Digital Strategies for Optimizing Classroom Management

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Abstract. Purpose: to identify and promote effective strategies for optimizing classroom management in the current educational context. **Objective:** to conceptualize the SDLS (sapiential leadership teaching style) + HOP ("Heptalogul" of wisdom + "observer method" + PPT / interactive digital lesson) model. **Subject:** highlighting digital resources that can add value to the educational process. **Importance:** proven by the favorable results of an educational experiment (application of the HOP strategy) started 2-3 years ago. **Basic concepts:** interdisciplinarity, multiple intelligences, holistic assessment, etc. **Approach:** participatory observation method, distributed pedagogical management (student "observers" become co-assessors together with the teacher). **Results:** optimization of student class management, based on moral-constructive principles, taking into account the diversity of different student classes (in this case, we are talking about a teacher who teaches at least 18-20 different classes per week). **Implications:** the holistic involvement of students in the educational process (through co-evaluation, co-teaching, co-learning) makes them intrinsically responsible and motivated. **Value:** new concepts: sapiential leadership, volitional intelligence (in tandem with IQ, IE), the observer method, etc.

Keywords: ICT; PowerPoint; artificial intelligence; interdisciplinary; holistic evaluation

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1. Introduction

In today's evolving context, the use of information technologies is absolutely necessary in the educational process at all levels. Students, even in preparatory classes, know how to use PowerPoint slides, at the very least. High school students are allowed—with the permission and special assignment of the teacher—to use their phones during class to solve applications. At any level, whether it is a PowerPoint presentation, a video, or a song, etc., all of these can provide additional stimuli for those with different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.). If we also take into account the *interdisciplinary* or *holistic* assessment aspects, which are increasingly necessary today, the balance will tip substantially in favor of using ICT in the educational process.

It is commendable – as an echo of the digital age – that many undergraduate and master's students attach great importance to ICT and IAC courses. These courses give them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with advanced information technologies, which are very necessary in the further educational process. For example, they learn how to keep track of a class's grades using Excel, how to graphically represent research results, and how to make lessons as attractive as possible for students using platforms such as Learning Apps, Wordwall, Kahoot, etc. Of course, they also learn about the substantial help that ChatGPT can offer a more or less conscientious student. Or about the Mentimeter platform, where they can easily brainstorm with the entire class, or how to create artistic and dynamic PowerPoint presentations in Canva.

2. Research Problem: Adapting the Multi-Subject Teacher to the Characteristics of Different Classes

The issue addressed in this article concerns the adaptation of teachers (who teach at least 18 different classes, covering a major curriculum interval: grades 0-9 or even 0-12) to the different characteristics of their classes. We note that the general theme of the research is *Optimizing classroom management by leveraging sapiential leadership*. As an applicable model for solving the above-mentioned problem, we propose the strategic triad HOP (Heptalog of Wisdom, Observers Method, PPT / attractive / interactive lesson) + SDLS (sapiential leadership teaching style).

3. Points of View from the Specialized Literature

3.1. In Terms of Signalization

The performance of a class of students is essentially determined by the personality of the manager (teacher/form teacher), which it actually reflects. A child's development can be significantly influenced by how they perceive their educator. Baciu (2019) emphasizes the need for early education, evoking the proverbs: “The tree straightens when young” and “If you didn't teach your child to sleep across the bed, you won't teach them to sleep lengthwise.” (Romanian pedagogical paideuma).

Dumitrana (2019) presents in his book “Managementul clasei” (Class Management) a series of positive cases, as well as a much more extensive series of unpleasant school experiences reported by his students. They painfully recalled situations marked by a lack of empathy, injustice, emotional imbalance, impaired human qualities, excessive authoritarianism, lack of tact, psychological and physical abuse, lack of professionalism and education, etc. on the part of the manager (teacher/form teacher). Therefore, “teachers can often serve as examples, either positive or (unfortunately) negative.” (Ceobanu, 2009, p. 549). The teacher/instructor can be perceived by students “as a collaborator or an adversary, depending on their ability to establish appropriate relationships with students, to communicate effectively, to show enthusiasm, understanding, and friendship.” (Iucu, 2006, p. 54). The head teacher, through his pedagogical and relational position, directly influences the collectivity of students, contributing to the cohesion and balance of the group. (Nicola, 1985, p.35). The teacher must be attentive in the relationship with students, in the way they address them, to avoid formulations that may affect the student's self-image and the image of the educational group. (Iucu, Ezechil & Chivu, 2008, p. 421). Teachers can contribute to a positive and effective educational climate in the classroom through assertive communication, emotional intelligence, observation of student relationships, reframing, pedagogical flexibility, etc. (Herman, 2024, pp.18-39). Teachers need to adapt their management style to the relationships between students in order to encourage teamwork and everyone's involvement. (Stan, 2006, pp. 12-18). Virtual interaction can help students connect and collaborate. Teachers should adapt their teaching methods to the digital native generation. (Stan, 2012, pp. 45-52). To create an environment (non-virtual/virtual) in which all students feel involved, teachers will use methods that encourage collaboration, respect, and honest communication. (Albulescu & Catalano, 2025, pp. 88-95)

3.2. In Terms of Digital Teaching Resources

A teacher dealing with a broad curriculum (in this case, Religion) can make use of the database (applications, complete digital lessons, etc.) offered by generous application platforms such as: RED-Religion (complete lessons for 9th grade, where, unfortunately, there is currently no digital textbook available), Wand, Livresq (platforms with which some of us have just become familiar during the DigCompEdu training course), the ISJ Călărași platform (digital textbooks for each grade, and links to very useful educational applications). In addition, interactive educational applications such as Wordwall, LearningApps, Kahoot, etc. provide ready-made, easily customizable activities that stimulate motivation, attention, and active learning. Therefore, a "multi-curricular" teacher can benefit from an extensive digital infrastructure that can also be expanded with their own additions. At the forefront of pedagogical innovation, digital pedagogy "requires a rethinking of teaching strategies, especially in classroom management, where virtual learning environments are becoming an integral part of the educational process." (Istrate, 2022). Managerial creativity involves generating new ideas and finding innovative and adaptive solutions in an educational context. (Bocoș & Răduț-Taciu, 2024, p. 102). To optimize learning and stimulate student motivation, education can adapt to the digital generation through the use of gamification, edutainment, interactive rewards, etc. (Stan, 2012, pp. 60-68). Some authors, exploring the potential of digital teaching materials in hybrid classroom management, provide examples of good practices in organizing online assignments, monitoring progress, and involving parents through educational platforms. (Albulescu & Catalano, 2025, pp. 115-130; 210-225)

4. Research Process, Method Used, and Technical Solutions

4.1. HOP Strategies in Adapting Teachers to the Signality of Each Class

4.1.1. The Heptalog of Wisdom It is based on the three Socratic "laws" whereby students are encouraged to make an effort to say—at least during school hours—only what is TRUE, GOOD, and USEFUL. The seven rules approved by the students at the beginning of the school year (Baciu, S., & Lăzărescu, L.-D. (2025)) have been supplemented along the way with rules proposed by the students themselves, resulting in a complete Decalogue. Examples of "laws" proposed by students: *infinite forgiveness* – 6th grade, *everyone should mind their own business* – 1st grade, etc., the *star of wisdom* – 5th grade, etc.

4.1.2. Observer Method (an educational experiment that has been running for over two years) offers students the chance to respond and also to choose the task for the class – by drawing lots (from slips of paper with the students' names on them). The student whose name is drawn chooses the button (on the PowerPoint slide, which we will discuss later) with their preferred task. It is a discreet way of expressing controlled autonomy. In addition to the observer students (whose responsibilities we detailed in the article Baciu, S., & Lăzărescu, L.-D. (2025)), the "teacher" students, who solve the task correctly and most quickly, can also be given responsibility, with an emphasis on demonstrating competence. The first 2-3 of them can offer – after first receiving positive feedback from the teacher – to become teachers (who teach/explain the correct solution to the tasks in an interactive way, first asking their classmates how they thought of solving the task, while also asking helpful questions).

4.1.3. The Attractive PPT

From the very beginning of their teaching career, teachers need to manage the information they will present to their students correctly. It is true that when the curriculum they have to cover is more extensive (as is the case with religion teachers, for example), laptops become an absolutely necessary tool. On this laptop, the teacher will organize their classes, worksheets, and lessons in PowerPoint. At least in religion class, in addition to the necessary information, suggestive images can be presented. Sometimes the teacher can use various links to videos (e.g., The Book of Books, Chosen, educational and motivational videos such as (JD.com, Inc., 2018), etc.).

The games in Learning apps, Wordwall, Kahoot, etc., which a teacher will create or select from those previously created by other teachers, will be a delight for students. They will make the lesson more dynamic and attractive. The worksheets that students will receive to complete can also be viewed in the PowerPoint presentation for that lesson and completed step by step on simple whiteboards or interactive whiteboards. Basically, the entire educational process can be "recorded" in advance and presented appropriately to students during class. It is important for the teacher to be able to find the most valuable sources necessary for presenting the information. Ideally, this information should be summarized and presented to students in the most attractive way possible, accompanied by the most appropriate images.

In this adaptive approach, every teacher who is passionate about what they do can create a series of applications (based on the exercises provided in textbooks) and

even entire lessons, either in PPT, Prezi, Canva, Livresq, etc. The interactive whiteboard comes in handy, successfully replacing the whiteboard next to the video projector. Not long ago, before learning about the benefits of the Livresq and Wand platforms, we used to create lessons in PPT.

4.1.3.1. Slide with Buttons. Tasks Available to Students

A somewhat more complex element—quite time-consuming to create—is the slide with multiple buttons, linking to other slides (with various exercises) or even to links to the aforementioned applications, songs, or videos (such as The Book of Books (JD.com, Inc., 2018), etc.). With the observer method, students have the opportunity to be randomly selected to choose the order in which they will complete the tasks in the applications. Several buttons with links to various other slides (from the same or another ppt) can be arranged on a slide (ppt). Each button will send—with one click—to a task. It is important for the teacher to propose or select—from those proposed by others—the most eloquent and stimulating tasks for students, so that they solve them with interest and joy. Previous experience has shown that students prefer tasks in which they can be fully involved, such as mini-skits, role-playing games, charades, Pictionary, etc. Students are also fascinated by solving puzzles, quizzes, mini-ABC tests, and true/false exercises on their own.

Figure 1. - Slide with Buttons

4.1.3.2. Games on Generous Platforms

The Wordwall (unfortunately, creating games here is not free, but requires a monthly subscription when the author exceeds 5 of their own creations!) and Learning apps platforms offer a wide range of possibilities for creating attractive games for students of all ages. For example, the assessment of lessons on Ancient Religions (Mesopotamia, Egypt, Rome, Greece, etc.) can include only 4-5 exercises (such as puzzles, quizzes, associations, pairings, etc.) that a teacher can create or select from those available on the above-mentioned platforms. High school students have unrestricted access to mobile phones. So they can solve the exercises, then take a

screenshot and post it on the class group, and the teacher will note the points accumulated by each student in their personal catalog. In this case, students who, for various reasons, cannot be present in class at that moment will also benefit, as has unfortunately been the case during epidemics, etc. It is worth mentioning the Classroom platform, where our students posted their homework during the pandemic and where teachers gave video lessons based on a wide variety of teaching materials (PPT presentations, games, various links to videos, etc.).

4.1.3.3. Interdisciplinary Approaches

From the point of view of interdisciplinary approaches, the use of ICT is an essential element that can effectively bring elements from a wide variety of fields within the teacher's reach. Thus, in a lesson such as "The Holy Land in the Time of Christ the Savior" (6th grade), various geographical, historical, and general aspects of the religious, social, and family life of the Jews will be presented in a logical order. In a lesson on the Mystery of Baptism, aspects related to water, as a chemical element, etc., can be detailed. And from an assessment point of view, ICT comes to the substantial aid of the high school teacher, especially in the form of forms-type questionnaires. Of course, creating worksheets requires either creativity on the part of the teacher or research (through digital textbooks, RED-type platforms, etc.), followed by writing and printing using ICT tools.

4.2. Method Used

This entire process, involving the application of HOP strategies, was and is observed in a participatory manner (the teacher supervises and approves the points that the student observers record in their observation sheets), with the observer method being based on distributed pedagogical management.

4.3. Technical Solutions

- Creating simple or interactive PPTs, with buttons linking to internal slides or various educational applications

- Creating interactive digital RED lessons (on the Livresq platform) with access to multiple educational applications (created or selected from other authors)

- Empowering student observers (two of them are directly involved in operating the interactive whiteboard: scrolling through slides, choosing colors for students who come to the board to write/draw/fill in a diagram with symbols, etc.)

- Use by observer students of observation sheets, in which they note the points accumulated by their classmates for answers/tasks/behavior.

- The Heptalog of Good Behavior – necessary for each student to become aware of their own behavior, for the purpose of self-control.

- Self-assessment of students' own behavior, by referring to the fulfillment of the "laws" in the Heptalog (at the end of each lesson – especially primary school students – they write down in their notebooks the emoticon they think they deserve for their behavior on that day/hour).

- The marks received in the notebook at the end of the lesson, on the lesson written by the student, from the teacher: a flower – for a complete and correct written lesson, a heart – for beautifully done drawings, a light bulb – for students who have answered correctly several times.

5. Novelty of the Approach

- combining the frontal approach with interactive digital elements leads to:

  - increased student engagement in the process of choosing activities;

  - an incipient form of differentiation, by offering options;

  - the introduction of controlled autonomy, even in the context of a predetermined path

  - a first step towards gamification of the lesson, through the use of buttons and digital applications;

- despite the frontal format, these technological insertions can change the dynamics of the class, supporting a form of active participation.

- organizing observational roles (responses, tasks, behavior) and using scorecards to record points, with a view to transitioning to a digitized and automated scoring system

- exploring a self-assessment system also based on the accumulation of points (good/less good – for behavior), following the angelic model of marking deeds (good/unlawful) in the "catastif," in the spirit of competition with oneself.

6. Further Research

6.1. The Need to Implement a Digital Instant Assessment System. The Utopia of an Angelic Assessment System

Regarding the observers' method, we hope that in the future, there will be collaboration with IT specialists, through which we will implement a system for instant scoring of points earned by students for their answers and tasks during a lesson. This system will replace the manual scoring of points by student observers. Of course, a system for marking "emoticons" for behavior would also be interesting. After all, if we think about the stories of angels who "write down" all our deeds, it means that they already have a well-established scoring system. It is true that there are two categories of angels: those who record good deeds and those who record deeds that do not comply with the Ten Commandments. Perhaps our system will become an individual one, meaning that instead of "external" observers, each student will become their own observer and accumulate points for answers and tasks, or emoticons (as cheerful as possible), on their own responsibility, just as their parents, for example, receive a salary for their work. This perspective may seem a bit prosaic, but if we look at past experiences, many of those who became great people were responsible from childhood. Saint Nectarios, the cancer healer, is an eloquent example. He worked from childhood in harsh conditions. For now, this remains a utopia. Of course, we do not want to encourage commercialism or competition. Only competition between students and themselves. Mastery of their own behavior. And, last but not least, the multiplication of good deeds.

7. Conclusion

The use of current information technologies is of utmost importance in the educational process. It is essential that all of these be handled wisely, moderately, and cautiously, so that they are truly useful for students and others. Artificial intelligence is taking over pretty much everything, and in the next 10 years, some people think (Tobias, 2025) we'll have free "excellent tutoring," which could kinda threaten teachers' jobs. All this will force teachers to be constantly updated on everything that can improve the educational process, without forgetting that their main goal is to help students discover the hidden values of the spirit.

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