The Importance of Communication Strategies in Higher Education: A Case Study of an Ecuadorian University

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ABSTRACT:

Effective communication is a fundamental pillar of higher education because it facilitates learning, interaction between teachers and students, and the development of academic and social skills. This research analyzes the importance of communication strategies in higher education, using the Dentistry program at an Ecuadorian university as a case study. The main objective was to identify the communication techniques and tools used by faculty and their influence on the Dentistry program at the Salesian University. A qualitative methodology with a descriptive approach was employed, utilizing interviews with faculty and students to obtain a comprehensive view of the communication situation at the university. The results show that the communication strategies applied to Dentistry students are clear, inclusive, and adapted to the students' needs.

The communication model focuses on communication skills such as motivation, regulation, elaboration, and organization of information. Effective communication strategies focus on strengthening communication. Specific aspects to address were defined, and the impact of each strategy was assessed, including increased trust, participation, performance, and inclusion, ultimately reducing dropout rates and fostering greater student engagement. In conclusion, the research demonstrates that implementing and improving effective communication strategies is a key factor in enhancing educational quality at Ecuadorian universities, promoting a more collaborative and dynamic academic environment. It is suggested that institutions prioritize training in communication skills and the incorporation of effective strategies that facilitate interaction among all educational stakeholders.

Keywords: Effective communication, higher education, motivation, strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is the fundamental pillar in higher education, as it facilitates learning through interaction between teachers and students. In the Dentistry program at the Universidad Politécnica Salesiana (UPS), this competence acquires special relevance, not only in the classroom but also in clinical settings, where the ability to transmit information clearly and comprehensibly directly impacts the relationship with patients and the quality of learning. UPS recognizes that communication is an inclusive practice that strengthens the participation of all university stakeholders, contributing to the development of transversal skills such as empathy, teamwork, and negotiation capacity, which are essential competencies for professional dental practice (Pérez y Torres, 2023).

In Oral and Written Communication classes, the development of effective communicative practices focuses on activities that promote verbal and written expression, critical understanding of contents, and collaborative interaction. Students participate in oral presentations, debates, case analyses, and report writing, under the guidance of teachers who emphasize clarity, precision, and respect in communication. Regular attendance, punctual completion of academic assignments, and participation are determining factors for students to internalize communication strategies, improve their performance in the subject, and increase their chances of passing. These experiences allow for the consolidation of communicative competencies that are essential for dental practice, reinforcing the effective transmission of information and the management of relationships in both academic and clinical contexts (Rodríguez y Morales, 2022; Martínez et al., 2021).

The main objective of this study is to identify the communicative techniques and tools used by teachers and their influence on academic careers. To this end, effective communication models in higher education and their relationship with academic performance and student motivation are analyzed. The communicative skills applied by teachers at the Salesian University are identified. Furthermore, effective communication strategies that contribute to the motivation and academic performance of university students are proposed.

The study is relevant because it allows understanding the importance of communication strategies in higher education, specifically in the Dentistry program at UPS, as good pedagogical and communicational practices that contribute to academic success, the comprehensive development of the student, and the improvement of educational management within the university. The implementation of communicative strategies constitutes a significant contribution to professional training, ensuring that future dentists not only master technical knowledge but also develop communication skills that enable them to interact effectively with colleagues, patients, and the academic community.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Communication in any environment is not an isolated process; rather, it is defined as the transversal axis that articulates any process, especially in educational settings. In higher education, this process goes beyond a mere exchange of data; it constructs the learning environments where the foundations for the students' future are built. To understand the impact of communicative strategies, it is necessary to understand communication from its essential components, progressing to its specific elements.

Effective communication is the clear and empathetic exchange of information that allows for mutual understanding, cooperation, and positive results in interpersonal, family, educational, and professional contexts. Evidence demonstrates its constant importance across multiple fields. Reyes (2025) identifies effective communication as the key to healthy, harmonious, and productive family relationships. Similarly, Quaranta (2019) points out that effective communication encompasses linguistic factors, empathetic listening, and cooperation, acting as a critical factor for success in academic teamwork, as it enables positive synergy and greater productivity. In the healthcare sector, the evidence is particularly robust regarding the consequences of ineffective communication. Following González and Fraile (2008), they found that 82% of 33 nursing staff members witnessed

workplace errors derived from poor communication, and 55% of these errors resulted in patient harm, implying that the problem of effective communication is highly visible in the health field. Along the same lines, Fontenele-Gomes & Teixeira (2021) conclude that communication is essential for strengthening bonds and promoting humanization in the hospital environment. Finally, Estévez Abad & Estévez Vélez (2021) demonstrate that medical students with communication training conducted interviews with greater empathy and effectiveness than their peers without such training. Under this analysis, communication in higher education represents a fundamental process within the education and training of young people, being one of the major impacts affecting the quality of both teaching and learning. Currently, universities face significant challenges in properly managing these educational pillars. However, communication, especially among members of the university community, is not always optimal, representing serious disruptions and problems for the educational process. The study by Quesada-Rodríguez (2013) surveyed students and professors of a health sciences faculty, identifying critical flaws in the communicative styles and interpersonal perception of the faculty. Therefore, effective communication is composed of several factors; it is not reduced merely to the use of appropriate language but involves a series of strategies aimed at optimizing the learning, teaching, and comprehension processes. Nevertheless, it is still evident that a wide gap remains for learning and continuous improvement to be optimal in higher education. As a model, the study by Pascual et al. (2017) conducted a mixed-methods case study at the University of the Basque Country, finding that integrated communication strategies improved decision-making and organizational modernization, but concluded that centralized structures impede improvements in internal communication. Similarly, Ortiz-Chimbo et al. (2022) analyzed Scopus and SciELO literature (2005-2021), concluding that inclusive communication is decisive for strengthening socialization processes in higher education organizations. More recently, Baño and Dahua (2024) surveyed 35 students and 16 professors, demonstrating that assertive communication practices improve interpersonal relationships and educational environments.

It is important to highlight that educational strategies are not the only contributors to student training; a crucial point is how ideas are transmitted in the best possible way. Educational learning strategies are specific procedures and actions that students employ to facilitate, expedite, and transfer learning to new situations, and they are essential for developing autonomous and self-regulated lifelong learning.

Following González (2012), this is defined as "specific procedures and actions taken by students". Gargallo López (2009) emphasizes that teachers must explicitly teach these strategies in the classroom, since students cannot acquire all the necessary knowledge at school alone. A recent systematic analysis of 40 articles (Huamán et al., 2024) reveals that learning strategies involve relationships among cognitive, motivational, and metacognitive variables that influence learning beyond mere cognition. Concluding the analysis, Dorado et al. (2020) identify specific types of strategies: affective-motivational, repetition, regulation, elaboration, and organization, proposing that such learning strategies act as a "revolution" in education and potentially reduce dropout and repetition rates,

III. METODOLOGY

In the methodological approach of this study, a qualitative method with a descriptive design was utilized, allowing for the selection of study categories such as organization and clarity of contents, feedback and follow-up, and motivation and participation, resulting in the development of communicative competencies. The interview technique was applied to a sample of UPS teachers, and based on the responses obtained, analysis conditions were defined to understand the perception of communicative competencies in university students. According to Hernández et al. (2018), qualitative research seeks to understand the social reality of the participants' meanings, experiences, and perceptions. Furthermore, it emphasizes natural contexts as a fundamental resource in the research process. The phases of the study are framed within communicative strategies,

which are viewed as student skills. These skills include motivation, repetition, regulation, elaboration, and organization of classes.

IV. RESULTS

The identification of the communicative techniques and tools utilised by teaching staff, in addition to the influence of these techniques and tools on the Dentistry programme, resulted in the following findings:

O1: Effective communication models in higher education and their relationship with academic performance and student motivation were analyzed.

TABLE I - COMMUNICATIVE MODEL IN THE UNIVERSITY

Study Categories	**Teachers Specific strategies**	**Students Communicative skills**
Organization and clarity	Class introduction	Motivational
Feedback and follow-up	Content comprehension	Regulation
Motivation and participation	Encourages participation in activities	Elaboration
Evaluation of teacher communication	Addresses difficulties in the Teaching-Learning (T-L) process	Organization - repetition

Table 1 indicates that the strategies used by teachers are connected to communicative skills and can be applied from the Dentistry program and various social approaches. These allow for estimating models such as organization and clarity, academic follow-up, teacher motivation through interaction, and the evaluation of activities towards passing the subjects.

O2- The communicative skills applied by teachers at the Salesian University are identified through the interview, and the students' perception regarding the development of these activities is recognized.

TABLE III- DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

Teachers	Interview Technique	Students' Perception
T1	Organizes classes through presentation, syllabus review, general guidelines, subject postulates, chapters, and subchapters. Diagnosis, questions, feedback. Feedback is applied in each meeting for 10 minutes. Forums: focuses motivational phrases on the subject and social responsibility. Difficulties arise due to non-mandatory connection.	S1- I have the guidelines that were given to me at the beginning. I was given a schedule, and the evaluation system was explained to me.
T2	I begin with open dialogues to learn the student's identity, provide the bibliography, and explain the course organization and the commitments to be fulfilled.	S2- They instructed me on how to develop the subject, along with the activity schedule and synthesized contents.

T3	In the introductory class, the entire compliance process, study units, evaluation, and recovery are explained.	S3- The teacher taught Unit 1, but there was no in-depth exploration of the topic. Similarly, there was a lack of interaction between getting to know each other. We did not have a diagnosis

O3- Effective communication strategies were proposed to contribute to the motivation and academic performance of students

TABLE IIII - EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Strategies	**Aspects to address**	**Expected impact**
Strengthening teacher-student communication	Implement space for continuous feedback. Clear, empathetic, and inclusive language. Open channels such as emails and academic platforms.	Greater trust, better comprehension of contents, and increased student motivation.
Use of interactive digital tools	Incorporate platforms such as forums, chats, and virtual classrooms by improving the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).	Greater participation, dynamic learning, and improved academic performance.
Develop communicative competencies with students	Workshops on oral expression, written expression, and argumentation. Debate activities, presentations, and collaborative work.	Better academic performance and greater confidence in participation.
Intercultural approach	Promote respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.	Greater inclusion, sense of belonging, and motivation in diverse students
Academic support and follow-up	Personalized tutoring and academic tracking.	Reduce dropout rates and improve academic performance
Effective institutional communication	Effective information regarding dates and evaluations. Disseminate through official and organized channels.	Less confusion, better organization, and greater student engagement.

Table 3 indicates that the implementation of effective communication strategies in the university environment significantly contributes to strengthening student motivation and academic performance. Clear, inclusive, and participatory communication improves the interaction between teachers and students, facilitates learning, and generates more dynamic and equitable educational environments

V. RESULTS

Effective communication constitutes a fundamental element in the educational process, as

it directly influences the motivation and academic performance of students, specifically in health programs, which is the context of this study. Clear, timely, and empathetic interaction between teachers and students facilitates content comprehension, strengthens trust, and generates an environment highly conducive to learning.

Likewise, it is evident that the implementation of appropriate communicational strategies, in both face-to-face and virtual environments, contributes to increasing student participation, favoring the development of academic and social skills necessary for their comprehensive training. Furthermore, incorporating an intercultural approach into communication allows for the recognition and valuation of student diversity, promoting inclusion and a sense of belonging within the university community. This is especially relevant in diverse educational contexts, where cultural differences can influence learning processes. The use of communicational tools strengthens educational interaction, optimizes communication channels, and improves the monitoring of student performance, which positively impacts academic results. Finally, the application of effective communication strategies at the Universidad Politécnica Salesiana not only improves academic performance but also enhances motivation, engagement, and student retention, contributing to the development of a more inclusive, participatory, and high-quality education.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

VII. Effective communication constitutes a fundamental element in the educational process, as

it directly influences the motivation and academic performance of students, specifically in health programs, which is the context of this study. Clear, timely, and empathetic interaction between teachers and students facilitates content comprehension, strengthens trust, and generates an environment highly conducive to learning.

VIII. Likewise, it is evident that the implementation of appropriate communicational strategies, in both face-to-face and virtual environments, contributes to increasing student participation, favoring the development of academic and social skills necessary for their comprehensive training.

IX. Furthermore, incorporating an intercultural approach into communication allows for the recognition and valuation of student diversity, promoting inclusion and a sense of belonging within the university community. This is especially relevant in diverse educational contexts, where cultural differences can influence learning processes. .

X. The use of communicational tools strengthens educational interaction, optimizes communication channels, and improves the monitoring of student performance, which positively impacts academic results.

Finally, the application of effective communication strategies at the Universidad Politécnica Salesiana not only improves academic performance but also enhances motivation, engagement, and student retention, contributing to the development of a more inclusive, participatory, and high-quality education.

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