*The system of support for academic teachers in process of shaping soft skills of their students*

**Communication between Peachers and Students**
Module 3 Topic 3

https://wspaerasmus.wixsite.com/supportsystem

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# Introduction

Communication is the main dimension of interpersonal relationships and assumes a fundamental role in the teaching and learning process.
In contemporary society, the use of technology in communication processes is increasingly frequent, mainly by Higher Education students, considered as *digital natives* (Prensky, 2001).

However, and although the communication process between teachers and students often uses digital tools, it has not always been considered effective, particularly when it aims to promote students' learning.

# Key questions

- What are the factors that promote an effective communication?

- What are the dimensions involved in the communication process?

- What strategies can be mobilized to enhance teacher and student communication in H.E.?

These are the issues that will be addressed in this session, aiming to contribute to the discusson and improvement of the communication process in H.E., particularly with the use of ICT.

# What is communication about?

- Communication is the relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response (Griffin et al, 2015, *in* Fofama, 2016).

- Between teachers and students there is a "relational process" as they communicate, and the nature of the communication shapes their relationship.

- As teachers and students communicate, either way, the communicator has to make conscious effort in creating "messages" that would be subjected to "interpretation" by the receiver.

- In trying to achieve effective communication, the sender has to make a good decision on the content of the message, its form, and the way it would be delivered.

- As teachers and students send messages to each other, their messages should be able to "elicit responses" that would be positive.

(Fofana, 2016:2)

# Teacher and students' communication processes in HE

- What do we know about the HE teachers and students' preferences regarding different forms of communication?

- How can we improve their communication?

- No matter the communication form used, there are studies showing that students still have a need for the face-to-face aspect of academic learning and teaching (Merdian & Warrior, 2015)

- In order to improve the communication process, teachers need to understand what are their main factors / dimensions and what tools can improve it — both face-to-face and online.

# What kind of preferences can we find?
# What tools are being used in HE?

- Face-to-face communication,

- Digital platforms - moodle, blackboard, …

- Discussion boards, instant chats, Skype, Messenger, …

- Email,

- Social networks: FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, …

# Students preferences
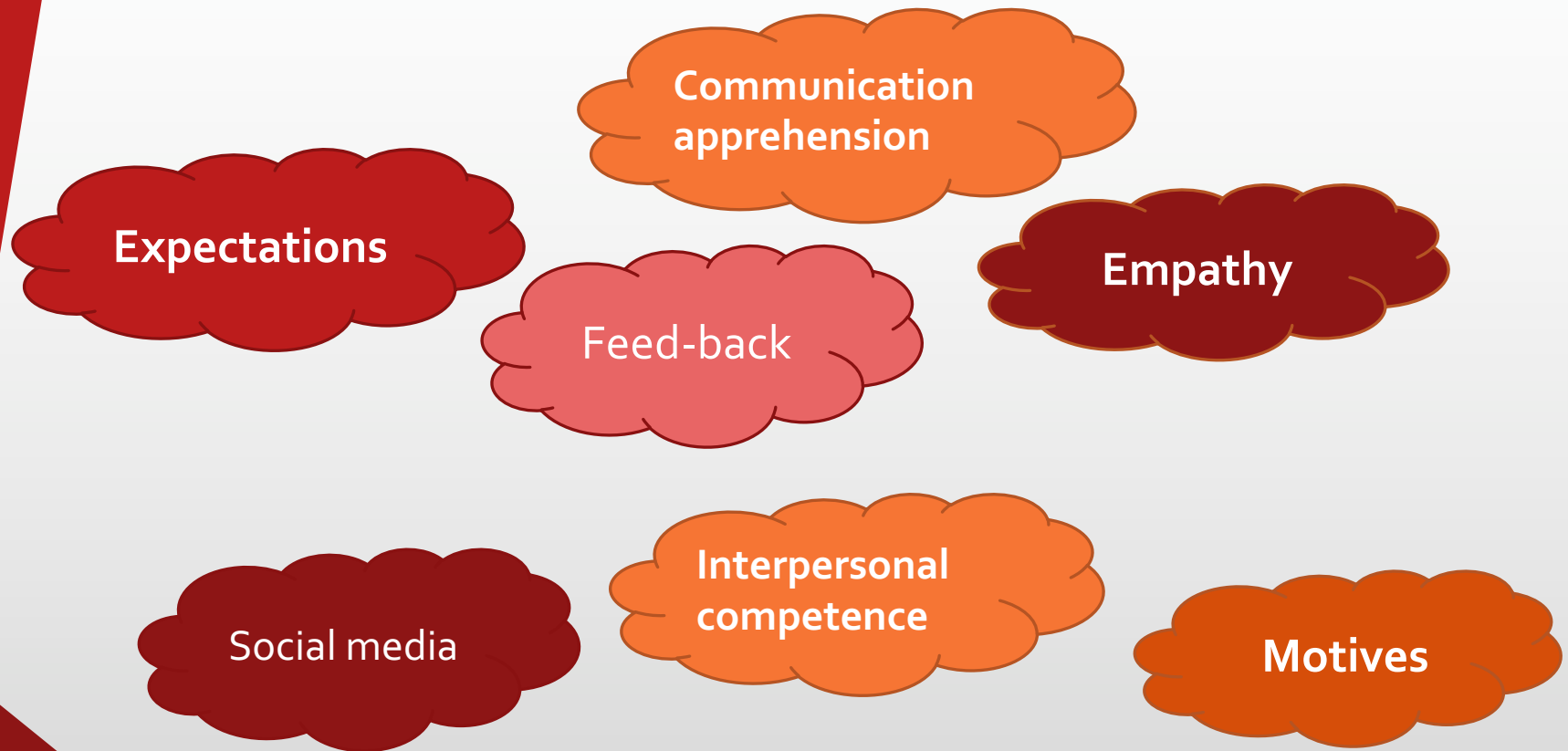
*Hannah Lena Merdian & John Kyle Warrior*

**Figure 1: An empirical model of students' communication preferences in educational settings.**
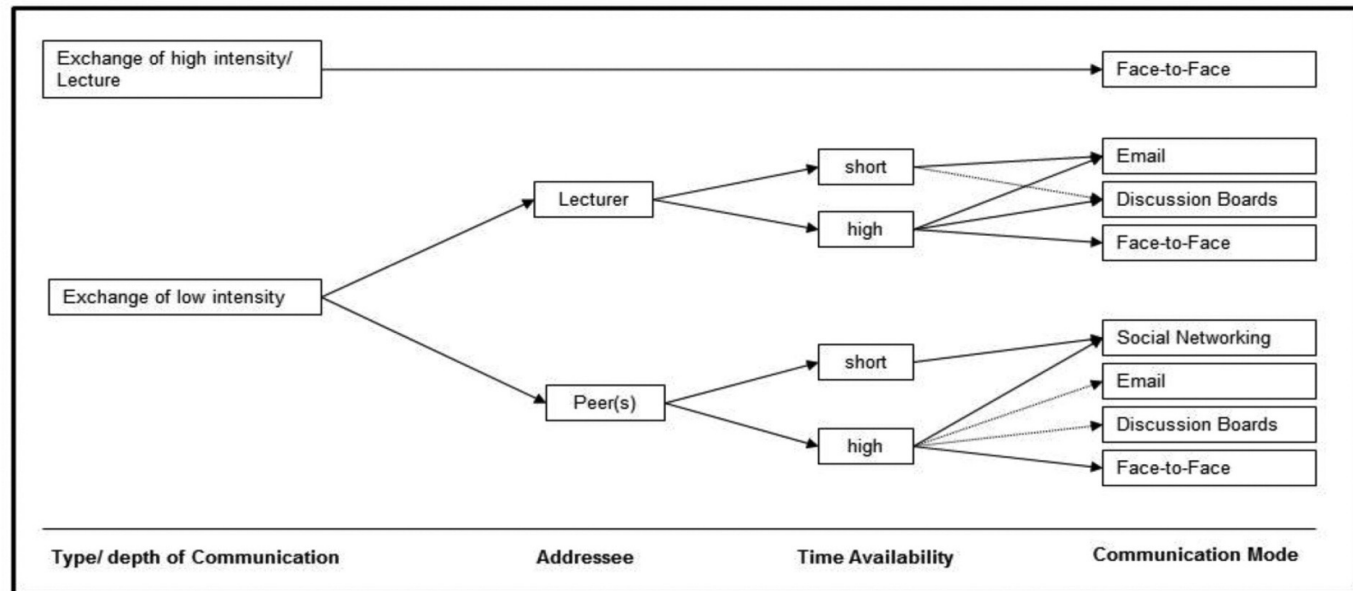


This model was developed based on exploratory data analysis and cluster analysis to questionnaire items with *N*=98 students. A straight line indicates that a relationship was emerged directly in the data. A dotted line indicates that the relationship was deducted based on the available data.

Merdian & Warrior, 2015:34

# Dimensions of an effective communication

**Communication apprehension**

**Expectations**

Feed-back

**Empathy**

Social media

**Interpersonal competence**

**Motives**

(Fofana, 2016)

# Feed-back

One of the major pillars in the relationship between professors and their students is communicating feedback on projects, exams, and other kinds of academic assignments (Fofana, 2016).

However, this process should be effectively done in order to produce desired results - feedback does not always realize its full potential to become an integral part of the learning process (ibid).

Useful feedback: timely feedback, delivering (speed and manner), focus on improvements and how to become better learners, …

# (video) Feed-back: types and purposes
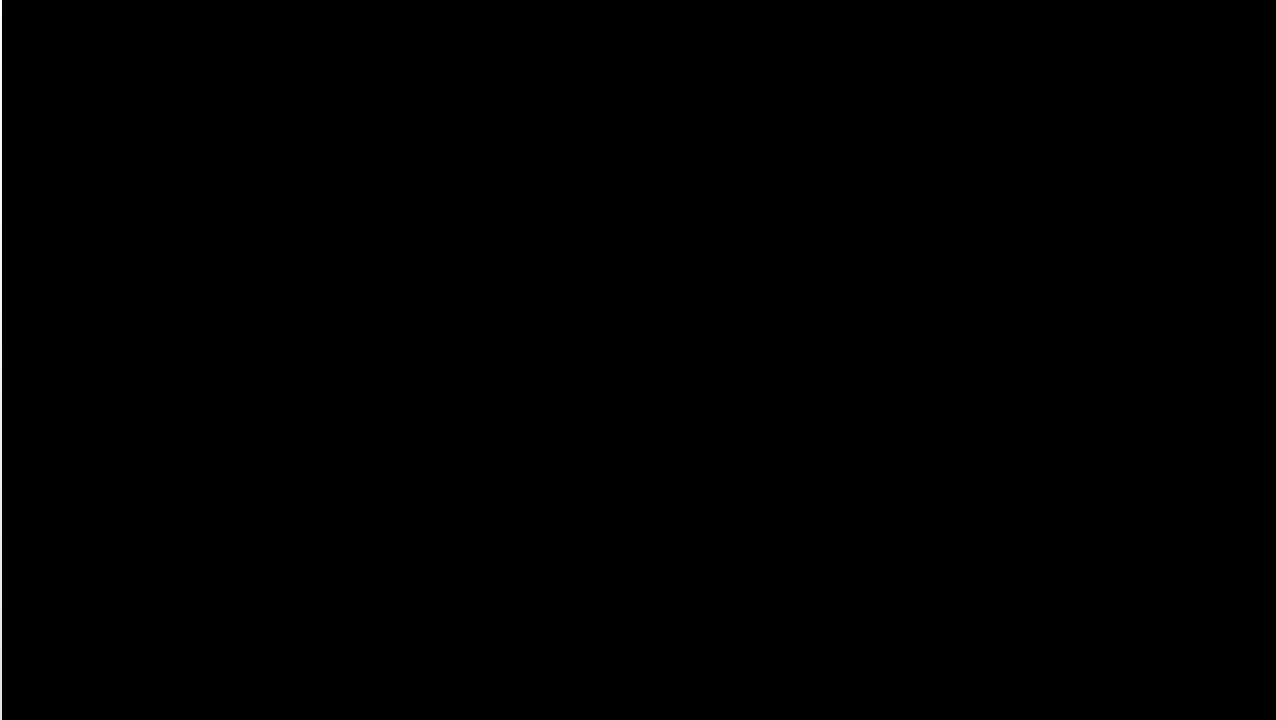
# Discussion

- Types and purposes of feed-back (John Hatti, Univ. Of Melbournee)

- What is the impact of teachers' feed-back on students?

- How and when? In Group? Individually?

- Teachers' perspective - how to facilitate progression - where are they going and how are they going?

- Students' perspective - How do they interpret it? How do they use it?

- Most importantly: What does feed back mean? What is its purpose?

# Discussion

"Whether it's evaluative feed-back or descriptive feed-back, the most important thing is to reduce the gap …"

3 key questions:

- 1) Where am I going?

- 2) How am I doing?

- 3) What do I do next?


3 levels of fedd-back:

- 1st Level - superficial: where do I go, what content do I need to learn, etc .;

- 2nd Level - process - how should I learn, what strategies should I follow, what are the levels of requirement, etc.

- 3rd level - self-regulation - how should I continue, where do I get more information, …;

- It requires greater involvement, strategic thinking, etc.

# Feed-back

- Pedagogical regulation is done through a communication process, whether in person or online, whether oral or written.

-  The quality of the communication process is crucial for mutual understanding and understanding.

- It can be said that there is pedagogical regulation when the feed-back given by the teacher is used by the student to improve his/her learning process.

- However, the feed-back given by the teacher does not always have a positive impact on the student's performance (nature of the feed-back, student's academic profile, timing, etc.)

# Improving efective communication

- Communication should be encouraged between students and their professors, and a common understanding of what it means.
- Teachers and students should be willing to:
- communicate effectively in order to build better interpersonal relationship; create more time for face to face communication (it is the most effective).
- avoid technology, like email, to communicate complex information; face to face should be used instead.
- There should be an agreed maximum time period for both to respond to emails, in order to save each other from frustration.

(Fofana, 2016)

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# Tips for teachers

- Be very clear in communicating expectations to students.

- Give feedback to students, especially, information relating to academic performance.

- Reminding students about tests, projects, assignments, or anything that is due and should be willing to communicate such information through multiple ways.

- Activities should be done to encourage students to be comfortable in talking to their teachers.

- Consider using social media like Twitter; this will help communication.

- Try to understand students' motives for communicating.

- Using humor in the communication process.

- (Fofana, 2016)

# (cont.)

- Promote the use of virtual discussion boards for both academic exchange and dissemination of information.

- Encourage students to contact lecturers directly if they have specific questions or queries.

- Communicate expected time frames for email response or face-to-face appointments, and clearly communicate other sources of information to avoid repeat emails (e.g. where lecture notes are found).

- Inclusion of instant messaging on discussion boards could increase its usage and popularity amongst students. Advise students of realistic response time frames and how posts are going to be monitored.

- Time availability is a major part in the communication preference, and thus time management could be a useful skillset to be taught to students.

(Merdian & Warrior, 2015: 36)

# References

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Thank you for your attention!