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THE RELEVANCE OF COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION IN EDUCATION



- **What is the purpose of education?**
- **Does the school practice meet the needs of all actors, students and teachers in the first place?**
- **How it could be changed to fit the purpose better?**

➤ **The purpose of school:**

- developing heart and soul as well as body and mind,
- to foster the development of personal integrity and interconnectedness,
- to nurture love for learning,
- to make studying in the school meaningful and life connected

➤ **obrazovanje** (education) = **obraz** means personal integrity

- **1995-2001: 4000 teachers and about 100 000 children involved, with the support of UNICEF**
- **2001- : integral part of Civic Education in Primary schools in Serbia**
- **6900 teachers with the support of MoES**
- **Manuals WORDS ARE WINDOWS OR THEY ARE WALLS 1,2,3 for teachers working with children from 5-10,11-14,15-18**
- **2001- Spreading abroad**

- **Experiential learning paradigm for teacher's and children's training based on M.Rosenberg's Model of Non-Violent Communication (NVC)**
- **see www.CNVC.org**
- **CONNECT COMPASSIONATELY BEFORE** doing anything else
- **Radical shift in the approach to education**

➤ **Basic and Advanced seminars for teachers, up to 96h, 3-day format**

➤ **Goals:**

- To assimilate and integrate NVC skills into their teaching and educative practice,
- To transmit these skills to children (within classroom meetings)
- To transmit these skills to parents (within parents meetings)
- To transmit "peer mediation" program to students

COGNITIVE PREREQUISITES FOR NVC

- a. differentiation of the observed facts from our interpretation, judgements, prejudices, stereotypes
("you are lazy, irresponsible...")
- b. differentiation of clear expressions of feelings from our judgments
(sad vs. neglected, humiliated)

COGNITIVE PREREQUISITES FOR NVC

- **making connection between feelings and needs generating them; moment by moment awareness...(I am feeling sad because I am needing connection..)**
- **differentiation of the feelings created by our jugmental thinking (anger, shame, depression, anxiety, jealousy...) from genuine feelings**

COGNITIVE PREREQUISITES FOR NVC

- a. identifying needs behind judgmental thinking (“you are selfish” = “I need care for my needs”)
- b. differentiation between motivation based on force (I must, should) and autonomous motivation (I chose... because I want...);
self discipline vs obedience

COGNITIVE PREREQUISITES FOR NVC

- a. identifying needs behind should and must (I choose it because I need...)
- b. identifying needs behind negative statements,
translating “I don’t” into “I want”
- c. differentiation between needs and strategies, ways of meeting needs;
(money, time for example are not needs)

COGNITIVE PREREQUISITES FOR NVC

- a. differentiation between requests and demands; (a request implying freedom of choice for the other to say NO, and empathic receiving of NO)
- b. differentiation of characteristics of communication that leads towards connection or alienation (timing, way of expression...)
- c. ability of compassionate receiving of four basic elements of messages no matter how they are formulated

COGNITIVE PREREQUISITES FOR NVC

- a. differentiation between empathic and other kinds of feed-back
- b. differentiation between expectation and expectancy
(fixed images vs. openness to the development)
- c. clear connection between intention and choice of actions in tune with it (not to support autonomy by giving advices, punishing, rewarding etc.)
(differentiation between protective and punitive use of force)

SOME CHALLENGES IN TEACHERS' LEARNING OF NVC

- **Expressing needs and requests**
- **Translating “I don’t want children to do...”**
- **Static vs. process evaluation**
- **Expressing appreciation in NVC terms**
- **Receiving NO**
- **Agreements vs. rules**
- **Alternatives to punishment**
- **Translating labels**

EVALUATION: SOME INTERESTING FINDINGS

Table 1. Type of change in way of communication (percentage)

type of change	with colleagues	with children	with parents	with boss	with family
better expression	14.7	7.4	8.5	6.9	15.7
better receiving	36.7	33.4	19.9	11.2	27.4
less conflicts	27.4	50.1	37.5	25.0	40.7
undefined change	8.7	4.3	5.7	3.4	8.1
no change	12.0	4.9	11.3	40.5	8.1
answered	150	162	141	116	172

EVALUATION: SOME INTERESTING FINDINGS

Table 2. Teachers Self-confidence in their own NVC skills in communication with different partners

partner	not confident	partly confident	confident	mean value	stand. dev.
children	2%	34%	63.9	2.62	.53
colleagues	17.6 %	54.1%	28.3%	2.11	.67
family	6.6%	41.2%	52.3%	2.46	.62

1-3 scale, where 1=I don't feel confidence, 2=I'm partly confident, 3=I'm confident

EVALUATION: SOME INTERESTING FINDINGS


Table 3. Difficulties in applying the Model of NVC

Personal inhibition, skills not yet developed	37.2%
Reactions of others (resistance, mocking)	41.2%
Not specified	8.8%
No difficulties	12.8%
Answered	226

THE EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM ON CHILDRENS BEHAVIOUR

- better able to understand the consequences of their behaviour
- better able to manage their feelings especially anger
- better at conflict management, negotiating disagreements
- have fewer fights and upsets

THE EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM ON CHILDRENS BEHAVIOUR

- more positive feelings about self and peers
 - better able to focus and take other's perspective
 - have improved empathy and respect for the feelings of others
 - better at listening to others
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THE EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM ON CHILDRENS BEHAVIOUR

- have more sharing, co-operation and mutual respect
- have better relations with teachers
- have more willingness to learn
- have school performance better

LESSONS LEARNED

➤ We noticed:

- that with a bigger number of professionals trained from one school,
- with the school principal participating in the training,
- and more continuous education of the same group,

the overall atmosphere in the school positively changed ensuring sustainability of the program

Ruth Bebermayer's verses:

**Words are windows or they're walls
they sentence us or set us free,
when I speak or when I hear
let the love light shine through me.**