

Profitable Uses of Communication Concepts in an Interdisciplinary and Multicultural Context

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Abstract

Within a volume dedicated to *Interactions of Professional, Institutional, and Business Discourses*, an interdisciplinary approach proves highly relevant, emphasising the judicious application of communication concepts in professional and institutional exchanges.

In reinforcing the necessity and skilful implementation of various concepts, theories, and models within communication professions, it is crucial to recall B. Dagenais' perspective on the fundamental stakes of communication—particularly in the field of public relations. While these principles are primarily associated with this domain, they also permeate strategic and tactical elements of advertising, mass communication, and educational sciences. Dagenais (2002) delineates these objectives as follows: (a) communication is essential to existence; (b) it serves to capture attention; (c) it informs; (d) it fosters an atmosphere of goodwill; (e) it resolves issues; (f) it navigates challenges; (g) it builds reputations; (h) it provides defense; (i) it influences public opinion; (j) it responds to journalists and audiences; and (k) it addresses socio-economic complexities.

An analysis of the operationalisation of these elements leads to anticipated conclusions: professional communication enhances meaningful interaction across critical sectors, and societal expectations can be met through properly structured education, ensuring that the balance between aspirations and realities is anchored in fair evaluation and self-assessment criteria for both students and educators.

Keywords: communication, discourse, education, interdisciplinarity, self-assessment.

Introduction

Committed to the precision of our approach, we remain faithful—etymologically speaking—to the terminology that underpinned the fourth edition of the International Conference Interdisciplinarity and Cooperation in Cross-Border Research (third edition), held on November 28–29, 2024, in Chișinău, Republic of Moldova. Key concepts such as interdisciplinarity, multiculturalism, multi(pluri)disciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity frame our discussion.

According to dictionaries, **interdisciplinary** carries three operational meanings within our proposed subject: (a) belonging to multiple disciplines; (b) establishing connections between them; and (c) being based on the transfer of concepts and methodologies between two or more disciplines to more effectively address the issues under investigation. Similar meanings are attributed to **multidisciplinarity** and **pluridisciplinarity**, both derived from **the term plurality, which indicates** abundance, quantity, multitude, multiplicity, and diversity. The idea of plurality extends to **multiculturalism**, giving rise to concepts such as cultural pluralism and a **multicultural society**.

As highlighted in *A Dictionary of Sociology (Dicționar de sociologie)*, coordinated by Gordon Marshall, a multicultural society is fundamentally defined by cultural pluralism. As an ideal, multiculturalism celebrates cultural diversity—such as linguistic and religious variety—and stands in contrast to the assimilationist perspective advocated by early studies on race, ethnicity, and migration (Marshall, 2003).

The same work clarifies that the label "plural society", while related, should not be conflated with multicultural society. A plural society refers to any social structure wherein ethnic, linguistic, religious, or racial groups coexist without a binding obligation to the nation that encompasses them (Marshall, 2003). This distinction is critical as it underscores the **segmentation—or fragmentation—**of intergroup relations. However, in our approach, such social division must be carefully avoided to uphold the principles of homophily, collaboration, and the exchange of concepts, methods, and practices that foster meaningful interaction.

Materials and methods

From an educational perspective, do innovations in communication and learning represent true advancements, or are they merely new iterations of classical, enduring structures? Following decades of emphasis on hyper-specialisation (academic niches), the current shift encourages integration, exchange, and cross-pollination of concepts and methods across various domains and disciplines. This shift urges us to approach the world in its full complexity—interactively, collaboratively, and through practical applications that merge even the most unconventional subjects within the curriculum.

In this context, pluri-/multidisciplinarity facilitates problem-solving by drawing on multiple fields, fostering students' ability to develop a broader vision and perspective. Meanwhile, interdisciplinary can be regarded as the highest form of curricular integration, enabling interaction between distinct competencies and independent content spanning multiple disciplines. Its advantage lies in promoting participatory methods and cultivating flexible cognitive and behavioural structures, equipping individuals with strong adaptability. The goal becomes unmistakably clear: ensuring that young learners grasp the intricate connections between various phenomena and develop a deep understanding of the complexities that shape the world around them.

One of the key aspects of educational development in which these principles are operationalised is the evaluation of the learner. We focus on this aspect, drawing on the perspective of experienced educator Laurențiu Șoitu, who asserts that evaluation is a form of **communication**.

According to some scholars—such as Guy Bergen—education is undergoing a crisis that extends to the methods used for assessing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour. The central question arises: Does measuring learning outcomes entail **values**?

The legitimacy of this inquiry finds support in the social structuring pyramid, which encompasses: (a) the **assessment** of each individual's acquisitions and potential as a means of positioning them; (b) the **orientation** towards the best opportunities for leveraging these acquisitions and potential; (c) the **formation** process aimed at personal acquisition of knowledge, abilities, and methodologies; (d) the **selection** of individuals for roles, positions, or social statuses based on measured competencies (de Peretti, 1996).

This analytical lens underscores the multifaceted role of assessment—not merely as a tool for quantification but as a dynamic mechanism for shaping educational paths and societal integration.

Who/What compels schools to engage in measurement, competition, hierarchy, and selection? Society, undoubtedly, stands as the primary force. The assessment and certification of competencies position each individual within their appropriate societal role, determined by the selection process that best serves collective interests.

According to André de Peretti, evaluation "clarifies the most advantageous orientations for the individual, providing them with the motivation to prepare for institutional selections that will offer the best opportunities and fulfil social expectations" (de Peretti, 1996, p. 67). An ideal mechanism for a meritocratic society, wouldn't you agree? However, its practical implementation is far from simple. Competition often leads to direct comparisons among students, an excessive focus on grades (summative evaluation), and a diminished emphasis on teacher feedback and self-assessment.

Greater student support from educators, active family involvement, and learners' courage to acknowledge and address their setbacks (academic failure) would contribute far more to shaping a society built on fairness, tolerance, equity, inclusion, and autonomous development.

The reliance on grades as a stabilising factor in education—while providing "pedagogical reassurance"—often leads to a secondary consideration of a student's personal development as a social individual. This early emphasis on ranking, beginning as early as ages five or six, warrants a critical stance toward Michel Barlow's concern that "evaluation interprets the entire personality of the student" rather than focusing solely on their academic behaviour (Barlow, 1992, p. 151). One viable solution is to diversify assessment methods, incorporating "qualitative procedures" alongside more conventional grading approaches. This would include embedding "formative evaluation habits, self-correction, and self-assessment" into educational practices (Barlow, 1992, p. 151). As discussed in *Psychologie de l'évaluation scolaire* (G. Noizet & J.-P. Caverni), formative evaluation not only refines student performance, but also enhances teacher effectiveness (Noizet & Caverni, 1978). L. Şoitu's insightful remark aptly captures this concept: "Both the student can become more of a student, and the teacher more of a teacher" (Şoitu, 2006).

Considering that the assessment of a learner undeniably serves a social function, the academic perspective put forth by Laurențiu Şoitu highlights a discursive divide—between its negative connotations, such as "repression, sanction, control, and selection," and its positive dimensions, which include "progress, transformation, adaptation, and the

rationalization of actions at both granular and systemic levels" (Șoitu, 2006, p. 258). Following the French pedagogical tradition, if we accept that education is an intricate act of communication, then within Șoitu's framework, evaluation operates in precisely the same manner. As a result, "the assessment of formative processes is an interaction embedded within the individual's educational journey—an engagement jointly undertaken (hopefully) by both the educator and the student/participant" (Șoitu, 2006, p. 259).

Results and discussion

The evaluation-as-communication dynamic between teacher and student operates through three distinct forms of quantification: *implicit evaluation*, *spontaneous evaluation* (which allows room for spontaneous self-assessment), and *systematic/instituted evaluation* (Șoitu, 2006). The true purpose of assessment is fulfilled only if and when it culminates in self-evaluation, "enabling the student to acquire criteria for self-appraisal and independent measurement of their results" (Șoitu, 2006, p. 260).

This ideal is not only desirable but also achievable, provided it begins with an awareness of the discrepancy between students' aspirations (academic success, social development) and the reality—meaning their actual results and behaviour, as evidenced through evaluation and self-assessment.

Are there flaws within this communication-interaction mechanism? Indeed, these shortcomings arise from various sources, such as parents who project their own past successes or failures onto their children; teachers who see their personal validation through the achievements of their students; schools, particularly those with elitist aspirations; professional environments setting unrealistic expectations for future employees; society, reaching a certain level of performance or striving toward an unattainable standard of perfection. This relentless pursuit of the best version of oneself—perfection personified—poses a significant barrier to a balanced, natural, and realistic path toward adulthood, regardless of one's chosen profession (Șoitu, 2006). To foster healthier teacher-student interactions in educational management, L. Șoitu advocates for *mutual orientation* of the learner, an approach that harmonises *internal orientation* (focused on personal ambition and development, sometimes at the expense of external experience) with *external orientation* (incorporating societal behavioural and conduct norms) (Șoitu, 2006, pp. 265-266).

Balancing similarity, agreement, difference, disagreement, success, failure, expectations, and criteria, the most critical challenge in an educator's tireless efforts lies in **adjusting the level of expectation imposed on the learner**. As Laurențiu Șoitu asserts, "external demands—social, cultural, and spiritual—ultimately dissolve within the framework of one's personal standards" (Șoitu, 2006). André de Peretti proposes that an optimal developmental trajectory for young learners must integrate four essential dimensions: cognitive, affective, motor, and relational (de Peretti, 1996). This perspective aligns with Șoitu's educational vision, reinforcing the notion that holistic formation across multiple areas is the key to meeting the demands of contemporary society. The alternative is troubling: "when aspects such as imagination, responsibility, creative potential, operational mastery, organisational and methodological aptitude, communication skills, interpersonal growth, aesthetic sensibility, common sense, and life experience are either disregarded or undervalued" (de Peretti, 1996, p. 126). Intellectual brilliance remains, indeed, appreciated in the professorial assessment of the era analysed by Peretti!

Conclusions

One of the defining innovations of interdisciplinarity may well be the "moral lens"—the ethical perspective (C.G. Christians et al., 2001) that must oversee all aspects of learning, research, and knowledge dissemination. This includes education rooted in moral principles (Montaigne, 1984, vol. 1), heightened vigilance against the deluge of information that overwhelms us in the form of infodemia (informational obesity), and the imperative to discern between truth and falsehood (Oprea, 2001, p. 193-220), particularly amid the rise of fake news (Oprea, 2001, p. 79-98) and the social logic of post-truth (Dumitru, 2019). Additionally, the social obligation to remain perpetually connected, the necessity of public expression as a form of civic participation, and the fusion of sciences and arts (including AI technologies) further highlight the evolving role of interdisciplinarity. The incorporation of practical communication skills—transparency, sincerity, efficiency, clarity, cooperation, and ethical competition—cultivates balanced discourse, non-aggression, active listening, stylistic finesse, argumentation, persuasion, and influence. These are sufficient social imperatives to justify the invocation of key elements of professional discourse—such as emotional intelligence, empathy, communication aesthetics, and personal development—alongside all the principles examined throughout this discussion.

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