

Online Learning between Movement and Stillness (The Use of Nonverbal Theatre Games in Online Education)

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Abstract: *This article starts from the premise that nonverbal theatre exercises can help motivate, stimulate and support online learning. We started our research from the idea that nonverbal theatre games can be an alternative to address online education for teenagers, with the goal to improve communication at a personal level: between body and mind, as well as at an interpersonal level: pupils-teachers, pupils-pupils. Survey, observation, structured interviews were used as investigative methods, while nonverbal theatre games in online courses were the experiential intervention techniques, and the research results lead to the conclusion that movement greatly influences our mood and that, when the body is neglected, the mind is also in discomfort. No matter how much digitalization has penetrated our lives, we need movement, social interaction, face-to-face interaction and, most of all, community life. For this reason, the interaction through nonverbal theatre games, based on the stimulation of the body and expressivity elements, can be an alternative in online education, but also in nonformal education. The idea of limiting learning to one single form, as in our case, to online or to formal education, based on reproducing information and memorizing, is only limiting and enclosing the development of pupils' abilities.*

Keywords: *online education, nonverbal theatrical exercises, nonverbal communication, interpersonal communication, alternative teaching methods.*

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In March 2020, when the first Covid cases were registered in Romania, due to isolation at home and other isolation measures, I felt like the Earth had stopped moving. Many of the projects we were working on got canceled, and others, out of inertia, confusion or fear, I canceled on my own. The first thought was to give up on the in-progress

dissertation project within the interdisciplinary PED-ArtE MA (a UNATC - University of Bucharest collaboration). Things seemed to be returning to normal much faster. Being a fan of direct, face-to-face communication, I felt that, in terms of interaction methods, everything I knew before was no longer valid, and communication was becoming difficult. Both as a trainer and as a participant to online classes, I felt that I was not achieving my goals, which frustrated me. I felt my body "stuck" online and none of what was happening seemed tangible, serious. Then, after a few weeks, I imagined the entire situation as a scene from a play, in which we all play our own role and suddenly... the curtain falls, separating us from one another. What can we do? Do we remain stuck? Or do we continue to "play the game"? And then I did what theatre classes taught me: *to adapt to the given situation, with the resources I have at hand "here and now"*. So, changing my perspective, I started the research project I had designed for the defense of my dissertation: the study of the impact that nonverbal theatre games can have on the development of adolescents. What initially seemed impossible, became necessary at the end of the project, with the conclusion: there is a close connection between body and mind, and when we communicate exclusively online, the body is neglected, which has an effect on our mind. And the pandemic context has led us to highlight the role and positive impact that nonverbal theatre games can have in online education.

The argument of this study starts primarily from my own experience with nonverbal theatre, as I was always fascinated by the deep way in which the body manages to transmit and receive messages from the environment. A simple gesture can provoke, stimulate, perhaps even displease, putting you face to face with the most hidden parts of your personality and revealing the hidden aspects of your inner self. Although words accompany us all our lives, you integrate/feel the greatest emotions and discoveries *in and through the body*. But what happens when the communication channel changes? Adapting to online education has challenged us to check the extent to which theatre games can pass beyond the screen and whether the online environment is a barrier or a channel of communication as effective as face-to-face.

As a theoretical basis, we support the principles of communication and the method of theatre games, as a way to release the "potential", as defined by Viola Spolin, who argued that theatre has two values: an educational value and a communicational value. The theatre game thus become, as Professor Bogdana Darie told us at the theatre in education classes, a "performative form of school" in which communication, socio-emotional skills that the student needs to manage and integrate in society are developed. Therefore, by using nonverbal theatre games techniques, at the level of high school classes in the case of this study, it is possible to contribute to the improvement of surpassing difficulties in adapting to online education, to stimulate the body's communication potential, to indirectly increase school performance and not lastly, to the psycho-emotional well-being of the students.

Survey, observation, structured interviews were used as **methods of investigation**, while *nonverbal theatre games in online courses* were the *experiential intervention*

techniques. Looking ahead, we chose adolescents as the target group, because adolescence is the period in which "the direction of the students' personality is outlined and decided", and the direction in which they go may even be the direction in which the country goes "because today more than ever, Romania needs mentors with a healthy and worthy soul, who know their needs and identify with their aspirations". (Firu, 1939, p. 25)

Nonverbal communication

Communication has been and will always be discussed, because it remains important regardless the context in which it takes place. At a simple search on Google, while writing this article, the English word "communication", I found 2,450,000,000 results. As a trainer, in soft skills courses, I came across the most diverse definitions of communication. From rigid definitions, "I say what to do, and the other responds, *Yes, sir!*", to subtle definitions of the nonverbal, "When the client looks at you tenderly, you can't help but help him", or wordings expressing frustration, "I say my opinion, yet my mother also answers me, *You do as I say*". To be honest, communication has given and continues to give us headaches, but it remains the engine of our existence. One way or another, from an objective point of view, we all realize that it is important, but caught in the whirlwind of communication, few realize how to communicate effectively and, most of all, few of us are willing to take responsibility for poor communication. And the transposition of communication online has only put us in a position to readjust the way we use all elements of communication effectively.

Verbal communication is closely related, almost inseparable to nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication or body language has been described as the language we all speak, but very few of us understand it.

Body language conveys more about a person than all the words they say. While words can lie, nonverbal communication always tells the truth, for the simple fact that many signals generated by the brain are transmitted to the body and communicated unconsciously. Mastery of nonverbal communication consists in the ability to perceive and understand the signs and movements of others (Arhip, 2015, p. 26).

The term nonverbal communication, although I don't find it exactly appropriate, the negation canceling out the importance of what the term tries to define, was first used by Jurgen Ruesch (American psychiatrist) and Weldon Kees (photographer), in the title of a book published in 1956, *Nonverbal Communications: Notes on the Visual Perception of Human Relations*. But the existence of universal bodily signals, to which all people should respond equally, has long before been discussed. Charles Darwin (1872) in his book, *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*, was the first to speak of the universality of signals, considering that the facial expressions of emotions are similar, beyond cultural diversity. Darwin's research was deepened by Paul Ekman, E.R. Sorenson and Wallace V. Friesen (1969) in Borneo, Brazil, Japan, New Guinea, USA, which led to the idea that cultural

differences did not have a significant influence on the identification of emotions and that there are facial expressions common to all cultures. Ekman¹ continued his research and in 1972 identified six universal facial expressions: anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness and surprise. In 1990 he completed the list with 11 more universal expressions: amusement, gratitude, contempt, embarrassment, excitement, guilt, pride, relief, satisfaction, sensory pleasure and shame. After long experiments and research, the psychologist developed the Action Coding System (F.A.C.S.), a classification of human facial expressions.

Social psychologist Amy Cuddy (2012) goes even further and asks the question, "Does nonverbal affect how we think of ourselves?"², in other words, can body language change the way we perceive ourselves? After 15 years of study on body language, she launches a theory, controversial for some experts, which shows that, for example, "body positions specific to power" – to sit in a position that inspires self-confidence, even when we do not feel confident – can affect the levels of testosterone and cortisol in the brain and can even impact our achievements. In other words, communication can be achieved in both directions: from the inside towards the outside (what we transmit to others), but also from the outside towards the inside (what we transmit to our minds).

The body – mind – soul connection

Neuroscience has shown that the mind and body are interconnected: Adler said that it is "the temple in which our spirit burns," neurologist Anthony Damasio believed that the mind can only be conceived as belonging to a body, and Freud argued that our ego is first of all bodily. With such a close relation between the two, we can consider that what the body manages to convey is the sincere, unprocessed message of our mind. And when the mind is in discomfort, the body follows (and then we can talk about somatization), but the opposite is also valid, a defective posture of the body can influence the mental state.

The ancient Romans and Greeks believed that you had to have a healthy body to have a healthy mind (*Mens sana in corpore sano*), which is why they considered athletics so important. Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, according to which there is no single way to be intelligent, also includes bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, which he said was:

The ability of someone to use their body to express an emotion (as in dance), to play a game (as in sports), or to create a new product (as in discovering an invention), is the proof of some cognitive properties of using the body (Gardner, 2015, p. 19).

If we look around us, in any profession there is a necessity to use the body: a surgeon, or a dentist, needs the mobility of the hand, the same as a baker who kneades the

¹ <https://www.paulekman.com/>

² https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_may_shape_who_you_are?language=ro

dough or the cashier who handles the money. As for sports, where the body is the working tool itself (just like in theatre), Tim Gallwey argued that a tennis player must be less attentive to technical indications and more connected to his body and senses:

If we allow ourselves to lose contact with our own ability to feel actions, relying too much on indications, we can seriously compromise our access to our natural learning process, but also to our own potential to perform (Gallwey, 2013, p. 63).

In martial arts the mind must be focused on the actions of the body, and in Tai Chi a series of exercises are combined, called "forms", which also help to improve mental balance. Therefore, body movement has a role in concentration, spontaneity, but also improves mood. Endorphin, one of the hormones of happiness, is the chemical with morphine-like properties, which is released 30 minutes after we start doing sports.

In the nineteenth century, Francois Delsarte (1811-1871) was the first to study human behavior driven by emotion, proving that there is a connection between what happens in our soul and gestures. After a visit to a hospital in Paris, he differentiated between the way a mother and a doctor take care of a child. In fact, he turned his attention to all spontaneous everyday expressions, but also to the reactions of human beings faced with extreme situations. For example, he went to a mining disaster to observe specific attitudes of bodies in situations of great physical suffering, or was simply attentive to the fights that took place on the street. Delsarte developed a method that bears his name, through which artists were taught to develop the expressiveness of their bodies. He divided human movement into three categories – *eccentric, concentric and normal* –, developed in three body areas (*head, torso and limbs*) in an attempt to develop the physical control of his students.

The connection between emotion and body is also found in Yoshi Oida's approach, who dedicates an entire chapter to this topic. He starts from the premise that an actor must find "the bodily movement that corresponds to the inner movement". He even talks about creating emotional and physical maps: starting from what you feel, finding a physical correspondent for emotion:

There is no point in finding the body position that seems to be "about" correct. You need to find the precise physical detail that is clearly and strongly associated with the emotion of the moment. Once you have discovered all the essential forms, you can connect them to form a kind of map of the emotional journey. Then you follow the physical "map" every time you play a role. But you need to take the time to find the right details to create the right "map" (Oida and Marshall, 2009, p. 89).

But he also proposes the exercise in reverse:

Instead of starting with movement and then finding the inner connection, you can keep a certain image in mind and let your body move. [...] However, for these exercises to be truly effective, you need to have a strong and rich imagination, to

allow your body to move in many ways and not to get stuck in stereotypical patterns (Oida and Marshall, 2009, p. 90).

Thus, nonverbal theatre games also challenge from the inside towards the outside, but also vice versa, allowing the student to explore both the inner and the outer space. Awareness of the connection between physical and emotional state helps you not only to control, but also to stimulate them. As Yoshi Oida argues:

Body exercises are not performed by actors just for the sake of health or to improve performance. If you get into the habit of regularly exploring your body so that it becomes entirely free and receptive, your mental processes become just as flexible. Moreover, your emotional life will be enriched (Oida și Marshall, 2009, p. 87).

We can argue that in a world where it is difficult to find the right words, our body helps us to rediscover ourselves. As Viola Spolin said:

Life arises from physical relationships, whether it is a spark from a flint, the howl of the waves hitting the beach, or a child born of a man and a woman. The physical element is what we know and through it we can find the way to the unknown, intuitive and, perhaps even further, towards human spirit (Spolin, 2014, p. 63).

Metaphorically speaking, if life were a stage and we were the actors of life, we could say that the first role on the stage of our life was nonverbal, the body helped us to express ourselves and discover the world around us. In improvisation exercises, Viola Spolin uses the term "physicalization" when talking about nonverbal elements, "which give the student a concrete personal experience (which he can accumulate), on which his development depends" (Spolin, 2014, p. 63).

In his book *Mime Spoken Here*, Tony Montanaro (1995, p. 17) states that mimes appeared in theatre as a solution to a problem, when actors encountered problems with speech on stage and were forced to use nonverbal language. For example, some authors consider that the first mime appeared in the Roman Empire and was Livius Andronicus, who before a show suffered a paresis and lost his voice. Instead of canceling, he chose to play in silence, keeping the choir in the background. Therefore, we can say that pressure can give birth to a language, and when you run out of resources, you turn to your inner self and awake the resource we all have at hand: *the body*.

In Romania, the most famous creator of nonverbal theatre is the actor and director Dan Puric, under whose guidance I had the joy to participate in his latest performance, *Înșir'țe mărgărite*. He told us that gestural theatre is a theatre that everyone understands, from workers to intellectuals, thus managing to bring us closer, to raise the cultural level, because the role of the artist is to "wake you up". He emphasized that gesture gives meaning, does not translate, and that every movement of the body is accompanied by the soul. So much so that when we had the premiere, he urged us to play with our souls "as if God were in the hall".

Jacques Lecoq, known for his teaching methods in physical theatre, movement and mime, at the school he founded in Paris (École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq) said:

I conceived my work with a double goal, a part of my interest goes towards theatre, the other towards life. It may seem like a utopia, but I want the student to be alive in life and an artist on stage [...] One of the originalities of the school is to offer a base, as wide as possible and even permanent, knowing that everyone will choose from these elements, an own path. The students who follow our path acquire a kind of intelligence of the game and develop their imagination (Lecoq, 2009, pp. 28-29).

In other words, nonverbal theatre games do not only prepare you for the stage, but also for life. From personal experience, as a member of a nonverbal theatre group (Passe-Partout Company), the discovery of this type of language completely changed my perception of myself, of interactions with others and I can confirm its transformative value, being a theatre lesson, but also a life lesson.

Nonverbal Theatre Game

When we say *game*, we instantly think of the major activity of childhood. From personal experience, I can say that I cannot imagine my childhood without the moments of play. In fact, as an adult I always felt the need to remember the game, so much so that, at the age of 35, I decided to quit my job, go to an audition, join a theatre group and return to game. In addition to the new path it helped me choose, theatre games gave me the courage, the spontaneity, the strength to adapt and to know myself better. During the rehearsals, Mr. Dan Puric told us, "You play and game is an exercise to disinhibit the brain. It's an act of freedom. You make people happy" and, I would add, you also make yourself physically and emotionally happy.

As you go through the following quote, I suggest you do an exercise in imagination and pay attention to the effect of words on your body.

Suppose that suddenly our children would stop playing, that in our schools the lessons would take place in silence, that we would no longer be distracted by the shouts or cries that come from the garden or the yard. Then we would no longer have this world of children around us, which brings us joy and worry, but a sad nation of clumsy and silent pygmies, lacking intelligence and soul... For soul and intelligence become great through play [...] A child who does not know how to play, "a little old man", is an adult who will not know how to think (Chateau, 1967, p. 8).

Maybe some of you breathed a sigh of relief reading the first part with the silence in schools, but what if you were in this scenario, the ones who would have been "robbed" of the game? I consider the above quote revealing, for the benefits that game has on us: the *game* moves our *body*, and the *body* moves the *mind*. A Chinese proverb says, *Tell me and I will forget, show me and I will remember, get me involved and I will learn*. Involving the body

in an activity helps in learning, because in addition to emotional memory, we also have physical, bodily, involved memory (for example, when you learn dance steps, or when you learn to drive a car).

If we consider the hypothesis that theatre appeared with the first religious ceremonies, we can say that theatre was a constant presence in our lives.

And if theatre is inextricably linked to human existence, it means that the human being, the one who needed to "invent" it, asks it to successfully carry out its mission: that of educating, of developing, of evolving man (Darie, 2018, p. 58).

Therefore, if theatre represents life, then connecting with theatre can mean connecting with life. Theatre games exercises achieve exactly this: they connect the individual with reality and, through them, the actors immediately identify the correct relationship between life and the theme or subject of the scene/play.

Theatre brings with it a world in which no judgments are made, no labels are placed, where students/participants are encouraged to have ideas and opinions, where group-level coordination is managed through "concession and cooperation", where the element of surprise is transformed into opportunity, where you are ready to adapt to any situation. We live in a dynamic world, called by some political specialists VUCA, (an acronym from the English words *volatility*, *uncertainty*, *complexity*, *ambiguity*). It is said that this world is *volatile* – everything changes rapidly, *uncertain* – that is, we can not anticipate change, we only know that it will come in one form or another, *complex* – our activity is influenced by a multitude of factors, *ambiguous* – with gray areas and we do not always realize the link between cause and effect. A recent and handy example of VUCA for us is the context of the pandemic. Theatre trains precisely these skills necessary to adapt to these complex, uncertain, changing and ambiguous situations.

We can say that theatrical exercises also help in self-discovery. Regardless of the communication channel that a teacher uses in teaching, it is necessary to teach students to "learn" and discover their own way of... discovering.

Acting can be taught to the "ordinary", as well as to the "talented" individual, if the teaching process is oriented towards the intuition of the theatrical technique, so that it becomes something that becomes a part of the student (Spolin, 2014, p. 14).

Or, as Lecoq rightly says, "the great strength of the school is its students, let them bring to our school their own school." In fact, he used a teaching method called self-study in his theatre school in Paris. By this he meant that for an hour and a half a day the students should work in small groups, on a topic proposed by the teacher and which they would present to the class at the end of the week. This method encouraged students to be responsible, autonomous, to work in a team, of course under the guidance of the teacher. We also encounter this idea in Viola Spolin, who lists among the principles of the improvisation game the idea of "individual freedom (self-expression), respecting common responsibility (collective agreement)".

In an interview with actress Andrada Corlat, she emphasized the importance of theatre games: "I think that in schools certain exercises done with students of all ages can help them to better socialize, help them fight bullying, or teach them how important teamwork is". (The last aspect applies everywhere, especially in corporate, institutional workspaces). She continues with some examples of exercises:

An example would be that of status, in which without speaking you can set a certain status in a certain situation. If the person who understands this exercise manages to take it further, in his life, he can use it to impose himself when needed, when the job requires it or on the contrary, lowering his status, to help someone else to establish a higher status in a team. Likewise, for those who are introverted, individuals who do not feel the need to express themselves, certain exercises (such as *Mirror*, in which you do something and others have to repeat your movements identically, or even the simple game of *Mime*) can force this more sensitive side and can change it so that they feel more comfortable in their own skin when they are the center of attention. Those who are not very confident in their own strength can work with the body so that it conveys to the brain that they are strong, as it happens when you sit in the *Hero's position* for a while and due to the chemical processes in the body, man can become more confident (Andrada Corlat, interview).

Challenges of online education – Research methodology: interviews with teachers and survey applied to adolescents

In the educational context, the use of communication elements (verbal, nonverbal, paraverbal) in teaching has a very important role. The way the teacher's body is positioned and moves influences the quality of interaction and learning:

Movement towards the speaking student may, for example, convey involvement and interest, while movement away from that student may communicate loss or lack of interest. The teacher's movements can thus often develop and optimize the interaction. Indeed, the teacher's movement in all its aspects, in different areas of the classroom, can support students in maintaining attention to the teacher (Moore, 1994, p. 328, apud Pânișoară, 2006, p. 94).

From selecting a few statements from interviews with teachers, online education seems to prevent the involvement of the whole body in the conversation, hence the feeling that you fail to communicate "completely":

I would also like to emphasize a key moment in the process of adapting to online teaching. There is, given the technical conditioning, another major disadvantage of this type of communication: we see each other's head, with the torso at best. But the human brain is taught to process the whole image of the interlocutor. In addition, non-verbality, gestures, the energy transmitted have more value in communication than words themselves. Hence the terrible feeling of discomfort that I felt during the first classes. The struggle for adaptation was harder at first, but easier with each hour (I specify a detail not to be neglected: after the first two or three classes I was

physically ill, I felt a condition similar to a person deprived of liberty, I felt I did not transmit enough). (Associate Professor Mihaela Bețiu, interview)

What was it I didn't like? The possibility for students to sit with their camera off, so you often do not know if the students are with you, in class or not. What's not convenient? To not know what the student is doing behind the camera! And body language can't be used at all, you can't understand and consider certain reactions and behaviors that are easy to deduce face to face. (Dana Macadon, technical disciplines teacher, interview)

I believe that in the online school the message hardly penetrates beyond the screen, it is necessary to engage directly in the learning process, the rest is just trying to get heard as much and as loud as possible. (Florina Iacob-Gheorghită, educator, interview)

The negative effects of online education on the body, in a pandemic context, are also deduced from the answers given by adolescents in the online questionnaire:

- related to the need to move during this period: 54% answered that they felt the need to move to a very large extent, 26% to some extent and only 2% not at all, and 74% said that they felt they lacked outdoor outings and 32% that it was difficult for them to become aware of body expression.
- The idea that during this period the relationship with others and with space was affected, is also confirmed by the answer regarding nonverbal communication: 30% of adolescents say that this period did not help them to communicate nonverbally.
- It seems that not only does online learning hinder nonverbal communication ("I only interacted over the phone and found that a face-to-face conversation is much more beneficial"), but so does the use of medical masks: "It's harder to understand what the other person speaks", "It bothers me to wear it and makes me feel insecure not to see faces", "Communication is impersonal", "I don't realize the true meaning of the sentence and I don't see facial emotions", "Conversation lacks personality, even if the eyes are expressive, I feel that the communication is not complete".

These answers lead us to conclude that the elements of bodily expressiveness support verbal communication, as well as the theories of communication. The lack of nonverbal cues affects both the interlocutors and the quality of communication. Spending several hours in front of the computer, we lose touch with our body, our physical presence is neglected.

For many teenagers, it is important to be active, regardless of the proposed form of education: "I am so affected that I no longer feel anything. I just feel indifference and total lack of involvement.", "The lack of interaction affected my social skills", "This experience affected me to a great extent mentally, because I was asked by many teachers to solve many topics while I was 5-6 hours in front of a screen, and after that I felt very tired." Movement influences our mood and body equally, and when the body is neglected, the mind is also in discomfort. No matter how much digitalization has penetrated our lives, we need

movement, social interaction, face-to-face interaction and, most of all, community life. This conclusion is also confirmed by the answers to the last question of the survey: what will they do after the end of the period of isolation at home, where, in proportion of 90%, they answered that they will either meet their friends, or that they will move, or that they will go out in nature: "I will run through the park", "I would like to go to school, to go out with friends in the park, to visit my relatives, to solve my social problems".

Therefore, following the centralization and analysis of the above answers, it was necessary to direct online education towards the non-verbal resources "hidden" to adolescents. By stimulating body language by practicing nonverbal theatre games, we can increase the awareness, involvement, spontaneity and adaptation of adolescents, both in school and extracurricular situations.

Practical online experiment

We have therefore started from the premise that, in the conditions in which the human mind and body are interconnected and influence each other, the theatre game is the means that can bring these together. Thus, the practical experiment consisted in the elaboration and development of an interactive program based on the use of nonverbal theatre techniques taken from different theoretical works, written by specialists of educational theatre.

The selection of participants was made independently, based on the interest of participation. Through the applied online survey, we reached a group of teenagers interested in participating. Motivation was assessed in a preliminary, 15-minute interview with 7 questions: *What do you know about nonverbal communication so far? How much do you think you use it? How well do you think you can interpret nonverbal messages? How much did online education require of this type of communication? Have you ever interacted with theatre games? How would you like these courses to be held? What do you expect from these courses?* These questions helped me to find out the reasons why everyone wants to participate in these courses, to anticipate the degree of involvement, to find out their concerns in the nonverbal area and what their expectations are from such a course.

Related to the support framework, this was on the Zoom online platform, and from the beginning we agreed that everyone has to activate the video camera, so we can see, not just hear. The duration was 1 hour and 30 minutes, taking place between 10 May and 20 May 2020.

The experimental project took place in two stages. In the first stage, the participants were contacted, and an online one-on-one meeting was set up. The purpose was on the one hand to inform about the program and the participation agreement, and on the other hand to get acquainted with the nonverbal theatre games exercises and to get used to the trainer. Starting from the principle of mirroring in communication, according to which you have more persuasive power when copying someone's gestures, I practiced the *Mirror* exercise for 3 minutes.

The goal was to develop attention, concentration, and collaboration through the nonverbal exercises used. Regarding resources, given that improvisation theatre aims to use a minimum of objects, the body being the source of designing objects, our only resources used in carrying out activities consisted of our own body, surrounding objects and online resources used for animating content (videos, online tests). At the end of each session, the subjects had to reflect on several topics, called *Missions without words*, such as making a nonverbal film or giving nonverbal feedback. To test the energy level at the beginning and at the end of the course, we used the following exercise: "Let's imagine a line from 0-10, where 0 means 0 energy and goes progressively up to 10, maximum energy! Express nonverbally what your mood is now!" This exercise helped the participants to practice and recognize facial expressions, but it was also useful for me as a trainer to get feedback and observe progress.

Although at first there was a lack of reaction from teenagers, it came from fear of the unknown and the need to adapt: "At first I was a little afraid because I did not know what it would be like, but it was great." Gradually the communication became fluid and the participants regained their comfort: it was "better than at school". The larger the group, the more difficult it is to manage interactions, the more reactions and opinions are lost sight of. Having a small teaching group, we managed to "adjust" our interventions more easily, to be able to better capture our facial expressions on the screens, to listen to each other and to get closer.

Online learning groups are all the more effective as they function as a supportive community because we are social beings and need interaction. To increase the level of motivation for online participation, we need to include elements of non-formal education in online learning. The students reacted positively to all the proposed activities: "We played, we didn't even feel that time passed!", "Usually, after our classes I was tired. I felt better in these classes." "I'm curious how classes would go with all my classmates."

When the process of educational communication focuses on a single form of interaction – the verbal one, we actually ignore the important elements of communication. As the theoretical studies in the first part of this article proved, nonverbal communication has a great impact on communication. Movement influences our mood and body equally, and when the body is neglected, the mind is also in discomfort.

In a discussion with the actress of the National Theatre Bucharest, Carmen Ungureanu, she captured with a phrase the most beautiful and complex definition, which may be the best conclusion of this study: "Nonverbal theatre game is the unrestricted expression of the child when, not having any outside toy, he produces all of them from his inner self, free to create the story in which he feels himself."

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