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### THE IMPORTANCE OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

*Nazaru Cristina, university lecturer,  
"Ion Creanga" SPU*

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#### Rezumat

Acest articol abordează importanța managementului clasei în învățământul online. Managementul clasei este vital pentru stabilirea unui mediu prietenos și precoce învățării. Este un factor important pentru realizarea cu succes a procesului educațional indiferent de forma de organizare a acestuia – învățământul clasic în spațiul real, învățământul dual sau învățământul la distanță. Necătând la specificul mediului online de învățare, managementul clasei ramâne la fel de important pentru realizarea cu succes a obiectivelor învățării. Mai mult ca atât, respectarea regulilor, etichetei de comunicare, satisfacerea nevoilor personanelor cu cerințe speciale, devin și mai dificile de controlat în mediul online. Aplicând strategiile corecte de management al clasei în învățământul la distanță finalitățile de studiu pot fi realizate la fel de bine în regim online.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** managementul clasei, educație online, predare eficientă

*"Effective classroom management is a key component of effective instruction, regardless of grade level, subject, pedagogy, or curriculum."*

Randy Sprick, Jim Knight, Wendy Reinke & Tricia McKale, 2006

Classroom management is probably one of the most important aspects of the teaching process. Being able to effectively manage a class is as important to a teacher as their knowledge, expertise and the whole set of their teaching skills. A teacher must be able to deliver the content in such a way as to ensure its efficient reception in a class where there is active participation, eager engagement and as little trouble as possible. Evertson and Weinstein underline that successful classroom instruction is contingent upon effective classroom management to maintain appropriate student behavior, engagement, and, subsequently, academic achievement [4, p.7]. Adaymo states that classroom management is a complex setoff articulate behavior which the teacher uses to establish and maintain conditions to enable learners achieve instructional objectives efficiently. [1, p.368]

Initially classroom management was regarded as teacher's ability to manage behavior in class. More recent research on the topic has shifted from a focus on controlling behavior to a complex of actions realized by the teacher to create, implement, and maintain a learning

environment within the classroom. All the things done in class by the teacher affect classroom management, including creating the setting, decorating the room, organizing the chairs, speaking to children and handling their responses, placing everyday routines appropriately, developing and delivering rules, as well as respecting them. These are all aspects of classroom management.

Effective teachers are good instructors and good classroom managers. Teachers are multifunctional and carry out a number of specific tasks. Evertson and Weinstein state that:

They must (1) develop caring, supportive relationships with and among students; (2) organize and implement instruction in ways that optimize students' access to learning; (3) use group management methods that encourage students' engagement in academic tasks; (4) promote the development of students' social skills and self-regulation; and (5) use appropriate interventions to assist students with behavior problems. Clearly, classroom management is a multifaceted endeavor that is far more complex than establishing rules, rewards, and penalties to control students' behavior. [4, p. 6]

Classroom management is a complex system of strategies and techniques. In the traditional classroom the elements of classroom management include appropriate planning, good organization, classroom design and seating, scheduling and timing, giving instructions and monitoring, communication, discipline, creating and maintaining a learning environment, etc.

The ability to transmit content, to facilitate its reception and to manage the class accordingly are as important in online education as in the real classroom. Although the nature of the virtual learning is unique, many of the features that are essential to the success of a traditional classroom management plan also apply in the online classroom. However, the instructor must be aware of potential stumbling blocks such as complacency of rules, the needs of non-traditional students, and feelings of isolation that may be exaggerated in an online environment and plan preventive classroom management accordingly. [7, p. 371]

To effectively manage learning in an online environment the best practices in traditional environments should not be discarded. Although the participants are interacting digitally from various locations, they still need to be managed as a cohesive group of learners by applying the following strategies:

### **Good planning**

As in a traditional class, online sessions have to be carefully planned beforehand. Before going online to begin the lesson, teachers should make sure they have planned the session. Considering the age of students when planning the time for each task and game, including breaks and tricks to help students stay focused and increase attention span are essential. Well-structured lessons help with time management in the virtual classroom. Moreover well-organized content will prevent students from feeling frustrated, confused, and disengaged. The design and sequence of content and learning activities should be methodical, systematic, and purposeful.

### **Considering classroom diversity**

Like traditional classrooms at any educational level, virtual classroom reflects a variety of learning styles. The online instructor should try to offer learning activities that will appeal to the widest variety of learning styles possible. Another aspect of classroom diversity which the instructor must be prepared to deal with in the online environment is ethnic and cultural diversity, multi-level learners. Apart from that is the different level of technology literacy of the learners. Online courses should be the equal of traditional courses in providing a quality learning environment that addresses the needs of a diverse group of learners.

### **Setting rules and expectations beforehand**

According to Arends, “In classrooms, as in most other settings where groups of people interact, a large percentage of potential problems and disruptions can be prevented by planning rules and procedures beforehand” [2, p. 179]. Many practicing teachers might add that these rules and procedures must be introduced to the students as early as possible. The online classroom is not an exception. It is important to establish clear rules and expectations regarding student discipline, participation, the study process, deadlines, and the reward system that will be used. All of the rules need to be as simple as possible and easy to follow.

### **Being humane**

Stewart D. mentions that while establishing course rules and policies in an online course is very important, “rules and policies on their own may be perceived by the student as rather dehumanizing and isolating if not accompanied by a “human side” to the instructor that issues them” [7, p. 373] Establishing warm and friendly relations with students in an online environment might seem a daunting task, but is nonetheless very possible. First, a sense of community should be developed, then it is teacher’s readiness and openness to help and show understanding, and to offer timely responses and prompt feedback.

### **Managing the workload and providing variety**

Not overwhelming students with assignments and controlling the amount of tasks given are also essential for the success of the lesson in any environment. Providing a variety of assignments is important too. Online learners will definitely benefit from as many possibilities for individualizing and customizing their learning. Opportunities to choose from a range of assignments will greatly enhance student engagement by enabling their learning to be more relevant. Providing a variety of assessments is another good strategy. These might include:

### **Language and netiquette**

Effective communication is key to success in online education. In the traditional classroom words, gestures, posture and facial expressions communicate a person’s thoughts and observations to students, from students and with peers. Online communication most often lacks these verbal and non-verbal cues. The absence of these can quickly lead to misunderstandings in the online environment, especially when most of the interaction takes place asynchronous. Lewis C., offers some good advice about the right way to communicate online which he calls “the WRITE way and involves communicating online in a manner that is (W)arm, (R)esponsive, (I)nquisitive, (T)entative, and (E)mpathetic.” [5]

### **Control of behavior**

Although, in an online environment, teachers won’t have to tell anyone to stay nicely in their seat or stop teasing next-seat classmate, disruptive behavior often happens in online education, especially in synchronous, real-time online sessions, especially when tutoring large groups and young students. The best way to keep the balance a virtual classroom is to deal with discipline problems immediately.

Keeping a positive attitude and being respectful when having to correct an unacceptable behavior are advisable. It is recommended to approach each student who breaks the rules in private after class to encourage them to improve their behavior and to figure out the causes of their actions.

### **Active participation and interaction**

In the past, online learning was treated like electronic correspondence courses. Students worked through the content alone, submitted their assignments, and received grades only after they had completed the entire course. Many teachers still believe that students should take

themselves through an online course without much active guidance from the instructor. On the contrary, to achieve success online learners need the same amount of teachers' attention and regular and active guiding of online class - posting announcements, giving further explanations, providing tips on forthcoming assignments, answering questions, replying to online discussion posts, grading students' work.

To conclude, clear rules and policies along with prompt feedback from the instructor via a variety of means, a sense of community, a variety of lesson and assessment types are essential to student success in the online classroom. It is important for the online instructor to understand the preventive nature of class management which will enable him/her to foresee possible problems and deal with them before they happen or structure the class in such a way as to avoid any type of disruption. With appropriate classroom management which is an integral part of course preparation the online learning environment can be as rich and rewarding and as productive as the traditional classroom.

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#### DE LA COMPETENȚĂ SPRE PERFORMANȚĂ: ABORDARE INTERDISCIPLINARĂ

*Celpan-Patic Natalia, lector univ.,  
UPS „Ion Creangă” din Chișinău*

**CZU: 378.147.88 :811**

#### Abstract

This paper is about the importance of interdisciplinarity in the process of foreign language teaching and learning at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the “Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University. This process is being analyzed with the purpose of showing its direct role in developing linguistic competences in students, in order to attain linguistic performance, according to the generative grammar concept by Chomsky. A distinction will be made among the concepts of interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, pluridisciplinary, and transdisciplinarity. The internal and external interdisciplinary relationships will be shown, as well as the orientations of their practical application: textual and auditory. The large spectrum of theoretical and practical disciplines that are taught at the Faculty will be reviewed, along with their interdisciplinary connections, with a special emphasis on the value of the university research papers.

**Keywords:** interdisciplinarity, linguistic competence, linguistic performance, communicational competence, students.