

## **IMPROVING THE TEACHERS' SKILLS FOR THE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING NEEDS**

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### **Abstract**

The expertise of the teaching staff to organize the didactic activity and to manage the pupils' behavior is of major importance for achieving school performance, especially under the conditions of frequent changes in the education system, the digitization process, the numerous discipline problems in schools, the various expectations of the professional environment, of the civil society, of teachers or of parents. Teachers must lead pupils' behavior and also must prevent and act in unexpected situations using the most appropriate classroom management strategies to create a positive climate conducive to learning.

The aims of the current study are to identify the challenges that teachers are facing in the classroom management at various age levels of pupils and to analyse their needs of training in order to improve the professional skills in this area. A number of 97 teachers from all four levels of pre-university education have answered a questionnaire with three semi-directive questions that targeted the following aspects related to the classroom management: the most common problems that teachers face in the classroom management; the examples of management problems from their own professional practice; the knowledge or skills that teachers would need to improve for a better classroom management.

The content analysis of the teachers' answers highlighted as the most common categories of challenges in classroom management the following: the discipline problems, the teacher's poor collaboration with pupil's families, the management of the social and emotional environment of the class, the lack of material resource or the insufficient space in classroom. In terms of the teachers' training needs for a better classroom management, the analysis showed a grouping of answers around the following aspects: specific intervention strategies, techniques and tools in disciplinary cases, communicating with pupils, communicating and working with the pupils' parents, specific methods and techniques to make teaching-learning more efficient, knowledge in child psychology.

The information obtained through the current study can contribute to the design of continuous training programs for teachers and to the introduction of discussion topics focused

upon the identified problems into the curriculum for the initial training of pupils who wish to pursue a teaching career.

**Keywords:** *Teachers' professional development, classroom management, teachers' knowledge and skills, teachers' training needs.*

## **Introduction**

The training and professional development of teachers is a key aspect in improving the quality of the didactic act, as it is a significant mediator in increasing classroom effectiveness, the pupil performance (Hill, Beisiegel & Jacob, 2013), in creating a positive school culture and in improving the individual skills of teachers (Willemse, Dam, Geijssel, van Wessum, & Volman, 2015).

In Romania, the legislation in force stipulates that the continuous training of teachers is a right, but also an obligation and the ways of achieving it are; the scientific, psychopedagogical and didactic improvement programs and activities; the training programs in the fields of management, guidance and evaluation of the education; the preparation courses and support of the exams for obtaining teacher certifications – level II and level I; the occupational retraining programs or studies corresponding to a specialization in the field of the degree in such a way that "once every 5 years, a number of 90 professional credits are accumulated." (National Education Law no. 1/211, p. 103).

This activity is regulated at national level by *the Framework Methodology regarding the quality assurance of programs for the continuous professional development of teachers in the pre-university education and the accumulation of transferable professional credits.*

The dynamics and scope of this process during the 2021-2022 school year is captured in a *Report on the state of the pre-university education in Romania*. During that period, 134 continuous training programs for pre-university education personnel, provided by 76 providers, were accredited, as follows: 63 programs offered by associations, training centers, foundations, 60 programs by TSRCs (Teaching-Staff Resource Center), 11 programs by higher education institutions and by the County Educational Resource and Assistance Centers (CJRAE).

Most of the thematic areas covered by these programs were: Teaching-learning-assessment didactic strategies (24), Expertise in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (21), Management and leadership in education (18), Management and counseling for the teaching career (16), Non-formal, extracurricular and informal education (12), School and career counseling and guidance (11) (2022, p. 70). 90,200 pupils were included only in the

programs carried out through the teaching teaching-staff resource centers (CCD) at the national level.

They participated in training programs on topics other than those mentioned above, topics which were more specific, related to the management of the classes, the anti-bullying education, the education of children with special educational needs (CES), the equality of opportunity and gender equality, the new education methods, the sustainable development and the challenges of the globalization, the entrepreneurial education, the health education, the intercultural education, the children's rights education, the human rights education, the educational marketing, the education quality management and the educational policies. These quantitative data show how varied and wide the range of programs offered is and above all, what the training and professional development needs of teaching staff are.

The Ministry of Education requires each program submitted for accreditation to substantiate its educational approach on an analysis of the needs expressed by the teaching staff. This involves "defining those areas where there are discrepancies between what is and what should be, by defining the nature and importance of these discrepancies and by proposing action plans that lead to the reduction of the differences thereof" (Paloş, 2007, p. 267). Thus, the employees are offered alternative routes to satisfy the needs that they identify in their current practice and whose solution they have not found by accessing other offers or through their personal study work.

The expressed needs can range in the category of knowledge, skills, attitudes and the ability to succeed, and their source can be: reporting to a standard level established and required by legislation/institutions at a given time, the comparison with the method and level at which the classmates demonstrate certain skills and their own feelings of professional inadequacy (Paloş, 2007), which makes these feelings and skills sometimes difficult to satisfy only through a training program.

Even so, the analysis of teachers' learning needs "is an important stage in the design of a training approach" (Paloş, 2007, p. 273), a way to offer quality programs, adapted to social and institutional requirements and also a way to monitor their efficiency. For each participant this can be a moment of identifying the weak and strong points of their own performance, of self-reflection on their role and their position within the school, of the personal and professional skills needed to carry out an effective educational approach.

### **The managerial challenges of the didactic activity**

The didactic activity is distinguished by a number of general characteristics such as: the variety of people and the contexts in which it is carried out, the simultaneous and rapid unfolding of many events, the unpredictability of some situations and the results thereof, the dynamic and public nature of the activities held in the classroom (Kaur & Pahuja, 2019) which limit the reflection, the thorough analysis, the appropriate decision and they require a planned, organized and controlled approach for the smooth and efficient performance. Classrooms are closed, sometimes crowded spaces where many people with different abilities and priorities are forced to use limited resources in order to achieve a wide range of personal, institutional, and social goals. Teachers face a classroom of pupils daily, they must negotiate potentially stressful interactions with parents, administrators, counselors, and other teachers and they must ensure that pupils meet increasingly stringent standards given that the school budget is relatively small. The alarming increase in the frequency and severity of aggressive manifestations in schools adds up to the issues mentioned above.

Thus, in Romania a statistical analysis carried out for the 2021-2022 school year reveals that "the slightly increasing evolution of acts of violence in the school environment can be observed by reporting to the previous school years (2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020- 2021). Of the total number of 9741 acts of violence, 69% (6744 cases) are acts of violence in the category of assault on a person, 14% (1326 cases) - the category of attack on property, 13% (1289 cases) - the category of other acts of violence or attacks on security and 4% (382 cases) – in the category attack on the security of the school unit" (Report, 2022, p. 106). A research carried out in the Romanian educational environment on 114 primary and secondary school teachers also indicated an increase in the disruptive behavior in the classroom and the discipline issues are an important challenge for teachers (Constantinescu, Chirleşan, Tăbăcaru, 2019).

The aggressive behavior of some pupils with disruptive effects has been a source of concern, for several years, for all decision-makers in the Romanian education system. The classes where such situations occur have less time for the didactic activity, the pupils have lower grades, the standardized test results are poorer (Shinn, Ramsey, Walker, Stieber & O'Neill, 1987), the teachers waste a lot of time to manage them (Oliver & Reschly, 2007) and, as a result, they are frequently dissatisfied, ineffective, stressed, exhausted (Browers &

Tomic, 2000). These are also the reasons why teachers give up the teaching profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

The behavior of pupils has been, in the recent decades, influenced by the changes that have taken place within the society (e.g. the insufficient control of mass media that broadcast aggressive content, the free access of children to it, the devaluation of the importance of following the rules in favor of the misunderstood freedom), of the family (e.g. the impairment of the parent-child attachment relationship, of the role of the parental authority as a result of parents leaving for work abroad), of the school and the education system (e.g. the numerous legislative reforms that have weakened the trust of the society, the parents and the pupils in the system).

Under these conditions, an approach is required to ensure that the instructive and educational process takes place in optimal conditions, preventing and solving the various deadlocks that occur in the achievement of the didactic objectives. This approach, called classroom management, has gradually taken shape in all psychological and pedagogical disciplines and it contains theories, strategies and techniques for approaching and analyzing the school class/group with the aim of facilitating the teachers' interventions in concrete educational situations (Iucu, 2006). "The class management, however, also means the knowledge, skills and activities of a teacher which allow him to increase the level of involvement of children in teaching and learning activities and the level of assimilation of knowledge that later on turn into life skills" (Ștefan, Kállay, Cosma, Vaida, 2015, p.13). In addition, the classroom management is considered to be a tool, an important professional skill that any teacher must grow throughout their teaching career.

The class management initially focused upon analyzing and intervening in problematic situations in the class, upon developing the skills necessary to maintain and increase discipline and control of the group; gradually it became a theoretical and methodological support for those who want to create an environment of collaboration, effective learning, self-knowledge, self-evaluation and self-control in the classroom (Jones & Jones, 2007). Thus, the conclusion that was gradually reached was that the school discipline is an important element of the instructive-educational process and it is a consequence of creating a positive educational environment.

The managerial approach of the teaching staff has a formative and behavioral purpose and it is structured on three levels: preventive, action (e.g. launching some proposals to solve minor problems arising in the complex environment of the class) and resolution (oriented towards solving major conflicts arising in this environment) (Curwin & Mendler, 1999, p. 7).

Taking into account the main resources involved in carrying out classroom activities to achieve performance standards, the classroom management is carried out on several main dimensions (Iucu, 2005):

-*ergonomics* intended for structuring and supervising the educational environment, the furniture in the classrooms, in such a way that it respects hygiene, ergonomics, functionality, simplicity, safety/security and aesthetics norms;

-*curriculum* that involves the management of all the resources involved in the optimal development of the teaching-learning-evaluation axis, in order to obtain school performances and to achieve the objectives stipulated in the school documents;

-*psychological* which involves knowing the pupils' personal resources: intellectual, personality, particularities of the stage of their mental development, learning skills, motivation and so on;

-*social and relational* by monitoring the various relationships among the pupils, the factors that impact them, the formal and informal leadership processes, the collaborative relationships with other teachers, with parents and the development of the feeling of belonging to the school group;

-*normative* that deals with fixing, maintaining and changing the rules established by common agreement, with the knowledge and compliance with general and specific norms and with internalizing the principles of coexistence based on moral and ethical values.

The actions of the teacher in the classroom are influenced and inevitably they need to be grounded and correlated with changes at the level of the entire education process and system (e.g. changing legislation, securing basic funding) or at the school level (the endowment of educational resources, the number of pupils and the school size). Therefore, in order for teachers to successfully manage classroom activities, they must possess: well-structured knowledge (about the school curricula, the instructional and educational process as a whole) supported by effective strategies for their management, solid knowledge about how to teach specific subjects based upon understanding the mechanisms of pupil learning and digital skills, classroom management strategies; interpersonal, collaboration, reflection and research skills; critical attitudes towards professional practice leading to innovation; positive attitudes towards diversity, inclusion and collaboration, attitudes of commitment towards the continuous professional development, the ability to adapt plans and practices to contextual challenges and pupils' needs (Caena, 2014, p. 315).

### **Areas of skills a teacher needs for the classroom management**

At the moment, training the skills of teachers is one of the challenges of education systems anywhere in the world. Broadly speaking, the expertise entails a multitude of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes manifested by one's ability to convey appropriate information, to solve a problem, to make appropriate decisions in a professional context with valuable personal and professional results. The expertise is a sum of "knowledge, qualities and skills or abilities that are involved in the performance of specific tasks of an activity that can be taught, measured, evaluated and that can be called performance standards" (Niculescu, 2001, p. 358).

The training and development of a competent teacher is carried out gradually, in an individual and organizational effort to assimilate, consolidate and expand the knowledge and skills necessary to assume the roles mentioned above. The moment of validating the actual competence is the one in which the teacher is able to take over, to adapt and to creatively apply knowledge, strategies and methods depending on the context. Being competent can therefore involve a level of performance at which "various pre-existing methodical algorithms for accomplishing certain work tasks are selected, combined and implemented depending on the changes in the institutional context in which the instructive and educational activity with the pupils is carried out " (Diaconu, 2002, p. 34).

The managerial competence is part of the endowment of skills specific to the teaching profession, along with scientific, methodological, communication and relational, pupil assessment as well as psychosocial, technical and technological, career management skills. The members of the teaching staff must grow all these skills through initial training and to develop them constantly through continuous learning and training given that they assume the institutionally assigned roles of: *planner, organizer, communicator, coordinator, guide, motivator and evaluator* (Iucu, 2005). Thus, according to Romita Iucu (2006), the teachers must:

- plan the instructional and educational activities in the form of didactic design, set tasks and objectives on the different functional levels, structure the essential contents and establish the class schedule.
- organize the class activities by establishing the entire instructive and educational program;

- communicate scientific information and sets of values in the form of messages, to establish communication channels at the level of the entire group of pupils;
- lead and coordinate the activity carried out in the classroom, directing the pupils' learning process and constantly monitoring the synchronization between the fulfillment of individual objectives and the objectives of the class;
- motivate pupils through various forms of positive and negative reinforcement;
- advise pupils in school and extracurricular activities;
- control the pupils in order to know the stage of achievement of the objectives;
- evaluate the degree of fulfillment of the instructional and educational goals.

The managerial competence ensures, through developed capacities (for planning, organization, control, supervision, orientation, counseling) and through trained or grown traits (endurance under stress conditions, control and self-control of negative emotions), solving various types of issues of to those of discipline, up to those of a relational nature, thus optimizing the educational climate.

### **The purpose of the presents study**

The research performed in the Romanian educational environment regarding the pupil class management and the specific training needs of teachers in this field are few as most of the data is known from the above-mentioned reports. The present study, of descriptive exploratory type, intended to investigate the perceptions of a group of teachers, from all four levels of the pre-university education, with the purpose of: 1) identifying the most common problems that teachers frequently encounter in the classroom management and 2) analyzing the teachers' needs for professional training in order to improve the management of classes/groups of pupils.

### **Participants and procedure**

The total number of participants in this study was as follows: 97 teachers from the pre-university education system, from Romania, Iasi County, of which 93 were female and 4 were male, with an average age of 40.29 years (23-60 years). Forty of them are teachers from several rural schools and 57 are teachers from urban schools. Table 1 shows the structure of the participants group.



Education level	Number of teachers	Environment		Average age (years)	Seniority in education (minimum-maximum, in years)
		rural	urban		
Pre-school	32	13	19	39,34	1-41
Primary school	42	15	27	39,11	1-32
Middle school	13	10	3	40,07	1-29
High school	10	2	8	47,3	10-32
<b>Total</b>	97	40	57		

The data collection was carried out through a survey based upon a short questionnaire with three semi-directive items that teachers answered online through the GoogleDocs platform. The teachers were asked for their consent to participate in the research that aims to analyze the specific problems of the classroom management and the professional training needs in this field.

The three semi-directive items of the questionnaire were as follows:

1. Reflect upon the classroom management problems you personally encounter in your current work and briefly list below at least 7 types of situations that frequently raise classroom management challenge.
2. Exemplify one of these problems by describing a specific case.
3. State 3-4 knowledge or/and skills that you think you would need for an effective classroom management.

## Results

The data were analyzed predominantly qualitatively by using the content analysis technique. This technique involves an attempt to objectify qualitative data by measuring the frequency of occurrence of some units from the collected verbal responses and by reducing the units to categories (Băban, 2002). We carried out an inductive analysis, the identified

categories emerging from the data through a bottom-up approach (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The answers were initially coded by two experts in the educational field, in order to be later included in several categories (sub-themes) which were then narrowed down to a few themes relevant to the main dimensions of the classroom management.

### 1. The most common problems experienced in the classroom management

To the first requirement of the questionnaire, a total number of 620 responses were obtained in the form of words, expressions, phrases that reflect various challenges or issues that teachers encounter in the classroom management. Tables 1-4 show the themes and sub-themes resulting from the analysis carried out separately for the four levels of education, ordered according to the frequency of occurrence.

**Table no. 1** Themes and sub-themes showing the most common problems in the classroom management during the **pre-school**

Themes and Subthemes	Frequency	%
<b>1. The material and human resources needed for a good management</b>	45	25,14
The lack of teaching materials, insufficient funds for toys and extracurricular activities, improper/insufficient educational space, the lack of financial resources for continuous training, insufficient auxiliary staff, the lack of a speech and language therapist		
<b>2. The collaboration with the family</b>	42	23,46%
The difficult communication with the parents, the non-involvement of parents, the lack of agreement regarding the educational methods in the family and in the kindergarten, the lack of discipline and autonomy skills in the family, the lack of training for parents in the field of children's education, the unrealistic expectations of parents, parents who have gone abroad, divorces, families with material and emotional problems,		
<b>3. The social and emotional environment of the classroom</b>	36	20,11%
The communication, the boredom, the growing of respect, civilized expression, the group play, capturing attention, supporting children's emotional regulation, interacting with hyperactive		

children, the marginalization of some children due to their ethnicity, religion or social and economic status, the large number of children in groups, heterogeneous groups,		
<b>4. The discipline</b>	33	18,43%
The behavioral problems of children, the non-compliance with the group rules, the excitement, the restlessness, the verbal and physical aggression, the conflicts among children,		
<b>5. The integration of children with SEN</b>	12	6,70%
The adaptation to the needs of children with SEN, the lack of assessment/diagnosis of children with problems,		
<b>6. The general management of education</b>	11	6,15%
The uncertainties of the education reform, the lack of transparency, the lack of information, the faulty collaboration with the hierarchical supervisors, the excessive bureaucracy and the devaluation of the teaching profession.		
<b>Total answers</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table no. 2** Themes and sub-themes reflecting the most common problems in the classroom management in the **primary school**

<b>Themes and Sub-themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. The discipline</b>	81	27,84%
Excitement, the talking during class, the lack of adapting to school rules, conduct problems, absenteeism, lateness to classes, the phone use, the abusive language, the bullying, the common assault, imitating negative role models, the discrimination, the intolerance, the lack of responsibility, the conflicts among pupils, the conflicts among parents, the conflicts between children and their parents, the lack of respect,		
<b>2. The collaboration with the family</b>	62	21,31%
The difficult communication with the parents, the negative attitude towards education, the non-involvement of parents, the unfavorable family environment for education, the material problems, the divorce, the parents absent from their family, the unrealistic		

expectations of parents, the lack of parental training in the field of children's education, the lack of discipline and autonomy skills in the family,		
<b>3. The social and emotional environment of the class</b>	53	18,21%
Problems of emotional regulation in pupils, the large number of pupils in the class, the organization of the teamwork, the organization of extracurricular activities, the communication among pupils, the lack of respect and fair play, the lack of pro-social behavior, the pupil fatigue,		
<b>4. The motivation for learning</b>	28	9,62%
The lack of interest in activities, the failure to complete the homework, the lack of involvement during the class, the children's refusal to work, the attention deficit issues during the class		
<b>5. The teaching and learning process</b>	21	7,22%
The lack of match among curriculum documents, the frequently changed school programs, the school programs above the average level of children, the difficulties in making objective assessments, the individualization of learning, the activity planning, the teaching and learning time management, the simultaneous and heterogeneous classes, the functional illiteracy,		
<b>6. The material and human resources needed for a good management</b>	20	6,87%
The lack of material endowment and some financial resources for materials, the small classroom space, inadequate for teaching activities, the lack of a psychologist, the lack of financial resources for continuous training, the lack of training for classroom management,		
<b>7. The integration of children with SEN</b>	14	4,81%
The management of activities, the attention paid, the adaptation of activities,		
<b>8. The general management of education</b>	12	4,12%
The poor collaboration with the local community, the bad image of education, the excessive bureaucracy, the poor collaboration with hierarchical supervisors, the non-application of ROFUIP, the poor communication among the members of the teaching staff.		

<b>Total answers</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100%</b>
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**Table no. 3** Themes and sub-themes reflecting the most common problems in classroom management in **middle school**

<b>Themes and Sub-themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. The discipline</b>	30	34.09%
The non-application of ROFUIP, the inefficiency of some sanctions, pupils who manipulate other pupils in the class, inappropriate pupil attitudes, the noise in class, the non-compliance with class rules, absenteeism, conduct problems, aggression, bullying, the lack of respect, imitating negative models,		
<b>2. The collaboration with the family</b>	17	19.31%
The lack of the family involvement, the lack of communication or difficult communication, parental hostility, family environment unfavorable to education, emotional problems in the family,		
<b>3. The social and emotional environment of the class</b>	,15	17.05%
The class organization, the poor teacher-pupil communication and relationship, the social recognition of pupils, the pupil-pupil relationships, the poor communication with classmates, the organization of extracurricular activities, the large number of pupil in the class, the social isolation of pupils, the intolerance and discrimination		
<b>4. The teaching and learning process</b>	15	17.05%
Reading-writing difficulties, poor intellectual development, low school performance, time management, busy and incoherent programs, teaching and learning activation, insufficient or outdated material resources,		
<b>5. The motivation for learning</b>	6	6.82%
The lack of interest, the non-involvement during the classes,		
<b>6. The integration of children with SEN</b>	5	5.68%
Providing special attention, tailored learning and positive discrimination.		
<b>Total answers</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table no. 4** Themes and sub-themes reflecting the most common problems in classroom management in **high school**

<b>Themes and Sub-themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. The discipline</b> Truancy, lateness to classes, smoking within the school premises, the use of mobile phones, the noise in class, the talking without being asked, the substance use, the disrespect, the intolerance, the discrimination, the lack of responsibility, pupil-teacher conflicts, parent-pupil conflicts, conflicts among pupils, foul language, violence and theft,	30	48,38%
<b>2. The motivation for learning</b> The lack of interest for schooling, not doing homework, refusing to participate in class activities, the attention deficit issues during the class,	13	20,97%
<b>3. The social and emotional environment of the class</b> Creating a sense of belonging to classmates in class, organizing teamwork, supporting pupils' emotional regulation, supporting pupils' desire to stand out, advising and guiding pupils, the exclusion, the lack of involvement in volunteering, the lack of values,	13	20,97%
<b>4. The integration of children with SEN</b> The exclusion of children with SEN by their classmates, managing the behaviors of children with SEN,	3	4,84%
<b>5. The collaboration with the family</b> The non-involvement of parents, the family environment experiencing material and emotional problems.	3	4,84%
<b>Total answers</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100%</b>

In order to deepen the analysis of the teachers' subjective experience in the classroom management situations, we asked them to describe a particular case that highlighted one of the problems they faced. Most of the examples given relate to discipline or working with the family. We provide details of some of these descriptions below.

***At the preschool level***

*"The child X taps his foot whenever he wants to get a toy or any other advantage. This is a behavior he also has within his family and the family members give the child absolutely everything he asks for, without any restrictions".*

*"One little girl didn't want to paint because she wanted to model. I explained to her why we were painting, why we did this and not that, but she absolutely refused to comply."*

*"A child's parents are divorced, the child lives only with his mother, and his father wants to show the child that he loves him. The father tries to pick him up from school without the mother's knowledge, he gifts his child things that are not quite suitable for his age and he sends negative messages to the mother through the child. Both parents come to school and tell the teacher how bad the other parent is treating the child."*

***At the primary school level***

*"During class, the pupil X states that he is not in the mood for discussions and sits with his feet on the bench. He is told that he needs to pay attention and what the advantages of studying the problem in class are, but he keeps shouting that he is not in the mood to collaborate. He looks menacingly at the teacher and he replies "I don't care!" and "Why should I comply?" When the teacher explains to him that this behavior is not helping him or his classmates, he replies again "I don't care!". He does not stop even when he is told that his behavior brings about some consequences that he has to bear if he continues."*

*"A naughty child who constantly disturbs his classmates, who bullies them, who speaks badly to them; his parents are not interested in his school situation; he is rejected by the group and the classmates avoid interacting with him when various activities are carried out. He never takes responsibility for his actions and his behaviors and he constantly feels the need to victimize himself by constantly blaming others."*

***At the middle school level***

*"The mother of a child with emotional problems is working and living abroad. The child is cared for by his grandmother. The child's mother complains to the head teacher and the school management that not enough attention is paid to the pupil in question, that his rights are not respected and that he is discriminated against. Surveys are conducted from the classroom level to the school level. The pupil is under monitoring by the school counselor and the support teacher."*

*"A pupil bullies his classmates daily and even several times a day for no reason, just because he can and because he wants to. Neither punishments nor kind words have any effect on him; his mother is never interested in the pupil. She avoids coming to school and meeting the teaching staff."*

***At the high school level***

*"I asked a 10th grade pupil to turn off his cell phone because I had started teaching a new lesson. He complied and turned it off but a few minutes later he turned it on under the desk!"*

*"During teaching, when certain details and pieces of information from the lesson are dictated, pupils often ask "Do we have to write?" "It's some kind of fear of writing or a refusal to do so that I don't understand".*

**2. Knowledge and skills teachers need to improve for the classroom management**

To the third requirement addressed to the teaching staff, a number of 185 responses were obtained, which were grouped around the themes described in table 5.

**Table no. 5** Themes and sub-themes reflecting the knowledge and skills teachers need for a better classroom management

<b>Themes and Sub-themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<p><b>1. Specific intervention strategies, techniques and tools in disciplinary cases</b></p> <p>Applying regulations, training and reinforcing desirable pupil behaviors, problem solving, conflict management, dealing with serious situations of violence.</p>	46
<p><b>2. Communication skills</b></p> <p>General communication skills (assertiveness, active listening, persuasiveness). Specific strategies and techniques for communication and relationships with the family (communication with parents, educating and advising parents).</p>	42
<p><b>3. Specific methods and techniques to make teaching and learning more efficient</b></p> <p>Active learning methods, methods and techniques for getting everyone's attention, the use of educational software, the use of mobile phones in the teaching and learning process, the tailoring of learning, methods and techniques for motivation and involvement in the lesson</p>	27



<b>4. Knowledge of child psychology</b>	24
Temper, character, emotional development, peculiarities according to age.	
<b>5. Skills for managing the social climate of the classroom</b>	14
The organization of the class and learning groups, the positive relationship with pupils, the growing of a positive and warm climate, the support of the cooperation among pupils.	
<b>6. Personal development skills</b>	13
Regulating one's emotions, growing patience and a positive attitude.	
<b>7. Specific methods of working with pupils with SEN</b>	11
Tailoring of learning, methods of preventing discrimination	
<b>8. Knowledge and skills specific to the institutional management</b>	8
Institutional relations, organization and time management.	
<b>Total answers</b>	<b>185</b>

## Discussions and conclusions

The main sub-themes and the themes that emerged from the empirical data obtained from this study indicate a fairly large correspondence among them and the classroom management dimensions described in the specialized literature. Thus, the social and relational and psychological dimensions (Iucu, 2005) circumscribe the common themes, identified through comparative analysis of the four education cycles, which cover the problems faced by teachers in the classroom management (regardless of the pupils' age): the discipline, the social and emotional environment of the class, the collaboration with the family and the integration of children with SEN.

But there are also a number of differences regarding the challenges of teachers. For example, at the younger ages (preschool and secondary school levels), the theme of collaboration with the family appears in the second place in the hierarchy of challenges, while at the high school level, this theme is hardly evoked. Regarding the topic of discipline, it is at the top of the challenges for the primary, secondary and high school levels, but not for the preschool level, where it does not have a priority weight. As it can be seen in Table no. 1, a predominant theme among pre-school teachers is that of the scarcity of material and human resources, which is also found among those in the primary education, but it does not appear at all in middle school and high school level.

In contrast to the kindergarten level, at the other levels of schooling, the concern for pupils' learning motivation is as a predominant theme. At the primary and secondary levels, there is also a concern for the management of the teaching and learning process, a topic that is not found in the responses of preschool and high school teachers.

A careful analysis of the subthemes related to each theme indicates common points, but also nuances at the level of the specific problems faced by teachers. If we take as an example the theme of the social and emotional environment of the classroom, we notice that at all ages there is a concern of teachers for organizing the group, growing the respect, the understanding, the tolerance and diminishing the exclusion and the discrimination. However, it can be found that at the preschool and primary school levels, teachers are predominantly concerned with managing the emotional climate, while in the case of the older children they are challenged by the need to create a sense of belonging to the classmates, by the need of pupils to stand out and by growing and training their civic sense.

The differences noted in the list of themes and sub-themes can be explained by internal factors (level of psychic and social development, specific needs for psychic and social development, relationships for each age category) as well as by contextual factors (the performance standards stipulated for each education level).

Regarding the training needs indicated by the surveyed teachers, the sub-themes obtained by coding the answers highlight a focus on specific knowledge, skills, techniques and tools needed for the classroom management. For instance, as we can see from Table no. 5, the teachers need to master specific intervention techniques and tools in cases of indiscipline ranks first, and the need to develop concrete communication skills ranks second. The didactic training needs rank third. These are no longer related to the general skills of curriculum design, but very specific needs to master active methods, for the immediate motivation of pupils, for their involvement in learning with the help of technologies.

The need for knowledge of children's psychology is also a need that is key as the teachers instinctively feel that many of the discipline problems are based on internal sources that are sometimes inaccessible to them. These results are not surprising if we relate them to the themes of the training programs offered at the national and local level accredited by the Ministry of Education.

This situation is explained by the slightly increasing evolution of the acts of violence within the school environment in the last 4 years, to which the repeated changes at the legislative level, the multiple and unfinished reforms in the Romanian education system, the confusion in the organizational environment of the school, the political environment, the

precariousness technical and technological issues highlighted by online education during the pandemic are added, having turned the activity at the department into a real challenge.

In these conditions the professional development is necessary not only for the teacher's appropriate intervention (if need be) but especially for the prevention of such situations. The continuous training through various programs regarding the classroom management can provide teachers with a useful practical and theoretical tool in managing the material, curricular, psychological, as well as the social and relational resources of the classroom.

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