

# ASSURING STUDENTS' RIGHT TO EDUCATION: A MODEL FOR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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## **Abstract:**

The purpose of this research was to present a model for classroom management for creating an effective learning environment wherein students feel accepted and valued as human beings, assuring their right to education.

An intra-paradigm mixed research methodology consisted of action research, case study, and photovoice was used. Data were collected through interviews, focus-group discussions, qualitative surveys, observations, document analysis, and photos. The participants were faculty, students, and experts, selected by using purposive sampling. The data were transcribed, translated, and coded. The findings grouped seven core components of CoLearnITT: training model, flipped classroom, classroom management, dimensions of learning, interactive lecturing, mastery learning, and integration of values in teaching and learning. The study presents a practical model of classroom management consisting of procedures, rules, and routines. The recommendation is to apply this model and to test its efficacy in K-12 and higher education.

**Keywords:** *Right to education, classroom management, action research, case study, photovoice, initial teacher training, CoLearnITT.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Is education an instrument for liberation or oppression? Are teachers aware of their role in empowering human beings through education? Are they aware of those who come into their classrooms for education for one, two, or more years? Is there any difference in how teachers relate to students that come from disadvantaged or advantaged groups? All these are pertinent questions in the context of today's society. It is important

to remember that education is one of the fundamental rights of children. Therefore, how education occurs in the classroom must be a preoccupation of teachers as they holistically prepare students for society.

Teachers' approach to education reflects their worldview and beliefs regarding human nature. When teachers believe that their students have divine origins and they have a special call to educate God's children, then the educational approach is carefully planned and delivered. The evaluation is redemptive, and the classroom has an exemplary format, so the learners are led to know God, develop good characters, being prepared to serve God and the people around them as good professionals<sup>1</sup>. With such a high aim, this desideratum is fulfilled when teachers are well-trained<sup>2</sup> and have an other-oriented worldview<sup>3</sup>.

Cooperative learning (CL) and interactive teaching are approaches for educating students in a positive learning environment<sup>4</sup>. Their contribution focuses on developing students' values<sup>5</sup>, creating a supportive education setting wherein students feel accepted and valued<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, they ensure a democratic learning environment with equal treatment for students, reciprocal acceptance, and respect.

### 1.1. Right to education

Children must be treated with respect and their dignity protected during academic preparation. Through education, children's personality is

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1 George R. Knight, *Educating for Eternity*, Berrien Springs, MI, Andrews University Press, 2016.

2 Michael H. Harvey, "The Importance of Training Faculty to Integrate Faith with Learning," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 81, no. 3/2019, p. 15.

3 Elissa Kido, "Cognitive Genesis: Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Factors Contributing to Academic Success in Adventist Education," *Journal of Adventist Education* 79, no. 3/2017, pp. 18-19.

4 Cynthia M. Gettys and Elaine D. Plemons, "A Biblical Foundation Course Design Model That Works: Teaching Millennials in Higher Education," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 79, no. 1/2016, p. 43; Shawna Vyhmeister and Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson, "Understanding, Serving, and Educating Students in Urban Settings," *Journal of Adventist Education* 79, no. 2/2017, p. 6.

5 Adelle G. Faull, "Critical Thinking: Practical Strategies for Teaching and Learning," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 78, no. 3/2016, p. 28.

6 See the Establishing routines section in chapter 2 of W. H. Green and R. Henriquez-Green, *Basic Moves of Teaching: Building on Cooperative Learning*, Victoria, Canada: Trafford, 2008.

developed harmoniously, making room for knowledge, abilities, and attitudes necessary for a healthy life in society. This kind of education will lead to treating others and being treated with respect, creating positive interactions, and educating valuable people for society. Education encompasses every student; hence the emphasis should be on inclusive education—that kind of education that fulfills the needs of all students<sup>7</sup>. There is interest to support students' rights to dignity during education programs<sup>8</sup>, as well as developing their self-respect and respect for others<sup>9</sup>, together with a balanced cognitive and emotional development<sup>10</sup>, transmitting values<sup>11</sup>, and preparing them for society<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, showing concern and taking care of students irrespective of their background, recognizing their rights, and being a model for them should be the teachers' preoccupation<sup>13</sup>, from effective instruction to redemptive evaluation<sup>14</sup>.

## 1.2. Educated Romania

A project showing preoccupation for education in Romania is the initiative of President Klaus Iohannis, named Educated Romania. The project aims to help Romanian people to adjust their knowledge, skills, and attitudes to a world in continuous change. The benefits of such education are at the personal and social level as people would face the challenges of a

7 Gianina-Estera Petre *et al.*, "Challenges and Solutions in Inclusive Education: A Case Study with Group Investigation," in *Relevanța cercetării științifice socio-umane pentru estul și vestul Uniunii Europene*, ed. C. F. Iosub, Cernica, Editura Universității Adventus, 2019, p. 143.

8 Eliza-Mihaela Spătăreanu, "Uphold child dignity in primary education," *Journal for Freedom of Conscience* 7, no.1/2019, p. 608.

9 See Ramona S. Kiru, "Integrity in the educational environment" *Journal of Education Studies* 1, no. 2 (2019)

10 See Laura Maftai, "Language development in early education," *Journal of Education Studies* 1, no. 2 (2019)

11 Gianina-Estera Petre, "Preparation of the Human Being for Society through Integration of Values in Learning: 2M2S Model," *Symposion* 3/2017, p. 153.

12 Gianina-Estera Petre, "Developing Students' Leadership Skills through Cooperative Learning: An Action Research Case Study," *International Forum* 23, no. 2/2020, p. 156.

13 Maryann Cavender Hood, "Eleven Suggestions for Improving Discipline in the Classroom," *Adventist Education* 62, no. 3/2000, p. 40.

14 Gianina-Estera Petre, "Evaluarea în contextul educației creștine [Evaluation in the Context of Christian Education]," in *Principiile educației creștine*, ed. Eliza Mihaela Spătăreanu, Cernica, Editura Universității Adventus, 2020, pp. 152-153.

European marketplace. Educated Romania initiative emphasizes the need to improve the initial teacher education program as well as continuous professional development programs<sup>15</sup>, the initial and continuous leaders' training<sup>16</sup>, the early access to education<sup>17</sup>, and the equity in education<sup>18</sup>. When those objectives are fully implemented, the educational system will register significant improvements.

Romania is a member of the European Union and implemented during the last decade different education programs. However, as the Council of the European Union states<sup>19</sup>, Romania still has difficulties at the education level. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development evaluations of the Romanian education reported the need for authentic improvement<sup>20</sup>, with equal rights to education for all children, no matter their background. A balanced approach regarding educational equal treatment for all students can be a practice of the teachers intentionally trained for such an approach. The European Commission<sup>21</sup>, mentions that, when stipulated that by properly training teachers, the education quality and equity are improved.

### 1.3. Interactive teaching

Interactive teaching, through cooperative learning strategies, creates a positive learning environment wherein all students are actively involved

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15 OECD, "Improving the teaching profession in Romania," *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 1, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020a <https://doi.org/10.1787/3b23e2c9-en>.

16 OECD, "Improving professional leadership in Romania's school system," *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 2, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020b <https://doi.org/10.1787/e2fe224f-en>.

17 OECD, "Improving access to quality early education in Romania," *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 3, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020c <https://doi.org/10.1787/f398e488-en>.

18 OECD, "Improving educational equity in Romania," *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 4, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020d <https://doi.org/10.1787/f4a8c506-en>.

19 Council of the European Union, "Council Recommendation of 12 July 2016 on the 2016 National Reform Programme of Romania and delivering a Council opinion on the 2016 Convergence Programme of Romania," *Official Journal of the European Union*, 73–78/2016.

20 Hannah Kitchen *et al.*, *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education. Romania 2017*, Paris, OECD, 2017, p. 20.

21 European Commission, *Education and Training. Monitor 2019: Romania*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2019, p. 5.

in learning, collaborating in groups, addressing diversity and multicultural-ity of colleagues, developing self-respect and respect for others as well as becoming prepared for society. In such an environment, the 21st-century skills of students are developed<sup>22</sup>.

Traditional teaching does not contribute much to creating an interactive learning environment, attractive and motivating for students<sup>23</sup>. It may be a challenge for schools to produce high learning outcomes<sup>24</sup> in a time when students have many attractions like social media, modern gadgets, or other opportunities to explore. Therefore, teachers must adopt a differentiated approach<sup>25</sup> and individualized teaching<sup>26</sup> for ensuring each student's right to education, growth, and proper preparation for social life.

Having students passive in the classrooms is a characteristic of traditional teaching<sup>27</sup>, with teacher lecturing and students taking notes<sup>28</sup>. However, students need to be actively involved, and their learning needs to be met<sup>29</sup>. They need to go through a formative education process<sup>30</sup>, reflecting in their outcomes how involved they were in the classroom<sup>31</sup>. The more involvement is, the higher outcomes are. That is not at the grades level, but also in the quality of interpersonal relationships, social skills, and values reflected in individual and interpersonal aspects.

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22 Petre, "Developing Students' Leadership Skills", p. 156.

23 D. W. Johnson and R. T. Johnson, *Cooperative Learning: The Foundation for Active Learning*, 2018, p. 7.

24 See Renate Nummela Caine *et al.*, *12 Brain/Mind Learning Principles in Action*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin, 2016.

25 Martin Fautley and Jonathan Savage, *Lesson Planning for Effective Learning*, Berkshire, England, McGraw-Hill Education, 2013, pp. 72-73.

26 Barbara Bray and Kathleen McClaskey, *Make Learning Personal: The What, Who, Wow, Where, and Why*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin, 2015, p. 7.

27 Anca Cristina Colibaba *et al.*, "Goerudio Method and Tool to Achieve Necessary Level of Comprehension," *Agronomy Series of Scientific Research* 57, no. 1/2014, p. 249.

28 See K. Mehrotra, *Effective Methods of Teaching*, Jaipur, India: ABD Publishers, 2017.

29 Colibaba *et al.*, "Goerudio Method", p. 251.

30 Evelina Balas, "Educational Alternatives in the Romanian Education System," *Journal Plus Education* 16, no. 2/2016, p. 304.

31 Codruța Gavrilă, "Characteristics of the Instructive-Educational Activity from the Perspective of Postmodern Didactics," *Research Journal of Agricultural Science* 47, no. 4 (2015); Gabriel Gorghiu *et al.*, "Problem-Based Learning. An Efficient Learning Strategy in the Science Lessons Context," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 191/2015, p. 84.

Romanian teachers show interest in modern teaching methods<sup>32</sup>, to align their teaching to the society's needs<sup>33</sup>, and to create a positive learning environment wherein students feel responsible<sup>34</sup> and are accepted as they are. That can be considered a challenge for teachers. However, when there is an interest in creating such a learning environment, educators may look for tools to support them in classroom instruction. Aware of the various challenges faced by teachers in managing the class for creating a learning environment of quality and equity, a model of classroom management is presented in this study. Classroom management is one of seven components of the CoLearnITT process model, also presented by other studies<sup>35</sup>.

To develop the CoLearnITT process model, both social interdependence theory<sup>36</sup> and empowerment education framework<sup>37</sup> were the foundation pillars. The purpose of the study was to explore teachers and students' experiences during and after the implementation of CL. Further, the study aimed to develop a classroom management process model that helps teachers to create a positive educational environment. In that environment, students feel accepted and valued, developing healthy relationships, having positive outcomes, and being empowered by education.

## 2. Methodology

The focus of this study was to present a model of effective classroom management that creates a learning environment wherein students feel

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32 Colibaba *et al.*, "Goerudio Method", p. 249.

33 Mariana Constantinescu, "Changing and Restructuring of the Romanian Education System," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 191/2015, p. 432.

34 Nadia Laura Serdenciuc, "Shaping Learning Experiences of the Future Teachers," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 180/2015, p. 966.

35 See Petre, "Developing Students' Leadership Skills"; *Idem*, "Using Flipped Classroom to Facilitate Cooperative Learning Implementation: An Action Research Case Study with Photovoice," *Journal of Education Studies* 2, no. 2/2020; *Idem*, "Developing a Model to Implement Cooperative Learning in a Romanian University: An Action Research Case Study with Photovoice," PhD diss., Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Philippines, 2020.

36 See D. W. Johnson and R. T. Johnson, "Social Interdependence Theory and Cooperative Learning: The Teacher's Role," in *The Teacher's Role in Implementing Cooperative Learning in the Classroom*, ed. R. M. Gillies, A. F. Ashman, and J. Terwel, New York, Springer, 2008.

37 See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, New York, Continuum, 1993.

accepted, appreciated, and valued as human beings, benefiting from the right to education in a positive classroom climate under the guidance of involved teachers. It is maybe the moment to reiterate a characteristic of CL where the teacher is not anymore *the sage on the stage* but *the guide on the side*.

The presented model resulted from a qualitative research design, and it aimed to describe and evaluate the model after the implementation of CL in a Romanian university. During that process, the philosophical approach of Constructivism allowed for multiple interpretations of the same phenomenon during social interactions<sup>38</sup>. The methodology included case study, action research, and photovoice in a mixed intra-paradigm research design thus using three qualitative research designs in the same investigation<sup>39</sup>. Case study research design has examined the process of training students in their initial education program to develop classroom management skills<sup>40</sup>. Action research helped improve teaching practices<sup>41</sup> and develop solutions for work issues<sup>42</sup>. It consisted of a framework for classroom management training by following the action research stages<sup>43</sup>. Photovoice design has disseminated the results within the university in photo exhibits<sup>44</sup>.

The study took place in a Romanian Southern University. As part of research ethics, the identity of the university remains anonymous. The university offers different programs such as Pedagogy of Preschool and Pri-

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38 See Alan Pritchard and John Woollard, *Psychology for the Classroom: Constructivism and Social Learning*, London: Routledge, 2010.

39 M. O'Reilly and N. Kiyimba, *Advanced Qualitative Research: A Guide to Using Theory*, London, SAGE, 2015, p. 96.

40 S. B. Merriam and E. J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass, 2016, pp. 38-39.

41 Richard Sagor, *The Action Research Guidebook: A Four-Stage Process for Educators and School Team*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin, 2011, p. 4.

42 Vicki L. Plano Clark and John W. Creswell, *Understanding Research: A Consumer's Guide*, Boston, MA, Pearson, 2015, p. 430; John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Boston, MA, Pearson, 2012, p. 576; Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, p. 4.

43 See Sagor, *The Action Research Guidebook*.

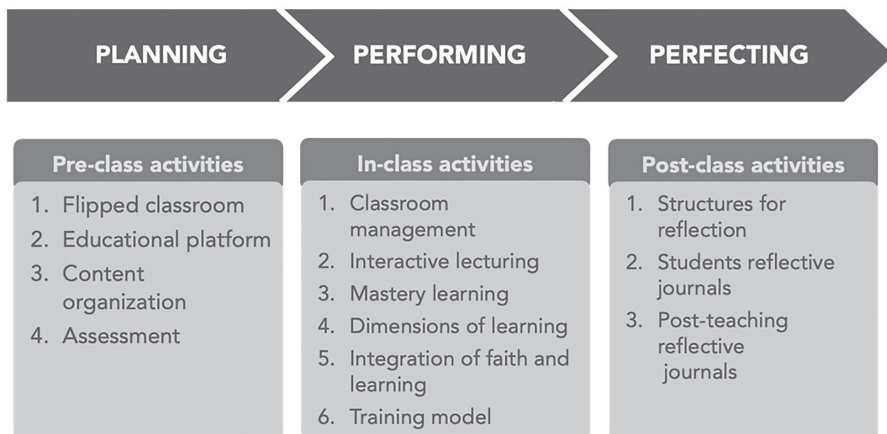
44 See Gianina-Estera Petre, "Good and Better in Teaching: An Internal Evaluation of University's Teaching Methods through Photovoice," *Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education* 9, no. 1-2 /2019.

mary Education, Theology, and Social Work. The study took place in two classes from the education program. In one class were 23 enrolled students, 20 women, and three men. In the second class were 26 students, all women. During the initial phase data were collected through online surveys for teachers and students, photovoice, course outlines, and written communication. For the final phase, data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, documents' analysis (student reflective journal; post-teaching reflective journal), class observations, and photovoice. The study was conducted ethically, obtaining approvals, collecting informed consent, and assuring confidentiality. Acceptance was from the ERB committee, selected university, and participants.

### 3. Classroom management model

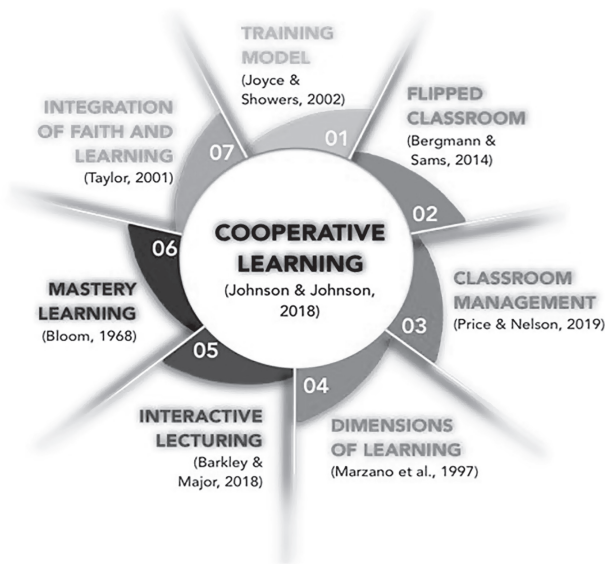
As a result of the study, a model for effective classroom management emerged. Classroom management is one of the seven components of the CoLearnITT model developed for implementing cooperative learning in the initial teacher training. Figure 1 reveals the process followed in developing the CoLearnITT process model (Fig. 2). A detailed presentation of this model is available for interested readers<sup>45</sup>.

**Figure 1: The 3P's of CoLearnITT process model**



45 See Petre, "Good and Better in Teaching"; *Idem*, "Developing Students' Leadership Skills"; *Idem*, "Using Flipped Classroom."



**Figure 2: CoLearnITT process model**

Effective teaching requires effective classroom management<sup>46</sup>. Teachers need to manage the class well to be able to accomplish the learning objectives. The organization of the classroom, the manner the groups are arranged, and the roles of the students are aspects of classroom management. Also, a favorable climate is created by establishing class rules, routines, and procedures<sup>47</sup>. In such an environment, students are equally treated, and they treat their colleagues as well with equity and respect.

### 3.1. Classroom organization

When a class is a cooperative one, then the physical organization is significant. Students' desks are displayed to facilitate face-to-face interaction in groups without disturbing the visual contact with the teacher. The number of students, too big or too small, should not discourage teachers from using CL and organizing the class properly. In a classroom, (a) each group must have a particular space; (b) if needed, changing groups may take place at any moment; and (c) teachers make sure that they can move

46 Kenneth D. Moore, *Effective Instructional Strategies*, Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE, 2015, p. 13.

47 See Jan Barnes, "Managing Your Classroom Environment," in *Training to Teach*, ed. Neil Denby, Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE, 2015, p. 125.

around groups<sup>48</sup>. This organizing space may develop a feeling of belongingness for students and openness to their colleagues.

### 3.2. Group formation

Students can be organized by groups of four to five. Green and Henriquez-Green<sup>49</sup> state that groups of four work best for different activities. Most of the time, students work within their base groups. Based on the planned objectives, teachers can use formal (see expert jigsaw strategy) and informal groups (see turn-to-your-neighbor structure). In grouping students, teachers can use different techniques such as mix-and-match, continuum<sup>50</sup>, or by using specific criteria. It is teachers' decision about how they group students. The benefits are mutual support when working together to solve problems and enjoying the group's success.

### 3.3. Roles in groups

Students play different roles within their base groups. There are four roles: (a) reporter—who speaks for the group when the strategies used require it; (b) recorder—who takes notes when the group works together to fulfill the teacher's requirements; (c) social person—who takes care that each member of the group contributes to the group's activity and, also, takes care of group members coming on time back in the classroom from the break; and (d) material person—who takes care of giving and receiving materials used for class activities, arranges the group table(s) at the end of the class, and submits all group materials to the teacher<sup>51</sup>. The roles are changed every class occasion. As such, students can experience different capacities during the semester and develop responsibility for themselves and others.

### 3.4. Favorable climate

A favorable classroom climate may create a proper environment for learning. Therefore, teachers must keep this important aspect in their attention. Getting to know each other may favor a positive climate in the

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48 Kay Price and Karna Nelson, *Planning Effective Instruction*, pp. 179-180.

49 See William Green and Rita Henriquez-Green, *Basic Moves of Teaching*, Trafford, Canada, 2008.

50 See Green and Henriquez-Green, *Basic Moves of Teaching*.

51 *Ibidem*.

classroom<sup>52</sup>. As such, teachers must organize activities wherein students work together and get to know each other. Such activities must be intentionally planned and used within the class, according to the class objectives.

### 3.5. Rules, routines, and procedures

Rules, routines, and procedures can save the teachers' energy and time in the classroom<sup>53</sup>. The reason is that different activities can take more time than is necessary. Therefore, by using rules, routines, and procedures, teachers effectively manage the classroom. Students may also feel confident and safe when knowing what it requires and how they must behave.

3.5.1. *Getting started*. When students enter the classroom, they must know what they should do before the class usually starts<sup>54</sup>. As such, teachers may post to-do activities for students in a visible and familiar place. They may review an assignment, respond to some questions individually, or address assignment questions in pairs. These activities help students to prepare physically and mentally for class.

3.5.2. *Getting students' attention*. To have an organized class, students need to act when they see the teacher indicating a need for attention during activities<sup>55</sup>. Sometimes, they can be very involved in work. Therefore, when the teacher needs the students' attention to give directions and explanations, to ask or answer questions, or when the noise is too loud, s/he will raise a hand. In response, students look at the teacher, become quiet, stay still, and lift their hands to inform the teacher they are ready to listen. This technique assures beneficial communication between teacher-students, making the environment effective for learning.

3.5.3. *Taking attendance*. Student attendance is realized without difficulty by preparing cards with the students' names. These cards may be placed in a particular spot for attendance, easy to be accessed. When entering the classroom, students pick up their cards and post them on the teacher's desk. In that way, they mark their presence and facilitate the teacher's

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52 Moore, *Effective Instructional Strategies*, p. 93.

53 See Green and Henriquez-Green, *Basic Moves of Teaching*.

54 Moore, *Effective Instructional Strategies*, p. 92.

55 Moore, *Effective Instructional Strategies*, p. 234.

access to students' cards. The cards are helpful in-class activities such as random calls, think-pair-square, think-square-share, or others involving answering questions. They make evident equal treatment and participation in the classroom.

3.5.4. *Voice levels.* Keeping students' voices in a classroom at a proper level is beneficial. For different activities, different voice levels are used<sup>56</sup>. Therefore, students must know how loud they should speak. A recommended procedure is as follows. Level 0, or silence, when students work on their individual designed work. Level 1, or whisper, when students need to read the designated material. Level 2, or soft, when students discuss in pairs or in their groups, following the teacher's indications. Level 3, or regular, is when students share their answers in class and teachers ask for them. Level 4, or loud, may be used outside of the classroom. As a result of using the voice levels procedure, the teacher and students communicate respectfully.

3.5.5. *Collecting and passing out materials.* For collecting and passing out materials, the teachers may use the students who have the role of the material person within their respective groups<sup>57</sup>. As a result, the class remains ordered even when teachers distribute or collect materials. At the same time, the students accomplish their responsibilities within their respective groups. They may feel capable and valued for their work within groups.

## 4. Conclusions

Education is a right any child has, an instrument for empowerment and continuous development. Therefore, the environment wherein students learn is of high importance. Teachers that model other-oriented world-views prepare a favorable learning scene wherein students feel accepted and valued, as their human origins are divine. Teachers that are aware of that invaluable aspect know that they are a guide on the side for students and cherish their uniqueness. Classroom management has a significant role in that preparation for developing a positive learning environment through classroom organization, group formation, students' roles, responsibilities, class rules, routines, and procedures. When the class works in groups, stu-

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56 *Ibidem.*

57 See Green and Henriquez-Green, *Basic Moves of Teaching*.

dents' interaction is trouble-free. They know each other well, developing a feeling of belongingness. They feel part of a group that understands and supports them in challenging moments and celebrate together in successful moments. Working by groups develops equity and acceptance, responsibility for themselves and others, empathy, patience, and reciprocal respect. Classroom management helps students feel safe and confident when learning thus, assuring their right to a successful education, equal participation, and fair treatment.

This paper aimed to present a model of classroom management as a constructive tool for effective learning and respect for all human beings. Teachers may adjust by adding or removing different elements of it, according to their class' needs. For further studies, a recommendation is to apply classroom management techniques, structures, and strategies from K-12 and higher education, to create a positive learning environment wherein students benefit from their right to education. The other components of the CoLearnIIT process model may be applied and tested as well.

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