-2022 an intervention program that constitutes a variable, namely 3 interactive methods, namely the Thinking Hats method, the cube method and the brainstorming method or the idea assault method during the teaching-learning process in all the teaching objects taught in an integrated way to 46 students of the 4th grade of the National College „Mihai Eminescu" Petroşani. After the application of the final tests, from the analysis of the final data, the following conclusions can be drawn: the pupils in the experimental group obtained significantly remarkable results compared to the initial tests in terms of psychological maturity - 35.6%, level of school motivation - 28.7%, communicative skills - 52.3%, level of self-motivation - 41.9%. 75% of those in the control group obtained similar results and 25% stagnated in the development of interpersonal skills.

VIII. Research findings

The research findings present the results of an analysis of the data obtained after the final tests were administered. The results of this research on the effects of an educational intervention programme on pupils are as follows: pupils in the experimental group participated in the programme, while those in the control group followed the regular programme. The results show that students in the experimental group showed significant increases in mental maturity, school motivation, communication skills and self-motivation. These increases suggest that the intervention programme had a positive impact on the students, contributing to their better psychological and social development. At the same time, the results show that 75% of the students in the control group achieved similar results, suggesting that they showed similar development to the students in the experimental group. However, 25% of the control students stagnated in their development of interpersonal skills, which may indicate a need to include them in future programmes similar to that experienced by the experimental students.

IX. Final conclusions

In conclusion, the results suggest that the intervention program had a positive impact on the students in the experimental group, significantly improving mental maturity, school motivation, communication skills and self-motivation. These can be considered indications of an effective educational programme and can be considered for expansion to the whole school or even national level.

By stimulating the creative activity of individual pupils, we encourage cooperative learning, initiative and imagination, which can lead to greater self-awareness and therefore to quality achievement and success at school. Therefore, interactive methods lead to the development of creativity in communication, the mechanisms of emotional intelligence in relationships. At the same time, they are a means of discovering the creative potential through which skills, abilities and competences are formed and developed as part of the formation of the young schoolchild's personality. They help in using the roads of knowledge by transforming the exterior into interior facilities, forming character and developing personality. They transform the pupil from an object to a subject of learning, he is a co-participant in his own formation, in his own process of self-discovery, engages all the psychic forces of knowledge, develops critical thinking and motivation for learning, allows evaluation of his own activity.

As a didactic aid the research provides teachers with the didactic model of forming communication and interpersonal skills by involving students in activities using interactive methods within the framework of implementing strategies for realization of the curricular contents of the subjects taught in an integrated way and realization of the objectives related to development of emotional communication and interpersonal skills, the basis of self-awareness skills.

We have selected some of the strategies that can be used in the classroom to develop communication and interpersonal skills, which can develop attention, memory and motivation and stimulate school maturity. in primary school students :

- Teamwork activities: This strategy focuses on collaboration, communication and problem solving together. Pupils can be encouraged to work in teams to solve problems, discuss and do joint projects.

- Role-playing: Students can be encouraged to role-play different roles to improve communication skills and to put themselves in others' shoes. This can help develop empathy and understanding of how others perceive the world.

- Directed discussions: The teacher can encourage students to participate in discussions on specific topics, encouraging them to express their views and listen to others.

- Constructive feedback: The teacher can provide constructive feedback to pupils to improve communication skills and support them in developing social skills.

- Interdisciplinary projects: This strategy focuses on collaboration between students and combining skills from several subjects into a joint project. This can help develop teamwork and communication skills.

It is important to remember that each student is unique and may have different needs in terms of developing communication and interpersonal skills. Teachers can adjust these strategies to suit the individual needs of the students and maximise their impact.

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