

SMART TEACHER FOR A DIGITAL GENERATION. PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL DIRECTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Elena Anghel-Stănilă ¹

"Titu Maiorescu" University
Romania

Abstract

A successful psychoeducational act is achieved by carefully focusing on the children and their families, by choosing psychoeducational methods and strategies adapted to the needs of the pupils you work with. Satisfaction in a job well done helps you to seek out and implement teaching-learning-assessment methods that ensure your teaching success and the academic success of the children you work with.

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A dedicated teacher, with a vocation and aptitude for teaching-learning-assessment and for building strong characters, will act with responsibility and confidence to establish an educational partnership between school, children and parents.

To do this, however, some resources are needed:

- Willingness to communicate and learn;
- Communication and organizational skills - classroom management and managing the relationship with parents;
- Cognitive, emotional and socio-relational skills with children and their families; (book knowledge, pedagogical tact and relationship building).

The **successful primary school teacher**:

- Assesses their own resources and sets their own goals for the new school year (positive effect on self-esteem and clarity in communication and guidance);
- Chooses well-explained and well-written textbooks and aids (motivational source for learning for all)

¹ Associate Professor, PhD, Faculty of Psychology, "Titu Maiorescu" University of Bucharest, Romania; Founder "Life Up - Centre of Excellence in Educational Psychology"; E-mail: elenaanghel.stanila@lifeup.ro

- Works with them all year round and motivate pupils and parents to use them confidently and successfully.
- Establishes its annual and module planning from the beginning with clear objectives and content units (positive effect for the coherence of teaching throughout the year);
- Builds up its own physical and virtual library: books and teaching materials in line with the age and generational characteristics of the children (motivating effect for an instructional activity that strongly captures pupils' attention and sustains their interest in knowledge and learning);
- Communicates and share psycho-educational experience with colleagues for own development and academic progress;
- Sees the relationship with pupils and parents as a win-win partnership. The teacher makes an important contribution to building this partnership.
- Pays attention to everything that happens in the school and asks for feedback from parents and children in order to build a thorough partnership, to clarify, explain and enrich psycho-educational strategies to adapt teaching-learning-assessment acts to the specificity of children;
- Knows very well the school policy, is in line with it and ensures congruence between what is sold and what is implemented (positive effect: happy children, happy parents).
- Knows its partners well: pupils and parents!

The *skilled teachers* know and consider the particularities of his/her pupils, the characteristics of the digital generation, when choosing teaching strategies:

- They surf the internet quickly, building digital skills and structuring digital thinking;
- They use technology as a way of living, connecting with others and learning;
- They are becoming more competitive, more inventive, are in a constant search for knowledge;
- They are motivated by the need to help others but also by the desire for success and recognition;
- They are focused on skills training and less on content (not "what it is" but "how it is" and "what I need it for");
- They want to document, think and solve problems;
- They have a high level of education;
- They take risks, develop entrepreneurial, coordination, learning and communication skills, innovative and "influencer" skills as a result of multidirectional physical, mental and socio-cultural maturation;
- They show maximum perseverance in achieving goals that add to their well-being;

- They are very much anchored in the "here and now", on discovering the world through all the senses, so they need to experiment.

Also, a *successful teacher* knows and considers the possible vulnerabilities of the generation of children they work with: the risk of superficiality, the cultivation of impatience, the development of narcissism, the rejection of guidance - "they know it all" - and of following the rules, as well as the emergence of depression, anxiety and the risk of attention deficit due to the excessive digitalization of their lives.

A *SMART teacher* knows very well what the methodological needs of his/her pupils are and carefully chooses his/her intervention methods and techniques to ensure an effective learning process for the digital generation:

- To be interactive, using non-traditional teaching-learning-assessment methods;
- To focus on skills and competences training, structuring and integrating learning content for easy implementation in everyday life;
- To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
- To achieve learning centered on critical analysis of alternative points of view for the formation of personal decision-making skills;
- To be mobile learning ways: video libraries/virtual libraries, digital learning;
- To enable practice and implementation of knowledge;
- To Facilitate simulation, role-play, case studies, collaborative and creative activities.

The psychological age peculiarities of children in early schooling should also be well known by the teacher. This will help him/her to organize teaching-learning-assessment methods in a way that ensures academic performance and the development and maintenance of motivation to know, to learn and to discover in young children:

- Logical reasoning about concrete events appears;
- The ability to classify objects into different groups appears;
- Magical thinking still mixes with logical thinking;
- Enriches its vocabulary with access to the "tools" of reading;
- Can order thoughts and feelings according to well-aware and learned grammatical rules;
- Mnemonic skills are increasingly developed and consciously practiced by confronting school tasks and requirements;
- The sense of competence is conveyed through diligence and discipline versus feelings of inferiority, depending on performance in activity and feedback/appreciation given by adult;
- Becomes more independent from parents;
- Develops motivation for learning;
- Develops curiosity, initiative and exploratory skills;

- Autonomous moral feelings appear;
- Represses sexual interest in the opposite sex parent and develops social and intellectual skills.

In order to develop a constructive partnership with parents and children in teaching, a teacher needs to be aware of their individual/family characteristics. Adaptation to the school environment and school performance is individual and depends on:

- Family living context;
- The child's previous experiences;
- Parental model and involvement;
- Experience and compatibility of the teacher with the child's particularities;
- Positive school environment.

In *conclusion*, a SMART teacher, focused on achieving successful academic performance for their children, should:

- Try to get to know their partners and have genuine adaptive skills;
- Use visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory teaching materials where possible - for adaptive processing of each child;
- Carry out personalized learning activities where appropriate.

Educational objectives for the primary cycle must be clear in the mind of the teacher to ensure the academic success of the children they work with and to have the satisfaction of a job well done. The achievements of children at the end of the primary cycle (grades 0 - 4) consist of:

- Oral and written communication skills;
- Reading;
- Counting;
- Problem solving in familiar situations;
- Introduction to science, history and civics; learning skills and organization of school-related activities;
- Motivation to know, to discover, to learn.

Next, we will mention some psycho-educational strategies with a motivational role for children's learning activity.

1. Children need to use their already acquired knowledge and put it to use in a new learning activity.

The teaching activity must always be based on the activation of previously acquired knowledge and on a moment of capturing children's attention through which new knowledge can be introduced.

For example: In History it is important to always activate information about historical eras and their characteristics when teaching another lesson so that children are aware of the progress mankind has made over time and maintain their interest/motivation to learn the content of this subject (it meets their need to know "what it's good for").

2. Children need to practice their thinking and form good learning skills.

Each lesson should end with a moment of knowledge retention - possibly by writing down in a notebook some essential notions/concepts by making a scheme or/and applying new contents taught in some games/exercises/possibly interactive exercises from digital textbooks. This builds effective learning skills, develops synthetic/summative thinking and prepares for home learning - which should practice memorization of essential content. Smart kids need to have content to think/work with, too!

3. Children in primary school need clear benchmarks, models on which to operate.

For these reasons, concepts are first taught to the whole class, then the understanding of what is taught is practiced/checked in the whole class and then independent work follows.

For example: A new text is read after the moment of activating previous knowledge to be used in the new learning content and after the moment of capturing attention at the whole class level. Summarize a few ideas, try to put the ideas presented in the text in order, then reread in fragments, clearly delimit these fragments. Then narrate each fragment and formulate the main idea (in the form of a title, an affirmative sentence, a question). All this happens at the level of the whole class. The children, with the teacher's help, narrate the content together, starting from the idea plan and structuring it according to the plan for a composition: introduction, contents and conclusion. The children can then summarize the text themselves in their notebooks. (only after they have previously written together with the teacher at the blackboard and in the notebook a summary of texts already studied).

The children will know what to do, complete the task successfully, then correct mistakes in expression, and re-post the text perhaps in a Word file and add custom drawings or graphics to present it as a successful personal project to their peers. The effect is positive in terms of self-image, self-esteem and self-confidence in children. They form good learning skills early on and will be able to cope with the content in their middle school, high school and college years and whenever life gives them the opportunity to learn/understand/retain new knowledge.

4. Children need a clear model of mathematical thinking for effective problem solving in mathematics and everyday life.

In mathematics, children need models and practice in order to form algorithmic and then heuristic thinking. This structures long-lasting neural connections and fixes content in long-term memory.

A problem is solved after writing down the problem data: it is given/asked. Drawing pictures can be helpful for the concreteness of primary school children's thinking. Drawing up the solution plan and

solving it in a variety of ways are essential conditions for ensuring mathematical progress. (solving mode 1, 2, putting the problem into an exercise are absolutely necessary for the development of mathematical thinking).

Previously acquired theoretical notions are reactivated each time they are used in the performance of current problems or exercises.

They are better fixed in the working memory and during systematic repetitions they are fixed thoroughly in the long-term memory and will be easier to access.

5. Children need immediate positive feedback, support and guidance, encouragement and appreciation to progress.

A given test should be completed on the board and in pupils' notebooks immediately after it has been completed. Independent work is checked in class as soon as it has been completed. Homework is checked as soon as it is due. The progress the child has made on the activity is put into clear and concise words. The knowledge/notions that need to be remedied are stated in clear words. Feedback is given verbally or in writing (depending on the situation). Exercises corrected weeks or days later, without giving the correct version, do not help. Marking "Seen!" also does not help.

All these formulas do not motivate children for the learning activity nor do they improve performance, they are deeply connected to the present moment. They don't have the patience to review information/exercises carried out days/weeks ago.

Formulas such as "Pay attention to the math!" or "Pay more attention!" don't help. The child needs to know why they made a mistake: they wrote the numbers illegibly, forgot to add a ten or forgot to subtract a ten, or the numbers are too big and they would need to place them under each other to calculate correctly. Or maybe he didn't pronounce the word correctly and wrote it as he said it to himself. Confusion often arises when turning sounds into letters in primary school. The teacher should check why certain mistakes are made or repeated and act at the level of the cause. In this way they will be removed.

6. Children need to practice their working memory as well as their long-term memory.

Once the lesson plan has been drawn up, they need time to work with the concepts learnt, to commit them to memory and to reproduce them later (through competition, games, listening between congeners etc.).

7. Children need to remind themselves what they are learning for (highlight their reasons for learning).

The teacher helps the child to formulate and reformulate their motivations for the learning activity.

8. Children need a revision plan before taking any type of assessment and guidance in revision work, test/quiz preparation.

Review of theoretical and applied elements would help pupils to consolidate learning content and better manage assessment situations without great, disorganizing emotions.

9. Primary school children need to practice the type of test because their adaptive capacities work very well on familiar ground, and during the test they just need to perform, activating and building on their knowledge.

New situations at a young school age can be quite emotionally disruptive and then focusing children on content could be a problem. In such situations, assessment of knowledge becomes irrelevant.

So, dear primary school teachers, in order to have beautiful achievements in the work you do, make a great partnership with your pupils and their parents! You will always remain in their hearts as a teacher who has laid the foundations for a healthy, adaptive, creative and rich in wonderful experiences! You will contribute to the development of generations who will transform with responsibility, morality and enthusiasm the world they live in into a better and more beautiful world!

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