

Virtual reality to assess classroom management competence: a study on conflict management

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INTRODUCTION

This study underscores the importance of using realistic scenarios to assess Classroom Management Competence (CMC), which has traditionally been measured through questionnaires. The CMC of preservice secondary school teachers was assessed using Didascalía Virtual Classroom, a virtual reality simulation platform designed to foster this competence.



THE OBJECTIVE

The study aimed to identify and categorize the coping strategies employed by preservice teachers to manage incidents within an Immersive Virtual Reality environment. Conducted as part of a teacher training Master's programme, the study involved 39 students from eight disciplines from two Spanish universities.



METHOD

Three simulated scenarios were designed to represent disruptive behaviours: disturbances in teacher-student relationships, conflicts between classmates, and issues during group work. A mixed-methods approach with an exploratory-descriptive perspective was used.



THE DATA

Data were collected through videos of the participants' actions, which were then analysed using thematic content analysis based on Thomas y Kilmann's (2008) conflict management styles: collaboration, compromise, accommodation, avoidance, and domination.



RESULTS

The results indicated that participants tended to employ more assertive and reactive strategies, such as domination and compromise. Two distinct subgroups emerged: one assertive but uncooperative, and another with low assertiveness and moderate cooperation. Differences in strategy implementation were observed across scenarios.



CONCLUSION

This suggests that future teachers need to develop flexibility in classroom management by adopting a proactive approach and tailoring strategies to various contexts and types of disruptive behaviour.