

## APPLICATIONS OF MODERN TEACHING METHODS IN LESSONS OF ROMANIAN LANGUAGE FOR THE FIRST GRADE

Venera-Mihaela COJOCARIU<sup>a \*</sup>, Simona IORDACHE<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> “Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău, Mărășești Street, 157, RO-600115, Bacău, Romania

<sup>b</sup> School with Grades I-VIII No. 9, Moldovei Street, 136, 600352, Bacău, Romania

---

### Abstract

*The interest in modern teaching methods has increased exponentially during the last decade, both in terms of theory and, especially, concerning the possibilities of using them in preschool and primary education. First graders, faced with learning situations that should keep the ludic and interactive features and also gradually increase the degree of complexity of tasks and acquisitions, may constitute real beneficiaries of the formative valences of these methods. The study aims, as a theoretical foundation, at a brief analysis of the three modern methods, namely, brainstorming, “Know – Want to know – Learned” and the cluster. Based on this, we shall proceed to structuring and presenting some applications made throughout an entire school year by turning these methods to advantage during the lessons of Romanian Language and Literature.*

**Key words:** cluster, brainstorming, modern teaching methods, Know – Want to know – Learned

---

### 1. Introductory considerations

The interest in modern teaching methods has experienced an exponential growth during the last decade, in terms of theoretical knowledge and, especially, of turning them to advantage in preschool and primary education. The students from the first grade, faced with learning situations that should maintain the ludic and interactive features but also gradually increase the complexity degree of tasks and acquisitions, may be real beneficiaries of the formative valences of these methods.

---

\* E-mail address: venera@ub.ro

For a theoretical foundation, the study aims at realizing a brief analysis of three modern methods, respectively, *Brainstorming*, *“Know-Want-Learn”* and the *Cluster*. Starting from this, we shall further structure and present certain applications performed throughout an entire school year by applying these methods during the lessons of Romanian Language and Literature. *The modern didactic methods* are those tools used to reach the pedagogic objectives and the assimilation of contents that: provide the student with the possibility of manifesting himself spontaneously and showing initiative; trigger various factors of the creative potential; allow for a constant dialogue students/students; facilitate the establishing of a psychic climate characterized by positive emotional tone; turn learning into a continuous, constantly changing phenomenon.

## **2. Brainstorming - conceptual delimitations and applications in teaching-learning Romanian Language and Literature for the first grade**

### *2.1. Conceptual delimitations*

Brainstorming (etymologically: storm in the brain) is a method originally used during sessions for creativity simulation. Due to its multiple formative effects, it has been gradually adapted and integrated into the didactic processes, both in preschool and primary education. According to some authors such as Gliga and Spiro (2001), the method is characterized by the following dimensions:

- is one of the highly used methods applied within group activities to stimulate creativity;
- applying it triggers and requires the students' active participation, develops the ability to experience certain situations, analyze them, make decisions regarding the choice of optimal solutions and practice a creative attitude in expressing one's personality;
- enhances development of interpersonal relationships;
- the teacher should encourage expression of ideas and stimulate explosion of ideas;
- the main objective of the method is represented by freedom in expressing opinions, formulating unprejudiced personal ideas, practicing an open and creative group activity, enhancing motivation for the activity.

Using the method implies covering the following stages:

- The topic is selected and the work task is assigned; the groups consist of at least 10 persons;

- Students are required to express themselves quickly, briefly and concisely, without censoring their ideas – be they unusual, absurd, cloud-built, as they flow inside the mind in relation to solving a situation-problem. Associations may be drawn in connection with the others' statements, group ideas may be taken over, completed or transformed, but without critical references. In this case, the principle of quantity generates quality works;
- Everything is recorded in writing, on the blackboard, on video, on audio tape etc.
- There is a 15 minutes break, sometimes even a day, to internalize the ideas emitted and received;
- The emitted ideas are reconsidered and the group identifies criteria to categorize them into symbols, key-words, images representing possible criteria;
- The group is divided into subgroups, according to the categories of ideas listed, for debate; there is a critical analysis, an evaluation, argumentation for and against the ideas emitted previously; there is a selection of the most authentic ideas or those that are the most appropriate for the problem under discussion; the risks and contradictions that arise are discussed freely and spontaneously;
- The ideas resulted from each group are displayed, in forms that are as varied and original as possible: words, sentences, collages, images, drawings, songs, role play, so as to make them known to the others.

## 2.2. Applications

a) Find as many words containing the sound “e” as possible:

- writing the letter on the blackboard;
- identifying the words containing the sound e and writing them on the blackboard;
- explaining unknown words;
- grouping words according to the position of the letter within the word (in the beginning, inside and at the end of the word);
- dividing words into syllables and drawing the graphical schemes.

b) The sound and print lower case letter “b” – “Until tomorrow”:

- reading the text and explaining the unknown words;
- building sentences with these words;

- grouping words from the first sentence according to the number of syllables;
- providing examples of new words with one, two and three syllables;
- making a drawing according to the topic of the lesson.

c) The sounds and print letters ț and Ț – “The Birds’ Houses”:

- reading the words from the column of words and explaining the unknown ones;
- dividing students into two groups;
- the task of the first team is to build as many sentences as possible with words formed of two syllables, and the task of the second team is to build as many sentences as possible with words consisting of three syllables;
- identifying new words related to the topic of the lesson – team competition;
- interpreting a song about the end of winter and the coming of spring

### **3. The Cluster – conceptual delimitations and applications in teaching Romanian Language and Literature for the first grade**

#### *3.1. Conceptual delimitations*

The method of the cluster is approached in reference works as having the following dimensions (Gorbănescu et al., 2003):

- A didactic method, used individually or in group, consisting in the students’ emphasizing the connections among ideas by finding their meanings and revealing new associations among ideas;
- The students also perform brainstorming because the method stimulates the students’ active involvement in emitting and selecting new ideas;
- The method engages the students’ thinking and imagination, stimulates the use of knowledge, personal opinions and convictions and, in terms of skills, contributes to building self-knowledge and self-evaluation.

Applying the method implies covering the following stages:

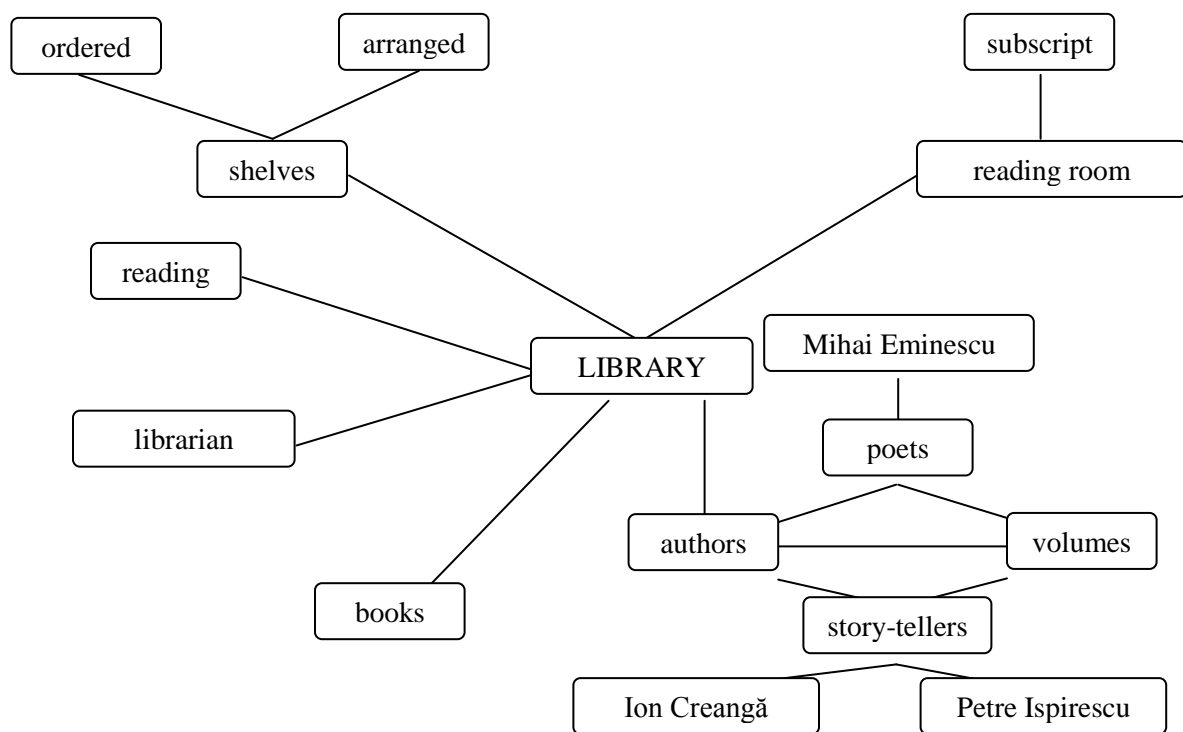
- writing a word or a sentence-nucleus in the middle of the blackboard or sheet of paper;

- writing some words that come to the students' minds connected with the content of the term under discussion;
- drawing some lines from the word or the sentence-nucleus to the new words and syntagms, to establish the connections with these;
- writing the ideas that come to the students' minds in connection with the topic suggested until the given time lapses.

### 3.2. Applications

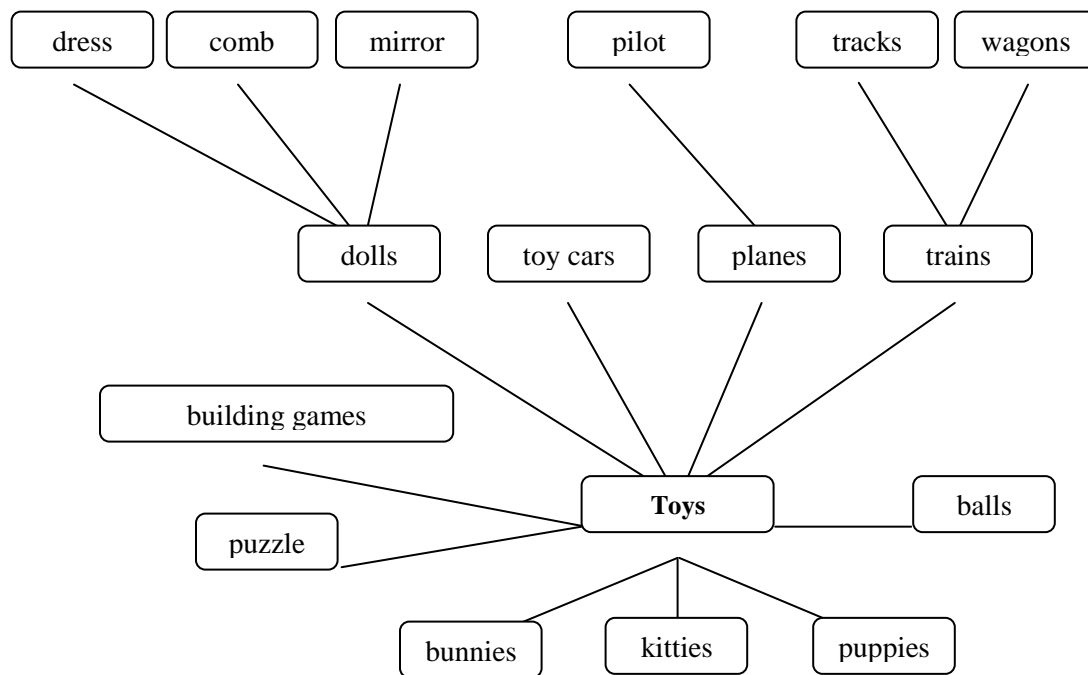
a) "At the library" (Figure 1):

- writing the word-nucleus **LIBRARY** in the middle of the blackboard with colored chalk;
- writing some words or syntagms that come to the students' minds in connection with the content of the term-nucleus: books, volumes, shelves, writers, reading, stories etc.
- drawing some lines from the term-nucleus towards the new terms-nucleus and syntagms to establish the connections between them;
- formulating ideas that come to the students' minds in connection with **LIBRARY**



**Figure 1.** The representation of Cluster in the lesson "At the library"

b) The sound “j” and the print lower case letter “j” – “We play” (Figure 2)



**Figure 2.** *The representation of Cluster in the lesson “We play”*

#### 4. Know/Want-to-know/Learned – conceptual delimitations and applications in teaching-learning Romanian Language and Literature for the first grade

##### 4.1. Conceptual delimitations

The method known as Know/Want-to-know/Learned is approached in reference works as being defined by the following dimensions (Gliga and Spiro, 2001, Gorbănescu et al., 2003):

- It is a method that reviews what the students already know about a certain topic who then formulate questions for which they expect to find the answers during the lesson.
- It is efficient because it aims at using the students’ intellectual skills, also drawing a critical evaluation of the skills’ level and quality.
- A table is drawn on the blackboard, like the one below (Table 1).
- The first column is to be filled in with what the students already know about the respective topic.
- The second column contains the students’ questions about the topic under discussion, questions that highlight the learning needs with regard to the respective topic.

- The text is read, then the questions formulated in the first column are reconsidered and given an answer which is written in the third column.
- The students compare what they already know to what they have learned by reading the text, they distinguish between the questions to which they found answers in the text and the questions that still need to be discussed.
- If there are questions that remain unanswered for the moment, these will constitute homework and the teacher indicates the information source to be used.
- **Table 1.** *The components of Know/Want-to-know/Learned method*

What we know/ believe we know	What we want to learn	What we have learned

#### 4.2. Applications

a) The sound “s” - Lesson “Winter” (Table 2)

**Table 2.** *The integration of Know/Want-to-know/Learned method in lesson “Winter”*

What we know / believe we know	What we want to learn	What we have learned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is one of the four seasons.</li> <li>- This winter is rich in snow.</li> <li>- The children are going on a sledge ride into the woods.</li> <li>- Bear is coming with them.</li> <li>- The boy sees the footprints of an animal in the snow.</li> <li>- A wolf shows up.</li> <li>- Bear flies at its throat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are snowflakes?</li> <li>- What does snow mean?</li> <li>- Why did the children go into the woods with their father?</li> <li>- Why did Bear fly at the wolf’s throat?</li> <li>- Who won the fight between the two?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Snowflakes are drops of water that, due to low temperature in winter, freeze and turn into snowflakes.</li> <li>- The word snow means .....</li> <li>- The children went into the woods to bring fire wood.</li> <li>- Bear flew at the wolf’s throat to protect the children.</li> <li>- Bear won the fight.</li> </ul>

b) The group of sounds “ge” and the group of letters “ge” – “The Poultry’s Council” (Table 3)

**Table 3.** *The integration of Know/Want-to-know/Learned method in lesson “The Poultry’s Council”*

What we know / believe we know	What we want to learn	What we have learned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is an important meeting in the yard.</li> <li>- The poultry have chosen another leader to act as alarm clock every morning.</li> <li>- The goose proposed the gander, the hen proposed the pearl hen, and Grivei proposed the he-fox.</li> <li>- The poultry had an argument with Grivei.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who gathered in the yard?</li> <li>- Why did they take the role of alarm clock from the rooster?</li> <li>- Why none of those proposed are suitable for this responsibility?</li> <li>- Have the poultry finally chosen somebody to wake them up every morning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The poultry gathered in the yard.</li> <li>- The rooster had grown old and could no longer crow.</li> <li>- The gander is too sulky, the pearl hen is too small, and the fox is the poultry’s enemy.</li> <li>- Eventually, the rooster remained the alarm clock of the poultry.</li> </ul>

c) Elaborating upon the text (revision) – exercises for recognizing the letters and groups of letter learned; selective reading from the texts studied (Table 4)

**Table 4.** *The integration of Know/Want-to-know/Learned method in a revision lesson*

What we know / believe we know	What we want to learn	What we have learned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have learned part of the letters and groups of letters.</li> <li>- We know how to order words in a sentence.</li> <li>- We know how to tell how many words a sentence contains.</li> <li>- We know how to choose the correct sentence corresponding to a given image.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to recognize all the letters and groups of letters learned.</li> <li>- To write a sentence starting from an image.</li> <li>- To ask appropriate questions.</li> <li>- To give correct answers to questions.</li> <li>- To read all the texts we have studied correctly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To name the letters and groups of letters shown on plates.</li> <li>- To formulate sentences starting from several images.</li> <li>- To formulate questions about what we see in the images or what we read in the texts.</li> <li>- To understand what we read in order to answer the questions.</li> </ul>

## 5. Conclusions

Using the three teaching methods throughout the entire school year 2010-2011 during the lessons of Romanian Language and Literature for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade allowed us to identify certain aspects that are relevant for improving the didactic process. Some of these are: the special formative impact in engaging and practicing higher cognitive processes, especially thought, language and imagination; the active and interactive nature of the methods, enhancement of the ability to get involved, showing initiative, cooperation with fellow students and with the teacher; the many-valued function of the methods, readiness to achieve a diverse range of tasks: learning, building skills and abilities, revision, systematization, evaluation, particularly in the field of intellectual education; the need to select effectively the learning situations in which these methods may be used, given the impossibility to operate with them anywhere and anyhow, irrespective of the topic and context; the need to combine them with traditional methods, for an essential methodological and action balance.

## References

- Cojocariu, V. (2002). *Teoria și metodologia instruirii*, București: E.D.P., R.A.
- Gliga, L., Spiro, J. (Eds.) (2001). *Învățarea activă*, Buzău: Tipogrup Press.
- Gorbănescu, M., Ciobanu, D., Secară, G., Mîrzac, D. (Eds.) (2003). *Impactul managementului clasei asupra succesului și insuccesului școlar*. Bacău: Editura Plumb.
- \*\*\* (2003). *Programe școlare revizuite. Limba și literatura română, Clasele I – a-II-a*. Curriculum approved by Order of the Ministry of Education no. 4686/ 05.08.2003 (Annex 5): București, [http://curriculum2009.edu.ro/Ciclul\\_primar/](http://curriculum2009.edu.ro/Ciclul_primar/), Web 10.01.2011.