

Gianina-Estera Petre
Adventus University,
gianina.petre@uadventus.ro
Maria-Magdalena Puiu
Adventus University

Working Cooperatively in Communication and Language Class

Keywords

Interactive teaching strategies, improving teaching practices, communication skills, action research, case study.

Abstract

Implementing interactive teaching strategies in primary school can challenge teachers with little or no training in cooperative learning. The purpose of the study was to implement interactive teaching strategies in the Language and Communication class and identify the learning outcomes. Further, it aimed to develop a model to improve teaching practices in primary school for Language and Communication class, Fourth grade. The theoretical framework that guided the study is the structure-process-outcome theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2018). The study used a qualitative methodology. The research design was a case study and action research, as the aim was to improve teaching practices and outcomes by

implementing interactive teaching strategies. The participants were four primary school teachers, the teacher-researcher, and Fourth-grade pupils. The class comprised 16 pupils who benefitted from the implementation process of new teaching strategies. Data collection methods included qualitative questionnaires, observation, interviews, and pupils' five-minute essays. The results emphasized the desire of teachers to improve teaching and learning by receiving training, the teacher-researcher and Fourth-grade pupils enjoying unexpected positive results after implementing interactive strategies. The recommendations include increasing teachers' interest and motivation for teaching improvements and providing practical training in applying modern teaching strategies for better learning outcomes. It is also recommended to use more interactive teaching strategies in other subject matters and add art and technology when giving assignments.

1. Review of Literature

Adult: But how do you imagine the school of the future looks like?

The child: Let there be better teachers and no benches. Let us all sit on a mat and learn easier. Let us think and tell us the solution only after we have time to think, not from the start. Maybe a child knows the answer at first. And there is something else more important. I would like the teacher to ask each of us what we do and what we do not know. And to teach us exactly the things we do not know, not the things we know. Talk to each of us (Grigoriou, 2018).

Modern generations of students are different from those from ten years ago in terms of mentality, aspirations, values, socioeconomic status, access to technology, and others. A

reform in Romanian education is needed because we, as teachers, have limited ourselves, and we are afraid maybe to make a change that will benefit our students. Therefore, we decided to explore more on this topic, analyze the practices, and look for effective educational interventions in times of change.

Primary education is the first stage of compulsory education and includes a balanced cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor development adapted to the needs of each child. Pupils go through a period of accommodation at the beginning of primary school, in the preparatory class. In the fourth grade, they already have the competencies necessary to adapt to diverse situations. Pupils are trained based on a school curriculum, specific competencies are central in teaching and learning, and an emphasis falls on continuous assessment for improvement (www.edu.ro/invatamant-primar).

Primary school students have some characteristics and needs. Psychologically, pupils go through the development of memory, perception, speech, or thinking levels. These aspects vary from a child to another. Therefore, for that reason, each student is unique and requires a particular type of teacher-student interaction (Landmarks for projecting, updating, and evaluating the National Curriculum). Of course, a specialized approach requires the special training of educators (Voinea, 2019). From a socio-emotional perspective, the pupils' development is influenced by families, environment, health, living conditions, religion, political context, ethnicity, or economic status. In such a diverse environment, each student needs the approach of holistic education, employed through the best methods and strategies (Cazan & Stan, 2018; Patrut, 2017), aiming to prepare them for society (Constantinescu, 2015).

In primary education, the competencies are the final aims. At the elementary level, declarative and procedural knowledge allow pupils to solve simple operations in known contexts for them. Most of these operations are concrete operations. For applying the acquired competencies outside of a known context, the pupils need additional support (Landmarks for projecting, updating, and evaluating the National Curriculum).

Language and Communication

Through language, the child acquires knowledge about the semantic structure of words, about the role they play in expressing thoughts. Through language, children plan activities and the order of the actions they must perform (Crețu, 2008). Therefore, developing communication skills through diverse teaching methods is a valuable aspect of formal education (Ahsanah, 2015). There are language disorders, either due to the wrong takeover of the word form (pronunciation), or some neuro-physiological problems (dyslexia, dysgraphia), disorders that suffer interventions and improvements through educational and medical therapy (Crețu, 2006; Gherguț, 2016). The schools' goal is to help pupils achieve their highest potential in knowledge, develop skills, and acquire positive attitudes for a harmonious development (Petre, 2020b).

Communication is a complex skill that includes receiving and delivering oral and written messages (Crețu, 2008; Molan, 2016). In certain positive situations, when communication and integration of students are effective, it avoids blockages and facilitates acceptance (Gherguț & Frumos, 2019). Specifically planned and created conditions are necessary for such positive results. One is the communication initiative which consists in having the courage to express personal thoughts and opinions (Badea, 2012). In addition, taking responsibility for expressing

feelings and desires and not hiding them because of fear due to possible negative repercussions would help (Pânișoară, 2015). Formal education aims to develop such communicational competencies (Presadă & Badea, 2014), preparing students to accomplish their roles.

To encourage the pupil-teacher communication it is necessary to listen to what the student wants to say and facilitate the individual free expression. Further, teachers must create a dynamic learning environment (Ionescu, 2017), adjusted to the students' developmental stage (Stan, 2014). Thus, it is expected from the adult to adopt a non-superior attitude. There is no room for addressing pupils with superiority. Expressions such as *You are small, you know nothing; Draw as I tell you!* should be avoided. Communication must be a process that assures an interchange of information between teacher and students, respectfully and ensuring constructive feedback (Cucoș, 2014).

Even nonverbal messages can discourage pupils; condescending to them or showing a superior or ironic smile (Graur, 2001), teachers often lose from their attention these aspects of nonverbal language (Cucoș, 2014). For efficient communication, it is better to treat the pupils from an equal position as friends while convincing them to respect the set limits and hierarchy (Pânișoară, 2015). In communicating with children, adults must pay attention to their needs. A visual contact, a posture that indicates listening and that they have nothing to be afraid of what they say, feel and want, are necessary, the communication partners being in an equal position (Neacșu, 2015). In other words, to strengthen the feeling that adults respect their individuality and personal traits.

Traditional and Modern Education

In a traditional society, the expected values in schools are discipline and obedience. Teachers have an advantageous position in schools, unlike students who are often considered passive objects in the educational process (Colibaba, Dinu, Colibaba, & Cîrșmari, 2014; Cuceș, 2014). In the traditional school, learning is mainly explanatory, reproductive, or receptive. The main activity is passing knowledge, with an emphasis on the teacher and teaching (Blândul, 2014; Mehrotra, 2017). The training is limited to presenting conclusions and answers previously formulated, which the students must receive, memorize, and reproduce when asked. The students' ability to think critically, act freely, and be motivated for learning is not a central concern (Cerghit, 2008; Chervase, 2016). Traditional education preserves a format used by generations. Students are not actively involved, and the teacher is the sage on the stage. Learning occurs mechanically through memorization and the reproduction of knowledge (Cuceș, 2014). In this type of education, the teacher presents the content, imposes distinct points of view, manifests authority while students listen, work individually, memorize, and reproduce from memory the lesson (Cerghit, 2006).

Modern education is known as organizing teaching activities in groups, each member of the group having a role and a specific task to perform (Johnson & Johnson, 2018). The teacher is the one who facilitates access to learning, representing an educational partner (Oprea, 2007) for better outcomes (Caine, Caine, McClintic, & Klimek, 2016). He is not anymore the sage on the stage but the guide on the side (Petre, 2020a).

Interactive teaching strategies are on the list of modern teaching methods. They promote active learning, involving collaboration between students who, organized in small

groups, work together to achieve predetermined goals (Chervase, 2016; Popa, Bochis, Laurian-Fitzgerald, & Fitzgerald, 2018). The teacher emphasizes not the role of disseminator of informational messages but the organizer, facilitator, and mediator of learning activities (Gorghiu, Drăghicescu, Cristea, Petrescu, & Gorghiu, 2015; Joița, 2006), manifesting enthusiasm in teaching (Beadle, 2019).

2. Methodology

The present study used a qualitative methodology. The research design was a case study with an action research component. This section presents the purpose of the study, research questions, research gap, research design, data collection methods, and research participants.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the teaching methods used in the selected school for primary school pupils. The study aimed to implement new interactive teaching strategies in the Language and Communication class and identify the results of this process. Moreover, through the study, the researchers developed a model to improve teaching practices in primary school for Language and Communication class, Fourth grade. The theoretical framework that guided the study is the structure-process-outcome theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2018), stating that, by structuring the teaching process, positive learning outcomes appear.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the teaching methods used in the selected primary school?

2. What does the implementation of interactive methods in the selected classroom look like?
3. What are the recommendations to improve the interactive teaching in the Language and Communication subject matter in primary school?

Research Gap

Teachers are interested in implementing new interactive strategies in their teaching. However, in academic training, not much is done in training teachers to use modern teaching methods (European Commission, 2019). Therefore, teachers may take a personal initiative in improving their teaching knowledge and skills regarding interactive teaching strategies.

Research Design

As Merriam (1988) states, a case study “is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” (p. 9). It is a research design used when the inquiry has limited space, participants, and data to collect (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is the option when researchers aim to understand participants’ experiences. The goal of the present case study was to understand these experiences regarding modern teaching methods implemented in the selected class. Therefore, the case is the process of interactive teaching strategies implementation.

Action research is a research design used by researcher-practitioners to improve their practices, having the decision power in their context (Sagor, 2011). It is a cyclical process, in this study using the three steps model developed for education: (a) planning, (b) performing, (c) perfecting (Petre, 2020c). The present study aimed to implement interactive teaching strategies in the Fourth grade in the Language and

communication class. Further, it explored the improvement of interaction among pupils and the recommendation for better teaching and learning.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods used in this study were: qualitative questionnaires, observations, interviews, and pupils' five-minute essays. The qualitative questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms to the primary school teachers from the selected school. The questionnaire had three main sections. In the first section, we collected information about participants' teaching experiences. The second section focused on the teaching methods used by primary school teachers. In the last part, we looked for the teaching methods the participants recommended for using or would like to use. The questionnaire items had open responses format (Yin, 2014).

Observations helped identify pupils' reactions and responses to the interactive teaching strategies. Their behavior and involvement during activities guided teachers' next steps in teaching. The aim was to identify the information tiring to discover through other data collection methods, thus enriching the findings (Yin, 2016).

The interview was the third data collection method in the present study. It helped the teacher-practitioner give reflective responses on personal teaching practices (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The teacher responded in a written form, providing narrative thoughts on the interactive teaching strategies implementation. A five-minute essays document was the last data collection method. It consisted of pupils responding to the question, *What did you learn and like in the class?*

Research Participants

The participants in this study represent three groups: primary school teachers, teacher-researcher, and Fourth grade pupils. Each group had a specific role in research. We create below the profile of each group of participants.

Primary school teachers represent the group of four primary school teachers from the selected school. In a primary school, we have five grades: the Preparatory grade and Grade 1 to 4. Four of them responded to the qualitative questionnaire, data necessary in the preliminary phase of research. Through their responses, we created a picture of the teaching methods used in the selected school for primary education.

The teacher-researcher represents another category of participants. It is one primary school teacher interested in implementing interactive teaching strategies in her class. At the same time, the teacher is one of the two researchers involved in the study. That can lead to achieving the aim of the study, which is to provide a tested example of how to implement interactive teaching strategies in the Language and communication subject matter for Fourth grade.

Fourth grade pupils represent the last group of participants, those who benefited from modern teaching strategies implementation. The class consisted of 16 pupils having as a teacher the practitioner-researcher. There were eight girls and eight boys.

3. Results

To create an image of the findings of this study, we present the emerging themes based on the research questions. Research question 1, *What are the teaching methods used in the selected primary school?* displayed a list from known and practiced to unknown and desired teaching methods.

Theme 1: Between Known and Unknown

The responses collected through questionnaires showed that the teachers from the selected institution listed conversation, explanation, stellar explosion, mind maps, the cube, and problem-solving as primary teaching methods applied in the classroom. Additionally, teachers use observation, brainstorming, thinking hats, and exercises. From a provided list of modern strategies, the participants indicated Taba, Feeling strategy, Graffiti, and Concept attainment as unknown teaching methods. The Jigsaw strategy, which was part of the list, was not mentioned as unknown. However, it was neither in the list of applied teaching strategies.

Teachers were asked to provide examples of the teaching strategies they consider effective in engaging pupils in learning. They mentioned conversation, explanation, exercise, brainstorming, the stellar explosion, the cube, active and participative strategies, and combining traditional with modern methods according to the feedback received from pupils.

Regarding the teaching strategies the participants would add to their repertoire, they mentioned the desire to apply new teaching strategies they do not know, hands-on methods, and strategies for teaching specific concepts. They said, “new teaching methods are welcomed, but we need special training for learning how to apply them in class” (Teachers’ questionnaire).

For Research question 2, *What does the implementation of interactive methods in the selected classroom look like?* the results arose from the teacher interview, observations, and pupils' journals in the form of a Five-minute essay. The emerged themes showed that the teacher accepted the challenge to implement interactive teaching strategies in her class and the results were beyond her expectations, increasing the feeling of togetherness.

Theme 2: Challenges Accepted

Implementing new teaching interactive strategies in classrooms is not facile. For most educators, this is a challenge if they have no training. However, when teachers benefit from proper training, the desire to transfer the new teaching strategies from training to the classroom increases. They accept the challenge as happened with the teacher-researcher of the present study.

I chose to implement interactive teaching methods in my class because I noticed a capping of teachers on traditional methods and short-term results. I aimed to observe the reactions and outcomes when teaching in another way. I chose to implement the Random call cards, Think-pair-share, KWL, and Jigsaw strategies. I noticed that students' attention was awake throughout the classes (especially for Romanian language and literature). Their level of involvement increased, the results being as desired. We also used feedback at the end of each class, with students receiving a Five-minute essay in which they had to write down what they liked and what they learned new that day. (Interview, Maria)

The pupils' reactions were encouraging for the teacher. "They liked the new strategies implemented in class. At first, they were excited and a little awkward, but over time adjusted and began to participate with pleasure" (Observation). These reactions, observed by the teacher, were confirmed by the pupils in their five-minute essays. They noticed and appreciated the influence of the use of the Call Cards: "There is silence in the class, and everyone has the patience to be called by the teacher. I liked that because generally, I dislike noise" (Five-minute essay, A.). Their attention was awake during the entire lesson because they knew that after exploring a content, the

teacher addresses questions to evaluate their understanding and learning:

Today at the Romanian language class, we discussed the informative text, and I really liked it. I learned a lot of information about bees, honey, and beekeeping. I liked that we were all mindful and that it was quiet when the teacher used the cards with our names. (Five-minute essay, B.)

Theme 3: Beyond Expectations

The outcomes of implementing interactive teaching strategies went beyond the expectations of the teacher. The learners were actively involved in each lesson, and their motivation increased. “Implementing the Five-minute essay, I noticed some of the students felt much more involved than usual” (Observation). Moreover, the inclusion of pupils from ethnic groups was successfully done in the classroom.

By implementing the mentioned teaching strategies, I can say that I received satisfaction. Having a class in which half of the students were from the Roma ethnic group, they were not eager to learn something new or participate actively. There was a great change when I started using the above interactive strategies and organizing the pupils by groups. Learners who did not answer or did not work on homework became active, which helped them a lot and helps them even now. In the past, at the end of the school year, only 12 have been promoted out of 16. After implementing interactive strategies, we also motivated the four pupils to be active and hardworking. As a result, 15 out of 16 pupils were promoted. They became more conscientious, serious, and very excited that we could teach the lessons differently. (Interview, Maria)

The atmosphere in the classroom was “calm, everyone knew what to do, and the instructive-educational approach took place according to the requirements” (Observation). The response of the pupils was positive, the excitement and motivation for activities increasing. “I liked it very much! I would like all classes to be like the Romanian language class. I learned a lot and worked harder than usual” (Five-minute essay, C.).

Each interactive strategy implemented in the classroom had specific outcomes. Pupils’ attention was awake, and order was a normal state in the class. The teacher noticed and noted that outcome in observations. “When the atmosphere became too noisy in the other classes, the pupils requested the use of the Random call cards technique” (Observation). They were aware of the benefits of the call cards. They requested using the cards in other classes, and not only for the Romanian language.

While using the above strategies, my class was calm, attentive, and ready to respond to given tasks at any time. Through the Random Call Cards, I kept them focused. They could not wait to use the cards. When the noise was loud, some students asked to work as we do it in Romanian language class. (Interview, Maria)

The KWL and Jigsaw strategies improved communication and active listening skills in the classroom. As an outcome, the class was better organized and managed, were developed pupils’ leadership skills, shy learners found the courage to speak in front of their classmates. What wrote a student on the Five-minute essay captivated teacher attention: “I like that now the teacher has time to listen to us, even the shy ones who express themselves with difficulties” (Observation). Another student emphasized the satisfaction of being a leader in the

group: “I liked that today, I was the leader of my group. I organized them and helped my weaker colleagues learn” (Five-minute essay, S.).

As already highlighted, by using these interactive teaching strategies, the content was integrated and extended, learning taking place on a long-term basis, as a learner wrote, and the teacher-researcher observed:

Today, we used a method with a table called: I know, I want to know, I learned. It was great to see how many things I knew, but also how much we found out. (Five-minute essay, P.)

The other day, I met my former students, and they told me that they fondly remember those activities we had last year. (Observation)

Theme 4: Togetherness

The interactive teaching strategies applied in this study helped pupils develop the feeling of togetherness. They worked in groups, had specific roles and responsibilities. It was a new experience for both pupils and the teacher. The students learned to cooperate, respect, and support each other, learn from others, wait for their turn, and always have a good response to colleagues and the teacher. The teacher-researcher was open to sharing her new experience:

Personally, it seemed easy to me because the students were young and did not know in detail the strategies used. So, they did not observe my clumsiness at the beginning of the implementation. We learned from each other and at the same time with each other. It was challenging to adapt what I usually have used in the class to different interactive strategies. I think that insufficient training is a threat because here, we still focus on traditional methods. (Interview, Maria)

Mutual support helped build a sense of togetherness in the class. The pupils were responsible for their learning but also for group learning. “Students with leadership skills knew how to guide their colleagues in their work tasks” (Observation). That was great support for the teacher and the learners who needed some help. Some learning tasks were for the entire group, meaning that each pupil had to know the response. So, the goal was for each member of the group to know the proper answer. As such, the leader of each group assured that all members accomplished the task. In presenting the group work, the pupils have learned to wait their turn and “always be prepared to respond” (Observation). That way of working in groups was attractive and constructive.

I liked the class because we worked in groups. I am a shy person, but I was able to participate with my answers. (Five-minute essay, Ş.)

We worked in another way today. Not just the teacher spoke but us. And I liked when she used the cards. (Five-minute essay, A.)

Teachers must be interested in improving their classroom practices. Research question 3, *What are the recommendations to improve the interactive teaching in the Language and Communication subject matter in primary school?* it looked for these possible improvements. Two directions appeared under this question: the academic training and the personal initiative for the development of teachers.

Theme 5: Practical Training

Higher education programs for initial teacher education can provide more practical training for future teachers. The teacher-researcher benefitted from the training model of Joyce and Showers (Joyce & Showers, 2002), a model applied in two

courses. However, it was enough to motivate her to transfer the interactive teaching strategies from the academic program to her classroom. She recognized the importance of practicing these new strategies during the undergraduate program after being prepared to use them with pupils. As Maria mentioned, “The transfer of interactive strategies in primary education can be motivated during the academic training. When presenting them theoretically but not putting them into practice, fewer results appear” (Maria, Interview). That observation, from Maria’s experience, is proved by the training model.

Teachers have their role in implementing new and modern strategies. Of course, the decision to transfer the learned teaching strategies to the classroom is in the hands of teachers. When the academic training is effective, that transfer becomes a reality. They must be motivated to improve teaching and learning practices in their classrooms, knowing that positive results will appear for pupils and the teacher.

Personal interest and search for better practices would help teachers. Their teaching interactive methods list is improved “if teachers’ curiosity to apply new strategies would be a reality in the classrooms. We need to focus more on modern methods and encourage their use in teaching” said Maria, when sharing her new teaching experience. She decided that on future occasions, “I will use interactive strategies from the beginning of the school year to get students used to this teaching style. Using them systematically, we will see great results because students will find new ways to learn” (Interview, Maria).

4. Discussions

The purpose of this study was to explore the teaching methods used in the selected primary school. It aimed to

implement interactive teaching strategies in the Language and Communication class for the Fourth grade. Further, the researchers developed a model to improve teaching practices in primary school for Fourth grade in the Language and Communication class.

Teachers from the primary school level did not apply interactive teaching strategies such as Taba, Graffiti, Feeling strategy, Concept attainment, Jigsaw. However, they considered these strategies useful for pupils. For implementing new and modern teaching methods, teachers need training as it is challenging to apply the theory into practice without exercising. That was what the participants mentioned. These findings are supported by other studies on the topic (Barkley & Major, 2018; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Price & Nelson, 2019), showing the importance of proper training for teachers when implementing new interactive teaching strategies.

Besides good academic training, teachers must be motivated to improve their teaching practices and curious to look for better strategies to teach. When pupils' reactions to new and interactive teaching strategies are positive, teachers feel encouraged to continue this improvement even if challenges appear. Students like interaction and good organization. They are attentive when actively involved during the class (Tudor, 2016). As a result, long-term learning occurs at a declarative and procedural level of knowledge (Harmon, Marzano, Marx, & Schmidt, 2015). Furthermore, interaction and working by groups support inclusion and collaboration (Ghergut, 2016), positive emotions are activated (Karacop & Diken, 2017), and a constructive learning environment atmosphere is created (Johnson & Johnson, 2018). In such an environment, learners feel accepted and encouraged to help rather than compete (Popa et al., 2018), as they have roles and responsibilities (Strebe, 2018). The learners noticed that when

they were the leaders of the group, they were able to help the pupils who did not understand the lesson, to develop social skills (Miller, 2017), interpersonal skills (Sharan, 2015), and a self-discovery (Voinea, 2019) of their leadership skills (Petre, 2020a).

When learners work together in groups to achieve a common goal, they learn to listen actively, respect others, wait for their turn, develop a sense of togetherness and responsibility for personal and colleagues' learning (Sahadeo-Turner, Marzano, Bryant, & Harmon, 2015). During learning, teachers provide expert feedback for mastery learning (Petre, 2020b) and receive feedback to know how learning occurs (Marzano, 2017). The five-minute essay is an effective technique in obtaining feedback from learners who reflect on what they have learned. Through practice, future teachers can develop teaching skills during academic training. The teacher-researcher of this study had micro-teaching during the academic preparation. That class requirement motivated her to transfer to her class the interactive teaching strategies. Systematic practice supervised by teachers with constructive feedback provides support and increases interest in teaching (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2015; Price & Nelson, 2019).

We present now the model implemented in Fourth grade. The implementation process was during May-June, in the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year. It was conducted only in the Communication and Language class, scheduled for 6 hours per week. The teacher organized the learners into groups of four, the pupils having different roles in their groups. Further, the teacher implemented different interactive strategies according to the proposed goals and objectives of each class.

Group roles. The roles pupils had in their groups were four: (a) presenter (leader), who had the role of representing

the group and presenting in class the group response to specific tasks; (b) secretary had the responsibility of taking notes during group work; (c) social person, responsible giving to each member the chance to contribute in solving the group task, and also taking care of the group members return in class after each brake; (d) material person who managed on taking from and giving back to the teacher the materials necessary or resulted from an activity (Green & Henriquez-Green, 2008).

KWL (I know, I want to know, I learned) is a strategy proposed by Donna Ogle in 1986. Teachers can apply it at the beginning of a new learning unit or a new subject. The purpose is to identify what knowledge students have about the topic. It promotes discussion and invites to address questions. KWL can be applied to any subject teachers explore with students. The procedure for this strategy is as follows (Petre, 2017). Teacher:

- draws a three columns table on the board and writes the theme on the top.
- asks the students to say what they know about the proposed topic; writes students' ideas (whether they are correct or not) in column K (I know).
- invites students to ask questions about what they would like to know about the proposed topic and writes these questions in column W (I want to know).
- presents the material to be learned (ppt, textbook, video, etc.), or the students read (watch) the material proposed by the teacher.
- asks the students to check if the ideas written in column K are correct and answer the questions in column W through what they listened/read/watched. In column L (I learned) will be written the answers to the questions from column W. In this column will be noted other ideas learned during the lesson.

- mention that the questions in column W that remained unanswered can be considered homework for students for the next class.

Jigsaw is a strategy developed by Aronson Elliot and his students in 1978 (Aronson, 2002). It is a cooperative learning strategy for helping learners explore a new topic; they learn how to present what they have learned to their classmates. Jigsaw has the following steps (Aronson, 2002; Petre, 2017):

A. Before class. The teacher prepares the Jigsaw materials (chooses the text to be taught; prints it before coming to class; divides and cuts the learning material into as many parts as there are students in each group. The number of students in each group should be four. The teacher presents the strategy and provides the necessary instructions to carry out the activity.

B. During the class, the stages are as follows:

Stage 1. Initial group

- teacher forms the groups (each group has several students equal to the parts of the material to be explored and learned, the Jigsaw set).
- each group receives a Jigsaw set.
- each student in the group receives a part of the learning material and reads it carefully, highlighting the main ideas.

Stage 2. Expert group

- teacher asks students who have the same part of the Jigsaw set to form expert groups (ex. students who have part 1 in the Jigsaw set, make the expert group number 1; students who have the second part of the Jigsaw set, form the expert group number 2, etc.).
- experts from the newly formed groups discuss their part becoming experts in that section of the lesson.
- experts return to their base groups.

Stage 3. Initial group second phase

- each member presents what they learned in the group of experts.
- each member of the group must know the content.

Stage 4. Verification of learning

- teacher asks questions to check the learning of the material by the students. Clarify, if necessary, possible misunderstandings.

Think-pair-share is a structure used to create answers developed both individually and by peers. A *structure* is an “organized and planned process to create interaction between students, with instructive purpose but not having a specific content” (Green & Henriquez-Green, 2008, p. 1.12).

Step 1 - teacher addresses the question.

Step 2 - students think about the answer for a given time, announced.

Step 3 - students form pairs and share the answer to the question (the class is organized in groups of 4 students).

Step 4 - students share the answer with the whole class (using the Random Call Cards technique).

Random call cards is a teaching technique used to keep learners' attention awake. It helps randomly select the names of the students who must respond to the addressed question. It has several steps (Petre, 2017):

Step 1 - the teacher prepares cards with the students' names.

Step 2 - draw a card at random, mentioning the name of the student who will answer.

Step 3 - after answering, the card is inserted back into the card pack. The process continues as necessary.

5. Conclusions

For many primary school teachers, implementing interactive teaching strategies is a challenge. In the academic training, the future teachers do not have enough practice to apply modern teaching strategies in their classrooms, as their training is conducted more often at a theoretical level. The present study showed that when teachers are well trained during the academic program and their interest in implementing new teaching strategies in their classes is real, improvements occur.

Pupils are interested in participating in the class, and they develop personal and interpersonal skills. They are motivated to learn and support colleagues' learning, manifesting a sense of inclusion. In such an interactive learning environment, teachers manage the class easier as pupils know well and practice their roles and responsibilities. The shortlist of interactive teaching strategies applied in the present study and the implementation of the model in one class represents a limitation of the study.

For further studies is recommended to add other interactive strategies and apply the model to more subject matters. We also recommend adding art and technology when giving assignments as Five-minute essays. Pupils may record their responses audio or video, thus developing technological and communication skills. They may also draw the response developing their artistic abilities. Good learning results appear when teachers go in their practices beyond traditional teaching, adjusting, and improving their teaching skills with a repertoire of interactive teaching methods. Pupils will reward this effort with their enthusiasm in attending the class and experiencing positive learning outcomes.

References

- Ahsanah, F. (2015). 'Group Investigation': A cooperative learning method for the 10th grade students in speaking english classroom. *Teaching of English Language and Literature*, 3(1), 57–69.
- Aronson, E. (2002). Building empathy, compassion, and achievement in the jigsaw classroom. In J. Aronson (Ed.), *Improving academic achievement: Impact of psychological factors on education* (pp. 209–225). Elsevier. doi:10.1016/B978-012064455-1/50013-0
- Badea, M. (2012). Students' perception of teaching reading. A pilot study. *Journal of Educational Sciences and Psychology*, 2(1), 93–98.
- Barkley, E. F., & Major, C. H. (2018). *Interactive lecturing. A handbook for college faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Beadle, P. (2019). *Cum să predai* [How to teach] (E. Ivan, Trans.). București: Didactica Publishing House.
- Blândul, V. C. (2014). New curricular approaches in the pre-academic learning system from Bihor county, Romania. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 159, 248–253. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.367
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews. Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Caine, R. N., Caine, G., McClintic, C., & Klimek, K. J. (2016). *12 brain/mind learning principles in action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

- Cazan, A. M., & Stan, M. M. (2018). Learning patterns and self-regulation in higher education: A Romanian study. *Journal Plus Education, 21*, 76–83.
- Cerghit, I. (2006). *Metode de învățământ* [Education methods] (4th ed). Iași: Polirom.
- Cerghit, I. (2008). *Sisteme de instruire alternative și complementare. Structuri, stiluri și strategii* [Alternative and complementary training systems. Structures, styles, and strategies]. Iași: Polirom.
- Chervase, C. (2016). Active methods for language learning. *Revista Academiei Fortelor Terestre, 2(82)*, 127–135.
- Colibaba, A. C., Dinu, C. E., Colibaba, C. L., & Cîrșmari, R. (2014). Goerudio method and tool to achieve necessary level of comprehension. *Agronomy Series of Scientific Research, 57(1)*, 249–252.
- Constantinescu, M. (2015). Changing and restructuring of the Romanian education system. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 191*, 432–434.
- Crețu, E. (2008). *Învățarea limbii române. Sugestii metodice* [Learning Romanian language. Methodological suggestions]. București: Aramis.
- Crețu, T. (2006). *Psihologia vârstelor* [Psychological development]. București: Credis.
- Cucoș, C. (2014). *Pedagogie* [Pedagogy] (3rd ed.). Iași: Polirom.
- European Commission. (2019). *Education and training. Monitor 2019: Romania*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. doi:10.2766/79859
- Gherguț, A. (2016). *Educație incluzivă și pedagogia diversității* [Inclusive education and pedagogy of diversity]. Iași: Polirom.

- Gherguț, A., & Frumos, L. (2019). *Educație incluzivă. Ghid metodologic. [Inclusive education. A methodological guide]*. Iași: Polirom.
- Gorghiu, G., Drăghicescu, L. M., Cristea, S., Petrescu, A. M., & Gorghiu, L. M. (2015). Problem-based learning. An efficient learning strategy in the science lessons context. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *191*, 1865–1870. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.570
- Graur, E. (2001). *Tehnici de comunicare [Communication techniques]*. Cluj Napoca: Mediamira.
- Green, W. H., & Henriquez-Green, R. (2008). *Basic moves of teaching: Building on cooperative learning*. Victoria, Canada: Trafford.
- Grigoroiu, D. (2018). Cum vede un copil de șapte ani școala românească. [How a seven-year-old child sees Romanian school]. Retrieved from <https://republica.ro/cum-vede-un-copil-de-sapte-ani-scoala-romaneasca>
- Harmon, K., Marzano, R. J., Marx, K., & Schmidt, R. A. (2015). *Practicing skills, strategies & processes: Classroom techniques to help students develop proficiency*. West Palm Beach, FL: Learning Sciences Marzano Center.
- Ionescu, M. (2017). Metodologia didactică - orientare, metode, abordări creative [Didactic methodology - orientations, methods, creative approaches]. In M. Ionescu & M. Bocoș (Eds.), *Tratat de didactică modernă* (2nd ed., pp. 219–272). Pitești: Paralela 45.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2018). *Cooperative learning: The foundation for active learning*. doi:10.5772/intechopen.81086
- Joița, E. (2006). *Instruirea constructivistă - o alternativă. Fundamente. Strategii [Constructivist instruction - an*

- alternative. Fundamentals. Strategies]. București: Aramis.
- Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Joyce, B., Weil, M., & Calhoun, E. (2015). *Models of teaching* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Karacop, A., & Diken, E. H. (2017). The effects of jigsaw technique based on cooperative learning on prospective science teachers' science process skill. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(6), 86–97.
- Landmarks for projecting, updating, and evaluating the National Curriculum. Retrieved from https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/DPC_31.10.19_consultare.pdf
- Marzano, R. J. (2017). *The new art and science of teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Mehrotra, K. (2017). *Effective methods of teaching*. Jaipur, India: ABD Publishers.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, S. (2017). Group encouragement: Action research on cooperative learning. *Honors Projects*. 256. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/honorsprojects/256>
- Molan, V. (2016). *Didactica disciplinelor Comunicare în limba română și Limba și literatura română din învățământul primar* [Didactics of Communication in Romanian

language and Romanian language and literature in primary education]. București: Miniped.

- Neacșu, I. (2015). *Metode și tehnici de învățare eficientă. Fundamente și practici de succes* [Methods and techniques for effective learning. Fundamentals and practices for success]. Iași: Polirom.
- Oprea, C. L. (2007). *Strategii didactice interactive* [Interactive teaching strategies]. București: Didactică și Pedagogică.
- Patrut, B., (2017). Învățământul românesc – încotro? [Romanian education - where to go? EduSoft, Retrieved from <https://www.edusoft.ro/invatamantul-romanesc-incotro/>
- Pânișoară, O. I. (2015). *Comunicarea eficientă [Efficient communication]*. Iași: Polirom.
- Petre, G. E. (2017). Preparation of the human being for society through integration of values in learning: 2M2S model. *Symposion, 3*, 136–160.
- Petre, G. E. (2020a). Developing students' leadership skills through cooperative learning: An action research case study. *International Forum, 23(2)*, 143–162.
- Petre, G. E. (2020b). Evaluarea în contextul educației creștine [Evaluation in the context of Christian education]. In E. M. Spătăreanu (Ed.), *Principiile educației creștine* [Principles of Christian education] (pp. 126–159). Cernica: Editura Universității Adventus.
- Petre, G. E. (2020c). *Developing a model to implement cooperative learning in a Romanian university: An action research case study with photovoice*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

- Popa, C. A., Bochis, L. N., Laurian-Fitzgerald, S., & Fitzgerald, C. J. (2018). Cooperative learning and student mentors in a hybrid teacher preparation program. In C. J. Fitzgerald, S. Laurian-Fitzgerald, & C. A. Popa (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student-centered strategies in online adult learning environments: Advances in educational technologies and instructional design* (pp. 386–405). Hershey, PA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-5085-3.ch018
- Presadă, D., & Badea, M. (2014). Active learning techniques in literature classes. *Journal Plus Education*, 11(2), 37–45.
- Price, K. M., & Nelson, K. L. (2019). *Planning effective instruction: Diversity responsive methods and management* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage.
- Sagor, R. (2011). *The action research guidebook: A four-stage process for educators and school teams* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Sahadeo-Turner, T., Marzano, R. J., Bryant, G. L., & Harmon, K. (2015). *Processing new information. Classroom techniques to help students engage with content*. West Palm Beach, FL: Learning Sciences Marzano Center.
- Sharan, Y. (2015). Meaningful learning in the cooperative classroom. *Education 3-13*, 43(1), 83–94. doi:10.1080/03004279.2015.961723
- Stan, L. (2014). *Pedagogia preșcolărității și școlărității mici* [Pedagogy of preschool and primary school]. Iași: Polirom.
- Strebe, J. D. (2018). *Engaging students using cooperative learning* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Tudor, S. L. (2016). Reconsideration of the teaching strategies from the perspective of learning and integrated

training/skill centered paradigms-formative strategies and open resources strategies. *Journal Plus Education*, 14(1), 75–89.

Voinea, M. (2019). Rethinking teacher training according to 21st century competences. *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 4(3), 20–26.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research. Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.