

Development of Higher Education Institutions and Online Communication with Students in Modern Conditions

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Abstract

The conditions that have developed in the educational sphere since the beginning of the Russian military aggression in Ukraine have significantly complicated the implementation of the educational process, the establishment of professional communication – from contacts with the immediate environment to global and intercultural ties. The stress burden experienced by both teachers and students includes the forced relocation of participants of the educational process to other regions, the participation of teachers and students in hostilities, territorial defence units and volunteer movements, the loss of relatives and friends, etc. In such conditions, teachers in higher educational institutions should react quickly and take corrective measures in order to restore professional and pedagogical communication. The purpose of the academic paper is to characterize, clarify the advantages, disadvantages and determine the features of certain types of online communication of higher educational institutions with students in modern conditions. In the course of the present research, a number of general and special methods of analysis of scientific sources were applied, as well as an online survey was used to study the standpoint of participants of the educational process, namely, students and teachers of higher educational institutions, regarding the features of online communication of higher education institutions with students in current conditions. Based on the results of the research, the main characteristics of the communication processes taking place in the online mode in higher education were studied, and the standpoint of the participants of the educational process regarding the priority components of the organization of the educational online system was clarified.

Keywords: online communication, interaction of HEI with students, distance learning, stages of communication, cloud technologies, communication technologies

1. Introduction

In order to ensure the full functioning of the educational process in current conditions, it has become necessary to search for new ways for improving the methods and principles of distance learning, the objective of which is to ensure individual orientation of the educational process and create comfortable conditions for students and teachers, taking into account individual and psychological characteristics, developing information culture, improving skills in working with pedagogical and information technologies.

In the theoretical part of the present research, the concepts, components and principles of online communications of HEI with students in modern conditions have been substantiated.

The practical part of the research includes an assessment of the effectiveness of various types of organizing the communicative online learning processes in terms of their synchronism, priority and importance of the main key advantages and disadvantages of online communications in distance learning, as well as the priority of directions for optimizing online communication in distance learning (Bahno, Serhiichuk, Tanana, Tkachenko, & Khmelnytska,

2021).

Based on the results of the research conducted, it has been established that, according to the standpoint of students and teachers of higher educational institutions, the systems of synchronous and asynchronous “one-on-one” communication, as well as asynchronous group work with cases, chats, and “many-to-many” synchronous communication are the most effective ones.

The most important key benefits of online communication in distance learning for both education seekers and teachers is the ability to learn anywhere, at one’s own pace and at any time.

The main disadvantages of online communication in distance learning are the lack of practical skills and the fact that distance learning is not suitable for the development of communication skills (Mykhalchuk, Levchuk, Ivashkevych, Yasnohurska, & Cherniakova, 2021).

During the survey, teachers and education seekers have noted that the most priority directions for optimizing online communication during distance learning are students’ increase in motivation, independence, social activity, reflection and introspection during online learning, the formation of the process of constructing one’s own knowledge by education seekers, personalization of the educational process.

2. Literature Review

Modern students are characterized by a tendency to actively use information and communication technologies; (Leshchenko et al., 2021; Zinovieva et al., 2021) therefore, the education system is currently undergoing a series of reforms related to the establishment and management of communication processes (Calonge et al., 2021)

Currently, the features of the operation of higher educational institutions, from the perspective of the system of establishing contacts with students, are as follows:

- use of specialized technologies and learning tools – computers, network tools, multimedia technologies, special software for teaching students;
- test control of the quality of knowledge – use of test systems based on information technologies;
- changing the forms of interaction between the teacher and students, and, consequently, the forms and methods of learning.

From the viewpoint of the formation and development of a set of elements related to the constant interaction of participants of training, the following aspects are of particular importance for performing the functions of the educational process, namely:

–institutional - the presence of a strategy for the development of the information and communication base, especially in universities, where a blended learning system is introduced;

–aspect of management technologies – organization and management of the educational process, combining traditional forms and electronic learning;

–pedagogical – development of methods, models and pedagogical and methodological support of the educational process in the electronic learning environment (Elken, Stensaker & Dedze, 2018; Santandreu Calonge, et al., 2022; Ali, 2020).

The management of the educational process in general, as well as the pedagogical interaction between the teacher and the student, in particular, should be based on a set of pedagogical principles, such as: effective goal setting, adaptability, continuity, conditionality, communication, consistency and innovation (Ertmer & Otterbreit-Leftwich, 2019).

The optimal combination of these basic principles of the communicative process forms an approach that makes it possible to create a set of measures that provide high-quality information and communication support for educational programs in higher educational institutions, according to which each stage of this process corresponds to the set goals and objectives and has an innovative content (Novak, Lytvyn, Laun, & Velykdan, 2021). In addition, the variety of modern information technologies allows teachers interacting with students outside the traditional curriculum, expanding access to knowledge and developing a new approach to solving problems through various means (Levitt, 2018).

One of the forms of modern education is blended learning, the purpose of which is to combine traditional formal learning methods (work in classrooms, studying theoretical material) with informal ones, for instance, discussing

controversial issues through educational Internet platforms, online conferences (Zhang, et al., 2020).

Blended learning is a purposeful process of mastering knowledge, acquiring skills and abilities in the context of integrating classroom and extracurricular educational activities according to the subjects of the curriculum, with the introduction and complementarity of traditional, electronic, distance and mobile learning technologies with simultaneous self-control of students in time, place, methods and pace of learning (Paladan, 2018).

The basis of effective communication educational activity is a dialogue, which involves communication, during which a joint action takes place, leading to a joint solution of tasks. At the same time, the high effectiveness of joint problem solving is beneficial to both sides of the educational activity, forasmuch as in the process of communication, an internal impulse to action arises, contributing to sensitization and more productive activity (Hrehová & Teplická, 2019).

Strategies for managing pedagogical interaction involve the use of different roles in the joint activity of the teacher and students, styles of perception and performance of communicative activity, as well as management of the communication process to a large extent due to the solution of various educational tasks (Tang & Hew, 2020). In order to better understand the effectiveness of online communication in higher education institutions (HEIs), it is important to examine the viewpoint of the participants of the educational process. The purpose of the research is to determine the viewpoint of the participants of the educational process regarding the features of individual components of the online communication process of HEI with students, taking into account the modern conditions of educational activity.

3. Materials and Methods

The practical study of modern tendencies in online communication of higher educational institutions with students in current conditions was carried out by means of an online survey of 311 students and 204 teachers studying and teaching in institutions of higher education where online communication is used by participants of the educational process in HEI of Kyiv, Ukraine. The research was conducted using the Survio service. The use of an online survey allows for the collection of data in a quick and cost-effective way, which is essential in a rapidly changing educational landscape. The data collected from the survey can be used to identify areas of improvement in online communication, which can inform the development of policies and strategies to enhance the quality of online learning. Furthermore, the study of modern tendencies in online communication of higher educational institutions with students can provide valuable information on the effectiveness of various online communication tools, such as video conferencing, chat rooms, and email. This information can be used to identify the most effective communication tools for specific learning activities, which can enhance the quality of online learning and improve student engagement. The study can also provide insights into the challenges that students and teachers face when communicating online, such as technical difficulties, language barriers, and lack of social interaction. These challenges can inform the development of strategies to overcome them and improve the quality of online communication in higher education institutions.

4. Results and Discussion

Answering the questions of the questionnaire, students and teachers of HEI have determined the effectiveness of the following types of organization of communicative online learning processes from the perspective of their synchronicity (Figure 1).

According to the results of the survey, the students believe that the most effective systems are synchronous and asynchronous “one-on-one” communication, as well as asynchronous group work with cases, chats. From the viewpoint of teachers of higher educational institutions, synchronous “one-to-many” communication, “many-to-many” synchronous communication, and “one-to-one” synchronous communication has the highest level of effectiveness.

An important component of evaluating the effectiveness of various types of online education is clarifying the standpoint of the participants of the educational process regarding the advantages and disadvantages of online communications, which makes it possible to distinguish their benefits and drawbacks and implement measures towards optimizing communication procedures (Figures 3, 4).

As it can be observed from Figure 2, the most important key benefits of online communication in distance learning for both education seekers and teachers is the ability to learn anywhere, at one’s own pace and at any time.

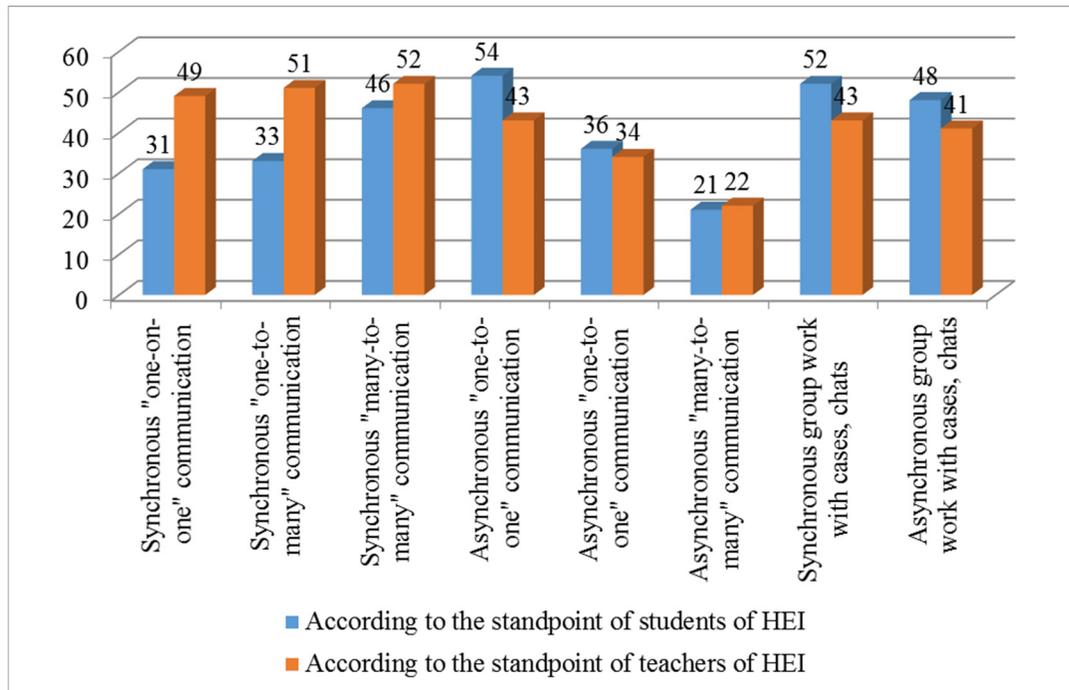


Figure 1. Effectiveness of Various Types of Organization of Communicative Online Learning Processes from the Perspective of Their Synchronicity, %

Source: compiled by the authors

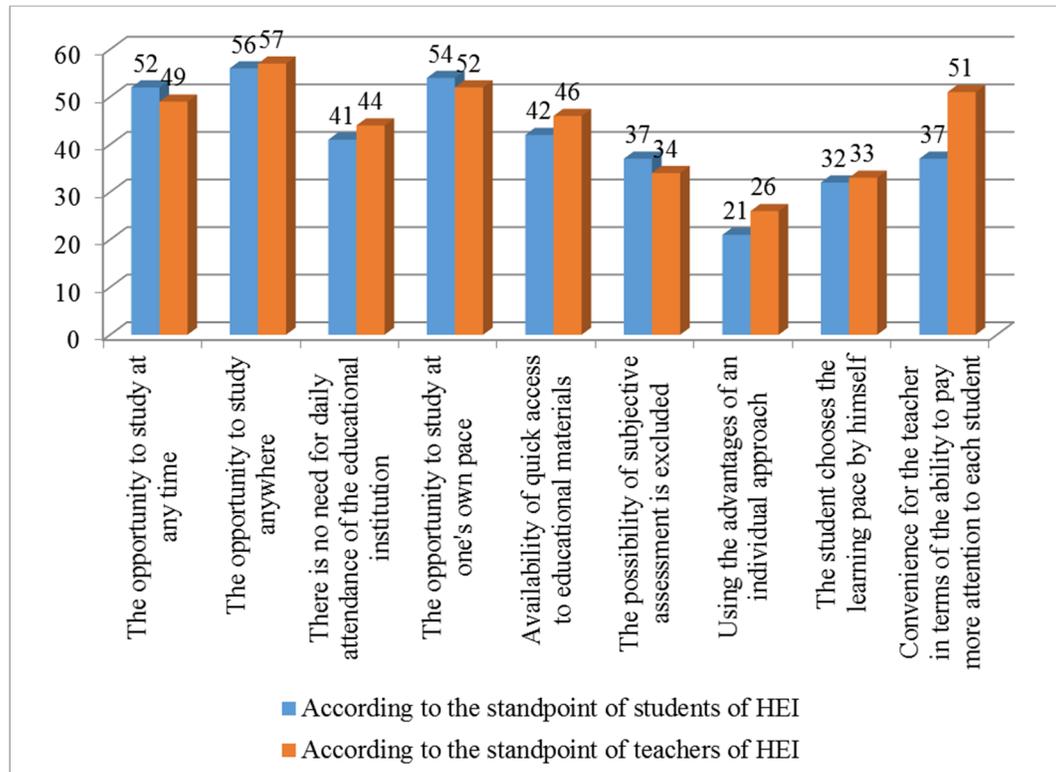


Figure 2. Evaluation of the Main Key Advantages of Online Communication in Distance Learning, %

Source: compiled by the authors

In the course of the research, the respondents were asked to identify the main disadvantages of online communication during distance learning, as well as to evaluate the degree of their importance (Figure 3).

- lack of practical skills and abilities;
- distance learning is not suitable for the development of communication skills.

During the survey, teachers and education seekers were given the opportunity to express their standpoint about the most important directions of optimizing communication processes during online education, which are as follows (Figure 4).

- increasing students' motivation, independence, social activity, reflection and self-analysis during online learning;
- formation of the process of constructing one's own knowledge by the education seekers;
- personalization of the educational process (the student independently determines his educational goals and methods of achieving them).

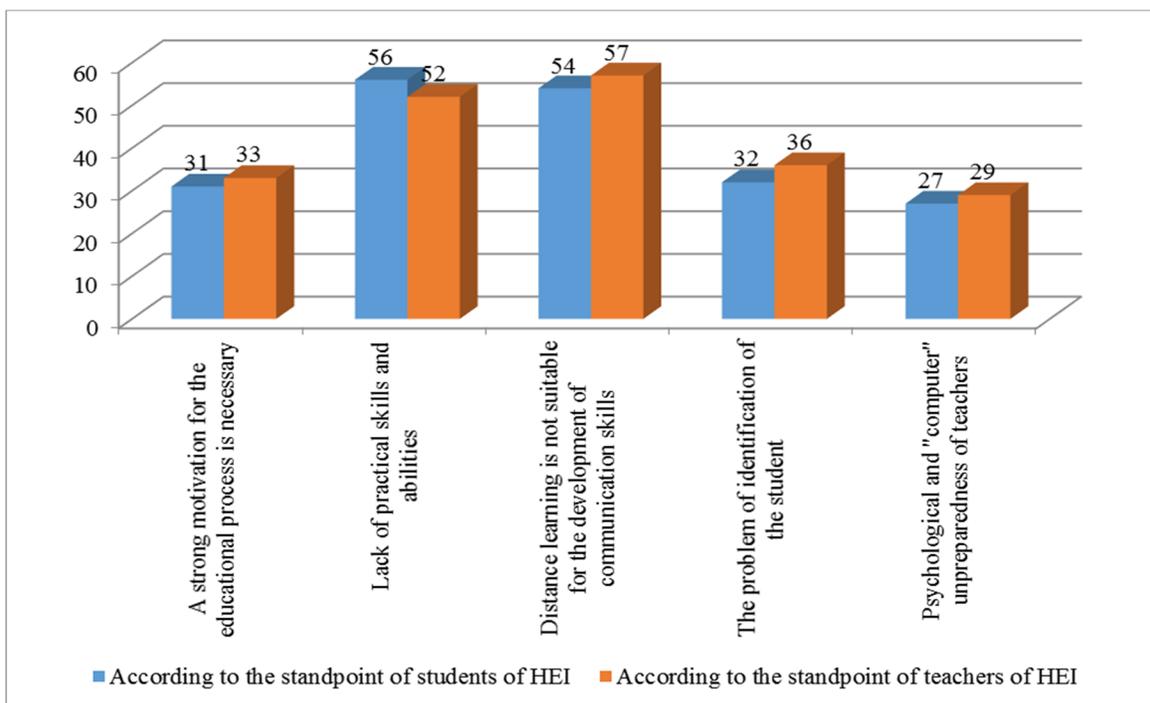


Figure 3. Evaluation of the Importance of the Main Disadvantages of Online Communication in Distance Learning, %

Source: compiled by the authors

Currently, there are many models of educational communication, in the process of which students get access to video lectures, independent tasks and test materials, communicate with teachers and other students, and also have the opportunity to study additional material on a specific topic. At the same time, it should be noted that even when using the same Internet platform, teachers have different algorithms for working with students and different approaches to managing such interaction (Öztok & Kehrwald, 2017; Cronin, 2017).

Considering the existing problems in the field of communication education, primary attention should be paid to the development and improvement of the teachers' skills to navigate in the information space, receive information and work with it, create optimal conditions in the learning process, contribute to the organization of communicative processes at the highest possible and qualitative level in accordance with the individual abilities of students based on their own needs and taking into account the opportunities and requirements of modern high-tech society (Sun, et al., 2018).

In order to establish effective communication, the teacher of HEI should contact students not as a "manager", but as an interlocutor who has come to the lecture to "share" personal content with the students, seeking not only to

recognize, but also to show interest in the student’s right to his own judgment, discuss different viewpoints on solving the problem (Potter, et al., 2021).

Communication with students should be structured in such a way that it leads to independent conclusions, makes them co-participants in the process of preparation, search and finding ways to resolve contradictions created by the teacher himself (Santosa, Batistaab, & Marques, 2019).

Effective pedagogical facilitation is an important aspect of communication in educational activities of higher educational institutions. It involves the creation of such an interaction when the individual experience of the participants is actualized; there is a mutual transfer of individual contexts of understanding educational information; the need and opportunity arises for operational and individually motivated application of updated experience. Objectivity is formed as a style of pedagogical action, which is based on the subjective experience of students and becomes the most important facilitating factor, forasmuch as under such conditions the students’ personal development becomes possible (Alvarez, 2020; Moreno & Cavazotte, 2017).

Recently, the latest information technologies are increasingly used in educational communication processes. One of the options for such technologies is cloud services; this is another way to implement existing students’ abilities and develop new ones, expanding the boundaries of information and communication literacy. In addition, cloud technologies can become a convenient tool for the teacher in organizing effective pedagogical interaction of students (Crawford, et al., 2020; Gallagher, Doherty, & Obonyo, 2020; Iatsyshyn, et al., 2019).

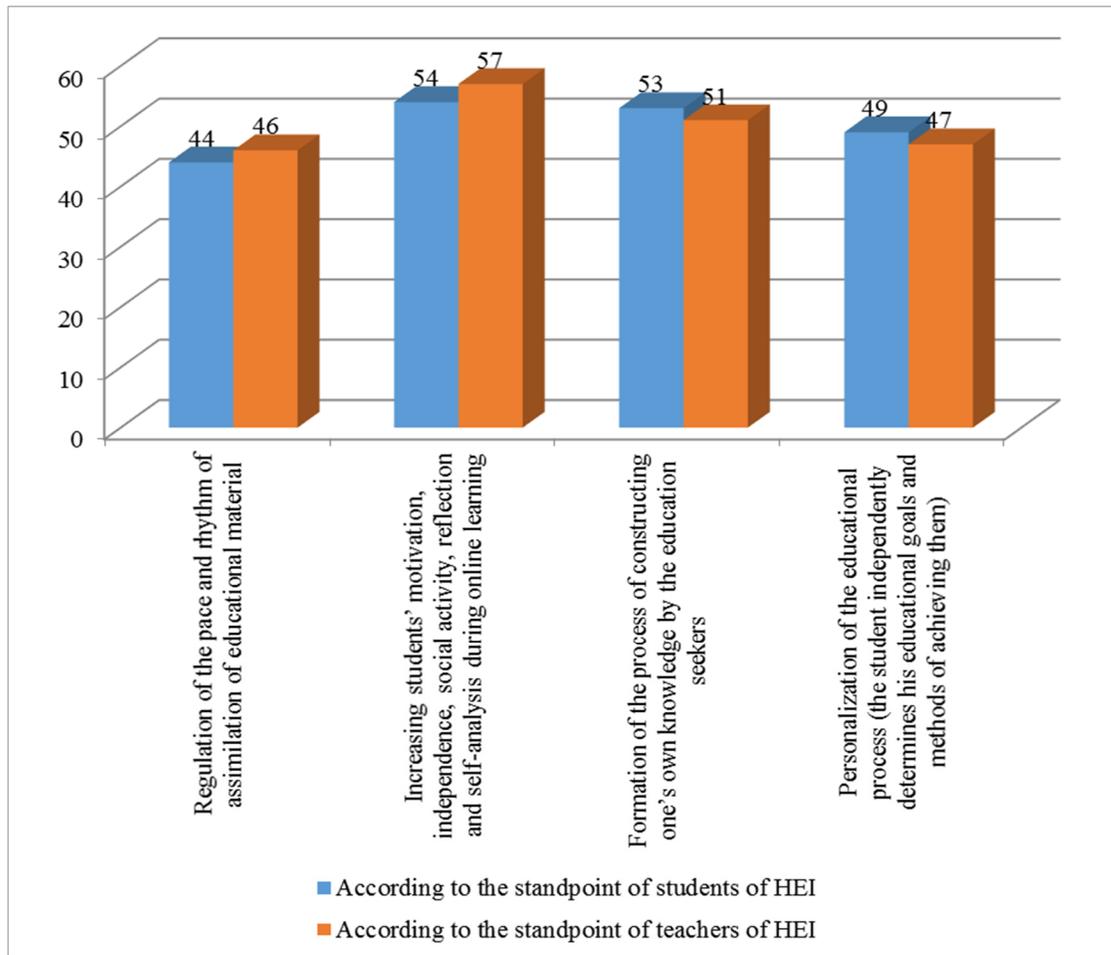


Figure 4. Prioritization of Directions for Optimizing the Online Communications in Distance Learning, %

Source: compiled by the authors

The use of information and computer technologies in blended learning opens up wide opportunities for students to perform controlled independent work with the help of a teacher - facilitator. It promotes the development of independent creative activity, stimulates the acquisition of additional knowledge and their consolidation, which makes it possible to indirectly influence the educational process and prepare highly qualified competitive specialists for the national and international labour market (Huang, et al., 2020).

Thus, in modern conditions, the development of higher education institutions and online communication with students is crucial for the effective delivery of education. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards online learning, making it more important than ever to ensure that online communication is efficient, effective, and engaging. The advantages and disadvantages of communicative processes in modern educational conditions have been outlined, highlighting the need for the use of relevant tools, principles, and practices in the educational process. Effective communication is essential for the transfer of knowledge and skills between teachers and learners, and the use of digital platforms and communication strategies can enhance the learning experience and promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The practical study of modern tendencies in online communication of higher educational institutions with students provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of online communication in higher education institutions. The use of online surveys to gather data is a reliable and efficient way to collect data from a large sample of participants, which can inform the development of policies and strategies to enhance the quality of online learning.

5. Conclusions

Effective communication plays a vital role in modern educational conditions as it facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills between teachers and learners. The use of relevant tools, principles, and practices in the educational process enhances the communication process, thereby increasing its effectiveness. For instance, the use of digital platforms such as e-learning management systems, online discussion forums, and video conferencing tools promotes timely and effective communication between teachers and learners.

Moreover, effective communication in modern educational conditions promotes a more interactive and engaging learning experience for students. Learners can participate actively in class discussions, share their perspectives, and engage in collaborative learning activities, which fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Effective communication also helps to reduce conflicts and misunderstandings between teachers and learners, which may negatively impact the learning process.

However, the implementation of communicative processes in modern educational conditions may also present some challenges. For instance, language barriers, cultural differences, and technological limitations may hinder effective communication between teachers and learners. In addition, some learners may struggle to express themselves adequately, while others may dominate the discussion, leading to a lopsided communication process.

To overcome these challenges, educators need to employ a range of communication strategies, including active listening, clear and concise language, and the use of visual aids. They should also encourage learners to express their ideas freely and provide opportunities for feedback and reflection to enhance the effectiveness of the communication process.

In conclusion, effective communication is crucial in modern educational conditions as it promotes organized, constructive communication between teachers and learners. The use of relevant tools, principles, and practices, coupled with effective communication strategies, enhances the learning experience, promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and reduces conflicts and misunderstandings.

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